

BEACON HILL

Local Nature Reserve

Gateway to the South Downs National Park

TQ 364028

ANNUAL WILDLIFE REPORT 2018/19



Lark Ascending

Bob Webzell 2018

By the Beacon Hill NR Working Group of
Rottingdean Parish Council

Beacon Hill NR Working Group and Report Distribution

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Cllr Sue John	Rottingdean Parish Council Chair
Cllr Jo Davies	Rottingdean Parish Council
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Rottingdean Tourist Information Point	
Longhill High School	
Our Lady of Lourdes School	
St Margaret's School	
The Grange Library	
Booth Museum of Natural History, Brighton	
Beacon Hub	
The Blind Veterans UK	

NB This Annual Wildlife Report can be downloaded free of charge from the Rottingdean Parish Council website: www.rottingdean-pc.gov.uk along with quarterly Nature Notes for Beacon Hill LNR. The species records of BHLNR are regularly uploaded onto irecord by Peter Whitcomb, Wildlife Co-ordinator for BHLNR

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Our Herd by Louise Arnold

Chairman's Editorial by Bob Webzell (Councillor)
Chairman, Beacon Hill Working Group & Vice-Chair Rottingdean Parish Council

In 2011 I took over the Chair of Beacon Hill Working Group. Brighton and Hove City Council agreed in 2005 that they and Rottingdean Parish Council should share responsibility for the Beacon Hill Nature Reserve through the Beacon Hill Working Group of Rottingdean Parish Council. And so, 8 years, 8 Annual Wildlife Report editions and two electoral terms later, it may be the time to pass on the roles of Chair and Editor to the Councillors elected in May 2019.

But before I go, allow me please the opportunity of a retrospective of eight years on Beacon Hill. Annual Reports monitor change in a year, but sometimes mask the bigger picture only viewed across the years. If you disagree with my facts or summaries, be assured you are right and I am wrong, it's a well known fact that elected Councillors are never right and certainly never please all of the people all of the time!

The South Downs National Park was established on 1st April 2010 and Beacon Hill NR is within the SDNP, which offers additional protection to our nature reserve. The SDNPA has sought a gateway to the eastern end of the National Park and prompted first by Beacon Hub, and latterly by the Parish Council we are pleased to announce Beacon Hill as a Gateway to the South Downs National Park and to have entered into joint funding for projects on the Hill an the Hub. You may well have noted the new strapline on our front cover celebrating this fact.

Having re-engaged with South and South East in Bloom since 2011 and having won straight gold awards from 2012 to 2017 the decision was taken to leave the competition for a few years. We have got a lot better at monitoring our own Reserve and identifying strengths and weaknesses such that the judge's feedback was less helpful than previously, and competition had expenses and time commitments upon a regular few of us who deserved a break.

Beacon Hill LNR is as it is today because of the dedicated efforts of both Working Group Members and real community effort, that led to the creation in September 2013 of the Friends of Beacon Hill. Early beginnings of volunteers led by Bernadette Skinner and ORPS were transformed the day Jason Fisher and Jo Spickett decided to move from Kent to Rottingdean and along with Louise Arnold and other regular stalwarts we now have regular band of up to 20 volunteers, moving the sheep, scrub-bashing, path-making, ragworting, ivy ringing, in the presence of a ranger, and also self led which has provided 722 hours of manual labour on BHNr in the first 9 months of 2018 alone. Their energy, enthusiasm and drive has moved BHNr to a different level of care that we could only have dreamed about in 2011.



Added to this came the seed of an idea that has evolved in 2013/14 into the Beacon Hub Project who now lease the disused golf kiosk and are refurbishing as an education and interpretation centre for the Reserve. The café and a small classroom have been open for some years but significant grant applications and fundraising are taking place this year and there are hopes that their six-figure target to transform the building will be achieved soon. The current team of Trustees including Atlanta Cook, Bernard Turnbull and Jay Butler deserve great credit for their enduring vision and commitment to a very worthy cause and we wish them well.

The Beacon Hill WG, The Friends and The Hub and the village communities they serve, aim to work collaboratively to assure that the Beacon Hill LNR we have today is passed on better maintained and better understood to those generations that follow us. The invaluable help of Founders John Cumming and BHCC's Conservation Manager, David Larkin, along with Countryside Rangers, Emma Keane and Will Furze, are gratefully acknowledged.

At the same time as the Hub team were awarded the lease of the kiosk the land-owners BHCC, Ward Councillors, including Lynda Hyde, confirmed the decision that the former mini-golf course would be integrated into Beacon Hill Nature Reserve, and this move and added commitment was welcomed by Rottingdean Parish Council. Although stock fencing was erected in 2015 and the sheep grazed the extended site that winter, the legal integration of the 8.15ha extension into the protected status of the original 18.55ha site 'seemed to drop off of the radar'. I take some credit for doggedly pursuing this goal through City Officers Rob Walker and Larissa Reed, we worked closely together to secure this sealed document that requires the approval of both BHCC's Legal Department and of Natural England. After months of email exchange and form filling the sealed document was eventually approved and signed on 6th September 2017. I am wisely reminded that these processes do take time and it is important they are carried out correctly. The reward is, however, a much larger 26.7ha nature reserve and open green-space for people to enjoy and for wildlife to flourish.

Beacon Hill Nature Reserve had been founded, in the spring of 2005, by three insightful people, David Larkin of BHCC, John Cumming of RPC and the late Alan Holden. Alan had been a renowned wildlife expert and the requirement for the BHWG to manage the Reserve and 'perform, compile and distribute the annual Nature Reserve surveys in a report', potentially faltered with Alan's sad passing. But then, into the void, ably stepped Brighton resident Peter Whitcomb and the stability was restored. Throughout my eight years Peter has been our Lead Specialist, and the one constant through changing times. One blessed day we were joined by the afore-mentioned Botany graduate and chalk downland specialist Jo Spickett, and we are close to the specialist team that serve us so well today. To Peter and Jo, and all the others who have helped us monitor and record our special fauna and flora across the years, may I formally record my sincere thanks.

It is fair to state that the return of regular and extended sheep grazing on Beacon Hill over the last six years was not universally welcomed especially by some dog-walkers who found their favoured path obstructed by stock fencing and gates. Issues were occasionally made of an escape sheep or one newly sick within the flock. But with the skilled aid of our Rangers, the shepherds and owners of the flock and a swelling band of volunteer 'Lookers' who help monitor the sheep daily these issues have been significantly minimised, and a number of our former critics now are genuinely delighted to see the flock return, conscious of the improvements they have seen in the grass sward and the wild flowers on the nature reserve as a result of well managed grazing. Early plans to graze in the three coldest winter months lead at times to the sheep flattening and not adequately eating the lank grass. This did little to aid wild flowers growth next season and so in more recent years on the advice of our experts, the flock have returned in autumn and again in spring providing a double helping of natural grass cutting and nutrient-rich dung.



And now in 2018, with the flock grazing, the Hub blooming, the Friends blossoming, growing engagement and participation with South Downs National Park Authority and the Blind Veterans UK this strong forward development is maintained. As I write plans are afoot for a Centenary Beacon Lighting on Beacon Hill by the Royal British Legion and hopefully for a permanent beacon site for an elevated brazier to be established for future generations. In preparation for this The Friends again worked to clear the beacon site, after David Larkin had earlier removed the 16m diameter circle from the HLSA. Members of Brighton and Hove Archaeology Society surveyed the cleared site and an extract of their findings is included within this report



And stoically since 1802 the iconic Rottingdean Windmill has stood quietly amongst us and observed more than two centuries of change on Beacon Hill and in the linking historic villages of Rottingdean and Ovingdean. Whilst it is clearly not wildlife I have used my editorial licence, just this once, to invite Colin Dellar of Rottingdean Preservation Society to compile our first contribution in this edition upon that Mill that dominates every instantly recognised view of Beacon Hill Nature Reserve. Thank-you all

Bob Webzell

November 2018



Beacon Mill

Paul Singer, Rottingdean Camera Club

Rottingdean Windmill

Compiled by Colin Dellar

Rottingdean Mill is located on Beacon Hill Nature Reserve at TQ 365024, 160 meters north of the South Coast Road, A259. It is an octagonal four-storey smock mill on a substantial single storey base of flint and rubble, rendered and tarred externally with brick lacing courses and birdsmouth angles.

History – The Mill was probably built in 1802, the first owner being Thomas Beard whose initials “TB 1802”

Have been carved on one of the original timbers. An article in the Sussex Weekly Advertiser of 7th June 1802 describes the finding of a skeleton during the digging of the foundations of a windmill and refers to “the master, Mr Beard”, so it is most likely that this is the mill being referred to. The mill ground the corn for the village of Rottingdean until 1881, when the miller George Nicholls retired, and the mill ceased to function. Later it became derelict, losing its sweeps and fantail. In 1922 the village realised that it was likely to lose its iconic mill, and a Parish Meeting was convened and raised the £400 needed to repair it, when much of the machinery was removed and the doors bricked up. A 99-year lease was granted by the owner, the Marquess of Abergavenny, to four trustees from the village, who “undertook not to alter or detract from the picturesque appearance of the mill and to preserve the same as an object of interest to the inhabitants and visitors to Rottingdean”. The lease was subsequently transferred to Brighton Borough Council, now Brighton and Hove City Council, and expires in 2021, when the responsibility for the Mill reverts to the City Council.

In 1929 the Mill was re-tarred and minor repairs were carried out, and in 1935, thanks to the generosity of Mr Yapp, the Mill was made waterproof and a new set of sweeps fitted. The Rottingdean Preservation Society was formed in 1960, and the trusteeship of the Mill was vested in members of the Society. A local resident, William Heinemann, is believed to have been inspired by the mill for the colophon which is now used on books published by the Heinemann Press, although the design of the colophon is nothing like Rottingdean Mill.



1935 Restoration Photos Courtesy of Fred Neve and Sons with thanks to Colin Neve of Henfield

In the 1960s various repairs were carried out, and in 1969, as a result of a survey carried out by Robert Gregory, a respected mill expert, a steel frame was erected by Ernest Hole, at a cost of £3,500 to stop the structure twisting and eventually collapsing. This work was done without any help from Brighton Borough Council but with a large bequest to the Rottingdean Preservation Society from the late Mr R A Caton. In the 1970s further repairs were carried out on a regular basis, two of the sweeps were dismantled and virtually rebuilt on the advice of Mr Gregory.

During the 1980s and 90s further extensive repairs were carried out by Paul Rigden on the advice of Vincent Pargeter, the Society for the Protection of Ancient Building's millwright. Three cant posts have been replaced and the intermediate framing rebuilt, the remaining five cant posts reinforced and the steel frame extended.

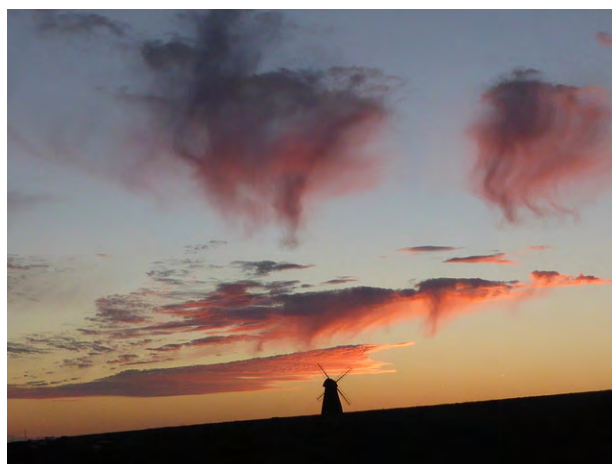
Recently a new staircase was inserted between the ground floor and the first floor to provide easier access to the public and a new set of stocks and sweeps fitted. This was made possible as a result of the heritage Lottery Fund, who awarded the Society a grant of £41,800. The Mill is now regularly open to the public.

As you will see from the above giving details of the history of the Mill, the lease which the Rottingdean Preservation Society has with Brighton and Hove City Council expires in 2021. Rottingdean Preservation Society has now signed a new 25 year lease with BHCC with effect from 11/1/18 and this lease contains opt out clauses if required.

The Mill is in a good state of repair and no major works are planned in the near future but with an old building you never know what is just around the corner! On an annual basis we have the lightning conductors tested to ensure that they are in the required condition to protect the Mill, in its very exposed position. The sweeps are also turned once every 18 months and when this happens the sweeps which are at the top are turned through 180 degrees so that they are repositioned to the bottom. This ensures that any slight twisting and drooping, which may have occurred whilst they were in the top position, is corrected by their repositioning at the bottom.

Colin Dellar and with thanks to Ron Martin

October 2018



Images courtesy of Pauline and Colin Dellar of Rottingdean Preservation Society

Excavations at Beacon Hill, Rottingdean 2018

Introduction

In early October the Brighton and Hove Archaeological Society were contacted by David Larkin a manager at City Parks about conducting a survey at Beacon Hill, Rottingdean (TQ 3645 0265). A large beacon was to be constructed to celebrate the end of the First World War. The County Archaeologist, Mr. Greg Chuter, was concerned about the damage to potential archaeological remains in that location. The County Archaeologist suggested that a trench be cut across the area to be used, to investigate and find evidence for archaeology on this part of Beacon Hill. The BHAS conducted a small scale-excavation on Saturday 3rd November 2018.

A visit to the Beacon monument on Beacon Hill, located just north/west of the windmill shows that the hill has been used as a beacon location on numerous occasions. The beacons included a warning of the approach of the Spanish Armada in 1588, and several of Queen Victoria's jubilees.

The Geology

Beacon Hill is the southern section of a spur of the South Downs that runs down from Warren Road to the cliffs and the sea between Rottingdean and Ovingdean. The central section has been built upon at Ovingdean, while the most prominent location of the spur is at Mount Pleasant, just north of Ovingdean. The southern section has an undulating topography rising up from the southern end of Ovingdean to a higher location west of the 'Blind Veterans' complex. The hill then drops back down towards the cliffs and sea. On the east side of Beacon Hill is located the village of Rottingdean, while the west slopes dramatically down to Greenways Road. This is the road leading to Ovingdean church and the old village.

Discussion

Beacon Hill has long been regarded as having great archaeological potential. A combination of Neolithic long barrows and Saxon burials make any ground intervention requiring investigation and recording. The various geophysical surveys conducted by BHAS over the past decade, revealing additional images of possible ancient features, has only enhanced the importance of Beacon Hill as a site of immense importance.

The whole area of Ovingdean and Rottingdean is rich in archaeology. Field walking in the valley to the west of Beacon Hill produced numerous finds from the Neolithic to the medieval periods (Funnell 2000), and it is well known that metal detectorists have frequently been observed digging on Beacon Hill in the past although this is illegal.

The small test pits cut by the BHAS in November have only embellished the known records. The excavation has revealed edges that could indicate the location of ancient features or terraces. The finds from the excavation have provided additional evidence for activity on the hill ranging from the Neolithic through to the medieval period, with clay pipe stems and Victorian ceramics showing even later activity.

Beacon Hill remains a site of great interest and any ground intervention will require monitoring and recording. It is the ambition of BHAS to eventually conduct a major geophysical survey of Beacon Hill, and hopefully discover even more features. It is anticipated that further information may give a greater insight into the history of this very intriguing location.

Authors: J. Funnell & P. Tolhurst of BHAS

November 2018

The 2018/2019 Management Plan

The additional BHWG meeting on 6th July 2018 at Stanmer Park largely determined and agreed the 2018-19 management Plan. I attach the recorded summary of that meeting here:

Grazing

The intention is to bring the sheep on sometime in August starting on the extension. This will be divided into 2 along the central path to avoid the whole area being inaccessible to the general walking public. Provisional rotation is Extension, Windmill, Bramble Experimental Area, Top Centre, Ovingdean West, Ovingdean East then having a 2nd go at Top Centre, Extension, Bramble Experimental Area. The plan is to keep the sheep on through the winter but obviously this is a moving target and we'll just have to see how happy or not they, acting accordingly.

It is now probable the sheep will leave over the New Year and return nearer to Spring.

Footpath Mowing

Natural England are unhappy about the number of paths mown on the Nature Reserve and suggest this could threaten funding. That said, it is not BHCC policy to mow "Paths of Desire" but to only keep the designated walkways clear. It has been decided that, as an experiment, only the 2 bridle ways and the path along with the perimeter line will be mown. The generally consensus of opinion was that the other paths will remain as the footfall of the walking public will keep them in check. If this is not the case the mowing plan can always be amended. We may have to mow "paths" to enable electric fencing to be erected but this will be decided nearer the time once a survey has been done.

Benches and Infrastructure

FoBH have secured a donor for one picnic bench/table and have funds in hand to pay for a second. Our aim at both the Quiz and Rottingdean Fair will be to raise funds for a third. Keeping the grass trimmed around the picnic tables will fall to BHCC responsibility (as volunteers are not allowed to use power tools). Given they have drastically cut down the number of paths being mown this is not seen as a problem with Natural England and David Larkin is also checking whether this area is indeed within the designated Stewardship Agreement.

FoBH have secured a donor for the big noticeboard at the Ovingdean Entrance and RPC are in discussions regarding funding replacement of the big one at the other end of the Nature Reserve. The smaller notice boards will be replaced with small lectern-style ones along with an improved sign at the Hog Plat entrance to the Nature Reserve. The Sheep Walk entrance on the coast road will be looked at to see if that too needs renewing. Three new Information Posts will be installed at various points across the hill. RPC (or FoBH) will be approaching BVUK (St Dunstons) to see if they want to fund a noticeboard at their entrance to the Nature Reserve.

Fire Beacons

The British Legion have been granted permission to light a beacon on the hill "in commemoration and remembrance of the end of the war and the many millions who were killed or came home dreadfully wounded, 1000 Beacons of Light will be lit at 7pm on 11th November 2018 throughout the United Kingdom, Channel Islands, Isle of Man and UK Overseas Territories - a century after the guns fell silent. The event will also commemorate the huge army of men and women on the home front who, often in dangerous and exhausting conditions, underpinned the war effort - keeping the wheels of industry turning, bringing the harvests home to ensure the nation did not starve". There will be strict crowd controls around this and The British Legion will be organising the event, ensuring the fire is contained on corrugated iron. They will also be advised that it is their responsibility to clear the litter afterwards and remove all nails and staples should they burn anything except clean wood.

2018/9 Work Calendar

The Friends have drawn up a detailed calendar for the work sessions in the upcoming 18 months. Obviously it's always subject to weather and changes will occur as and when needed. Jason has managed to secure a donation of 185 tree whips which will need planting in

November and a potential second batch arriving in the Spring.

The new picnic benches will be delivered one by one, fully built but we will need to dig the holes to plant them. This is pencilled in for December. We are scheduling a weekend "Introduction to Scrub Bash" for Friday 28th and Saturday 29th September - 2 sessions on each day.

Meeting need to take place between RPC / the Friend and Blind Veterans UK to inform staff and residents of our actions. There also need to be liaison with Beacon Hub to assure that the BHWG, Friends and Hub plans compliment one another

My thanks to Louise Arnold for compiling this report for us.



Born on Beacon Hill

Emma Keane



Our much-loved Herwicks

Louise Arnold

THE STEWARDSHIP AND MONITORING REPORT

Calcareous grassland (or alkaline grassland) is an ecosystem associated with thin basic soil, such as that on chalk and limestone downland. Plants on calcareous grassland are typically short and hardy, and include grasses and herbs such as clover. Calcareous grassland is an important habitat for insects, particularly butterflies, and is kept in this balance by grazing animals, usually sheep but sometimes cattle. (Wikipedia, 2014)

Over the whole of the South Downs, only 3% of these grasslands remain, the rest having been permanently changed by ploughing. There is no evidence or record of ploughing on Beacon Hill for over a century, probably two.

As we enter an eighth year in which the City Council are grazing our LNR with mixed groups of Herdwick and upland sheep for three to five months, starting in the late Summer with a proposed return visit for some hard-to-manage compartments after the coldest winter months, evidence suggests we are recreating on Beacon Hill the circumstances to maintain the regeneration of the reserve's grass sward. And as our specialists monitor and study it, we continue to discover new plants and other natural findings that suggest our efforts are overcoming the degradation that has taken place to better meet the CG2a category of chalk grassland.

THE MONITORING OF THE FAUNA AND FLORA ON BEACON HILL

Without the vision of our Founders, David Larkin, John Cumming and the late Alan Holden, and the enthusiasm, dedication and hard work of volunteers, Beacon Hill NR would probably not exist today. It certainly wouldn't have won In Bloom Gold Awards six years running.

We remain indebted to the Peter Whitcomb, our Wildlife Co-ordinator, for our current flora observations on top of his primary responsibility of butterfly recording. We are indebted to many regular walkers and observers including Libby and Jay, the Family Connolly, and many others for unusual sightings. The innovative contribution of Jo Spickett is again here for all to see and we thank them all for what they do for the nature reserve.



Buzzard calling over Beacon Hill

Bob Webzell

FRIENDS OF BEACON HILL (FoBH) REPORT OF THEIR 2017/18 ACTIVITIES

The Friends of Beacon Hill have continued their good work over the 2017/18 season. Autumn 2017 saw them continuing the scrub bash with aplomb, holding 2 weekender sessions to attract those members of the community that can't make week days. It's always good to get involvement from the wider public and these weekend sessions go a long way to increasing the workforce. The area that is situated on the central westerly side of the Nature Reserve is showing a remarkable slowdown in the growth of brambles due to the Friends dedicating many hours handpulling. For the first time there was no need for the council to come in and machine cut back prior arrival of the sheep. In years past they have had to do this because the bramble was too dense but thanks to tireless manual intervention the area was deemed clear enough for the sheep to come straight on. It just goes to show that a lot of hard work goes a long way in the world of conservation.

In December, to add a different flavour to workdays, the Friends took a break from scrub bash headed into the woods to tackle the top steps at the Court Ord Road end. They have created a lovely, rustic gateway from the woods to the Nature Reserve. In the Spring they returned to finish off the job and have now successfully transformed a 'ski slope' into something that is accessible all year round. The results were remarkable and the North Wood has a sturdy staircase constructed from old fence posts kindly donated by a local landowner.

The sheep were on the hill for 91 days during the Autumn 2017 (arriving 9th August and leaving 11th November). The Friends continue to assist the ranger with putting up and moving the electric fence. This season the Nature Reserve was divided up into 7 sections, ensuring that the majority of the hill is always accessible to the public. The sheep returned on 16th March for their Spring 2018 graze, leaving on 7th May for pastures new. A total of 143 days on site. The New Year arrived and the scrub bash continued. Even though they are getting a handle on the scrub, it insists on continuing to grow and therefore it is highly doubtful the Friends will ever run out of scrub to bash. They are a dedicated bunch who never run out of steam.

The Spring saw an increase in growth of an unwanted visitor, namely Hoary Cress. This is a particularly invasive species which, if left unchecked, could take over the chalk grassland. With their usual gusto the Friends set about tackling this invader and will be eager to see if their hand pulling has been as successful as the Ragwort pull of previous years. They have seen a very light showing of ragwort, no doubt a combination of long dry summer, spring grazing and manual pulling. Teamwork !! A Butterfly Bank was created at the bottom corner of the Hub carpark out of a chalk pile and plug plants. With a bit of TLC the plants manage to go on and survive the drought.

Another fantastic year for Friends of Beacon Hill culminated in fundraising events at Ovingdean Green Festival, a Quiz Evening and the Rottingdean Village Fair. Funds raised will be used to replace the picnic benches at the southern end of the Nature Reserve. In November 2017 an informal register was started to establish an attendance record. In the last 11 months Friends of Beacon Hill dedicated a total of 712 hours to conservation.



FOBH REPORT AND IMAGES BY LOUISE ARNOLD.

Beacon Hub, Brighton

By Atlanta Cook

Beacon Hub Brighton CIO has had a fantastic 12 months with an official partnership with SDNPA announced, along with £40k funding from their new SDNP Trust taking the redevelopment of the former golf pavilion on as one of two flagship projects. The creation of a coastal gateway to the UK's newest national park is well underway with plans for a Biosphere, National Park, Dark Skies Reserve and Beacon Hill LNR interpretation hall being integral to the new building. Further funding success was achieved when SDNP led on a £75k funding application to Veolia and we met with them to discuss collaboration on school visits to increase capacity for both education centres. We will be launching a Spacehive crowd-funding campaign to raise the final 10% (£7,500) needed to secure this grant. Donations from the local community have been gratefully received and the Cafe Kiosk has brought in a profit. Deeper links have been forged with The Living Coast, ONCA and The Brighton Dolphin Project, seeing us working in partnership on three projects thus far. Our education and social programme of events was well attended throughout the year and we are pleased to announce that our Education Programme is coming along nicely with assistance of long established eco-educators within the city and our Education Officer, Andy Wilson. Three local school visits to the reserve and windmill were blessed with sunshine and enthusiastic volunteer experts to guide them round. We hope to increase this to at least 6 school visits next year by including Saltdean Primary and Brighton Steiner.



As we move from Phase 1 into Phase 2 of the project, we will be concentrating on the final fund-raising bids, details of the new building, setting up the new cafe kiosk business model and seeking funding for the 3 new jobs we intend to create. The new eco-education & visitor centre business plan has to be put in place during the redevelopment phase so that we hit the ground running and ready to open our new doors to the public. Behind the scenes we are busy creating everything we need to relaunch in our new building so it will be a little quieter at 'the hub' over the winter months. We look forward to 2019 with great anticipation and can't wait to enhance people's connection with the LNR, Marine Conservation Zone, National Park, Dark Skies Reserve & UN Biosphere via a fit for purpose building that adds benefit to the local community and beyond.



PLANT REPORT 2018

By Peter Whitcomb

Apologies for repeating, but our chalk downland reserve has two important speciality plants which flourish and give much pleasure to visitors. 2018 was another year where the numbers of **Cowslips** were phenomenal, and later on the **Round-headed Rampion** was also in abundance. Admittedly I have not botanised as much as I would have liked, but there are always plants along my butterfly counting route, and if the wind is not blowing too much, then a photograph is forthcoming.



Cowslip



Sainfoin



Common Toadflax

In the Spring there was a good showing of **Apple**, **Wild Pear** and **Blackthorn** blossom but it was a harsh Spring and most of our plants flowered a little later than usual. Unfortunately there was a spread from the coast road of **Hoary Cress**, an unwanted 'weed' which the Friends of Beacon Hill volunteers will add to their already daunting task of removing Ragwort. In May one of the three species of orchid, the **Twayblade**, appeared in South Wood but failed to flower. Our other species – **Common Spotted Orchid** and the more frequent **Pyramidal Orchid** appeared a little later.



Twayblade



Common Vetch

There were good displays of **Goatsbeard** and **Salsify** at the end of May, and I managed to find just one plant of their hybrid. During this period **Sainfoin**, **Mignonette** and the **clovers** were showing and **Cow Parsley** too. Then June, when the plants on the Hill really start to flourish, with **Hedge** and **Lady's Bedstraw**, **Agrimony**, **Yellow Rattle**, **Dropwort**, **Hogweed** and **Yarrow** are all easily spotted. Not so easy to find were **Pot Marigold**, **Woody Nightshade** and **Common Fumitory** only present in small numbers and usually a bit off the main tracks.

Other plants which need more careful searching are **Strawberry Clover**, **Common** and **Tufted Vetch**, and **Hound's-tongue**.

Some **Honeysuckle** appeared along the woodland edge but there are many more species to be found in the Summer, too many to mention in this summary. The two **Knapweeds**, which are a good source of nectar for insects and butterflies, appeared in good numbers but with the long spell of hot weather and no rain, went over far too quickly.



Honeysuckle



Round-headed Rampion

The old dewpond area has short grass on the inner east rim and there are plants here which flower nowhere else on the reserve. The rare **Bastard Toadflax** is not easy to find as it is so small, so too are **Squinancywort**, **Wild Thyme** and **Fairy Flax**. **Quaking Grass** and some vetches are also here. One of the rarer plants found this year was **Rough Poppy** which was among **Common Poppies** along the Greenways field fence. Escapes from the allotments can always be a feature on the reserve with **Spring Starflower** and **Mint** creeping through the fences, and for the second time I spotted a **Garden Asparagus** plant out among the grasses.



Rough Poppy



Yellow Rattle

Earlier in the year a small butterfly bank of chalk was made at the western end of the Hub carpark and a number of vetches and other flowers were planted around the general area. Watering of these new plants became a necessity during the hot weather and it was good to see many of them thriving into the Autumn and hopefully to next year. Of the 103 plants and grasses listed as being typical of Chalk Grassland 2A category, we now have 70% of these recorded at Beacon Hill LNR. These are marked with an asterisk in the full updated list shown below:

REVISED PLANT LIST 2018

*CG2A Species

*Agrimony	*Creeping Thistle	Hoary Cress
Alexanders	*Crested Dogstail	*Hoary Plantain
Annual Wall Rocket	*Crested Hair Grass	Hoary Ragwort
Apple	Crow Garlic	Hogweed
*Autumn Gentian	Curly Dock	Honesty
Babington's Poppy	Cut-Leaved Cranesbill	Hop
Barren Brome	Daffodil	*Horseshoe Vetch
*Bastard Toadflax	*Daisy	Hounds-tongue
*Bird's Foot Trefoil	*Dandelion	Hybrid Bluebell
Bittersweet	Danish Scurvy Grass	Ivy
Black Horehound	Deadly Nightshade	Kidney Vetch
*Black Medick	*Devilsbit Scabious	Knotted hedge-parsley
Black Mustard	*Dog Rose	*Lady's Bedstraw
Blackthorn	Dog Violet	Lesser Burdock
Bladder Campion	Dogwood	Lesser Celandine
Borage	Dove's-foot Cranesbill	Lesser Swinecress
Bramble	*Dropwort	Lucerne
Bread Wheat	*Dwarf Thistle	Marjoram
Bristly Ox-tongue	Elder	MeadowCranesbill introduced
Buckshorn Plantain	Equal-leaved Knotgrass	*Meadow Vetchling
*Bulbous Buttercup	*Eyebright	Michaelmas Daisy
*Burnet Saxifrage	*Fairy Flax	Mugwort
*Cat's Ear	False Oat Grass	*Nettle
Charlock	Fat Hen	Nipplewort
Cleavers	Fennel	Opium Poppy
*Cocksfoot	Field Bindweed	*Ox-eye
Coltsfoot	Field Forget-me-not	Pear
*Common Bent	Field Scabious	Pendulous Sedge
Common Chickweed	Garden Asparagus	Perennial Ryegrass
Common Corn Salad	Garden Columbine	Pineapple-weed
Common Field Speedwort	Garlic Mustard	Ploughman's Spikenard
Common Fumitory	Germander Speedwell	Pot Marigold
*Common Knapweed	*Glaucous Sedge	Privet
Common Knotgrass	*Goat's-beard	Purging Buckthorn
Common Mallow	Gooseberry	*Pyramidal Orchid
*Common Milkwort	Grape Hyacinth	*Quaking Grass
*Common Mouse-ear	Grass Vetchling	Red Bartsia
Common Poppy	Great Mullein	*Red Clover
*Common Ragwort	*Greater Knapweed	Red Dead-nettle
*Common Sorrel	Greater Plantain	*Red Fescue
*Common Spotted Orchid	Green Alkanet	Red Valerian
Common Toadflax	Ground Ivy	*Rest-harrow
Common Twayblade	Groundsel	Ribbed Melilot
Common Vetch	Hairy Bittercress	*Ribwort Plantain
Corn Gromwell	*Hairy Oat Grass	Rock Sea-lavender
Corncockle	*Hairy Violet	Rosy Garlic
Cow Parsley	*Hawthorn	*Rough Hawkbit
*Cowslip	*Hedge Bedstraw	Rough Hawks-beard
*Creeping Bent	Hedge Bindweed	Rough Meadow Grass
Creeping Buttercup	Hedge Mustard	Rough Poppy
Creeping Cinquefoil	Hemlock	*Round-headed Rampion
	Herb Bennet	*Sainfoin

*Salad Burnet
 Salsify
 Salsify hybrid
 Sea Beet
 *Self-Heal
 Shasta Daisy
 Sheep's Sorrel
 Shepherd's-purse
 Silver Ragwort
 Silverweed
 *Small Scabious
 Smaller Catstail
 *Smooth Hawk's-beard
 *Smooth Meadow Grass
 Smooth Sow-thistle
 Snowdrop
 Soft Brome
 Spanish Bluebell
 Spear Mint

*Spear Thistle
 *Spring Sedge
 Spring Starflower
 *Squinancywort
 Star of Bethlehem
 Stinking Iris
 Strawberry Clover
 Sun Spurge
 Swinecress
 Sycamore
 Tansy
 Three-cornered Garlic
 *Timothy
 *Tor Grass
 Tree Cotoneaster
 Tree Mallow
 *Tufted Vetch
 *Upright Brome
 Viper's Bugloss

Wall Barley
 *White Clover
 White Dead-nettle
 Wild Basil
 Wild Carrot
 Wild Mignonette
 Wild Oat
 Wild parsnip
 *Wild Strawberry
 Wild Teasel
 *Wild Thyme
 *Yarrow
 *Yellow Oat Grass
 *Yellow Rattle
 *Yorkshire Fog



THE BUTTERFLY MONITORING REPORT 2018

by Peter Whitcomb

All photographs by Peter Whitcomb

Weatherwise it has been an interesting year for us and for butterflies. An unseasonably cold Spring followed by warm weather, the hottest Summer for many a year and no significant rain for two months, meant a few ups and downs with regard to butterfly numbers. One thing that needs an airing is the annual UK Big Butterfly Count which runs for four weeks during the mid-Summer period. Results over the whole of the UK reflect which species are doing well and those which aren't. I have taken the results released for 2018 and show the comparisons below and how much they differ:

Big Butterfly Count 2018 Top 10

- 1 Small White
- 2 Large White 9 Red Admiral
- 3 Gatekeeper
- 4 Meadow Brown
- 5 Common Blue
- 6 Green veined White
- 7 Peacock
- 8 Speckled Wood
- 9 Red Admiral
- 10 Comma

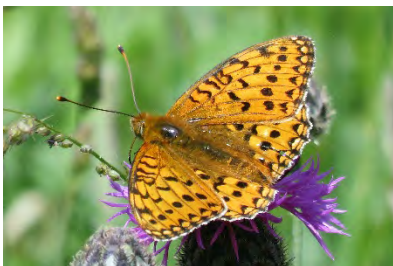
Beacon Hill 2018 Top 10

- 1 Small Heath
- 2 Common Blue
- 3 Meadow Brown
- 4 Gatekeeper
- 5 Large White
- 6 Small Skipper
- 7 Small White
- 8 Holly Blue
- 9 Brown Argus
- 10 Adonis Blue

So what can be seen by this – that the larger species haven't done very well at Beacon Hill this year with Red Admiral, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell being virtually absent during the counting period. Also, with Small Heath and Common Blue appearing at the top on our reserve shows, perhaps, that the counts for the Big Butterfly Count are from different habitats and perhaps are from gardens or parks rather than in open countryside?

Here at Beacon Hill the Spring started late with the first two weeks of the season far too cold for counts. The numbers that followed were low but it was good to record typical early butterflies such as **Brimstone** and **Orange Tip**. Towards the middle of May **Small White**, **Holly Blue** and **Speckled Wood** were emerging. A week later saw the start of the season for **Common Blue** and **Small Heath**.

The first **Meadow Brown** was noted on 5th June and **Marbled White** on 15th. These two chalk grassland specialities tend to predominate our reserve during the Summer months but both had a poor year. In fact for the first time **Small Heaths** broke all previous records and even outnumbered **Meadow Brown** for the first time. **Gatekeeper** did well with an improvement over the last two years and there were the usual sightings of **Dark Green Fritillary**. For the third year running there were no sightings of the attractive **Painted Lady**, and there was only one sighting of **Clouded Yellow**.



Dark Green Fritillary



Common Blue



Adonis Blue

There were average figures of **Small Skipper** and very low numbers of **Large Skipper**. July saw an increase in the number of white butterflies, with **Large White** performing extremely well. It is not easy to identify whites when ambling round the reserve but the size is usually the best feature. **Green-veined White** was seen earlier in the year but close views are necessary to be certain. The highlight of the Summer was the discovery of a single male **Adonis Blue** which were the first sightings since 2011. Two were seen on my weekly counts, and a third was photographed by a visitor. Also of special note were two **Chalk Hill Blues** seen in July, the first since 2014, and a **Wall Brown** in August.



Speckled Wood



Small Heath

Here are the details of the butterflies counted in 2018 shown in bold, with the average number over the last seven years in brackets. The italic shows the normal flight periods:

SMALL/ESSEX SKIPPER 57 (87) *End June/July*

Another poor year with similar numbers to the previous year. One of many species having a poor year. The maximum count was 19 on 4th July. The two species are linked together as they are almost inseparable in the field, with the main difference being the colour of the antennae!

LARGE SKIPPER 1 (4) *June/July*

A very poor year.

DINGY SKIPPER 0 (1) *Mid May/June*

None found this year. The last recorded was in Spring 2013.

CLOUDED YELLOW 1 (2) *Aug/Sep*

The only sighting was in mid-summer.

BRIMSTONE 2 (1) *End Mar-May, Aug/Sep*

Only two recorded but the first since 2012. This is a species which prefers woodland and it is likely that it is present in larger numbers but not within the transect route.

LARGE WHITE 81 (40) *End May/Jun, Aug/Sep*

Exceptional numbers and double the average. The highest numbers were in July with 25 on 4th.

SMALL WHITE 94 (105) *May/Jun, Aug/Sep*

Only just below the average numbers with most being seen in close proximity to the allotments. There were two flight periods with peaks in early May and early September. As Small Whites are more likely to be seen, there has been a general assumption over the recording years that most of the 'smaller' whites are recorded as such, rather than female Orange-tips or Green-veined Whites.

GREEN-VEINED WHITE 5 (2) *May/Jun, Aug-early Sep*

Only a handful seen close enough to identify from Small White (see above).

ORANGE-TIP 4(1) *May/Jun*

It was very pleasing to count four during May and like Brimstone it prefers woodland glades rather than edges.

SMALL COPPER 1 (3) *May, Aug-end Sep*

A very poor year for this attractive species, often seen flying later in the recording year.

BROWN ARGUS 3 (3) *May/Jun, Aug/Sep*

A good close-up view is necessary to clinch the identification, as brief in-flight views are very similar to female Common Blues.

COMMON BLUE 198 (169) *Mid May-end Jun, Aug/Sep*

Seen from the early date of 15th May, and an encouraging increase with a peak count of 36 on 1st August. Well over the seven-year average but a way off the record count of 301 in 2013.

CHALK HILL BLUE 2 (4) *Mid Jul-end Aug*

For three years there have been no sightings so it came as quite a surprise to find two males at the end of July. The caterpillar's food plant is Horse-shoe Vetch and there is very little of this on the reserve and it is hoped that by adding plug plants the species may return and even increase in numbers. This attractive butterfly is a South Downs speciality and it deserves to be a regular sight here at Beacon Hill.

ADONIS BLUE 3 (1) *End May-mid Jun, end Aug-Sep*

Yet another surprise, this time with three sightings of a male Adonis Blue. It is likely it was single as its wings showed signs of deterioration from its first sighting on 21st July to the last on 30th August. This is the blueist of all blue species has not been found in any numbers here as its larval foodplant Horse-shoe Vetch is quite scarce. Same sentiments as above.

HOLLY BLUE 16 (7) *Apr/May, Aug-mid Sep*

This was a good count and well above average numbers. Most were noted during May along the woodland edges.

RED ADMIRAL 3 (12) *Jun-Oct*

A disastrous year with none recorded on ivy flowers during the last couple of weeks which in the past have swelled the numbers.

PAINTED LADY 0 (2) *Jun, Aug/Sep*

Strangely none recorded on transect walks this year for the second year running.

SMALL TORTOISESHELL 1 (10) *End Mar-May, end Jun-Oct*

After some recent high totals, the numbers sadly dipped again to an all-time low. It is quite extraordinary that the only sighting was on second day of the counting. There are a few patches of nettles around the transect route, but no caterpillars were noted. The low counts were also reflected in the UK Big Butterfly Count for 2018.

PEACOCK 1 (5) *Mar/Apr, Aug/Sep*

Yet another one of our large and familiar butterflies that had an extremely poor year here.

COMMA 6 (2) *Apr-early May, Jul-Oct*

Never a regular species here, but the most recorded for over six years.

DARK GREEN FRITILLARY 7 (7) *Jul/Aug*

An average year for this beautiful chalk grassland speciality again, with 4 on 28th June being the peak.

SPECKLED WOOD 9 (9) *Apr-Oct*

An average year for the species, recorded mostly along the woodland fringe of North Wood, but also among the scrub along the western edge.

WALL BROWN 1 (2) *May/Jun, Aug-mid Sep*

A poor year, but a species which has never been that numerous.

MARbled WHITE 126 (165) *End Jun-mid Aug*

This was another low total and significantly below the average. The peak count was 57 on 28th June. Their flight period generally extends into August but the last was on 21st July.

GATEKEEPER 125 (159) *Jul/Aug*

After the last couple of year's lower numbers it was pleasing to see the total approaching average.

MEADOW BROWN 349 (596) *Jul-early Sep*

The worst total for more than seven years and the species which has always come out Top, for once it was pushed into second place by the phenomenal performance of Small Heath. Peak count was only 64 on 4th July.

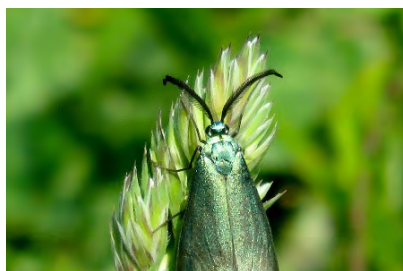
SMALL HEATH 477 (204) *May/Jun, Aug/Sep*

The undoubted success of the year. After last year's 314 record count it came as something of a shock to see double average numbers. Like last year they were recorded on every visit from the mid May right through to September, with a peak of 67 on 15th June. This species has a distinctive habit of keeping its wings closed when alighting, so it is practically impossible to see a photograph with open wings.

MOTHS & MISCELLANEOUS

By Peter Whitcomb

Day-flying moths were seen such as **Silver Y**, **Six-spot Burnet** and **Cinnabar**, but it was slightly odd to see good numbers of the caterpillars of the latter on ragwort after very few sightings of the moth! Perhaps the more significant species recorded were **Scarce Forester** and **Hummingbird Hawkmoth**. Two moths were recorded in August – a **Wood Carpet** and a **Straw-barred Pearl**, and a very worn **Yellow Shell** in September, but there were no reports received from the two specialists this year who had previously added to our knowledge of the moths present on the reserve.



Scarce Forester



Hummingbird Hawkmoth



Straw-barred Pearl

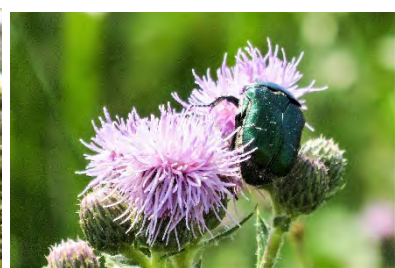
Various other insects were seen and reported during the year a few of which are shown below. There seemed less numbers of Hoverflies and Bees around the reserve than normal. Joanne Spickett has taken up an interest in Bees and their identification and a fuller report will be welcomed for next year.



Female Ruddy Darter



Dor Beetle (JB)



Rose Chafer

Among the miscellaneous were Grasshoppers, Lizards, Worms, Snails, Spiders and a few mammals.

Photos by Jay Butler and Peter Whitcomb

SPECIES RECORDING

For those readers who are interested in what happens to sightings and records for Beacon Hill, many are entered on iRecord, a website run by the Biological Records Centre (BRC). This is a useful way of record keeping nationally and around our local Brighton area. A representation of butterfly sightings are entered, as are significant plant and insect finds. This enables anyone accessing the website to search for Beacon Hill LNR and get an idea of species seen from year to year. The software allows transfer of records to various bodies including the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC), County Recorders and Societies for Plants, Butterflies and Invertebrae.

As a member of the Sussex Ornithological Society I send direct records of occasional breeding local birds and passage sightings during Spring and Autumn.

BEACON HILL LNR WEEKLY BUTTERFLY COUNTS 2018

Week	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	18	19	21	22	23	24	26	Total	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Date	16.4	20.4	4.5	6.5	15.5	23.5	2.6	5.6	15.6	23.6	28.6	4.7	14.7	21.7	1.8	7.8	22.8	30.8	3.9	15.9	26.9	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012
Small/Essex Skipper										5	10	19	12	10	1							57	58	64	78	124	143	83
Large Skipper							1															1	6	7	9	4	2	1
Dinky Skipper																							0	0	0	0	1	2
Grizzled Skipper																							0	0	0	0	0	1
Clouded Yellow														1								1	2	0	3	3	3	1
Brinstone	1			1																		2	0	0	0	0	0	3
Large White				1					1		13	25	24	11	5			1				81	10	31	51	26	60	22
Small White	1	6	9	11	7	8	2	1		1			3	2	2	4	1	7	16	4	7	94	80	123	100	72	180	86
Green veined White				3		2																5	1	7	0	0	1	0
Orange Tip			2																			4	0	0	0	1	0	3
Small Copper																1						1	4	1	0	9	3	2
Small Blue																							0	0	0	0	0	0
Brown Argus															2			1				3	0	2	1	10	1	0
Common Blue					1	19	7	20	17	2	1		23	28	36	26	4	7	4	3		198	189	51	145	167	301	133
Chalk Hill Blue													1	1								2	0	0	0	4	4	15
Adonis Blue														1			1	1				3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Holly Blue			1	5	3	3								1		1			2			16	7	15	7	1	1	3
Red Admiral								1					1				1					3	11	16	8	10	4	31
Painted Lady																							0	0	4	2	5	0
Small Tortoiseshell	1																					1	8	6	19	30	32	4
Peacock													1									1	6	3	6	4	13	2
Comma	1										1	1	1	1	1					1		6	2	1	1	0	2	0
Dark Green Fritillary										1	4	2										7	6	0	5	6	7	13
Speckled Wood			2	1	3								1							1	1	9	6	5	9	19	12	7
Wall Brown																1						1	0	0	2	9	4	1
Marbled White									3	19	57	40	6	1								126	111	150	149	188	201	231
Gatekeeper											1	15	46	54	7	2						125	81	80	134	273	236	185
Meadow Brown								6	55	42	53	64	35	33	25	22	6	5	3			349	444	454	353	682	741	1151
Small Heath					3	21	39	45	67	41	37	27	14	30	38	29	15	34	23	11	3	477	314	62	66	80	157	275
Ringlet																							0	0	0	0	0	0
WEEKLY TOTALS	2	8	14	22	19	53	49	73	143	111	177	193	168	173	117	86	28	56	48	19	12	1571	1346	1078	1153	1743	2114	2255
Temperatures		18	17	19			18	18	19	19	24	21	22	20	19	24	18	18	21	18	18							
% Sunshine		100	100	100	100		80	90	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	10	100	50	100	100							
Wind Direction		SW	SW	NE		NE	S	N	SW	SE	NE	SE	S	SW	SW	W	SW	SW	SE	W	SW							
Wind Force		2	2	2			4	4	2	4	4	2	3	3	3	2	3	2	3	3	2							

BEACON HILL 2018 FIGURES BY SECTION

Species	Section	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
Small/Essex Skipper		12	18	10	6	2	9	57
Dingy Skipper								
Large Skipper			1					1
Grizzled Skipper								
Clouded Yellow			2					2
Brimstone			1		1			2
Large White		29	27	2	9	4	10	81
Small White		42	26	5	3	7	11	94
Green-veined White		4					1	5
Orange-tip			4					4
Small Copper						1		1
Small Blue								
Brown Argus			3					3
Common Blue		29	51	29	38	23	28	198
Chalk Hill Blue				1	1			2
Holly Blue			16					16
Red Admiral			1	1	1			3
Painted Lady								
Small Tortoiseshell					1			1
Peacock			1					1
Comma		1	2		1	1		5
Dark Green Fritillary			4	3				7
Speckled Wood			7		2			9
Wall						1		1
Marbled White		8	37	27	27	17	10	126
Gatekeeper		13	23	15	37	25	12	125
Meadow Brown		41	106	86	43	23	50	349
Small Heath		56	118	94	77	68	114	477
Ringlet								
TOTAL 2018		235	447	223	248	173	245	1571
2017		223	410	139	189	137	248	1346
2016		160	277	131	151	143	218	1078
2015		146	372	182	255	73	125	1153
2014		173	563	227	312	159	292	1726
2013		286	654	216	368	238	352	2114
2012		315	901	316	364	300	240	2427
2011		144	676	156	278	163	133	1550
2010		227	519	106	238	94	261	1445
2006		149	420	163	94	113	182	1113
2004		137	393	181	137	180	229	1257
2003		228	424	143	245	264	218	1522
2002		159	265	123	160	100	208	1015
2001		180	278	126	198	169	279	1230

Beacon Hill Birds 2018

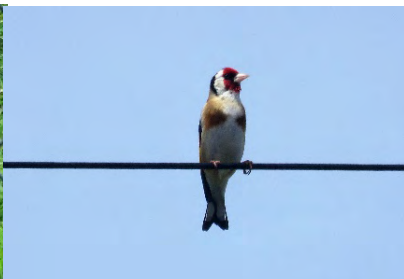
By Peter Whitcomb

Our **Skylarks** started singing in mid January and staking their claim to territories. Strangely they were singing from ground level in strong windy conditions. A **Merlin** was seen along the clifftop, and in March atrocious weather brought **Lapwings** to the reserve with several flying over on the 1st and three seen near the windmill and another 3 down in the horse paddocks. Six were in Hilder's Field on 3rd March.

In early April signs of nesting birds included two male **Pheasant**, **Stock Doves** and **Buzzard** all in the region of South Wood, while singing male **Skylarks** were up to around eight. The first **Swallows** were noted with nine on 7th April and three the next day. An unusual sighting at this time was two **Red-legged Partridges** wandering around. April also saw some notable sightings with two **Ravens** overhead, a **Siskin** and **Red Kites** on different days. Migrant warblers were noted with **Blackcaps** and **Whitethroat**, some probably staying to nest, and towards the end of the month **Chiffchaffs**, **Wheatears** and a **Redstart** were seen, just passing through.



Red-legged Partridge (JC)



Goldfinch

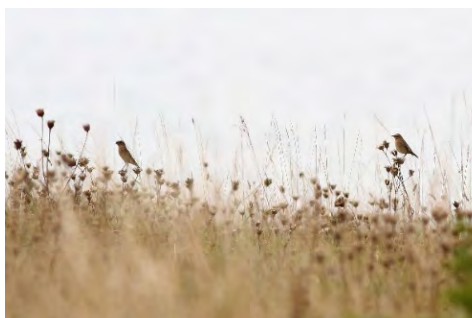


Herring Gull family

There were no positive reports of our common resident species nesting, but no doubt we are blessed with well over a dozen species nesting in the woodland and scrub. **Kestrels** are seen regularly but nesting is not proven. On 4th May a **Whimbrel** was seen heading eastwards. The next day was the Beacon Hill Bird Stroll and a pleasing 25 species were seen or heard by the eighteen attending. The first **Swifts** of the year were seen as well as **Buzzard** and **Sparrowhawk**, and one person saw a **Red Kite** on his walk back home afterwards. Another Bird Walkabout was held on 8th May with a class from St Margaret's School.

I tend to concentrate too much on the butterflies when I make my weekly visits, but it is safe to say that of the migrants that **Whitethroat** and **Blackcap** remained to breed in small numbers, and at least one pair of **Meadow Pipits** nested out in the grasses with perhaps as many as 9-10 pairs of **Skylark**. Visitors using the Beacon Hub Café watched the progress of a pair of **Herring Gulls** nesting on nearby rooftops.

Autumn passage returning to winter in Africa was almost non-existent on my weekly butterfly counts in August with sightings of **Whitethroat** and **Swallow** just as likely to be local birds rather than migrants. Genuine migrants were 6 **Wheatears** on 30th August and on 31st August there were 2 **Whinchats** on the west slope and 2 **Reed Warblers** along the woodland edge. Four **Yellow Wagtails** flew over, and others were noted in early September. Seven **Stonechats** were seen along the western boundary fence on 9th September.



Whinchats (SM)



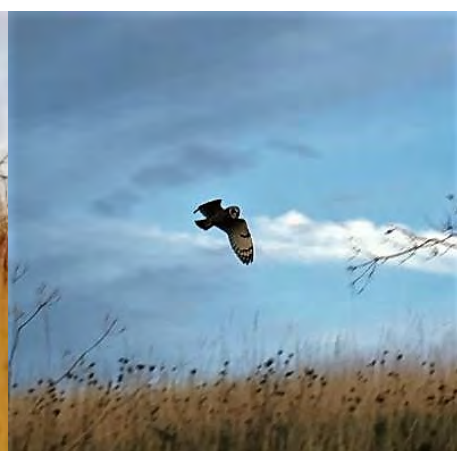
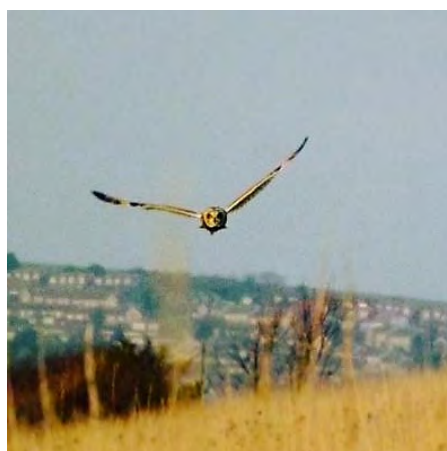
Kestrel (TS)



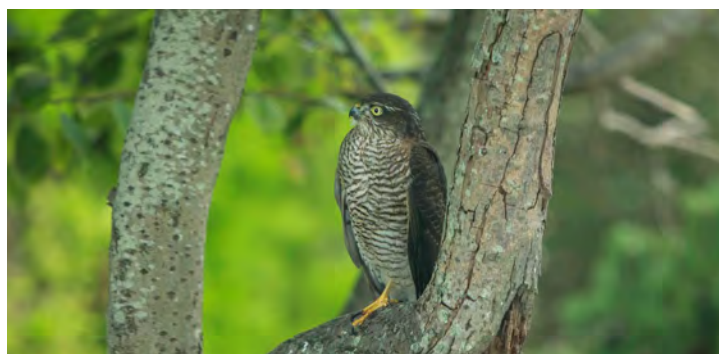
Reed Warbler (SM)

Typically at the end of September there were movements of **House Martins** and **Swallows**, and 4 **Buzzards** were noted drifting high westwards. Three **Stonechat** were also noted at this time. Other birds seen were 7 **Pied Wagtail**, 3 **Chiffchaff** and a **Wheatear**. Flocks of thrushes noted on 7 October probably included the first **Redwings** of the autumn. On 13 October a visiting birder had 6 **Chiffchaff** in the woods and a **House Martin** overhead. This time of the year often brings rarities but many birders were reporting what a poor autumn it's been in 2018

The absence of notable birds was redeemed from mid October and into November when there were numerous sightings, first of **Barn Owl**, then later a **Short-eared Owl**. Many locals were treated to the birds hunting, mainly over the western slope. There was no indication that both birds turned up on the same day, but for those that saw these lovely birds it was a special occasion not only for them, but for Beacon Hill Reserve. These excellent photos were taken by Teenie Connolly:



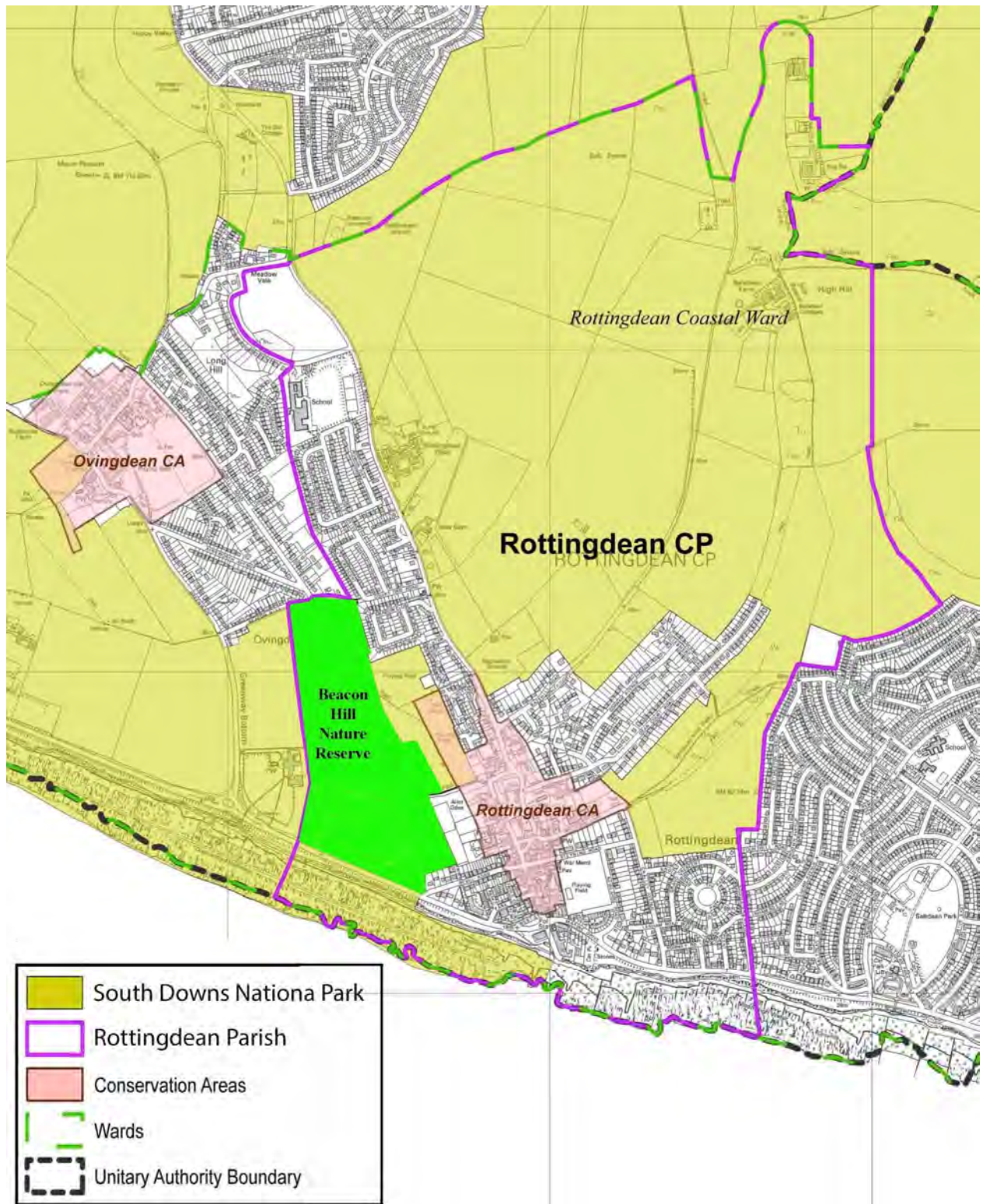
In the absence of a regular birdwatcher for the reserve I am therefore indebted to Jay Butler, Connolly family, John Cumming, Libby Darling, Steven Munday, Bob Webzell and Tim Squire for their sightings, news or photographs.



Sparrow Hawk

Frank Consodine

THE LOCATION OF BEACON HILL LNR



Beacon Hill Nature Reserve

Ovingdean

Rottingdean

KEY

- Footpath
- Bridleway

Mound

North Wood

Dew Pond

Tumuli

Warren

Beacon Memorial

Windmill

Notice

Tables

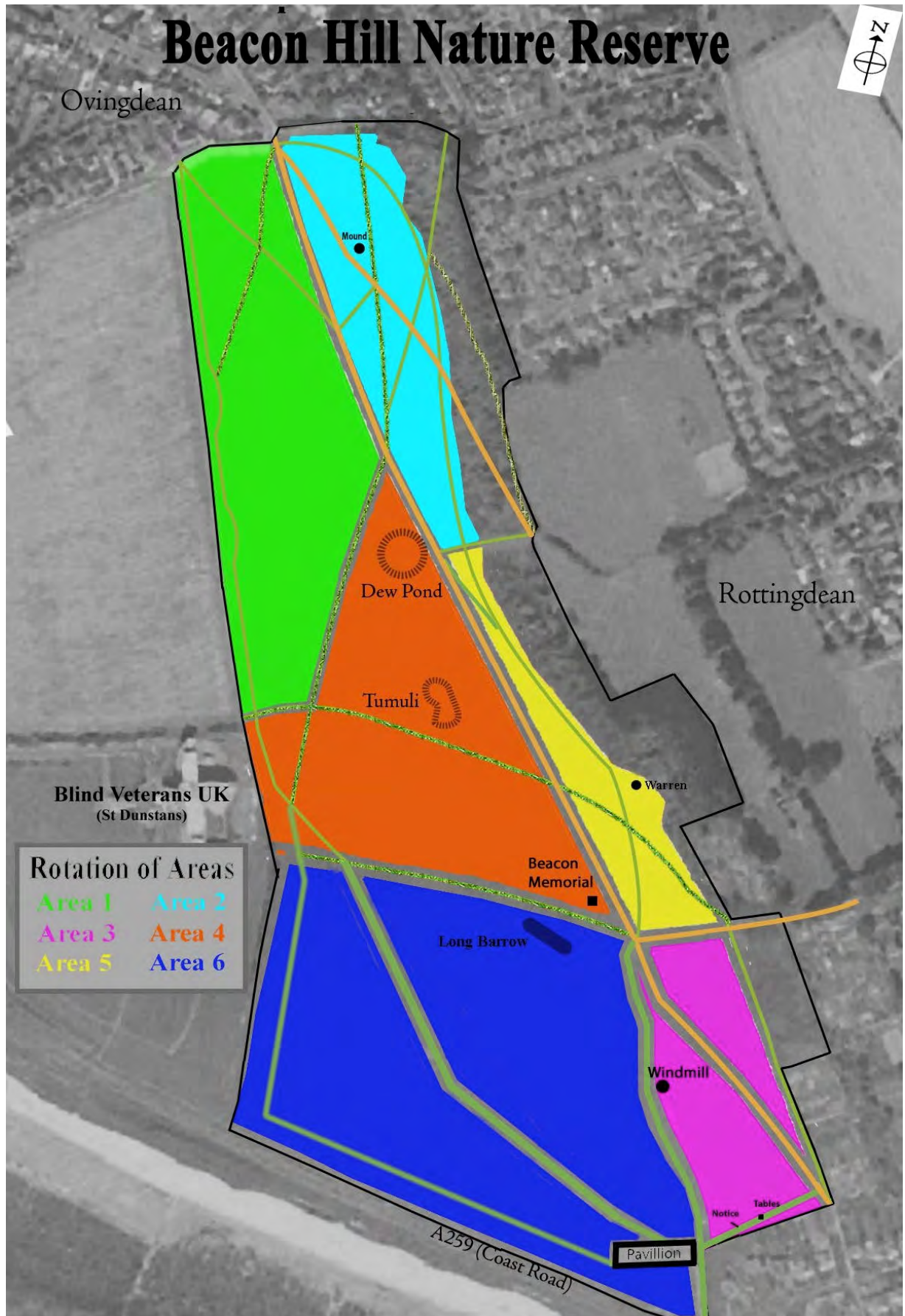
Pavillion

A259 (Coast Road)

Blind Veterans UK (St Dunstons)

South Wood

Old Rectory



BEACON HILL BUTTERFLY TRANSECT

