

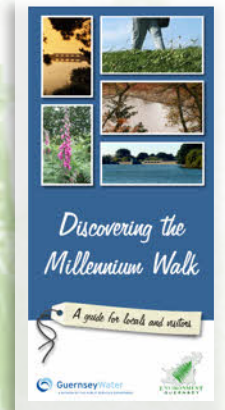
WEATHER

At the beginning of June, the drought was broken by a couple of days of very heavy and much needed rain. Generally the first part of the month was dominated by strong drying winds. The second half of June saw an increase in sunshine and a lessening of the wind.

USE & CONDITION OF THE WALK

The Walk continues to be popular with both visitors and locals as noted by the registration plates of vehicles in the car park. Dog walkers and joggers continue to use the facility on a daily basis. At half term many children were playing in the area and a few more dens have been built among the pine trees. The leaflets (*right*) have been very popular, so much so that the supply has run out. The public, especially visitors, are very keen to take a leaflet and appreciate the information contained in it.

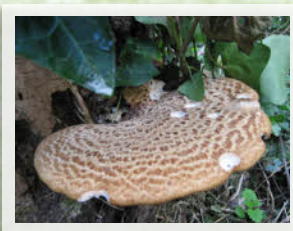
Children have been seen following the map as they walk around or looking out for some of the items listed. They are a valuable asset for the Walk.



The parched soil has soaked up the heavy rain very quickly and the path has been mostly dry and dusty. The area has been strimmed but brambles and bracken grow very quickly and still require trimming back. Overhanging trees, particularly down on the eastern side alongside the daffodil field, cause even people of smaller stature to duck.

OBSERVATIONS

Elders have been in full bloom during the month and have brightened up the views. Foxgloves, which are normally still flowering in June, are over. There are little splashes of colour from Calamint, Figwort, Musk's Stork's Bill, Cleavers, Sheep's Bit Scabious, Woodsage, Self Heal, Scarlet Pimpernel, Yarrow, Thyme-leaved Speedwell, Hedge Bedstraw and Red Campion but these can easily be overlooked as the general impression of the area is one of the dryness of high summer. Some grasses are in flower including Cyperus sp. Galingale which is particularly early this year. Brambles are promising a good crop of blackberries in the months to come and the scent of honeysuckle fills the air in the early evening. Another example of the early season is the Rowan berries which are already ripening and are a rich orange colour. Further along the way the path is littered with the fallen fruit from Wild Cherries.



There are very few fungi in evidence at the moment - the one exception was a particularly fine group of five or more large Dryad's Saddle (*left*); these were quickly obscured from view however by the growth of ivy and bracken. Another small colony of insect eaten fungi which caught the eye was Branching Oyster (*Pleurotus cornucopiae*), this is not on the species list for the area and we don't recall seeing it previously. The spore print was lilac and we are fairly certain that we have correctly identified it. The

bright yellow, rather disgusting looking, Dog Vomit Fungus was spotted; this is not really a fungus but a slime mould *Fuligo Septica*.

On the water the Bistort is in full bloom and has, as usual, attracted the attention of a group of 7 or 8 Greylags. The noisy young of the Coots are also to be found among the Bistort and they and the splash of large fish jumping break the quiet of the area. An adult Little Grebe with one young has been seen on a number of occasions from the roadside wall. Hopefully the other pairs have also successfully raised their young. The calls of the Little Grebe are still heard in two or three places around the reservoir. Grey Heron and Little Egret have been occasional visitors this month.

The warm sunny weather has been beneficial for the butterflies and there are many in the area including Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Red Admiral, Large White and Holly Blue. The solitary bees which a few years ago were to be found in one spot of the bank by the western exit have spread and can now be found nearly all the way along the bottom of that bank beside the road.

June has been another popular month for visitors to the reserve and favourable comments on the peace and tranquility the area provides show what a valuable asset it is to the Island.

Rhiannon Cook and Val Bloese