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President's Address

This being my first year as President, I am discovering how difficult it is to write an introduction for the February Bulletin when we are still in early January and there will be a Council meeting before this appears. In addition, the Bulletin is one of the most widely read and enjoyed publications produced by the Society – so no pressure! One important development in 2017 was the first email distribution of news items and events, (thank you Colin). Please let us have your email address (iwnhas@btconnect.com) if you wish to receive this mailing and did not get the 'first edition'. Similarly, we can cross you off the list (nicer than being deleted), if it is not for you.

I hope you were able to attend the Recorder's Conference on 3 February. There was lots to look at and short talks by invited speakers covering wide and varied interests. Tea and cakes have become a special feature at this meeting. The AGM on 24 March also will be an opportunity to look back, as well as look forward. A particular issue that has been raised with me is that our Society's focus on recording has sometimes been at the expense of considering the changes in habitats and landscapes that have happened and are ongoing. I think this a valid point and should influence our programme – but what do you think?

This Spring Issue of the Bulletin brings the Society ever closer to our November 2019 Centenary. I am very grateful to Roger Herbert who has kindly agreed to coordinate our Scientific Conference for 2020. Some discussion has taken place over practical details and two geological papers are promised, but there is wide scope for suggestions and innovation. The Conference will be an agenda item for the AGM.

Paul Bingham

Some Old Chestnuts

'An old chestnut' is a term referring to a story that has been discussed or repeated so often that it is no longer funny, although the connection with the chestnut tree or its fruit is somewhat tenuous. Nevertheless, perhaps one story regarding the Sweet Chestnut which has been repeated endlessly is that it was introduced by the Romans. Evidence for this and the cultivation of the tree in this country is however scant. Rackham (2003) says that there is no certain evidence for Sweet Chestnut in Britain before the Roman period but wood and charcoal have been found on six Roman sites in southern England and Essex. Records of nuts have to be discounted because they could have been imported. Rackham says that, despite suggestions to the contrary, there is no conclusive evidence of chestnut timbers being used in medieval buildings.

I first came across Rob Jarman some years ago when he worked for the National Trust as adviser on nature conservation and latterly, as sustainability director. More recently he contacted me, and also Hugh Milner, formerly of the Forestry Commission, for information on the existence of any old Sweet Chestnuts on the Island. Rob has been completing a Ph D thesis at University of Gloucestershire researching Sweet Chestnut in Britain. He has been seeking genetic, palaeo-environmental and historical evidence for the chronology and provenance of Sweet Chestnut introduction to the region and testing the theory that it was first introduced by the Romans.

Sweet chestnut, *Castanea sativa*, has been an important food resource for people in upland and marginal lands in continental Europe. In Europe, it has long been regarded as an 'archaeophyte' (or ancient introduction) outside of its presumed native range in the Caucasus, where it survived the last Ice Age. The Greeks and Romans are credited with introducing chestnuts across the Mediterranean and the Atlantic fringe from Iberia to Britain but Sweet Chestnut is now thought to have had other Ice Age refugia in Northern Spain, North Italy, Greece, Bulgaria and Turkey.

In his researches, Rob discovered that currently the Isle of Wight is one of very few places in Britain where there is 'as near definite as it's possible' proof of Sweet Chestnut growing (not imported) during or very soon after the Roman period. The evidence comes from some branch-wood recovered from a weir structure in Alverstone Marsh, which was radiocarbon dated to 5th century AD. Following on from this, Rob considered that it would not be impossible to have early medieval sites for Sweet Chestnut on the Island, most likely be evident as coppice rather than veteran trees.

Unfortunately, neither Hugh nor myself could come up with many sites for potentially old Sweet Chestnut. The Victorian botanist, William Bromfield (1856), refers to Lorden Copse at Shorwell as containing several trees of 'considerable girth and evidently of great age' but it is believed that no long-established coppice stools survive here. However, there is a well-known ancient Sweet Chestnut in the garden of Sydney Lodge at Shide, Newport and I remembered Bill Shepard telling me about a group of old trees 'formerly planted alongside a village blacksmith's shop at the site of The Old Forge' at Garretts Farm on St George's Down. During the summer, Rob Jarman came down to Island to inspect these trees.

1. Garretts Farm, St George's Lane, Newport

Rob spoke with the elderly lady who lives in the farmhouse. She told him that the chestnut trees there give good nuts and she and her parents have routinely collected them for eating for many years. She told him that Garrett's Farm and land are owned by the quarry company and the land is leased for grazing; she rents the farmhouse.

Rob surveyed all four chestnut trees (3 alive, 1 dead). They are located on a terrace, with the trees growing on the bank above the terrace and with a second terrace above that bank. Further along the terrace to the south-west is an ancient ash tree and oak tree.

The largest of the four chestnut trees is the one split apart - the standing part is 5.2 metres girth at 1.5m, but with the addition of the split section the original girth would have been between 7 and 7.5m. The other two living trees are 4.5m and 5.3m at 1.5m. One of the trees shows clear signs of previous pollarding.

Rob considers that the trees are historically significant, possibly dating back to the 17th century and it would be most useful to ascertain any pre-18th century history for this site, to see why the chestnut trees are in this location.

2. Shide, 2 Chestnut Close

The owners of this tree have been pestered by people wanting to see it over the years and they do not welcome visitors. However Rob, as a serious arboriculturalist, was permitted to examine the tree. He recorded a 10m girth at 1.5m with adjustment of the tape under major protrusions; and with 12.5m basal trunk girth. Rob considers that the tree does not appear visually to have been historically pollarded, with no really obvious bolling and there are an unusual number of large main stems forming the upper canopy. In relative girth terms, this tree ranks amongst the top 20 sweet chestnut trees in Britain, based on its 1.5m height girth. Ascribing age to girth is a dangerous exercise, especially when growing conditions might be atypically favourable in this garden, but he considers that a 10m girth could well indicate over 400 years of age.

In summary, Rob considers that the Garretts Farm chestnuts are very interesting and deserve proper protection and preservation, following some more research into their historical context. The Shide Chestnut tree is of national significance in terms of its size and therefore probably its antiquity and deserves a more detailed historical study to determine its origins.

Vicky Basford has commented that notes by Clifford Webster (former County Archivist) reveal that Garretts Farm was in existence by 1559-60, the date of the Royal Survey of the Isle of Wight. She considers that the land around Garretts is quite poor quality and was probably a late medieval enclosure from waste or rough grazing land.

Rob is hoping to be able to analyse DNA material from these two sites to add to the Sweet Chestnut trees already analysed from Borthwood Copse and America Woods in order to strengthen the picture of the type and possible origins of the Isle of Wight Sweet Chestnut population.

Footnote: The trees at Garretts Farm can easily be viewed from the footpath SA24 which crosses St George's Down. The tree at Shide can be viewed from Shide Road but it is on private land and closer access to the tree is not possible.

REFERENCES

Bromfield, W.A. (1856) *Flora Vectensis* London. William Pamplin

Rackham, O. (2003) *Ancient Woodland – its history, vegetation and uses in England*.
New Edition. Dalbeattie. Castlepoint Press

Colin Pope

British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) News

Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)

The 2017 Breeding Bird Survey had a record number of fifteen 1-km squares covered, 25% higher than 2016, many thanks to all of you who took part and especially to our new counters.

For the first time on the Island, we are getting a better mix of habitat coverage for this survey which will ultimately produce a strong dataset for monitoring species population. We now have urban, rural, coastal, downland and farmland coverage along with partial woodland coverage. Hopefully we can continue to increase the coverage on the Island and there are still a number of 1-km sites available for anyone interested in taking part in 2018 (please see details below).

Looking at the 2017 results, 72 species were recorded and I have compiled a list of the top 20 or so species which makes for some interesting reading and illustrates the effect of the mixed habitat on this year's data.

Nationally, in 2016 the most reported species were Wood pigeon, Blackbird, Rook and Wren so no surprise to find that our equal top was also Wood pigeon and Blackbird. In comparison to the 2016 Island data, Song Thrush and House Sparrow are now in the "Top 20" table at the expense of Magpie and Whitethroat. Chiffchaff abundance is slightly distorted by migrant birds still moving through when the first survey is undertaken while Yellowhammer's presence is no doubt due to the number of farmland and downland squares covered. Species such as Starling, Collared Dove, Magpie, Whitethroat and Moorhen would be expected to feature in a top 20 with a more equal habitat split.

Position (2016 in brackets)	Species	% Present in 1-km squares
=1(=1)	Wood pigeon	100
=1(=1)	Blackbird	100
=3(=9)	Jackdaw	93
=3(=1)	Carrion Crow	93
=5(=9)	Blue Tit	87
=5(=9)	Chiffchaff	87
=5(=5)	Wren	87
=5(=5)	Chaffinch	87
=5(=14)	Goldfinch	87
=10(=9)	Pheasant	80
=10(=5)	Herring Gull	80
=10(=5)	Great Tit	80
=10(=1)	Robin	80
=10(=9)	Dunnock	80
=15(=20)	Rook	73
=15(=14)	Blackcap	73
=15(=26)	Song Thrush	73
=18(=20)	Mallard	67
=18(=14)	Buzzard	67
=18(=14)	Swallow	67
=18(=26)	House Sparrow	67

=18(=14)	Yellowhammer	67
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A more detailed analysis will appear in the 2017 Isle of Wight Bird Report.

Looking ahead to the 2018 survey, there are still a number of key 1-km squares available:

SZ3489 Norton

This square was surveyed from 2005 to 2012 so ideally the route, using Westhill Road, Halletts Shute, Gasworks Lane and finishing at the end of Saltern's Wood, should remain unchanged to ensure consistency in the data reporting. 57 species have been reported from this square, a nice mix of waterbirds, marshland and woodland species.

SZ4787 Bowcombe

Mixed habitat with parallel paths so it would make an ideal survey square.

SZ5186 St. George's Down

This square was surveyed from 2000 to 2004 so ideally this same route should be used. 44 species have been reported from this downland square.

SZ5294 Osborne Estate / Barton Manor

Landowner permission will be required for this square which includes part of Osborne Wood in the north and Barton pond in the south of the square. Due to the dense woodland this square requires an experienced birdwatcher who is fully conversant with bird song and calls as you are likely to hear more birds than you see.

Skills required for this survey; Volunteers need to be able to identify common birds by sight and sound. The survey involves two early morning spring visits to your 1-km square to count all the birds you see or hear while walking two 1-km lines across the square.

Project Owl

The BTO are hoping to conduct a wide-ranging survey on owls during the next few years. However to secure the necessary funding for the project they are launching a nationwide appeal for funds. Please consider supporting this appeal, any amount is greatly appreciated. Further details can be found at the following link; <https://www.bto.org/support-us/appeals/bto-owl-appeal>

There will also be a Woodcock survey this year to record the number of roding birds seen at a woodland site. Further details will be available in early spring. Anyone wishing to express an interest in participating should contact myself (contact details at the end of this article).

Ringling

The Isle of Wight Ringing Group have completed another busy, and successful, year with two national ringing courses held at Haseley reserve while once again three Constant Effort Scheme (CES) sites were covered; two at Haseley and also at Jersey Camp. The group was again the main Island participants in the Nest Record Scheme (NRS).

There are limited vacancies for trainee ringers at present so if anyone is interested and would like to come along to see what is involved and to learn about the science of bird ringing, please contact either Chairman Anthony Roberts (tel. 01983 865420), vice-Chairman Daphne Watson (tel. 01983 731114) or Secretary George Rowing (tel. 01983 873590).

If you require further information or wish to discuss any BTO-related topics please contact myself, Jim Baldwin (BTO Regional Representative) either by phone (01983 721137(home),

07528 586683(mobile)), email (wightbto@hotmail.com) or write to me at 21 Hillcrest Road, Rookley, I.W PO38 3PB.

Jim Baldwin

iWatch Wildlife

Watch out for opportunities to get involved in our project to encourage more people to record. Tina Whitmore, our project officer, will be re-launching our species of the month, encouraging people to send in records. We will, for instance, be looking for records of Hedgehogs, Hares and nesting House Martins to build up our records for these species.

iWatch will be at Sandown Bay 'Hullabaloo' on 12th/13th May on Culver Parade, where this years' Bioblitz will also be taking place and we will holding another training event at Dinosaur Isle on 1st July. Look out also for a forthcoming Seaweed Pressing Workshop in August.

News from the Library

We have acquired a number of books in recent months, many as donations from, for example, Margaret Burnhill, David Motkin, Colin Pope, Tony Steele, Stephen Plummer and Rick Barnett. Purchases for the IWatch project have increased our stock of identification and field guides'

To give you a taste, here is a random selection of new stock:

Saltmarsh by Clive Chatters (2017) A beautifully illustrated and informative book from the British Wildlife Collection by one of our members.

A Photographic Guide to Insects of Southern Europe & the Mediterrean by Paul Brock (2017) perfect for identifying insects seen on holiday or new arrivals from the Continent.

An Eye for a Bird by Eric Hosking (1970) Classic account of one of our foremost pioneering bird photographers.

Conquest, The Roman Invasion of Britain by John Peddie (1987) donated by David Motkin

Helen Jackson

What's in a name? Primula

The name Primula is derived from primus, Latin for first. The suffix -ula denotes little one.

Although chronologically not the first plant of the ear to come into flower, the widespread blooming of primroses is generally accepted as one of the first definitive signs of spring. William Shakespeare and dramatist John Fletcher collaborated on a play, 'The Two Noble Kinsmen', which includes the lines '...Primrose, first-born child of ver, merry springtime's harbinger...'. Ver is Latin for spring.

The English common name of Primrose may be a derivation of Old French or Middle English: primerole.

Carl Linnaeus gave primroses the Latin name *Primula acaulis*, which seems strange as acaulis means stemless, yet each primrose flower is borne at the top of its own slender stem. Linnaeus may have compared primroses with other *Primula* species such as cowslips, oxlips and cultivated Polyanthus. These species produce an umbel of pedicellate flowers at the top of a stout central stem called a scape, which primroses do not have (or only very rarely).

The name was changed from *Primula acaulis* to *P. vulgaris* by William Hudson (1730-1793) when his 'Flora Anglica' was published in 1762. *Vulgaris* simply means common.

Queen Victoria and Prime Minister Disraeli were particularly fond of primroses. On the death of Disraeli in 1881 the Queen sent primroses, reputedly from the Osborne Estate, to be placed on the statesman's coffin.

The anniversary of Disraeli's death, 19th April, was declared Primrose Day and in 1883, to honour the late Prime Minister, the Primrose League was founded. The 'League, which was set up to conserve and protect the British way of life, adopted the primrose as its official emblem. Primrose Day is no longer recognised and the Primrose League was dissolved in 2004.

***Primula veris*, Cowslip**

The Latin word for spring is *ver*, so *veris* means of springtime.

Cowslip means cow-dung and is derived from Anglo-Saxon, *cuslyppe*, *cu* meaning cow and *slype* meaning slime. The reason for this somewhat unfortunate name probably came about because the plants grew abundantly in grassland where grazing cattle left behind their slimy waste deposits.

19th century poet John Clare used the term 'cowslap peeps' (sic) in his nature-inspired poetry. In days long gone an individual floret in a cluster was commonly called a peep or a pip.

John Clare (1793-1864)

Any nature-lovers unfamiliar with the poetic works of John Clare are missing out on something special. Of the English poets Clare's name may not come to mind as readily as Keats, Wordsworth, Shelley or Tennyson, yet nature and poetry were John Clare's reason for being. His reverence for all aspects of nature, be it flora or fauna, is evident throughout his wonderfully descriptive verses.

Some of Clare's evocative poetry is quoted in Dr W A Bromfield's 'Flora Vectensis' (1856) under the entries for *Acer*, *Pyrus*, *Bellis*, *Labiatae*, *Primula* and *Arum*.

Well-known botanical author George Claridge Druce (1850-1932) wrote several county floras including a flora of Northamptonshire, home county of Clare and Druce.

In Jonathan Bate's comprehensive biography of John Clare reference is made to Druce as a boy, who had sometimes seen the contemplative aging figure of Clare wandering about in Northampton.

Paperback editions of John Clare's lifelong works have been published but may need to be sought from second-hand sources. From a naturalistic point of view they are well worth reading.

Sue Blackwell

Recording Matters

Are you sure? – a critical question when you are making wildlife records!

Before records are entered into the Society's database, two types of checks must be carried out: data validation and data verification.

Validation is a check to make sure that all parts of the record are present and lie within certain limits. The site name and grid reference should 'agree'. For example the grid reference must be expected for the Isle of Wight. Sometimes the 'eastings' and 'northings' are confused; SZ6086 would refer to a site in Brading but written as SZ8660 it is somewhere in the middle of the English Channel!

There must be a person's name attached to the record - the observer - so that if there are any queries that person can be approached to provide clarification; and if there is credit to be given for an unusual find, it goes to the correct person.

The date of the record must not lie in the future – unlikely to be the case with a hand-written record but it is surprisingly easy to mix up figures when entering into an electronic database. It is possible for an automatic warning to be given if such an error occurs. More difficult is the format of the date -DD/MM/YYYY is the style preferred; however our transatlantic colleagues seem to use MM/DD/YYYY more frequently so some computer spreadsheets will follow suit unless closely watched! Swifts flying overhead on 11th May would be accepted quite readily but such a record on 5th November would certainly generate some comment.

Verification is a rather more difficult issue – has the species been identified correctly? There is a volunteer system of local people – the IWNHAS Recorders- with a great deal of experience in identifying species who are always willing to help out with difficult identifications. Their names and contact details are available from the Society's website and the January issue of Recording Now, the recording newsletter also had their photographs.

They have been appointed by the Council of the Society and they act as local custodians of data. Some of these are also appointed by national bodies such as British Trust for Ornithology, Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland, British Dragonfly Society and such like. This means that they have access to a larger range of specialists to help with identification, and also they assist in the maintenance of records which are held on national data bases by checking on records which have been submitted by people visiting the Island for example. In the course of this work, they help to maintain an accurate national picture as well as being 'on the ground' to check unexpected records which arise.

To assist with identification, a photograph of a specimen is often very helpful to rule out some possibilities but it is not a substitute for first hand examination, with suitable magnification, of the critical features – for example, shape of seeds and fruit markings, or of particular segments on the abdomen of an insect. Reporting your unusual find to an expert as soon as possible makes these verification checks much easier.

Entering observations on an internet system such as i-record can be a rapid way of reporting what you have seen. It makes storing and transferring your records relatively easy and includes the facility to attach photographs. There are tools in place as part of i-record – called 'record cleaners' - which flag up unusual records, for example purple emperor butterfly on the Isle of Wight, a species not known to be here at the moment. Extra evidence would have to be forthcoming or a check to see where a slip of the finger had been made!

Those who verify the records on i-record have levels of certainty to attach to a record:

- Accepted: correct – based on photo on i-record or other evidence submitted separately
- Accepted: considered correct - evidence not supplied but the species is likely to be correct because it is straightforward to identify, and the date and location are within expected limits

- Not accepted: unable to verify, because the record lack detail and/or the species is difficult to identify
- Not accepted: incorrect – based on the photo supplied, the identification is incorrect
- Unconfirmed: plausible –more supporting evidence is needed to be sure of identification
- Unconfirmed: not reviewed – reserved for records not yet critically examined

Plant and animal distribution is changing as a result of development pressure, climate change, agricultural practice and land management, as well as by the introduction of species by global trade and travel movements. Some of these newly-arrived species are proving a challenge to established ecosystems: for example the impact of the arrival of ash die-back has yet to be fully realised. Asian hornet is another potential threat. It is important that we have biological recording of the highest quality, so any action which may be planned as a result of emerging patterns has proper justification.

Anne Marston

Odonata Recording in 2018

2017 was an interesting year for Odonata recording on the Isle of Wight with 24 species reported. The highlight was undoubtedly Southern Emerald Damselfly *Lestes barbarus* first seen at Bouldnor on 25th May (see Bulletin:68). This was both a new species and a new breeding species for the Island.

Further details of the 2017 reporting year will be included in the forthcoming online Isle of Wight Odonata report which will be available to view and download via the IWNHAS website. Looking ahead to 2018, I am hoping that in conjunction with iWatch Wildlife, there will be an outdoor dragonfly meeting during the summer. Further details will be posted on the IWNHAS website in due course.

One of the aims of publishing an annual report is to encourage more people to submit their sightings of dragonflies and damselflies during 2018. Records can either be forwarded to me in paper format or electronically. I can send you a recording form to enter your sightings manually or a formatted excel spreadsheet via email in the format required by the British Dragonfly Society (BDS). Alternatively I can forward you details of how to enter your records directly into iRecord where there is also the facility to upload any photos of the species (there is a special BDS input screen).

At the time of going to press, the BDS is considering a survey regarding the status of White-legged Damselfly *Platynemis pennipes* in the UK. The species has not been recorded on the Island since 1992 and although it is unlikely that they are still here, they can be a difficult species to record as they have been known to spend long periods in nearby woodland after emerging from their breeding site.

If you have any query or questions regarding Odonata and/or reporting, you can contact me either by phone (01983 721137(home), 07528 586683(mobile)), email (wightdragonflies@gmail.com) or write to me at 21 Hillcrest Road, Rookley, I.W PO38 3PB.

Jim Baldwin (County Dragonfly Recorder)

Andy Butler's Nature Notes July to December 2017.

July

- 21st. Went to Walter's Copse with Dave Nordell. 21 Silver-washed Fritillaries, 20 White Admiral, 2 Southern Hawker dragonflies, one male Beautiful Damselfly and one female. Went on to Lock's Farm, Porchfield and saw 3 Purple Hairstreaks. Stopped off at Brook Down on the way home and had about 30 Dark-green Fritillaries.
- 4th. Back to Brook Down early in the morning. A few Dark-greens and at least 7 Dartford Warblers with 3 juveniles together.
- 5th. Climbed down the cliff at Whale Chine and walked along the shore to below Blackgang Terrace. Found 10 male Keeled Skimmers (2 immature and 8 female). Access is not easy from Whale Chine, I think that next year it will have to be from Rocken End. Had a Common Blue along Wheeler's bay revetment. Went in for a swim, quite warm!
- 6th. The best sighting of the year! A White-letter Hairstreak flew into the garden and settled long enough to dash indoors, grab a camera and get a photo. The last one I saw here was in 2006 so they are still extant, much to my surprise.
- 7th. Went to Newtown Meadows looking for White-letter Hairstreaks. No luck. On to Lock's Copse where there were 8 Silver-washed one of which being the form *valezina*. A fresh Painted Lady on the bank at the back of my house.
- 8th. Over to St.Helen's Duver to look for Purple Hairstreaks. Only found one. A migrant Hawker in the garden. A Ni Moth in the trap this morning.
- 10th. Had a look down Southford [Whitwell] and saw 2 Golden-ringed Dragonflies, 2 Broad-bodied Chasers, one Southern Hawker and 26 Banded Demoiselles.
- 13th. 12 Glanville webs along the revetment.
- 14th. About 50 male Chalkhill Blues on Mottistone Down plus 20+ Common Blues and one Wall.
- 17th. A Redshank in Ventnor Haven, a bird not often seen round here. Went to Brook Down chalk-pit and recorded 216 Chalkhill Blues, 4 White Admiral, 4 Brown Argus and 2 Dark-green Fritillaries. Drove on to Freshwater Causeway and walked to Yarmouth along the railway track. Had 4 Purple Hairstreaks and 4 White Admirals. A Jersey Tiger moth in the garden when I returned home.
- 20th. Female Emperor dragonfly in the garden. Small Copper along the revetment and a Humming-bird Hawkmoth at Monk's Bay.
- 21st. A strong southerly gale blowing today. Pete Campbell came down and we sea-watched from the garden. A number of Manx Shearwaters a long way out and Pete had a Cory's Shearwater just as I'd nipped indoors.
- 22nd. Pete and I went over to Newtown. 25 Whimbrel in one flock, which is a good record.
- 23rd. A Common Sandpiper along the revetment and a Clouded Yellow in the garden plus 3 Painted Lady.
- 25th. Went to Shepherd's Chine, Atherfield and saw 28 Common Blue butterflies and a Clouded Yellow. Carried on to Clammerkin, Porchfield, and had 25 Emerald Damselflies, 16 Ruddy Darter dragonflies and a Clouded Yellow. Stopped off at Brook Down on the way home and had 800+ Chalkhill Blues, 5 Wall and a Small Copper.

August

- 6th. Mottistone Down in the morning.c.200 Chalkhill Blues, 3 Wall, 1 Grayling, 1 Hummingbird Hawk Moth and a Small Copper. Carried on to Walter's Copse where there were 8 Silver-washed and a Southern Hawker.
- 10th. 3 Hummingbird Hawk moths, 2 Clouded Yellow and 4 Small Tortoiseshell on the bank at the back of my house.

11th. Shepherd's Chine, 3 Wall. Walked up to the reservoir saw a Grasshopper Warbler *en route* and a Greenshank, 2 Common Sandpipers, 2 Black-tailed Skimmers and a Southern Hawker at the top.

12th. Newtown in the morning. Distant view of an Osprey and 7 summer plumaged Grey Plover.

13th. Up to Bonchurch Down mid- morning. 8 Adonis Blue and 3 Dinky Skippers. Moved on to Nansen Hill and had one Adonis Blue and a *helice* Clouded Yellow. Another Clouded Yellow in Bonchurch Landslip on the way home, 3 along the revetment and 2 more in my garden.

14th. 7 Bottle-nosed Dolphins off Wheeler's Bay heading west. Pete had a late Marbled White at Blackgang.

15th. 2 Ospreys at Newtown but again distant.

19th. Back to Newtown early [7am]. Quite a few bass off the Black Hut chasing small Mullet, I reckon they were about the 2 to 3 lb mark. Also, a very nice Sea Trout leaped clear of the water just in front of me, probably about 5 or 6 lb.

23rd. 5 Common Sandpipers along at Bonchurch. 3 Hummingbird Hawk Moths at the back of house.

25th. Went to Laundry Lane with Pete. 15 Snipe, a Green Sandpiper, 2 Willow Warblers, 3 Spotted Flycatchers, 4 Migrant Hawkets and a Blackcap.

26th. Luccombe Down with Pete. 1 Grasshopper Warbler, 12 Spotted Flycatchers, 3 Redstarts and 1 Migrant Hawker.

27th. 34 Adonis Blue on Bonchurch Down and 4 Adonis Blue, 1 Chalkhill Blue and 4 Clouded Yellow along the revetment. A juvenile Ringed Plover in Monk's Bay.

28th. St. Catherines with Pete, 80 Yellow Wagtails. In the afternoon Dave called in to say he had just seen a Small Heath along the revetment, it was still there and was the first I'd seen there. It is the 39th species of butterfly I've recorded from my house to Bonchurch.

September

1st. Pete and I went to Newtown. Pete did a careful telescope count of all the birds we could see from one spot near the east hide. 77 Oystercatchers, 25 Curlew, 30 Ringed Plover, 100 Dunlin, a Sandwich tern, a Reed Warbler, 60 Goldfinches, 70 Linnets, 2 Yellowhammers, 6 Blackcaps, 6 Whitethroats, 4 Stonechats, 4 Wheatears and 4 Chiffchaffs.

4th. A Bloxworth Snout [moth] in my dining room.

5th. 2 Common Sandpipers and a Wheatear along at Bonchurch.

6th. The revetment is alive with butterflies at the moment. 63 Large White, 9 Small White, 14 Peacock, 9 Red Admiral, 5 Painted Lady, 5 Small Tortoiseshell, 4 Clouded Yellow and 2 Hummingbird Hawk Moths all seen in one short walk along there.

10th. 1 Common Sandpiper at Bonchurch and a Raven along the revetment.

12th. Went to Shepherd's Chine in the morning. Flushed a Common Sandpiper from the pool on the beach, it flew straight out to sea and kept going until out of sight. Also, 4 Wall, 1 Common Blue and a Small Copper.

14th. A Clouded Yellow and 3 Hummingbird Hawk Moths at the back of my house.

16th. Early visit to Newtown. Watched an Osprey eating a fish at the far side of the marsh. A Holly Blue in the garden.

17th. Went round to Newtown in my son's boat but no Ospreys to be seen but good views of a Grey Seal made up for it [a bit].

18th. There were 18 Peacocks on a Buddleia bush just by my garden, quite a sight.

19th. Went to Rocken End fishing, too swelly so nothing doing. 6 Yellow Wagtails at Watershoot.

26th. Back to Newtown and had good views of an Osprey at last, also a Marsh Harrier.

28th. Went to Southford [Whitwell] in the morning. 15 Long-tailed Tits, 12 Chiffchaff, a Kingfisher, 4 Commas, 4 Speckled Wood, 4 Common Darters and 1 Migrant Hawker.

October

3rd. Atherfield, 3 Wall and a Dunlin.

5th. 5 Clouded Yellow along the revetment.

6th. Pete and I went to Shorwell to look for a reported Rose-coloured Starling. Long gone!

7th. Had a call to say that a White Stork was in a field near to Grange Chine. Drove straight there and it was, good views and plenty of photos. I was the only one there.

9th. Watched a Glossy Ibis at Laundry Lane.

12th. 7 Clouded Yellow along the revetment.

16th. A strange yellow light in the sky and almost dark by 13.00, due to Sahara dust and smoke from forest fires in Iberia blown up by hurricane Ophelia. All very odd.

30th. 2 Clouded Yellow and a male and female Stonechat along the revetment.

November

3rd. At least 40 Long-tailed Tits moving through the back garden this morning.

6th. A Clouded Yellow at Castle Cove and a juvenile Shag on the breakwater in front of the house.

10th. 2 Humminbird Hawk Moths at the back of the house. Went over to Brading old sea wall with Pete to see the Glossy Ibis and a Cattle Egret. Good views.

11th. A Narcissus in full bloom in the garden.

17th. A Black Redstart on the boathouse roof in front of the house.

18th. Went over to the Dinosaur Museum open day at Sandown. Had a really good time.

20th. Went to Clammerkin with Adam Wright to look for Brown Hairstreak eggs. Didn't find any.

22nd. 8 Rock Pipits at Monk's Bay.

24th. Back to Laundry Lane with Pete. A Cattle Egret, 4 Marsh Harriers, Glossy Ibis, a Peregrine and a rather nice black rabbit.

25th. Grey Seal off the revetment [Ron].

26th. Black Redstart in the garden.

December

4th. Had a look around the marsh at Yarmouth. 2 big flocks of Golden Plover about 200 in each.

5th. On the way to Newtown saw a Stoat running down the side of the Blackgang road with a rat in its jaws.

8th. Went to Borthwood to see a flock of Brambling feeding on sunflowers in a set-aside area. Managed to get some reasonable photos but it was very cold there. There was also a large flock of Linnets, numbers of Chaffinches 1 Yellowhammer, 2 Greenfinches etc all making use of the seed supply.

11th. A movement of Gannets up Channel this morning, about 50 or 60.

22nd. Many birds feeding on the Cabbage Palm berries in the garden especially Song Thrushes, which is nice to see.

25th. Large movement of Gannets this morning heading west and feeding as they go. Can't see what they are diving on but could be sprats. Counted 108 in 10 minutes and 250+ in half an hour. There was probably a total somewhere near 4/500 in 2 hours.

28th. Went over to Dodnor with Pete early this morning. The highlight was a Hawfinch, a good record for the Island. We also had 1 Snipe, 6 Bullfinches, 30 Fieldfares, 100 Redwing, 2 Stonechats, 40 Brent Geese, 30 Wigeon, 4 Little Grebes, 40 Lapwings, 20 Redshank, 1 Greenshank, 80 Oystercatchers and 30 Black-tailed Godwits. Later on we also saw about 200 Lapwings along the Military Road at Atherfield.
31st. A wet and windy end to the year. A few Gannets offshore in the mist and rain.

Andy Butler

Reports of General Meetings

9th July Freshwater: Place-names and Historic Settlement – the Search for Sutton

Seventeen supporters gathered at Freshwater Bay for another in John Margham's series of historic landscape walks. He began with a quote from Sir Richard Worsley in 1781: 'Freshwater being a large parish, is divided into six districts, namely, Easton, Weston, Norton, Sutton, Middleton, and Wilmingham', though leaving out both Compton and Afton. All of these are still well-known today with the specific exception of Sutton, which it has been John's mission to try to identify, as well as attempting to reconstruct Domesday manors and landholdings in this extensive parish.

We began by ascending the cliff in an easterly direction and then turning inwards along footpaths across the fields. Nearing the golf clubhouse, the second of the Island's two Neolithic long barrows was pointed out (the other being the Longstone), together with three small Bronze Age round barrows. More footpaths brought us to Afton Farm, where the Domesday name *Affetune* (1086) almost certainly referred to the owner of the manor, *Æffa*. Arriving at the Causeway, John pointed out that Afton manor watermill, which was in use from the 14th to 16th centuries, was no doubt sited here, then continued as a tide mill processing grain until finally going out of use by 1835.

Next stop was the parish church, where the churchyard's rectilinear design indicates that this was possibly a minster church in the medieval period. One of seven Island churches originally belonging to the Abbey of Saint-Marie of Lyre in Normandy, All Saints is likely to be an early, 7th or 8th century, dedication. We looked at the Anglo-Saxon and Norman architecture inside the church. Given that the church was part of the manor of Freshwater – i.e. Kings Manor – why was it built so far from it?

Proceeding along Longhalves, a 1793 map shows how a planned medieval settlement once adjoined this back lane and that it had become virtually deserted by the 1790s, but was now occupied once more. A lunch stop at Freshwater (School) Green beckoned; thence to Sheepwash Green, where a Romano-British burial had been discovered: an inhumation in a stone cist. The area indicates a polyfocal or dispersed settlement pattern dating to the Anglo-Saxon period and incorporating Pound Green, Middleton Green and More Green – 'green' simply indicating grazing land for a variety of animals.

Passing by the former windmill site active around 1800, from a hilltop point we admired the views over Totland, 'the cultivated land or estate with a lookout place', with its former beacon on Headon Warren, which we could also see as part of the panorama. We descended to Weston Farm, for which the first documented reference is 1248, but the origin of the manor is not the same as the origin of the settlement. Stonewind Farm which we next came upon lies within an area of the former medieval open field system.

Arriving at Briary Lodge and some very loudly barking dogs, John mentioned how in 1844 eleven separate parcels of land here were auctioned; the landholding was identical to that in the 1608 survey of royal manors and provides good evidence for the survival of open

furlongs. Close by was the tiny Middleton Green, or what is left of it: we just managed to fit everyone on it! The place-name Middleton is first recorded in 1246. Then along Bedbury Lane to Farringford Farm, first recorded *c.*1250 as *Feringeford*, 'ford of the family or followers of a man called *Fēra*', but probably established as a settlement site by the early 7th century. The date stone of 1694 at St Agnes' Church is totally misleading and reputed to have come from Stonewind Farm: the church was in fact built only in 1908.

And so, finally, to the mysterious Sutton. The 'road from Sutton to Freshwater Gate' was mentioned in a document of *c.*1278; and a survey of 1583 declared that 'the heirs of William Baker held one tenement and twelve acres in Sutton'. Standing in Gate Lane, John pointed to the 18th-century, Grade-II listed building now known as Bakers Farmhouse, and asserted that *this* was the elusive Sutton! When then did it lose its identity? Quite simply, when it became yoked together with Easton, as in the hearth taxes of 1664–1674. So an enigma which many have long pondered seems now conclusively settled!

Completing the 5½-mile excursion at the Bay, John explained how plans for Freshwater to become an island and 'a place of retreat for the inhabitants' by a group of prominent Islanders in 1629, in fact came to nothing. It only remained at this point to thank John warmly for yet another fascinating day's outing.

Alan Phillips

30th September Annual Fungus Foray, Parkhurst Forest

A group of sixteen members met in Parkhurst Forest carpark, including Stephen Plummer on his last Island outing before moving to the mainland. As usual, we were joined by Alan Outen from Bedfordshire, who was our expert on the day but this year the Hampshire Fungus Recording Group were unable to join us due to clashes in their timetable. 135 species were recorded.

Colin Pope

11th November The England Coast Path: Access to the Coast, a talk by John Taylor of Natural England

The Marine and Coastal Access Act of 2009 set in motion the creation of the England Coast Path, to give walkers access to the coast wherever possible. The Isle of Wight is one of the last stretches to be considered by Natural England. The Island already has a very good coastal path, but there are some problems to resolve. In some parts of the north coast the path goes inland, where there are marshy areas and also private estates, such as Osborne House and Quarr Abbey. There is also some misuse of the paths by motorbikers and others. John and his Natural England team recognise the need to balance the interests of landowners, path users and those involved in leisure activities.

The Isle of Wight coastal path will be raised in status to a national trail, for which there will be increased funding for maintenance. This amenity should attract more 'green' tourists and also be a lasting legacy for future generations to enjoy. It is currently for walkers only.

The first step in the sensitive improvement of the path is to align the route in consultation with landowners and to allow spreading room landward of the trail, giving a less erratic route. There are some excepted land categories through which the path cannot run. These include buildings, parks and gardens, railway lines, golf courses, caravan sites and arable land. To allow for coastal erosion, agreements need to be drawn up with landowners

for the path to be rolled back. In the case of excepted land, however, a diversion inland would have to be made. John's team must balance public and private interests. The public interest is the proximity of the trail to the sea; the private interest is generally about making an income from the land, but may also be about privacy and the quiet enjoyment of one's property. The Access and Sensitive Features Appraisal incorporates a Habitats Regulations Assessment and an Access Assessment. There is a requirement to balance the needs of wildlife and path users.

Developing the Coast Path is broken down into five stages:

Stage 1 (Prepare) is to understand the opportunity areas and issues;

Stage 2 (Develop) is to discuss the route with key stakeholders;

Stage 3 (Propose) is to define the route and notify the landowners;

Stage 4 (Determine) - After an 8-week consultation period, the Secretary of State will decide whether to approve, modify or reject the proposed route;

Stage 5 (Open) The Isle of Wight stretch of the path is expected to gain approval in Autumn/Winter 2019 and an Ordnance Survey will be undertaken.

During Question Time, concerns were expressed about the path being routed through Jersey Camp Firing Range and Quarr Abbey. John emphasised that Natural England is legally obliged to inform landowners by letter of the proposed path and to meet with all stakeholders. Someone asked what provision there is to realign the path should land use change, such as if the firing range at Jersey Camp ever became redundant. John told us that a Variation Report and a full consultation would be necessary before the path could be realigned. Someone else pointed out that rare migrants are more common on our shores and reptiles and overwintering birds need to be considered. John proposed seasonal routes, with gates locked and the path diverted during the winter.

This was a fascinating talk that raised our awareness of the complexity and sensitivity of this process.

Maggie Nelmes

Reports of Section Meetings

Looking at the Countryside

Sunday 16th July Bonchurch

Only four people unfortunately attended this very interesting meeting which was led by Iris Fay. Maps were given out to us and we then did a tour of Bonchurch looking at all the notable houses whilst Iris gave us information about the various interesting residents. We looked at the famous pond where a terrapin was seen and also the Parish Church, the Old Village School and Bonchurch Old Church. This walk will be repeated in another programme as I am sure many members would have enjoyed it. The extension to the Old Village at Shanklin will now take place as a separate meeting.

Toni Goodley

Tuesday 5th September Compton

The day started off wet and windy which perhaps explained why there were only five of us at the starting point of our walk. We set off from the National Trust Compton Farm car park and walked down to the coast and westwards along to Afton Down. The strong wind and overcast conditions meant that there were no butterflies or birds to watch and we contented ourselves with looking at a wide variety of plants. We were most surprised to find a couple of specimens of the rare Ox-tongue Broomrape in full flower; there were plenty that had flowered earlier in the year. We also saw our first Ladies Tresses Orchids. We ascended Afton

Down and walked eastwards along the downland ridge to Brook, enjoying the fine views and marvelling at the abundance of Autumn Gentian, Lady's Tresses Orchids, Clustered Bellflowers and Lesser Centaury in the grassland roughs of the golf course. A Kestrel was hovering over a slope somewhat sheltered from the wind. On reaching Brook chalk quarry we dropped down and walked back through the valley towards Compton farm. Again the views were very fine and we enjoyed the early autumn colour of Dogwood and Black Bryony fruits in the hedgerows. We watched a large flock of Goldfinches. All of us who took part enjoyed the scenically splendid and varied walk and we felt that it would be good to repeat it another time in better weather conditions.

Colin Pope

Saturday 7th October

Wootton to Newport

On a cool, blustery but dry morning, a dozen members set out to view historic landscapes from Wootton to Newport. After considering place names, geology and settlement origins, we followed the former Newport and Ryde Railway (1875) from Wootton Station to the misleadingly named Whippingham Station, little used by the royal family but having one of the first Station-Mistresses in England, Emily Merwood (nee Downer). Emily was a distant relative of one of the members present.

On route, we examined the history of the Railway and the early Fattingspark enclosures, the importance to wildlife of Palmers Brook with its associated semi-ancient woodlands, and the fate of lands purchased by Queen Victoria to extend Prince Albert's model farm. These included The Racecourse, and Mount Misery up which we ascended by a trackway for good views over the Medina estuary. Some of the Crown land was resold in 1865. The Mount, given virtual spin in poetic praise c.1845, was renamed Belmont Farm and acquired by Henry Pinnock of Carisbrooke. He became a Director of the Railway which was built across the farmland.

Downhill from Belmont we passed a field full of post boxes, part of the Postal Museum, to see Pinnock's monogrammed houses on Fairlee Road. At Tidemill House on the Medina we reviewed the fate of William Porter's 1790 flour-mill, the vicissitudes of The Marina, and the history of the paddle steamers 'Medway Queen' and 'Ryde'. Nearby we saw the setting for David Ellison's popular 1970s TV programmes, 'Tales from the River Bank'. The walk continued along the riverside footpath with an account of West Medina flour-mill, which became the important Medina Cement Works (1840) and later a site for the modern Vestas wind-turbine works. We concluded with the origin of Newport Arboretum.

Michele Van Buren and Mike Cotteril

Tuesday 14 November

Shorwell to Atherfield

Eight members met at Shorwell parish hall on a dull, overcast morning for a walk across fields to Atherfield. Alan Phillips led the group. Initially walking up Corve Hill – referring to 'a cutting, gap or pass' – we turned off on a footpath leading up to Hill Heath with its panoramic views. Vicky Basford, who had helped reconnoitre the walk a few days earlier (but was not able to be present on the day), had identified long linear boundaries in the area, forming boundaries of large closes and indicating poor quality farming in the medieval period. Haslett Farm in the near distance was originally *Haresclad* in 1294: 'the valley frequented by hares', occupied in the 13th century by Robert Carpenter of Hareslade, who administered the lands of the de Insula family of West Court, then called the manor of South Shorwell. The group observed the abandoned Smallmoor buildings, which were occupied in recent living memory.

Nearing Atherfield itself, evidence for the classic medieval open field system – where everyone had their own strip (not widespread on the Island) – has been identified by Vicky;

though it is very difficult to relate modern field patterns to those shown on the 1793 OS map owing to radical re-organisation of fields in the 20th century. We learnt of St Simon of Atherfield, infamously described as ‘a martyr to his wife’, and murdered by her on 21 March 1211, for which she was sentenced to burn the following year. Miracles took place at his tomb and pilgrimages were made to the site before the cult was quickly suppressed by the Bishop of Winchester.

We passed Dungewood Farm at Kingston – ‘the enclosed farmstead of Dunna’s family or followers’ – before arriving at an important ditch, again identified by Vicky, separating the Atherfield Anglo-Saxon estate from Atherfield parish boundary. The name ‘Atherfield’ itself was originally recorded as *Aderingefeld* in 959: ‘the open land of the family or followers of a man called Eadhere or Aethelhere’; but its temporary much reduced spellings as *Avrefel* and *Egrafel* in the Domesday Book (1086) indicates Norman influence. Despite the additional surviving place-name Atherfield Green, the green itself has disappeared, but the feature is shown on the 1793 OS map east of Atherfield Green Farm and south of Atherfield Farm. Atherfield also became one of three medieval beacon sites in Shorwell parish, and is referred to in 1324 as having a watch of four men by night and two by day; its most likely location would have been in the vicinity of the coastguard lookout.

Curving round westerly on Atherfield Road, we next crossed fields with a view of the Coastguard cottages, dating from the 19th century and replacing a mid-19th century coastguard station sited closer to the cliff edge. We were also reminded that the Military Road was built in the 1860s and then reconstructed in the 1920s. The footpath then skirted round the rear of the dwelling known as Compton Fields, mentioned as a separate holding in 1249 when it was purchased by Adam de Compton, Lord of Compton in Freshwater Parish – thereby having retained its name for some 7½ centuries!

The return footpath ran in a northerly direction, roughly parallel with the outward one, and coming out onto Samber Hill – probably to be associated with *Sanberghe* 1235, ‘the sandy hill’. We then skirted the eastern edge of Yafford – meaning either ‘the ford provided with a hatch or grating’ or ‘the ford by the dam-weir or sluice’ – before completing the walk by means of lanes approaching Shorwell to arrive at our starting-point: a circular of a full three hours.

Alan Phillips

Friday 1st December

Niton

Nine people met at the White Lion, Niton, on a very cold but sunny day. Mary Edmunds said there were many English pubs called the White Lion, the livery of the Duke of Norfolk. Alan Phillips told us the origin of the name Niton or ‘Neeton’, a new settlement, for many years known as Crab Niton, because of the annual crab fair. We set off through Puckwell Lane, Puck being a name for a goblin, past the once derelict Puckwell Farm, now rebuilt as houses and holiday accommodation. Taking the Cripple Path, one of five ways, we climbed towards the clifftop, stopping to look back at clear views as far as St. Catherine’s Oratory. The Path is possibly named after pilgrims who came to the area and walked to the White Well at Whitwell, believed to cure many ills.

Halfway down the steep path, Mike Cotterill explained the geology of the cliff face which was exposed, and we continued down to reach the Undercliff Road. Dave Trevan showed us several unusual plants of Abraham- Isaac-Jacob. As the group was small, and the weather cold, we had walked quite quickly, so Dave suggested we go down to Castle Haven. Sheltered from the wind, many gardens we passed had summer flowers still blooming, including the Old Niton Radio Station House, where Marconi had stayed while carrying out some of his radio experiments in the 1980s. At the cove we saw evidence of mining bees in the rocks by the shore. We climbed steps up Duck Lane to the Buddle Inn, where we were

met by John Edmunds, Dave Biggs and Bill Shepard. Over a bowl of welcome carrot and ginger soup, we discussed the name of the pub, Buddle being an old settlement according to one book, while another told us a Buddle was a sloping trough and to 'Buddle' meant to wash ore. The quiz was won by Alan and Renella Phillips, and some of the group returned to their cars via the Tunnel, a path partly covered over by a local landowner to shield his view of workmen going to and fro.

Mary Edmunds

Archaeology Section

7th & 8th October

Bronze Age Weekend

Thanks to Joy Verrinder's hospitality, there was plenty of space for a fascinating range of activities. Neil Burridge came from Cornwall to share the expertise which has made him nationally respected and led to television appearances. Whilst people had booked in advance for the paid workshops, there were various ongoing activities for the casual visitor to watch or try. Delian Backhouse-Fry presided over a display of bronze-age food which including delicious oat bread/cake and Joy gave a weaving demonstration. In the pottery there was a chance to make a collared urn and admire the examples that Boudie had produced in the true spirit of experimental archaeology. There was a pop-up museum displaying original and replica tools, materials etc.

The weather was not welcoming on Saturday but visitors braved the cold wind. Those who stayed till the evening enjoyed the feast, which included a joint cooked in a hot coal-pit.

Sunday was sunnier and warmer. The challenge that day was to find the detour after debris from a tractor left Chine Lane impassable.

Reports of the two workshops are from participants.

Saturday: Bronze casting: report by Michael Claridge

“You will be making bronze swords, blades and axes!”

Having visited a couple of archaeological 'recreation' sites where I had been told bronze smelting demonstrations had taken place, I was hugely excited at the prospect of bronze smelting so close to home. Ten of us students gathered round to witness this ancient craft, but while the surprisingly small charcoal furnace got up to heat, mentor Neil Burridge discussed the sources and use of metal ores, the origins of bronze making and the technological development of the craft. While the availability of copper ores were widespread, and some tin came from Turkey, the best quality alluvial tin was to be found in Cornwall, thus there became a huge trade between Cornwall and Phoenicia and the eastern Mediterranean.

Bronze metalworking is believed to have originated at the time of the ancient Sumerians in present day Iran and Iraq around 3,500 BC. The transition from arsenic bronze to using the ores - copper and tin, (having formerly been employed for pottery decoration), were found to give greater durability, hardness and were easier to control in the smelting process. The copper knife had developed into the bronze dagger and the subsequent range of metalwork became not only functional, but ownership was regarded as a status symbol and art form, yet the technological development travelled westwards at a very slow rate. Bronze is a mixture of between 10-12% tin with copper and while tin melts at around 200 degrees C, the

smelting process with copper requires 1200 degrees.

Having previously constructed three two-piece moulds - for a sword, an Arreton-style flanged axe and a dagger - we were first shown how to smelt copper from the crushed turquoise coloured ore.

This was followed by the much awaited bronze castings and each of us students was given a chance to control the smelting temperature with the delicate use of bellows. This required some concentration but by using a modern thermocouple arrangement with a digital readout it was found accuracy of between 5 and 10 degrees could be achieved. Prior to the white hot bronze in its crucible being removed from the charcoal, in each case the gods were offered burning frankincense to ensure a flawless casting! (How such superstitions still survive!)

Throughout the day, dagger, axe and sword in turn were expertly produced, the swift crucible-to-mould process, revealing of the castings and final dunking in cold water. The gods were very obliging. At the end of the afternoon, lots were drawn and three very lucky students each went away with a bronze trophy made in almost the same way all those millennia ago. A great experience.

Sunday – Silverwork: report by Janie Martin

After the cold, miserable weather on Saturday we were fortunate to have a lovely sunny day for the silver workshop, enabling us to spend most of the time outside. Neil began again with the very important safety briefing, the small furnace and tools being a serious hazard.

Outside he introduced us to silver by passing round a sparkling lump of galena, explaining that from ancient times craftsmen have been able to extract, first the lead and eventually the silver from the rock, an amazingly difficult process. Neil told us the story of the Romans' attempts to appropriate the huge silver supplies in Dacia; after being repulsed with huge loss of life the Romans returned in greater force. Thinking to retrieve it later, the king of Dacia hid all the silver in a river bed, but of course he was betrayed and the Romans marched off with a vast hoard.

When the furnace was hot enough Neil poured the beads of pure silver into the crucible, put on the lid, covered it with more charcoal and then some of us used the bellows to raise the temperature to 1100 degrees C and then to keep it there for 15 minutes. With a very steady hand Neil poured the silver into two moulds, in wooden boxes filled with sand. The thin bars were tipped into a wooden bowl of water and the process was repeated to provide enough strips of silver for the 10 of us. Several times the silver was heated with a blow torch and cooled in water to make it more malleable and then Neil cut each bar into strips and we were away! He had already made a model in copper wire for each of us, the size of our fingers. We were provided with a hammer and small anvil, mounted on wood, and were shown how to flatten and straighten the strip. Next came the decoration, Viking style. Neil had a number of stamps, which he had painstakingly made, of circles, lines and triangles. The intrepid punched out their own designs but most of us were helped by Neil, who bravely held the stamp while we banged in the design with a hammer. Finally each strip was cut to size and soldered, then polished to a brilliant shine and each of us could thank Neil and go home, proud owners of a silver ring.

We had a brilliant and fascinating day thanks to an inspirational teacher with the patience of Job who explained everything clearly as we went along and filled the time with interesting stories. I will never forget the experience and thank Neil for introducing me to a completely new craft.

Delian introduced this as her favourite of David's talks and by the end I'm sure many of the audience agreed with her. The subject was chosen as part of the Bronze Age theme we have been considering this autumn.

It was in 1979 that funding from English Heritage enabled the newly formed Isle of Wight Archaeological Committee to investigate plough damage on a barrow near the better-known Gallibury Hump, a barrow that was, in historical times, used to mount gallows. It was one of the handful of barrows remaining from about 400 on the Island that had not been previously dug by medieval treasure hunters or antiquarians such as Rev John Skinner. The excavation revealed a surprisingly complex site that offered new insights into how people in the Bronze Age dispose of their dead.

The first find was an inverted pot protecting a smaller pot which contained cremated remains. So far, so predictable.

The next discovery was the primary burial in the centre. Staining in the context suggested there had been a wooden cist surrounded by stones to hold it in place. No human remains were found or grave goods apart from a beaker bowl in the pit. This was unusual, shaped like a chamber pot with a handle on the side and a stamped pattern of small rosettes. A second burial had later been cut into the fill of this grave. This had been accompanied by a lugged food vessel with four carefully fashioned stub feet.

The next pit was D-shaped with a flint fill. Staining and fragments of tree bark suggested that this had housed a tree-trunk coffin. These were made by splitting a trunk in half, which was then partially hollowed out so the body could be packed in before the two halves were put together again.

Also in the pit was another of the unusual food vessels with stub feet. Both had a thumbprint maker's mark on the base, showing they were made by the same potter. The size of fingermarks on Bronze Age pots suggests that making them was women's' work.

There was a deeper pit containing nothing but sludge, the high phosphate level suggesting there had been another burial. Another smaller pit had contained another tree-trunk coffin, this time child-sized.

After the barrow had been built, two secondary cremation burials had been added by digging down through the mound. One of these was the first pot mentioned above. The second was buried under an inverted urn in much the same way. When the second cremation was removed from its inner pot, a third pot was found concealed with the bones. This was highly unusual with a reddish-burnished finish. Whilst four other examples have been found in Southern England, there are more examples in Brittany, again found in barrows. The only find apart from pottery was a tiny bronze pin. David recognised it as similar to those used to decorate daggers in Armorica – present-day Brittany.

Surrounding the pits was a circle of postholes forming a rough 11-sided circular shape. Inside this was a smaller ring of postholes enclosing the earliest burials.

David was able to construct a chronology for the various burials and also to draw a picture of what the original structure may have looked like. The original burial would have been surrounded by a 'mortuary house' (evidenced by the inner post holes) with the D-shaped burial pit added later too close to the wall. At a later date the perimeter wall was created and turfs were stacked inside so that the shape resembled a drum rather than a curved mound.

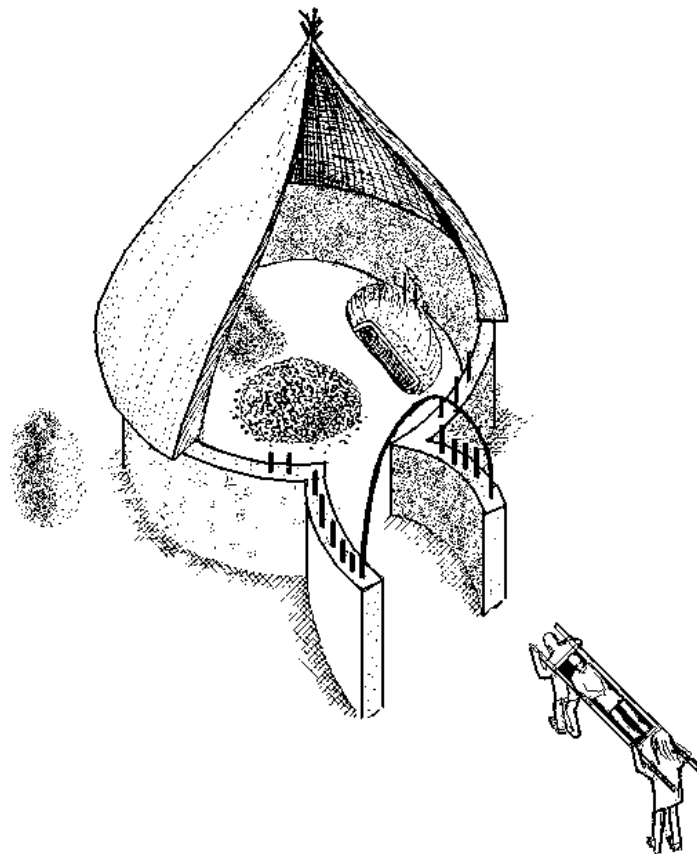
Another excavation by John Alexander and Paul Ozanne in the 1950s of a barrow close to Michael Morey's Hump had produced evidence for a similar structure. So there seems to have been a very distinctive form of burial monument different from the normal Bronze Age round barrows.

A final treat for the excavators was to borrow a stack of wooden fencing posts and place them in the original 217 postholes to form a reconstruction.

The final tantalising thought is about the links with Armorica. David talked about the Arreton Hoard, a collection of Bronze Age daggers and axes found in the 18th century and now at the British Museum. Some of their features appear to reinforce the evidence for links with Armorica. But that is a story for another day.

Helen Jackson

Illustration: Drawing of what the 'burial house' may have looked like.



Botany

9th July 2017 Pig Leg Lane, Ryde

Pig Leg Lane is a Gift to Nature site to the south of Ryde, bordered on the east side by the Monkton Mead brook and to the west by Weeks Lane. Extensive scrub clearance took place last winter and this has opened up paths through the site. At the time of our visit the meadows were very flowery, and we recorded a total of 135 plant species.

Of particular note was Fragrant Agrimony (*Agrimonia procera*) which many of us would have ticked off on our lists as the more frequently occurring and familiar Common Agrimony (*Agrimonia eupatoria*) had not Eric Clement drawn our attention to us and explained how to distinguish the two species. The 'fragrant' in the name refers to the lemon scent released on crushing the foliage. The other feature examine is the shape of the fruit. The

fruit of Common Agrimony is conical with grooves running all the any down and the characteristic hooked bristles are more-or-less upright; the fruits of Fragrant Agrimony are more bell-shaped with the grooves extending about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way along the fruit and the hooked bristles are reflexed (bent backwards).

A number of year ago, Galingale (*Cyperus longus*) was introduced to one of the ponds on the site and although the pond had dried up at the time of our visit, the Galingale was flowering well.

Wood calamint translocation project: August-September monitoring

The botany group has been involved in a translocation project to reinforce the population of Wood Calamint for many years and visits the site during the flowering season. It has flowered well in the lay-bys this year and there was even a plant flowering above the nettles in the verge about 50m to the south. The translocation plots are generally only reached with some difficulty as they are plots within the wood, but in each of the areas where we have done reinforcement planting, there is evidence of the plants surviving and in some cases spreading well. One area which we have not been able to access for several years because of scrub regrowth was cut back earlier this year and we were pleased to see several plants flowering which presumably had survived vegetatively while they were heavily shaded. This bodes well for the translocation project, so long as the woodland is in a suitable coppice rotation allowing the plants to flower and set seed when light levels are sufficient.

9th September Mount Joy Cemetery

Mount Joy cemetery, overlooking Newport, is a chalk grassland site and has interest throughout the flowering season. We began our survey at the top of the slope just off the footpath which runs from Whitcombe Road to Whitepit Lane. Here we had the opportunity to get to grips with the identification of several yellow composites: Smooth Hawk's-beard *Crepis capillaris*, Rough Hawkbit *Leontodon hispidus*, Autumn Hawkbit, *Scorzoneroides autumnalis* and Mouse-ear Hawkweed *Pilosella officinarum*. Next, we looked at the ways to distinguish different types of 'scabious' -all in the *Asteraceae* (daisy family) and partially sharing a common name, but actually being in different genera of plant: Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis*, Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis* and Small Scabious *Scabiosa columbaria*. Making our way downhill, we found two species of Eyebright still in flower, *Euphrasia officinalis* in some quantity and just one plant of *Euphrasia nemorosa*, which is a taller plant with pale mauve petals. In the area behind the chapel and around the memorials along the wall we had hoped to record flowering Autumn Lady's tresses (*Spiranthes spiralis*) but unfortunately the grass had been mown, so an earlier visit is required to see these.

23rd September Bouldnor Forest

The day of our annual meeting to record galls, leaf miners and micro-fungi was warm, sunny and bright and we enjoyed making our way round Bouldnor Forest on a route suggested by David Biggs. However, our progress was relatively slow, as we found so many species, many which had not previously been recorded in Bouldnor Forest.

The new gall for the site was a mite, *Aculus laevis* which forms pustules on the leaves of Grey Willow (*Salix cinerea*).

There were 26 different species of leaf miners: three sawflies, 13 micromoths and ten flies. Eleven of these species had not previously been recorded here and one was a new species record for the Island. This was a fly called *Chromatomyia blackstoniae* whose larvae make tunnel-like corridor mines in the leaves of Yellow-wort (*Blackstonia perfoliata*). The other leaf mines had a variety of forms – one with a spiral corridor, others producing blotches or tentiform blotches on the leaves.

The remaining new record for the site was a species of powdery mildew *Phyllactinia fraxini* found on Ash leaves (*Fraxinus excelsior*)

Anne Marston

Ornithology

Saturday 29th July Fort Victoria

14 members meet at the car park for a walk led by Toni Goodley. As is our custom we started off with a brief sea watch. Besides an Oystercatcher only gulls were seen – Herring Gull, Black-headed Gull and Great Black Backed Gull were spotted. As there was no other activity we set off for a walk through the woodland to Cliff End and followed Monks Lane briefly before taking the footpath that returned us to Fort Victoria via Norton. Although we had deliberately left the meeting to the very end of July in the hope of seeing some returning migrants our wish was not fulfilled. The usual woodland and field species were noted. Common Pheasant, Woodpigeon, Crow, Robin, Buzzard, Blue Tit, Dunnock, Jay, Linnet, Blackbird, Wren, Great Spotted Woodpecker, Greenfinch, Magpie, Long Tailed Tit, Jackdaw, Goldfinch, Starling and a mixed flock of Rook and Crow. It was very noticeable that no Swallows or House Martins were seen in the Cliff End area, a place where we normally see them. In all 23 species were recorded. We also saw a variety of butterflies: Meadow Brown, Common Blue, Gatekeeper, Large White, Small Copper and a Cinnabar moth.

Jackie Hart

Sunday 20th August Laundry Lane, Brading

The weather was mild, partly cloudy and with light winds as 14 members met at Carpenter's Rd end of Laundry Lane. We walked along the cycle/footpath, successfully seeing the Marsh Harrier and later a Hobby. A Grey Heron was in the triangular field. A few dragonflies, mostly Common Darters, were zooming around near Bexley Point and further on towards Marsh House. Butterflies, especially Meadow Brown, were there in a fair number for this time of year.

Past Marsh House, we checked the fields and views towards the Brading Ponds. Canada geese were noted. Swallows were still in abundance. Goldfinches were seen. Coming back along the path, we stopped to admire a male Reed Bunting, singing away at us. A Cetti's was heard in the trees. A variety of other birds sang out: Long-tailed Tits, Robin, Wren, Greenfinch and willow/chiff.

We crossed the scrape noting the high water levels on the ponds near New Bridge which meant there were few birds visible apart from a few Coots, Mallards and Teal as very little else was able to feed on muddy banks.

A total of 32 varieties of birds were seen including a Cormorant, a Kestrel and a Little Egret.

Debbie Hart

Saturday 23rd September Blackgang Viewpoint car park

Nine members met on a beautiful, sunny morning for a walk along the top of the cliff to Niton and then walk back inland. The whole morning we were accompanied by Swallows and some House Martins, flying and hawking for food before making the long journey to Africa. One or two Sand Martins were also picked out. At the top of the cliff at the edge of the arable fields where the farmers have left unploughed there is a scrubby area and it was here that we encountered our first two Stonechats, both male and female and then we saw two more. Before the end of the walk we spotted another male. A Kestrel was hovering over the cliff edge and a Buzzard was flying and later standing on a post. We saw Jackdaws, Carrion

Crows and a large flock of Rooks as well as a Raven. Herring Gulls, mainly juveniles, were flying along the cliff and one or two Great Black Backed Gulls. In the trees near Niton we heard a Great Spotted Woodpecker and saw some Chiffchaff. We saw small flocks of about 30 Goldfinches and a few Meadow Pipits on the fields and had a superb view of a Hare showing us just how fast it could run and how far. It was towards the end of the walk, after half the group had taken the short cut back to the car park, that the remaining four had good views of Linnet, two Yellowhammer and two Wheatear. At the very start of the meeting I was greeted with the statement that Debbie had seen ‘millions’ of Goldfinches in a flock. She sent me a photograph later and I could see that there were at least 500 in the shot – so how many were there overall? I was asked if we could do the walk again next year. 25 species were noted

Jackie Hart

Sunday 15th October Culver

The weather was very mild for this time of year, 17C, but overcast and a bit breezy. 12 of us met at the far car park on Culver Down. We skirted the cliffs from the far end, past the footpath that leads down to Yaverland, making our way back around the fort and up past the monument.

In total 25 species of birds were seen. We stopped to admire two Peregrine Falcons soaring on the air currents; a joy to watch. Two buzzards and possibly four Kestrels were seen hunting. More than one charm of goldfinches flew overhead! Stonechats seemed to be on every bush; Meadow Pipits and Skylarks took to the skies. The bushes at the far end of Culver seemed to have more small birds than usual.

Debbie Hart

Sunday 26th November St Helen's

Nine members met in Latimer Road for a walk led by Anthea Blackwell in the vicinity of Bembridge Harbour including a walk along the old railway track to Harbour Farm. It was a lovely, crisp calm morning and our first port of call was near the old Mill and then Old Mill Ponds. The tide was out which enabled us to see some waders: Redshank, Black-tailed Godwit, Lapwing, Oystercatcher, Greenshank, Curlew and later on just two Dunlin. Also on the mud or in the sea we saw Teal, Mallard and Little Grebe. Later, on the Eastern Yar we saw Coot, Gadwall, Shoveller, Wigeon and two Great Crested Grebe. The Marsh Harrier was quartering the reed beds and Grey Heron flew over as did a Kestrel. Many Canada Geese were grazing in the fields. Tufted Duck were swimming and feeding in the lagoons and a Water Rail was heard. On the large pond beside Harbour Farm there were at least 20 Pochard and a couple of Mute Swan. Along the way we saw both Mistle Thrush and Fieldfare, heard Dunnock and Robin and also saw Jackdaw, Crow, Blackbird, Goldfinch and Blue Tit. Another look at the harbour we saw Brent, Black-headed Gull and many Great Black Backed Gull. In all 45 species were noted during the course of the morning.

Jackie Hart.

Sunday, 10th December Yarmouth

The meeting was abandoned because of storm force gusting winds and squally showers.

Entomology

Tuesday 18th July

Northwood Cemetery

This was a hot day for a special meeting of the section, teaming up with members of the Friends of Northwood Cemetery. The event was part of the HLF funded Northwood Cemetery Heritage Project. The first part of the meeting focussed on running a Big Butterfly Count. After an initial look at the conservation sections within the cemetery to study likely species a count was run. A total of 11 species were seen on the count, including Silver-washed Fritillary, a couple of Brown Argus, Ringlet, Brimstone, Speckled Wood, Common Blue and Marbled White. As expected, Gatekeeper and Meadow-brown were dominant. Outside the count area, in more open parts of the cemetery, Small Heath, Small Copper and Comma were added. There was also a very nice view of a sloe-bug *Dolycoris baccarum*. A large range of galls were also observed on oak, including marble, knopper, silk button and common spangle galls.

Microfungi found, which were new for the site, included *Erysiphe heraclei* on Hogweed, *Melampsora capraearum* on Grey Willow, *Sphaerotheca plantaginis* on Ribwort Plantain and *Venturia rumicis* on Dock.

This was a fascinating chance to see all the work that has been carried out in the cemetery, during the lifetime of the project, and make our own contribution.

Saturday 22nd July

Arreton Down

What a difference a few days make. After the heat of the previous Tuesday, this was a day full of heavy rain showers. By the afternoon there was a steady light rain, hardly ideal for an afternoon visit, focussed on catching the large population of Chalkhill Blues which can be seen in good years, and offer a breath-taking sight, as they rise up over the downland. What was remarkable was how much was seen by those members who attended. At least eighty Chalkhill Blues were found, often lying at an angle on the surface of the grass, with smaller number of Meadow Browns and Six-spot Burnets. A couple of the abandoned chrysalis cases for the latter were also seen. The grass moth, *Agriphila straminella*, was also found, as were four bumble-bee species, including the Tree Bumblebee, and a Dark Bush Cricket. Yellowhammer and Buzzard were also seen.

Saturday 5th August

Isle of Wight Crematorium

This was an unusual location for a meeting, but the interest of the meeting was considerably enhanced by Bill Shepard's attendance, showing some of the most unusual tree species on the site that he had helped to establish. Of these, the most spectacular, if not the most unusual, was a beautiful example of a Caucasian Wingnut. Conditions were rather dull, which reduced the number of butterflies seen. Speckled Wood, and Holly Blue were found, with a number of Meadow Browns on the more open land and a fine cluster of Peacock caterpillars on nettles at the side of the site. Among the moths seen was the Nettle-tap Moth *Anthophila fabriciana*. There were two new leaf-mine moth records for the site, and other new evidence of *Diptera* and *Acari*, found through the evidence of a range of mines and galls. The leaf-miners recorded which were new for this site were *Stigmella floslactella*, and *Stigmella microtheriella*, both mining Hazel. A number of galls on oak were identified, and it was particularly pleasing to find an example of the rare Cotton-wool Gall, *Andricus quercusramuli*. Some of the most interesting species were on the quieter margins of the site. There was a brief glimpse of what were believed to be Wood Crickets, and the site will need to be rechecked in future years to confirm this. The spectacular large hoverfly *Volucella zonaria* was identified. However, the most striking entomological sight of the day was the

large number of Migrant Hawkers, with at least twenty dragonflies patrolling one of the more sheltered lawns, towards the south-west of the site. Our thanks to the Bereavement Service staff for giving up permission for this meeting.

Tuesday 5th September

Shalfleet Churchyard and Parish Hall field

This was a meeting which was to turn out memorably, but took place in very poor weather. The afternoon featured waves of persistent soaking drizzle, the end of which was frequently forecast by the Met Office, but it only dried up late in the meeting after most of the participants had left. We were grateful to Chloe Sutherland and Hilary Higgins for showing us the churchyard and the adjacent field with its small orchard. We also took advantage of the location to admire the tympanum in one of the wetter interludes in the meeting. The purpose was to find the Box Bug, a species which was for some time confined to Box Hill in Surrey, but the range for which has expanded in recent years. The Box-tree in the churchyard was an obvious starting point, but despite some beating of the leaves did not produce any likely looking candidates. As the rain became steadier and the Box-tree provided less shelter was moved to the south side of the churchyard and while sheltering among the Yews were shown the Yew Tree Gall, which was very common in this area. While the rest of the party had an interesting visit to the orchard, finding a range of commoner species including Red Admiral and an unidentified Scorpion Fly, Stephen Plummer continued to search for the Box Bug in other parts of the churchyard. Not long after the meeting had been abandoned, he emerged with three Box Bugs and a Hawthorn Shield Bug, and so it was good to have their presence confirmed, even if not everyone was able to see an example of what we had been looking for. This however was not the end of the excitement. While sheltering under the Box-tree, the shortage of any insect life was so acute that we were keen to see whether we could find anything at all on the plant. A tiny bark-fly was found, by looking under the leaves of some ivy on the trunk, and we were very fortunate that Stephen Plummer agreed to look into the find in more depth. It turned out to be a new species for the Island, and a very recent arrival (2015) in Europe, from Chile and Patagonia, which glories in the name of *Chilenocaecilius ornatipennis*. In 2015 it was found in County Cork, in 2016, one was found in Devon, and Inverness-shire, and this record is one of a number of new sightings made in 2017. Nothing is too small to deserve its place in the story of how species are adapting to changes in climate and in global movement of goods.



The new find *Chilenocaecilius ornatipennis*, Shalfleet churchyard. Photo Alan Outen

Friday 13th October

Hasely Manor

This meeting, held late in the season, was by kind permission of Anthony and Vivian Roberts. It was held to mark National Moth Night for 2017, the target species for which, nationally, were species attracted by ivy. This was rather a breezy evening, but was a well-attended meeting. The trap itself was dominated by Caddis-flies, which were present in huge quantities. Eight species of moth were seen. Four Setaceous Hebrew Characters, made that species the only one to be seen in any numbers. The other species found were Large Yellow Underwing, Light Brown Apple Moth, a second-brooded Swallow-tailed Moth, Black Rustic, Straw Dot, and Barred Sallow. The highlight was undoubtedly a species which never made it into the trap, and is one of the largest moths that one is likely to be found, the Clifden Nonpareil. In the past this has been called the Blue Underwing, the colour is more like a bluey-lilac. This is an unusual species, but it seems to have done well this year. It is one of the most spectacular species that one can hope to encounter, and it was a fitting end to the Entomological Section's season.

Richard Smout

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY'S REPORT

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Toni Goodley

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General Secretary Ms J. Tolley, 31 Glynn Close, Seaview, IOW. PO34 5JZ

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NEXT BULLETIN

Items for inclusion in the next Bulletin and Reports of Meetings
for 1st January 2018 to 30th June 2018 should be sent to:-

Isle of Wight Natural History & Archaeology Society, Unit 16, Prospect Business Centre,
Prospect Road, Cowes PO31 7AD Email - iwnhas@btconnect.com

The closing date for acceptance of items and reports will be 1st July 2018

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