

Newsletter No.51 February 2015

Hampshire & Isle of Wight
Wildlife Trust
Protecting wildlife. Inspiring people.



Welcome to the South Down Group's Newsletter which gives details of meetings from now until May 2015, plus a few nature notes and local activities with some news from the Horndean Biodiversity Group. As Hampshire Wildlife Trust are not now producing their Wildlife Diary we will continue with our branch newsletter. Local members have said they would like to have a paper version. It is also a way of introducing ourselves to non-members and is available at all meetings. Our next newsletter will be produced in April 2015 (NL51a) and will include details of HWT summer walks in this area. The editor (JV) welcomes feedback. Your contributions and pictures for inclusion by 16th April 2015. A Pdf file of this newsletter will be sent to all members provided we have your E-mail address on the members list.

Meetings and Events in the South Down Group area from February to May 2015

2015

The following two Wednesday meetings are at St. Wilfrid's Hall 7.30 to 9.30pm.
Admission £2.50 to pay for the hall etc and there is a break for refreshments.

Wednesday 18th February ***"The Colourful World of Hoverflies"***

Phil Budd from Southampton NH Society will introduce us to this fascinating group of insects and show how they can mimic other insects. We are doing a local hoverfly survey during 2015 and 16 in our own gardens and countryside, The talk is well illustrated. There will be forms and details available for those that would like to join in, also a display of members photos.

Saturday 21st February ***"Hants Moth Conference"***

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Annual moth conference will be held at Littleton Millenium Hall, Winchester from 12.30pm to 6pm. Beginners and experts welcome.

Saturday 7th March ***"HBic Annual Recorders Forum"***

To encourage recorders and local groups to share their experiences. This year the focus is on under-recorded species. Free admission. Held at Littleton Hall Winchester

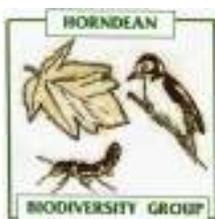
If you wish to attend notify organisers by 20th February. Contact John Vigay for details



Wednesday 18th March ***"Wild Flowers in History and Folklore"***

Gerald Ponting gives a fascinating and beautifully illustrated talk on the stories behind some of our wildflowers

Tuesday 14th April ***"Horndean Biodiversity Group"*** and ***"The Living Record"***



The HBG are holding their Annual meeting. 7.0pm at Napier Hall, Horndean All wildlife enthusiasts and South Down Group members are most welcome. Presentations on recording our local wildlife and livingrecord.net with a talk by the founder Alan Bicker plus other local projects will be displayed. Park in front of Hall which is to the north of Merchistoun Hall on the old A3. See below for more notes

Details of the summer walks and events will appear in the April newsletter. The first of the walks will be on **Wednesday evening 13th May** 6.15pm and will be around Ancient Lanes and Hedgerows.

Websites with information on wildlife and conservation in S.E.Hampshire

Hampshire and IW Wildlife Trust	-	WWW.hwt.org.uk
John Goodspeed	-	WWW.havantnature.net
Ralph Hollins	-	WWW.homepage.ntlworld.com/ralph.hollins/
Horndean Parish Council	-	WWW.horndeanpc-hants.gov.uk /countryside.
Rotherlands Cons. Group. Petersfield	-	WWW.Rotherlands.co.uk
Bluebell Woods, Clanfield	-	WWW.bluebellwood.wesnetservices.co.uk
Horndean Tree Register	-	WWW.HorndeanTrees.co.uk
Yoells Copse, Lovedean	-	WWW.yoellscopse.co.uk
South Downs National Park	-	WWW.southdowns.gov.uk
The Sustainability Centre	-	WWW.sustainability-centre.org
HWT- South Down Group	-	via WWW.wildlife.vigay.com
Horndean Biodiversity Group	-	WWW.horndeanbiodiversitygroup.co.uk

Earlier Southdown Grp. Newsletters can be downloaded from www.wildlife.vigay.com.
The Horndean Trees website has pages on local Hedgerows, verges and the HR survey
On Horndean Parish Council web you will find Countryside Team News plus important news for volunteers with some details about Tree and hedgerow planting and conservation events.

For more information about South Down Group Activities contact :

Peter Leversha on 023 92592711 or E < p.leversha@btinternet.com >

John Vigay on 023 92592647 or E < wildlife@vigay.com >

Horndean Biodiversity Group contact E-mail < horndeanbiodiversitygroup@gmail.com >

NATURE NOTES

WILD FLOWERS

After a rather wet and windy winter the ground has been very soggy underfoot but there have been some bright intervals with many fungi putting on a brief showing and mosses have had a grand time. Two wild flowers that have done well in this area are -



Winter heliotrope *Petasites fragrans*

A wonderful show of these sweet scented flowers were seen along the banks just outside the entrance to Merchistoun Hall, photos taken on Christmas Day 2014. This species is locally frequent in Hampshire. Closely related to Butterbur *P.hybridus* which flowers later in the spring. Is very good for winter insects.



Spurge-laurel *Daphne laureola*

Another very early flower, this one snapped on 27 Jan 2015 in the southern edge of Wick hanger, Blendworth. A native found across Hampshire on calcareous woodland but rather mis-named as it is neither a spurge or a laural. The only known local sites are Wick Hanger and Catherington Lith where the plants can be mistaken for rhododendron or laurel, The editor would welcome local reader's photos of unusual.



Dont forget that on Wed. 18th March, Gerald Ponting will be coming to give us a talk on Wild Flowers in History and Folklore. We hope to see you and would like to recruit more volunteers to help us record the flowers on local grass verges and nature reserves. There will be a display of members photographs during the break so if you have any favourite pictures of wild flowers that you would like to share or want them identified, bring them along,

TOADS

Toads are becoming increasingly rare. To help ensure that they don't disappear completely the Sussex Amphibian and reptile Group want information from the public about toad sites especially road crossing points to assist with their Toad Watch project this Spring. Each year at breeding time from Feb to April they follow the same migratory route to ancestral breeding ponds often having to cross roads. There are still a few in our neck of the woods (eg. Yoells Copse) but they need a helping hand. Pete King of the A & R Grp hopes to build up a network of volunteers to help with the Toad Watch project. If you know of toad localities in our area please ring JV 02392592647

BUTTERFLIES

We are pleased to inform you that Roger Marriott has agreed to take over the task of co-ordinating the butterfly transects. He would like recorders to confirm their availability and preferences of six survey sites so that he can draft a rota. New volunteers would be welcome to join in. Transects are carried out from April to September. Please let him know your interests and send him an E-mail to biffins.route66@virginmedia.com

MOTHS

Moths recorded in Horndean during 2014 came to 145 species, mostly attracted to moth traps set up in the back gardens of John Nundy and John Vigay.

There were a number of species of Hawk-moths this year including Privet, Lime, Poplar, Eyed and both Large and Small Elephant Hawk-moths shown here (right.) The full survey list will be available on the web sites or a paper copy at meetings.

During 2015 we are planning to have a public moth trapping evening on 12th June '15 as part of a "Bioblitz" to be held at Dell Piece West.



BIRDS

Whilst walking across the fields in Blendworth (Woodhouse Lane) on 15th February we were delighted to hear and see 3 Sky Larks and also heard Spotted woodpeckers 'drumming' in Wick Hanger. Green Woodpeckers have been frequently seen across the area and one was drilling quite deep holes in our lawn in Victory Avenue !

Looking after our garden birds They really need our help to survive, particularly over the colder months. Seed, peanut and fat feeders all have a part to play in attracting a variety of birds into our gardens. Sparrows love seed mixtures, goldfinches opt for nyjer seed, tits and starlings favour fat balls which, if placed on the ground are an easy high energy option for blackbirds, dunnocks, starlings, wagtails etc. Fruit such as apples, currants and sultanas are also popular sources of energy for blackbirds. Water for drinking and washing is also important.

Results of the annual RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch in January will be published in March

Thanks to Rosemary Clarke for the Bird notes.

RECORDING THE LOCAL WILDLIFE

We need your help We can all play a part in helping to save precious local habitats from destruction by accurately recording, photographing and letting HBic and the professional ecologists know what is here.

Do not keep your observations and photographs to yourself - SHARE ! We believe that the best and easiest way to do this is to register with Living Record as recommended in the Horndean BAP (on page 32). Because this is so important the HBG and SD Groups are devoting an evening on Tuesday 14th April to encourage all our members and local naturalists to come to this meeting and hear Adrian Bicker (founder of Living Record.net) explain the system and answer questions. The meeting is free so please make every effort to come to this meeting, which is sponsored by HBic, HBG and the local council. More details are above in this newsletter and it will be publicised on the media.

CURRENT SURVEYS. Progress will be reported at all HBG and SDGrp meetings, in the newsletter and on www.horndeanbiodiversity.co.uk

A survey of Hoverflies in gardens and hedgerows is being done during 2015/6 and will be launched at the meeting on 18th February which is being devoted to these fascinating insects. Survey forms will be available. More details on 92592647

