

Autumn 2017

Report on the "Bioblitz" at Catherington Down on 7th/8th July 2017

This years Bioblitz was blessed with fine sunny weather. The event was organised by the Horndean Parish Council Countryside team supported by helpers and members of the Horndean Biodiversity Group. At least 500 species of plants and animals were recorded during 24 hours. A full list of species can be found on horndeanbiodiversity.co.uk. A map with numbered grid squares was available to help recorders fix their position on the Down.



Over 280 plant species were recorded but no orchids were found and there was no sign of the solitary group of Dropwort although its close relative Meadowsweet was recorded. One highlight amongst chalk downland species was Round-headed Rampion *Phyteuma orbiculaire* seen here near basecamp.

Butterfly numbers were much higher than last year with many 'Browns' being seen - 956 Meadow Browns, 152 Gatekeepers, 68 Ringlets and 152 Marbled Whites. Out of the 150 Skippers seen it was interesting to note that over 90 were Essex Skippers. Total 21 species of butterflies seen

Moths 3 moth traps were spaced across the Down and the lights were on all Friday night and the traps were checked the next morning inside the tent. Over 53 species were recorded and the star of the show was a Privet Hawk-moth *Sphinx ligustri*, here seen on the hands of a young admirer. A full illustrated list will be seen on the website. **BATS** - 3 different species were recorded, Common Noctule, Serotine and Pipistrelle. Visitors were shown how to use bat detectors by Jim Park from the Hampshire Bat Group. A wide range of insects were recorded and many were caught on digital cameras and this is a good way to aid identification and where necessary difficult species can be sent to experts for verification. Some fine photos were taken by Stuart



A Dor Beetle

Ball and JV took pictures of most of the moths. These were useful for ID after they had been released. We are planning to have a meeting next year (18th April) when naturalists, recorders and photographers can show off all the amazing plants and animals seen during 2017 and it is hoped that plans will soon be in progress for the next Bioblitz which may possibly be at the Lith.



A capsid Bug - *Orthops campestris*

Local Wildlife websites with more information on what's going on in this area

Horndean Biodiversity Group	-	horndeanbiodiversity.co.uk
Horndean Parish Council	-	horndeanpc-hants.gov.uk /countryside.
Horndean Tree Register	-	HorndeanTrees.co.uk
Yoells Copse, Lovedean	-	yoellscopse.co.uk
South Downs National Park	-	southdowns.gov.uk

Nature Notes Autumn 2017

2017 has been a very good year for growth in our trees and hedgerows resulting in lots of chainsaw activity but now the leaves are showing autumn colours and now falling as can be seen in this picture taken on a very wet day in Clanfield woods on 4th November.



Recording Our Special TREES

This autumn there have been 2 important meetings, both on the theme of saving and looking after our trees.

1. **The 7th European Champion Tree Forum** on 23 Sept. at Kew gardens organised by the Tree Register (TROBI) with contributions from well known Tree experts from Kew gardens and leading tree scientists in Europe (Germany, Czech and Spain) - all engaged in the discovery, recording and measuring of Special and Champion trees in the British Isles. Nearer home - I have been a member of TROBI for some years and have recorded trees in the Horndean area which can be seen on www.horndeantree.co.uk/tree_register This website describes important trees in our area, some of those illustrated have been lost over the last 10 years and new ones need to be added to the register so updating is now needed. Help would be welcomed, inspecting and measuring trunks etc.



Some of us will remember the very wet day in November 2012 when we planted several native trees in jubilee field, Horndean. (left) These trees were inspected recently and as seen here (right) are doing very well - no doubt due to the TLC received from the Parish Rangers. HBG are looking for new planting sites for trees.



2 The other important tree meeting was the Annual Southern Counties Tree Wardens Forum on 21st October at Winkworth Arboretum. The theme was 'The value of Trees' and how this relates to the Tree Charter, launched on 6th November 2017 on the 800th anniversary of the influential 1217 Charter of the Forest, only briefly mentioned here but full details (and handouts) will be available at our meetings, you are all invited to sign The Tree Charter. Or see lots more on <https://treecharter.uk>

Valuing trees was the main topic at the meeting. Many organisations including the Woodland Trust and other University science laboratories, co-ordinated

by the Open University are making an interactive 'Monster map' of all the important trees in the country to show how the trees near you benefit the local environment. We are all

involved! Details of how we can put our local trees on the map are found on www.treezilla.org (like Living Record) Again, full details will be displayed at all our meetings. We are all invited to become 'Citizen Scientists'!

Local PONDS and freshwater Wildlife

Working with the Parish rangers HBG members are surveying the rich variety of ponds that we have in the Horndean area. A list or 'register' of all our ponds, not only public ponds but including private garden and farm ponds, recording the features as well as the wildlife that they support including basic tests for water quality. Some of our ponds are 'ancient' (at least 300 years old) and many are recently created - all gardeners with space or a small area for wildlife are urged to create a pond however small. Apart from being of tremendous benefit to wildlife, it is of immense interest to watch the increase in biodiversity and visitors to the pond. Our efforts are assisted by the **Freshwater Habitats Trust** (www.freshwaterhabitats.org.uk) and **PondNet** who have run (free) training days on ID of aquatic invertebrates. I attended a recent course on Water beetles & Bugs at Haslemere Museum and on 28th Sept. some of our members attended a **Water & Wildlife Forum Event** at Brockenhurst (First event of its kind focusing solely on the freshwater environment with presentations from Dr Naomi Ewald (FWT) Catherine Chatters and David Rumble (H&IW WT) Catherine Patel (Env. Agency) and others, together in a packed hall attended by volunteers, professionals and enthusiasts keen on freshwater life.

A full account of the meeting will be on display at meetings (paper copy on request to JV). During this year pond surveys were carried out at Hazleton and Blendworth ponds and a garden survey was done at JV's garden pond in Victory Av. Surveys in 2018--- dates will appear on websites and at meetings. There are many aspects of pond surveys, let us know your special interests -- eg dragonflies, amphibians, invertebrates algae etc

Members reports and photographs

A good year for caterpillars ! Rosemary spotted this **Privet Hawkmoth** caterpillar, one of our biggest, an adult moth was seen at the Bioblitz (pic.on page 2)
This striking fellow snapped by Richard is a Sycamore moth (right)



This was a first for JV, ID as a Red Admiral larva looking around the back door for a place to hibernate



A good year for Galls and oak apples at Hazleton Common in August 2017



Artichoke or hop gall created by the asexual generation of the gall wasp *Andricus foecundatrix*



Oak Apples or Marble galls produced caused by the asexual generation of the gall wasp *Andricus kollari*



Large knopper galls produced by the induced by the asexual generation of the gall wasp *Andricus quercuscalicis*

Early in the New Year the annual report on **Butterflies** in 2017 and the annual review of **Moths** recorded in 2017 will be produced together with plans for the recording Butterflies and Moths in 2018. There is a Members day to be held at Littleton Village Hall by Butterfly Conservation at which our local members will be attending. Proposals for studying (recording) other invertebrate groups will be discussed in the winter months and we hope to announce who is doing what in 2018. Details of all surveys and projects will, it is hoped be available at the meeting listed for Wednesday 16th .

NL56 is later than planned this year partly due to the many changes in membership to the local groups. Some groups have had to close down due to an ageing and declining membership. This is the case with the local history group (after 30 years) and the Winchester Geology Society (after 60 years) but although this may be happening across the UK, there is however still a growing interest amongst old and young in wildlife and conservation and it is one of the aims of the Horndean Biodiversity Group to bring together those with specialist interests and those who follow their interests on their own. The biggest problem is finding people with the time and experience to organise small groups on projects and surveys. The 'Friends of --' Groups are finding some difficulties. Friends of Catherington Down has not run for some years now, Friends of the Blubell Woods (Clanfield) are keeping going but are mostly rather ageing and Friends of Park Wood (Cowplain) are meeting on 2nd November to discuss their future. It is sad that we have lost Jordan Walker from the HPC team but wish him well in his new post with Hampshire County Council and he will still be working with trees. Roger Marriott has had to give up co-ordinating the butterfly transects owing to family illnesses but will be continuing with the Marsh Fritillary breeding and reintroduction programme, he will be missed and for now the HPC Rangers will keep things going. Lastly both the SouthDown Group and the Biodiversity Group are looking for more to join the Committees as Peter Leversha will be giving up the Chairman at the end of March after a long stint of keeping the Group going and will be much missed.

The next newsletter will be published early in January 2018 and will contain details of projects for next year. Contributions for NL 57 will be welcomed.

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