



Celebrating fifteen years of Garden Bird Watch 27th May – 1st June 2024.

The field of dandelions is to the east of Culliford Tree and contains a series of Tumuli and Long Barrows, which stretch from here westwards to just beyond Hardy Monument. Historic England presently have no online information about these ancient burial sites, but have taken steps to protect those hidden by trees in Came Wood. Working with Forest England, the owners have removed many diseased ash and other trees opening the woodland up. It is just possible, if driving slowly past the wood to Chalky Road to see the exposed tumuli, but better; park in a lay-by to the west of the cross roads and walk on the public footpath past Culliford Tree. A long barrow has been exposed there. Plans are that the exposed barrows will be protected from future woodland encroachment.



The A354 Relief Road



Currently, driving from Preston towards the Manor Roundabout, the road verges are a mass of yellow horseshoe vetch, kidney vetch and very many ox-eye daisies. For this we can thank the then County Ecologist Dr Phil Sterling for pressing for biodiversity net gain from the project. The area is rather good for butterflies, even walking along the south end of Littlemoor Road, there is a good chance of seeing the rarer blue butterflies.

Last June, I was asked by a Dorset orchid enthusiast to use the lay by on the east side to photograph pyramidal orchids. He tells me bee orchids are on the west side.

However, back in Sutton Poyntz, my garden is full of the biggest willow-herb that could grow. I have many bags needing disposing. The attractive plant is caper spurge *Euphorbia lathyris*, which has appeared from somewhere. My Wildflower Society Diary says Carlton in Lindrick Notts in 1984 was the first time. The pond and stream have yellow flag iris. Look in the flower heads for tiny weevil *Mononychus punctumalbum* – Nationally rare but found on the Dorset Coast most years. Please let me know if you see one. A water crowfoot is just managing to flower by Brookmead Close,



Garden Birds:

With quite a few people away from home, just 12 people sent in a list so just 197 records of 39 species averaging 9 per garden. Nothing remarkable. Rita, Colin and I regularly walked Church Road and round the west side listening for nightingale but failed to hear one. We have not checked the usual spot at Ringstead due to high toll charges on the private road. Staff from the National Trust Purbeck team managed to trace one on Ballard Down earlier this week, but it has been left to Penny and Mike to witness the evocative call in France where I am told there were good numbers. Swallows seem to be present as individual birds. There are a few elusive swifts about, no cuckoos.

Deer:

Take care driving, I have seen two killed on the road to Came Down in the past week and I have a friend, whose car is off the road due to one jumping out in front of him in the Bridport area.

Butterflies:



It is too windy, wet or a full moon to make it worthwhile running a moth trap so nothing doing there. This year, we have managed a Butterfly Conservation transit walk in SY7084 around the waterworks for seven out of eight weeks with good luck having just one good day in a week. Thanks to my grandson's efficiency with a net my walk included two endangered wall butterflies. (Photographed and let go).

Lots of orange tip butterflies around the garden and occasional holly blue in mine (associated with ivy).