



May 2022 - Garden Bird Watch 28th May - 4th June

Firstly apologies for the late delivery of this *Newsletter*. Some of you know but others may not Liz and I have been away celebrating our Golden wedding and subsequently my 80th birthday. Things have got quite behind including all the weeds in our garden still growing. This brings me on to the next news item.



At the end of April, I was waiting for Liz to climb in the car and started pulling out weeds by the front door, when I saw this plant. It is a fumitory, a weed of field margins and hedgerows and rarely seen. Interestingly, the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland, (BSBI in Google gets you there) publish a series of handbooks. No **12** *Fumitories of Britain and Ireland*. There are ten native species, two casuals and some hybrids. It clearly was not the one seen most often common fumitory *Fumaria officinalis*. I had a go at working out what species it could be but my eye sight is not good enough for close detail so I took a sample to Robin Walls (The Dorset Recorder), who lives at Broadmayne and by the time I arrived home an email announced *Fumaria capreolata* subsp. *babingtonii* or white ramping fumitory. Robin tells me that it is only the sixth record for Dorset on the BSBI mapping scheme. (There is some public access via the BSBI website. Be careful what you weed.

Still on wild flowers. The banner picture is rosy garlic *Allium roseum*. I have long known this plant from the coast road from Portesham to Abbotsbury Hill. It seems to be spreading by some means with examples in many gardens and on roadside verges in Preston and Sutton Poyntz. The photograph was taken on Brunel Drive last week but the verge has been mown this week. Another plant, which seems to be spreading, possibly from seed blown by wind from the mass plantings on new road verges, with small clumps appearing here and there on non-sown verges, again in gardens (The old Maxgate croquet lawn is one example.) Cowslips are another example having moved into my lawn years ago without my help and recently turned up in the field by the White Nothe Cottages at Ringstead. There is some caper spurge growing from the wall by the Rectory on the Weir.

Garden Bird Watch:

Again one of the problem with nearly two weeks away, I was not gathering garden bird watch reports. In part, this was due to poor internet access in places where we were staying but ultimately 15 lists arrived. There was one report of a grey heron, house martins have arrived at Sutton Court Lawns but little rain makes nest building difficult and just three reports of swallows. It is not just here that swallows and martins have made a poor arrival but elsewhere in west Dorset. Rita reported up to 9 swifts over the Puddledocks around 23rd May. It was also good to see Dorothy had yellowhammer.

Moths and butterflies:



Underside of Adonis blue



Female Adonis blue



Pale Tussock moth

Lizzie took the photographs of Adonis blue whilst undertaking the weekly Pollard walk. A recent *Newsletter* from the Dorset branch of Butterfly Conservation highlighted the importance of these surveys across the County. From all sources 281,600 records were received in 2021 of which the transect walks contributed 121,100. With 65,800 from the website. The rest from a variety of sources. However, it is the transect data rather than casual data, which allows the statisticians to produce the scientific understanding of the decline in butterflies. We contributed dingy skipper, but no grizzled skipper this year. Green hairstreak was around below the Beacon in early May and we have all seen wall butterfly, which is declining in the County.

Whilst the numbers of butterflies on standard walks are important, it is the range of species spread, which is also important and the Butterfly Conservation App on your smart phone is an excellent way of recording butterflies whilst out and about, even in town. It is free to download and easy to use with a picture guide.

Finally moth trapping has been poor – cold nights with a north easterly wind has not helped. The pale tussock moth was photographed on a gate in my garden.

Please send your bird lists a.s.a.p after the Jubilee weekend