

Lockdown News 8th May.

Welcome to this VE Day version of the Lockdown News. We remember the sacrifices made by all the British and Commonwealth armed forces and those supporting them at home during those hard 6 years of war. And there are parallels with our current time where we can remember the sacrifices being made by members of the NHS and other frontline workers, putting themselves at risk to keep the rest of us safe.

As I am writing this, there is talk on the news of relaxation of some of the aspects of lockdown being announced next week. Your Committee has already had a meeting about this and preparing for the way forward. We will of course have to be guided by the Ramblers as it is they who have said that all events are cancelled until at least 31st May, but we want to be ready as soon as they lift this restriction. Please be assured that we will do everything we can to have us all up and walking as a group as soon as we are allowed to do so.

But it is very exciting even to be able to talk about being able to walk together in the near future. In the meantime, over to Brian S for the more interesting part of the Lockdown News.

Judy Brua - Chair

Hello everyone from here in sunny Chaldon. Living where we do, Moira and I feel especially lucky in these strange times to live in a house with a lovely garden - getting lots of attention now, of course - and being directly adjacent to some of the loveliest areas for walking and wildlife, such as Happy Valley and Farthing Downs, in which we walk every day with our dog Daisy, without ever needing a car.

As some of you may know, I am a volunteer "Urban shepherd" for the Downlands Partnership, so once a week we make a longer dog walk out of my visit to check the sheep and goats kept on the edge of the North Downs, and who are doing a great job in preserving the chalk grassland habitat.

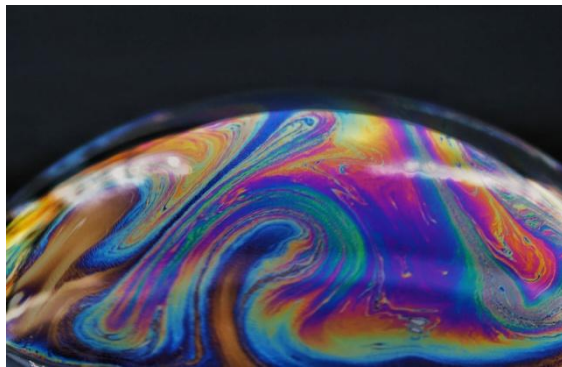
My other fairly new volunteer role is in monitoring butterfly populations, and although all official recording has been put on hold, I do still undertake the occasional count just to keep my eye in and to build a picture of how the year is progressing. With all the warm weather we have had the prospects are looking very positive for butterfly numbers.

Another interest that keeps me fairly busy is photography. Along with 7 other ESW members I am a member of Tandridge Photographic Society, and of course missing our weekly meetings at the White Hart Barn in Godstone. Thankfully the medium of Zoom has allowed the club to continue to thrive, with weekly well attended meetings online, as well as extra forums for sharing images and discussions through the likes of Flickr and Facebook. Some people are wary of social media, but in these times it has proved a godsend for keeping in touch and maintaining interests.

The great thing about photography is you can practice it anywhere (and practice I do, even in bed! Its called creativity!). At the start of the year, along with 8 other TPS members, I embarked on a 366 project: committing to take and share one photo every day of the year. This is enough of a challenge in more normal times, but in the light of how the year is progressing it seems like a foolish enterprise. Nevertheless we are all still at it - up to day 127 as I write - trying every day to produce an interesting image to impress or amuse our members. Over the period I have had a go at photographing birds in flight, still life (aka what can I find in the kitchen), soap bubbles, star trails, butterflies and flowers. The more you try to excel at such subjects, the more you realise there is to learn, and the greater your admiration of those that really have mastered the techniques and demonstrated their creativity. Thankfully with the likes of YouTube there is a vast host of tuition material available online to help you gain these skills. Or not!

Another key interest of mine is music, and in the current lockdown the plight of musicians who can no longer perform in public, and earn a living, is truly worrying. But it is heartening that so many musicians have volunteered freely to perform live from their homes for our benefit, and such performances help to establish an intimate connection between performer and audience. Someone who I have been a fan of since the early 1970's, and who I consider to be one of the greatest British songwriters as well as an exceptional guitarist, is the folk musician Richard Thompson. If you are reading this before the weekend then you can catch his performance from his home in Los Angeles this coming Sunday (10th May) at 7:30 pm.

<https://www.royalalberthall.com/tickets/events/2020/royal-albert-home-richard-thompson/>. Enjoy.



Brian Smith