

# Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch

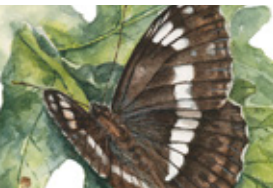


Newsletter 109



Butterfly  
Conservation

October 2020



# Winter Work Party Arrangements 2020-2021

Due to Covid restrictions we need to know in advance who will be coming. If you intend to join a work party please email Richard Lemon, [richardlemonjnr@gmail.com](mailto:richardlemonjnr@gmail.com)

We'll be there until 3pm but people can finish whenever they like. Bring a packed lunch if you're staying. We'll supply gloves and tools.

If you have any questions about our reserves or our work parties please contact Steve Wheatley, [swheatley@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:swheatley@butterfly-conservation.org)

Do keep an eye on the Branch website for changes  
[www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/workparties.php](http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/workparties.php)



## Magdalen Hill Down

1 - Monday 12 October 2 - Monday 16 November

3 - Monday 14 December

### Meet details

Magdalen Hill Down, 10am–3pm. Meet in the car park at the top of the track between the Stonemasons and Morn Hill Cemetery SO21 1HE (SU 512 295).



# Chairman's Message

## Introduction

*"And always keep a-hold of Nurse  
For fear of finding something worse."*

Extract from Jim, by Hilaire Belloc

The story of Jim and his sad demise in the jaws of Ponto, the hungry lion, is a reminder that bad news is not necessarily followed by good. After the forest fires in Australia; the continuing loss of biodiversity in the UK; the scourge of plastic pollution around the world and the murder of butterfly conservationists in Mexico, it was an enormous shock to find ourselves in the middle of a global pandemic with the arrival of Spring. If there has been a silver lining in this depressing cloud it must have been the long spell of glorious weather that boosted the fortunes of our spring and summer butterflies. It also helped many of us, where able, to get out and enjoy the natural world as restrictions gradually eased.

And the weather was glorious. Matthew Oates in his book, *In Pursuit of Butterflies*, waxes lyrical about the abundance of butterflies in the hot summer of 1976. A succession of good summers allows butterflies to build their numbers and establish new colonies. Unoccupied pieces of habitat suddenly become occupied. Potential habitat becomes actual habitat. Like 1976, this year has been the third good summer in a row, at least here in southern England. Butterflies have responded in kind and the Branch sightings and Facebook pages have been full of reports of "what's this?" and "never seen that here before". Chalk Hill Blues, Wall Browns and even Brown Hairstreaks have all been recorded in suburban gardens. New species have been recorded on Up Somborne Down where the branch has been working with a local landowner to restore the chalk downland habitat. The Adonis Blue has colonised Mound Meadow near Winchester for the first time and Marbled Whites flew in abundance over Magdalen Hill Down. Late June and July saw an explosion of Peacocks and Red Admirals across the region.

The lockdown clearly played a part in all this. Furlough arrangements, home working, staycations and the good weather prompted a huge increase in local walks and local sightings. People have occupied habitat they may never have occupied before! It has been good to see so many young people taking a keen

interest in what is living around them, from the peregrines, Winnie and Chester, breeding successfully on Winchester Cathedral to the humble Ringlet flying in profusion in Crab Wood. Let's hope a new generation of keen naturalists will develop over time and provide a positive legacy from this pandemic pain.

We will not know how the year has fared butterfly-wise until the number crunching begins in November but I suspect we will be able to put 2020 down as a good year for butterflies, if for little else.

## **Branch changes**

This brings me to some unhappy news regarding the Branch. Covid-19 has had a major impact on the income streams available to Butterfly Conservation. BC began the new financial year with a projected budget deficit. This is not unusual and something that the Government has practised for many years. However, unlike the Government, BC relies on legacies, grants and awards from external funders to close the deficit over time. This has proved very difficult this year because of the pandemic and BC has had to cut costs, including staff costs.

A staff consultation began in early June. The BC Senior Leadership Team ("SLT") decided to restructure the Nature Reserves team and make some roles redundant, including that of our Senior Reserves Officer, Jayne Chapman. A new operating and funding model for BC's England reserves was developed and responsibility for all six reserves in South East Region has been transferred to Steve Wheatley, Regional Conservation Manager. This includes the three Hampshire reserves of Magdalen Hill Down, Yew Hill and Bentley Station Meadow.

Jayne was offered the chance to apply for a new post of South Downs Landscape Officer. This role will have responsibility for the Hampshire reserves and the development of landscape conservation projects in the South Downs. Jayne disagreed with the changes proposed by SLT and left BC at the end of July. She leaves a wonderful legacy in Hampshire and at other sites that she helped to manage in and around Winchester and across the border into Surrey and Sussex. A well-deserved appreciation follows later in the newsletter.

The Branch was informed of the outcome of the staff consultation on 24th July. The Branch Main Committee was surprised and disappointed not to have been consulted on the new operating, funding and management model for the three Hampshire reserves and on the possible implications of that model. These are reserves which the Branch began to acquire and manage over thirty years ago. Sadly, there was no opportunity to influence the outcome or



discuss possible alternative approaches. BC insist this was necessary to maintain the confidentiality of the staff restructuring programme.

Whilst we recognise that Butterfly Conservation was faced with a very difficult situation and had to take a series of tough decisions to secure the future of the charity as a viable concern, the Branch Committee was extremely unhappy about the lack of consultation with such major changes. Sadly, therefore, I have to report that, having each considered their position, all of the Main Committee have decided, individually, either to resign or not stand for re-election at the forthcoming Branch AGM on 11th November.

We do not expect members to necessarily understand or fully support the decision we have each taken. We accept that resigning is an essentially negative step. But it is important to understand that the work of the Branch will continue in many ways. Bob Annell will continue as County Butterfly Recorder and Mike Wall as County Moth Recorder. Transects will still be walked and livestock will still be checked as and when grazing is re-introduced onto the reserves. The Marsh Fritillary re-introduction will remain a priority for this writer and the South Downs Landscape Officer post should be filled later this year. Our education and outreach work will resume when the pandemic eventually passes. It must, however, fall to others to come forward to lead and manage this Branch.

This is, therefore, my last introduction as Branch Chair. May I end by thanking all the many friends and colleagues who have helped, supported and occasionally challenged the way I have done things over the past few years. I shall remain a firm supporter of the butterflies and moths of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

With very best wishes,

***Clive Wood, Chair***  
1 September 2020



# Branch AGM 2020

Normally at this time of year we invite you to join us at our Branch Members' Day and AGM. But these are far from being normal times and Covid-19 has meant that we have had to cancel this year's Members' Day and AGM which was due to be held on Sunday 22 November.

Instead we shall be holding our 2020 AGM by a Zoom conference call on **Wednesday 11 November at 7:30pm**. All members of the Branch are warmly invited to join us. We expect the meeting to last less than an hour.

## Agenda for the Annual General Meeting 2020

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of 2019 Annual General Meeting
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Presentation of Branch Accounts
6. Chair's Report, including changes to the Main Committee
7. Election of members of Main Committee
8. Any other business including questions
9. Close of AGM

The information about the 2020 AGM will be available via a link on the Home Page of the Branch website – [www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk](http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk) – from where you'll be able to pick up the draft minutes of the 2019 AGM and the up-to-date Branch Accounts. Please note:

- If you disagree with anything in the draft 2019 minutes and/or have any comments or questions on them please email these to the Branch Secretary [marymacmillan.mm@gmail.com](mailto:marymacmillan.mm@gmail.com) to arrive no later than **4 November**. If no dissenting comments are received by that date then the minutes will be taken as approved.
- As all accounts are now handled by BC Head Office there is no longer a legal requirement for Branches to formerly approve their Annual Accounts so our Branch Accounts are presented to Branch Members just for your information.

If you have any questions prior to the 2020 AGM please email them to the Branch Secretary [marymacmillan.mm@gmail.com](mailto:marymacmillan.mm@gmail.com) to arrive no later than

**4 November** and they will be answered during the meeting where possible. Any questions which you may have during the meeting should be raised under item 8 on the Agenda.

The draft minutes for the 2020 AGM will be posted onto the Branch website **[www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk](http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk)** a few weeks after the meeting. You will be able to find these minutes by following Home > About > Minutes of AGMs > 2020.

If you would like to attend the AGM online please register your interest by sending an email to the Branch Chair **[clivepwood@gmail.com](mailto:clivepwood@gmail.com)** *to arrive no later than 4 November* giving your name(s) and your Butterfly Conservation membership number(s). This information will only be used by the Branch to send you a link to join the meeting and will be deleted shortly after the AGM has concluded.

Joining a Zoom meeting is easy, provided of course that you have internet access. On 9 November the Branch Chair will send an email to Branch Members providing a link to join our 2020 AGM and guidance on how to do so. This will only be sent to those Branch members who have registered to attend.

If you do not have access to the internet you will not, unfortunately, be able to take part in this AGM. We are sorry if this is the case but trust that you will understand why this is necessary this year. If you have any questions to raise please feel free to send them by post to the Branch Secretary (Mary Macmillan, 5 Carrington Close, Milford on Sea, Lymington, Hants, SO41 ORD) to arrive no later than 4 November together with a stamped addressed envelope. Your question will be addressed at the AGM and a reply sent to you after the meeting. If you would like to see the minutes of this year's AGM please send a stamped addressed envelope to the Branch Secretary, see above for address, and a copy will be sent to you when they are available.

Just as a footnote, without a Members' Day there will, unfortunately, be no photographic competition this year.

***Mary Macmillan***  
***Branch Secretary and Organiser***

For obvious reasons the Powells will not be there, but they can be found in their electronic guise at **[www.powellwildlifeart.com](http://www.powellwildlifeart.com)** with their artworks, greetings cards, calendars and other gift ware. A donation to Hants BC will be made by any sale generated from the AGM.



## Jayne Chapman: an appreciation

Jayne Chapman was recruited by the Branch nine years ago as Reserves Officer for Magdalen Hill Down, Yew Hill and Bentley Station Meadow and was promoted to Senior Reserves Officer in 2018. Engaging Jayne was one of our better decisions as she has made a tremendous difference over those years and all three reserves are in great shape due to the skill and passion she brought to the role.

Good land management is a rare skill. Contractors, chainsaws, heavy machinery and some “slash and burn” all have a role in managing a reserve for wildlife but Jayne’s true area of expertise was the use of grazing livestock for conservation purposes. Different breeds graze in different ways and Jayne was an expert in knowing when to move livestock between compartments to achieve the best results for target species. The Adonis Blue and Brown Argus tend to be short sward specialists whilst the Small Blue uses short, medium and tall swards to feed, breed and roost. Another of our target species, the Chalk Hill Blue, prefers medium height swards. Pleasing all these butterflies takes some doing. Yet the Hampshire reserves are now some of the best sites in the country for a fantastic range of downland butterflies.

The effect of Jayne’s management skills can be seen in the transect figures. The “Old Allotments” field on Magdalen Hill Down (MHD) was added to our portfolio in 2012. Since that time, Large and Small Skippers have seen a 30-fold increase in abundance and Small Heath a ten-fold increase. On the “Original” part of MHD, the Brown Argus has done exceptionally well whilst the Small Blue has become firmly established. The Adonis Blue was previously unknown on the site before 2014 but the annual count is now into double figures.

Jayne combined her vision for the reserves with a rare combination of practical skills. Woe betide the contractor who tried to over-charge for chestnut fence posts or wiring staples. Budgets were always met; plans



always delivered. She inspired so many to volunteer and people loved to work for her. I remember going onto Magdalen Hill Down one Boxing Day in driving rain to check on the livestock. A cow had managed to get stuck on some barbed wire in a desperate attempt to find a friend in the neighbouring field. Never mind the warm fire at home, you spent an hour releasing the cow and checking all was well because Jayne had asked and you knew it was important.



Jayne has also worked her magic on non-reserve sites. The widow of a retired farmer living near Kings Somborne in Hampshire was worried about the condition of a 3.5Ha piece of remnant chalk downland left over from the sale of the family farm. Hogweed and assorted coarse grasses were steadily encroaching at the expense of a diverse downland sward. Jayne took the trouble to visit in her own time and quickly assess what was needed to improve the site. She got the widow to pay for new fencing, gates and a water trough and oversaw the installation work. A grazier who had worked with Jayne over many years agreed to loan some sheep at next to no cost. A volunteer came forward to undertake regular survey and site monitoring work. All inspired by Jayne. Three short years later, sward diversity has been transformed, butterfly numbers have quadrupled, and new species are using the site.

She has a boundless enthusiasm and warmth that is able to engage and motivate people young and old from all walks of life. Jayne set up a regular Monday work party on Magdalen Hill Down for people with mental health challenges. The benefits were huge for both the reserve and the volunteers. One year a very disgruntled member of the public made the mistake of approaching Jayne to complain about something on MHD. She ended up joining BC and volunteering for work parties!



*Mugshot!*

Jayne is highly respected by fellow conservation professionals, local landowners and colleagues in partner organisations. Her in-depth understanding of how to manage land with all its practical, financial and legislative constraints is widely admired. And her little black book of contacts is second to none.

But above and beyond all this, I would single out Jayne's enormous energy and creativity as attributes that BC and the Branch will most miss. Many is the time I have puzzled over a problem only to come away from a chat with Jayne with a couple of ideas to take forward and feeling energised. She really is a force for good and will be missed hugely by her many, many friends, colleagues and admirers.

Thank you Jayne for all you have done for us, for the butterflies and moths of Hampshire, and for nature and wildlife generally. We wish you well.

***Clive Wood***  
***Branch Chair, on behalf of all Branch Committee members, past and present***



# Branch boosts volunteer support in Hampshire

Volunteers are and will remain the lifeblood of Butterfly Conservation. Whether it involves monitoring and recording butterflies and moths, helping to maintain habitats, speaking to landowners and members of the public about Lepidoptera, or working behind the scenes to ensure the branch runs smoothly, almost all of the activity on the ground in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight is led by volunteers. In fact, in 2018/19, more than 220,000 hours of volunteer effort worth in excess of £14 million was contributed across the UK. Hampshire volunteers played a significant part in this as one of the largest and most active branches.



*Painted Lady.  
Rosemary Powell.*

In recognition of this phenomenal effort, a pioneering new post has been championed and partially funded by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch to help promote volunteering more widely. We want to make it easier for new volunteers to become involved with the work of the Branch and to ensure we offer training and development opportunities for existing volunteers. This role is the first of its kind in England, so Hampshire volunteers will be the first to benefit from what will eventually be a UK-wide approach to better supporting our volunteers. My role as Education Officer was extended to encompass volunteer development in April 2020. Following a period of furlough in the spring, I'm now busy making plans to develop the training and support that we can offer volunteers and explore the opportunities available to those who would like to get involved.

If you are interested in finding out more, see the Volunteer Development page on the main Butterfly Conservation website (under How You Can Help > Get Involved > Volunteering) or contact me using the email address or telephone number below.

**Kate Barrett**  
**[kbarrett@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:kbarrett@butterfly-conservation.org)**  
**01962 673565**



# Remembering Ivan Arnold

Ivan Arnold, long associated with our reserve at Yew Hill, sadly passed away in May.

Ivan, who lived near to Yew Hill, built up a relationship with the reserve over the years being involved with work parties and the management of the site. He also walked the butterfly transect at both Yew Hill and the adjoining site, Hill Top.

I got to know Ivan in recent years when he took over the organisation of the transect rotas at the two sites. In his last email to me he said how much Yew Hill meant to him and his family and how he felt privileged and to have known such a lovely place.

Our thoughts are with his family.

*Linda Barker*



*Brown Argus. Rosemary Powell*

# Lockdown Musings



Sadly, as Members' Day has been cancelled this year, there will be no Annual Photographic Competition. A 'Butterflies in Lockdown' Competition was held in its place in the summer and the winning entry can be seen here. Congratulations Kerry on a superb image.

*Burnet Moth on Dock Flowers. Kerry Mellor*

*Freya Brown*

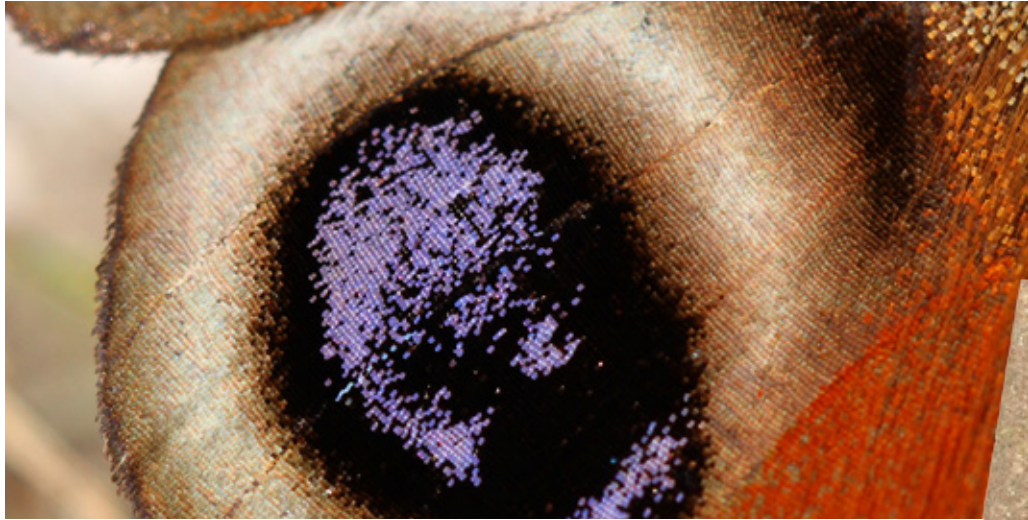




# Garden Musings

Mary Macmillan

The wildflower meadow which I sowed in the autumn of 2018 is beginning to come into its own in terms of the number of insects in the garden, including butterflies and moths of course.



*Peacock. Lee Hurrell.*

There is no doubt that there has been a marked increase in butterflies in my garden this year. The lockdown has meant that I have been at home more than usual so have been able to see far more of what's been going on. In previous years there have been good numbers of Whites, mainly Small, and of Holly Blues with a few Brimstones, Red Admirals, Commas, Peacocks and Painted Ladies. It's been a delight to see all these again this year together with several new species. Gatekeepers have been abundant as in so many other places. There have been Meadow Browns and Green-veined White. I was entranced watching three Small Skippers jostling with each other amongst the fine grasses. And it was a pleasure to come across a Small Copper several times. Common Blue and Marbled White seems a bit out of place. And then there were a couple of tantalisingly brief glimpses of what might have been a Brown Argus, far too brief for me to be able to identify it for certain. I have high hopes for my meadow next year!

On the moth front, I've run a moth trap in my garden at least once a week since before lockdown started. My general observation is that moth numbers here in Milford on Sea are generally down with some usually common species being conspicuous by their absence. Other species which are normally abundant in their season have been turning up in much lower numbers. Of these, the most dramatic decline has been the Large Yellow Underwing. At the time of writing (late August), I have recorded just 13 individuals whereas up to the same date in 2019 I had recorded 247. And for several species many of the individuals seem to be smaller than they usually are, perhaps a reflection of adverse conditions for caterpillars and/or pupae over the winter and early spring. But there have been high spots with some old friends appearing which I'd not seen for a while and species coming in which I've not seen before. These have included Wormwood Pug, White-line Dart and Oak Processionary, the latter perhaps not such a welcome visitor.



Oak Processionary.



# Lockdown Notebook

Rosemary and Dan Powell



The Lodger



Two of many that day



Summer Snowflake



Corncockle



Fritillary





Hairy-footed Flower Bee



The Workers



*Eristalis pertinax*



Batman - *Myathropa florea*



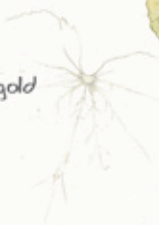
The Freeloader



Marsh-marigold



Apple Blossom



The Larder

# Time to watch

Jacky Adams

## Speckled Wood

It's widely known that butterflies can be pollinators but lockdown was the first occasion I'd taken time to watch a Speckled Wood whizz up into my apple tree and plunge itself headfirst into the blossom. This also helped explain the yellow dusting on another of the species I photographed the next day which I suspect was pollen and not some strange contagion!



## Green-veined White

I know that butterflies of the same species will vary in size, depending on how well the caterpillar feeds and that intensity of colours and markings can vary but, even so, I was surprised by the differences in the mating pair of Green-veined Whites I saw during lockdown. The larger, whiter one (female?) carted her partner around for a while before settling onto nettles to complete their coupling.



## Small White

The 'sacrifice' Nasturtiums grown in pots by my front door in 2019 nurtured a good number of Large White and Small White caterpillars, some of whom decided that my porch area would be a safe place to pupate and overwinter. Despite keeping an eye on them during lockdown, I failed to see a butterfly as it emerged, although I did manage to document a Small White pupa as it went from pale, to dark, to empty over the course of three days.





# Musings on Magdalen Hill Down

Lee Hurrell



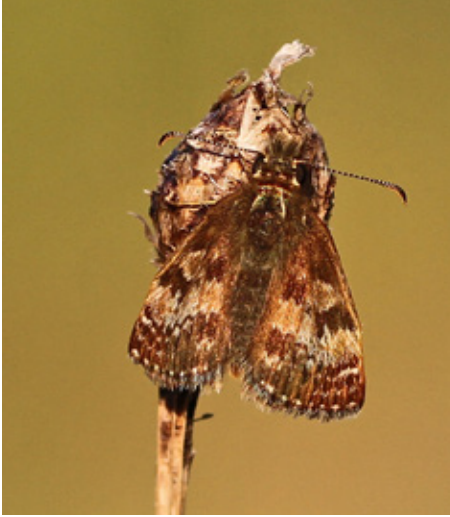
Brimstones.

I would imagine that if you are reading this, you quite like the countryside. You might even go as far as me, and need the countryside. I'm not averse to driving somewhere at the weekends, which is when my butterflying is usually done, but it's nice to have a local patch you can walk to.

When COVID-19 took hold of the country in the spring, I, like many others, began working from home. This gave me the opportunity to go walking locally; first at lunchtime, just to get out, and once it got warmer and lockdown restrictions were eased a little, again in the late afternoon and early evening. I found lots of lovely places within walking distance of home and visited them all. However, one place stuck out as special: Magdalen Hill Down.

I had visited once, a few years ago, and once more last year. This year though, I found myself returning again and again. It became like an antidote to the imprisonment of lockdown. I wasn't able to see my loved ones, but I was able to spend time with my beloved butterflies. I started visiting several times a week, and still do so now.

Early in the spring, the site was host to lots of post-hibernation Peacocks, Brimstones, the odd Small Tortoiseshell and a few Commas. There was an influx of Red Admirals one week, which I then saw everywhere I went.



*Dingy Skipper.*



*Grizzled Skipper.*

In early April, Holly Blue and Speckled Wood appeared. I watched Grizzled Skipper numbers grow and became addicted to finding roosting Dingy Skippers. (They're easy when you get your eye in – my record was four on one of last year's Knapweed seed heads.) Orange-tips and Green-veined Whites preferred the shady area of the tree line that bisects the down. Small Whites popped up here and there and Small Heath gradually built their numbers.



On one visit, I bumped into Colin, one of the wardens. We got chatting and he told me where some of the best spots for Green Hairstreak were. I then saw them all over the down. I had time to watch behaviour where I hadn't previously; females ovipositing and males sparring for territory. If you think Small Coppers are pugnacious little beasts, they are nothing on two male Green Hairstreaks going at it!



Roosting Common Blues.

As April carried on and the weather stayed warm and sunny, the down became a sea of yellow as cowslips took over. These were later replaced by the deeper yellow of buttercups. Brown Argus made an appearance, then an early pair of mating Common Blue. Small Blue soon followed, although Small Copper took some finding.

Early May gave surprise sightings of Marsh Fritillary and Adonis Blue. Later in May, Large Skipper, Meadow Brown and then graceful Marbled Whites took over in abundance; a real highlight of early summer. Ringlet also preferred the middle tree line or the shadier sections along the bottom of the slopes. Small Skipper then Essex Skipper came next as we edged into high summer. Red Admiral numbers exploded and could be seen everywhere in great abundance, followed by the annual eruption of Peacocks. I was counting 30 or more of both species on visits at this time. Late June cooled off and the heat returned for the flowering of Marjoram and the arrival of Chalk Hill Blue, second broods of Common Blue and Brown Argus, Gatekeeper and a few surprise Clouded Yellow. Brimstone added a further splash of yellow and Large Whites were suddenly everywhere.

Pleasingly, a second brood of Adonis Blue appeared and I found females this time; suggesting a small population is establishing. Colin and I also found several Marsh Fritillary larval webs, which we will monitor over the winter.

All this took place in the constant company of resident Skylarks, with their beautifully cascading warbling, and Kestrels and Yellowhammers. Buzzard, Red Kite, Raven and even Winchester's juvenile Peregrines were frequent sightings.

I have adored watching the site throughout the season this year; something I have not been able to do before and I am already looking forward to doing it all again next year. Magdalen Hill Down is a very special site and one that I am so lucky to have on my doorstep.

# The Buzz about Magdalen

Tricia Spink

At the start of Spring 2020, through most of February, we watched the rain fall continuously. The ground became saturated. Then, after a cold and windy spell at the beginning of March, warmth and life seemed to kick in: Cowslips appeared, carpeting the open field everywhere on Magdalen Hill Down. Skylarks filled the air with their song. And as we progressed into the early part of April, bumblebees began to arrive.

There were fairly strong winds, sometimes blowing force 4 or 5, but these small creatures are fairly robust and can usually be seen foraging for nectar even when other insects have given up or stayed at home. By early May, Magdalen Hill Down was very active with bumblebees: the beginnings of Sainfoin were showing in patches, spreading through the grasses among large clumps of Kidney Vetch, Plantain, Meadow Cranesbill and Red Clover, and the tiny Bird's Foot Trefoil. Each of these species is very desirable to the bumblebee, most especially the Sainfoin, to which they are strongly attracted. Along the Pathside area of MHD, great swathes of Sainfoin cover the grassland; this transect I presently observe can show, in an hour's observation, over 80+ *Bombus lapidarius*, (queens and workers have a black head and thorax and orange-red tail), and 110 + *Bombus hypnorum*, the miracle, newly-found species in the UK since 2000, (queens and workers: black head, thorax tawny gold, abdomen black with white tail). This latter bee has a shorter tongue, and as the year moves forward into June, brambles appear and the flowers, being shallower in shape and more open than the funnel petals of other plants and the Sainfoin, become another desirable plant.



There are almost too many to note as one walks slowly forward, observing a metre each side of the sheep track towards the end of the Pathside. Also, there are a number of *Apis mellifera*, honey bee, and a few carders – a bumblebee that seems to drift in a quiet and very solitary state, in its pale green-brown overcoat among the Sainfoin. Moving down through the trees, (Area 4), there are clumps of Wild Clematis and Bramble, but few bees; further on, along the Extension which borders the A31, and up to the Cemetery, we find Sheep's Sorrel, Hawkweed and Hogweed set among tall grasses and scrub, but no Sainfoin. Then dotted along the higher pathway is another welcome surprise for bumblebees, the *Vicia cracca*, much like the Sainfoin, and as you pass the Cemetery and approach the long pathway that leads down Pathside, there are tall clumps of Rosebay Willowherb. It has been a wonderful summer for bees and this particular site offers much for these creatures, busily competing with the butterflies.



*Bombus lapidarius*





# Musings out and about in Hampshire and beyond

Ashley Whitlock

The 2020 field trip programme was all set to be one of the best, in theory, but as we all know best laid plans... During March we were told we had to stay indoors because of the dreaded Covid-19, but we could exercise for an hour – locally. It was a good time to get to know our local patch. There is an allotment less than 100 yards away from my house in Portsmouth and also a shoreline leading to the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust’s Milton Lock. The weather in March was delightfully sunny and it turned out to be one of the warmest springs on record.



Orange-tips.

Silver Y.



The butterfly counts soon increased, responding to the splendid weather, and in my garden I was really surprised how many moth caterpillars I found. I watched the progress of Mint Moth, Garden Tiger and White Ermine Moths as they ravished whatever they could find in the shrubbery. By the allotments Red Admirals and Small Tortoiseshells were eagerly laying eggs on fresh-shooting nettle patches.

March turned to April and still the sun shone, which I think was a boon, making local walks all the more enjoyable. Redshanks and Oystercatchers kept me entertained on the shoreline and there was a lovely pair of Kestrels nesting near to the nature reserve and hunting around the area. Lovely courting Orange-tips near the allotments reminded me what I was missing in the big wide world of butterflying.

When the Government guidelines allowed travel for exercise further from home, I drove on empty roads to Oxenbourne Down; it looked like the 2020 Butterfly season was just starting.

The Duke of Burgundy was flying in good numbers in the Meon Valley at most sites and it was a joy to see along with Green Hairstreak and Grizzled and Dingy Skipper.

In early May there was an easing of lockdown restrictions and transects could begin again, but alas the field trips programme remained suspended. The air seemed fresher, there were no vapour trails in the sky, everyone who was out walking seemed to relish in the joy of being out in the countryside again.

During this extraordinary time, a visit to Martin Down in mid May provided an exceptional day with over fifty Marsh Fritillaries seen and a similar number of Adonis Blues, while the icing on the cake was spotting a Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth.

To add to all of this, and probably driven by the record-breaking spring weather, the Purple Emperor was flexing its wings in the first week of June, which is unprecedented. In the ensuing hot weather we all cooked.



*Garden Tiger Moth.*



*Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth.*



# John Vetterlein's 2021 Calendar

Clive Wood

John is a long-standing member and benefactor of several BC branches and a prize-winning photographer. In 2019 he raised over £4,600 for BC from the sale of butterfly photographs at an exhibition at the Harbour Lights Gallery in Southampton.

This year he is producing a **“Bonking Butterflies”** 2021 calendar with all profits to be donated to the Branch. The calendar will contain 14 high quality 30x30cm images of his best ‘in cop’ photos from Dorset, Hampshire, the Isle of Wight, Sussex and Kent.

The calendar is in the best of all possible taste! The photographs can be viewed through the following link:

**[www.butterflyphotos.co.uk/store/p8/Bonking\\_Butterflies\\_Calender\\_2021.html](http://www.butterflyphotos.co.uk/store/p8/Bonking_Butterflies_Calender_2021.html)**

The calendar is a limited edition of 300 copies only. They are priced at £13 including UK shipping (£10 if collected from Southampton).



*Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Rosemary Powell.*



## Reserves News

### Magdalen Hill Down, Yew Hill, and Bentley Station Meadow

It has been an exceptionally good year for butterflies on our reserves in Hampshire and, at the time of writing, it is looking like more butterflies will be recorded on transect this year than ever before – 15,851 so far – an increase of 10% over the same time last year.



*Chalk Hill Blue.*  
*Lee Hurrell.*

Chalk Hill Blue numbers this season are 40% higher than any year since 2013, and at Yew Hill numbers exploded, with four times as many Chalk Hill Blues counted this season compared with last year. Meadow Browns have also had their best year on the reserves, with more than 4,500 counted. At Bentley Station Meadow, White Admirals have had their best year.

Two Adonis Blues reappeared on the Magdalen Hill transect in 2019, having been absent since 2015 and nine have been counted this year, suggesting this butterfly really wants to set up permanent home on the reserve. Management for Adonis Blue will also benefit the Grizzled Skipper, which had its second best count this year (75 – just pipped by a count of 76 in 2017).

Small Blue and Marbled White numbers remain stable and very strong. The chalk triangle at the heart of the Magdalen reserve continues to deliver an abundance of Kidney Vetch and an almost guaranteed opportunity to see our smallest butterfly.



Interesting too that Small Tortoiseshell numbers have been very good for the last two years but their numbers are still down on counts eight or nine years ago. This seems to reflect the national trend and points to a broader issue with this species. Such Small Tortoiseshell data highlights how our reserves can be used as a measure of wider trends.

Clouded Yellows have been a regular feature on the chalk slopes and flying over the top, usually blown by a strong wind. A favourite spot for them seems to be the scrapes in the Extension field at Magdalen Hill Down.

All of these butterflies and all the very valuable records that have been collected is a tribute to the outstanding work of Jayne Chapman and the dedication and hard work of the Hampshire Conservation Volunteers and butterfly recorders. This means the Hampshire sites have not only some text-book habitats but we have a wealth of data to show the impacts and the potential for what can be achieved.



*Small Blue.  
Brown Argus.  
Lee Hurrell.*

In light of the Covid situation and the economic difficulties ahead, the huge challenge now for Butterfly Conservation as a charity is to maintain this great work and use our reserves and our data to greatest value.

A new South Downs Landscape Officer is being recruited who will lead the ongoing delivery of the conservation management and maintenance of Magdalen Hill Down. The reserve and the results achieved here will be used to



demonstrate, inspire and promote more positive conservation action for butterflies and moths in the wider landscape of the South Downs National Park.

Our greatest strength is, of course, superb volunteers. Without their enthusiasm, skills and dedication Butterfly Conservation couldn't achieve such wonderful results. We're also hugely lucky to have Kate Barrett as Volunteer Development and Engagement Officer in Hampshire, who will continue to provide additional support for our existing volunteers and bring in new keen volunteers, students and researchers.

Staff and volunteers will work closely together to deliver and advocate positive conservation. Working together we can ensure the Hampshire reserves will remain some of the best managed, resourced, studied and recorded in the UK and will sit within a landscape that is getting better and better for butterflies and all wildlife.



*Clouded Yellow. Lee Hurrell.*

Please do keep an eye out for upcoming opportunities to get involved or contact Kate Barrett – [kbarrett@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:kbarrett@butterfly-conservation.org) – or me – [swheatley@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:swheatley@butterfly-conservation.org) – and help us save butterflies, moths and other wildlife on these special sites.

***Steve Wheatley***  
***Regional Conservation Manager, South East England***



# Making your Records Count

## **Records Overview**

Records of sightings of butterflies and moths are the life blood for the work of Butterfly Conservation. At national level they allow the organisation to influence policies on the environment while locally they provide information about how our butterflies and moths are faring.

## **Your Records Count**

First a big thank you to everyone who records butterflies and moths and submits their sightings. Your support allows us to build up a good picture of what is, and is not flying in Hampshire and on the Isle of Wight, which species are doing well, and where they need support.

Whether you are a regular transect walker, enjoy taking part in the annual Big Butterfly Count, participate in the Garden Butterfly Survey, support the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey or submit your observations to iRecord, Living Record or on a casual recording sheet, you are helping to monitor our butterflies. Moth records submitted through MapMate syncs or a casual recording sheet also help us understand what moths are around in the two counties.

Please remember to submit your records as quickly as possible, with 30 November the deadline for butterfly records to feature in this year's Annual Butterfly Report and 31 December 2020 the deadline for moth records and any late butterfly sightings.

## **Annual Butterfly Report**

Apologies to those who have been waiting patiently for their hard copy of the 2019 Annual Butterfly Report (included with this mailing of the Autumn Newsletter). Unfortunately the printed copies were not available until two days after our Lulworth Head Office (from where they are dispatched) closed due to 'lockdown', preventing them going out with the Spring Newsletter.

We have opportunities for any budding authors to join our team of species writers for this year's report. If you have a knowledge of or interest in Small White, Large White, Adonis Blue, Chalk Hill Blue or Red Admiral and would be happy to provide around 200 words based on the 2020 records, please get in touch. A spreadsheet with the 2020 records will be circulated by the end of the year for return of text towards the end of January 2021. If you would like to help, please contact Bob Annell at [grahants23@gmail.com](mailto:grahants23@gmail.com)

We are pleased that Lee Hurrell has offered to help with image collation and selection for the 2020 Annual Report. Lee would be pleased to receive your species images (landscape for species reports, portrait for front and back covers) by the end of the year. Please send a small number of your best images of our local species to [lee.hurrell1@gmail.com](mailto:lee.hurrell1@gmail.com)

### **Hantsmoth**

The Hantsmoths web site is up to date with moth sightings to 2019 and provides an invaluable guide to which moths are seen where and when in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Whether you're a new or experienced moth spotter, the 'flying tonight' page provides a wealth of information about the species around every week of the year.

### **Records Sub-Committee**

A number of members have or are stepping down from the Sub-Committee by the end of the year and its future role and membership will be reviewed after the AGM. My thanks go to all members – Bob and Jean Annell, Andy and Linda Barker, Kelvin Richards and Mike Wall – for their contributions to the work of the Sub-Committee over the last year. I'm pleased to confirm that Bob and Mike are continuing their sterling work as County Butterfly and Moth Recorders respectively and Andy and Linda Barker as Butterfly Transect Coordinators.

*Jacky Adams*  
*Chair Records Sub-Committee*



# Garden Butterfly Survey

As in previous years our Annual Butterfly Report had gone to print before we could access records from the Garden Butterfly Survey.

The following table summarises the results of the Garden Butterfly Survey in Hampshire and Isle of Wight over the last four years for the top ten species of 2019.

Species	Records	Individuals	Position (by Records)			
			2019	2018	2017	2016
Small White	787	1,437	1	1	2	1
Large White	590	1,172	2	2	6	2
Red Admiral	567	858	3	8	1	3
Speckled Wood	379	473	4	4	5	9
Meadow Brown	346	1,540	5	5	9	7
Gatekeeper	339	882	6	9	10	10
Brimstone	290	523	7	6	3	4
Painted Lady	283	538	8	19	14	14
Peacock	233	399	9	10	8	6
Comma	210	266	10	7	4	11

Overall, the results are very similar to 2018 except for the notable inclusion of Painted Lady. Records of Small White rose by nearly 16% although the number of individuals seen remained approximately the same.

Records of Red Admiral were double those of 2018 and although Peacock records were up by over 30%, the species fell one place in the rankings.

There are still only 64 gardens using this facility for recording with ten returning 60-69 records, 14 had 2-9 records and 13 gardens reporting over 100 records.

A garden in Denmead has featured in the top five gardens since this quantitative system became available in 2016.

**Bob Annell**  
County Butterfly Recorder





## Au revoir, Jayne

This is an update I never thought I would be writing, but after nine wonderful years as Reserves Officer at Butterfly Conservation, my role has been made redundant due to the Covid-19 crisis and the financial implications this has had on the charity.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with many of you over the years and your commitment to the reserves and the butterflies and moths has been humbling. Thank you for taking this journey with me and for supporting everything that we did and have achieved as a team, from working with the livestock to maintaining the optimum habitat for all those fussy species.

It is nice to have gone out on a 'good year', with successes on our Hampshire reserves that include Adonis Blue and Marsh Fritillary at Magdalen Hill Down and Silver-spotted Skipper at Yew Hill.

I wish whoever takes up the newly devised role as 'South Downs Landscape Officer' all the very best of luck with the very real challenge of managing the three reserves in just two-and-a-half days per week.

Please do keep in touch, I shall be working in the landscape on conservation projects and would love it if you feel you would like to join me. My personal email is: **Jayne.t.chapman@hotmail.com** and my mobile number remains the same: 07909 968657.

Au revoir.

*Jayne Chapman*



# Useful Contacts

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**Printed by:** Better Printing, Southampton. [www.betterprinting.co.uk](http://www.betterprinting.co.uk)

## Newsletter Deadline

As is evident from the 'lockdown musings' presented in this newsletter, butterflies and moths bring colour and curiosity and joy and interest into our lives; and a seemingly successful year for all kinds of wonderful sightings has raised our spirits amid the strange and uncertain times through which we have been living.

Do keep your butterfly and moth anecdotes coming in. New contributors are especially welcome. I want to continue to reflect the very deep interest in butterflies and moths, the work and events that support our Branch, and encourage articles representative of the wider conservation interests throughout Hampshire and Isle of Wight.

Please send your Lepidoptera-related newsworthy pieces and features to Kevin Freeborn... and you don't have to wait until February!

## The deadline for the spring Newsletter, edition no. 110, is 5 February 2021

### Lepidoptera Tale Piece... your story behind the picture

Thank you Jayne for all you have done for the Branch, for the butterflies and moths of Hampshire, and for nature and wildlife generally. We wish you well.

*Clive Wood*



The opinions expressed in the Newsletter are not necessarily those of Hampshire and IoW Branch.



Butterfly Conservation is a charity registered in England & Wales (254937) and in Scotland (SCO39268).  
Registered Office: Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5QP. Vat. No. 565 9070 16.

## *Lepidoptera Tale Piece ...*



*...see inside for Jayne's farewell message, page 31, and Jayne Chapman: an appreciation, page 6. Jayne Chapman at Magdalen Hill Down, checking for Striped Lychnis larvae – Andrew Cooper*