



**Moss on Ash**

The banner photograph is probably too small to be meaningful. There has recently been some discussion in *British Wildlife* about the potential loss of species diversity if the *Chalara fraxinea* fungus seriously decimates the ash population. Well I was quite surprised when I examined, using a microscope, a sample from the trunk of this ash on the edge of the Waterworks wood. There were three species of moss and three of the closely related liverworts in the small sample. Often hidden amongst the moss is the occasional gnat, which has eight legs, a nematode, occasionally a moth larvae or a small snail.

How serious is the threat? Well I gather the National Trust has uprooted all saplings bought from a nursery in the last five years and burnt them. They are also advising staff not to manage older trees lest the fungus invades through a cut. Fortunately in Dorset, we have many old coppice Ash and also a few quite old pollards, and I just have a gut feeling, they have seen it all before and will survive. As all gardeners know Ash saplings grow without mercy, often a good distance away from a tree. I even saw one below Margaret's Seat on East Hill perhaps 800m from the nearest tree recently.

**Garden Bird Watch**

One of the interesting items on this month has been a report from two of our group of a black racing pigeon resting up and feeding in their garden. Six species of birds have been reported as nesting including a pair of Swallows on Puddledock Lane. Yellowhammer in five gardens where feed is provided reflected the very cold April and early May. There was only one record for Bullfinch, whereas this time last year it was around three. Peter Shreaves thought he had heard a Cuckoo in late April. There has been just one record of a Thrush. For the past few years, Song Thrush was been present early in the morning on Church Lane, but not this year. Is this another cold weather casualty?



Veteran Ash pollard at Chideock

**EDITOR: JOHN NEWBOULD**      **PHONE 01305 83738**  
[www.suttonpoyntz.org.uk](http://www.suttonpoyntz.org.uk)  
**EMAIL: johna72newbould@yahoo.co.uk**

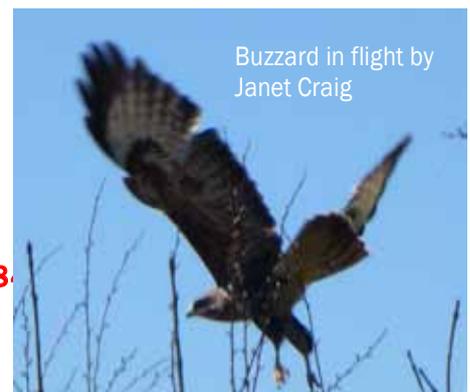
Wildlife Walks – Mondays from Fox Cottage near the Mission Hall at 9.30am. All welcome.

**Butterflies:** Again butterflies have been scarce. I have walked the hill twice this week for Adonis Blue without success. Orange-tip seems to be the most common species. Normally this feeds on Cuckoo-flower or Jack-by-the-hedge, but on Tuesday in my garden it was on Aubretia. There was a battered Peacock by East Hill on 16<sup>th</sup> May and I have seen a Holly Blue.



Newly emerged female Orange-tip Butterfly

David Emery has been spending time in the wet water meadow and has been pleased to see two Reed Warbler, Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Whitethroat in the sheltered environment. A Stonechat was on the hill on 13 May with Skylark



Buzzard in flight by Janet Craig