

HIGHDOWN GARDENS AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2011

Once again, the year has flown by, and we are preparing for the Winter. We have already hit 0°C this year, but, thankfully, just on the one occasion. No doubt, before the daffodils have next raised their sunny heads with laughter, we shall see 0° again.

We were beginning to doubt whether we would see the usual autumn colour, as the sudden cold weather, after such a nice warm spell in late September, began an early leaf fall. Things evened out with the weather, and we are getting some nice colour, though not as spectacular as usual.



We are only now just beginning to see the odd toadstool in the middle of November, usually in abundance by October. What a topsy turvy year we have had with the weather! At least it has been dry for the most part! Great news for the workers, but not so good for the Garden. Saying that, we did have wet weather in July. Usually a hot, dry month in the Gardens, and one that causes some concern with the herbaceous borders, the Gardeners had one less thing to worry about, i.e. watering!

The butterflies seemed a little down in numbers this year. If you noticed the same in your Gardens, do let us know! We had such a fabulous number of the common species back in 2009, and some not so common, that we had hoped it was set to be the norm. We have planted a lot more nectar plants to encourage the numbers of butterflies, so we shall see if this trend continues, or whether it was something else we can attribute to the odd weather patterns seen this year.

You may remember that we wrote in Autumn two years ago that we had seen a Wasp Spider nesting here, and had hoped that we would see more each year, but, alas, it remains the only one we have ever seen here.



We have started doing some clearance on the old chalk face, and we are so pleased with the result.

Once again, one is reminded of the old chalk pit, and the immense work undertaken by Sir Frederick Stern. The whiteness of the exposed chalk was dazzling in the September sunshine. We hope that more renovation work can be achieved before too long.

Highdown Gardens has again this year been awarded with the Green Flag Award. This is in no small measure due to the tireless work of Mr Chris Beardsley, and his small team of dedicated gardeners. For those of you who search out the staff to thank them, it is much appreciated, and the staff would like to return the thanks both to the visitors, but also to the Friends of Highdown, our small team of volunteers, whose help this year, as always, has been invaluable.



Fingers crossed that we can escape the bad weather of the last two winters and we can survive to see another Spring without too many casualties.

Season's Greetings to all our visitors for the coming festivities, and Best Wishes for the New Year.

Chris Beardsley
Manager
Highdown Gardens