



**Butterfly Conservation  
Friends of Magdalen Hill  
Down Butterfly Reserve**

## **Newsletter No 25**

### **Autumn 2006**

**(Apologies – no Spring issue produced)**

#### **Dates for your diary**

##### **Work Parties**

Meet up track by Blackwell & Moody & Magdalen Hill Cemetery on the B3404 (approximately ½ mile west of Percy Hobbs Roundabout. Grid reference SU 511 295 )

Usually 10am to 4pm but helpers welcome for part of day. An odd hour helps so please come!

**Extra Work Party Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> November  
Ragwort digging & fire 10 –2pm**

Sunday 12 November 2006 10 -4pm with Hampshire Conservation Volunteers

Also Wednesday 15th November with Wednesday Conservation Volunteers

Saturday 2nd December with Dorset Branch of Butterfly Conservation

Wednesday 6th December,  
Wednesday 3rd January  
Wednesday 24th January

Friday 23rd February 2007. At this work party we will be digging out patches of dogwood on the extension as it should be pretty easy to see after the cattle grazing

#### **An invitation**

Members of Butterfly Conservation will have had the Branch September newsletter giving details of the AGM and Members Day on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> November at St Barnabas Church Hall. Doors open 1pm. **Non members welcome.** There is a good selection of talks to be heard, displays etc

#### **Another invitation**

Many of you will know Nigel Spring from his years at The Kingcombe Centre. Nigel is now running work parties at Butterfly Conservation's new Alners Gorse reserve which is near Hazelbury Bryan in Dorset. Contact him for more details if you are interested.

Tel: 07981.776767. Any help Hampshire Members can give will be most appreciated. Hampshire members are going to one of these WPs on Saturday March 10<sup>th</sup>. Contact Lynn  
Nigel might also be planning conservation work party trips abroad in 2007. Contact him if interested

#### **On the hill - What people have been seeing**

Early in the year Patrick found coltsfoot growing on MHD North – flowering earlier than dandelion it is a good early nectar source. He also saw yellow rocket in car park – could be used as a larval food plant by Orange Tips and Green-veined whites. No sightings of Duke of Burgundy reported in 2006 – if you saw one please tell Lynn. Other than that Pat Fleet was heartened by the butterflies he saw in April & May with many looking like having a good season. He was pleased to observe Grizzled Skippers laying on agrimony.

He had 14 species of moth on the evening of 22<sup>nd</sup> April, including 2 very early Small Waved Umber. 12th May a visitor submitted a photo taken at MHD to the web site & the webmaster believes that this is a helice form of female Clouded Yellow. In May Phil Budd saw two Marsh Fritillaries on the transect. The interesting thing, wrote Phil, was that one specimen was much fresher than the other meaning that they probably weren't released at the same time and in any event that were certainly different specimens. One MF was seen a couple of weeks later on the transect on Magdalen Hill Down North.

On 6<sup>th</sup> June Regional Officer Dan Hoare & Kelly Thomas recorded 38 species of moth including Reddish Light Arches, The Fern, Sharp-Angled Peacock and Green Arches.

On 23<sup>rd</sup> September National Moth Night Patrick with a group of 5 recorded Pearly Underwing, & Pink-barred Sallow on ivy flowers with Convulvulus Hawkmoth and The Delicate coming to the light. In all 42 species including 8 migrants were recorded.

13<sup>th</sup> October Patrick counted 14 Clouded yellows on a 20-minute walk across the Extension, including a Helice egg laying. That day he saw 7 species.

#### **Butterflies 2006**

The transect data for 2006 shows that a number of species have had exceedingly good years. Full details in the Spring newsletter, but the ones that please us most is an increase over last years record figure for Chalkhill Blues on the Original reserve – 3236 and a small but welcome increase in Grizzled Skipper numbers – also on the original reserve

## **Promoting the reserve**

Our first guided walk of 2006 on 22nd April was greatly enjoyed by all. The cowslips were at their best and Green Hairstreaks were among the butterfly species seen.

We had 14 walks in all – some public walks, some visits arranged for specific groups.

When we host visits under the Defra scheme of educational access it raises a £100 in grant income so if you belong to a group that would like to make a visit contact Lynn. Bookings being taken now for 2007

The public walk on 21<sup>st</sup> June was a particularly enjoyable one as our guide that evening was local archaeologist Don Bryan. We hope to have another one of his historical walks next year.

The reserve also featured on Radio 4's Open Country and Meridian local news in July & August respectively.

## **Posters** **Butterflies of month**

Visitors will have noticed that the helpful posters illustrating some of the butterflies which might be seen in a month are now in colour, thanks to help from a volunteer.

Volunteers and friends of the reserve can help with all kinds of things to enhance the running of the reserve, so please think about any ways in which YOU might help us.

We also have an update colour leaflet of all three reserves Havens for Butterflies in Hampshire

## **Dogs**

Earlier in the year the pupils at Leigh House hospital produced some posters to draw attention to the problems caused by dog fouling.

We are hoping that dog walkers will be considerate & not leave their canine deposits on the hard path – most unpleasant for wheelchair wheels!

It is also important that dog walkers take the bags of dog poo away with them. There is a disposal bin located just the Winchester side of the bridge over M3 – on the right just down a tarmac footpath.



## **Watch out!!!**

Lynn found numerous holes in the ground which she had to fill in – these being dangerous both to visitors and grazing animals. Metal detecting is banned by Defra on Stewardship land and no one has permission to do this on any of our ground.

Please also watch out for other undesirable activities. We have had reports of motorbikes on MHD North, found tyre tracks up the steep slope of the original reserve, have had gate fittings stolen and important notices torn down. Another unpleasant problem is bags of dog faeces being left on the reserve.

Magdalen Hill Down is a lovely place and we want it to be a pleasant place to visit not marred by the thoughtless activities of a minority.

Please contact Lynn if you are aware of problems or if you see motorbikes on site or a theft taking place please ring the Police on 101.

## **Grazing**

Sarah's cattle have arrived to start grazing the original reserve on 21st October. She does check them every day but as ever we are grateful to the regular walkers who notified us of problems from time to time.

Dorset Poll sheep (very pretty!) have arrived to graze the area of North Down next to the road. When they have done that they will go onto the southern compartment of MHD North (where the hardened path is.) Please note this will necessitate the gates being locked but they will be accessible to disabled people who hold a radar key. Notices giving advance warning of this have been put up. Cows and calves will be coming onto the extension shortly.

## **RAGWORT**

Those of you who know this site well or are friends of the reserve will know that we put considerable efforts into the control of ragwort. Right through the winter of 2005/6 we have had regular work parties digging out the rosettes, but sadly loads of plants came into flower this summer. This drew a couple of complaints.

We had numerous work parties of members and friends of the reserve, the Wednesday Conservation Volunteers and Hampshire Conservation Volunteers and also groups from Probation service serving community punishment orders. We also commissioned to Serco to cut a large area. These measures meant that the bulk of the ragwort was eradicated before it flowered. But we know it is going to be a problem for a few years to come.

Incidentally please note Butterfly Conservation is obviously aware of the usefulness of ragwort to insects – almost 30 species are said to rely on it see [www.buglife.org.uk](http://www.buglife.org.uk) to find out more. However the need to establish good clean flower rich grassland is our over-riding concern on this site.

### **Other Conservation Work**

Patrick has undertaken the usual summer conservation work of re-cutting scrub in the grassland on the original reserve. And as ever considerable effort has gone into the control of wild clematis. Individual volunteers helped to clear ragwort off the original reserve too. Ben Spraggon cut paths & other areas.

### **Peeps from the past**

#### **Information from**

<http://www.southernlife.org.uk/chilcomb.htm>

St Mary Magdalen hospital stood near the Winchester to Alresford road on what is now known as Morn Hill. The hospital was founded before 1158 for the treatment and care of leprosy probably by Bishop Henry de Blois who founded St Cross Hospital in Winchester.

But the hospital was struck twice by disaster during the 17th century. Many of the local sheep were slaughtered by the Royalist troops during the Civil War and they also stole the corn and set fire to all the woodwork which included an altar table in the chapel. Later in 1665 the inmates were ordered out by the government of the time to make way for Dutch prisoners of war, who are recorded to have done more damage than the Royalists. In 1788 the buildings were pulled down and the Norman chapel was incorporated in St Peter's Roman Catholic church in Winchester, with a lot of the other rubble used in the building of Rosemary Close, Water Lane.

During the late 1990s Time Team which is an archaeology programme on Channel 4 television did an excavation of the area to find the remains of the hospital

The book 'Winchester Voices' by Sarah Bussey in the Oral History series by Tempus ISBN 0-7524-2447-5 contains a chapter on the First World War recounting local peoples memories of the hard lives the soldiers faced at the Morn Hill Camp. There are photos too & it is worth looking up the copy in Winchester library. It is likely that a plaque will be erected near the Jubilee Clump on MHD North to commemorate the camp and the cemetery that was nearby.



### **Higher Level Stewardship**

It is pleasing to report our new agreement for MHD & Yew Hill started on 1st August – one of the first in Hampshire under the new Scheme of funding by Defra (now Natural England). This provided important funding for a further ten years.

### **Introduction of Natural England on 1 October 2006**

On 1st October 2006 a new non-departmental public body called Natural England will be created. This new organisation will bring together English Nature (EN), the landscape, access and recreation elements of the Countryside Agency (CA) and the environmental land management functions of the Rural Development Service (RDS).

Natural England will work for people, places and nature, to enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, -urban, coastal and marine areas; promoting access, recreation and public well-being, and contributing to the way natural resources are managed so that they can be enjoyed by future generations.

### **Newsletter**

This newsletter is produced on behalf of Butterfly Conservation Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch & is provided free of charge to friends of the reserve. Lynn has written the majority of this newsletter - apologies for any errors/omissions. Items welcomed from you. Please send any items for the Spring Newsletter to Lynn by 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

Let her know if you would like it by email to save us the cost of postage. Alternatively it can be accessed on our web site

### **Magdalen Hill Down Who's Who**

#### **Who's Who....**

#### **Friends Coordinator & newsletter distribution:**

Sylvia Whalley, 77 Alresford Road  
Winchester.SO23 0LA Tel: 01962 890848

**Warden:** Patrick Fleet, Ivy Cottage, Dummer.  
Basingstoke. RG25 2AG. Tel: (01256 398471)

#### **Reserves sub-committee Chairman**

Jenny Mallett Great Fontley Farm Fareham PO15  
6EA 01329 832177

#### **Reserves Officer and Editor of MHD News:**

Lynn Fomison Mount Pleasant Parkstone Road  
Ropley. SO24 OEW Tel: (01962 772251).

**Sheep Owner** John Britton 01420 587343  
Mo 07850 256167

**Cattle Owner** Sarah Jackson 01962 733969  
mo 07889 750577 and 07738 420860

#### **Police Non urgent 101**

web site [www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk](http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk)