

Bealeswood Common - Wildlife Records

June 2022 www.dockenfieldpc.org.uk/wildlife

The Common in June to the casual eye is dominated by a rich and varied display of flowering grasses - here, on warm sunny days, a host of butterflies weave back-and-forth. Closer attention reveals a Lilliputian world abundant in other wildlife: minute flowers, day-flying moths, damselflies, grasshoppers, bumblebees, beetles, spiders and so on, several species of which we have identified for the first time this month. We will concentrate on these, but first, the butterflies. Unseasonably scarce, in early June, later warmer weather heralded large numbers of Meadow Browns (112); Marbled Whites (24, photo 1 left, life-size); Large Skipper (8, centre, x2); Ringlet (1, right x1.5) and singles of Green Hairstreak, Common Blue and Small Skipper.



Photo 1: Alex Potts

Some moths are relatively easy to identify, such as Blood-vein (Photo2 below left, x1.8) and Five-spot Burnet (centre, x2.2) but an expert is needed for such as the Burnet Companion (right, x1.8) and a newly recorded micro-moth, present in some

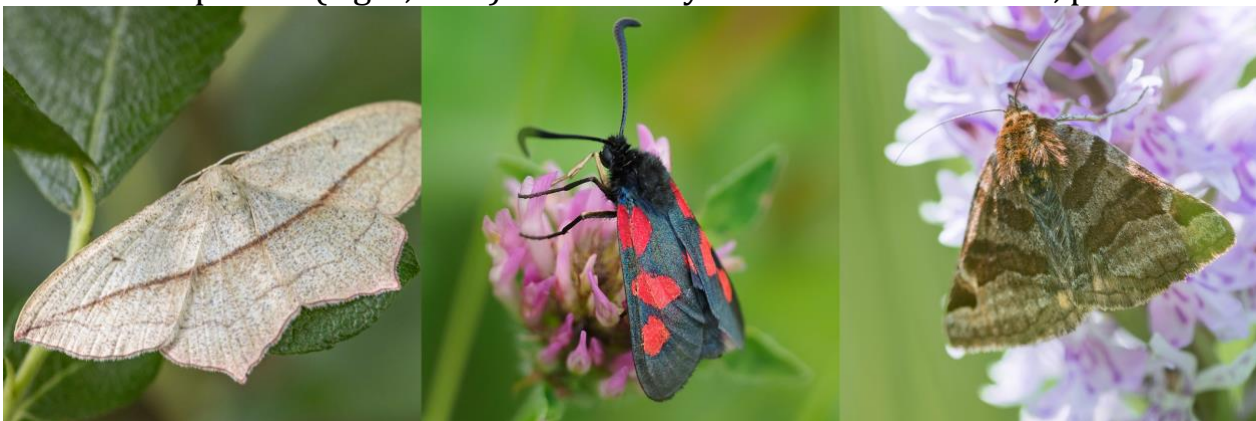


Photo 2: Alex Potts/Alan Cox

numbers, uniquely on rushes, of which there are outcrops across the Common. This, the Speckled Fanner (Photo 3, below left, x6), was being shown to our Ranger, Vicky Keller, when she noted one was being molested by a small spider (centre, x4) which



Photo 3: Alan Cox

when studied in the hand was again new to us. Expert advice from Darren Hill clinched its identification because of the well-marked pattern on its back (inset). If you think Bairstow, you might guess it – Cricket Bat Spider! Later nearby a Meadow Grasshopper (Photo 3, right, x2) struggled, hopelessly ensnared by this orb-weaving spider or another. A little human interference disentangled the silken threads and the grasshopper bounded away, depriving the predator of its meal.

A damselfly gliding over the Common just had to be Common Blue. One of the few to be



Photo 4: Alan Cox/Alex Potts

regularly found away from water. No... Closer scrutiny revealed instead an unexpected Azure Damselfly (Photo 4 left x2). Another new find was a green Lacewing (centre, x1.5) on Meadow Buttercup. There are several green look-alike lacewings that are difficult to separate, especially as their body colour changes during the year. A Roesel's Bush

Cricket nymph (left x 2) on Lesser Stitchwort had wing buds but wings will not form until the later adult stage from July onwards.

Now to our diminutive flora amongst the grasses. For two weeks, a tiny pink jewel called Grass Vetchling sparkles (Photo 5, left, head-on x3, and side view x2) in a sea of

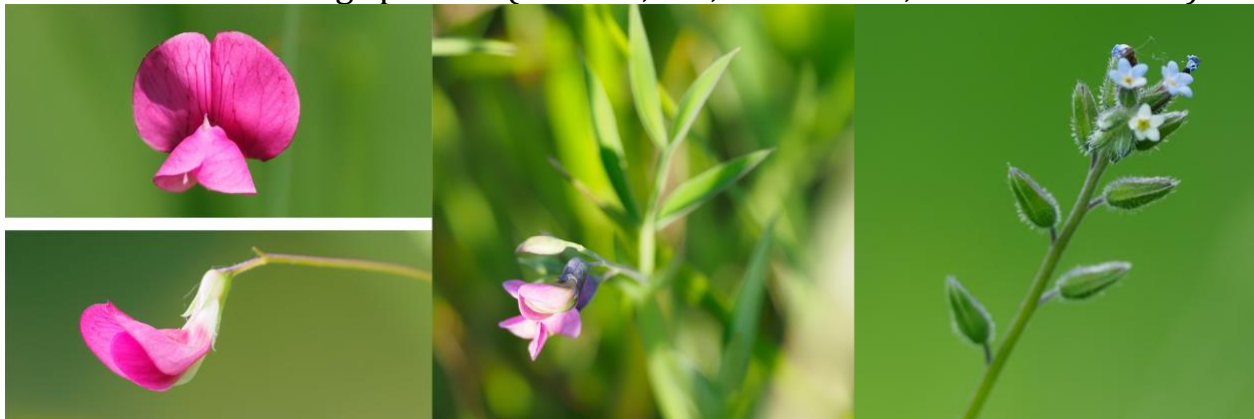


Photo 5: Alan Cox

green, flowering at the tip of a grass-like stem. Even more cryptic is its cousin Bitter Vetch (life-size, centre), found in flower for the first time this year, low growing among taller grass. The last is the Changing Forget-me-Not (right, x2). Cream-coloured flowers form at the tip first, turning blue as they uncurl and age - hence the name.

Dan & Alison Bosence, Alan & Pauline Cox, Philippa & Colin Hall, Claire Jackson, Philip Nangle, Steve Luckett, Alex Potts, Christina Rasmussen, Anne Tutt, and Raf Wane. 28th June, 2022.

Nature Walks Programme: Saturday 2 July. 9.30 Meet at Bealeswood Common noticeboard or 10.00 at Abbots Wood Inclosure carpark GU10 4HA. Walk until 11.30. Good paths. Butterfly walk to see, perhaps, Purple Emperor and certainly others along the way. Coffee stop at Alice Holt visitor centre after. Info from Steve: 07530 044278. **Friday 22 July. 21.30-22.30 meet at the corner car park Frensham Common GU10 3DW.** Nightjars and other night-time wildlife. Steve: 07530 044278. **Friday 19 August. 20.30 -22.00 Meet at Bealeswood Common noticeboard.** Bat walk. Listening and watching bats at sunset, walking to Frensham Mill and back; good paths. Steve: 07530 044278