Southampton Natural History Society

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

SOUTHAMPTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

CONTENTS

	Page
The Year in Brief	1
Outdoor Events	1
Indoor Events	6
Membership Report	8
Looking after Spiny Norman by **David Hubble**	8
Hoverfly Interim Report 2013 by **Phil Budd**	10
Weather Records 2013	13
Members' Records for 2013	15
Flora & Fungi	15
Fauna	20
Never Work With Children ... Or Butterflies by **Jan Schubert**	29

cover photograph:
one of many late flying
Common Darters (*Sympetrum striolatum*)
Mike Creighton November 2013

Southampton Natural History Society
Founded 1907

The Year in Brief

Outdoor Events

On 9th February 5 members set out on a cold and wet day to visit RSPB **Arne Reserve**. It was drier later and they were rewarded with at least 43 species of birds, including 14 Spoonbill from one of the hides, hundreds of Avocet, a Greenshank, a Dartford Warbler (heard), one very tatty Marsh Harrier and about 6 Pintail. Also over 50 Sika Deer were seen, many of them stags.

Closer to home, on 9th March 5 members went to **Mayfield Park** to look at lichens, where they found several common lichens, the most interesting being *Lecanora compallens* and *L. carpinea*. They then visited **Peartree Green** to see the rare Golden-eye Lichen *Teloschistes chrysophthalmus* and identified the moss *Orthotrichum diaphanum* on lime bark.

No Famous Five were available to accompany the leader to **Lord's Wood** on a bitterly cold March 24th, but he saw four male Roe Deer (in velvet) together and Bog Beacon fungus *Mitrula paludosa* and False Morel *Gyromitra esculenta*.

Five members tirned up again for a visit on 6th April to **Langley Wood**, Wiltshire. A mixture of weather: dry and sunny, cold then warm There were some good lichen displays and Primroses and Wild Daffodils in bloom in places. Afterwards the group visited **Redlynch** to see the Wild Tulips, but they were disappointed to find they were still in tight bud. There was a mixture of Winter and Spring species as well with, on the one hand, large flocks of Redwing in Langley Wood, probably eating ivy berries and, on the other, a Chiffchaff singing and several butterflies: Red Admiral, 2 male Brimstone and Orange Underwing Moth.

Veteran tree at Dur Wood

Numbers were up again on 21st April when 11 members visited the privately owned **Dur Wood** (near Upham). The dry weather with hazy sunshine had brought out some flowers: False Oxlip, 4 species of violet including a form of Sweet Violet called *Imberbis* (also Hairy, Wood Dog and early Early Dog Violets) and Forster's Woodrush. As well as several lichens, there was an interesting and attractive moss *Orthotrichum pulchellum*. A Great Spotted Woodpecker drummed. It was too cloudy for butterflies, but not for the many Bee Flies *Bombylius major*, *Osmia* and *Andrena* bees and two Orange Ladybirds. Everything was about three weeks behind.

Disappointingly, numbers were down again when only 4 visited **Roydon Woods** on 27th April, but it was rather cold and showery. Most of the usual spring flowers

were in bloom. The red-veined form of Wood Dock (unusual away from gardens) was found in Newlands Copse and the moss *Hookeria lucens* and Bog Beacon Fungus *Mitrula paludosa* were of interest. There were more than 15 Fallow Deer, including a white individual. Cuckoo and Redstart were both heard singing. There were rather few insects, but one Speckled Wood butterfly in Calveslease Copse. The Wolf Spider *Pardosa saltans* was very common.

Twelve members visited **Yew Tree Heath**, New Forest on 11th May. 21 species of birds were recorded, despite the poor weather, mostly typical New Forest species, including Willow Warbler, Cuckoo, Redstart, Treecreeper, Curlew, Lapwing and Dartford Warbler.

One other member accompanied the leader to **Barton Common**, Christchurch on 19th May That lucky member heard a Whitethroat singing and was treated to a magnificent display of flowers, including Bluebell, Greater Stitchwort, Lousewort and Heath Milkwort. Insects were few, but solitary bees braving the poor conditions included *Andrena flava* and *A. clarkella.* Also two homeless bees *Nomada flava* and some bumble-bees.

Four members pulled on their wellies to visit **Fishlake Meadows**, near Romsey on 26th May. They found a variety of species: a shoal of Rudd and a large Pike, Roe Deer doe, an adult male Slow-worm, 3 Hobbies, a Cuckoo, and the expected warblers including Cetti's Warbler, the alder fly *Sialis lutaria*, the spider *Tetragnatha extensa*, 4 species of butterfly including Green-veined White, Orange-tip and Peacock, and a Downy Emerald Dragonfly. And it was warm and sunny!

It was also warm, dry and sunny when 12 members vitited **Martin Down** on 1st June. 23 bird species included Raven, Whitethroat, Lesser Whitethroat, Yellowhammer, Cuckoo, Bullfinch and Lapwing, but a reported Turtle Dove was missed. Other highlights were 8 species of butterfly including Green Hairstreak, Small Blue and Small Heath. There were four Burnt-tip Orchids in bloom.

There were a couple of walks on **Southampton Common**. On 9th June 7 members found a good display of Common Spotted Orchid on the north side of the narrow tarmac path east of the Ornamental Lake. There were some Ladies Smock by the ditch north of the bend in Cemetery Road. Among the insects were the uncommon sedge-feeding moth *Glyphipterix forsterella*; a full-grown larva of Scalloped Oak Moth, Grousewing Caddisfly *Mystacides longicornis* and Holly Blue butterfly. The uncommon spider *Hyposinga pygmaeus*, with a yellow stripe along its abdomen, was swept from grass. On 7th September about 25 members of the public heard bat expert Erika Dahlberg give a one-hour presentation in the Hawthorns Centre. 2 live male Soprano Pipistrelle's and 1 live Whiskered Bat were shown to the group, who then walked to Cemetery Lake and detected Common Pipistrelle, Daubenton's and possible Noctule Bat.

As well as the wider Common, members walked round the **Old Cemetery** to look at butterflies and flowers. On 2nd June 14 members of the public and 1 SNHS member found 4 butterfly species including Small Tortoiseshell laying eggs on young nettles, some flower beetles on yellow Composites including Thick-legged Flower Beetle and Malachite Beetle, and Three-cornered Leek in full bloom. Some grasses normally found on the chalk were identified: Upright Brome, Downy Oat and Narrow-leaved Meadow Grass. On 7th July the Cemetery produced large numbers of Meadow Brown and both Marbled White and Small Skipper butterflies, but there were no new flower records. The 4th August was very good for butterflies. A male Chalkhill Blue on Bell Heather was a surprise. 9 other species of butterfly included Large Skipper (rare in the cemetery) and Brown Argus (the first for many years). There were also 6-spot Burnet and Silver-Y Moths. On 1st September the butterflies included a late Gatekeeper, 2 Small Copper (on Ling and Devils-bit Scabious) and 7 Holly Blue, the latter mostly on Ling. There was also the amusing sight of a Magpie chasing a Kestrel.

Small Copper

An evening walk at **Shirley Valley** on 13th June attracted only 1 member. Possibly because of the very high pollen count! A plant growing in Shirley Pond was tentatively identified and later confirmed as Lizard's Tail *Saururus cernuus*. Yellow Waterlily was in flower in the pond and a double-flowered Hawthorn was still in bloom nearby. A male 3-spined Stickleback was in Holly Brook. Birds included Blackcap and Great-spotted Woodpecker. Many bumble-bees were seen, especially Early Bumble-bee *Bombus pratorum* and Tree Bumble-bee *B. hypnorum*.

Another evening walk to **Yew Hill** and **Hill Top** Butterfly Reserve on 21st June attracted 9 members who heard both Yellowhammer and Skylark singing. They disturbed several common moth species and saw a flying Small Heath plus one Meadow Brown. A Fragrant Orchid in the new part of the reserve known as Hilltop was unexpected.

On another evening walk at **Sholing Valley** on 28th June 8 members found several fungi seen including Chicken-of-the Woods, Broad-gilled Agaric and Common Stinkhorn. There were many naturalised plants, and in a wet flush unexpected plants like Bristle Club-rush. A male Bullfinch was seen before the start of the walk and a Blackcap was still singing. No butterflies were seen, but there were many new insects for the site. High numbers of Tree Bumble-bee *Bombus*

hypnorum and probable *B. vestalis* were seen and several soldier flies *Chloromyia formosa*.

The day of the Hawthorns coach trip to **Stourhead Gardens** (National Trust) on 14th July was dry, hot and sunny. Most of the species were common: Treecreeper; several common species of butterfly; dragonflies including Brown Hawker and Red-veined Darter on the lake. A Tree Bumble-bee nest was found in a yew tree.

Dusky Sallow

Only 3 members visited **Stoke Park Wood** on 27th July even though it was warm with hazy sunshine and some leaf mines were recorded.

Despite an unusually windy day at **Magdalen Hill Down** on 3rd August, 6 members found several Small Blue in the north down chalk scrape, Chalkhill Blue in large numbers and moths like Dusky Sallow and the micros *Udea lutealis* and *Nemophora metallica*, the hoverflies *Scaeva pyrasti* and *Helophilus trivittatus* and the Pointed Snail *Cochlicella acut*a in the northeast corner of the extension.

A slightly different event took place at **Crockford Bridge** in the New Forest on 11th August. 8 SNHS members and 6 members of the Pond Conservation Society helped the leader Naomi Ewald to conduct a BAP Plant recording form trial. They were shown five key species: Coral Necklace, Marsh Clubmoss, Pillwort, Slender Cicendia and Tubular Water-dropwort, and the rare Hampshire Purslane. Other species recorded included Ruby Bolete *Xerocomus rubellus* and some common dragonflies including Common Darter and Keeled Skimmer.

Pillwort

Keeled Skimmer

Even though it was billed as a joint meeting with the Hampshire Wildlife Trust Havant Group, only the 2 leaders visited Nutbourne in Sussex on 14th September, possibly because it was again cool, cloudy and drizzly. But the pair worked hard, recording 40 species of bird in 3 hours at Nutbourne and Chidham, including a large House Martin movement, at least 4 each of Whinchat and Wheatear, 3 Hobbies, 3 Teal, several Greenshank and 6+ Sandwich Tern. The interesting flora included

Sea Wormwood, Golden Samphire and Lax-flowered Sea Lavender. Invertebrates included 4-spotted Orb-web Spider, Blood-vein Moth and Migrant Hawker. But there were no butterflies due to cloud.

Members at Calshot

The visit to **Calshot** to look at seashore life at low tide on 21st September again proved popular, attracting 10 people. It was overcast but mild and dry. Great assistance in identification was provided by one of the staff at the Oceanography Centre. Most were species that had been seen before, but there were very large numbers of the burrowing anemone *Sagartia troglodytes*. Two spider crabs not found here previously were *Macropodia rostrata* and *Inachus phalangium*, the former covered in seaweed, the latter covered in sponges. An alien red seaweed was found in quantity and identified as *Grateloupia turuturu*, probably from Japan. In the salt marsh the seaweed *Bostrychium scorpoides* was identified. There was quite a lot of bird life including a Mediterranean Gull, 2 early Dunlin and 2 Sandwich Terns.

Another unusual event was held at **Lord's Wood** on 4th June: 'Nocturnal Creatures by Eye Shine'. Sadly, the 4 members saw only a Roe Deer by eyeshine. But they heard Tawny Owls and found the first Fly Agarics of the year.

As it was now fungus season, about 15 members of the public (but no SNHS members) went on a fungus foray to **Steamer Point Wood** and **Town Common**, Christchurch on 9th November. It was bright and dry after heavy rain, but there was not much apart from fungi. However, about 70 species of fungi were found at Town Common/St Catherines Hill including Ear-pick Toadstool *Auriscalpium vulgare* and Rosy Spike *Gomphidius roseus*. There were fewer fungi at Steamer Point Wood.

On 30th November 8 members went birdwatching in the **Durley** area on a chilly but dry and mostly sunny day. They recorded 35 species of bird. A Sparrowhawk plucking post was found at the base of an alder tree north of Durley Mill. Redwing and Fieldfare were about. An inland Herring Gull and 2 Treecreepers were seen in the Brown Heath area. There were a few late fungi such as Wood Blewit, Shaggy Parasol and *Agaricus variegans*. Butchers Broom and Bush Vetch in flower, but very few insects.

Sparrowhawk plucking post

For another winter birdwatching trip, 12 members visited **Eyeworth Pond**, Fritham area, New Forest. It was dry with sunny spells. There were at least 5 (but possibly as many as 15) Mandarin Ducks and 4 Gadwall on Eyeworth Pond. 24 species of birds in total and mostly the usual New Forest species but including Merlin.

The final walk of the year was a Christmas birdwatch in the **Hamble Area** on 28th December. 10 members dragged themselves away from the turkey and Christmas TV and braved the light showers to see 46 species in total. 2 particular highlights were a singing Cetti's Warbler at Westfield Common and a drumming Lesser Spotted Woodpecker in woods by Netley Military Cemetery (both only heard). There were a few Redwing in the Hamble village area, 4 Great Crested Grebe off Hamble Oil Terminal and two drumming Great Spotted Woodpecker. To complete the set of common woodpeckers, Green Woodpecker was also on the list. Hazel catkins were out at Hamble Rail Trail.

A fuller description of each walk, with weather and species seen can be found on our website http://sotonnhs.org/reports.asp

Indoor Events

During 2013 there were again 7 Indoor Meetings held on Monday evenings at the Edmund Kell Hall, Bellevue Road in central Southampton. These meetings were held on Monday evenings in February, March, April (the A.G.M.), September, October, November and December.

Our first indoor meeting of the year took place on 4th February. The weather was mild and dry and this no doubt assisted the all-time record attendance (since we began using Edmund Kell Hall) of 38. One of our own members, Richard Reeves, presented a fascinating lecture on the historical ecology of the New Forest. Richard, who works at the Lyndhurst Museum, probably knows more about the landscape and history of the New Forest from a wildlife perspective than anyone else. We were all surprised about how little we really knew about the new National Park on our doorstep.

On 4th March I launched the Southampton Hoverfly Survey 2013 with a Powerpoint lecture on these familiar yet little known insects. I explained that as many as 50 species are easily recognisable in the field and that very many of these can be found in urban gardens and open spaces. Some species can even fly through the winter. There were detailed guides to the identification of species and summaries of Southampton records so far. 26 people attended this talk and several members took away hoverfly record forms to fill in.

Our A.G.M. took place on 8th April and was attended by 23 members. This was the second Monday as 1st April was Easter Monday. It was a case of 'all change

at the top', with Jan Kidd being thanked for serving successfully as both chair and treasurer for the previous two years. I then took back the responsibility of chairperson and Kirsty Pearman was elected the new society treasurer. Martyn Drabik-Hamshare also joined the committee as an ordinary member, filling the last remaining vacancy. Jan Kidd organised the rest of the night. We held a raffle and there were displays of animal, bird and fish bones donated by Darren Naish and a display of mystery objects. There were two short talks, the first by Barrie Roberts on the Nest Record Scheme and the second by John Vetterlein who talked about the Holywell Estate (near Wickham) and its largely undisturbed wildlife.

The new winter season of Indoor Meetings began on 2nd September and was attended by 23 people. Graham Long, an expert on molluscs in Hampshire, gave a presentation entitled "Snails and Things — An Introduction to Terrestrial Species". This talk covered the entire range of medium to large sized land snails likely to be encountered around Southampton with a few chalk specialities thrown in. One shelled species of slug was mentioned as was the invasive freshwater Asian Clam — one to look out for. There were also specimens of shells on display so that members could obtain an accurate indication of true size for each species.

On 7th October John Notman, of the Salisbury Natural History Society, gave a presentation on Bentley Wood — a site that he is familiar with. Bentley Wood lies on the border of Hampshire and Wiltshire, but most of it is located in the latter county, and is known for its range of rare woodland fritillaries and other butterfly species. John explained that the site is also very rich for fungi and spring flora. In autumn the pink Meadow Saffron 'Crocus' still blooms there, but the Fly Orchid now appears to be extinct in the wood. Again 23 people attended this talk.

Our penultimate talk in 2013 took place on 4th November. The speaker was Geoff Blackford on the subject of "New Zealand — South Island", the venue for a wildlife holiday several years ago. The talk provided an interesting insight to an area unfamiliar to most members and covered a wide range of subject matter. Frustratingly, the presentation was plagued by technical issues and difficulties of various kinds with the equipment. The society sent a donation to the British Lung Foundation as requested by the speaker. Cath Corney and I brought in a display of fossils collected at Barton-on-Sea during a recent trip there. 22 people attended this meeting.

Our last talk of 2013 was a presentation on the status of the Red Kite in Hampshire by Keith Betton, the Hampshire Bird Recorder. Keith explained the national re-introduction programmes for this bird which, even in the 1980s, was still confined to central Wales. Most of the population now expanding in northern Hampshire originate from the introductions to the Chilterns area to our north. I know that my brother Robert, who lives in Reading, regularly sees these birds

over his garden. It is only a matter of time before these birds become commonplace around Southampton. In the question and answer session that followed Keith offered to present another talk on the Peregrine Falcon — I think we will take up that offer. Disappointingly, only 19 attended this talk.

I would like to thank Julian Moseley for organising the talks again this year. Also I would like to thank all of the helpers with the refreshments at our meetings, including Anthea and Vernon Jones, Cath Corney and Sue Channon. A special thank you should extend to all of our speakers.

The society did not hold any special events during the course of 2013.

Talks start at 7.30 pm. For full details of forthcoming talks check our website http://sotonnhs.org/events.asp

Phil Budd

Membership Report

We are pleased to welcome the following who joined (or re-joined) SNHS during 2013, bringing the total to 135 members:

Tony Davis, Emily lles, Martyn Drabik-Hamshare, Ingrid Peckham, Kirsty Pearman, Mary Hatcher & Ewan Organ, Colin Trigg, Katherine Wood, Jenny Mallinson, Katie Smart, Mark Painter, Russell Pearce, Bernie Dempsey, Tara Dempsey, Zoe Newnham, Jon Lea.

Also, with regret we were notified of the death of Dr. Pamela Aihie and send our condolences to her family and friends.

Sue Channon, Membership Secretary

Looking after Spiny Norman
by David Hubble

OK, in case you've not heard of him, Spiny Norman is a giant hedgehog from the Monty Python "Piranha Brothers" sketch. I'm not going to write about offbeat-comedic imaginary hedgehogs, just the real ones you might see in your garden — more precisely the European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* (there are seventeen species worldwide but only this one is found in Britain and last summer it was voted Britain's national species).

Traditionally a common and familiar species, hedgehogs have undergone a serious decline in Britain — this is difficult to measure but has been achieved with work such as the Mammals on Roads Survey and the BHPS 2011 State of Britain's Hedgehogs report. The national population is estimated at around 30 million in 1950 but only 1.5 million by 1995, and a further halving by 2001 in

some areas. The reasons for this major decline are not entirely clear. However, some likely causes include:

- Agricultural intensification, in particular larger field sizes and losses of hedgerows and permanent grassland — also pesticide use which reduces prey availability.
- In urban areas (even small ones such as villages), smaller and tidier gardens with impassable fencing are likely to have reduced the amount of suitable urban habitat.
- (Over)development, not only direct habitat loss, but fragmentation by buildings and roads which leads to local populations becoming isolated and vulnerable to local extinction.
- Increased road use — tens of thousands of hedgehogs are killed by vehicles each year and may be an importance cause of local decline in some areas.
- Competition with badgers (*Meles meles*) — where habitat provides effective cover and foraging opportunities, badgers and hedgehogs can coexist. However, badgers are a natural predator of (and competitor for food with) hedgehogs which therefore avoid sites with large numbers of badgers. But I still think that the badger cull is a bad idea!
- Increased disease levels.

So what can you do?

- If you have a garden, don't be too tidy — allow leaves to accumulate, have a scruffy wildlife area and put in a hedgehog house. I made one out of scrap wood last autumn and it's already got a hedgehog in it. I wouldn't have known except that the current bad weather damaged the roof and I found the hedgehog during (subsequently very careful and quiet) repairs. It really is important to resist the temptation to lift the lid for a peek ...
- Also, if you have a pond (as we do), make sure the sides are not steep all the way around as hedgehog will drown if they fall in and can't climb out — flatten/shallow out at least some of the edge and/or install slipways if you need to.
- If possible, avoid using plastic mesh/netting or leaving plastic bottles, pots, etc.lying around as hedgehogs can get tangled, or get their heads stuck in them (their foraging behaviour means they are naturally inquisitive). Also, don't burn piles of grass mowings or other cut vegetation without checking first for hedgehogs (the same goes for bonfires). Similarly check compost heaps before turning them with a fork to avoid stabbing hedgehogs.
- Also avoid using garden chemicals, including slug pellets, especially the more toxic versions (some are more mammal-friendly).

- Leave some gaps/holes in fencing so hedgehogs can move between and in/out of gardens.
- Don't feed hedgehogs with bread-and-milk — they can't digest it and it makes them ill. If you want to feed them, cat-food is fine. In dry conditions, shallow dishes of water are important too.

I could go on, but there are plenty of online resources, as well as opportunities to get more involved such as the Hedgehog Street project where you can become a Hedgehog Champion, and a variety of voluntary surveys. See the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) website www.ptes.org.

Hoverfly Survey Interim Report 2013
Phil Budd

The Southampton Natural History Society undertook a survey of the hoverflies (*Diptera: Syrphidae*) in and around Southampton in 2013, with an emphasis on records in members' gardens. It was decided that this survey should continue into 2014 because of the unusual weather conditions in 2013, particularly the very cold and late spring. The hot and dry summer also impacted on some species. Hopefully, a fuller summary of results, and possibly a booklet on the hoverflies of Southampton, will be produced in early 2015. This report only summarises those records received and also entered onto Mapmate up to 15th December 2013.

Erratum: Please note that there may have been an uncorrected error on at least some of the posters. '*Volucella intricaria*' should have been labelled *Eristalis intricaria*. This is the species annotated numbers 23 and 24 on the poster.

Only twelve members contributed to this survey and these (excluding myself) are acknowledged below. There were records from 104 sites in an area that included all areas within Southampton and out to a radius of about ten miles from the centre of the city. In total, there were 457 records for 69 species of hoverfly. The species total of 69 represents about 30% of the total Hampshire list. 48 of these species were recorded feeding at flowers and 80 species of flowering plant were identified as nectar sources. The earliest record was dated 11th January and the latest was 23rd November. However, there were several mild, sunny days in mid-December resulting in some of the usual late species being seen then. Since only six recording forms were received, no meaningful analysis can be conducted in relation to either garden size or to the proximity gardens to woodland.

Episyrphus balteatus

Myathropa florea

Of the species shown on the poster there were no records for three: *Chrysotoxum festivum*, *Dasysyrphus tricinctus* and *Volucella bombylans*. *C. festivum* is an uncommon species anyway; *D. tricinctus may* have been affected by the cold spring and *V. bombylans* appears to have had a bad year in 2013 for unknown reasons. All of the other species depicted were recorded at least once during the course of 2013.

Particularly useful data has been received in relation to nectar sources. As stated above, 48 species of hoverfly were recorded on 80 different nectar sources. As would be expected, hoverflies are most commonly observed feeding at flowers. Many 'wild' plants were identified as particularly good nectar sources including buttercup sp., Common Fleabane, Common Ragwort, Devil's-bit Scabious, Fennel, Hogweed, Ivy (native and foreign *Hedera* species), Sea Aster and Water Mint. There were some particularly unusual nectar sources identified amongst garden plants. Flowering shrubs attracting hoverflies included Bay Laurel *Laurus nobilis*, *Nerium oleander* and 'Beauty Bush' *Kolkwitzia sp.* Many other garden plants proved attractive to hoverflies such as the shrubs *Abelia*, *Buddleia*, *Choisya* and *Mahonia* plus smaller species such as *Coriandrum*, *Erica* (especially winter-flowering species), *Euphorbia* and *Lobularia*.

All records were of adult hoverflies and most were daytime sightings. However, there were records for two species at Mercury Vapour lamps at night. These two species were *Episyrphus balteatus* and *Melanostoma mellinum*.

In terms of phenology, the first records were of *Episyrphus balteatus* and *Eristalis tenax* at *Mahonia japonica* at Hinkler Green, Thornhill on 11th January. At the other end of the year all of the November records refer to *Episyrphus* or *Eristalis* species either at ivy *Hedera helix* or *Mahonia sp.* In 2013 late winter and early spring was so horribly cold and dull that there were only 13 hoverfly records received prior to 19th April and no records at all from 6th March to 1st April. Only 'hibernating' species were seen prior to the first appearance of *Myathropa florea* at Mount Pleasant on 29th April. There were no spring *Cheilosia* species until *C. longula* appeared at Warsash Common on 2nd May and the Large Narcissus Fly

Eristalis pertinax

Merodon equestris didn't put in an appearance until one was seen at Hum Hole, Bitterne on 26th May. Other spring species also suffered terribly as there were only three records of *Dasysyrphus sp.*, and no records at all of the normally common *Leucozona lucorum*. *Epistrophe eligans* was also scarce in spring, but there was an unusually late sighting of it at Lower Test Nature Reserve on 4th September. Most of the summer species occurred in more normal numbers, although there were far less *Eristalis sp.* than in 2012 due to the dry and hot weather in July. The large *Volucella* species also appeared to be scarcer than normal, but there was an influx of probable migrants and one such species, namely *Scaeva selenitica* was particularly frequent in 2013. Two other summer species that put on a good showing in 2013 were *Epistrophe grossulariae* and *Leucozona laternaria*.

Mention must be made of some of the most significant records in 2013:

Brachypalpoides lentus — a woodland species seen at Bitterne Road East on 6th June

Callicera aurata — a second Southampton record at bramble blossom at Hum Hole, Bitterne on 24th June

Chrysotoxum cautum and *C. elegans* — both seen in the meadow west of Comarty Pond on 8th/9th June

Didea fasciata — a second record for the hoverfly survey and seen at Hollybrook Cemetery on 12th May

Sphaerophoria rueppellii

Meligramma trianguliferum and *Neoascia podagrica* — both seen in a garden in Hythe on 3rd May and 30th June, respectively

Portevinia maculata — this is a speciality of Ramsons *Allium ursinum*; 10 seen at Marlhill Copse on 26th May

Rhingia rostrata — this is a species on the increase; seen at Warsash on 13th May and Hythe on 16th June

Sphaerophoria batava — genitalia determination used to identify a male specimen at Donkey Common, Bitterne on 22nd May

Sphaerophoria rueppellii — identified at Mount Pleasant on 26th August and at Upper Shirley on 2nd September

Tropidia scita — one seen at Rosemary flowers in a Hythe garden on 6th June

Finally, a thank you for all contributors to the SNHS hoverfly survey in 2013: Andy Barker, Linda Barker, Tony Bates, Mike Creighton, David Hubble, Emily Iles, Jonathan Lea, Sue Lambert, Graham Manchip, Jan Schubert and Dennis Trunecka.

Weather Records 2013
Records made at 488 Bitterne Road East (SU454129), Phil Budd

In summary, 2013 was fairly 'normal' year but slightly colder and wetter than average. Sunshine figures were slightly above average. In terms of the seasons the early winter period was a mix of cold and mild. This was followed by a particularly cold and dull spring. The summer was hot, dry and sunny; overall much the best summer since 2006. The autumn was a 'mixed bag' with no overall pattern and December was mild but very stormy and extremely wet.

I will now summarise the main weather phenomena of 2013:

January 4th: A very warm night; minimum 10.4˚C (11˚C + minima nightly from 2nd to 9th). **January 18th**: Snow fall to a depth of 10.5cm; more snow on 23rd. Thawed on 24th

February 10th: Third-wettest day of 2013; 30mm rain recorded. Sleet followed on 11th. **February 15th to March 6th**: Only 0.1mm rain recorded in 20 days; an exceptionally dry period

March 9th to 10th: Sharp drop in maximum temperature from 13.6˚C (on 9th) to 5.1˚C (on 10th) **March 11th**: Coldest day of 2013; maximum 0.8˚C. Light snowfall recorded. **March 11th/12th**: Coldest night of 2013; minimum -2.9˚C. **March 21st to March 27th**: Only 2 hours sunshine recorded in 7 days. **March 24th**: Maximum temperature 1.1˚C. Coldest day ever recorded after the Vernal Equinox. **March 25th to April 3rd**: 10 concurrent nights of air frost recorded, unusual this late in winter.

April 4th: Rare April snowfall not lying. Maximum 3.7˚C, coldest April day for about 25 years. **April 7th**: Last air frost for 2012/13 winter recorded

May 7th: First day over 70˚F in 2013; maximum 21.4˚C. **May 9th & 14th**: Rare May gale-force winds recorded. Southwesterly gale on 9th and southeasterly gale on evening of 14th.

June 13th: Rare June gales, a westerly gale in early morning following a belt of heavy rain

July: Hottest July since 2006. Driest July recorded and sixth-driest month since 1996

July 5th: First day over 80˚F in 2013; there were an exceptional 20 such days in July 2013. **July 5th to July 21st**: 17 concurrent days with more than 10 hours sunshine recorded. **July 12th to August 31st**: No night minimum below 10˚C recorded in this period. **July 22nd**: An exceptional night minimum temperature of 20.3˚C. Warmest night in 2013

August 1st: Hottest day in 2013 and the hottest day since 19th July 2006; maximum 33.0˚C

September 5th: Unusually hot for a September day; maximum 28.0˚C. **September 22nd to October 5th**: Exceptionally warm nights, no temperature below 11˚C for 13 nights.

October 22nd: 11mm rain fell in just one hour in an evening thunderstorm. **October 28th**: The 'St Jude's Storm'; 31.5 mm rain fell and the wettest day of the year. At 5am a gust of 77mph (hurricane-force) recorded in Southampton and 99mph at The Needles, IOW. **October 30th**: October was very mild; 4.3˚C recorded this morning was the minimum temperature

November 20th: First air frost recorded in Bitterne in 2013/14 winter; minimum -1.2˚C **December**: Wettest month since November 2002 and the second-wettest recorded. An exceptionally windy month. Gales or stronger winds on six dates; force 10 winds on 18th. **December 23rd/24th**: Pressure fell to 973mb. Wind gusts to 80mph in evening of 23rd. **December 24th**: Second-wettest day of 2013; 31.0 mm fell in 24 hours and 46mm in two days. **December 25th**: A brief 'white' Christmas in some places after a heavy hail storm at about 11am

Month	Average maximum temperature		Highest temperature	Average minimum temperature		Lowest temperature	No. of air frosts	No. of wet days	Total rainfall		Sunshine
	ºC	ºF	ºC	ºC	ºF	ºC			mm	in	hrs
Jan	8.1	46.6	14.2	4.4	39.9	-2.0	3	13	108	4.2	64
Feb	6.5	43.7	11.5	1.1	34.0	-1.8	8	8	61	2.4	85
Mar	7.2	45.0	13.6	1.3	34.3	-2.9	11	10	72	2.8	71
Apr	13.4	56.1	20.6	4.1	39.4	-2.3	5	7	38	1.5	159
May	17.3	63.1	21.4	6.9	44.4	2.2	0	8	54	2.1	201
Jun	20.9	69.6	26.6	10.8	51.4	6.7	0	7	35	1.4	208
Jul	26.9	80.4	31.1	14.4	57.9	9.3	0	5	13	0.5	311
Aug	23.8	74.8	33.0	13.9	57.0	10.9	0	9	28	1.1	238
Sep	20.0	68.0	28.0	10.9	51.6	6.1	0	13	39	1.5	140
Oct	17.2	63.0	20.9	10.3	50.5	4.3	0	17	130	5.1	132
Nov	10.4	50.7	16.0	4.7	40.5	-1.2	2	13	76	3.0	97
Dec	9.9	49.8	12.3	4.1	39.4	-0.4	3	18	197	7.8	71
Means/ Totals	**15.1**	**59.2**	**33.0**	**7.3**	**45.1**	**-2.9**	**32**	**128**	**850**	**33.5**	**1776**

Note: A 'wet day' is one on which more than 1mm rain fell.

MEMBERS' RECORDS FOR 2013

This year I decided to make two significant changes to this report, which it is hoped will enable the production of the overall Annual Report to be completed more quickly and efficiently. Firstly, I have decided not to credit every individual record but simply list the contributors in the appropriate section as acknowledgements. The second large change is that I have discarded the full bird records section. Furthermore, the hoverfly records are summarised in the separate report. As in previous years a considerable proportion of the records have been my own. Sightings and reports of flora and fauna (including birds) are updated on an approximately weekly basis throughout the year and later archived. See our web-site: http://sotonnhs.org .

Phil Budd

FLORA AND FUNGI

A lot more information on flora records can be found on certain websites, such as those produced by the Hampshire Fungus Recording Group: www.hampshirefungi.org.uk/, the Wessex Lichen Society: http://wessexlichengroup.org/ and the Flora Group of the Hampshire Wildlife Trust: http://www.hwt.org.uk/pages/-hampshire-flora-group.

I would like to thank the following for their contributions towards the Flora and Fungi Records for 2013: Ginnie Copsey, Cath Corney, Simon Currie, Kathy Emmott, Dave Hubble, Graham Manchip, Maurice Pugh and Dennis Trunecka.

FUNGI

Spring 2013 was very cold and late, and therefore not particularly productive for fungi. Nevertheless, the **Scarlet Elf-cup** *Sarcoscypha sp.* was plentiful with the first sighting at Hall Lands, Fair Oak on 19th February followed by at least 30 seen at Swanwick Reserve on 10th March. Despite the coldness, 5 fruit bodies of **False Morel** *Gyromitra esculenta* were seen in Lord's Wood on 24th March. Spring records of micro-fungi included ***Bisporella pallescens*** on beech at Beacon Hill, Warnford on 17th February; the rust fungus ***Octospora wrightii*** on the moss *Amblystegium serpens* at the same place and date plus a rust fungus on Cowslip ***Peronopsora oerteliana*** at St Catherines Hill, Winchester on 28th April. Additionally, an interesting fungus gall ***Exobasidium japonicum*** was found on *Azalea* at Woolston on 7th November.

Scarlet Elf-cup *Sarcocypha austriaca*

The summer was very dry and, in particular, there were virtually no fungi to be seen in August and early September. Things got going in October and then, with virtual lack of frost, continued on and off to Christmas and the New Year. Unfortunately, due to the number of people picking fungi, we have to be very cautious about disclosing sites. This applies especially in the New Forest area where there is so much public access.

Devil's Fingers *Clathrus archeri*

There were a large number of records from the New Forest area. A very large number of fungi seen at a site on the Headon Beds in the southwest of the New Forest on 12th October including the both **Devil's Bolete** *Boletus satanas* (4 specimens) and its look-alike ***Boletus satanoides*** (=***B.legaliae***) (5 specimens); the rare bolete ***Leccinum melaneum*** and **Birch Web-cap** *Cortinarius triumphans* (30 of this latter species were also seen at Fairthorne Manor, Botley on 15th October). **Devil's Fingers** *Clathrus archeri* was present at Setley from at least 18th October to the 31st October and in good quantity. 2013 was also a very good year for **Nail Fungus** *Poronia punctata* across the New Forest. Also in the New Forest it was an exceptional year for **Wood Hedgehog** *Hydnum repandum* and the rare **Zoned Rosette** *Podoscypha multizonata*, with 3 records of the latter between 28th September and 27th October. 2 rare fungi records were **Snaketongue Truffleclub** *Cordyceps ophioglossoides* and **Scaly Tooth** *Sarcodon squamosus* at a site in the west of the New Forest on 26th October. It was also a good year for the rare ***Hericium*** species in the north and centre of the New Forest, with a new site discovered for ***H. coralloides*** and at least four new localities for ***H. erinaceum.*** Sadly, one fine specimen of *H. erinaceum* in the southeast of the New Forest was 'vandalised'. Both species of 'Piggyback Toadstool' ***Nyctalis sp.*** were seen on rotten *Russula* fruit bodies, including ***N. parasitica*** on private land near Beaulieu on 10th November and ***N. asterophora*** at Exbury Gardens on 13th November. There was also a burst of extraordinary late records in the Stubbs Wood area on 30th December, including ***Craterellus***, ***Cortinarius bolaris***, both ***Hydnum*** species and a large number of ***Lactarius chrysorrheus***.

Podoscypha multizonata

There was a good selection of chalk fungi on the private land at Dur Wood for the Field Meeting of 27th October. Some particularly interesting species included the **Star**

Mycena seynesii

Fibrecap *Inocybe asterospora* and three new site records: ***Lepiota alba***, ***Lycoperdon umbrinum*** and ***Tricholoma orirubens***. There were some interesting records from Hall Lands, Fair Oak including **Rooting Bolete** *Boletus albidus* on 3rd September (not many other fungi about at the time).

Most of the remaining records were from the immediate Southampton area. There were a particularly large number of records from the east of Lord's Wood in October; particular highlights included **Fenugreek Milk-cap** *Lactarius helvus* and several interesting brittle-gills: e.g. ***Russula aurea***, ***R. pulchella***, ***R. turci*** and ***R. virescens***. There were also two potentially outstanding records from this site but sadly not confirmed: *Boletus rhodopurpureus* and *Ossicaulis lignatilis*. Elsewhere there were two new records for Southampton Old Cemetery: **Giant Puffball** *Calvatia gigantea* and **Pale Chanterelle** *Cantharellus cibarius var. ferruginascens*. Two interesting records of bird's-nest fungi were ***Crucibulum leave*** on bark mulch by Bursledon Road, Thornhill on 4th November and ***Cyathus olla*** under cypress trees at Mayflower Park on 12th December. Three other records of particular interest were ***Ganoderma resinaceum*** on Holm Oak *Quercus ilex* at Bitterne Church on 11th October; ***Mycena seynesii*** on a Monterey Pine cone by Moorhill Road on 19th October and ***Pholiota aurivella*** at the base of a Horse Chestnut at East Park, Southampton on 13th December.

LICHENS

In the 2012 report I reported the discovery of the very rare national Biodiversity Action Plan lichen **Golden-eye Lichen** *Teloschistes chrysophthalmus* on an apple tree by the railway line at Peartree Green on 5th January (2013). There were fears for this specimen after two bad fires in the area in summer but on 29th December the lichen was found to have survived. Despite determined searches, no other specimens of this lichen have been found in the Southampton area to date. However, there are numerous records from more coastal locations in Hampshire. 2 other particularly interesting lichen records in 2013 were ***Arthopyrenia analepta*** on Wild Service Tree *Sorbus torminalis* at Catlands Copse, Manor Farm Country Park on 20th February (expertly determined) and ***Ramalina canariensis*** in a hawthorn hedge at Lordshill Recreation Ground on 29th March.

Golden-eye Lichen

BRYOPHYTES

The highlight of the year was my discovery of the tiny liverwort ***Cephaloziella baumgartneri*** on old mortar on the shady north side of Netley Abbey ruins on 9th March. John Norton made a tentative identification, which was then expertly confirmed and is a first for Hampshire. Other species seen at Netley Abbey on 9th March included the liverwort ***Porella platyphylla*** and the mosses ***Scorpiurium circinatum*** (well known here) and ***Tortella tortuosa***. 3 other interesting moss records early in the year were ***Orthotrichum cupulatum*** on Old Northam Bridge on 4th January; ***Tortella flavovirens*** on a ditch bank by the River Hamble at Swanwick on 1st March and ***Scleropodium touretii*** at Weston Shore on 9th March (identified by John Norton).

VASCULAR FLORA

Native Species

On the evening field meeting at Weston Common, Sholing on 28th June an interesting acidic wet flush was discovered and is a remnant of the original wet heath vegetation. Two particularly interesting plants found surviving at this site were ***Bristle Club-rush*** *Isolepis setacea* and **Bulbous Rush** *Juncus bulbosus*. A single plant of **Yellow-horned Poppy** *Glaucium flavum* was an interesting find at Windy Bay, Northam on 11th September, but it appears that **Wormwood** *Artemisia absinthium* is now extinct at this site. On the western side of Southampton two interesting records were dated 10th July. These were the hybrid woundwort ***Stachys x ambigua*** (***S. palustris x sylvatica***) at Coxford Copse, Shirley and **Orpine** *Sedum telepium* at Nursling Plantation near Aldermoor Road. There is a remnant acid woodland flora at the latter location, despite its urban setting, which includes **Common Cow-wheat** *Melampyrum pratense*. Further afield, interesting records included **Mistletoe** *Viscum album* on birch at Warsash (an unusual host for this species) on 7th April; 3 plants of the red-veined form of **Wood Dock** *Rumex sanguineum var. sanguineum* at Newlands Copse, Roydon Woods on 27th April and the first-ever record of **Fragrant Orchid** *Gymnadenia conospea* at Hill Top, Yew Hill near Winchester on 21st June.

Rumex sanguineum var. sanguineum

Non-native Species

On 1st October a strip of dumped soil along Doncaster Drove, Eastleigh (along the entrance to Lakeside Country Park) proved to be a happy hunting ground for botanists, although it was all cut down a few days later. Species seen here included 7 plants of **Safflower** *Carthamus tinctorius* plus **Coriander** *Coriadrum sativum*, a purple-stemmed form of **Green Bristle Grass** *Setaria viridis* and **Niger** *Guizotia abyssinica*. Earlier in the year some other interesting records included a large colony of **Few-flowered Leek** *Allium paradoxum* (the only site in Southampton) established by Highfield Road on Southampton Common on 5th May; 50 plants of **Compact Brome** *Anisantha madritensis* at Ocean Terminal, Southampton on 6th May; a new site for **Shetland Mouse-ear Hawkweed** *Pilosella flagellaris subsp. flagellaris* at Hollybrook Cemetery on 8th June (perhaps 50 plants in total) and **Abraham, Isaac and Jacob** *Trachystemon orientale* by the Copse Lane, Hamble Common on 11th June. 4 more records, of particular interest, later in the year were 5 plants of **Coral Sprurge** *Euphorbia coralloides* in scrub at Monks Brook Greenway on 12th July; 11 plants of **Atlas Poppy** *Papaver atlanticum* on the grass bank of Old Northam Bridge on 11th September; a second colony (downstream of the first) of **Lesser Knotweed** *Persicaria campanulata* at Bassett Wood on 23rd October and a 2-foot tall (and apparently self-sown) plant of **Fatsia** *Fatsia japonica* by a damp woodland path at Hamble Cliff on 28th December.

Atlas Poppy

Coral Spurge

FAUNA

I would like to thank the following for their contributions to the Fauna Records for 2013: Andy Barker, Linda Barker, Tony Bates, Rowan Bright, Peter Burford, Andy Collins, Ron Cooke, Ginnie Copsey, Cath Corney, Mike Creighton, Simon Currie, Kathy Emmott, Graham Harrison-Watts, Mary Hatcher, John Horne, Dave Hubble, Mark Jackson, Sue Lambert, Jonathan Lea, Graham Manchip, Dave Munday, Rose Nicole, Mark Painter, Josh Phangurha, Keith Plumridge, Kate Reeves, Martin Smith, Anna Stewart, David Stewart, Chris Sykes, Dennis Trunecka, John Vetterlein, Julie Watson, Andy Welch and Paul Winter.

MOLLUSCA AND CRUSTACEA

Irish Yellow Slug

There were some interesting records of slugs, particularly **Durham Slug** *Arion flagellus* at Telegraph Woods, West End on 3rd April and **Irish Yellow Slug** *Limacus maculatus* at Kendall's Wood, Thornhill Park on 4th November. The latter species was also seen at Warwickslade in the New Forest on 31st October and is now widespread in the central New Forest west of Lyndhurst (Graham Long, pers. comm.). Of the crustaceans the **Lawn Shrimp** *Arcitalitrus dorrieni*, the only terrestrial amphipod in the Southampton area, was recorded in several locations in the east of city in spring. These records included some at Dumbleton's Copse, Thornhill on 30th March (4 under a log and initially identified by Dave Hubble) followed by more at nearby Hightown on 2nd April and at Kendall's Wood, Thornhill Park on 15th April (5 seen here).

ARACHNIDA

The spread of the tube-web spider ***Segestria florentina*** in the Southampton area appears to be quite dramatic and there is evidence that this species may be ousting the common *Amourobius* spiders from their webs in walls and buildings (Dennis Trunecka, pers. comm.). There were records of this species at West End, Thornhill Park, Little Lances Hill at Bitterne (4 adults seen on webs — the highest number), Bitterne Road East and Sholing Valley Study Centre between 7th July and 27th October. This species was previously recorded in Bishopstoke and at Maybush in 2011 (see Annual Report 2011). At the known Thornhill Park site 8 immature ***Atypus affinis*** spiders were recorded on 15th April. At this same site other interesting records of spiders recorded through the year included ***Araniella opisthographa***, ***Harpactea hombergi***, ***Lepthyphantes tenuis***, ***Micaria pulicaria*** (also recorded on two dates at Netley Common), ***Oonops domesticus***, ***Pardosa armentata*** (on the very late date of 7th December), ***Pseudeuophrys lanigera*** (also recorded at Bitterne Road East) and ***Scotophaeus blackwalii***. 3 other interesting records were a female ***Evarcha falcata*** at Gypsy Mile, Lord's Wood on 19th June; ***Hypsosinga pygmaea*** near the Boating Lake on Southampton Common on 9th June and ***Lepthyphantes minutus*** at the Cricketer's Inn, Curdridge on the very late date of 20th December.

INSECTS

2013 was a considerably better year for insects than was 2012, despite the cold, wet and late spring. The hottest summer since 2006 with a particularly hot July, provoked an instant positive response. It was an excellent year for Lepidoptera in particular and also the Hemiptera and Coleoptera showed some positive response. However, it was not quite a good year for some Diptera as much of the summer was rather dry. The very mild autumn and start to winter enabled many insects to remain active very late. There was also some insect activity very early in the year before the cold weather between mid-January and mid-April kicked in.

Collembola (springtails)

A survey of these was conducted at Beacon Hill, Warnford on 17th February and the following species were found in various habitats: ***Ceratophysella bengtssoni***, ***Leptocyrtus cyaneus***, ***Neanura muscorum*** and ***Tomocerus vulgaris***.

Odonata

Two particularly interesting damselfly records were of **scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly** seen at a site in Nursling on 16th May and **Small Red Damselfly** (confirmed from a photograph) at Old Bursledon on 16th July. The first **Large Red Damselfly** record this year was at Bishopstoke on 30th April, a very late 'first' date and evidence of the very cold early spring. 3 late individuals of Large Red Damselfly were seen at Highbridge Farm, Bishopstoke on 21st July. The earliest adult dragonfly report this year didn't happen until 16th May, this was of **Broad-bodied Chaser** at Sheepwash Pond, East End in the New Forest, although a nymph **Black-tailed Skimmer** was identified in a pond at Milkmead Copse in the Lower Itchen Valley on 23rd April. The latest reports were of **Common Darter** at Exbury Gardens on 13th November and of 2 of the same species at Lakeside Park, Eastleigh on 15th November. A late **Broad-bodied Chaser** was seen at Gypsy Mile, Lord's Wood on 7th August. 2 other interesting dragonfly records were of a fighting pair of **Hairy Dragonfly** at Gypsy Mile, Lord's Wood on 2nd June and a record of **Keeled Skimmer** at Old Bursledon on 13th July.

Small Red Damselfly

Hemiptera, Homoptera and Neuroptera

2013 didn't seem to be a particularly good year for shield-bugs but was quite productive for other Hemiptera. In particular, the autumnal Mirid bug ***Pantilus tunicatus*** was numerous and a link between this species and alders was established. 4 adults and 1 nymph of this species was found on Common Alder

Alnus glutinosus at Titchfield Haven on 20th September and a very late adult seen on Grey Alder *A. incana* in central Bitterne on 15th November. Also there were records of **Andromeda Lacebug** *Stepanitis takeyei* on comfrey in a Bishopstoke garden on 9th July; the flower bug ***Temnostethus gracilis*** and the **Bracken Bug** *Monalocoris filicis* in a garden at Thornhill Park on 15th August and 10th November, respectively, plus the Mirid bug ***Megacoelum infusum*** (amongst other species) at U.V. light in a central Bitterne garden on 1st August. The most interesting Homoptera record was of three female ***Diptropis pteridis*** identified on bracken during the field meeting at Weston Common on 28th June. There were two brown lacewing (Neuroptera) records of interest received: ***Micromus variegatus*** in a Thornhill Park garden on 26th August and ***Hemerobius humulinus*** at Telegraph Woods, West End on 28th August. The site http://micropics.org.uk proved very useful in the determination of these species.

Lepidoptera: Butterflies

The earliest records of selected species were as follows:

Brimstone at Bitterne, Lord's Wood and Shirley on 5th March

Comma at Donkey Common, Bitterne and Thornhill Park Wood on 5th March

Holly Blue at a Bishopstoke garden on 1st May

Orange-tip near Milkmead Copse, Itchen Valley on 23rd April

Peacock near Cromarty Pond and at Lord's Wood on 16th April

Red Admiral at Hinkler Green, Thornhill on 11th January

Small Tortoiseshell near Cromarty Pond on 2nd April

Speckled Wood near Shirley Pond on 25th April

Clouded Yellow

The latest dates of selected species are as follows:

Brimstone at Southampton Common on 28th October

Clouded Yellow at Lepe on 10th November

Comma at Lepe on 10th November

Large Skipper at Gypsy Mile, Lord's Wood on 10th September

Orange-tip at Gypsy Mile, Lord's Wood on 16th July (second brood?)

Peacock a drowsy one at Mincingfield Lane, Durley on 20th November (the last one seen actually flying was at Riverside Park on 12th November)

Red Admiral at Stagsbury Hill, New Forest and at Rownhams on 26th December

Ringlet very late at Gypsy Mile, Lord's Wood on 21st August
Small Copper at Wootton in the New Forest on 12th October
Small Tortoiseshell near Coxford Copse, Shirley on 8th October
Speckled Wood at Hum Hole, Bitterne on 30th October

Monarch Butterfly

There was certainly some migrant butterfly activity this year with 20 records (of 29 individual) **Clouded Yellows** reported. The first was a male at Warsash Common on 6th August and the last one was seen on the 10th November (see above). The penultimate record was near Coxford Copse in the Shirley Valley 8th October. One was seen on *Buddleia* in a Thornhill Park garden on 7th August and there were 3 records at Monks Brook Greenway on 12th August and Grange Fields, Netley on 4th September. Two much rarer migrants were also recorded, with a record each actually within Southampton's borders: **Long-tailed Blue** on Southampton Common on 24th September (another Long-tailed Blue seen in a garden at Bishopstoke on 26th August) and a spectacular **Monarch** photographed on *Buddleia* at Burgess Road, Swaythling on 3rd August (there was also a report from Hythe and another in a Bishopstoke garden on 28th July). The hot weather also encouraged the movement of mobile species away from their usual habitats and there were 2 reports of **Chalkhill Blue** in Southampton: a male on Bell Heather *Erica cinerea* at Southampton Old Cemetery on 4th August and another (or the same individual) at the nearby Hawthorns Centre on 9th August.

As part of a project to assess the status of butterflies in Southampton open spaces and taking advantage of the good summer weather, there was more recording of the common species than usual. As a result, a new site for **Silver-washed Fritillary** was discovered at Nursling Plantation, Aldermoor on 10th July and **Small Heath** at Netley Common (three on 7th August) were the first for many years. 3 **Brown Argus** were seen in Southampton Old Cemetery on 15th August (with 1 there on 7th August) and another seen at Monks Brook Greenway on 19th August. A **Dark Green Fritillary** was

Brown Argus

reported in the south of Southampton Common in July (exact date unknown) and, further afield, this species was seen at Wootton Coppice Inclosure in the New Forest on 4th July. Also further afield a male **Purple Emperor** was reported drinking from standing water at Otterbourne Pumping Station on 24th July and **Wall** still survives on the Hampshire coast with 4 reported at Pennington on 12th October. However, 2013 doesn't appear to have been a particularly good year for **White Admiral** or hairstreak species around Southampton.

Lepidoptera: Moths

Generally 2013 was a good year for moths and, in particular, moth numbers. However, one observer reported a particularly disappointing season in his garden at Sholing. As for the butterflies there were some migrant moths about, the most spectacular being a **Clifden Nonpareil** (actually a potential resident) resting on brickwork in the Itchen Valley at Highbridge Farm on 14th September (seen by someone luckier than I am). Also there was **Gem** at U.V. light in central Bitterne on 17th June and **Vestal** at Southampton Old Cemetery on 7th October, but only one **Hummingbird Hawkmoth** report at *Abelia* at Catisfield, Fareham on the late date of 7th November. On the subject of lateness, the final **Vapourer (Moth)** report was seen at Archery Road Recreation Ground, Woolston on 19th October.

In terms of nocturnal light-trapping, there were several new records from a central Bitterne garden through the year including the macro-moths **Scarce Silver-lines** on 8th July and ***Phoenix*** on 20th July. New micro-moths from this site included an attractive species associated with cypresses, ***Argyresthia cupressella***, on 6th June and ***Dichrorampha acuminitana*** on 6th June; ***D. petiverella*** and ***Grapholita tenebrosana*** on 8th July and **Large Pale Clothes Moth** *Tinea pallescentella* on 19th June. An interesting record at U.V. light at Calmore Road, Totton on 18th October was **Figure-of-Eight**. In a garden at Holbury 2 very early records at Actinic light on 5th January were **Rush Veener** and **Hebrew Character**. A micro-moth ***Scrobipalpa costella*** was identified at Actinic light at Holbury on 30th January. Macro-moths at U.V. light and new to this same Holbury garden included **Chinese Character** on 30th May; **Ghost Moth** on 30th June and **Beautiful Snout**, **Cream-bordered Green Pea** and **Dingy Shears** all on 15th July. A few other records, all of micro-moths elsewhere, included ***Pammene germmana*** at a 'bioblitz' at Manor Farm Country Park on 15th June; ***Pammene aurita*** (an overlooked species on Sycamore) at Hum Hole, Bitterne on 24th June; the plume ***Platyptilia pallidactyla*** on ragwort at Peartree Green on 13th July and ***Tachystola acroxantha*** at a lighted window at Thornhill Park on 17th October. Moth leaf-mine records included the uncommon ***Bohemannia quadrimaculella*** (larvae seen) on Italian Alder *Alnus cordata* at Southampton Sports Centre on 23rd October; blotch-mines of ***Incurvaria pectinea*** on hazel leaves at Stoke Park Wood on 27th July and mines of ***Phyllonorycter messaniella*** in Cork Oak *Quercus suber* leaves at East Park, Southampton on 26th March.

Hymenoptera

For the more common Hymenoptera I thought it would be a useful exercise to present some of the earliest and latest dates of records.

The earliest records of selected species were as follows:

Andrena cineraria **(Grey Mining Bee)** at East Park, Southampton on 22nd April

Andrena fulva **(Tawny Mining Bee = Lawn Bee)** at Bishopstoke (3 seen) on 23rd April

Anthophora plumipes **(Hairy-footed Flower Bee)** at *Pulmonaria* at Dunkirk Road, Lordswood on 2nd April

Colletes hederae **(Ivy Mining Bee)** at Bitterne Bypass on 9th September

Lasioglossum calceatum in a Bishopstoke garden (4 seen) on 8th August

Vespa crabro **(Hornet)** at Highbridge Farm, Bishopstoke on 25th May (caught in mid-air by a Pied Wagtail)

Vespula vulgaris **(Common Wasp)** at Church Road, Bishopstoke (2 seen) on 19th February

The latest dates of selected species are as follows:

Andrena cineraria **(Grey Mining Bee)** at Warsash Common on 14th November! A female was seen in 'hibernation'.

Bombus lapidarius **(Red-tailed Bumble-bee)** at Hum Hole, Bitterne on 30th October

Bombus pascuorum **(Dead-nettle Carder Bee)** on *Fuchsia* and *Salvia* at Exbury Gardens on 13th November

Colletes hederae **(Ivy Mining Bee)** at Marston Road, Thornhill (5 in nesting area) and 2 at different sites in Bitterne and on ivy. All were seen on 4th November.

Lasioglossum calceatum at ragwort near Cromarty Pond, Lordshill on 16th September

Vespula vulgaris **(Common Wasp)** on ivy at Lances Hill, Bitterne on 9th December

There were a number of other interesting records of adult bees including a first record of **Fork-tailed Flower Bee** *Anthophora furcata* on Hedge Woundwort *Stachys sylvatica* in a central Bitterne garden on 5th July; ***Coelioxys rufescens*** (a parasite associated with the leaf-cutter *Megachile centuncularis*) at Bishopstoke on 6th June; a male ***Hylaeus communis*** at alpine plants in the same Bishopstoke garden on 2nd August; the only record of the parasitic spring bee ***Melecta albifrons*** this year near St James Church, West End on 8th June and the unmistakable **Two-toned Mason Bee** *Osmia bicolor* in unexpected habitat at Frog's Copse, Townhill on 26th May. 21 adults of the small parasite ***Monodontomerus obscurus*** were hatched from Red Mason Bee *Osmis rufa* cocoons at Bishopstoke on 22nd June. 2013 was an outstanding year for Hymenopteran galls on oak *Quercus sp*. Three particularly interesting records were of numerous **Smooth**

Spangle Galls *Neuroterus albipes* on oak leaves at Stoke Park Wood on 27th July and the oak bud gall ***Andricus corruptrix*** and acorn gall ***A. legitimus***, both at Abbotstone Down, on 18th September.

Diptera (except hoverflies)

There was a very large increase in the number of sightings of **Spotted Bee-fly** *Bombylius discolor* this year following the record of one in a Chandler's Ford garden on 21st April 2012. There appear to be two main colonies in the northwest of Southampton at Hollybrook Cemetery and at Southampton Sports Centre. At the former locality four were seen on *Pulmonaria sp*. and Primrose *Primula vulgaris* in the centre of the cemetery on 25th April with one remaining there on 12th May. At the latter site three were found around the banks of the cricket pitches on the eastern side on 25th April. This fly seems to be associated with *Andrena* bees nesting in the terraced banks at both of these localities. At an even earlier date one was seen with two **Common Bee-fly** *Bombylius major* in the centre of Lord's Wood, probably representing another colony. Further afield one was seen at Sparsholt College, on the chalk west of Winchester, on 22nd April. **Common Bee-fly** *Bombylius major* appeared late this year and the only prior to the Lord's Wood sightings (see above) was of one at Rosemary *Rosmarius officinalis* at Hollybrook Cemetery on 2nd April.

An interesting dipterous gall to look out for on leaves of Robinia *Robinia pseudacacia* is caused by the **Black Locust Gall Midge** *Obolodiplosis robiniae*; this species was found in Southampton Old Cemetery on 10th July. A leaf-mining fly ***Mycomya marginata*** was observed emerging from a pupa at Thornhill Park on 14th February. There were a number of interesting records of adult flies. Soldier Fly records included three ***Beris vallata*** in a Bishopstoke garden on 22nd June; the large yellow and black centurion fly ***Stratiomys potamida*** in a Chandler's Ford garden near to Hocombe Mead on 13th July and a very late ***Sargus bipunctatus*** at Hum Hole, Bitterne on 16th October. 2 more records from the same Chandler's Ford garden as above were the **St Mark's Fly** *Bibio hortulanus* on 8th June and **Common Awl Robber-fly** *Neoitamus cyanurus* at Actinic light on 15th July. A female of the **St Mark's Fly** *Bibio johannis* was identified from a Thornhill Park garden on 24th April and 2 of the attractive yellow picture-winged fly ***Chaetorellia jaceae*** were seen on *Centaurea* in a Bishopstoke garden on 5th June.

Stratiomys potamida

Coleoptera (Beetles)

Something that was very striking in 2013 was the virtual lack of beetle records prior to May, due to the very cold spring. However, at the other end of the season there were some very late beetle records including the sexton beetle ***Silpha atrata*** active in Stubbs Wood, New Forest on 30th December! 2 more interesting New Forest beetle records were of the sexton beetle ***Dendroxena quadrimaculata*** at Denny Wood on 31st May and two **Rhinoceros Beetles** *Sinodendron cyclindricum* at Eyeworth Wood on 4th July. The other striking feature of 2013 was the explosion of records of the formerly scarce **Welsh Chafer** *Hoplia philanthus*. Nothing could prepare 2 of our members for the emergence of an estimated 2,000 of these chafers from their (completely destroyed) lawn. The scene of the 'crime' was St Giles Hill, Winchester on 21st June and it is of interest that there were also records from nearby Magdalen Hill Down. This beetle continues to increase in the Southampton area with records in a central Bitterne garden on 5th July and at Frog's Copse Meadow on 12th July.

There were quite a number of Carabid (ground beetle) records, but space prohibits their full inclusion. Of particular note, however, the **Violet Ground Beetle** *Carabus violaceus* seems to be much less recorded these days. Nevertheless, one was seen dead at Lower Swanwick Road on 4th July. 2013 appeared to be a good year for aquatic beetles. In a pond at Milkmead Copse, Itchen Valley numerous ***Haliplus ruficollis*** were seen on 1st May and ten ***Ilybius ater*** diving beetles seen in a Chandler's Ford pond on 6th June. Large numbers of the uncommon beetle ***Heterocerus fenestratus*** were identified at U.V. light in a central Bitterne garden on 6th and 17th June and then the aquatic beetle ***Helophorus aequalis*** identified at U.V. light in the same location on 8th July (both confirmed by Michael Salmon). A male of the large diving beetle ***Dytiscus semisulcatus*** was found at Wootton Coppice Inclosure on 4th July. The attractive blood-red click beetle ***Ampedus sanguinolentus*** was recorded at Warsash Common on 13th May and then at Netley Common on 31st May. 2013 was quite a good year for ladybirds with records of 2 micro-ladybirds: ***Scymnus frontalis*** at Warsash Common on 6th August and 2 ***S. auritus*** at Hum Hole, Bitterne on 21st August; also **Larch Ladybird** ***Aphidecta obliterata*** hibernating in a Sweet Chestnut *Castanea sativa* case at Thornhill Park on 21st October. There were several records of the apparently increasing longhorn beetle ***Leptura quadrifasciata***, but the most unusual location was one at Somerset Avenue, Bitterne on 22nd July. Another increasing species of

Dytiscus semisculatus

longhorn beetle in Southampton area is **Tawny Longhorn** ***Paracorymbia fulva*** and this species was recorded at Aldermoor Road (3 on bramble flowers) on 10th July and 1 seen near to Cromarty Road Ponds on 27th July. 2 other records of interest were of the uncommon longhorn beetle ***Judolia cerambyciformis*** feeding at *Hebe* flowers at 5.15 pm on 26th June in a Chandler's Ford garden and the reed beetle ***Donacia semicuprea*** at Highbridge Farm water meadows on 21st July.

VERTEBRATES

Amphibians and Reptiles

The earliest spawning report of **Common Frog** was at Holbury on 12th February followed by spawning at Highbridge Farm, Bishopstoke on 16th February. On 26th August a **Marsh Frog** was seen and heard calling at Shatterford, New Forest. There were reports of immature **Common Toad** at Parkhill Inclosure, New Forest on 11th May and at Whiteley Pastures on 15th September. 4 **Palmate Newts** were found in acid pools at Parkhill Inclosure on 11th May and a Smooth Newt well away from any ponds at Telegraph Wood, West End on 28th August. There was evidence of **Smooth Newt** breeding at a St Mary's Road, Bishopstoke garden and at Highbridge Farm also. With regard to reptiles, the most interesting record for 2013 was of 2 **Adders**, 1 of them black, at a possibly previously unknown site in the Eastleigh area on 18th September.

Adders

Marsh Frog

Birds

As stated in the introduction, there is no systematic bird report this year. The primary reasons for this are the requirement to save space and also the fact that bird records are so extensively and thoroughly recorded and reported elsewhere. There are numerous sites where up-to-date and/or thorough information on birds can be found, including the annual Bird Report and the quarterly Kingfisher magazine (I am currently the editor of this) produced by the Hampshire Ornithological Society: www.hos.org.uk/. There are also a lot of up-to-date sightings on the web, including our own site: www.sotonnhs.org/ and, particularly the Hampshire Going Birding site: www.goingbirding.co.uk/hants/.

Mammals

Perhaps the most bizarre sighting of 2013 was of a live **Mole** (it might not have survived for long) crossing the A27 at Chilworth in mid-afternoon on 16th November. Other interesting records included a **Water Shrew** at Hocombe Mead, Chandler's Ford on 7th May, signs of **Otter** in the Highbridge Farm area on 26th January and 2 New Forest reports of **Muntjac** at Wootton Coppice Inclosure on 4th June and at Crabhat Inclosure on 1st September. There were also numerous records of seals and the 2 species have a distinct seasonal bias with **Grey Seal** sightings in the summer as opposed to **Common Seal**, which is mostly seen in the winter. Despite this trend there was a report of a Grey Seal on the River Itchen by the Centurion Industrial Park on 28th December.

Snow on Southampton Common

Photographs by: Andy Barker, Phil Budd, Ginnie Copsey, Mike Creighton, Simon Currie, Peter Ellison, John Horne, Josh Phangurha, Maurice Pugh, Dennis Trunecka

Never Work With Children ... Or Butterflies
Jan Schubert

I went to see a play in Basingstoke. A Tortoiseshell Butterfly had been hibernating somewhere on set and was woken by a scene change. It flew round the auditorium, landed on the walls of the set, and was fascinated by a Persian carpet, more and more of the audience spotting it. Finally it became too distracting for the Actor and he tried to trap it under his bowler hat and missed. It landed on the Actress's angora sweater. She yelped and the butterfly set off on another circuit, arriving back in the same place. This time the Actor succeeded in placing his hat over the butterfly on her chest — Carry On-style. Now what to do? He removed the hat and the butterfly flew off again and landed on the wall — "Never work with animals", he said. Someone in the audience shouted out "It's behind you!" and he trapped it under his hat on the wall. He was now stuck with his hand on the bowler on the wall. The Actress looked around and found a large blue and white pottery vase and they trapped the butterfly inside with the bowler on top. By now they had both completely lost the plot. Luckily a member of the audience shouted out the last line. When the Actor next went off stage he took vase and hat with him to a huge round of applause. They should have kept the butterfly in the play ... it was by far the best bit!

SOUTHAMPTON NATURAL HISTORY SOCIETY

President:	Mr C Packham
Chairman:	Mr P Budd 488 Bitterne Road East, Bitterne Southampton SO18 5EP Tel. 80444172 e-mail: philipbuddathos@hotmail.com
Secretary:	Dr J E Schubert 24 Blackberry Terrace, Bevois Valley Southampton SO14 0ED Tel. 80229371 e-mail: schubertje@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Ms K Pearman Flat 4, Bath Court 539 Bitterne Road East, Bitterne, Southampton SO18 5EQ e-mail: kirstypearman@hotmail.co.uk
Membership Secretary:	Ms S Channon 12D Farmery Close Southampton SO18 2JX Tel. 80368657 e-mail: Sue.Channon@sky.com
Field Meetings Secretary:	Mr J Moseley 35 Greenway Court, Seacole Gardens Southampton SO16 6PN Tel. 80779850
Recording Officer:	Mr P Budd
Committee Members:	Mr M Drabik-Hamshare, Mr G Manchip, Mr J Poland, Ms V Russell
Editor:	Dr J Schubert

Registered Charity 264662

Website: www.sotonnhs.org

Printed by Printdomain, Rotherham