

We encourage members to share transport to events. If you would like a lift, or can offer a lift, please contact Jill Davey on gilliandavey74@gmail.com

14th April Seaford Head

Note the different start times. As on previous years, you have a choice of two walks looking at birds, the first will be at 0700am and the second at 1000am. We normally expect to see a greater variety of birds on the earlier walk, though you can never be sure with nature. Each walk will start from South Hill Barn Car Park, where parking should be easy and at the time of writing, is free. The terrain can be rough in places, very muddy after rain and whilst there are several short but steep slopes, the pace will be leisurely. Hopefully the café in the Barn will be open for coffee and cake after the walks.

21st April Cradle Valley

Bob Eade, who is well known to many of our members, and a popular leader, will guide a walk along Cradle Valley looking for early flowers and insects. Planning walks at this time of year is difficult because we can't predict if Spring will be early or late, but Cradle Valley is a lovely place at any time of year. From the car park we will walk down through a nearby pasture and cross the road into the valley. The valley has steep sides and the terrain on the slopes where most things of interest are likely to be found, is rough so walking will not be easy and your ankles will be tested. If you find it challenging it may be possible to stay on the main path but you should still be able to see plenty. There will not be any stiles and the walk will be at least 2 miles long. Whilst there is public transport to this location, the buses are infrequent and not of value for this walk.

5th May East Dean and Went Hill

For this walk, led by one of our members, Jonathan Timberlake, we will use the free car park in East Dean Village. We will primarily be looking for signs of spring on the open downland. The terrain is typical of downland and if we move away from the public foot path we will be walking on close cropped and rough grass, with some brambles and rabbit holes. There is one long climb up through the woods to the top of Went Hill, but the views should make it worth it. It is not usually muddy. Distance will be 2-3 miles. The starting point can easily be accessed by public transport.

19th May Abbots Wood

This is planned as a walk of exploration and should be a delight at this time of year. We will follow a fairly short route through the ancient trees of this woodland, taking in open glades and the lake. There will not be a formal guide, so members will be encouraged to use their observational skills to see what they can find and identify. We are hoping for spring flowers, new leaves on the trees, insects and if we are lucky we might hear the nightingale. We will mostly be following well worn footpaths, but we expect them to be rough, with plenty of trip hazards and if there has been recent rain, I can guarantee mud. There are no steep hills, or stiles and the route will be around 2 miles long. Parking will be in the Abbots Wood Car Park. Charges apply unless you hold an annual pass for Friston Forest & Abbots Wood. There will be plenty of parking space but as always we encourage car sharing, sadly it is not possible to get to this location by public transport.

2nd June Pulborough Brooks Day Trip

Day Outing Pulborough Brooks is one of the RSPB's most important reserves in the south-east. Situated in the Arun Valley in West Sussex, we thought that a day trip would allow you to explore fully the landscape of wildflower meadows, pools and newly restored heathland. In the morning, a reserve volunteer will lead us on a walk around part of the reserve. After lunch, we can continue to explore the reserve. We are hoping to see and hear lots of warblers and the Reserve's speciality, nightingales. This is a 'members only' activity and, as there is a maximum group size of 20 for the guided walk, we will be asking members to book in advance. To keep costs down we are not proposing to hire a coach, but we have been asked by the Reserve managers to reduce the number of cars as far as possible so we will arrange to share cars. Further details will be available nearer the time. The charges for non-RSPB members will be entry (£5) and car parking (£3 per car). The guided walk will cost £7.50 for RSPB members and non-members.

7th June Sunday Bioblitz at Michelham Priory Marion Trew

Note the different day. On Sunday 7th June the head gardener at Michelham Priory is holding a bioblitz which is open to the general public. Whilst this event will be used to engage the participants in a wildlife activity, it also has a serious aspect as they want to update their records. To this end they have invited any SNHS members with surveying skills to take part as they would welcome our expertise. All our records should be given to the staff at Michelham, who will forward them to the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre. Please take your own recording forms. This is not one of our formally organised events, but if you are interested in surveying the grounds of Michelham Priory then please meet in the car park at 10.00am and as a group, make your way to the gatehouse together and make yourselves known to the Front of House team so you can have free entry. You can stay as long as you wish but must sign in and out. I will contact you nearer the time to find out if you intend to attend. Regrettably it would be difficult to access this venue by public transport.

16th June Chailey Common

This walk will be led by Andy Mitchell, a very experienced Ranger. This is usually a lovely time of year to be out in the countryside and we should see a good range of wildlife as the walk takes us through open ground and wooded areas. The Common has no steep hills or stiles and we expect the terrain to be uneven/rough with the usual countryside trip hazards. We will meet in the Sports Ground car park at 10.00am. Regrettably it would be difficult to access this venue by public transport from Seaford.

30th June Lullington Heath

We are breaking with tradition to have a longer walk with a stop at lunch time when you can eat your picnic. Lullington Heath is an excellent area for wildlife and at this time of the year we would expect to see good butterflies, including the Green Hairstreak. The Heath is not accessible by car and to walk there and back is approximately 6 miles. We estimate that if we are looking at the wildlife the walk will take several hours. The terrain is hilly (steep in places), and the paths are uneven but it should be well worth it. The plan is to meet at the car park at Butchershole Bottom and then, depending on numbers attending either walk directly to the Heath or otherwise go in one or two cars to the car park in Jevington before setting off on the walk. The coastal buses stop at Friston Pond but it is at least a 2km walk to the start point.

14th July Belle Tout & Horseshoe Plantation

This is a lovely area at this time of year and there should be lots of plants, insect and birds to see; last year at this time, the flowers were a joy to see. This walk will be self-led by members and will be a walk of discovery as we search the different habitats. We will be walk from Birling Gap car park over Belle Tout and back along the valley floor, investigating Horseshoe Plantation. Be prepared for the usual rough terrain, with steep slopes and trip hazards but the walk is likely to be less than two miles and is not normally muddy. At Birling Gap there are good facilities including a café to sustain us at the end of the walk. It is fairly easy to get to Birling Gap by bus.

28th July Butts Brow Downland, Eastbourne

This is a good site for chalk grassland, and it is on the edge of the Willingdon Downs SSSI, which is recorded as being in favourable condition. To save us having to struggle up the steep escarpment, we will meet at Butts Brow Car Park in Willingdon and then walk towards Beachy Head along the ridge, avoiding the steep slopes. We will pass through the Beehive Plantation to the chalk grassland slope which contains the Liberator Memorial for a WWII bomber which crashed here. Currently there are plenty of tall grasses and herbs with plentiful butterflies. We can then continue to the Linkway track and onward to Foxholes Brow. The ground will be rough and have multiple trip hazards, but the views should make it worthwhile. The walk is likely to be around 2 miles long. There are no buses that pass near the start point, and the car park is Pay & Display, so that will be added incentive for car sharing. There is a café near the bottom of Butts Lane, on Church Street, where you can get refreshments at the end of the walk.

11th August Eastside, Newhaven

Mike Kerry, one of our very knowledgeable members, will be leading this walk in a part of Newhaven that we have not visited before. Eastside Meadows is the area of rough ground behind Halfords. It has lain fallow for a number of years and there is normally a good range of wildflowers and insects. The terrain is flat but very rutted and uneven. Whilst there are a number of paths that crisscross the area, none of them are official and none of them are well maintained so there will be plenty of trip hazards. The coastal buses all stop in Newhaven and it would be less than a 1km walk to the start point.

25th August Mothing in Seaford Gardens Marion Trew

Note the different start times. Moth traps will be run overnight in two gardens in Seaford and the traps opened and the moths identified the following morning. We will confirm the locations of the two gardens nearer the time. This has proved a very popular event over the years as not only does it enable us to see and identify the moths that fly in Seaford, but it is also a good opportunity to socialise with other members. The first garden will be open from 0900 and you are invited to visit at any time in the following hour and a half to see and identify what moths have been caught. At 1030 we will move to view the moth trap in the second garden and here the house owner has kindly agreed to provide refreshments. You have the choice of visiting both gardens or only one and can turn up at anytime during their 'opening hours'. Seaford residents may be able to take the town bus service or walk to the chosen gardens.

8th September Autumn Birds in Cuckmere Valley

Note the different start time This walk will start in the riverside car park at the Seven Sisters Country Park (charges apply). The exact route will depend on where the birds are to be found, but we are likely to walk towards the sea, looking at the meanders and the river. The overall walk will be less than two miles and the terrain will be rough but mostly flat. On our return there are good facilities at the Country Park and refreshments at the café. The coastal buses frequently pass the start point of this walk.

22nd Sept Eastbourne Downland

This walk is to be led by Alex Jarvis, the Ranger in charge of Eastbourne Downland and he will be able to talk to us about the challenges he faces and his plans. From the kiosk at the end of the seafront road, we will contour round the hill to Whitbread Hollow, a delightful, sheltered, south facing area. This is where the annual ringing of migratory birds takes place, so we hope to see some of them, we should also see late insects and flowers. There are good paths through this area which are relatively even, but Alex may deviate onto rough ground at times. There will be some ups and downs but nothing too steep, and it is not usually a muddy area. The walk should be around 2 miles long and at the end refreshments can be bought at the Kiosk. There is no direct bus from Seaford to the start of this walk, but with one bus change it would be possible to get there from Seaford by bus.

N.B. In the event of a walk having to be cancelled, we will circulate an email to all members. If you are doubtful about an event, and NOT on email, telephone Marion on 07720 776118

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