

## Portland Heights Butterfly Break

Friday June 16<sup>th</sup> – Sunday June 18<sup>th</sup> 2017



### Friday June 16<sup>th</sup>

Verne Ditch 2100

A very productive after-dinner walk with no less than three owls - two barn owls and a little owl - hunting in the ditch around the Verne Citadel. Probably even more noteworthy were the two grey herons that flew over, along with the fulmar shortly after. It was bright enough to spot a few plants as well, particularly the pyramidal orchids and wild thyme on the hotel's front lawn.

**Saturday June 17th**

**Weather: hot and sunny with a light breeze in the morning**

Portland Bill, 0900

A beautifully warm and calm morning at the Bill with plenty of guillemots, razorbills and gannets at the Bill. A family of six ravens were sat near the cliffs terrorizing the seabird colony which held a few kittiwakes and shags in addition to the species seen earlier. Away from the sea the Admiralty Slopes produced lots of butterflies with the highlights being the first marbled whites and small skippers of the year.



*Five-spot Burnet, photo by Liz Taylor*



*Kestrel*

Grove Point, 1100

With the morning warming up nicely we made a quick stop at a site where we hoped that an adder might be tempted out to bask in the sun. In the end it didn't show but we had good views of silver-studded blues in the nearby Admiralty Quarries instead

Ferrybridge, 1300

On a very busy day at the seaside the little terns were not really expected to put on much of a show so we were surprised to see a group of six terns drop in for a quick bath in the shallows not far in front of us. A group of very distant waders turned out to be a combination of sanderlings and ringed plovers.

High Angle Battery, 1400

With the afternoon now getting really rather hot it was ideal conditions for searching for adonis blues on the banks of this Victorian military complex. Several rather worn males were seen all showing their characteristic territorial behaviour. A single small blue was seen as well, but very briefly. A short excursion out onto the Admiralty Quarries produced a few tiny early gentians and lots more pyramidal orchids.



*Adonis Blue, photo by Liz Taylor*

Southwell Eastcliffs, 1500

The peregrines here were not co-operating today, with just the head of the female bird visible above a rock near the nest site. A few wall lizards were seen racing around the rocks as was a pair of hummingbird hawk-moths.



*Wall Lizard, photo by Liz Taylor*

Tadnoll Heath, 2100

On such a calm and warm evening we expected the nightjars to perform well tonight and they certainly did. The first male was seen while there was still enough light to follow it with binoculars, a most rare occurrence. For me though the highlight was the little glow-worm that we found almost back at the van.

**Sunday June 18th**

**Weather: very similar to yesterday but even hotter**

Grove Point, 0900

Our second attempt to see the massive female adder at the Grove Engine Sheds was a success with the snake behaving to plan and giving us close views after we waited patiently for it to take up position on its favourite ant hill.

Bincombe Down, 1000

The first visit to the Weymouth Relief Road for a Heights Hotel group was mainly to see the outstanding display of bee orchids which has been there this year. We certainly weren't disappointed even if the heat and the pollen did make this a fairly arduous walk for some of us. Lots of other plants were seen including a species new for these weekends, long-flowered cranesbill. An early ringlet was probably the best butterfly seen with a burnet companion the best moth.



*Marbled Whites on Wild Carrot*



*Bee Orchid*



*Long-stalked Cranesbill*



*looking under the Weymouth Relief Road towards Bincombe*

Radipole RSPB Reserve, 1130

For once the bearded tits were easy to see here with recently-fledged birds found at a couple of spots. Marsh harriers were much in evidence too, mostly the female-type male with its unusual reddish-brown plumage. Apart from birds we saw a huge range of flowers, most notably the dark form of the bee orchid. Insects were everywhere in the building heat, the scarlet tiger moths probably the most memorable, although the very fresh comma and the huge peacock caterpillars were pretty good as well.



*Peacock caterpillar on Nettle*

Cogden Beach, 1400

The far end of Chesil Beach was if anything too hot for wildlife this afternoon and we struggle to see very much at this normally very productive spot. Whitethroat and lesser whitethroat were added to the list and we very much enjoyed watching the outstandingly bright male stonecat here. The beach itself held a couple of botanical specialities, namely sea-kale and yellow horned-poppy both of which we found in abundance.

Looking forward to the next time,

Bob

**Birds:**

Great Crested Grebe	Radipole
Fulmar	Portland Bill
Cormorant	Portland, Radipole
Shag	Portland Bill
Gannet	Portland Bill
Little Egret	Radipole
Grey Heron	Radipole
Mute Swan	Radipole
Canada Goose	Radipole
Shelduck	Radipole
Gadwall	Radipole,
Mallard	Radipole
Shoveler	Radipole
Tufted Duck	Radipole
Pochard	Radipole
Hooded Merganser	Radipole
Kestrel	Portland
Peregrine	Portland
Sparrowhawk	Portland
Marsh Harrier	Radipole
Buzzard	Portland
Pheasant	Cogden
Coot	Radipole
Moorhen	Radipole
Oystercatcher	Ferrybridge
Ringed Plover	Ferrybridge
Sanderling	Ferrybridge
Black-headed Gull	Radipole
Herring Gull	various sites
Lesser Black-backed Gull	Ferrybridge
Great Black-backed Gull	various sites
Kittiwake	Portland Bill
Common Tern	Radipole
Little Tern	Ferrybridge
Razorbill	Portland Bill
Guillemot	Portland Bill
Stock Dove	Portland
Wood Pigeon	various sites
Feral Pigeon	Radipole
Collared Dove	Radipole
Nightjar	Tadnoll
Little Owl	Portland
Barn Owl	Portland
Skylark	Portland Bill, Ferrybridge, Cogden
House Martin	Radipole
Sand Martin	Radipole
Swallow	various sites
Swift	Portland, Radipole
Meadow Pipit	Portland Bill
Rock Pipit	Portland Bill

Pied Wagtail	Ferrybridge
Wren	various sites
Dunnock	Radipole
Robin	Radipole
Stonechat	Portland Bill, Cogden
Song Thrush	Cogden (heard)
Blackbird	various sites
Cetti's Warbler	Radipole
Sedge Warbler	Radipole
Reed Warbler	Radipole
Lesser Whitethroat	Cogden
Whitethroat	Cogden
Blackcap	Radipole (heard)
Chiffchaff	Radipole
Bearded Tit	Radipole
Blue Tit	Radipole
Great Tit	Radipole
Magpie	various sites
Raven	Portland Bill
Jackdaw	various sites
Rook	Ferrybridge
Carrion Crow	various sites
Starling	Radipole, Portland
House Sparrow	Radipole, Portland
Linnet	Portland
Goldfinch	Radipole
Bullfinch	Cogden (heard)
Chaffinch	Cogden
Greenfinch	Radipole
Reed Bunting	Radipole

### Reptiles

Adder	Portland
Wall Lizard	Portland

### Mammals

Bunny	Portland Bill, Tadnoll
Sika	Tadnoll

### Fish

Carp	Radipole
Rudd	Radipole

### Insects

Blue-tailed Damselfly	Radipole
Common Darter	Radipole
Black-tailed Skimmer	Radipole
Emperor	Portland, Radipole

Burnet Companion	Bincombe
Five-spot Burnet	Radipole

Six-spot Burnet	Portland, Bincombe
Hummingbird Hawk-moth	Portland
Scarlet Tiger	Radipole
Common Blue	Portland, Bincombe
Adonis Blue	Portland
Silver-studded Blue	Portland
Small Blue	Portland
Holly Blue	Portland
Ringlet	Bincombe
Marbled White	Portland, Bincombe
Meadow Brown	Portland, Cogden
Small Heath	Portland, Cogden
Speckled Wood	Portland, Cogden
Red Admiral	Radipole
Small Tortoiseshell	various sites
Peacock	Radipole
Comma	Radipole
Painted Lady	Portland
Small White	Portland
Large White	Portland
Large Skipper	Portland
Small Skipper	Portland
Dingy Skipper	Portland

## **Plants:**

### **Bedstraw Family:**

Cleavers (Portland)  
Hedge Bedstraw (Portland)  
Lady's Bedstraw (Portland)

### **Borage Family:**

Comfrey (Radipole)  
Common Gromwell (Cogden)  
Viper's Bugloss (Portland)

### **Broomrape Family:**

Ivy Broomrape (Portland)

### **Buttercup Family:**

Clematis (Portland)  
Creeping Buttercup (Portland)  
Meadow Buttercup (Radipole)

### **Cabbage Family:**

Horse-radish (Cogden)  
Sea Kale (Cogden)



**Carrot Family:**

Fennel (Radipole)  
Hemlock Water Dropwort (Radipole)  
Rock Samphire (Portland)  
Wild Carrot (Portland)

**Daisy Family:**

Beaked Hawk's-beard (Portland)  
Bristly Ox-tongue (Portland)  
Creeping Thistle (Portland)  
Greater Knapweed (Portland)  
Hemp Agrimony (Portland)  
Lesser Burdock (Portland)  
Mouse-ear Hawkweed (Portland)  
Mugwort (Portland)  
Musk Thistle (Cogden)  
Oxeye Daisy (Portland)  
Rough Hawkbit (Portland)  
Spear Thistle (Portland)

**Fern Family:**

Bracken (Portland)  
Hart's Tongue Fern (Portland)  
Maidenhair Spleenwort (Portland)

**Figwort Family:**

Balm-leaved Figwort (Portland)  
Common Field Speedwell (Portland)  
Broad-leaved Eyebright (Portland)  
Yellow Rattle (Portland)

**Flax Family:**

Purging Flax (Portland)

**Gentian Family:**

Common Centaury (Portland)  
Lesser Centaury (Portland)  
Early Gentian (Portland)  
Yellow-wort (Portland)

**Geranium Family:**

Herb Robert (Portland)  
Long-stalked Cranesbill (Bincombe Down)  
Pyrenean Cranesbill (Radipole)

**Grass Family:**

Cocksfoot (Portland)  
Crested Dogstail (Portland)  
Downy Oat-grass (Portland)  
False Brome (Portland)  
False Oat-grass (Portland)  
Quaking Grass (Portland)  
Red Fescue (Portland)  
Reed (Portland)  
Reed Canary-grass (Radipole)  
Rough Meadow Grass (Portland)  
Rye Grass (Portland)  
Soft Brome (Portland)  
Tall Fescue (Portland)  
Tufted Hair-grass (Portland)  
Upright Brome (Portland)  
Yorkshire Fog (Portland)

**Honeysuckle Family:**

Elder (Portland)  
Honeysuckle (Portland)  
Guelder Rose (Radipole)

**Iris Family:**

Stinking Iris (Portland)  
Yellow Flag Iris (Radipole)

**Mallow Family:**

Common Mallow (Portland)  
Tree Mallow (Portland)

**Mignonette Family:**

Wild Mignonette (Bincombe Down)

**Mint Family:**

Hedge Woundwort (Portland)  
Marjoram (Portland)  
Self-heal (Portland)  
Thyme (Portland)  
Wood Sage (Portland)

**Orchid Family:**

Bee Orchid (Portland)  
Heath Spotted Orchid (Tadnoll)  
Pyramidal Orchid (Portland)

Southern Marsh Orchid (Radipole)

**Pea Family:**

Birdsfoot Trefoil (Portland)  
Black Medick (Portland)  
Bush Vetch (Portland)  
Common Vetch (Portland)  
Dyer's Greenweed (Cogden)  
European Gorse (Portland)  
Grass Vetchling (Bincombe Down  
Greater Birdsfoot Trefoil (Radipole)  
Hairy Tare (Portland)  
Hop Trefoil (Portland)  
Horseshoe Vetch (Portland)  
Kidney Vetch (Portland)  
Lesser Trefoil (Portland)  
Meadow Vetchling (Portland)  
Red Clover (Portland)  
Restharrow (Portland)  
Toothed Medick (Portland)  
Tufted Vetch (Radipole)  
White Clover (Portland)  
Yellow Vetchling (Portland)

**Plantain Family:**

Buck's-horn Plantain (Portland)  
Hoary Plantain (Portland)  
Ribwort Plantain (Portland)

**Poppy Family:**

Yellow Horned-poppy (Cogden)

**Rose Family:**

Agrimony (Portland)  
Blackthorn (Portland)  
Bramble (Portland)  
Burnet Rose (Portland)  
Creeping Cinquefoil (Portland)  
Dog Rose (Portland)  
Hawthorn (Portland)  
Herb Bennet (Portland)  
Meadowsweet (Radipole)  
Silverweed (Cogden)

**Sea-Lavender Family:**

Rock Sea Lavender (Portland)

Thrift (Portland)

**Stonecrop Family:**

Rock Stonecrop (Portland)

White Stonecrop (Cogden)

**Tamarisk Family:**

Tamarisk (Cogden)

**Teasel Family:**

Teasel (Portland)

**Willowherb Family:**

Great Willowherb (Cogden)

**Yam Family:**

Black Bryony (Cogden)

