



**Butterfly Conservation
Friends of Yew Hill Nature
Reserve**

Dates for your Diary

Work Parties

Meet at end of Old Kennels Lane (SU451 269) near junction Port Lane/ Millers lane or join us on the Reserve.(SU 455 264). Usually 10am to 4pm but helpers welcome for part of day. An odd hour helps so please come!
Any enquiries Colin Matthews 01794 388272
Or Lynn 01962 772251

Wednesday 19th November

Wednesday 17th December

Friday 16th January

Friday 20th February

On the hill

This time last year I was writing that I had had very few reports of wildlife sightings in the last six months – a reflection of the poor summer weather maybe which left many of us feeling less than enthusiastic about being out & about. And I guess the true in 2008.

Sadly even the public walk on 15th June to see orchids was rained off.

How butterflies at Yew Hill fared will be detailed in full in the branch annual report to be published in April which is provided free to Branch Members. Butterfly numbers showed a slight increase over 2007.

Many people comment on the lack of butterflies in their gardens too.

One advantage of the poor summer weather was we only had one incident of illegal camping.

Small Tortoiseshell????

No Small Tortoiseshells were recorded on transect at Yew Hill this year. Lynn did see one as she walked up the bridle path to Yew Hill on 23rd July. All is explained in this extract from BC's web site

The Small Tortoiseshell was once a common sight in gardens throughout the UK. Over recent years it has suffered a dramatic decline, particularly in

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South East England where its numbers are down by over 80 per cent since 1990.

Scientists are becoming increasingly worried that the parasitic fly *Sturmia bella* could be responsible. This newly-colonised parasitoid fly lays eggs on the nettles that the Small Tortoiseshell's caterpillars feed on. It is suspected that the caterpillars are consuming the eggs which then hatch and develop inside them as they reach the cocoon stage, killing the host.

Butterfly Conservation is working with the Department of Zoology at Oxford University to investigate the severity of the problem. Dr Martin Warren describes the project "In order to prove the link between *Sturmia bella* and Small Tortoiseshell mortality we need to look at trends in butterfly population and sizes across the country. We need volunteers who can collect and rear Small Tortoiseshell caterpillars, then report back about how many are dying from parasitism. We are deeply concerned about the decline of the Small Tortoiseshell and are desperate to find the causes". Look on www.butterfly-conservation.org if you want to find out more.

Grazing and other conservation work

Patrick did the usual work of cutting the transect route & other work in controlling scrub. Ben Spraggon cut several areas through the summer and this continues to work well in controlling the bramble.

Ragwort was plentiful this year especially on Hilltop. We will definitely need a work party on this next year!

Cattle are due to arrive early November to do the usual grazing

Our real problems continue to be too many rabbits, too much dogwood & brambles, possibly as a result of milder winters!

We are planning on clearing small scrub from the grassland at winter work parties. This work is very important in preserving the grassland for the benefit of the orchids and other special chalk downland flowers. On the 17th December we welcome Wednesday Conservation Volunteers & will be tackling hedgerow maintenance and the bridleway. The latter is an important area for Orange-tips and Holly Blues, Speckled Woods too & hopefully the rarely seen White-letter Hairstreaks.

On the 27th October the management group for the reserve met to review the work we had done & to give consideration to future work. The group comprises Jenny Mallett, Colin Matthews, Patrick Fleet, Ivan Arnold & myself.

Promoting the reserve.

We had a visit from Compton & Winchester Scouts this summer. When we host visits under the Natural England scheme of Educational Access it raises £100 per visit in grant income for us, provided over 6 attend & the visit duration is two hours. So if you belong to a group that would like to make a visit contact Lynn. (Groups of friends are acceptable). Such visits are FREE to the group concerned. **Bookings being taken now for 2009.**

All about butterflies

Looking for a Christmas present for a child? A book by Matthew Oates has just been published & is recommended. It is well illustrated & with lots of "Did you know" questions posed makes interesting reading. Price £4.99. Published by New Holland ISBN 978-1-84773-050-3
You can see a few pages on Amazon

Promoting butterflies - A nice Christmas present

Sandy Harman has produced a new DVD entitled "The Best of Butterfly Days - PLUS" It is compiled from some of best clips of the past five versions of "Butterfly Days" and much fresh material. The PLUS refers to a new section, showing some of the rarer butterflies that visit this country and/or were once resident here - a further eleven species. This DVD can be likened to a field trip around Britain to see butterflies during the six months from April to September. 58 species (in addition to the 11 in the PLUS section) are identified by discreet captions, as are most of the other subjects. These include caterpillars, dragonflies, moths and wildflowers etc. There is no music, minimal voiceover, and only natural sounds of the countryside. Detailed close-ups abound. The DVD costs £8.00, including p&p, and of this, at least £6.00 goes to our Branch funds (or more if you add something to cover the postage costs, as many members have). To buy, just send a cheque, payable to 'S Harman' to 31, Upper Manor Road, Milford, Godalming, GU8 5JW.- and why not get one for a friend as well - Christmas is coming! You can enjoy a beautiful view of our wonderful butterflies, and help support our Branch at the same time!

Butterfly Calendar

If you are on the Internet have a look at www.ukbutterflies.co.uk
A calendar featuring super butterfly photographs is being sold with the profits going to BC.
Orders have to be placed soon.
It costs £9.99

UK Butterflies is run by a Hampshire Branch member & is a great site to look at with loads of forums, book reviews etc

Distribution List

If you are receiving this newsletter by post but have an email address please let us know as sending by email saves money and time. Thank you.

Newsletter

This newsletter has been written mainly by Lynn. Apologies for any errors/omissions. Items welcomed from you – it all helps to make the newsletter interesting and informative. Please send any items for the Spring Newsletter to Ivan or to Lynn by 1st April 2009.

Yew Hill Who's Who

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Branch web site

<http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk>

National Web site www.butterfly-conservation.org

Moths www.hantsmoths.org.uk

