



Newsletter No.58 October 2018



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



Welcome to the South Down Newsletter. Included in this edition are the meetings listed below which are at our usual venue at St Wilfrid's Church Hall (upstairs) Padnell Rd, Cowplain, PO8 0DZ. Cost is £3 and includes refreshments, Park to the rear of the church. Non-members welcome.

Wed. 17th October

"Watercress and Winterbournes"

7.30 - 9.30pm



An illustrated talk will be given by Maggie Shelton on the chalk streams and their ecology, with an introduction to the Watercress and Winterbournes project which aims to protect our local chalk rivers. More information on the project can be found in the Spring 2018 edition of "Wildlife" (page 4)

Wed. 21st November

"The Enchanting Nature Reserves at Buriton"

7.30 - 9.30 pm

An illustrated talk on the wildlife and management of the nature reserves and chalk quarries at Buriton, valuable habitats for a variety of species and full of surprises, described by the local ranger Jo Williams who leads a number of keen volunteers.



A brief preview of our programme for meetings in 2019

Wed. 16th January

"The Fascination of Fungi"

7.30 - 9.30 pm

An illustrated talk by photographer Rosemary Webb about what Fungi we might find in the area at this and other times of the year.

Wed. 20th February

"Milton Locks"

7.30 - 9.30pm

An illustrated talk about this small but important Wildlife Trust urban nature reserve. This 2 acre grassland and scrub nature reserve site owned and managed by H&IWWT adjoins Langstone Harbour and started life as part of the Portsmouth to Arundel canal in the early 19th century. Find out about an area of industrial heritage that has been used to form a wildlife haven with an abundance of insects, birds, amphibians including ground lizards and saltmarsh plants

Wed. 20th March

"Help our Hedgehogs"

7.30 - 9.30pm

An illustrated talk by Chris Matcham on the history of hedgehogs, reasons for their decline and how we can help them.

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News and Nature Notes

2018 has so far been an exceptional year with a very cold and wet start, then very hot and dry, then more very wet spells, climate change and the weather have, as usual, become a big topic of conversation. Many plans for wildlife surveys have had to be changed. The nature notes outlines comments from members received during this autumn but more details of this year's surveys and plans for 2019 will appear in the next newsletter which will be next February where we can attempt a review of wildlife in the Horndean and South Down Gp area. **Will members of SDGrp and HBG let the Editor(J.V.) have observations and comments/photographs by 1st Jan.2019**

For information and details of wildlife and conservation locally the following links are recommended ---

Hampshire & I of Wight wildlife Trust www.hiwwt.org.uk/events
Horndean Biodiversity Group & HIWWT SouthDown Grp www.horndeanbiodiversity.co.uk
There are two local conservation groups that would welcome newcomers to help on their volunteer workdays which are held usually once a month, more information and contacts can be found on *Friends of the Bluebell Woods, Clanfield* (Lowton's & Blagden Copses) www.bbwt.yhreecopse.co.uk
Friends of Park Wood, Cowplain (opp Queen's Inclosure) www.park-wood.org
Earlier South Down Group Newsletters can be downloaded from www.wildlife.vigay.com and
Information on Trees, Hedgerows and Verges in Horndean are on www.horndeantrees.co.uk

NATURE NOTES

Butterflies and Moths. The Butterfly Transects finished at the end of September, a detailed analysis of the butterflies recorded should be available by the end of the year. Our 4 sites (Catherington Down, Hazleton Common, The Holt and Horndean Down) were all walked weekly by up to 12 volunteers and the results were co-ordinated by Matt (HPC Ranger) and John Nundy. On many days especially in September even on warm sunny days the count was very disappointing. One thing everybody noticed was the great abundance of Whites especially Large Whites and the next runner up was the Speckled Wood, still noticeable in October. There were very few Red Admirals this year and almost no peacocks or Painted Ladies even on the Buddleja bushes, the Whites had the flowers all to themselves !

Moths did not do much better, plenty of species came to the traps in July but very few in September. We will produce the usual combined list by the end of the year. One species that did well was the **Silver Y** (*Autographa gamma*) The one on the right came to the trap at night on the 8th July (Victory Av.) I do not know the ID of the moth on the left which also came to the light on 8th July



Can anyone help me out and ID this moth ??



Other Insects. There seems to have been a big decline in insects this autumn with many plants and trees with healthy unattacked leaves but on a hot afternoon walk in Blendworth fields on 10th October 2018 walkers were met with a plague of **Harlequin Ladybirds**. Hundreds were flying and landing on gates and stiles and on skin and clothes - and they do bite ! Their larvae must have eaten all the aphids in the area. Aphids are an important food for small birds especially blue tits at this time of the year. The Ladybirds were mostly flying east across Woodhouse Lane in Blendworth. Only 2 weeks ago there were hundreds of Craneflies in the same area but no butterflies ! Several **Dor beetles** have been seen on the paths through the Holt (on Monarchs Way)

Birds and Animals. There has been an increase in **House Sparrows** especially in the colony that lives in Victory Avenue. As many as 20 plus come regularly to the feeding stations in our gardens. They are recorded on the BTO Garden Birdwatch. Anyone interested in joining the growing number of people recording weekly their garden birds should go to www.bto.org or phone the team on 01842 750050. An unusual report that a **Redstart** was spotted in a tree on Catherington Down by Rosie Blackburn, thanks for sending this record. We are glad to report that **Hedgehogs** and **Slowworms** seem to be doing well around Catherington Lane area and Deryn (chairman of South Down Group) has recorded many foxes and even badgers on her webcam in her Lovedean garden. Please send any interesting reports/pictures for the next newsletter to wildlife@vigay.com
The next newsletter will be produced in February 2019. Look forward to seeing you at Meetings. **Page 2.**