



media release

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Was RSPB nature reserve inspiration to Hendrix?

Rumours are circulating that the Jimi Hendrix hit *Purple Haze* was inspired by the RSPB's Arne nature reserve, on the edge of Poole Harbour in Dorset.

The heathland site is a riot of purple flowers at this time of year and may be described as a 'purple haze' because of the combined colours of masses of flowering heathers and heaths covering acres of land at the nature reserve.

The purple haze was described by Arne information officer, Emma Foulger, as 'a riot of colour set off by the blue of the sky' drawing comparisons with the Hendrix lyric: 'Actin' funny, but I don't know why/Scuse me while I kiss the sky.'

The humming of countless bees gorging on the heather nectar on warm sunny days can also be heard at this time of year and there is speculation it might have been the inspiration for Hendrix' famous guitar riffs.

A visitor to the site, who did not want to be named, said: "Jimi could've been here, man, maybe he popped over when he played the Isle of Wight festival. He might have been looking for the Dartford warblers, there weren't many around back then but Arne was really important for them after the harsh winter of 1963."

Views of The Needles on the Isle of Wight can be seen from one of the viewpoints at Arne.

When questioned about the Hendrix rumours, an RSPB spokesman said: "I don't really want to comment on this and anyway, Hendrix played the isle of Wight in 1970 – long after he'd written Purple Haze."

Visitors to Arne nature reserve are invited to make up their own minds about the rumours, by experiencing the heathland purple haze for themselves on a series of guided walks at the site, every Wednesday throughout August.

- Walks start in the car park at the Arne visitor hut at 10.30 am and 2 pm and last approx two hours. They are free of charge but there is a car parking fee if you are not an RSPB member, but this is refundable if you join on the day.

ENDS

J-pg images of Arne nature reserve are available for use free of charge, provided they are only used in connection with this story, by e-mailing sophie.atherton@rspb.org.uk, or contacting her on the number below. Unfortunately, we are unable to supply images of Jimi Hendrix.