



Butterfly Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

Hampshire an
Isle of Wight Bra

HOME

ABOUT US

EVENTS

CONSERVATION

HANTS & IOW SPECIES

SIGHTINGS

PUBLICATI

Saturday 29th November 2008

NATURES TOP 40

Natures Top 40 is a new BBC series starting next week, counting down the UK's 40 greatest wildlife spectacles. Chris Packham presents the show which features Butterflies and Moths as well as Butterfly Conservation staff! Watch BBC2 at 2:30pm every day from 1-4 December. Fluttering in at number 37 are moths: Watch on Tuesday 2 December and see Kelly Thomas moth trapping in Wareham Forest. And at a more respectable 27 are butterflies: On Thursday 4 December see Russel Hobson and some Silver-studded Blues at Great Orme. To find out what made top of the pops as the number one wildlife spectacle make sure you tune in...

Thursday 20th November 2008

WHERE HAVE ALL THE FLOWERS GONE – Restoring Wild Flowers to the Garden and Countryside by Charles Flower Reviewed by Lynn Fomison

The tantalising prospect of a flower filled countryside is bound to excite those who love the countryside & mourn the passing of flower filled meadows, road verges and banks. It is likely to be appealing to moth & butterfly enthusiasts who know so well the importance of plants to these species. Chapter after chapter offers incredibly sound advice on how to create wonderful wild flower areas.

About the Author

Charles Flower is not just passionate about restoring wild flowers to the countryside, he has amassed valuable knowledge & experience through doing this on his own Wiltshire farm & many other sites throughout the country. He is regarded as a pioneer in these techniques by many and held in high esteem. His knowledge and love of wild flowers and grasses is very apparent to the reader as is his interest in all the other wild life that can be found in rich habitats. Hampshire readers wishing to see some of his work need only visit Magdalen Hill Down as Charles masterminded the sowing schemes at the Extension in 1997 and on MHD North in 2004.

About the book



Charles Flower's book has the potential to appeal to a wide range of readers. Walking through a meadow brimful of wild flowers, butterflies and bees is a magical experience. Perhaps the next best thing, especially on a winter's day, is leafing through this book. And I suspect that that is the first thing many people will do. The beautiful pictures just draw the reader on & on through the book. But this is not just a book of pretty pictures! Very soon interest will be captured by the detailed history of the changes in agriculture which inadvertently left the countryside devoid of some of our best loved wild flowers along with the wild creatures they supported. Pictures of farming in years gone by and the old fashioned meadows populate the early chapters, such a strong reminder for me of the countryside I knew as a child.

Attention is drawn to the change in mindset in countryside management with grant schemes paying money to farmers who encourage biodiversity. Subsequent chapters cover every aspect of how to reintroduce wild flowers from selecting seed and propagating wild flowers to growing them in a variety of situations – meadows, hedgerows, woodland and ponds. One chapter concentrates on the most threatened group – the cornfield annuals. This is vital information for any land owner or manager wishing to develop habitats rich in plants. Subsequent chapters will fascinate naturalists for they highlight how butterflies, birds and other wild life are responding to the creation of areas rich in plants, nectar and seed. Detailed advice is given on over thirty species of butterflies – how to cultivate the plants they need to lay their eggs on and recommendations on the flowers producing the best nectar. Clearly this book is one which no farmer or land manager, intent on restoring wild flowers on their holding, should be without. Gardeners will need to be a bit imaginative in scaling down some of the suggestions to

the size of their plot. The book provided not only sound technical advice but a huge measure of inspiration and is a total pleasure.

Where have All the Flowers Gone £25
Papadakis, London
ISBN 978-1901092-82-0
www.papadakis.net

Saturday 1st November 2008

All ABOUT BUTTERFLIES by Matthew Oates
reviewed by Lynn Fomison

About the author

Matthew Oates works for the National Trust. His expertise and knowledge of butterflies has been featured on TV and on the radio and Matthew has written extensively about butterflies and other aspects of nature conservation. At the 2007 AGM of Butterfly Conservation he was been awarded a prestigious Marsh Lepidoptera Award for Lifetime Achievement, recognising his position as one of the country's leading lepidopterists. As a father of four & almost a lifelong interest in butterflies one would expect this book to be just the thing to direct children's interest to butterflies. And it does not disappoint. Costing just £4.99 it is an ideal small present for a child this Christmas.

About the book

It is described as ideal for 8-12 year olds but its bright colourful illustrations of butterflies make it an attractive book for younger children. Even toddlers can learn the names of butterflies with a bit of help from an adult reading out the names and playing identification games.

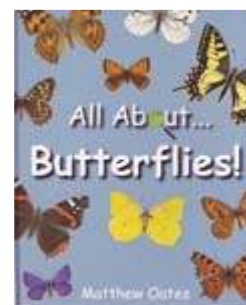
About 56 species of British & European butterflies are described. Each one of those pages carries a "Did you know" type question and its fascinating answer, making it an interesting read for adults too. For instance do you know which butterflies were introduced from Europe to the United States and have since become very common there? You will need to read the book to find out!

The early pages of the book describe the main families of butterflies & then the amazing life of a butterfly from egg to adult, highlighting the difficulties that life stages face. "10 things you need to know about butterflies are fundamental principles known by all keen butterfly watchers.

Then come eight tips on how to identify butterflies with the important recognition "It takes years to learn how to tell butterflies apart". Inspiration to explore the wonderful world of butterflies is provided by way of descriptions of exotic species like Two-tailed Pasha, the largest European butterfly at 75mm, and described as being more difficult to see than a Purple Emperor. The size of all species is given wing tip to wing tip. And I guess if one wanted to make one criticism of the book it is that the illustrations are not life size.

With the opening paragraph suggesting " Butterflies are a part of our summer like visits to the seaside" it would be great if this book encouraged children to think as much about butterflies on sunny days as ice cream!

All about Butterflies £4.99
New Holland
ISBN 978-1-84773-050-3
www.newhollandpublishers.com



Tuesday 28th October 2008

Proceeds from 2009 calendar will go to Butterfly Conservation

Butterfly lovers website UK Butterflies has offered to donate all proceeds from their new calendar to Butterfly Conservation. The 2009 calendar contains stunning photographic images of well known butterflies, as well as some of the rarer species that can be found in Britain. Each month features a full colour close-up of a different butterfly.

Founder of UK Butterflies, Peter Eeles, is a keen photographer himself: "Butterflies are extremely photogenic but capturing a good image of a small, moving subject is a real challenge. The fact that butterflies are in serious decline adds to the challenge of getting a good photo and really brings home the need to protect these fragile creatures. The UK Butterflies community is keen to support the great work of Butterfly Conservation, protecting butterflies, moths and their habitats, and preventing them from disappearing altogether. All of the photographs included in the calendar were taken by members of the UK



Butterflies website. We run monthly photo competitions and, as well as raising funds for Butterfly Conservation, this project is a chance to showcase some of the talent in the UK Butterflies membership."

To order a copy of the 2009 Butterfly calendar please visit [UK Butterflies](#).

More Butterflies on BBC1

The new Inside Out series begins on September 17th Wednesdays BBC1 7.30pm. There'll be a butterfly film every week for five weeks...starting with Purple Emperor (Matthew Oates

at Straits & Goose Green. Chalk Hill Blues planned for the second week - that is filmed at Magdalen Hill Down with Andy Barker, Pat Fleet & Lynn Fomison chatting with Chris Packham. Then one on woodland butterflies filmed around Bentley Wood with Kate Dent. Then Adonis Blue on Isle of Wight with Matthew (filmed on Friday 29th August). Finally one on decline of Small Tortoiseshell...which Manuel Hinge is filming and producing himself. Jenny Craddock of the BBC has worked on these butterfly items and has become very much a fan of butterflies as a result!

Butterflies Featured on BBC1

Just to confess that all next week (Mon 25th - Fri 29th) BBC1's One Show (7pm) will be running a series of 4-5 minute pieces on butterflies, presented by Miranda Krestovnikoff with contributions from Matthew Oates. They wanted the rarest, largest, mostly rapidly declining, and weirdest, and also wanted Cabbage Whites. The batting order is -

- Mon 25th Large Blue, filmed at Collard Hill (on Friday 13th of June - in lovely weather).
- Tues 26th Swallowtail, filmed at Hickling in the Broads. This butterfly gave us a ghastly time (and has been reclassified as a moth as a punishment), but eventually we hired a boat, stormed the reedbeds, and nailed the blighter. The problem is that Swallowtails only visit flowers in hot sun, and we had wind or cool sun.
- Wed 27th High Brown Fritillary, filmed at Heddon Valley in North Devon, plus Dark-green Fritillary and Silver-washed Fritillary.
- Thurs 28th Cabbage Whites and probably Small Tortoiseshell, filmed at Barrington Court garden, near Ilminster in Somerset. It's a seriously good garden for Cabbage Whites as the Head Gardener deliberately grows loads of Nasturtiums.
- Fri 29th The Emperor's Breakfast, filmed in Fermyn Woods, Northants, a little late in the season, starring a white trestle table, candelabra and a series in tempting baits.



Above all, it illustrates that when it comes to eccentricity, British natural history still has what it takes. Essential viewing... . Enjoy!

Further details are on the National Trust BBC websites and www.thepurpleempire.com Also in the pipeline, an 8 minute piece on the Purple Emperor in Alice Holt Forest on BBC1 South's Inside Out, sometime in September (we think) - others are planned. Matthew Oates

Nature of Farming Award

Butterfly Conservation joins the judging panel for RSPB's Nature of Farming Award

Butterfly Conservation's Head of Reserves, John Davis, was on the judging panel of the RSPB's Nature of Farming Award. For this important national award, which celebrates successes in farming for all aspects of wildlife conservation, the RSPB teamed up with BC, Plantlife and BBC's Countryfile Magazine.

The judging panel shortlisted 4 finalists from the regional winners of this national competition, 2 of whom, Henry Edmunds and Michael Poland farm in our area. Those regional winners were in turn selected from hundreds of entrants throughout the UK. The hardest part, choosing the winning farm, is now down to a public vote.

Go to the RSPB website and [vote for your favourite!](#)

You have until 26 September 2008 to help choose the Nature of Farming Award winner for 2008. When you vote, you will be entered into a prize draw to win a selection of fabulous wildlife goodies, including a free subscription to BBC Countryfile magazine.

John Davis said: "We are hugely impressed with the efforts of the contestants and their commitment to giving nature a place on their farms. It has been difficult to choose between the excellent regional finalists. The entries show levels of land management expertise to match their dedication to conservation." It takes dedication and care to achieve results of these standards and run an economically viable farm – but providing valuable wildlife habitats should be possible on all farms.



2008 A Purple Emperor Year?

Despite the advent of another dismal summer season, with low pressure sitting over the United Kingdom, the county of Hampshire managed to enjoy one of the best Purple Emperor years for more than a decade. Not due to the fact of the numbers of Purple Emperors seen, but due to the fact the best counts actually coming from the numbers of sites they were recorded from. There have been 23 sites so far this year which is one of the all time best. I have compiled these notes from all my records gathered over the past 6 weeks but I've no doubt there are some more to be analysed.

The Emperor in Hampshire was recorded at a very early date of 23 June with a single specimen coming from the Bishops Waltham area. Good numbers built up in the Alice Holt Complex by the end of June and (5) were seen on territory at Goose Green Inclosure, and (2) at Alice Holt Forest (1) on the 25 June. There were records from many sites where it has not been recorded for many years and never been recorded at all. It was good to know it was recorded in the New Forest again after such a long absence on the 10 July, its presence seems to be going westwards now for several years, as the Emperor had been seen in and around the Southampton area over the last decade. Some of the sites where it was recorded for the first time were The Vine, and Hawley Wood, in the north of the county. Sites where it had not been recorded for several years were Ampfield Wood, Pamber Forest, Micheldever Wood, Odiham Common, and Swanwick Nature Reserve., and Queen Elizabeth Country Park.

It was for ever present at Bentley Wood but probably not in such good numbers as on previous years, and in the Alice Holt Complex the numbers remained stable with Goose Green with a max of (7) and Alice Holt Forest (1) with a max count of (2). Matthew Oates noted in Abbots Wood Inclosure (6) Emperors 'Oak Edging' on the 4 July and in several other territories in Alice Holt there were just singletons to be seen. In the Straits Inclosure it was in reasonable numbers, and when the BBC film unit were filming for the 'One Show' there were (3) mineral sapping on the ground within a very short distance.

Other territories have been identified, amongst these being near Burghfield Common on the Hants/Berks border, where (6) were seen regularly throughout the season, and one possible area being near Odiham Common.

Other possibly good territory areas have been identified several of these being in the Wickham/Fareham area and other possible sites have been identified which will need checking out in the 2009 season. I'd like to thank all the recorders with a Purple Disposition and we can only hope for better Emperor weather in 2009.

Wednesday 17th July 2008 - PRESS RELEASE

Sir David Attenborough names Hampshire as prime butterfly location

Sir David Attenborough (President of Butterfly Conservation) has announced that Hampshire has been earmarked as a potential butterfly paradise. He was outlining a new national strategy to halt the decline in Britain's butterflies. Speaking at the launch of Save Our Butterflies Week 2008, Sir David identified the New Forest as one of 20 priority areas in the UK where efforts on rebuilding butterfly populations will be focussed, in partnership with other organisations. Members of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch of Butterfly Conservation said they were thrilled with the news.

Branch Conservation Officer, Dr Andy Barker, said that thanks to the management by various landowners and organisations, the Forest remains home to several rare butterflies, including the Pearl-bordered Fritillary, which has declined greatly elsewhere in Hampshire and across southern England. Furthermore, the New Forest heathlands are a national stronghold for the Silver-studded Blue butterfly, despite declines elsewhere. Dr Barker added: "It's not just here in Hampshire that butterflies are vanishing, it's right

across Europe. Butterfly habitat has been destroyed across vast tracts of land by intensification of modern farming and forestry practices, driven by economic pressures." The new strategy builds on knowledge gained over the 40 years since Butterfly Conservation was founded in 1968.



The intention is to encourage landowners across whole swathes of countryside to adopt practices that encourage butterflies to breed and thrive. The scheme has already been successfully piloted across some large tracts elsewhere in the UK. Dr Barker said: "We are fortunate in Hampshire to have many landowners with a positive outlook towards wildlife, and some excellent nature reserves that provide ideal habitat for butterflies and other wildlife. But small colonies are always vulnerable. The new strategy will allow butterflies to spread their wings and establish new colonies."

The Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch of Butterfly Conservation has a series of events lined up for Save Our Butterflies Week, which starts on Saturday - 19th July. The week is intended to heighten awareness of the extent of butterfly losses. Events will include guided walks on all three of our Hampshire nature reserves; Bentley Station Meadow near Alton on 19th July, Yew Hill and Magdalen Hill Down both in Winchester on the 23rd and 27th July respectively. We will also be exhibiting at "Butterfly Summer", a five-week long exhibition in the new City Space of Winchester Discovery Centre commencing on Saturday 26th July.

A full list of events is available [HERE....](#)

Wednesday 4th June 2008

HAMPSHIRE MOTHS

Many people's first reaction to the word "moth" is a negative one: they envisage small brown creatures which eat their clothes or big brown flappers crashing into their lampshades at night. The truth is rather different.



Hampshire is home to about 1900 species of moths, many of which are beautifully marked, intriguingly shaped and have interesting life histories. As well as being fascinating in their own right they are a fundamental part of our natural fauna, and an excellent indicator of the health of the environment. They act as pollinators, and are a vital food source for many birds, bats and small mammals without which these predators could not exist. They are an often overlooked part of our garden wildlife, but once you discover their beauty and diversity you may well become hooked!

Hampshire is particularly rich in species because of its southerly location and the diversity of its habitats: it has acid heathland in the New Forest, extensive woodlands such as Botley Wood and Pamber Forest among others, a band of chalk downland from the Hants/Wilts border across Winchester to Portsmouth, and coastal reed-beds and sand dunes. All these areas support different vegetation which in turn supports a great variety of Lepidoptera.

In spite of all this potential a sad fact is that moth numbers have decreased by a third since 1968. Butterfly Conservation is organising an exciting new nationwide survey called Garden Moths Count which runs from 21 June to 6 July, to try to discover which moths frequent our gardens. Anyone can take part and full details will be found on the website www.mothscount.org. Click on the link to Garden Moths Count.

So how do you get to see moths? Moths are attracted to light so you can:

- Leave on an outside light and inspect the wall in the vicinity
- Open your curtains and see what comes to the windowpane
- Leave the bathroom window open with a light (shut the door) for a few hours and see what comes in
- Hang a white sheet in the garden and leave a strong torch shining on it
- Go out with a torch to look for moths feeding on flowers at dusk

Members of Hampshire & IoW Branch regularly record moths in the county and run public events such as on National Moth Night (Saturday 7th June 2008) and Hampshire Moth Night (Saturday 5th July 2008) when anyone can go along and enjoy learning about moths. Quite a number of moths are day-flyers and could easily be mistaken for butterflies. You can join a walk organised by Butterfly Conservation and

quickly learn to identify the various species you come across. Full details of walks and other events can be found on the website ([HERE...](#)). There are lots of books and charts generally available which give details of a wide range of species. One book which is particularly recommended is *Moths of Great Britain and Ireland* by Waring, Townsend and Lewington published in 2003 by British Wildlife Publishing. The updated Concise Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland was published in 2007. Both books cover all the British species of macro (larger) moths. See also the Hantsmoths website at www.hantsmoths.org.uk



Juliet Bloss

Sunday 11th May 2008

When I told a friend I was going to a Caterpillar Training day. She went a bit quiet & then asked "to do what?"

Well the 20+ of us were the ones being trained, not the caterpillars! The course was arranged by Butterfly Conservation as part of the development of National Moth Recording Scheme & we were lucky to have leading national moth expert Dr Paul Waring as tutor. Paul provided inspiration to take an interest in moths & their caterpillars by describing how his interest had started at the age of two & three quarters and eventually being firmly established by the completion of a PHD on how woodland management affects moths. Those present, who included both beginners and experienced moth-ers, were also able to meet Hampshire & IoW Branch Moth Officer Tim Norriss and local moth expert David Green.



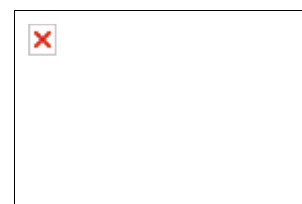
Paul highlighted the importance of hunting for caterpillars as some adult moths do not come to light. Also finding caterpillars feeding can enhance our knowledge of the aspect size and other features of larval foodplants. He stressed the importance of recording information at the time of finding caterpillars. Prior to "technology" he used a card index system - making sketches & recording size of caterpillar & foodplant information. He suggested that these days taking digital photos or using a video cam

is better.

We were shown two main methods of finding caterpillars - beating - where the tree branch is given a strong tap 5 times & caterpillars fall onto a Bignell beating tray or collecting sheet or even an upturned umbrella, a good cheap alternative, to the sweeping where a net is swept lightly but firmly through grass etc. Both methods are best used after dark when caterpillars are feeding more actively. The welfare of the caterpillar was stressed - we had to collect a few leaves it was feeding on & keep them cool in the shade on what was a very hot May day.

Paul showed overhead slides of three families of moth & a graph of the month showing when their peak season was. This related to the presence of young & tender leaves free of tannins & other chemicals giving protection ie. Spring and then the Lammas growth in late summer, with grass feeding caterpillars being at a peak in July. May was a peak time for geometrids and sure enough we found many caterpillars of the looper type, most numerous of which were the Winter Moths. Just one December moth was found, Copper Underwing, Feathered Thorn with its two raised orange conical bumps near the tail and a Footman sp.

Time did not permit the identification of all caterpillars but hopefully all the significant ones were highlighted. Paul showed us the useful illustration of caterpillar shapes in the Observer Book of Caterpillars (after the event I found that the Collins Field Guide to Caterpillars of Britain & Europe that I use also included a similar guide.) The book Paul recommended is *The Caterpillars of the British Isles* by Jim Porter which can be obtained on Amazon for £33, but this is very comprehensive book. He also mentioned a set of old books by William Buckler (collectors items and virtually impossible to acquire) which are now available on CD - for a price!



Paul showed a number of slides representing the many different moth families. He explained about numbers and positions of legs and claspers to and how to tell which were not lepidopterous but sawfly larvae. I am sure we will remember they have lots more legs & look a bit shiny like jelly babies! It was a truly inspiring day & hopefully the results will be more records sent in to the Branch & those of us who attended passing on our interest & knowledge of caterpillars to others.

Lynn Fomison Reserves Officer Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch /p>

PRESS RELEASE - Friday, 7th March, 2008

Forty years on, enthusiasts rescue crisis butterfly

Enthusiasts are claiming a remarkable turnaround in butterfly numbers at a Hampshire site. National figures indicate that the Chalkhill Blue has declined by more than a third over the past decade.

That's not so at Magdalen Hill Down near Winchester. At this Butterfly Conservation reserve the number of Chalkhill Blue butterflies has increased by as much as 700 per cent in recent years. Other butterfly populations at the site, including the Common Blue, are also showing a spectacular resurgence.

These reversals are the result of a major volunteer effort over the past 19 years. During this period the land available for butterfly habitat has been expanded five-fold.

Today (Friday, 7th March) a team from Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch of Butterfly Conservation will once again be working on the site, cutting back scrub and striving to achieve the flower-rich grassland on which butterflies depend.

Lynn Fomison, who oversees this reserve, said: "Last summer butterflies everywhere suffered because of the continual rain. Hopefully we'll have a better summer this year and there'll again be a profusion of these beautiful butterflies to provide a shimmering mass of blue. It's magnificent sight"

Magdalen Hill Down was traditionally a butterfly paradise, but the steep hillside became overgrown with scrub from the 1950's onwards. Other parts of the hill had been ploughed and taken into arable cultivation during the 1940's. Many acres of chalk downland supporting butterfly species were lost. Throughout the country vast tracts of other butterfly habitats were being similarly destroyed, prompting the setting up of the charity Butterfly Conservation 40 years ago this weekend.

By the time Butterfly Conservation was able to take responsibility for the Hampshire site in 1989 the butterflies had diminished to a fraction of their former numbers.

The Magdalen Hill Down volunteers will today be joined by journalist, author and broadcaster Rosie Boycott. Rosie is a member of Butterfly Conservation who has her own West Country smallholding and champions closer links to the countryside. She said: "We must treat our countryside with respect. Butterfly Conservation has shown that we can save these wonderful species."

The Hampshire work party is one of 15 being organised on key butterfly sites nationwide to mark Butterfly Conservation's 40th birthday. They are the first of a series of activities throughout the year marking the anniversary.

Over the past 40 years Butterfly Conservation has grown from a handful of members to more than 13,000, many of them actively participating in conservation work and in recording butterfly numbers. Butterflies are much more sensitive to change than other wildlife. The monitoring of them on this large scale provides invaluable data about what is happening to our environment and about climate change.

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Archive

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