

OXENHOPE GARDENING CLUB

NEWSLETTER Thursday 21st October

Tonight we welcome

Martyn Walker

as our speaker

Martyn heads the design team for Leeds Parks Department's entry for Chelsea Flower Show. Although their show gardens at Chelsea have always been innovative and much admired by the public, this year's entry "The Lock Gates" was absolutely brilliant. The judges agreed and awarded them a gold medal. It may have looked good on television but to see it in reality put it in another dimension.

Congratulations to Martyn Walker and his team.

DAFFODILS

This year Gardening Club is planting 2,000 wild daffodils around the village to add to those planted for the millennium.

So far we have planted 1,200. The remainder are in bags of 100. If you can help, please see Richard tonight.

Sometimes there are unexpected rewards – a couple of weeks ago, planting some of the daffodil bulbs on the Millennium Green we paused to watch water rushing over the weir following heavy rain when a kingfisher flew upstream and then moments later returned downstream, absolutely beautiful, what a joy!

I can't promise such a reward to all bulb planters but it does prove they are around, or at least one is!

Anne Collinson

A Reminder for Your Diary RHS Shows 2011

Malvern Spring Show 12-15 May

Chelsea Flower Show 24-28 May

BBC Gardeners World Live 15-19 June

Hampton Court Palace Flower Show 5-10 July

RHS Garden Show Tatton Park 20-24 July

Malvern Autumn Show 24-25 September

And don't forget

Harrogate Spring Flower Show 14-17 April

Harrogate Autumn Flower Show 16-18 September

Butterflies in Oxenhope

I was sitting in the garden this afternoon with a cuppa. The sun was shining, after a dull and windy October morning, when there it was, a *Speckled Wood* butterfly. I watched it feeding and flapping around the last of the sweet peas. It stayed for less than a minute then it was gone. A few minutes later I was watching a *Red Admiral* butterfly flying round my neighbour's roof and then it was off round the corner. I got up at that point to check the flowers round the front of the garden and sitting on the michaelmas daisy was a *Small Tortoiseshell*, also enjoying the last of the sun's rays. I've recorded butterflies in and around Oxenhope for many years for Butterfly Conservation and with the weather so changeable in Yorkshire, every year is different and interesting.

At the beginning of the year I'm so looking forward to Spring and, hopefully, warmer weather. Sun and warmth means the butterflies will soon be making a come back. In March this year a *Comma* butterfly, which had been hibernating in my shed over the winter, took flight when the sun warmed up its paper thin body. I never saw it again. In April I saw *Peacock* and *Green-veined white* butterflies and suddenly we had that warm spell and *Orange Tip* butterflies were taking flight; the males easily identifiable by their orange wing tips. Later in the month I saw a female *Orange Tip*, laying eggs on the aubretia in the garden. *Green Hairstreak* butterflies are difficult to spot and are well camouflaged on bilberry bushes in April and May. The weather always seems to be cold and windy when I am searching the moors for them but this year I spotted a dozen on one of the sunnier days.

The moors around Oxenhope are good areas to see butterflies. In June *Small Heath* can be found in grasses and *Common Blue* on Birdsfoot trefoil flowers. Over the last couple of years in July a small colony of *Ringlet* has been growing on Marsh Common. A flitty brown butterfly with yellow rings on its wings, often seen on ragwort, the plant hated by horse owners but loved by butterflies. In July you can also see *Large and Small Skippers*, which look more like moths, and *Meadow Browns* flying with *Ringlet*, feeding on ragwort or thistle flowers. Numbers of butterflies have been low this year, the cooler and wetter summers have taken their toll.

A few years ago you wouldn't see a *Speckled Wood* butterfly around this area but now they can be seen in a lot of Oxenhope gardens. They like to be on the edge of woods and I've seen them in the grounds of Manorlands and the small wood adjacent to Oxenhope School. A walk on the Worth Way is also a good place to see many species of butterfly.

The *Large and Small White* butterflies are a vegetable gardener's nightmare. Keeping them off brassica plants is a losing battle. The smallest hole in the netting and they are in. Picking off caterpillars is a soul destroying job but I don't let the birds have them all, I let some live in other areas of the garden.

In late summer once the buddleia comes out the coloured butterflies seem to come from nowhere. I deliberately prune my buddleias late to encourage the flowers to bloom when most others have finished. On 16 September this year I recorded 18 *Red Admiral*, 10 *Peacock* and 10 *Small Tortoiseshell* on my buddleias. They were flying round the flowers like falling leaves, it was one of those moments to remember.

I'm willing the Autumn sunshine to keep going as long as possible so that I can record until the frosts come. If we have a mild winter I'll be on the look-out for a sheltered warm spot, just in case a butterfly should be awoken from hibernation – if not I'll just have to wait until Spring.

Paula Dale

If you have an idea for an article for the next issue of the Newsletter please see Lynda Yewdall our Editor

Do remember to bring you questions for the Gardeners Question time panel next month.