



ROTTINGDEAN PARISH COUNCIL

BEACON HILL NATURE RESERVE

Gateway to the South Downs National Park
TQ 364028

ANNUAL NATURE REPORT 2023/24

From the Beacon Hill NR Stewardship Group of Rottingdean Parish Council



Sea Shanties at The Windmill
by Louise Arnold

Beacon Hill NR Stewardship Group and Report Distribution

Stewardship Group Members:

Cllr Mike Nixon	Rottingdean Parish Council Chair and BHSG Chair
Cllr Bernard Turnbull	Rottingdean Parish Council and Beacon Hub Trustee
Louise Arnold	Friends of Beacon Hill Secretary
John Cumming	Founder of Beacon Hill LNR
David Larkin	Conservation Manager B&HCC & Founder
Neil Doyle	Countryside Ranger B&HCC
Peter Whitcomb	Wildlife Co-ordinator and Specialist
Dave Harris	Butterfly transects
Joanne Spickett	Specialist
Bernadette Skinner	Ovingdean Residents & Preservation Society
Colin Dellar	Rottingdean Heritage
John Funnell	Sussex Archaeological Society
Bob Webzell	Former Chair RPC and Beacon Hill Working Group
Rob Walker	City Infrastructure B&H City Council

External:

Donna Chisholm	Director of Environment B&HCC
Will Tuckley	Interim Chief Executive Officer, B&HCC
Mark Rose	South Downs National Park Authority
Ward Councillors (2)	B&HCC
Dr Niall Burnside	Biogeography/Ecology Brighton University
Helen Clark	Rottingdean in Bloom
Jay Butler	Beacon Hub Trustee
All Councillors	Rottingdean Parish Council
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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 NR. The species records of BHNR are regularly uploaded onto irecord by Peter Whitcomb, Wildlife Co-ordinator for BHNR 2

LIST OF CONTENTS

	Page
Chair's Report by Cllr Mike Nixon	4
The 2023/24 Management Report by Neil Doyle	5
Friends of Beacon Hill by Louise Arnold	6
The Windmill by Colin Dellar	8
Stewardship and Monitoring Reports	9
Plant Report by Peter Whitcomb	9
Butterfly Monitoring Report by Peter Whitcomb	11
Moths Report by Peter Whitcomb	16
Bees and Wasps Report by Dave Harris, Heather Ball and Pete Varnham	17
Beetles and Bugs Report by Peter Whitcomb	19
Hoverflies and miscellaneous by Peter Whitcomb	21
Weekly Butterfly Count	23
The Birds of Beacon Hill by Dave Harris and Philip Forsyth	25
Maps of Beacon Hill	26
Photos of Beacon Hill	28



Photo by Jay Butler

CHAIR'S REPORT
by Cllr Mike Nixon

This is my first year as Chair of the Beacon Hill Stewardship Group and as a regular user of Beacon Hill I consider we are very fortunate to have such a special habitat so close to Rottingdean and Ovingdean villages.

It is a testament to the many groups and individuals who contribute to protect and enhance this chalk grassland Nature Reserve, permitting it to flourish, whilst providing a special community space for walking, reflection and appreciation of nature.

The continued success of the Nature Reserve has depended on active collaboration between Rottingdean Parish Council, BHCC, Friends of Beacon Hill, experts on chalk grassland and those who respectfully use Beacon Hill for exercise, dog walking, passing through, or to stop and explore the rich biodiversity.

During 2023 we said farewell, and a huge thanks, to Nick Lane who has been the BHCC Ranger for many years bringing essential expertise in the management of the Nature Reserve and to Peter Whitcomb, who provided regular and very informative wildlife reports on Beacon Hill.

We welcome Neil Doyle who has replaced Nick as Ranger, and Dave Harris and Philip Forsyth who have provided this year's wildlife survey and report.

A special thanks also to Friends of Beacon Hill, coordinated by Louise Arnold, for their tireless work to maintain the character of the Hill and allow indigenous species to flourish.

In this Annual Report, through maintenance and respect for this environment, you will see evidence of the healthy development of birds, flora, butterflies and other insects. Maintenance also extends to the noticeboards used to display information about the site, some of which are showing signs of deterioration from exposure to the harsh weather. The Stewardship Group have agreed to address those in most urgent need while assessing design changes for the others to protect against the weather and extend their life.

The Rottingdean Windmill continues to be an iconic attraction having hosted numerous fascinating exhibitions over the summer weekends and was even the scene for a Bollywood Movie. Rottingdean Heritage, specifically Colin Dellar and the host of volunteers supervising the events, deserve recognition for the work they do to bring the Windmill to life.

Once again, to support the Windmill events, thanks go to the Beacon Hub and its volunteers who have opened the Skylark Café and its facilities to visitors at peak times.

This Annual Report demonstrates the continued importance of the Beacon Hill guardian's role to nurture the habitat and enrich its native biodiversity. It is also an example of successful and respectful coexistence between the community and the environment. Long may this continue.

THE MANAGEMENT REPORT
by Neil Doyle

Earlier this year the Ranger team had a reshuffle of areas, and Rottingdean and the eastern parts of the city now form the large part of my patch, thank you to my colleague Nick for his usual hard work and diligence. My time has got off to a fairly trouble-free start. We did have problems earlier in the summer when the CityParks AEBI (off road tractor/ grass cutter) was in the workshop for an extended period, as a result the grass on some of the footpaths got a little longer than usual. This has now been remedied with the purchase of a brand new AEBI machine. I am hoping to utilise this fantastic bit of kit in the coming years to help manage the scrub at Beacon Hill. The sheep and the valiant efforts of volunteers alone, cannot contain the incoming tide of brambles across the whole site. So, I hope to take out some of the larger patches of brambles with the AEBI and follow it up with sheep grazing. This doesn't mean knocking out all the scrub, which is providing valuable habitat for birds. The Friends of Beacon Hill have been maintaining a nice circular patch on the eastern edge of the reserve (I think it would be nice for FOBH to name this feature, so we don't have to always refer to it as the 'nice circular patch on the eastern edge of the reserve'!). And on the western edge a largish patch has developed down by the boundary fence, again some of this patch is worth keeping (but, like the unnamed patch on the eastern edge, should be prevented from spreading). There's a path running through this patch of scrub which we have recently widened.

This year we are grazing the reserve in three sections (previously there have been more compartments grazed for shorter periods of time, but the setting up, taking down, and moving of fences was becoming increasingly time consuming and labour intensive). CityParks have received a few (but not many) complaints about this. These complaints have all been from dog walkers who in the main object to the inconvenience of having to put their dogs on leads whilst walking near the sheep. Grazing countryside sites on the urban fringe, always seems to create this problem. We are grazing to maintain and improve a Local Nature Reserve (not because we are sheep farmers, we are not, the sheep are the tool we use to achieve our conservation aims). But the majority of people walking on the reserve are dog walkers, so we have a duty to cater for their needs where possible. One of the main reasons for grazing the reserve in sections is to provide people with an alternative route across the reserve if they prefer not to walk through the sheep enclosures. Some people like to see the sheep (you often see walkers stopping to take photos of the flock, with the magnificent landscape behind) whilst others do not. All I can say is, that the sheep will only ever graze a third of the hill at one time and that will only really be during the winter months.

In the coming months, the South Downs National Park will be returning to help us with some more scrub bashing, and I'm hoping to run an electric fence repair session in the car park of The Hub in early January. Thank you to the Friends of Beacon Hill for promoting wildlife on Beacon hill both through their Practical work and for spreading the positive messages throughout the local community. Your efforts are appreciated.

FRIENDS OF BEACONHILL

by Louise Arnold



A beautiful sunny day for a Scrub Bash

The Friends of Beacon Hill have carried gamely on again this year, always welcoming a cheery smile and wave from passing members of the public. That said, the Autumn 2022 scrub bash got off a sticky start with our first 2 outings cancelled due to rain and 2 of our workdays taken over by moving sheep fencing. This meant we actually only had 2 full sessions scrub bashing as the end November day was cancelled due to only 3 volunteers turning up (we took ourselves off for a coffee and chat instead). Our volunteers took part in 9 sheep fence days, either setting up initially, moving the sheep from sector to sector and taking down at the end. The sheep were in situ from 12th September to 5th December with a total of 95 days on the Nature Reserve and in that time grazed each of the 7 sectors.

2023 started off in the same vein with our first January outing cancelled due to rain. Not downhearted we did our sunshine dance and managed to fit in 6 scrub bash work sessions with only 1 being hijacked for sheep fence moving. The Spring graze saw us participate in a total of 4 fence movements with the sheep covering 3 sections of the Nature Reserve (Extension North and South and Windmill) and being on the Hill for only 27 days.

Spring 2023 arrived and we managed to find enough Hoary Cress to fill 3 sessions and fill numerous bags for disposal back at Ranger HQ at Stamner Park. Once we'd tackled the Hoary Cress we spread across the Nature Reserve to trim the footpaths of overhanging branches and bramble as the Council machinery was broken so the paths weren't mowed and we had a few requests from members of the public to give them better access. August saw us repairing the steps by the Recreation Ground but this proved to be hard work as the ground was solid and we were overheating somewhat.

We manned our stall at the Rottingdean Village Fair (hastily moved to the Village Hall given the horrendous weather) and spent a lovely day chatting to supporters and spreading the

conservation conversation. Guess the number of snail shells in the jar was a hit and we managed to raise some funds with this and a small raffle.

As has become the norm we spent a lovely sunny August afternoon for our final outing of the summer armed with dog poo bags (clean) and collected seeds from around the paths. These will be spread across the extension (ex golf course) once the sheep have finished their 2023 Autumn Graze in an attempt to introduce more flowers to this sector.

From September 2022-August 2023 we took part in 29 sessions covering regular workdays and sheep moves which totalled an impressive 414 work hours. We have had over 30 individuals coming along to work sessions this season but always welcome newcomers.

We will be continuing our twice monthly sessions on the 2nd Tuesday and 4th Friday of each month. Meeting at the Beacon Hub at 10:00 for a 2 hours session.

To get involved please contact us on fobeaconhill@gmail.com



On Duty at the Village Fair

The Windmill

By Colin Dellar

The summer season at the Mill has been very successful with 2152 visitors and during this time there were 2 art exhibitions which were very popular and we also had a film unit which did a half day shoot.

In addition to the art exhibitions we also had visits from local schools and the Rottingdean Beaver group. For the first time ever we had 3 visits from the 'Homeward Bound Shanty Singers' who gave some enjoyable early evening performances.

The Mill is in good condition and no major works have taken place and none are planned for the near future.



by Pauline Dellar

STEWARDSHIP AND MONITORING REPORT

The Plants of Beacon Hill 2023

by Peter Whitcomb

In April the flowering of Spring plants on the Hill includes **Lesser Celandine**, **Starflower** and **Alexanders**. **Italian Cuckoo Pint**, a scarce plant, was found again in North Wood. Then by mid- April **Cow Parsley**, **Cowslip** and **Green Alkanet** start to show.

By Mid-May things are really up and running and dozens of species were noted. **Spotted Medick**, **Hairy Sedge**, **Sea Hard-grass** and **Field Woodrush** were all new finds for the Reserve, and likely overlooked in the past. Another new plant was **Pink Garlic**, a garden escape.



Italian Cuckoo Pint
by Peter Whitcomb



Houndstongue
by Heather Ball



Pink Garlic
by Peter Whitcomb

Early Summer sees the bulk of our chalk grassland species flowering. These include nectar plants such as **Greater Knapweed**, **Bramble**, **Creeping Thistle** and **Wild Carrot**. Also present were the foodplants of butterflies including **Kidney Vetch** and **Birds-foot Trefoil**. Other new species included **Spear-leaved Orache**, **Least Soft Brome** and **Glaucous Red Fescue**.



Wild Carrot by
by Philip Forsyth



Round headed Rampion
by Pete Varnham



Strawberry Clover
by Pete Varnham

Round-headed Rampion, the Pride of Sussex, were in good numbers and a diversion to the old dewpond found the specialities **Bastard Toadflax**, **Fairy Flax**, **Squinancywort**, also **Small Scabious**. In July closer examination revealed **Tall Sea-lavender** which had earlier been assumed to be Rock Sea-lavender. **Tufted Vetch**, **Red Bartsia** and **Restharrow** were found in good numbers, and patches of **Strawberry Clover** were found.

By early August most of Beacon Hill's plants will have been found, including **Marjoram** which is good for nectar, and **Wild Parsnip**, loved by small insects and hoverflies. **Crosswort** was another new find.

Of dubious interest are the number of garden escapes which this year included Cornflower, Garden Asparagus, Wallflower, White Spanish Bluebell, Shasta Daisy and Pot Marigold. Of the 103 plants and grasses listed as being typical of Chalk Grassland 2A category, we now have 75 of these recorded here at Beacon Hill.



CommonToadflax
by Jay Butler



Round Headed Rampion
by Jay Butler

STEWARDSHIP AND MONITORING REPORT

The Butterfly Monitoring Report for 2023

by Peter Whitcomb

Taking over from Peter Whitcomb were Dave Harris and Philip Forsyth. Between them they managed to cover walks for every one of the 26 weeks from April through to September. This meant that the coverage and numbers of butterflies counted was considerably higher than in the past when there was no cover for when Peter was away on holidays, often at peak times of the year.

The year started slowly, as is normal, with large butterflies featuring such as **Brimstone**, **Small Tortoiseshell** and **Peacock**. There was a surprise on 30 April when a **Green Hairstreak** was spotted – a first record for Beacon Hill. More species started to show from mid-May with **Common Blue** and **Small Heath** in good numbers.

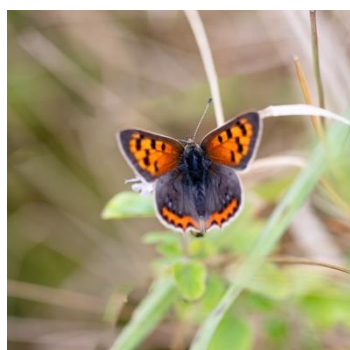


Gatekeeper by Heather Ball



Painted Lady by Pete Varnham

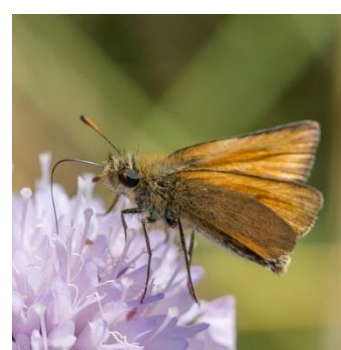
June and July are the peak flight periods here and there were some particularly healthy numbers of **Small Skipper**, **Meadow Brown**, **Marbled White** and **Gatekeeper**. Peak counts were exceptional as follows: Small Skipper 113, Meadow Brown 189, Marbled White 78 and Gatekeeper 154. For the first time Dave's expertise and careful i.d. skills enabled **Essex Skippers** to be more accurately counted whereas in the past they had been lumped with Small Skipper. There are minute differences in the antennae and male scent marks.



Small Copper
by Philip Forsyth



Small Heath
by Heather Ball



Essex Skipper
by Pete Varnham

Of the more interesting species it was excellent to record sightings of **Dingy Skipper**, **Small Blue** and **Chalk Hill Blue** which have always been scarce in the past. **Brown Argus** and

Holly Blue numbers had a great year and beat all previous day counts. There was much publicity given to the influx of **Red Admirals** and much higher numbers were recorded here from July through to end of September. The only **Clouded Yellow** of the year was seen on the very last transect walk.

The 10 July proved to be the best day's count ever here at Beacon Hill with a total of 477, surpassing the 390 recorded in 2013.

Here are the details of the butterflies counted on our transect walks in 2023, with the average number over the last eight years in brackets. The italic shows the normal flight periods:

SMALL SKIPPER 300 (93) *Mid June/July*

A well above average tally and the best total ever. The peaks were 113 (record high count) on 10 July and 106 on 20 July. The two species were previously linked together as they are almost inseparable in the field.

ESSEX SKIPPER 50 (see above) *Mid June/July*

This count was possible using a method of examining a small number and taking a percentage overall, as of course it is not possible to stop and examine every one that is encountered.

LARGE SKIPPER 8 (4) *June/July*

An excellent year of a species which has never been seen here in large numbers.

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

Very pleased with just one as the last sighting was in Spring 2013.

GRIZZLED SKIPPER 3 (1) *May/June*

All three noted in mid-June.

CLOUDED YELLOW 1 (2) *Aug/Sep*

Just the one on 23 Sept.

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

One in each flight period.

LARGE WHITE 76 (37) *End May/Jun, Aug/Sep*

A better than average year the highest count being 25 on 7 July.

SMALL WHITE 124 (111) *May/Jul, Aug/Sep*

Numbers fluctuate from year to year and a decent total after last year's poor results. The peaks were 15 on 10 July, 18 on 2 Sept and 15 on 16 Sept.

GREEN-VEINED WHITE 14 (4) *May/Jun, Aug-early Sep*

Usually not easy to identify from Small White, but the total goes to show they are present in larger numbers than previously thought.

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

Just the one on 30 April. Like Brimstone it prefers woodland glades rather than edges and therefore tends to miss the regular transect route.

GREEN HAIRSTREAK 1 (0) *End Apr-June*

A new record for the Reserve on 30 April.

SMALL COPPER 15 (3) *May, Aug-end Sep*

As is usual at Beacon Hill, the only sightings were in the second flight period.

BROWN ARGUS 32 (5) *May/Jun, Aug/Sep*

A good close-up view or a photograph is often necessary to clinch the identification, as brief in-flight views are very similar to female Common Blues. However, this year was exceptional with peak 15 on 7 Aug which was the highest count ever here.

COMMON BLUE 175 (135) *Mid May-end Jun, Aug/Sep*

This is another species which fluctuates considerably from one year to the next but this was the best total since 2020. The peaks were 20 on 7 June, 28 on 7 Aug and 38 on 15 Aug. While all blue males are easy to spot there was a good sprinkling of females noted during the second flight periods.

CHALK HILL BLUE 1(1) *Mid Jul-end Aug*

Just the one on 20 Aug and another seen off the transect route. The caterpillar's foodplant is Horseshoe Vetch and although adding plug plants has previously been suggested, nothing was actioned. This attractive butterfly is a South Downs speciality and it deserves to be a regular sight here at Beacon Hill.

ADONIS BLUE 0 (1) *End May-mid Jun, end Aug-Sep*

This is the blueist of all blue species and has not been found since 2018 here as its larval foodplant Horse-shoe Vetch is quite scarce on the Hill. Same sentiments as above.

HOLLY BLUE 26 (9) *Apr/May, Aug-mid Sep*

Above average numbers, most seen along the woodland edges. Nine on 7 June was a record count.

RED ADMIRAL 94 (20) *Jun-Oct*

After last year's dismal 5 total, this came as a bit of a shock. In fact there was a bit of a well publicised influx and the species was being seen just about everywhere in the country from July through to the end of Sept. The peaks were 10 on 1 Aug, 18 on 12 Sept (record count) and 14 on 23 Sept.

PAINTED LADY 7 (6) *Jun, Aug/Sep*

An average year by the Reserve's standards with 5 on 10 July the peak count.

SMALL TORTOISESHELL 18 (8) *Mar/Apr, Jul-end Sep*

We have been reporting an extraordinary demise of this attractive species since 2017, but a much better year with 7 on 16 Apr peaking the high count. We have to go back to 2015 with 19 and 2014 with 30 to get decent counts. No caterpillars were seen on nearby nettles.

PEACOCK 23 (7) *Mar/Apr, Aug/Sep*

The best year since 12 in 2019 with 5 seen in the first flight period, and 18 in the second, the peak 5 on 25 July.

COMMA 8 (3) *Apr-early May, Jul-Oct*

Above average and mostly seen as singles on visits.

DARK GREEN FRITILLARY 3 (5) *Jul/Aug*

Below average for this beautiful chalk grassland speciality all being seen on 10 July.

SPECKLED WOOD 15 (5) *Apr-Oct*

A rather poor year with all sightings along the woodland edges.

WALL BROWN 14 (6) *May/Jun, Aug-mid Sep*

Another decent year with sightings from end July until mid September.

MARbled WHITE 242 (166) *End Jun-mid Aug*

This summer speciality is always a pleasure to see on the hill. This total is second only to the 307 recorded in 2011. The peak count was 78 on 10 June. Their flight period generally extends into August but the last here were 3 on 25 July.

GATEKEEPER 495 (204) *Jul/Aug*

The counts were well above average and easily is the highest year count ever. The peak counts were 92 on 20 July, 154 on 25 July (record high count) and 94 on 1 Aug.

MEADOW BROWN 957 (455) *Mid Jun-early Sep*

Still by far the most numerous butterfly on the Reserve and well above average. Peaks were 169 on 7 July and 122 on 10 July. Recorded right through to the end of Sept.

SMALL HEATH 353 (270) *May/Jun, Aug/Sep*

Above average numbers and noted every single walk from 20 May to 23 September. The highest early year counts were 58 on 23 June and 62 the following week. The second flight period which can often bring high counts in sunshine did not happen this year, with the best of 43 on 2 Sept. This species has a distinctive habit of keeping its wings closed when alighting, so it is nigh on impossible to see a photograph with open wings.

RINGLET 3 (3) *End Jun/July*

Three on 10 July were the only sightings this year.

Footnote The transect walks were officially over but decent weather conditions enabled Dave Harris to make an additional visit on 9 October. A significant day with two **Long tailed Blues** heading north at head height – another new species of butterfly for the Reserve; also noted were an exceptional 29 **Red Admirals** including 10 migrating south.



Green veined White on Greater Knapweed
by Pete Varnham

Dave Harris' longer walks around the butterfly transect have enabled him to expand his entomologic interests and add to the bio-diversity of Beacon Hill. With the aid of two photographers, Heather Ball and Pete Varnham, the insect species for Beacon Hill have been considerably lengthened. Nationally scarce species such as Striped Summer Chafer, Scarab Shield Bug, Red Bartsia Bee, Purple shaded Piercer and others were found and many other bees, wasps, flies and beetles were recorded which makes it sensible to create new sections to this Annual Report. This change of emphasis means that we propose that updated Species Lists will be incorporated into the Annual Report and new species for the reserve will be marked with an asterisk.

STEWARDSHIP AND MONITORING REPORT

Moths at Beacon Hill 2023

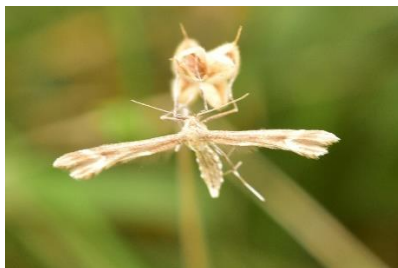
by Dave Harris, Philip Forsyth & Peter Whitcomb

One of the first Transects of the year in April produced sightings of Emperor Moth, a species that Peter had not come across in his twelve years of walking the Hill! In the first couple of months Brown tailed Moth, Rush Veneer, Green Longhorn and Silver Y were noted. Yellow Shell, Cinnabar, Mother Shipton, Common Carpet were among the more common moths found in June, and Meadow Neb and Cocksfoot were new species.

July saw some rarities, including Yarrow Conch and Restharrow Plume, and on 1 Aug a National rarity – the Purple Shaded Piercer Moth, also in Aug a Knapweed Conch. All these new to the Reserve. Some of the regulars seemed to be in short supply with very few Six-spotted Burnet moths but Shaded Broad Bar, Mother of Pearl and Hummingbird Hawkmoth were all good finds.



Emperor Moth
by Heather Ball



Restharrow Plume
by Heather Ball



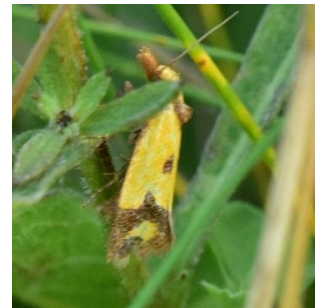
Purple shaded Piercer
by Pete Varnham



Green Longhorn
by Philip Forsyth



Six spotted Burnets
by Heather Ball



Knapweed Conch
by Heather Ball

Reports of these moths, together with photographs, are archived and verified through the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre. Same goes with many other insect sightings. Every butterfly count is automatically added to iRecord and passed to the SBRS at the end of the season. Significant bird sightings which do not need a photograph are reported to BTO BirdTrack.

STEWARDSHIP AND MONITORING REPORT

Bees and Wasps at Beacon Hill 2023
by Dave Harris, Heather Ball and Pete Varnham

As explained earlier, the emphasis on the monitoring at Beacon Hill is changing and some of the Hill's mini beasts are getting discovered, with the help of two excellent photographers who made a number of visits throughout the year.

In April a number of bees were spotted, including **Hairy-footed Flower Bee**, **Chocolate Mining Bee**, **Tawny Mining Bee**, **Grey-patched Mining Bee**, **Gooden's Nomad Bee**, **Common Mini Miner** and some of the more common bumblebees. A **German Wasp** was also noted. In June two new species for the reserve included **Small Garden Bumblebee** and **Patchwork Leafcutter Bee**.

Three rarities were identified in July – a **Bee Wolf**, **Brown-banded Carder Bee** and **Red-shanked Carder Bee**. There were some significant finds on 1 August including the Nationally scarce **Red Bartsia Bee** and a **Sharp collared Furrow Bee**. Those below all photographed by Pete Varnham on this day:



Green Furrow Bee



Mournful Wasp

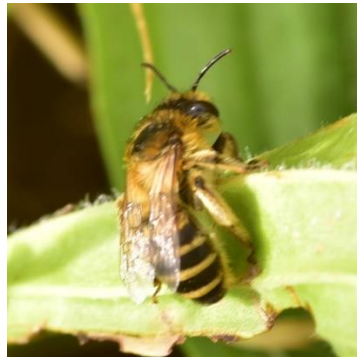


Sharp collared Furrow Bee

Some of the above were seen again on subsequent walks. One or two **Ichneumon Wasps** were spotted, one was the scarce *Amblyjoppa fuscipennis*, but these are very difficult to pin down to a species and usually require specialist examination. **Ivy Bees** were swarming in September. It has to be said that many of these would not have been identified without these superb photographs, those below by Heather Ball.



Bee Wolf



Hairy saddled Colletes



Sandpit Mining Bee

STEWARDSHIP AND MONITORING REPORT

Bees and Wasps recorded at Beacon Hill

Bee Wolf *
Brown banded Carder Bee *
Buff tailed Bumble Bee
Chocolate Mining Bee *
Common Carder Bee
Common Mini Miner *
Common Wasp
Early Bumble Bee
Early Mining Bee *
Four banded Hopper Wasp *
German Wasp
Gooden's Nomad Bee *
Green Furrow Bee *
Grey patched Mining Bee *
Hairy footed Flower Bee *
Hairy saddled Colletes *
Honey Bee
Ichneumon Wasp *Amblyteles armatorius*
Ichneumon Wasp *Amblyjoppa fuscipennis* *

Ivy Bee
Marsham's Nomad Bee
Median Wasp *
Mournful Wasp *
Patchwork Leafcutter *
Red Bartsia Bee *
Red shanked Carder Bee *
Red tailed Bumble Bee
Sandpit Mining Bee *
Sharp collared Furrow Bee *
Small Garden Bumble Bee *
Southern Cuckoo Bee
Tawny Mining Bee
White tailed Bumble Bee
Yellow legged Mining Bee *

34 species as at September 2023

Asterisked new finds for 2023

STEWARDSHIP AND MONITORING REPORT

Beetles and Bugs at Beacon Hill 2023

The early flowering of Dandelions attracted many **Common Pollen Beetles** in April. Also noted were **Dock Bug**, **Cabbage Stem Beetle** and several **Ladybirds**. In May the Nationally Scarce **Scarab Shieldbug** was found. Cow Parsley was attracting large numbers of **Celery-leaf Beetles**, while in early June two species of **Flower Beetle** were spotted.

The rare **Omalopia ruricola** beetle and **Striped Summer Chafer** also in June, and a nymph of the rare **Aphanus rolandri** was found. The distinctive **Common Nettle Bug** was seen in August along with numerous **Soldier Beetles**. In September finds of **Oedemera lurida** and **Halle Leaf Beetle** were both new to the Reserve. These photos all by Heather Ball:



Common Nettle Bug



Green Nettle Weevil



Mallow Fea Beetle

Beetles and Bugs recorded at Beacon Hill

Alder Leaf Beetle *	Orange Ladybird
Aphanus rolandri *	Orchid Beetle
Badister bipustulatus *	Potato Capsid
Black Clock beetle	Red headed Cardinal
Black tipped Soldier Beetle	Red legged Shieldbug
Buckshorn Plantain Groundbug *	Rhopalid Bug Corizus hyoscyami
Burying Beetle	Rose Chafer
Cabbage Stem Beetle *	Sage Leafhopper
Celery leaf Beetle	Scarab Shieldbug *
Crucifer Shieldbug	Seven spot Ladybird
Click Beetle Agrypnus murinus	Shiny Green beetle *
Common Nettle Bug *	Soft winged Flower beetle *
Common Pollen Beetle *	Striped Summer Chafer *
Common Sun beetle *	Summer Chafer
Devil's Coach-horse	Thick legged Flower Beetle
Dock Bug	Tortoise Shieldbug
Earwig	Twentytwo Spot Ladybird *
Flea Beetle Chrysomelidae	Two spot Ladybird
Fire streaked Bugkin	Yarrow Mirid *
Froghopper	
Grass Stilt Bug *	
Green Capsid Bug	
Green Nettle Weevil *	
Green Shieldbug	
Ground Beetle	
Halle Leaf beetle *	
Harlequin Ladybird	
Mallow Flea Beetle*	
Nettle Leafhopper *	
Omalopia ruricola *	
Orange Ladybird	

Asterisks * denote new finds for 2023

STEWARDSHIP AND MONITORING REPORT

Hoverflies and Miscellaneous

by Peter Whitcomb

In the first couple of months there were many hoverflies attracted to the patches of Alexanders. St Marks Fly, Green Lacewing, Craneflies, Spiders and Snails were all duly noted. June saw the arrival of a few Dragonflies and Roesel's Bush Crickets were quite numerous this year. A European Fire Ant was spotted in August and in September Grey Squirrels and Lizards were seen, while a Brown Rat was a bit of a surprise. Common Shrew was noted in October. Photographs by Heather Ball except where marked.



Spotted Cranefly



Syrirta pipens
by Pete Varnham



Azure Damselfly, female



European Fire



Sphaerophoria script



Short palped Crane



Candy striped Spider

STEWARDSHIP AND MONITORING REPORT

Hoverflies recorded at Beacon Hill

Chrysotoxum bicinctum
Dasysyrphus tricinctus
Episyrphus balteatus
Epistrophe eligans *
Eristalis pertinax *
Eristalis tenax
Eupeodes luniger
Helophilus pendulus *
Melanostoma scalare
Merodon equestris *
Myathropa flava
Parasyrphus punctulatus *
Scaeva pyrastris
Sphaerophoria scripta
Syrphus ribesii *
Syrpita pipens *
Volucella bombylans *
Volucella inanis
Volucella pellucens *
Volucella zonaria

Miscellaneous Flies recorded at Beacon Hill

Banded Burdock Fly *
Bramble Sawfly
Common Bluebottle *
Common Greenbottle
Common Green Lacewing
Crane fly Tipula paludosa *
Crane fly Tipula vernalis
Dance Fly Empis tessellata *
Dark edged Bee-fly
Dotted Bee-fly
Dull four-spined Legionnaire *
Eriothrix rufomaculatus
Flesh Fly
Grass Fly Meromyza *
Kite-tailed Robber Fly
Noon Fly *
Notch horned Cleg *
St Mark's Fly
Short palped Crane fly *
Spotted Crane fly *
Spotted Crane fly *
Turnip Saw-fly
Yellow Dung Fly

WEEKLY BUTTERFLY COUNTS 2023 – WEEKS 1-23

Week	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Date	3.4	13.4	16.4	28.4	30.4	7.5	13.5	20.5	2.6	7.6	15.6	23.6	24.6	7.7	10.7	20.7	25.7	1.8	7.8	18.8	20.8	30.8	2.9
Small Skipper												7	18	54	113	106	2						
Essex Skipper														5	30	8	5	2					
Large Skipper								3			2		2		1								
Dingy Skipper								1															
Grizzled Skipper										2	1												
Clouded Yellow																							
Brimstone	1																						1
Large White					1		4	4	5					25	4	7	5	3	1		1	3	4
Small White										5	1				15	11	6	8	3	11	12	14	18
Green veined White							1								5	1		3	1				2
Orange Tip					1																		
Green Hairstreak					1																		
Small Copper															2			1		1		1	2
Small Blue														2		3	1						
Brown Argus										1	2						3	5	15		5		1
Common Blue							4	9	20	15	12	7			1		6	4	28	38		11	16
Chalk Hill Blue																					1		
Adonis Blue																							
Holly Blue							3	1		9	5								2			1	5
Red Admiral						2	1			3	1		1	1	6	3	6	10	5	2	1	4	8
Painted Lady															5		1						
Small Tortoiseshell		1	7	1				1	1		1			2		2			1				1
Peacock			2		2		1								2	1	5	1	2				2
Comma			1								1			1	1				1	2	1		
Dark Green Fritillary															3								
Speckled Wood							1			1							1	2	2		4		1
Wall Brown							1	2									1	3	3				
Marbled White												7	29	72	78	53	3						
Gatekeeper													1		73	92	154	94	46	26	8		1
Meadow Brown										1	23	87	75	169	122	102	74	64	62	54	69	24	31
Small Heath								1	10	23	47	58	62	51	13	11	1	2	4	28	39	30	43
Ringlet															3								
WEEKLY TOTALS	1	1	10	1	5	2	12	17	25	65	99	171	195	382	477	400	274	212	176	162	141	88	136

WEEKLY BUTTERFLY COUNTS 2023 – WEEKS 24-26 AND ANNUAL TOTAL

Week	24	25	26	TOTAL							
Date	12.9	16.9	23.9	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016
Small Skipper				300	88	67	59	53	57	58	64
Essex Skipper				50							
Large Skipper				8	1	3	6	3	1	6	7
Dingy Skipper				1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grizzled Skipper				3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Clouded Yellow			1	1	4	1	1	0	1	2	0
Brimstone				2	0	0	0	7	2	0	0
Large White	4	4	1	76	21	18	40	19	81	10	31
Small White	2	15	3	124	45	223	61	139	94	80	123
Green veined White		1		14	1	1	1	3	5	1	7
Orange Tip				1	0	2	0	2	4	0	0
Green Hairstreak				1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Small Copper	3	3	2	15	1	3	3	2	1	4	1
Small Blue				6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Brown Argus				32	0	1	2	1	3	0	2
Common Blue		4		175	111	105	201	53	198	189	51
Chalk Hill Blue				1	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
Adonis Blue					0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Holly Blue				26	5	1	1	4	16	7	15
Red Admiral	18	8	14	94	5	10	7	13	3	11	16
Painted Lady			1	7	4	8	0	27	0	0	0
Small Tortoiseshell				18	3	2	1	0	1	8	6
Peacock	2		1	23	4	9	2	12	1	6	3
Comma				8	3	3	1	1	6	2	1
Dark Green Fritillary				3	3	7	7	6	7	6	0
Speckled Wood			3	15	4	2	0	4	9	6	5
Wall Brown		2		14	10	3	19	11	1	0	0
Marbled White				242	162	193	178	169	126	111	150
Gatekeeper				495	157	233	239	222	125	81	80
Meadow Brown	2	6	1	957	298	363	402	370	349	444	454
Small Heath	5	22	3	353	238	144	321	249	477	314	62
Ringlet				3	0	2	0	11	0	0	0
WEEKLY TOTALS	36	65	30	3057	1171	1406	1493	1382	1571	1346	1078

STEWARDSHIP AND MONITORING REPORT

The Birds of Beacon Hill 2023
by Dave Harris and Philip Forsyth
Photographs by Peter Whitcomb unless marked

Our visits started in early April and **Rooks** were already nesting and **Skylarks** were in full voice. Most of the common resident species were noted. **Chiffchaff** and **Blackcap** were seen, probably early migrants coming in rather than wintering birds. A pair of **Buzzards** noted.

On 30 April a reeling **Grasshopper Warbler** in a hawthorn was a good local record. **Common Whitethroats** were back on territory and a few **Swallows** were hawking over the grasses.

Unusually a **Sedge Warbler** was singing on 13 May, and presumably the same bird a fortnight later.



Chiffchaff



Whitethroat



Kestrel by Heather Ball

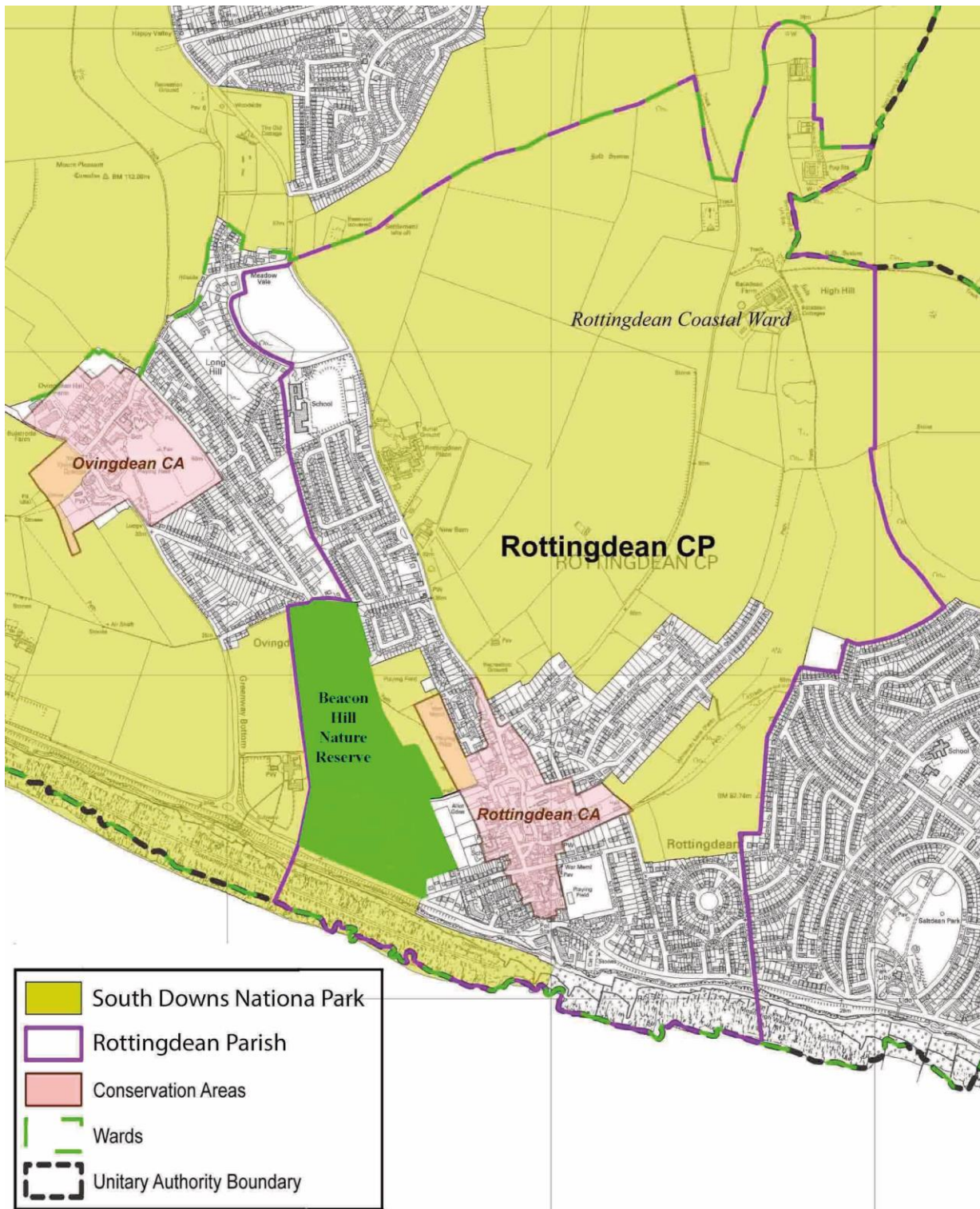
In June the young of **Swallows**, **Rooks** and **Blackcap** noted, and later in the month the young of **Jay** and **Goldfinch** proved local nesting. A juvenile **Buzzard** was heard calling from the woods. Local **Swallows** were regularly seen in September and on 16th there were large flocks of **House Martins** heading south.

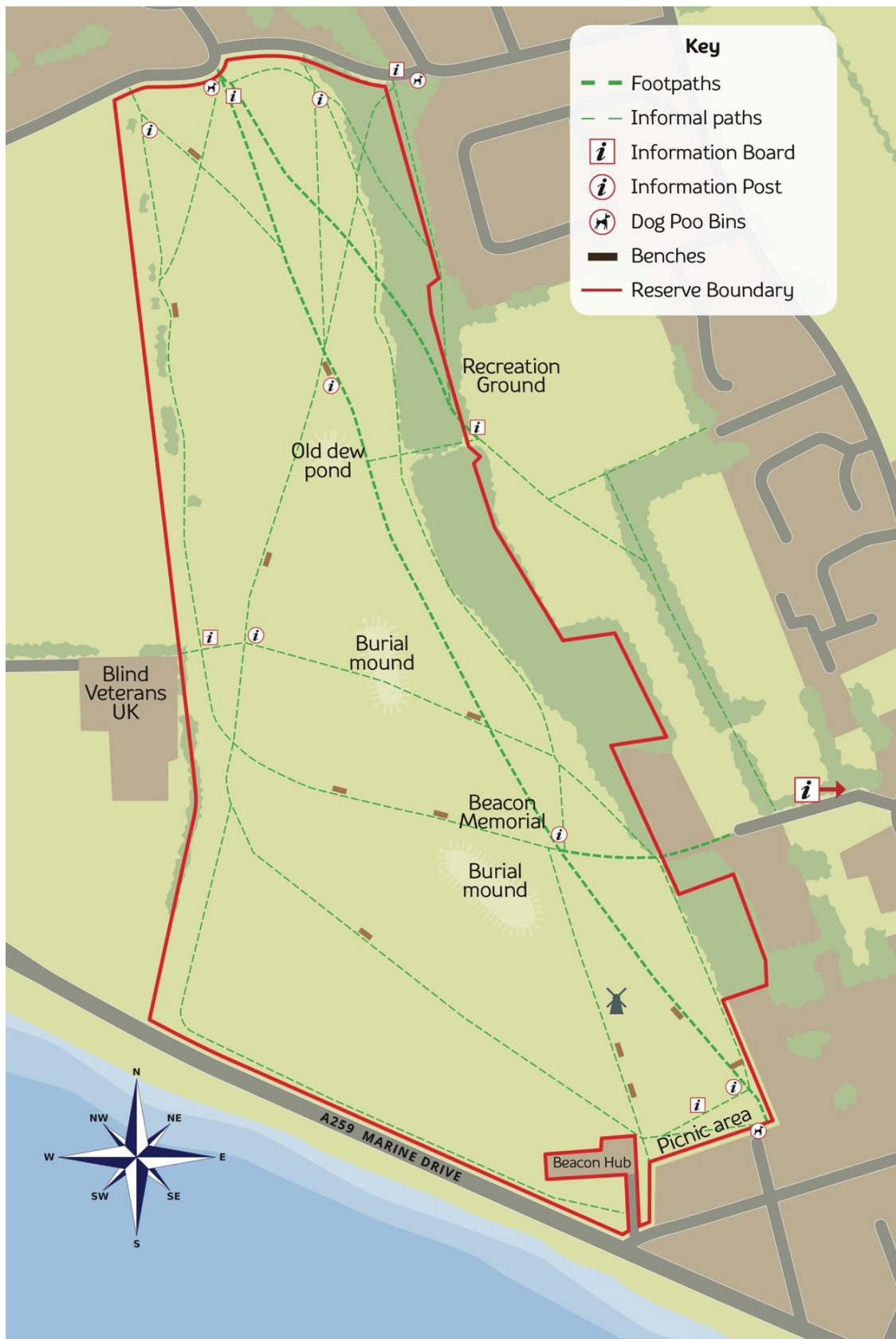
Please note this summary is based on the butterfly walks mainly in the middle of the day, not always ideal for spotting birds. It is disappointing to report that there have been no sightings communicated from locals walking the Hill or from visiting birders this year – hence the lack of numbers.



Skylark

MAPS OF BEACON HILL





IMAGES OF BEACON HILL

Images provided by Jay Butler, Louise Arnold, Clive Ward

