



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

Dates for your Diary

Walks

Meet at end of Old Kennels Lane (SU451 269) near junction Port Lane/ Millers lane or join us on the Reserve.(SU 455 264).

Saturday 5th May Leader Lynn Fomison. Meet 10:30am

A walk for youngsters and their parents to play 'nature detectives' & spot the signs of Spring. We will visit Butterfly Conservation's Yew Hill Nature Reserve and hope to see both the butterflies that have emerged from hibernation and newly hatched ones too. We will be taking a close look at hedgerows and the wildlife they support too.

Friday 15th June Yew Hill. Winchester. Leader Colin Matthews.01794 388272. Meet at 7.15pm Amble through the flowers. Wind down after a busy day with a relaxing walk. Superb views and we will be taking a close look at the spectacular flowers and butterfly habitat

Thursday 12th July Yew Hill Leader Lynn Fomison. Meet at 12.30pm A gentle stroll at one of the best times to see summer flowers and butterflies. Those who wish can start with a light picnic lunch. Approximately two hours

For walks at all reserves and elsewhere in Hampshire see www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk

We can provide walks for groups under the educational access provisions of our Higher Level Stewardship agreement. Such visits earn us grant income from Natural England. They are free to the group so if you belong to a group that would like a visit please contact Lynn or Colin.

On the hill

Report from Mervyn Grist who was helping at our first work party of the season at Yew Hill - wonderful day.

The 1st November work party was blessed with glorious autumn sunshine on a cloudless day. During a well earned rest for lunch we saw a flock of 60 Lapwings fly from the Itchen valley across the field on the north side of the reserve. About 10 minutes later 90+ Fieldfares flew over some stopping to feed on berries on the northern boundary hedge. For most of us these were the first Fieldfares seen this autumn.

Newsletter Spring 2007

We like to have news from visitors so please email Lynn or drop a note to Ivan.

Butterflies

How they fared in 2006

The information gathered on the transect is coordinated by Brian Fletcher & he writes the piece about Yew Hill butterflies for the Branch annual report. Members of the branch get a free copy – it is a wonderful publication giving lots of information on how the Hampshire species fared in the previous year.

Here are some of the main points from Brian's report.

He highlighted the poor weather in April & May which was not good for the Spring butterflies but thankfully the fine weather later enabled many species to do really well. A total of 3517 butterflies were recorded on the 26 weeks of the transect – the set walk around that volunteers do each week.

Large Skippers had increased from 2 in 2005 to 10, 10 Small Coppers were also seen – the best number since 1990. Pleasingly Small heaths continue to increase and Chalkhill Blues at 1450 was the highest number since the record total of 2787 in 1991.

A number of species were recorded at double or almost double the numbers seen in 2005. these included Brimstone (84), Small Skipper (74) – which was on a par with the good years this species had in the 1990's and Common Blue (200). Ringlet & Speckled Wood also.

Migrants like Painted Ladies, Clouded yellows were recorded along with Humming-bird Hawkmoth and Silver-Y moths.

Brian's report also referred to the variety of birds and orchids seen too. Butterfly Conservation's reserves are nature reserves as evidenced by the discovery of a rare shield bug *Sehirus impressus*, a species that feeds on Bastard Toadflax, itself a rare plant that grows well at YH.

It is great to hear of your sightings, any rarities, any of the less frequently seen butterflies, all such reports add to the interest of this newsletter & Brian's annual report.

Less frequently seen butterflies include:-
Dingy & Grizzled Skippers, Green Hairstreak, Dark Green Fritillary, and Small Blue

Also White-letter Hairstreak

Just a very odd one has been spotted at YH over the years. But we have tried to nurture the existing elms up the bridle path & we have planted the disease resistant elms that Andrew Brookes provides so maybe it's a good idea if we keep a sharp eye open for White-letter Hairstreaks. For survey tips visit the site established by a fellow branch

<http://w-album.hertsmiddx-butterflies.org.uk/index.html>

Winter Conservation Work

We feel we have had a successful winter and have achieved much of what we set out to do. Much of the scrub regrowth has been cut and work has been done on several of the hedgerows.

It has been pleasing that several people took up Lynn's invitation of coming along just for an hour. We realise people are busy and can not spare the whole day but several people coming along for a short time really does boost manpower and means we get more done.

The cattle grazing went well and the benefits of this are really starting to show on Hill Top with an increase in the quality and quantity of flowers.

Ragwort Clearance

Clearing ragwort from Hilltop has been a big job for the last few years. Last year we were helped by Compton Scouts and in a previous year by Hampshire Conservation Volunteers.

This year we are having a corporate group from Southern Water on 11th July. Some of the time will also be spent looking at plants butterflies etc. If you would like to help on that day it would be great to have volunteers present to make our guests welcome and their visit enjoyable. Please contact Lynn if you can come – part of the day will be fine.

Butterfly Transect Walkers meeting

This was arranged by Andy Barker & took place on 24th March. The reserves transects were well represented with Jenny Mallett, Patrick Fleet, Alison Harper, Thelma Smalley myself & of course Andy Barker all present. We enjoyed numerous talks about different sites and Ian Middlebrook from head office provided information on the latest position nationally with aspects of the scheme.

Transect walkers may find it useful to look at the web site www.ukbms.org

Bees

If anyone is able to photograph bees the Bumble Bee trust will identify them & record them on their map. www.bumblebeeconservationtrust.co.uk

Access

Please note there never has been any right of public access by vehicle to Yew Hill. Please note the land owner has now installed a locked gate on Hurdle Way due to unauthorised traffic on his farm tracks.

Keeping Yew Hill special

The vigilance of all visitors is important in keeping a control on unwelcome activities like camping, fires and barbeques at Yew Hill. There was a real problem with these last year. Please contact Lynn if you see anything untoward or phone the police non emergency help number 101.

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. Apologies for any errors/omissions. Items welcomed from you. Please send any items for the Autumn Newsletter to Lynn or Ivan by 15th August 2007

Including reports from visitors makes the newsletter interesting so please send us your news

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

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