



Oakley Woodlands Group

Newsletter No. 54 July 2010



SPOTTED ORCHIDS

If you didn't visit Cowdown Copse in June, you won't have seen our



Common Spotted Orchids

Spotted orchids are just one of the OWG's success stories. When work started in Cowdown in 1997 the number of orchids was in the twenties. Once again this summer we counted over three hundred. And they're spreading - from the main ride into the other paths in the wood.

Our practice of opening up glades and widening and maintaining the paths and rides is paying off. By enabling sunlight to reach the woodland floor we have encouraged many more plants and insects into the area.

There is a lot to see in our copses on sunny days in July and August, so if you have an hour or so to spare, why not enjoy a stroll in the woods



Honeysuckle

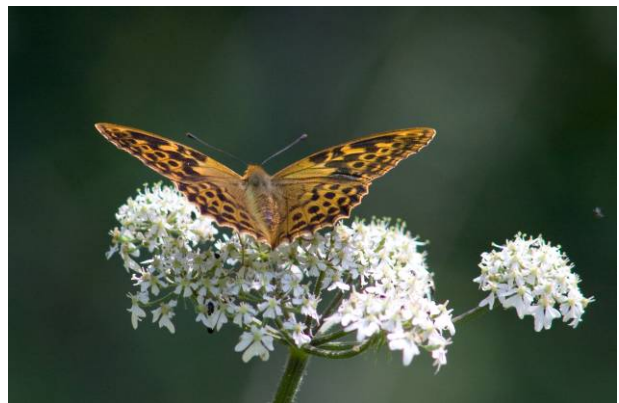
BUTTERFLY SURVEY 2010

We are at the mid point of our butterfly transects for 2010. The survey started in April when only a handful of butterflies were active. Gradually the days got warmer and so did the number of butterflies we observed.



White admiral

At the end of June we saw our first marbled white (in perfect condition) and then, as we entered July, white admirals and silver washed fritillaries appeared. The number of butterflies observed during the first week of July was over 100!



Silver washed fritillary

To get a rough idea of how well these lovely creatures are fairing in our woods we are comparing the number of species seen this year with those recorded in 2000. There are only three species we have yet to observe to equal those on the 2000 list. A detailed account of the 2010 survey will be published when transects are completed at the end of September.

ROYAL FORESTRY SOCIETY COMPETITION

This year the OWG entered a woodland competition organised by the Royal Forestry Society. The competition is run annually on an area basis and it was Hampshire's turn this year.

The group made a submission to the RFS and this was followed by an inspection visit to St. John's and Cowdown in June.

In preparation, paths were cleared and the woods were given a general tidy up - but without affecting the copses' natural woodland appearance. Refreshments were provided in the woods for the visiting judges.



The two judges with Karen Evans-Prosser (BDBC) and Brian Slater (OWG)

The inspection went well and it seems the judges were impressed by the condition of our woods. Unfortunately we were not one of the winners on this occasion. Nevertheless, the competition proved very worthwhile from the group's point of view.

OWG WINTER WORK SCHEDULE 2010/11

As you may know, the OWG works to a management plan that was produced by the Borough in the mid 1990's. Each year, during August, we pay both copses a visit to decide on the following winter's work schedule.

This "Walk in the Woods" meeting ensures that we achieve both the original and newly formed conservation objectives.

We will let you know when the Walk in the Woods is to take place and the dates of our autumn work parties as soon as we have them.

CHARCOAL BURNING

A reminder about charcoal burning...

August is the time when we produce charcoal from the waste material cut during coppicing. Why not get your BBQ charcoal from us? You can be assured that it is made locally by the OWG from entirely sustainable hazel off-cuts. Not only that, but you'll also be supporting the group's woodland conservation work. It's a bargain at only £3 a bag. Give Brian a call on 780810 to place your order while stocks last.

If you're interested in seeing how charcoal is made, or would even like to get involved in the process of making it, give David Breeze a call on 780814 and he will provide you with further information. We will be charcoal burning in Cowdown Copse from 14th to 20th August, so please come along.



Charcoal burning in Cowdown Copse

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE NEWSLETTER

If you have any comments, articles, questions, or letters that could be included in future issues of the "Newsletter", please contact me and I'll see what I can do. My contact details are below. The Newsletter is produced quarterly with the next issue appearing in **September 2010**.

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