Friends of Portsdown Hill Newsletter

OCTOBER 2022

Welcome back to Portsdown Hill— its Autumn again. The summer's heat may have faded but the countryside remains dry. However, we have had enough rain to prompt a display of mushrooms as well as a flush of plant growth. There is welcome display of late flowers and the hill's paths are nice and negotiable, if you fancy a walk to see.

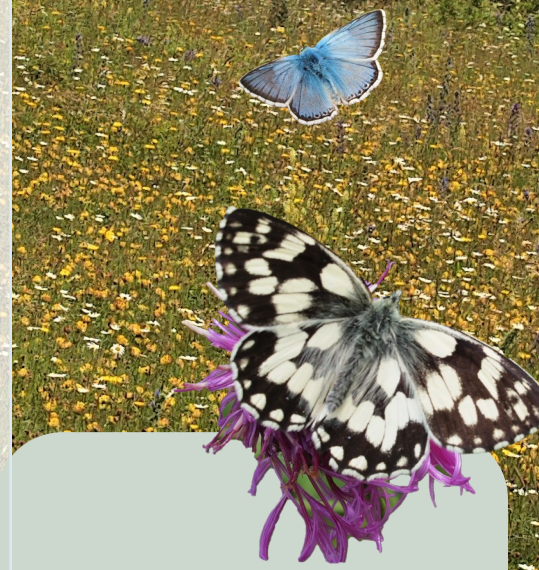
The extreme temperatures and drought will have left an effect on our wildlife that will take some time to work through. It seems likely that some unhealthy trees that were hanging on may succumb, notably ash and elm. Annual plants may not have germinated or have failed to thrive if they did start to grow.

The larval stages of insects that feed on vegetation, will have struggled if the grass they were going chew on was crispy instead of juicy. For instance we may see fewer meadow brown and marbled white butterflies next year.

During the heat flowers were fewer and often desiccated. This will have affected insects that search for nectar for energy and moisture. This in turn has an effect of creatures that depend on the invertebrates for food.

However, there is habitat variability within a big site like Portsdown and shaded areas that are slow to dry will have retained moisture for longer and so hopefully helped keep insect populations large enough to bounce back.

Richard Jones
Countryside Officer



Summer to Autumn

Species will have responded differently according to where they were in their life cycle during the hottest days. Caterpillars that were active will have struggled. No Rough poppies were seen this year, was drought the cause?



Chalkhill Blue, Marbled White on Greater Knapweed and the rare Rough Poppy.

On the Web
www.portsdown.org.uk/ The FoPH website.
www. havantnature.net/Wildlife information on Portsdown and further afield.
www. portsdown-tunnels.org.uk Portsdown's underground history.

Events

Talks — Between October and April we meet on the second **Tuesday** of the Month at the Church of the Resurrection Hall, Brecon Avenue, Drayton, PO6 2AW. Starting at **7.30pm**. £ 2.00 on the door

Talks are now on a Tuesday

In order to allow more space between everyone at our talks, we shall meet in the larger room at the Hall. **This means that we will be meeting on a Tuesday (rather than a Wednesday) evening**

Tuesday October 11th A 2022 update on Purple Emperors
Ashley Whitlock will be talking about this spectacular butterfly

Tuesday November 8th Soil biodiversity
Kieran Anderson will describe the amazing underground life we depend on



Tuesday December 13th Baffins Pond and Milton Common
Donna Cook is the new Countryside Officer for two sites in Portsmouth, she will be telling us about them

Milton Common a former tip, now a site of wildlife interest

Guided Walks Meet at the East Gate of Fort Widley 10.00 am — 1.00 pm

Thursday, 20th October **Fungi foray**
We shall head off into the woods and fields and see what mushrooms we can find

Thursday, 8th December **Berry Christmas**
A warming winter walk taking note of the season wildlife including remaining berries in the hedges