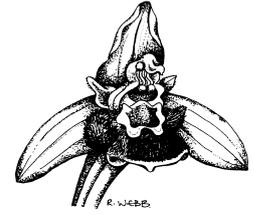


Friends of Portsdown Hill Newsletter

Welcome to an autumn that follows an unusually fine summer, that itself followed an unusually poor spring. At our latitude the weather from March to September has the dominant controlling effect on the natural world. However, poor weather during the critical pollination period reduces the production of fruits and berries, even if the rest of the growing season is excellent. If the pollinators are grounded by cold rain when the flowers are open don't expect too many fertilised fruit in October.



Oct 2018

This may account for the shortfall of fruit on treasured self-set apple and damson trees on the hill this year. Other species, with later flowering periods, such as holly and spindle seem to have abundant berries.

Untangling what causes a species to decline or thrive from one year to the next is a popular pastime for ecologists. The weather is no doubt an important variable but so are other factors. All the survey data suggests the near absence of Small Tortoiseshell butterflies this year. This is difficult to explain when it was such good butterfly weather, as evidenced by the abundance of other species such, as the blues. Everything is prey for something else so maybe the tortoiseshell's numerous predators have been doing well.



Some butterflies have small populations of inconspicuous individuals that can be overlooked, so it is more difficult to say whether their abundance is changing. A Brown Hairstreak was seen for the first time this year. Have they been here all the time and have avoided being seen or have they just arrived? Whatever the case it informs where and when we look for them in the forthcoming seasons.

Small Tortoiseshell had a bad year whilst the Common Blue had relatively good one. The Brown Hairstreak has appeared for the first time.

Whatever the fluctuations between years the long term trend for most species is clearly downwards. Butterfly Conservation's most recent State of [Britain's Butterflies Report](#) makes for gloomy reading but at least a good proportion our native butterflies can still be seen on Portsdown.

On the Web

www.portsdown.org.uk/
The FoPH website

www.havantnature.net/Portsdown.htm
Wildlife information on Portsdown and further afield.

Friends of Portsdown Hill
c/o Portsdown Hill Countryside Service
Fort Widley
Portsdown Hill Rd
Portsmouth
PO6 3LS

023 92389623

Talks and Events

Between October and April we have meetings on the second Wednesday of the month at the Church of the Resurrection hall, Brecon Avenue, Drayton, PO6 2AW.

Starting at 7.45pm. £ 2.00 on the door

Wild about Portsmouth - discovering Portsmouth Museums' Natural History Collections

10th October

Christine Taylor is curator for the **Wild about Portsmouth Project**, funded for two years by the Heritage Lottery Fund. It will concentrate on making full use of the council's collections to encourage people - particularly children - to develop an interest in the natural world.

Honeybees

14th November

A talk by Roy Godfrey

The Purple Emperor in Hampshire

12th December

Ashley Whitlock will talk about this rather elusive butterfly, followed as always by seasonal refreshments.



Portsmouth - Harlots, Dung and Glory Part 3

9th January

Andrew Negus returns to entertain us with another chapter in our history. Parts 1 and 2 were presented in 2011 and 2012. Some notes from these on the FoPH website, but are not required reading for those attending.

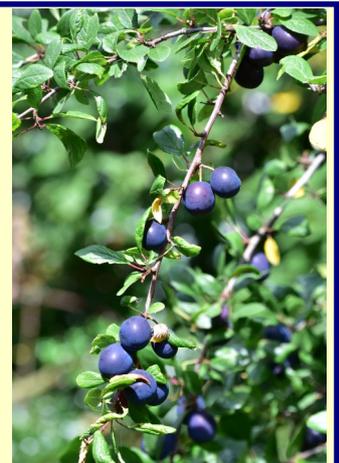
Portsdown Hill Countryside Service Walks and Events

Meet at the East Gate of Fort Widley, unless other stated

Berried treasure

Tuesday October 9th 10.00 - 1.00pm

The hill's bushes will be festooned with berries and other fruit, will shall be out taking a look.



Hello to winter

Tuesday December 4th 10.00am - 1.00pm

We will head off over the hill and down the lanes in search of environmental interest whilst taking a bracing walk.