

RINGWOOD

NATURAL

HISTORY

SOCIETY



NEWSLETTER No. 2

Compiled by M. Read from Members Records

Collected by M. King and M. Read

Part of our Year

1972-73 has been an eventful year in many ways. Our membership fluctuates somewhat but our numbers have been over 100 for a few years.

Analysing the numbers at each of our indoor meetings since September 1972 the least was 46 and the most was 96, the latter for Eric Ashby's remarkable photography in and around the New Forest. Last year's Social in December was enjoyed by 62 members and this is a good occasion for getting to know one another.

Of our outdoor meetings the visit to Dancing Ledge, on the Dorset Coast, followed Miss Exton's interesting slides of that area, so about 20 members enjoyed that lovely afternoon on the coast.

Two coach outings have had to be cancelled, for lack of support. Perhaps we are too busy in the summer. Next year we may put our energies into the smaller group meetings, or keep the coach visits earlier in the year. Suggestions for places of interest are always welcome.

Two events seem of particular importance. One was the election of Mr. & Mrs. Vernon Pickering as our Vice Presidents. These two members have quietly lead us, and taught us as they went along, to look, and to see, so much in the Forest. They hope to lead us on yet another "Fungus Foray" on September 29th - "what in the world is that?" - just go along and see, you will enjoy it however little you know at the start.

The second event, of striking importance, was the very impressive Natural History Display at the Greyfriars Open Day in July. This was put up by a very few members and will be repeated and perhaps enlarged at the Ringwood Carnival on Saturday September 15th. Everyone who saw it was delighted with such an interesting variety of items. Every one of our members would enjoy this and some could help with the duty rota, perhaps.

This News Letter is in improved form and our Emblem was chosen at the A.G.M. and is drawn by Miss J. Tofield.

The Wild Gladioli are unique to the New Forest so take care not to pick or damage them if you find any. It should be our rule now to look, draw, or photograph everything possible in these wonderful surroundings.

Make a few notes please for our Recorder Martin King.

Mrs. E. P. Homfray

A Note on Fungi

To list all the fungi found and identified in one year would take too much space to include in our newsletter, but a list can be seen in the Ringwood Natural History Society Records.

Most of the fungi listed in the records have been identified by Mr. V.T. Pickering, who has kindly given some 'figures on fungi'.

A fungus maybe the most prolific organism on earth. In Canada a giant puff-ball was found 50 inches in circumference. It contained 20 billion spores, but a smaller puff ball of only 7 billion spores would, if these 7 billion spores were placed end to end, place a girdle round the earth more than 5 times.

If all these spores were successful, the resulting fruit bodies would stretch twice to the sun and back, and would form a mass 800 times the weight of the earth.

A 4 inch field mushroom would have a total gill area of 1.33 square feet, each square inch of which would have about 20,790,600 basidia, which at 4 spores per basidium would produce 83,162,400 or a total for the 1.33 square feet of gill area of 16,000,000,000. As these spores are all discharged in 5 or 6 days, this gives an average fall day and night of over 100,000,000 per hour. Staggering!!

OUTINGS

Fungus Foray 30/9/72
Leader Mr. V.T. Pickering

Nearly 30 members participated in this very enjoyable outing, and through Mr. Pickering's knowledge of the forest, we were permitted to enter Wilverley Inclosure with our cars.

Over 50 species of fungi were found ranging from *Amanita fulva* to *Xylaria polymorpha*. A full list of finds can be seen in the Ringwood Natural History Records.

Farlington Marshes & Langstone Harbour
2/12/72 Leaders Mr. King and M. Read

Only six members turned out on this very wet day, but they were rewarded with some good views of waders and wildfowl but after a very short time, binoculars became dampened.

However everyone continued on round the outskirts of the marshes and tried to keep finding birds or anything else of interest, but the heavy showers of rain made identifying anything in Langstone Harbour almost impossible. In consequence the number of birds seen was not too good, as can be seen below:- Brent geese, Wigeon, Tufted duck, Shoveler, Shelduck, Cormorant, Heron, Teal, Kestrel, Oystercatcher, Dunlin, Black tailed godwit, Grey plover, Curlew, Redshank, Herring Gull, Greater black backed gull, Black-headed gull, Robin, Wren, Greenfinch and Chaffinch.

New Forest Walk 10/2/73 Leader E.P. Homfray

7 Members and 2 friends walked the "Tall Trees Walk" on the Ornamental Drive East section. It was delightfully sheltered and the trees were most interesting. A Robin and Goldcrest were seen as was a Badger's sett. 3 Deer were also seen on the way home.



Corprinus Comatus
(Shaggy Cap)

Walk in Great Linford Inclosure & Rockford Common
18/3/73 Leaders M. King & M. Read

Deciduous wood, Coniferous woods and open heathland were all enjoyed on this afternoon's walk. Fourteen members and friends were led through part of Great Linford Inclosure and then out on to Rockford Common after which Appleslade Inclosure was entered and a rather large badger sett was inspected, (this sett could have been there for centuries).

From Appleslade Inclosure the party then went into Red Shoe Wood where many comments were passed on the magnificent oaks found there.

After such a fine section of open forest, the regimental row of conifers of another part of Great Linford Inclosure did seem rather dull and uninteresting but after a short while everyone was walking back towards their cars along Linford Bottom.

Coach Trip to Radipole Lake and Portland Bill
14/4/73 Leader Miss M. LeRoy

It was a bright but cool morning when 30 members set out from the Community Centre. All birds seen from the coach were recorded as this outing was mainly for birds. Several Kestrels were sighted and Weymouth was approached through Lodmoor, a good place for rarities, particularly at migration times.

On reaching Radipole Lake the usual water birds were seen including Black-headed gulls, Mute swans, Coots, Moorhens, Shovel and Pochard and it was here that the rarest bird of the day was seen and this was a Long-tailed duck which was repeatedly diving for food. (This was only the tenth Long-tailed duck for Radipole Lake since 1944).

Lunch was taken at the Fleet where several Wheatears were seen.

At Portland Bird Observatory, many migrants were seen and the Warden, Mr. Frank Clifton, was seen ringing a goldcrest and the opportunity was taken to buy ornithological literature of the area.

The majority of the party then went for a walk around the cliff tops of Portland Bill where many more species of birds were recorded. A total of 62 bird species were seen on this very enjoyable day, which included:- Fulmar, Heron, Teal, Red-breasted Merganser, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Kittiwake, Razorbill, Guillemot, Greater Spotted Woodpecker, Sand Martin, House Martin, Swallow, Chiffchaff, Willow Warbler, Corn Bunting and Reed Bunting.

Dancing Ledge 29/4/73 Leaders M. King and M. Read

About 18 people arrived at Dancing Ledge car park just after midday and after the short walk to the cliff tops some flowers of special botanical interest were pointed out, (a short list of which can be seen in the records). Those with cameras then settled down to some serious photography in the bright sunshine while others disappeared along part of the Dorset Coastal Path.

Much of interest was reported back to and by the leaders, including Puffin, Fulmar, Guillemot, Cormorant, Corn Bunting, Kestrel and Stonechat.

The flowers are not recorded in this newsletter for obvious security reasons.

Nightingale Listening 10/5/73 Leader W.A.S. Lewis

Golden Plover, Skylarks, Pheasant and a Heron were among the birds seen at Martin Down as well as a hare.

The first Nightingale was heard at 20.05 hrs. After spending a while here the party was led to part of the Breamore Estate where more Nightingales were heard, and Woodcock, Nightjar and Tawny Owl were also noted.

Badger Watching 15/5/73 Leader Miss M. LeRoy

At 19.15 hrs. 13 people turned up at Burley Manor to go Badger watching. Six went to the 'Orchard' sett and 7 to the 'Lake' sett. The evening chorus soon filled the still air, and a Tawny Owl joined in at 20.15 hrs, in full daylight. Everyone had views of foxes but not a single badger was seen.

Breamore Woods and Miz-Maze 24/5/73

Leaders Mr. & Mrs. V. T. Pickering

Birds, Trees and flowers were all noted on this outing. Curlew, Cuckoo, Sand Martin and Chiff Chaff were among the birds seen and Oak, Beech, Hornbeam and Sweet Chestnut included in the trees.

As to be expected in this chalkland area, more flowers were recorded than anything, as can be seen by the incomplete list below.

Foxglove	Primrose	Three veined sandwort
Bluebell	Bugle	Yellow pimpernel
Wood speedwell	Ragwort	Thyme leaved speedwell
Figwort	Water pepper	Dove'sfoot cranesbill



Part of 'The Wakes'

Coach Trip to Selborne 30/6/73 Leader Mrs. E. P. Homfray

This day out in Selborne was probably the best supported outing of the year. The weather was ideal with sunshine all day

The Selborne area was the much loved haunt of the Rev. Gilbert White (1720-1793) that remarkable naturalist.

'The Wakes', Gilbert White's home, was the centre of attention and quite a long time was spent there, and one of the centres of the displays was a bookcase full of the many different editions of "The Natural History and Antiques of Selborne". A Book written by Gilbert White which has been published in some 150 editions and has been translated into German, French, Danish, Swedish and Japanese.

After a good look round 'The Wakes' the party was at liberty to walk either the Nature Trail or Selborne Hangar, and the more energetic in fact, did both, much of interest being recorded.

Win green, The Ox Drove and the Roman Road 14/7/73

Leader R. Ball

19 Members and friends arrived at Win green car park at 11.15. The flora was of great interest, but birds and butterflies were by no means absent, even though the weather was rather dull and overcast.

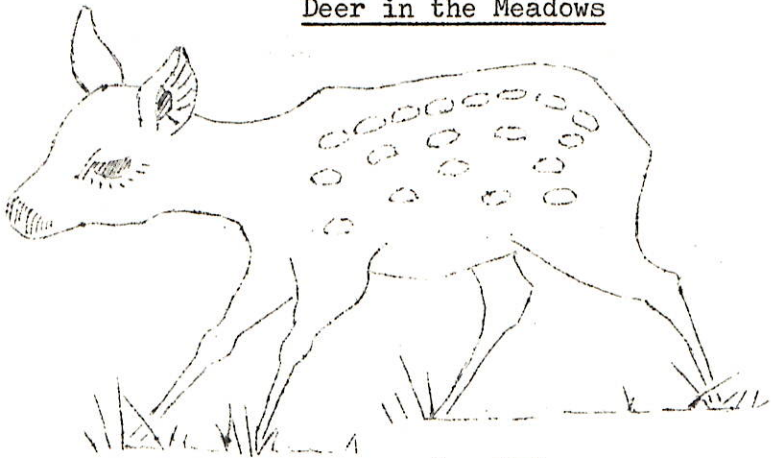
At Win green and along the Ox Drove 56 species of flowers were seen, 12 species of birds, 3 species of moths, and 5 species of butterfly.

After lunch the party started back towards Ringwood and stopped at the Roman Road between Sixpenny Handley and Cranborne where 15 species of flower, 7 species of butterfly and 3 species of birds were recorded in a very short walk.

This Outings section is incomplete as nothing was handed in by the leaders on some outings e.g. Studland 14/10/72, Deer Watching 22/10/72, Farley Mount 4/11/72, Lake House 24/2/73 and Field Survey Day 9/6/73.

If you are willing to lead an outing to a place of your choice would you contact a member of the committee about 6 months before your outing would take place so that it can be worked into the programme. If you are not willing to lead, but you know of an interesting place to visit please come forward with your suggestions anyway.

Deer in the Meadows



Roe Kid

Xmas Eve 1972 was mild and fine. During the early afternoon we saw 4 Roe Deer running rather fast across the water meadows, which were very dry.

During February and March we saw the deer several times - 1 buck and 3 does.

By April we remarked that one doe looked definitely expectant - sometimes they fed together and at other times they split up. Remarkably little rain fell all winter and spring. By the end of April there was so little grass for the cattle that they were removed from the meadows after being fed with hay for many days.

On May 11th the doe stood opposite and right beside her was the tiniest fawn - no, I should say kid, as she was a Roe doe. It was so small it just teetered on it's tiny feet and suckled for a few moments. She made it lie down and walked swiftly away, watching for danger all the time. Six hours later she returned but now on an indirect route. She grazed and gazed around moving in a diminishing circle till suddenly, there was baby standing up beside her. He could then walk under her, and suckled for a few minutes and tried to eat the grass. Mother licked him all over even down each leg to his feet. Then she left him again and he was quite invisible in the grass. We saw them together each day for a week. Then one day she was moving across the meadow with her kid and there, more than 10 yards away was another kid. He stood up in a patch of shorter grass and then scampered towards Mother. She had twins! This made deer watching so important we hardly left the window. Mother had not meant the two to be together, we felt. They frisked and leapt and scampered

alongside and fed and grazed but only for 15 -20 minutes and then one lay down and disappeared and then the other, but not apparently close together. Mother made off in a devious way - never directly to or from a kid. As we are 60 feet above the meadows deer watching is fairly easy.

They were not seen together, with Mother for several days but we saw her feeding one, or the other, who knows which? several times.

They were 6 weeks old the last time we saw the two kids actually with Mother - both so well grown, their ears were level with the top of her back. By August one kid was seen feeding alone but we could not keep up a continuous watch. The hay was cut at intervals but the deer came when they liked, sometimes 20 minutes after the men have gone home. Then it may be days before we see them again. No sign of the buck or other 2 does for 2 or 3 weeks up to August 6th.

E. P. Homfray August 1973

An Interesting Observation of Bird Behaviour by Mr. M. King

Sunday 29th July, 1973

At 16.00 hrs. a small number of Black-Headed Gulls were seen circling in the sky over the area around Kingfisher Lake and Poulner. By 16.15 hrs. the number of gulls had increased to many hundreds and some swifts had joined in above them.

For some time I could not see any reason for this behaviour, but then I heard a neighbour talking about the swarms of flying ants that were about this afternoon. Could this be the reason for the gulls' strange behaviour?

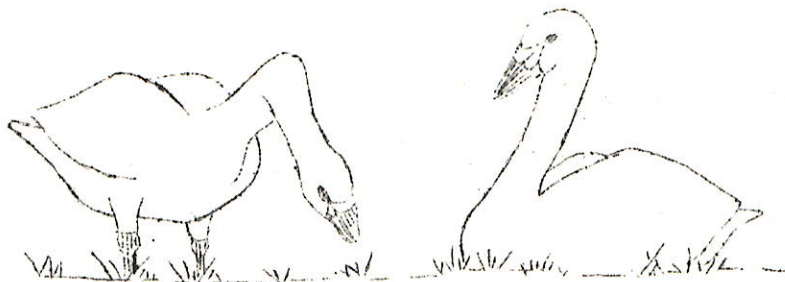
Picking up my binoculars, I watched the gulls for some time and eventually saw that the gulls were amongst flying ants, and they were feeding on these insects.

These ants were in large swarms, some of them were several hundred feet up, but by 16.45 hrs, most of the ants had gone and the birds began to disperse.

BIRD REPORT

Summary of birds seen.

*Black throated diver	1 Shell Bay	20/1/73
*Great crested grebe	11 Kingfisher Lake	22/10/72
*Slavonian grebe	3 Shell Bay	20/1/73
*Black necked grebe	4 Hengistbury Head	16/2/73
Heron	17 Sowley Pond	18/2/73
	Largest No. reported.	
*Wigeon	300-400 Flying South Harbridge	3/12/72
	Largest No. reported.	
	8 Harbridge	18/3/73
	Latest date reported.	
*Scaup	8 Little Sea	7/1/73
	5 male 8 fem. Little Sea	20/1/73
*Goldeneye	2 male 2 fem. Sowley Pond	18/2/73
*Long tailed duck	4 Poole Harbour	7/1/73
	1 Radipole Lake	14/4/73
*Common Scoter	40 Hengistbury Head	21/1/73
White Fronted geese	First winter record	25/11/72
	540 Max Harbridge	27/12/72
	380 Last reported	5/3/73
Brent goose	65+Keyhaven	7/1/73
	30 Poole Harbour	7/1/73
	53 Poole Harbour	28/1/73
Bewick Swan	Ringwood-Ibsley area	
	24 First winter record	3/12/72
	29 Max	13-21/1/73
	23 Last seen	16/3/73
	On last date the Bewicks left Harbridge and flew a lap of honour before heading off East on their way back to the breeding grounds. Others seen:-	
	4 Sopley	4/2/73
	8 Woodsford (Dorset)	24/2/73



Bewick's Swans

*Hen Harrier	1 fem. Ibsley	3/12/72
	1 fem. Turf Hill Inclosure	3/12/72
	1 male Hampton Ridge	10/2/73
	1 male Broomy walk	11/2/73
*Osprey	1 Flying south	
	Millersford bottom	24/9/72
	2 Kingfisher lake	Late Aug.
	1 Harbridge	21/7/73
	1 Blashford	23/7/73
	1 "	24/7/73
	1 Poulner	30/7/73
*Merlin	1 Ashlett creek	5/11/72
	1 male Ashley	22/12/72
	1 Gussage St. Michael	8/4/73
*Water rail	1 Stanpit marsh	26/11/72
	1 " "	16/2/73
Lapwing	2400+ Max between Salisbury and Ibsley	27/12/72
Golden plover	500+ Max Ibsley	10/12/72
	300+ Keyhaven	28/1/73
Green Sandpiper	1 Cranborne Cress beds	31/12/72
	1 Moreys pit	to 18/2/73
	1 Keyhaven	26/7/73
*Wood Sandpiper	1 Keyhaven	3/9/72
*Common Sandpiper	2 Kingfisher Lake	15/7/72

*Spotted redshank	1	Keyhaven	29/10/72
*Greenshank	2	Ashlett creek	28/10/72
	1	Beaulieu river	5/11/72
	3	Ashlett creek	5/11/72
*Purple Sandpiper	8	Hengistbury Head	21/1/73
*Little stint	5	Keyhaven	3/9/72
*Curlew Sandpiper	20	Keyhaven	3/9/72
	1	"	18/11/72
*Ruff	60-70	Pennington Marsh	18/2/73
*Grey Phalarope	1	Farlington Marsh	19/11/72
*Short eared owl	1	Farlington Marsh	19/11/72
	1	Crow	29/11/72
	1	Crow	30/11/72
*Hoopoe	1	Hightown hill	13/4/72
*Bearded tit		A number heard in reed beds Farlington Marsh	19/11/72
*Ring Ouzel	2	imm. Hengistbury Head	23/9/72
Blackcap	1	male Avon Castle Drive a rare overwintering record	22/1/73
Dartford Warbler		Regularly seen now as numbers increase.	
*Great grey shrike	1	Turf Hill Inclosure	3/12/72
	1	Holy hatch Inclosure	10/12/72
	1	Vales Moor	16/12/72
	1	" "	28/1/73
*Hawfinch	1	male Forest Mead, Burley	7/1/73
	1	male " " "	11/1/73
	1	male " " "	13/1/73

Siskin	20-25 Crab Wood	4/11/72
	'Large flock' Foxhills, Avon Castle	21/3/73
	Also good numbers regularly seen feeding on peanuts.	
*Crossbill	30+ Matchams/Avon Castle area	from April to Oct
	14+ Hurn Road	10/4/72
	2 male 1 fem. St. Ives Park	1/11/72
*Brambling	1 fem. Hengistbury Head	21/1/73
	1 fem. Horton Common	27/1/73
	35 Mannington	10/2/73
	20 "	20/2/73
*Tree Sparrow	30+ Mannington	10/2/73

Those marked * are all the records handed in.

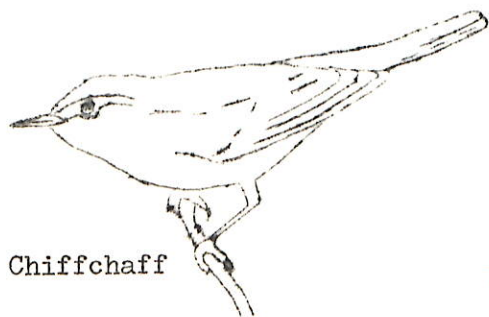
Those not marked are just a summary of the yearly sightings.

Bearded Tit

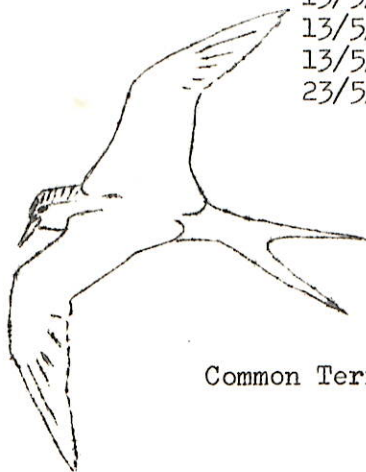


ARRIVAL OF SUMMER MIGRANTS

Hobby	27/5/72	26/4/73
Whimbrel		22/4/73
Common Tern		4/5/73
Little Tern		20/4/73
Sandwich Tern		20/4/73
Turtle Dove		4/5/73
Cuckoo	16/4/72	23/4/73
Nightjar		22/5/73
Swift	30/4/72	27/4/73
Swallow	9/4/72	9/4/73
House Martin	15, 4/72	15/4/73
Sand Martin	2/4/72	14/4/73
Wheatear	24/3/72	24/3/73
Redstart	24/4/72	6/5/73
Nightingale		1/5/73
Grasshopper Warbler	5/5/72	24/4/73
Reed Warbler		6/5/73
Sedge Warbler	2/5/72	13/5/73
Blackcap	3/4/72	17/4/73
Garden Warbler	10/4/72	18/5/73
Whitethroat	11/5/72	1/5/73
Lesser Whitethroat	11/6/72	
Willow Warbler	21/3/72	14/4/73
Chiffchaff	22/3/72	1/3/73
Wood Warbler	13/5/72	6/5/73
Spotted Flycatcher	10/5/72	13/5/73
Tree Pipit	14/5/72	13/5/73
Yellow Wagtail	16/4/72	13/5/73
Red Backed Shrike	7/6/72	23/5/73



Chiffchaff



Common Tern

The Changing Forest

I expect you have all noticed the neat ditches dug alongside the road verges in the Forest. Where there are not ditches there are short posts driven into the ground to prevent visitors driving their cars all over the Forest. Neat car parks have been built in places where they are partly concealed by trees and there are also Caravan Parks. This is indeed excellent. When all parts of the Forest have been completed the Forest will be a better place for plants and animals to live in.

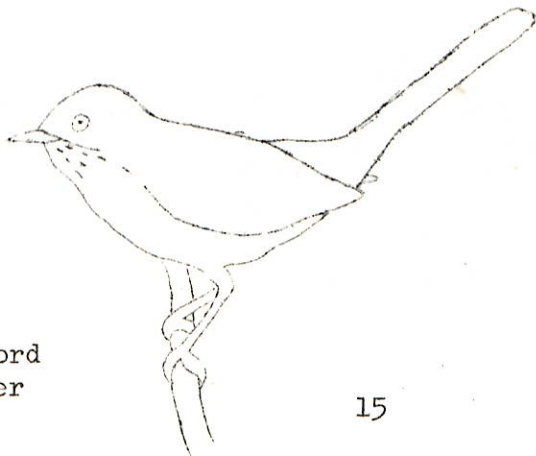
There are still some places where cars are driven quite a long way on to the Forest and occupants play cricked (?) near the car and trample down the plants, Heather needs this only three times in order to die. It is the host plant for emperor moth caterpillars, it is the food for deer. When it grows near gorse it may harbour Dartford Warblers. The other plants are equally important to other animals.

As a Natural History Society we must watch events and make sure our part of the Forest is made secure too. Near Ringwood there are several places which have not been made secure.

Nature Trails are not all the answer. It has been observed there is a dearth of wild flowers for some yards either side of the trails now installed. People really must be educated to leave wild flowers alone.

If any of you give talks to groups of people please think about this little note and do your best to persuade them to preserve our countryside.

Miss M. LeRoy



Dartford
Warbler

Butterflies

The first butterflies seen in 1972 were seen by Mr. W.A.S. Lewis at Hyde (15th March) and on this first butterfly day he saw 4 species, these being, Red Admiral, Peacock, Yellow Brimstone and Small Tortoiseshell. The next day Bob Ball saw the last three of these and added Green Veined White. The first Comma was seen on the 18th.

Holly Blue was added on 12th April and Orange Tip on the 22nd. Only 3 other species were reported for 1972 these being:- Silver Studded Blue (19th August) White Admiral (19th August) and White Letter Hairstreak (21st August).

1973 has only produced 12 species, on record, so far. The earliest was a Small Tortoiseshell on the 8th March which was not added to until 20th, which produced a Peacock. The next day a Yellow Brimstone was seen and on the 23rd all three of these were seen.

Holly Blue was not seen until the 25th April and then nothing was reported until 30th July when 9 species were seen all in one day, these being:- Small Copper, Small Heath, Small Skipper, White Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Hedge Brown, Meadow Brown, Large White and Grayling.

July and August 1973 has surely produced the largest numbers of butterflies since 1964. Mrs. Homfray says that she has seen up to 20 Peacocks at a time in her Avon Castle Drive garden.

Last Word

This newsletter shows what a wealth of wildlife there is to be found in and around the Ringwood area, if only we take the time to notice it. Our records are far from complete.

Could you help us form a more complete picture by writing down your observations on the record sheets enclosed and handing them to our recorder Martin King.