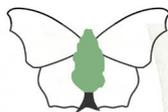


Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch



Newsletter 99



Butterfly
Conservation

October 2015

Join us on a Winter Work Party at one of our reserves

The work we do is fun and varied, and benefits butterflies, moths, birds and other wildlife.

All you need is enthusiasm, stout footwear, gloves and a packed lunch. We provide all the necessary tools and training, and teach you a little bit about habitat management along the way.

Volunteers are crucial to tackling the practical management work that is necessary during the winter months. It is a great reason to get outside and get fit.



Please call Jayne Chapman for a chat if you would like to find out more:
office: 01962 808400, mobile: 07909 968657
or email: jchapman@butterfly-conservation.org

So... get your boots on and bring a friend!



Chairman's Message

Hello everyone,

Welcome to the autumn edition of the Newsletter. A year ago this was Kevin Freeborn's first as editor; hopefully the year that followed hasn't proved too traumatic in this regard and thank you to him, Dan Powell and the team for continuing to produce a quality publication, and putting up with the likes of me who are incapable of meeting deadlines...

The Annual General Meeting and Members' Day is fast approaching, being held on Sunday 18 October, at the Littleton Memorial Hall as per usual. I appreciate that a Sunday date is a deviation from previous years and that it may cause difficulties for some but for others it may be preferable, so we look forward to seeing as many of you as possible there: we have lined up a varied array of speakers, with ample time for meeting your fellow members. At this time one year ago I broke my leg in a cycle accident: hopefully I will actually make it to the AGM myself this time! You will find the AGM agenda and relevant details on pages 3 and 4.

The AGM will mark Pete Eeles' last on main committee, as due to heavy work and travel commitments and living out of county he feels he can no longer continue in a committee role. Pete has served the branch well as committee member, chairman and, for the past year, stepping in to take over the role of Webmaster. Personally, and on behalf of the Branch, I thank him for his enthusiasm, support and commitment to the cause and Pete, should life ever become less hectic, you are welcome back whenever you feel able to do so. Pete will of course continue to support the purpose of Butterfly Conservation, and butterfly recorders in general, through his ukbutterflies website. In the meantime, with regard to the webmaster role, we are now actively looking for someone to take this on so if you, or someone you know, would be willing to consider this please come forward at the AGM and let us know!

In last year's introduction I hoped that everyone had been able to get out and enjoy what had been a reasonable, but not exceptional, summer for lepidoptera. The same could be said of 2015, which after a very slow start due to an extremely cold spring (as a moth recorder, this was very evident with the first five months of the year being very barren), has accelerated through the middle of the year. Last year grass growth was exceptional following early year high rainfall, which led to phenomenal high counts of the grassland generalists, especially Marbled White, on Magdalen Hill Down and elsewhere: this year, grazing on our reserves has been able to have a greater impact and with it we have seen a return to more balanced numbers.

Species' fortunes fluctuate annually: the larger fritillaries, Silver-washed and Dark Green, appear to have had a good year, and Small Blue is now seen across virtually all transects on Magdalen Hill Down; Silver-spotted Skipper is another species in credit. Conversely, Chalkhill Blue appears to have suffered a reverse this year, and I hear that Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary has not had a good season. As ever, it is long term trends that matter. From a moth perspective, it has turned into quite an exciting one for exotic migrant species, if not quite so for numbers of residents. Many recorders have had the pleasure of seeing Striped and Convolvulus Hawk-moths, and there have been large numbers of the slightly less showy Bordered Straw and Small Mottled Willow, both dispersing from southern Europe and northern Africa across our area.



Silver-spotted Skipper

Ashley Whitlock

As will ever be the case, I thank you for your continued support of Butterfly Conservation: without you, nothing we do would be possible. Please visit and enjoy our reserves, appreciate the work of our reserves team and we are constantly on the lookout for people who have some free time and skills to be able to assist in any way - please get in touch!

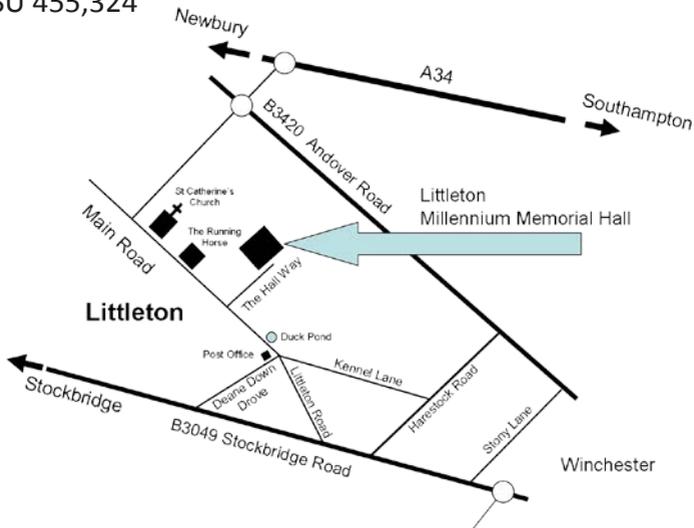
Mike Wall, Branch Chair



Members' Day and Branch AGM

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch Sunday 18 October 2015

Littleton Millennium Memorial Hall,
The Hall Way,
Littleton,
Winchester,
SO22 6QL
Grid ref: SU 455,324



12.30	Doors open
1.00-1.15	Chairman's welcome
1.15-1.45	Branch AGM
1.45-2.00	Conservation Priorities in the South-East (Steve Wheatley)
2.00-2.45	Jim Asher
2.45-3.45	Mingling, refreshments and photographic competition
3.45-4.10	Re-introducing the Marsh Fritillary to NE Hampshire (Andy Barker and Clive Wood)
4.10-4.40	Butterfly monitoring in the Amazon (Rupert Broadway)
4.40-5.00	Inspiring the next generation (Abby Sullivan)
5.00-5.15	Q&A, photographic competition results and close

Annual General Meeting 2015

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2014 Annual General Meeting
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Presentation of accounts
5. Reports of Conservation, Information, Records and Reserves Subcommittees
6. Chairman's report
7. Election of Committee members
8. Health and safety matters
9. AOB

Any other business: items should be notified to the Chairman or Secretary by 12 October 2015

Members' Day Photographic Competition

All images must be prints not exceeding an image size equivalent to A4 (297x210mm) in landscape or portrait format.

Entries are limited to a total of three prints.

Prints will be displayed and judged in the following categories:

- UK Butterflies
- UK Moths
- Behaviour
- Immature stages
- Overseas butterflies and moths

All members attending the meeting will be invited to complete a voting slip to identify their favourite image in each category and to choose their overall winning entry. The results will be collated and the winner announced at the end of the meeting.

There will be no opportunity to show slides or digital images at this meeting.

Members unable to attend but who wish to submit prints may do so by post to: Clive Wood, 68 St Cross Road, Winchester, SO23 9PS. Please ensure you enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you wish your prints to be returned.



Chalkhill Blue
Rosemary Powell



New Members

55 new members joined Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch in the period February to August 2015. A very warm welcome to you all. We hope you enjoy your membership and are able to join us at some of the Branch's events, field trips and work parties held throughout the year.

Mrs D Allan, New Milton;
Miss V Bailey, Bordon;
Mr J Baldwin, Rookley, Isle of Wight;
Mrs S Barnett, Hale;
Miss J Bennett, Leigh Park;
Ms L M Benson, Liss;
Mr M Bland, Brighstone, Isle of Wight;
Dr A Broadhurst & Ms H Haynes, Brockenhurst;
Mrs A M Burns, Overton;
Mr P Carter, Havant;
Mrs N & Mr R Clarke, Coxford;
Dr J & Mrs E Close, Ashtead, Surrey;
Mrs L Cooper, London;
Mrs J Cross, Totton;
Ms T Crossley, Broughton;
Mr A Davies, Sherborne St. John;
Ms J Day, Four Marks;
Mrs S & Mr J Dutton, St. Leonards;
Dr P Eastwood, Romsey;
Mr K Edwards, Winchester;
Mrs P Elkington, Crawley;
Ms H Firth, Upham;
Ms S Gill, Marchwood;
Mr J Hale, Vernham Dean;
Mr M Hampton, Eastleigh;
Miss C Hardy, Basingstoke;
Mr C & Mrs S Harrison, Eastleigh;
Mrs J Hayhoe, Alton;
Mr B & Mrs A Heal, Burridge;
Mr J Hicks & Ms E L Proctor, Alton;

Mrs K Jones, Waterlooville;
Mr S King, Totton;
Mrs S & Mr G Kirkpatrick, Colden Common;
Mr A Landy, East Cowes, Isle of Wight;
Mr J Levell, Poulner;
Ms M J Lewer, Chandler's Ford;
Mrs C & Mr I Mathews & Family, Bishopstoke;
Mr B J Matthews, Lymington;
Mrs H & Dr A Mossman & Family, Waltham Chase;
Ms K Newman, Denmead;
Mrs B Noble, Rogate;
Mr A Parker, Long Sutton;
Miss G Pearson, Yateley;
Mrs A & Mr D Pope, Beaumont, Jersey;
Mr E S & Mrs T B Read, Milford on Sea;
Mr A Smith, Chandler's Ford;
Mr M Smith, Sherborne St. John;
Mr A Stead, Rake;
Mr K & Mrs B Vokes, Marchwood;
Dr P Warren, Basingstoke;
Mr S Wheatley, Lewes, East Sussex;
Mr I Wilson, Southampton;
Mr T & Mrs J Woodage, Crowthorne, Berkshire;
Mrs C & Mr M Wooles & Family, Winchester;
Ms M Wotman, Hedge End;

Pat Turner, Membership Secretary



Summer Events Review

This year the Branch organised 16 displays across the county, from small local events such as the Lymington Reserves Open Day in September to the altogether larger New Forest Show in late July.

We were also pleased to notch up two firsts by showing off our rather smart new marquee at the Alresford Watercress Festival in May and at the Fleet Pond Wildlife Day later that month. The Fleet Pond event was organised by the Countryside Services team of Hart District Council and gave us a great opportunity to build our presence in this part of the county. We hope to return next year.

Best of all perhaps, we also held our first ever Family Fun Day on Magdalen Hill Down. This was organised by Abby Sullivan, our Branch Education Officer, and Jayne Chapman. Around 70 people attended despite a poor weather forecast, many in family groups. Several had no idea that the reserve existed or what a wonderful place it was to bring children. There was also a great show of butterflies to count!

Our live moth displays were big hits at several events this year. The Poplar Hawk-moth, Black Arches and Buff-tip moths displayed at the New Forest Show by Abby Sullivan, Lizzie Beer and Juliet Bloss were star attractions and helped changed a few opinions about moths.

Although we generate about £1,000 over the course of the summer programme from selling ID guides, badges, face painting, donations and the like, money is not the reason why we organise or attend events such as these. The more important purpose is to show that butterflies and moths need our help and how members of the public can make a difference. This could be through the plants they put in their gardens, getting involved in the Big Butterfly Count, joining BC and our work parties, or inspiring youngsters to develop an interest in the natural world.

We rely on about 25 wonderful volunteers to help run our Summer Events programme and I am very grateful to each and every one of them. You know who you are and thank you. But we are always keen to hear from anyone who would like to help with next year's programme, either by attending an event in your area for a few hours or who would like to help with organising our programme. It is enjoyable and fulfilling work so do please get in touch.

Clive Wood, Vice Chair



Big Butterfly Event

Butterfly Conservation took part in a very successful event on 7 August at the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens. The event was organised by Linda Barker with help from the Education Team at the gardens and two of our own volunteers. Many families with children attended. There was a photographic display of butterflies which could be seen in the garden, vases of butterfly-attracting flowers, and sheets of pressed grasses and other caterpillar food plants from the Herbarium. The children made badges, coloured in masks, and went on walks along the Centenary Border, lead by Andy Barker. A total of 20 butterfly species was seen on these walks, with Gatekeeper being the most numerous, followed by Small White, Peacock and Brimstone. Tim Norris and Lynn Fomison set up four moth traps the previous evening and much interest was shown in their large 'catch', which was on display in the Education Garden.

Juliet Bloss





2015 Field Trips Round Up

Another butterfly season has almost passed and the field trips have proved a great success despite, at times, some inclement weather. We saw all the target species set out in the spring Newsletter itinerary, and much more. I saw some familiar faces and was joined on the walks by some new faces as well, which is always nice to see. Here are some of the highlights.



Pearl-bordered Fritillary
Dan Powell

I managed to arrange a trip to Porton Down to see its amazing downland and woodland; it hasn't changed for decades and we saw some extraordinary expanses of Primrose with about eighty Duke of Burgundy on the wing. On Martin Down despite the overcast conditions, I think we all felt the Marsh Fritillary was doing well, with a good count close to Bockerley Ditch, running along the Dorset border. In the New Forest we had a fair count of Pearl-bordered Fritillary, and in the Eastern Clearing (Bentley Wood) the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary was on the wing. The highlight in June was the Duke of Burgundy caterpillar hunt which proved very popular; we did manage to find one, which was a triumph. Into July and the Purple Emperor was the target species: in Havant Thicket everybody was spellbound by the antics of several males playing tag around some of the lower oak stands close to the car-park, and we also had success in Abbots Wood Inclosure.



Brown Hairstreak - female



Duke of Burgundy caterpillar

On Oxenbourne Down we saw plenty of Silver-Spotted Skippers zipping all over the down, this being the best count I've had at this site in a long time. At Noar Hill the highlight was the elusive Brown Hairstreak and there were several seen coming down for photo opportunities. On Old Winchester Hill the Adonis Blue seems to be doing well and the field trip notched up a very good count. The biggest surprise was on West Harting Down where we encountered a Purple Emperor on the ground, which was really un-expected but a thrill never-the less.



Adonis Blue

Mother Shipton



Valezina Silver-Washed Fritillary

*Havant Thicket Purple
Class of 2015
All photos Ashley Whitlock*



Announcing a change of date on the branch website and Facebook page when inclement weather was forecast has been a boon. That field trips have been rescheduled rather than washed out has certainly paid off, with field trippers coming on site at short notice.

I'd like to thank all those who came along and made the field trips both pleasurable and memorable... and look forward to seeing you in 2016.

Footnote: I am planning a field trip to Noar Hill in the winter to find Brown Hairstreak eggs; I shall keep you posted.

Ashley Whitlock, Field Meetings Organiser



Reserves News

It's now late August, and as I sit in our new regional office, listening to the rain teeming down outside, I am grateful that for once I am in the dry. The butterflies, however, have to take their chances and the adverse weather over the last few days will probably have a significant impact on the numbers seen during transect week 20 and, possibly, week 21. But the weather has generally been kind to us. This summer has seen a good number of visitors turning up for the regular and the group walks that we hold on the reserves every summer. Between April and September this year 450 members of the public attended a total of 28 events. These ranged from our informal 'Wednesday Wanders', where anyone is welcome to join us without pre-booking, to the group bookings, which vary from Scouts to Natural History Societies and U3A walks.



If you would like to book a walk for your group between April and September at one of our Hampshire Reserves, please do get in touch with me (see the Useful Contacts page at the back of this newsletter). The walks are free of charge and last 2 hours. The only stipulation is that there are 6 or more attending.

Magdalen Hill Down

Magdalen has looked stunning this summer and the comments below are testament to all the hard work and effort from our wonderful team of volunteers.

'Beautiful weather, lots of butterflies and day-flying moths. Cubs very engaged. Lovely trip.' Melanie G.

'A beautiful place and the flowers were unbelievable. What a haven for all wildlife!' Susan K.



Six-spot Burnet moths
Ashley Whitlock

'The flowers were superb! We have never seen the reserve looking so good! We saw 16 species of butterfly and the members were thrilled to see the Small Blue – a first for most of them. Your management has proved to be very successful' Margaret H. Haslemere Natural History Society.

Although the majority of the management work is carried out during the winter months, there are still plenty of tasks that keep us busy over the summer too. Ragwort being one of them. This year, we held 'pulling parties' (no, not what it sounds like...) in the evenings during July. The volunteers formed a line and walked in the same direction, 'sweeping' the fields and pulling ragwort as they went. It was very effective, but relied on good numbers of volunteers turning up. One evening we got soaked to the skin and ended up in the pub! Please do join us next year if you have a few free hours. All the details are on the website.

Other management to maintain the grassland in good condition included a hay cut during the last week of July. There is a lot of planning that goes into which bits to cut and which to leave. The areas are cut on a rotational basis, but the final decisions are made depending on the ranker areas of grass and, most importantly, where the Skylarks are nesting that year. Despite the ground-nesting bird season coming to a close at the end of July, Skylarks can and do breed well into August. However, after early July, the nutrient value starts to decline so the contractors prefer to take an early hay cut. We have to keep both the Skylarks and the contractors happy, and by leaving areas that remain uncut the birds can escape into the longer grass for sanctuary.

In return for the hay we are left enough bales to sustain the cattle and sheep over the winter, should it be necessary to supplement their feed. By using our own hay we reduce the risk of introducing other species, such as weeds, on to the site.

Last year we were delighted when the Adonis Blue butterfly took a liking to Magdalen, so much so, it decided to breed on the reserve and produced a second generation. This year, sadly, its presence was not that evident, although a few individuals were seen.



*Mating Adonis Blues
Ashley Whitlock*

Butterfly highlights at Magdalen this year included increased numbers of Brown Argus, and Small Blue, with many Chalkhill Blue and Gatekeeper seen. There are plenty of bird species on this site too, with the following being recorded on the 15th May: Green Woodpecker, Chiffchaff, Blackcap, Willow Warbler, Kestrel, Dunnock, Great Tit, Starling, Jay, Buzzard, Goldfinch, Lesser Whitethroat, Common Whitethroat, Red Kite, Yellowhammer, Long-tailed Tit, Linnets and Blue Tit.



Green Hairstreak

Brian Fletcher

Bentley Station Meadow

Bentley Station Meadow appears to be a hit for the Silver-washed Fritillary now that it is open and sunny with a great array of nectar sources, plus Dark Green Fritillary and Purple Hairstreak have also been recorded.

Yew Hill

Hilltop at Yew Hill has been grazed with ewes and lambs for pretty much most of the year, and is looking spectacular. The Ragwort is clearly under control and mechanical means of flailing this year has not been necessary.



*Munchers
Jayne Chapman*



*Common Blue - female
Brian Fletcher*

All in all a delightful summer season has been enjoyed by our visitors and wildlife alike. Do please join us for the winter work tasks (see pages 16-17) to find out more about what we do on our reserves.

Jayne Chapman, Reserves Officer



Winter Work Party Programme

MAGDALEN HILL DOWN

November Monday 9th to Thursday 12th - Dean Gregory

Original. Area 1&2 – lower slope.

Continue scrub clearance along bottom as 2014/15 work parties.

Meet/park in entrance opposite St Swithun's School.

November Monday 23rd to Thursday 26th - Dean Gregory

Original. Area 1&2 – lower slope.

Continue scrub clearance along bottom as 2014/15 work parties.

Meet/park in entrance opposite St Swithun's School.

December Monday 7th to Thursday 10th - Dean Gregory

Original. Area 1&2 – lower slope.

To include clearing diagonal path and scrub further up slope.

November Friday 6th - Jayne Chapman

Original. Area 4 – lower slope.

Scrub clearance including bottom corner of A4/Extension. Scrub to be cut ready for volunteers to rake and burn.

Park in top car park, up track between cemetery and stonemasons for all dates.

November Friday 20th - Jayne Chapman

Top of Area 4. Cut back encroaching branches and scrub. Hand tools.

December Friday 4th - Jayne Chapman

Top of Area 4 with Northdown.

Manage hedge. Cut material will be ready for volunteers to collect, burn and tidy with hand tools.

December Friday 11th - Jayne Chapman

Pathfield. Cutting scrub out of grassland in Skylark area. Hand tools.

January Friday 8th - Jayne Chapman

Tumuli. Clear bramble/scrub. Rake and burn. Brushcutter and hand tools.

January Friday 22nd - Jayne Chapman

Extension. Cut scrub out of grassland and clear fence line around Rosebay Corner.

Fire and hand tools.

February Friday 5th - Rob West

Tree & Shrub West. Duke of Burgundy – habitat management.

February Friday 19th - Rob West

Tree & Shrub West. Duke of Burgundy – habitat management.

March Friday 18th - Jayne Chapman

Extension. Rake up cut material at bottom of Extension.

YEW HILL

October Friday 16th - Jayne Chapman
Reserve. Clearing fence line.

BENTLEY STATION MEADOW

October Wednesday 7th - Jayne Chapman
Install 2 new information boards. Auger and postcrete will be supplied. Remove Birch saplings using the 'Treepopper'.

November Wednesday 4th - Jayne Chapman
Tree felling with contractor.

December Wednesday 2nd - Jayne Chapman
Ride widening and scalloping.

January Wednesday 6th - Jayne Chapman
Nellie's bench. Clear encroaching scrub.

February Wednesday 3rd - Jayne Chapman
Ride widening.

March Wednesday 2nd - Jayne Chapman
Cut out scrub in grassland.

Magdalen Hill Down: 10am - 4pm. Meet at the top of the track between the Stone-masons and Morn Hill Cemetery (SU 512 295).

Yew Hill: 10am - 4pm. Park at the end of Old Kennels Lane, Oliver's Battery (SU 451 269). Please come and find us on the Reserve.

Bentley Station Meadow: 10am - 3pm: Park in the pay & display Station car park, and walk across the railway track to the meadow, SU 792 432. Alternatively, park in the free Forestry Commission car park off Gravel Hill Road SU 802 433.

If you cannot get to the meet points at 10am, please find us on the Reserves.

How you can get involved

As well as the dates listed above, I also send out an email for extra work-parties when we have one-off jobs to tackle, or if the weather has forced us to cancel any of the pre-planned dates. If you would like to be added to this list, please email your contact details to: jchapman@butterfly-conservation.org

Please call me to find out more – office: 01962 808400, or mobile: 07909 968657, and DO PLEASE PHONE ME IF THE WEATHER IS BAD TO CHECK THAT THE WORK PARTY WILL GO AHEAD.

Jayne Chapman, Reserves Officer



Butterfly Recording and Records

With most recorders adding their records towards the end of the year, it is really only possible to highlight some of the most interesting submissions to date.

Monarchs were not recorded in 2014 but have been sighted in Portchester, Portsmouth and Southampton earlier this year, and the first Swallowtail to be submitted was from Axmanford in mid-July. In addition, a Scarce Tortoiseshell *Nymphalis xanthomelas* recorded in Botley Wood has been definitely verified by experts from Suffolk working on a project about the species. We had a sighting of eight Painted Lady flying north over Ryde on 6 June, but the earlier prediction of high numbers this year does not seem to have materialised. A White-letter Hairstreak has been recorded on Studland Common Local Nature Reserve, Milford-on-Sea, and more recently, a Long-tailed Blue at Browdown.

A word, now, as usual about various methods available to you for submission of your records:

1. Using 'Living Record' online system.
2. iRecord online system.
3. Hampshire Branch MS Excel Spreadsheets, downloadable from our web site (or I can email a blank copy to you if you prefer).
4. Those of you who use 'Mapmate' for recording can synchronise your records with me at the end of the recording season (CUK cyb).
5. A few still prefer to submit hard copy records and I can provide the standard sheet if necessary.

With over 78,000 records to verify last year, it would help us considerably if you could:

- A. Ensure all fields are completed.
- B. Ensure your location entry matches the National Grid Reference.
- C. Please use the same format for your name for each entry, or you will be shown as two (or more) different people!
- D. If you have seen something special during a regular transect walk, please do not be tempted to enter the record on one of the above systems, otherwise it will eventually turn up as a duplicated record, often difficult for us to find.

I am verifying on Living Record & iRecord throughout the season, so entering your records on a regular basis would be very helpful.

Please submit your spreadsheets by the end of December in order that final verification can be achieved as early as possible, to enable the data to be circulated to Report Writers as soon as we can.

Please send me any images for possible inclusion in the 2015 Annual Report as soon as you are able.

Finally, many thanks for sending in your records which are invaluable to us and, of course, to Head Office where they are entered on to the National Database.

Bob Annell, Butterfly Recorder



Silver-spotted Skippers - Rosemary Powell

Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) Co-ordinator

Whether you have recently joined the Branch or you have been a member for a while, if you would like to get involved in a small but very valuable way, I have the ideal job for you. This will only take a small handful hours per month during the season.

The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) co-ordinator is a small role, maintaining a link between Butterfly Conservation Head Office and the WCBS recorders. I would like someone else to take on this role as, along with Andy Barker, I also look after transect data and this job gets bigger each year and takes up more of my time.

Do please contact me to find out more: lindabarker4@btinternet.com

I will obviously work with you during the first few months and would continue to be available after that if help is required.

Linda Barker, Transect Recorder



Living on the edge: the Marsh Fritillary in Hampshire



Marsh Fritillary
Pete Eeles,
UK Butterflies

Most members will be aware that we launched an appeal over the summer to help re-introduce the Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) to its former stronghold sites in the north-east of the county. Although the Marsh Fritillary can be found across continental Europe from Ireland in the west to the Ural Mountains and beyond, it lives in localised colonies that are threatened across much of its range by changes in farming practice and loss of habitat. It favours damp grasslands that are particularly vulnerable to intensive land use, drainage, afforestation and urban development.

Britain retains important populations of this beautiful butterfly in Devon and Cornwall, south-west Wales, Cumbria and the western isles of Scotland. Substantial populations can also be found on chalk and limestone downland in the Cotswolds, Wiltshire and Dorset. However, the national trend is worrying as the Marsh Fritillary has declined by two-thirds since 2003 (Source: UKBMS, 2013). In Hampshire, small and highly vulnerable colonies can only be found close to the boundary with Wiltshire.

Restoring the fortunes of the Marsh Fritillary in Hampshire

This was not always the case. In the mid-1980s, strong populations existed across a swathe of damp meadow habitat near Fleet and Farnborough. Numbers declined in the 1990s and several sites were lost. This prompted Butterfly Conservation to make the Marsh Fritillary a priority species for conservation action in southern England.

Our main conservation focus over recent years has been our reserves, but also with landscape conservation initiatives such as the Tytherley woodlands (for Pearl-bordered Fritillary) and the “Dukes on the Edge” project for Duke of Burgundy. In 2012, work started to assess whether a network of sites in north-east Hampshire (another key landscape) provided enough suitable habitat to consider the possibility of reintroducing the Marsh Fritillary. Conservation grazing had been re-introduced onto many of the former breeding sites between Fleet and Farnborough and the survey work showed that a substantial network of suitable habitat remained in place. Indeed, the area is probably the only viable landscape for the species in south-east England. The land is owned by the Ministry of Defence and managed by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT). Over half the area has Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) status explicitly for the Marsh Fritillary.



Marsh Fritillary caterpillars

Pete Eeles, UK Butterflies

Undertaking a re-introduction

The exciting news is that the Branch has established a partnership with the HIWWT to re-introduce the Marsh Fritillary to north-east Hampshire. The Marsh Fritillary is a relatively poor flier and it is unlikely that it will naturally re-colonise its former breeding sites. Instead, a good deal of preparatory work has been completed to identify potential Marsh Fritillary caterpillar donor sites in Devon. Under strict Natural England licensing, it is intended that a small number of caterpillars would be taken from sites across east Dartmoor and bred over two generations in purpose-built cages. The plan is to release up to 20,000 caterpillars over two seasons on the Hampshire sites to ‘kick-start’ a new population.

The ecological needs of the Marsh Fritillary are well understood through all its life stages and we also know how to re-introduce the species back into its natural landscape from successful conservation programmes in Cumbria. This is the first re-introduction programme undertaken by the Branch and both we and HIWWT are committed to its success.



Devil's-bit Scabious
Dan Powell



Heavy munchers
Clive Wood

However, there is much to do. Our current priorities are:

- Submitting a comprehensive licence application to Natural England;
- Raising funds to bring a further area of suitable habitat into conservation grazing;
- Purchasing and then propagating thousands of Devil's-bit Scabious plants, the main larval foodplant for hungry Marsh Fritillary caterpillars;
- Designing our captive breeding strategy.

Our appeal is still open for donations and any contribution would be greatly appreciated. Members can complete and return the donation slip attached to the appeal letter or call Butterfly Conservation on 01929 406015 to donate by phone.

This ambitious project will not be possible without your support. Thank you.

Dr Andy Barker and Clive Wood

Marsh Fritillaries in north-east Hampshire

I was pleasantly surprised to receive an appeal letter from Dr Andy Barker, Chairman of our Conservation Sub-committee, and Clive Wood, our Branch Vice-chairman, asking for funds for re-introduction of the Marsh Fritillary in north-east Hampshire. Having lost no time in sending off my donation, I would encourage other members of our branch to do likewise, as, however small an amount, it will help with the attempt to counteract a sad loss, which arose through unwanted development of sites where it was previously found.



Marsh Fritillary
Ashley Whitlock

The Marsh Fritillary is one of my favourite butterflies, which I first saw with a friend at Hod Hill after a motor-cycle journey to Dorset in the early 1960s. I was living in Oxford at that time and, needless to say, after travelling all that way, I then discovered colonies only a few miles away at Otmoor and on the edge of Bernwood Forest.

After moving to Fleet in 1973, I became involved in conservation locally and, before a field at Southwood containing one of the Marsh Fritillary colonies was bulldozed prior to development, I joined other volunteers in rescuing over 1,500 caterpillars which were then taken to boost numbers at other sites. Until then, on that sunny but crisp February morning, I had not realised how easy it was to find groups of these gregarious caterpillars on their foodplant, Devil's-bit Scabious.

To help with the project at that time, I had lots of the foodplant growing in my garden. I also had some in net-covered pots, which were kept in buckets of water to keep marauding predators away. Some of the caterpillars voraciously ate the potted plants until they pupated and, when the adult butterflies emerged, I was able to release them at some of the remaining local sites. Small numbers were still recorded locally for some years after this.

Many years ago, I was invited to join the Branch's Conservation Sub-committee and, when the odd Marsh Fritillary specimen was still seen in north-east Hampshire, I pressed for a re-introduction programme. Differences of opinion about this process existed at that time, but it was agreed that Phil Budd and I should survey potential sites in 2003, which we did, and one of these was the site that is referred to in the appeal letter. Subsequently, when Branch Members attended a special meeting at Alice Holt, I gave a presentation to those present on the re-introduction of the Marsh Fritillary in north-east Hampshire. Dr Caroline Bulman from Butterfly Conservation HQ appeared to welcome the idea and said that she had identified sites in Dorset from which specimens could be transferred.

Although a considerable passage of time has elapsed since then, it is good to see that action for re-introduction is now being planned, almost like a military campaign. I can vouch for the ability to easily breed this butterfly in captivity and wish those involved success with their project.

Peter Martin



*Marsh Fritillary
feeding on Common
Spotted Orchid.
Rosemary Powell*

The Allure of a Lure

This year Shaun Barrett and myself decided to try out pheromone lures for the first time when moth hunting. Having never used lures before we started on moth species that we were likely to come across in our area.



Emperor Moth

Graeme Davis

The first of these was an early starter to the mothing season, Emperor Moth (*Saturnia pavonia*). I managed on this trip to visit Hawkhill in the New Forest in April, both my parents tagging along for the ride. As it turns out, my parents, who have never expressed an interest in moths, found the trip to be most rewarding. I set up a lure in the middle of an area of heathland not far from the car park. In a matter of minutes two very large moths came swooping out of nowhere, circled the lure and quickly disappeared. It is the first time I had seen an Emperor in flight and was amazed by their turn of speed. After a few minutes I thought they had gone, but they came back and kept circling the lure. I stopped for lunch, and instead of packing away the lure I hung it from a chair whilst I ate. Very soon this led me to discover it is very hard to eat lunch when joined by, in total, 15 Emperor moths flying around. In the end we got tired of shouting, there's another one! Also, I learnt another quick lesson from this trip: once you have lured the moths in, place the lure closer to the ground to get the moth to settle for a quick picture.

Next came some out-of-Hampshire trapping, and totally unplanned, in May. The first was a butterfly hunt on Windmill Hill in Ludgershall, where I caught a single moth on a fairly blustery day. The next two trips were butterfly hunts with the Bulford Conservation Group on Salisbury Plain. The first trip netting four Emperors and the next three. Needless to say the Bulford Group was fairly impressed at seeing a moth of such size and colour.



Six-belted Clearwings
Graeme Davis

We had to wait until July to try out the next of the lures. Both Shaun and myself had Six-belted Clearwing (*Bembecia ichneumoniformis*) lures. We took a nice leisurely trip to Winchester for a whole day of trapping. First we hiked to Magdalen Hill Down where we scouted the area for a nice patch of Bird's-foot Trefoil, the food plant, and set up camp. A lure was hung at one end of a Guelder Rose Hedgerow and a second lure at the opposite end. Again the wait was not long. It must have taken two minutes for the first moth to arrive. The total count at the end of this session was 25 and definitely one of the most interesting moths I have seen. And the first clearwing I have seen! Having finished at Magdalen Hill Down, we decided to walk over to St Catherine's Hill, a Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust reserve. At first it did not look like it was going to be a successful trip, but then one single individual moth came along. Encouraged by this, we then headed to the opposite site of the hill, and luckily for us we did. Another 20 moths were caught. Certainly a worthy trip out.

Site Name	Dafor Scale abundance of Bird's-foot Trefoil and Kidney Vetch	Six-belted Clearwing Present	Recorder & Date
Magdalen Hill Down	Abundant	25	Graeme Davis/Shawn Barrett 11/07/15
St Catherine's Hill	Frequent	21	Graeme Davis/Shawn Barrett 11/07/15
Danebury Hill Fort	Frequent	9	Graeme Davis 17/07
Broughton Down	Abundant	9	Shawn Barrett 31/07/15
Stockbridge Down	Abundant	1	Graeme Davis 19/07/15
Anton Lakes LNR, Andover	Frequent in one area	1	Graeme Davis 20/07/15
Danebury Hill Fort	Frequent	3	Shawn Barrett 25/07/15
Anton Lakes LNR, Andover	Frequent in one area	1	Graeme Davis 25/07/15
Anton Lakes LNR, Andover	Frequent in one area	1	Graeme Davis 31/07/15
Britax Roundabout, Andover	Abundant	14	Shawn Barrett 12/08/15 (daytime)
Churchill Way verge, Andover	Occasional	2	Shawn Barrett 12/08/15
Britax Roundabout, Andover	Abundant	8	Graeme Davis 12/08/15 (evening)
Stockbridge Down	Abundant	3	Shawn Barrett 17/08/15

Since that last day trapping both Shawn and myself have been trying to hit local areas we know, regardless of whether or not we thought the site suitable. Just to see what was there.

If you haven't tried pheromone luring, do consider giving it a try. So far this year it has provided great delight, and at little expense or effort. I have also found it a great way to get others involved in moth conservation who would otherwise have deemed moths boring. Its great fun, have a go!

Graeme Davis



Butterfly Miscellany

National AGM and Members' Day

Saturday 14 November 2015, 09.30 – 17.15

This year's National AGM and Members' Day is being held just across the border at Cobham in Surrey at The Hilton Cobham, Seven Hills Road South, Cobham, Surrey, KT11 1EW

European Interests Group AGM

Saturday 28 November 2015, 14.00

This is being held at the NFU site at Stratford-upon-Avon and is scheduled to include presentations on Mediterranean butterflies and farming and butterflies – see the EIG website for further details, www.bc-eig.org.uk

There is also a Facebook page www.facebook.com/BC.EuropeanInterestsGroup

EIG's most recent newsletter was published in May 2015. It is absolutely jam-packed with interesting and informative articles, illustrated with superb photos on diverse aspects of European butterflies.

Book Review

***In pursuit of Butterflies – a fifty-year affair* by Matthew Oates**

Published by Bloomsbury, ISBN 978-1-4729-2450-6

Robert Macfarlane describes it as 'a wonderful, passionate, inspiring, witty memoir' and Dame Fiona Reynolds says it is 'an utterly magical book'. This is a must-have book for all butterfly enthusiasts. Based on his diaries, readers will be enchanted by Matthew's treasured butterfly memories, will want to visit the sites he describes so eloquently and find his passion and depth of knowledge inspiring.



“Where were you when you saw your first Purple Emperor?”

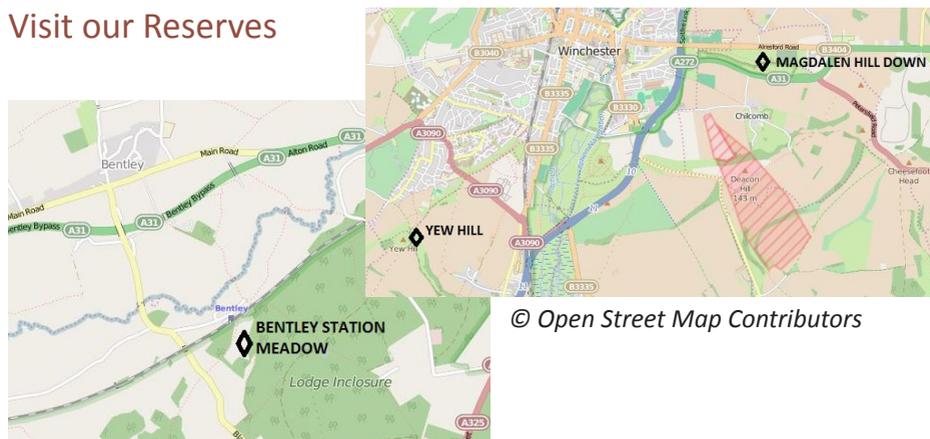
Definitely one for your Christmas list.

Kevin Freeborn

Joining In

Hampshire and Isle of Wight is a vibrant and active branch of Butterfly Conservation. A glance through this edition of the Newsletter reveals the broad range of activities undertaken on our reserves and, through the packed programme of summer events and field trips, more widely in the local communities across both counties. Whether visiting a reserve, sending in records or volunteering, there is something for everyone. Please consider supporting the Branch and enjoying your membership to the full in one or more of the following ways:

Visit our Reserves



© Open Street Map Contributors

- **Magdalen Hill Down** lies 2km due east from Winchester city centre between the B3404 and the A31, and is accessed from the B3404, Alresford Road, using the parking area opposite the cemetery entrance and walking up the track between the cemetery and the stone mason's yard.
- **Yew Hill** is located 0.5km south of Oliver's Battery, accessed via the bridle way leading off Old Kennels Lane near its junction with Millers Lane, and then following the bridleway and field-edge path to the reserve gate.
- **Bentley Station Meadow** lies just to the south-east of the railway station, which is just over 1km to the south of Bentley village. Park in the station car park (fee paying except Saturdays and Sundays) and follow the footpath across the railway line and along to the reserve gate.

Volunteer at a work party

Regular work parties are held throughout the late autumn and winter months, see details on pages 16 and 17. Why not enjoy some hands-on conservation tasks that directly benefit butterflies and their habitats? No previous experience is necessary.

Website

Use the Branch website and Facebook pages to follow the latest 'News' of which species are on the wing, post interesting and unusual butterfly and moth sightings and to see the events that are coming up. The website has an excellent species identification section and you can learn more about the work of Butterfly Conservation.

Newsletter

Send in your butterfly- and moth-related features and anecdotes, and accompany with appropriate photographs so we can illustrate your text. Image file sizes need to be at least 2MB to print satisfactorily.

Artists – do let us know if you would like to showcase an appropriately themed painting on the front cover of the Newsletter.

Photographers – if you have an unusual image of a butterfly or moth encounter, why not share this in print on the back cover of the Newsletter in our new 'Lepidoptera Tale Piece' spot?

The copy deadline for the spring issue is 19 February 2016. I've happy to receive enquiries relating to items for the next edition throughout the year... please don't leave it until the last minute!

Recording

Keep a record of the butterflies and moths you have seen visiting your garden, local park or dog-walk route, and record sightings in the wider countryside and along the coast of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Details of how to submit your records are given on pages 18 and 19.

Take on a Branch role

Current vacancies include the position of Webmaster and Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey co-ordinator. If you have some free time and want to be considered for either of these two roles do please make yourself known.



*Cowslips on
Magdalen Hill Down.
Kevin Freeborn*

Kevin Freeborn



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Newsletter Deadline

Many thanks to all who have contributed with words and images for this issue. Please send your Lepidoptera-related newsworthy pieces and features to Kevin Freeborn... and you don't have to wait until February! New contributors most welcome.

The deadline for the spring Newsletter, edition no. 100, is 19 February 2016

Lepidoptera Tale Piece... your story behind the picture

I was walking round Anton Lake, Andover, looking for birds to photograph. Sitting on a bench was a lady with a small camera photographing something on the ground beside her. On enquiring as to what she was interested in she replied that she was trying to get a photograph of the little 'Cabbage White' butterfly.

I was able to inform her that this was in fact a female Orange Tip, and not too common here at Anton. Whilst describing the difference between the sexes a male Orange Tip came to the female. I got this photograph and with digital magic I was able to show her the shot, which clearly shows the difference.

They did not mate but took off and flew away over the lake.

Brian Cartwright

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 (SC039268).
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Butterfly
Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment



Your lasting legacy...

...ensuring future generations discover
the wonder of butterflies and moths.

For further information about leaving Butterfly Conservation a
gift in your Will please contact Helen Corrigan on **01273 453313**
or **hcorrigan@butterfly-conservation.org**

Lepidoptera Tale Piece...



...for the full story go to page 32.

Orange tips - Brian Cartwright