

DIARY OF EVENTS

SUNDAY 5 OCTOBER **Magdalen Hill Down: Monthly Meander**
Meet: 10.30am in gravel car park opposite Magdalen Hill cemetery on the B3404 Alresford Rd, Winchester (SU 512 295). Approx 2 hrs. **Leader:** Lynn Fomison (01962) 772251.

TUESDAY 7 OCTOBER **Bentley Station Meadow: Walk to Health**
Meet: 10.45 am in Bentley Station car park (SU 792 432). Park free in Station Road or pay in car park. **Leader:** Lynn Fomison (01962) 772251.

SUNDAY 12 OCTOBER **Blackmoor Apple Day, Selborne**
A visit to Blackmoor Apple Day is a good day-out, with apples and pears to taste and buy, lots of craft stalls and stalls/displays by various charities, Morris dancers and teas. Moreover it is an opportunity to come and see the latest Branch information boards and meet Committee members and other volunteers, who are there to promote the work of Butterfly Conservation. As this is our last attendance of the year at a major event, we hope you will take this opportunity to come and say hello. **Time:** 10am-5.00pm. **Directions:** The event takes place next to Blackmoor Church (SU7833), half-mile west of the A325, between Whitehill and Greatham. If travelling along the B3006 from the Alton direction turn left (east) at Selborne (narrow country lane) signed to Blackmoor. Parking is opposite the church. (See website: www.blackmoorestate.co.uk/events.html)

SATURDAY 25 OCTOBER: AGM & MEMBERS' DAY
at
Littleton Village Hall, The Hall Way, off Main Road,
nr. Winchester
(SU 455 324)

Littleton is just north-west of Winchester between the Stockbridge (B3049) and Andover (B3420) roads out of Winchester.
See map on p. 6.

WEDNESDAY 5 NOVEMBER **Bentley Station Meadow Work Party**
Meet: in Bentley Station car park (SU 792 432). **Time:** 10am to 2.30pm.
Enquiries: Lynn Fomison (01962) 772251.

FRIDAY 14 NOVEMBER **Magdalen Hill Down Work Party**

Meet: use entrance opposite St Swithun's School to come in and park.

Time: 10am to 3.30pm. **Enquiries:** Lynn Fomison (01962) 772251.

WEDNESDAY 19 NOVEMBER **Yew Hill Work Party**

Meet: at end of Old Kennel's Lane, Olivers Battery (SU 451 269) or join us on the Reserve. **Time:** 10am to 3.30pm. **Enquiries:** Lynn Fomison (01962) 772251.

WEDNESDAY 26 NOVEMBER **Magdalen Hill Down Work Party** with

Wednesday Conservation Volunteers. **Meet:** at top of track by cemetery.

Time: 10am-3.30pm. **Enquiries:** Lynn Fomison (01962) 772251.

FRIDAY 5 DECEMBER **Magdalen Hill Down Work Party**

Meet: at top of track by cemetery. **Time:** 10am to 3.30pm.

Enquiries: Lynn Fomison (01962) 772251.

WEDNESDAY 10 DECEMBER **Bentley Station Meadow Work Party**

Meet: as 5 November. **Enquiries:** Lynn Fomison (01962) 772251.

WEDNESDAY 17 DECEMBER **Yew Hill Work Party** with Wednesday

Conservation Volunteers. Christmas Bash. **Meet:** as 19 November.

Time: 10am to 4pm. **Enquiries:** Lynn Fomison (01962) 772251.

MAIN COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Wed 3 December 2008;

Wed 4 February 2009;

Wed 6 May 2009;

Wed. 2 December 2009

Work Parties

All enquiries to Lynn Fomison (01962) 772251

Helpers are welcome for all or any part of the day. Contact me if you want to go on our email list for more information on work parties. Do phone me if you have not been before and would like more information about what is involved.

BUTTERFLY RECORDS FOR 2008

Please see p. 18

**PLEASE NOTE NEW VENUE FOR THE AGM
(see map on p.6.)**

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

As another butterfly season draws to a close, it is a little difficult to be overly positive about some aspects of what has passed thus far as 'our summer'. We have had some drier spells than last year but with a lot of wind. The **Wanted** poster produced by Head Office in respect of the Humming-bird Hawk Moth and the Painted Lady had few claiming a reward. Very few Painted Ladies have been seen on MHD and not one Clouded Yellow! One member expressed the view recently (during an excellent walk at Shipton Bellinger) that a warm September with the odd prevailing south-easterly should bring in the migrants. I hope her optimism proves correct.

On a more positive note, BC's 40th anniversary has gone well as far as our Branch is concerned. We have had good attendances at the many events and shows to which we have contributed. This year's New Forest Show was a huge improvement on 2007, when people watched bales of straw sinking gently in the mud! The Winchester Council's Butterfly Summer exhibition in the 'CitySpace' of the Discovery Centre attracted over 2,000 visitors, and our contribution was commented on very favourably. The walks held during that exhibition brought a good number of people up to Magdalen Hill Down for the first time: importantly with several children amongst the groups. Head Office's Open Day in early September has the Minister for Schools attending as its Special Guest and I hope the opportunity will be taken for further consideration of how we can make more children aware of the importance of butterflies and moths. It seems difficult to squeeze extra items into our very crowded national curriculum. However, we have important indicator species and we hope that Mr.Knight's attendance will help to develop our educational programme.

As the transect data comes in, we will be starting the process of producing our *Butterfly and Moth Report*. Linda Barker is stepping down from her editorial role and is also leaving the Main Committee. Linda has given a great deal to the Branch in these roles, and it is a pleasure to have this opportunity of recording our appreciation. Thanks also to the many who have contributed to the organisation and running of the Branch's activities during the summer.

I hope that you all use and enjoy our website. The excellent work started by Peter Eeles has been developed yet further by Robin Turner; many thanks are due to him for all that he has done in this respect. The Sightings section is obviously particularly popular: many thanks due to all of you who have provided information and images to keep it up-to-date.

Details of this year's AGM are included in this Newsletter. I hope that you will be able to attend and contribute to the meeting. **We are moving to Littleton Village Hall this year:** it is a more spacious venue and, in particular, will allow your photographs to be presented more easily. The speakers this year are drawn from within the Branch, and the presentations are particularly topical.

We would welcome new members on our committees: I hope that some of you will consider putting your names forward to help with the running of the Branch. We remain the largest BC branch and, as I will report at the AGM, there are a number of opportunities for us to continue to increase our membership and to add yet further to our contribution to conservation within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

Roger Buchanan, Chairman

NATURE OF FARMING AWARD

TWO LOCAL FARMERS ARE FINALISTS!

Excerpt from RSPB website <http://www.rspb.org.uk>

*"You have until the **26 September** to tell us which farm you think deserves to win the 'Nature of Farming Award', so please vote today! The four finalists have amazing wildlife on their farms and are all champions of environmentally-friendly farming. "*

This is a competition to choose the UK's most wildlife-friendly farm. The great news is that two of the finalists, both Branch members, have farms in the Branch area: one in Hampshire and one on the Isle of Wight. Four finalists in all were selected from more than 300 entries: **Henry Edmunds** from south-west England and **Michael Poland** from south-east England. So do check out the information on the RSPB website and vote, as it would be great for the winning farm to be one of the two in this area.

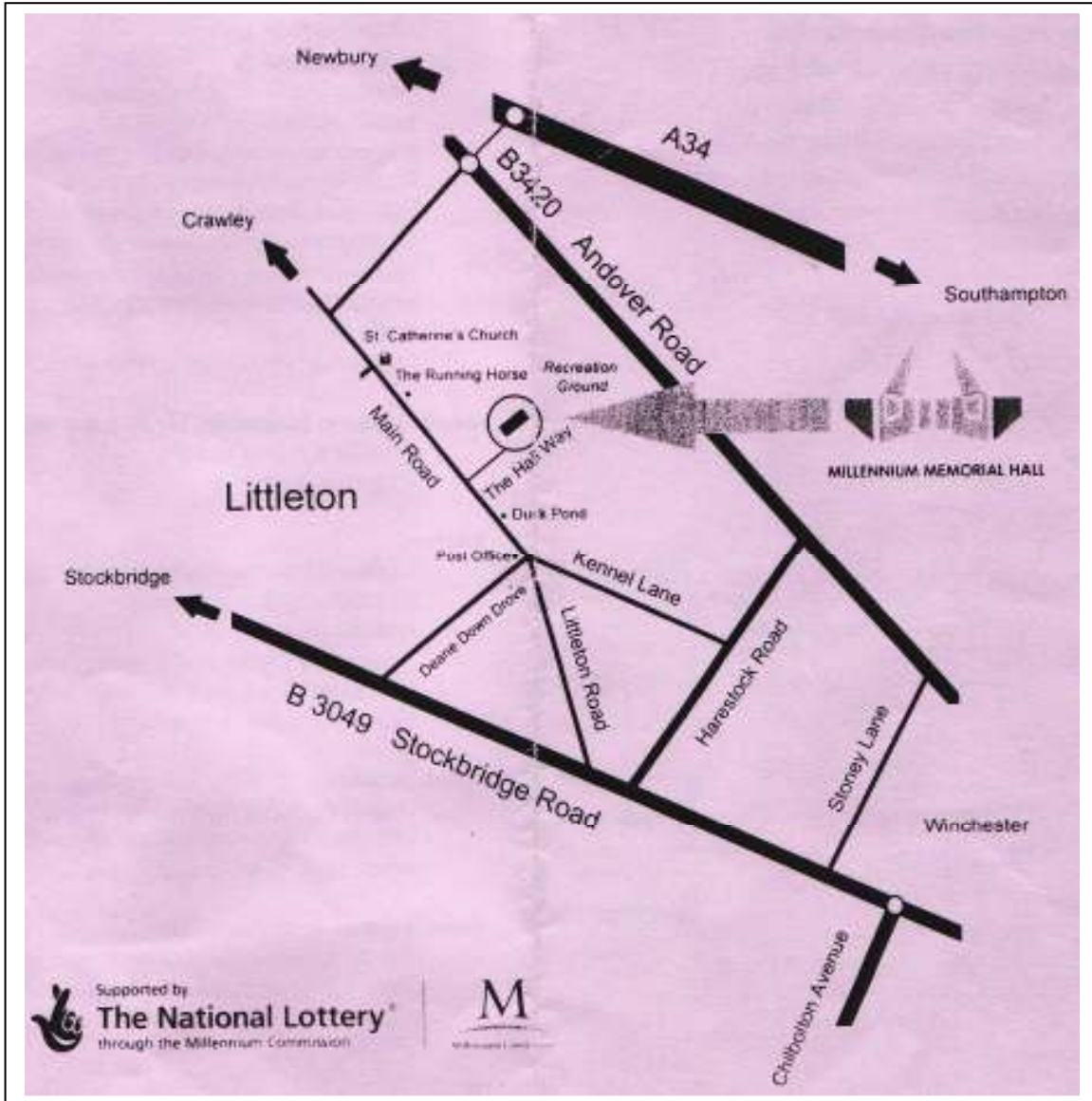
Lynn Fomison, Reserves Officer, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch

DON'T DELAY. VOTE TODAY.
September 26 is your last opportunity to vote.

NEW LOCATION FOR AGM/MEMBERS' DAY

LITTLETON VILLAGE HALL

**The Hall Way
off Main Road
Littleton
Winchester
(SU 455 324)**



Plan shows location of Littleton Village Hall

M E M B E R S' D A Y
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch 2008.

Date : Saturday 25 October 2008
Littleton Memorial Hall,
The Hall Way, Littleton, Winchester, SO22 6QL

Please note change of venue from previous years

See map on p.6.

Programme

- 1.00pm Doors open.
- 1.30 – 2.30 Annual General Meeting.
- 2.30 – 3.05 Dr Kate Dent: “**The Tytherley Woods Project: The First 12 Months**”.
- 3.05 – 3.45 Dave Green: “**Migration**”.

3.45 – 5.00 Refreshments, ‘mingling’ and photographic competition
(see page 9 for details).

- 5.00 – 5.30 Dr.Andy Barker: “**The Pattern of Change: 30 years of Butterfly Transect Recording**”.
- 5.30 – 5.45 **Results of photographic competition.**
- 5.45 – 6.00 Roger Buchanan: **Final comments and close of meeting.**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 2007 Annual General Meeting.
3. Matters arising from the minutes.
4. Presentation of accounts.
5. Reports of Conservation, Information, Records and Reserves Sub-Committees.
6. Chairman's report.
7. Election of Committee members.

In keeping with the requirement that a third of Branch Committee members should stand down at each AGM, although eligible for re-election the following Members (based on seniority rotation) are standing down but seeking re-election:

Roger Buchanan
Peter Eeles
Tessa Newell
Mike Wall

Note: **Linda Barker** is standing down from the Main Committee.

Branch Rules allow a maximum of 15 Main Committee members. This means, subject to the above members being re-elected, a maximum of one vacancy.

Additional nominations of members willing to serve on the Main Committee are invited. Names of those wishing to stand for election should be forwarded to Roger Buchanan, Chairman, no later than 18 October.

8. Health and safety matters.
9. Any other business. Items should be notified to Chairman by 22 October.

ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

Saturday 25 October at Littleton Village Hall

As last year, this popular and light-hearted competition will be held at the Members' Day meeting. It is an opportunity for members to display some of the images they have taken during the year.

As last year, there will be **NO** opportunity to show slides or digital images at this meeting: there will be an opportunity to do so at the Social Evening early in 2009.

All images should be prints which may not exceed an image-size equivalent to A4 (210x297mm) in landscape or portrait format. Prints may be mounted – small mounts, please.

Prints will be displayed in the following categories:

UK Butterflies

UK Moths

Behaviours

Immature Stages

Overseas Butterflies and Moths

Members will be asked to complete a “voting slip” identifying their favourite image from each category and to choose their overall winning entry. The results will be collated and the winners announced at the end of the meeting.

Please enter, however competent you may (or may not) feel as a photographer: this is an opportunity to get a glimpse of what members have seen during the year and, for some, where they have been to see our favourite insects.

Roger Buchanan, Chairman

PLEASE NOTE NEW VENUE FOR MEMBERS' DAY

RESERVES NEWS

“As I write rain streams down. Another typical day in a very wet summer!”

This was what I wrote last year. And sadly I feel a bit that way again now. Hopes that we had for butterflies on our reserves to make a recovery from the slump in 2007 seem a bit vain. It will be interesting so see the whole position when the transect data are completed. But already we know there has been a sad lack of migrants like Painted Lady and Clouded Yellow. What a contrast to earlier years when Magdalen Hill Down was positively awash with these species. The good news is that Small Blues seem to be getting firmly established at MHD, particularly on the north area in the vicinity of the chalk corner. This is wonderful as that corner was planned with Small Blues in mind, since they prefer kidney vetch growing in areas of sparse vegetation on a really chalky soil. Patrick Fleet counted 10 in a very small area, and Roger Buchanan photographed a mating pair in mid-August; hopefully Small Blue butterflies are assured for next year.

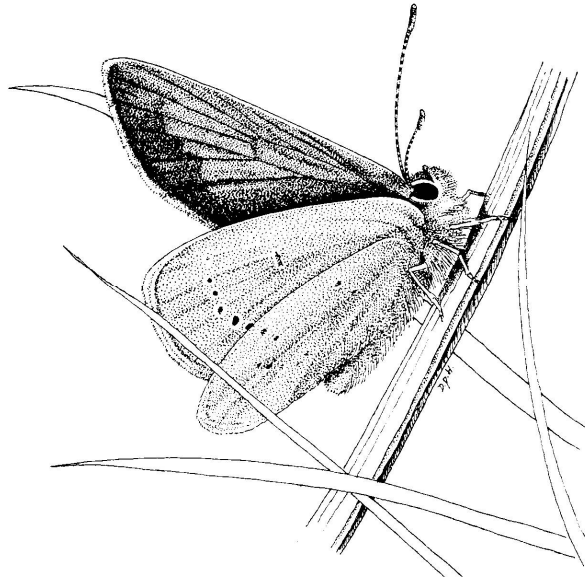
The creation of the chalk corner was just one of the things done on the reserves to help specific species. Also at MHD agrimony seed is being sown each autumn to encourage the growth of the Grizzled Skipper population. Each year at every reserve we sow seeds of Jack-by-the-hedge to encourage more Orange Tips to breed. At Bentley Station Meadow considerable effort goes into maintaining healthy sallows of an uneven age-structure to provide ideal breeding habitat for Purple Emperors. It was exciting that Sue Clark saw eggs being laid near Nellie’s Seat in mid-July.

At all three reserves we have planted some of the disease-resistant elms from the BC Elms project managed by Andrew Brookes. Many buckthorns have been planted at both BSM and MHD to encourage Brimstones, whilst at Yew Hill gaps in the field hedge have been planted up with various hedging species including holly and buckthorn. Both the Extension and MHD North have new hedgerows and significant plantings of other native shrubs and trees, many of which are used by moth caterpillars. We grow wayfaring trees especially for Orange-tailed Clearwings, whose caterpillar lives in the twigs. At BSM we keep a succession of cut silver birch stumps for Red-belted Clearwing. To help the Striped Lychnis moth Brian Fletcher has grown numerous dark mulleins and Patrick Fleet has planted and tended them at MHD. Individually these measures are only small things but, in conjunction with the on-going management of grazing, non-grazed grassland and scrub management, they help to ensure that our reserves are wonderful for butterflies and moths and people too.

SEPTEMBER 2008

If you would like to help with enhancing our reserves for butterflies please contact me. I send out regular emails too to people who support conservation work parties. Can you come? Every bit of help DOES make a difference.

Lynn Fomison, Branch Reserves Officer



Small Blue by Douglas Hammersley

Magdalen Hill Down on *Inside Out*

The new *Inside Out* series on BBC1 on Wednesdays at 7.30 pm begins on 17 September. There will be a butterfly film every week for five weeks, starting with Purple Emperor (Matthew Oates at Straits and Goose Green). Chalk Hill Blues are planned for the second week, filmed at Magdalen Hill Down with Andy Barker, Pat Fleet and Lynn Fomison chatting with Chris Packham. This is followed by one on woodland butterflies filmed around Bentley Wood with Kate Dent. Next comes Adonis Blue on the Isle of Wight with Matthew Oates again. The final programme is on the decline of the 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.

Lynn Fomison

Musings on the 2008 programme of field trips

The weather let us (and the butterflies) down again this year but nevertheless only two or three field trips were completely rained off. With the majority of the remainder taking place under cloud, numbers of each of the species flying were well down on last summer. But all was not lost. We managed to find a few specimens of the species we were hoping for at most of the sites visited – more than 40 species in all. There were very good views of Purple and Brown Hairstreaks, Chalkhill Blues and the very numerous Gatekeeper, and a tantalising glimpse of an ‘almost certain’ Purple Emperor. Sadly, the current plight of the once common Small Tortoiseshell was evident everywhere. I don’t think we saw it at all.

There was much to compensate for the lack of butterfly numbers: the wonderfully varied Hampshire scenery and the moths and other plants and wildlife seen. Of the large group at Bentley Wood at the end of May who will forget the excitement at the appearance of an Argent and Sable moth, which lingered long enough for everyone to see? Or what about the brilliance of the dozen Scarlet Tiger moths beside the path at Winnall in June? Those of us who came to Beaulieu Heath at the end of July were rewarded, not only by many Grayling and Silver Studded Blue butterflies and by Dark Green Fritillaries (most unexpected at that site), but also by some wonderful dragonflies and damselflies. (See Steve Lankester’s report of the trip below.) We also saw a superbly camouflaged Brimstone chrysalis at Pamber Heath, an Elephant Hawk moth caterpillar and a young toad at Shipton Bellinger, an adder at Martin Down – and, almost everywhere, often rare wildflowers which usually somebody could identify.

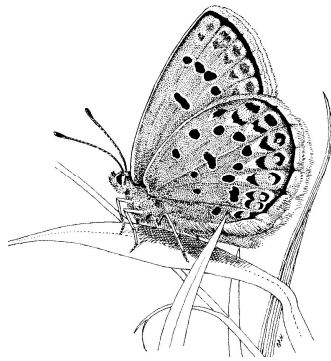
The companionship on our field events is another plus, whatever the weather. We get to talk at leisure with others who share our enthusiasm. Attendance this year, not surprisingly, varied between one person in Southampton who likes walking in the rain to over 30 at Martin Down. We shared some trips with members from five other branches of the Society and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, and on a couple of walks we were joined by local people. We are always very pleased to see you all.

I am eager for suggestions for the 2009 programme as well as your views on this year’s events (contact details are on the back page). Why do you, or do you not, come on field trips? How could they be more tempting? Have you any suggestions for new places to visit or additional field event leaders we haven’t discovered yet? Our attempt to introduce the wonder of moths in the morning before setting out on our walks was not, I think, a great success. Poor Dave Green gave up sleep and got very wet indeed for just three of us at Martin Down! But let’s be positive – the later trip to the other part of Martin Down in

August had about the largest attendance of the year *and* the rain just about stayed away.

Finally I want to say a very big thank-you to our trip leaders, who are simply brilliant, know so much about the sites and give up their time to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with all of us. We hope you will find time to continue in future years

Alison Harper, Field Trip Organiser



Silver-studded Blue

Beaulieu Heath Field Trip: 27 July

Ten intrepid souls turned up on one of the hottest days of this summer. Within five minutes the first Silver-studded Blue had been seen, followed by several others. Grayling soon put in an appearance as we walked across the heather and gorse landscape. Perhaps most unexpected were several, perhaps a dozen, Dark Green Fritillaries, first a single and then up to four nectaring on an isolated buddleia bush. The presence of this normally chalkland species can, perhaps, be attributed to the amount of lime left from the construction of the WW2 airfield in this otherwise heathland area.

A notable rare moth, Purple-bordered Gold, was disturbed from the heather and everyone had good views. At the limit of the walk we stopped by the source of the Crockford stream, where the rare Southern damselfly was seen, together with Small Red damselflies. Keeled Skimmers and Common Darters were disturbed from the vegetation.

Species lists

Butterflies

Brimstone, Large White, Silver-studded Blue, Peacock, Small Copper, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Small Heath, Grayling, Silver-washed Fritillary, Dark Green Fritillary.

Moths

Purple-bordered Gold (Nationally Scarce B).

Dragon/Damselflies

Southern Damselfly, Small Red Damselfly, Common Blue Damselfly, Keeled Skimmer, Common Darter.

Steve Lankaster, Trip Leader

SOUTH - EAST AREA GROUP NEWS

West Walk, Wickham

The conifer plantation at the North Boarhunt site was nearly all clear-felled several years ago and left to natural regeneration. However, North Boarhunt Parish Council was able to obtain £10,000 through the *Awards For All* scheme last year, enough to pay the Forestry Commission to replant the site with 3,000 trees, mostly oak, but with a sprinkling of wild cherry and whitebeam. The small area of Corsican pine remaining will be felled later this year and left open unless more funding is forthcoming.

The Western Hemlock block in the main plantation west of Hundred Acres Road is to be clear-felled in September. Hampshire CC has donated £1,500 for replanting with oak and small-leaved limes, and FC ranger Pam Eastwood has now invited BC to contribute 300 disease-resistant elm cultivars with the specific intention of establishing the White-letter Hairstreak in the Forest of Bere.

Fareham

Following the arrival of a very motivated young Ranger at Fareham Borough Council, Mike Gwilliam has been involved in determining the management of several natural areas owned by the Borough Council. Mention has already been made of Seafeld Park, Hill Head, now joined by Funtley Meadow, and the Gillies, all monitored by transect and managed with butterflies in mind. The Council is also to take direct responsibility for the Portchester chalkpits, a Small Blue haunt previously maintained by SEAG, and to enforce a more enlightened mowing regime at Cams Bay POS, where a wide grassland margin will be left uncut until autumn.

Bedenham grasslands

The grasslands, comprising the northern area of the Defence Munitions complex in Gosport, were very sympathetically managed last winter under the direction of PC John Wray, head of the depot's conservation group. The grasses were mown, and the rides through the elm wood, home of possibly the largest White-letter Hairstreak colony in the two counties, were cleared and widened. Alas, John is to retire later this year, and his presence will be greatly missed.

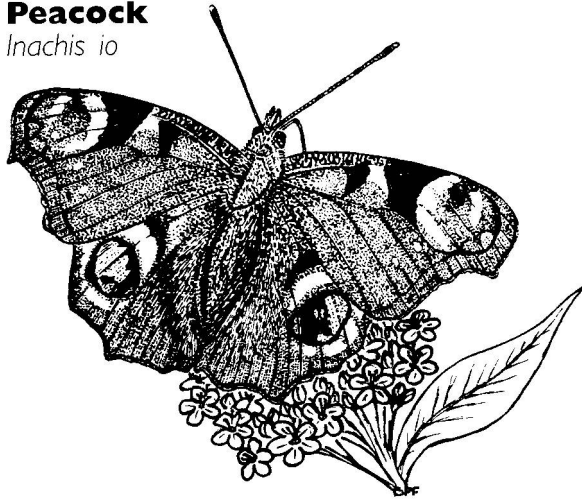
Vanessid parasitization study

Heeding the call to arms in the summer edition of *Butterfly*, 35 final instar Peacock larvae from Great Fontley Farm were taken into protective custody in early July, just two days before they pupated. Fifteen (43%) were found to

have been parasitized; the pupae were dispatched to Dr Owen Lewis at Oxford University for formal identification.

Peacock

Inachis io



Drawing by David Thelwell

Brown Hairstreak search

Members of the Group were invited to search for Brown Hairstreaks at a National Trust site on the Isle of Wight. There have been occasional sightings of the butterfly in the area since 1929, and more recently ova were discovered during a winter search. Alas, on a rather cool and often cloudy day the butterfly did not oblige, but the potential of the site was obvious.

Nelson Reservoir

The Group's unofficial reserve, the Nelson (covered) Reservoir, on Ports Down, was mown for hay in late July at the Group's behest by a local farmer. Three years of cutting and gathering is beginning to show rewards, with bird's foot trefoil, marjoram and kidney vetch appearing over a much wider area. The Group has established hedgerows on three sides of the plot, which should ultimately provide some shelter for the butterflies at present exposed to all four winds.

andrew.brookes@port.ac.uk,
Leader S-E. Area Group

ELM STUDY NEWS

Latest elm research

A paper published in May by Dr Luisa Ghelardini of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Uppsala has confirmed that elm growth is stimulated by temperature and in no way influenced by daylight ('photoperiod'). More significantly, Dr Ghelardini has established that the earlier a clone flushes, the less likely it is to be affected by Dutch elm disease, owing to an asynchrony between disease-susceptibility and infection. If the tree is effectively dormant when infected by the bark beetles, the fungal spores remain relatively static and harmless within the xylem.

New book

The Branch's elm trial observations feature in the forthcoming *NEW TREES – Introductions to Cultivation 1970 – 2005* commissioned by the International Dendrology Society. The book was prompted by the absence of any planned revision of Bean's classic *Trees & Shrubs Hardy to the British Isles*; the last (8th) edition of which appeared over 30 years ago. Written by John Grimshaw and Ross Bayton, *NEW TREES* will be published by the Royal Botanic Garden Kew in the spring of 2009.

New trees

A new North American elm cultivar arrived in April from the Jeffries Nursery in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. The clone, named 'Lewis & Clark' (Prairie Expedition™), was raised from the sole survivor of thousands of elms that had succumbed to Dutch elm disease along the Wild Rice River in North Dakota. The tree was propagated by the North Dakota State University



Research Foundation, and released in 2004

to coincide with the 200th anniversary of Lewis and Clark's expedition westward into the American prairies and beyond, where they encountered the first grizzly bears ever seen (or at least reported!) by the white man. 'L & C' develops a broad, rounded canopy, and is considered possibly the best American elm clone to have emerged to date. The tree is also being evaluated in the National Elm Trial coordinated by Colorado State University.

The French wholesale nursery, Les Pépinières Minier, Beaufort en Vallée, has kindly agreed to donate 10 potted specimens of the Dutch clone VADA™. VADA (the old Roman name for Wageningen, the Dutch town where it was raised) was formerly clone '762', from a selfed seedling of 'Plantyn'. Selected

for propagation by the French quango INRA, VADA was patented and released in 2006. No more introductions are planned by INRA, thus the Italian *Istituto per la Protezione delle Piante* is now the only European organization still raising and releasing elm cultivars. The addition of VADA to our trials is particularly significant as it will ‘complete the circle’ at the Great Fontley site: by October, every European cultivar released in the last 30 years will have been established there, making it a truly unique collection.

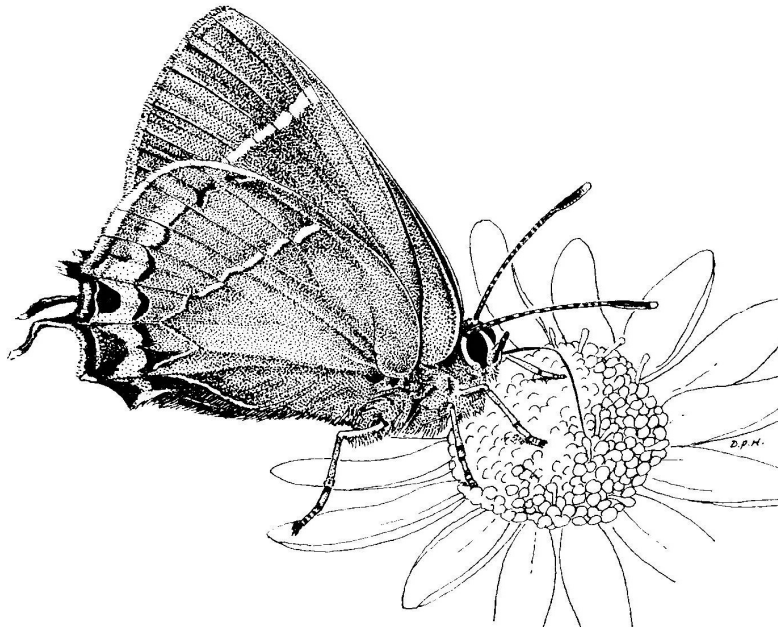
Interest from Brussels

The Research Institute for Nature & Forest in Brussels wrote in April to request information on disease-resistant cultivars to aid and abet the survival of the White-letter Hairstreak in the city and its environs.

New elm suppliers

The number of nurseries stocking new disease-resistant elms in the UK is slowly but surely increasing. The American hybrid cultivar, ‘Morton’ (Accolade™), which has performed so well at Great Fontley and elsewhere, is now being imported by Golden Hill Plants of Marden, Kent, along with the Japanese Elm clone ‘Prospector’. ‘Prospector’ has a very high resistance to disease, and forms a dense rounded crown of glossy dark-green leaves. Not quite an unqualified success however, owing to the brittleness of its branches which render it too vulnerable for exposed sites.

andrew.brookes@port.ac.uk



White-letter Hairstreak by Douglas Hammersley

BUTTERFLY RECORDS FOR 2008

WHEN TO SEND:

The deadline is Saturday 1 November.

As entering the data is very time-consuming, we would be grateful if you could start sending in your records as soon as possible. Although we cannot guarantee that anything sent in after the deadline will be used in the butterfly section of the *Butterfly and Moth Report*, please send your data in, however late: all data received will be incorporated in our database. Your data make a valuable contribution to the annual report and as part of our database will increase our understanding of the numbers of butterflies and their distribution in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, and subsequently help with their conservation.

WHAT TO SEND:

- Completed Site Recording forms (green)*.
- Completed Casual Recording forms (yellow)*.
- Anecdotal comments (for the butterfly section of the *Butterfly and Moth Report*), i.e. accounts of observations made in the field; for example, behaviour, nectaring, courtship, egg laying, predation, etc.
- Completed spreadsheets for electronic transmission. Please contact me if you would like me to email you our spreadsheet template.

* These forms were sent with the April newsletter. Please photocopy blank forms as required or contact me for additional forms.

Please note that although I am no longer editing the butterfly section of the Report all records, comments, etc., for the Report should be sent to me: contact details on back page of Newsletter.

If you would like to send your records on MapMate, please contact Dave Green on alpium@clara.co.uk to make the necessary arrangements.

Linda Barker, Butterfly Recorder

PLANTING FOR BUTTERFLIES

No. 4: Ivy *Hedera helix*

This article is intended as a corollary to the previous one on holly, not so much a recommendation to plant, rather a reason for retention as the main host plant of the second, or summer, brood of the Holly Blue. Ova are laid around the burgeoning buds of the flowers and, on hatching, the larvae burrow into them. In 'boom' years, up to seven ova can be found on a single bud, but the species' cannibal instincts prevent any exhaustion of food supply. Curiously, the survivors in these situations are always female. The flowers are also an invaluable nectar source for the Comma and Red Admiral when most flowers have faded.

Health & Safety

The leaves and berries of common ivy are poisonous if ingested by humans as they contain saponic glycoside. However, the plant should not be confused with 'Poison Ivy' *Toxicodendron radicans*, a totally unrelated North American vine which causes dermatitis when touched.

Cultivation

The native ivy is a ubiquitous climber that will lie dormant on the ground until offered the opportunity to climb when light levels increase. Frequently adapting to walls, ivy is often disparaged as harmful to mortar, whereas being evergreen its foliage can actually provide valuable protection from the elements, notably frost. Similarly, ivy thriving on a dying tree is often perceived as the cause of the tree's demise when in fact it is only the symptom, exploiting the light occasioned by the tree's diminishing canopy, viz. the burgeoning masses of ivy on hedgerow elms dying from Dutch elm disease.

Gardens

As with the holly, numerous ornamental *H. helix* cultivars are commonly available, notably those with variegated or yellow foliage, such as 'Goldheart' and 'Buttercup', which seem to serve the butterflies equally well. Cultivars of exotic species such as *H. canariensis* and *H. persica* are not always frost-hardy and thus need more considered locations.

andrew.brookes@port.ac.uk



Orange Tip Caterpillars and Honesty



Although I grow both garlic mustard (Jack-by-the-Hedge) and honesty in my garden ALL of the Orange Tip caterpillars I have seen have fed exclusively on the seed pods of honesty. Normally the caterpillars are widely spaced, almost always on separate plants even when I had a total of 17 caterpillars in one year, though once I had five caterpillars on a single plant of honesty. Each caterpillar stayed on its own seed pod which continued to grow even as the caterpillar did. Eventually the caterpillars each finished eating their first seed pod and moved to an adjacent one, of which they ate between a third and a half in a couple of days, before moving off into a nearby hedge to pupate. These caterpillars were no more than six inches apart, but there was no sign of the cannibalism so frequently mentioned in books.

Brian Fletcher

Verbena bonariensis

This verbena is easily grown from seed, which germinates quite quickly to give very small seedlings that seem to take a long time to increase in size. Once they do start growing they need to be potted on as this perennial plant reaches 3-5ft (100-150cm) in height. In spite of its height there are very few leaves and the stems with their side shoots are thin and wiry, which means that they are virtually invisible against a background of taller plants. The stems end in clusters of small violet flowers which seem to float in the air, attracting numerous butterflies. The flowering period is exceptionally long, from mid-June until the first really hard frosts in mid-to-late-October, providing nectar for any butterflies which may be around.

Once flowering is over I prefer to leave the plants as they are because the tiny seeds are much enjoyed by goldfinches during the winter. Once the goldfinches have finished with the seed heads the plants may be cut down to six inches (15cm) from the ground; most will throw up new shoots in the spring. It is likely that the finches will have missed some seeds, and in the spring these will produce seedlings, which can be left where they are, transplanted, potted on or pulled out.

Verbena rigida is smaller with deeper purple flowers and grows to 12-15 inches (30-40cm). In my garden it is completely ignored by butterflies and moths though it is just as colourful and floriferous as its larger relative.

Brian Fletcher

A New Butterfly Predator

The Brimstone butterfly is only an occasional visitor to our garden. Previous sightings have always been of males, but on 12 and 13 May 2008 both male and female were observed, and the female again on the following day. She spent her time around our buckthorn, which my wife had recently pruned, so we awaited developments with interest.

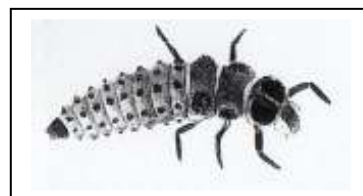
On 4 June four small caterpillars were seen and the maximum number on the plant reached nine on 22 June, despite this corner of the garden being a busy thoroughfare for feeding birds, including extended families on long-tailed tits. The green caterpillar is well camouflaged against the central spine of the buckthorn leaf but is more evident when feeding or rearing up from the leaf.

However, the number was rapidly reduced to just one large feeding caterpillar on 30 June, then no more sightings. We were aware that pupation occurs away from the larval food plant and so were very pleased to see a freshly emerged female Brimstone on 26 July, feeding on sunlit buddleia.

So what was the new predator? It is the recently arrived and rapidly spreading harlequin ladybird, not the adult in this instance, but the larva. They are easily identified and we saw many in our garden this spring. On 4 and 9 June we actually saw one of the Brimstone caterpillars being eaten by the harlequin larva and to prevent further such losses all subsequent larvae on the buckthorn were quickly removed.

Much concern has been expressed about the harlequin's effect on our native ladybirds, but look out for the larvae as well. They are voracious feeders with a catholic diet, which almost certainly encompasses caterpillars on any species that they discover.

Richard Stewart, Valezina, 112 Westerfield Road, Ipswich IP4 2XW



Ladybird larva

The Spread of the Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner

Cameraria ohridella

According to the Forestry Commission website:

“The horse chestnut leaf miner was first observed in Macedonia in northern Greece in the late 1970's, and was described as a new species of the genus *Cameraria* in 1986. In 1989 it appeared unexpectedly in Austria and has since spread throughout central and eastern Europe. Its current distribution includes Belgium, the Netherlands, Denmark, southern Sweden, all of Germany, Poland and the central European countries, and it is currently spreading west through France and south through Italy. Since 2002 it has been reported from Spain, Albania, Turkey, Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus and western Russia.

Cameraria ohridella was first found established in the UK in the London Borough of Wimbledon in July 2002. Leaf mines with larvae were present in high densities on horse chestnut trees (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) along the southern edge of Wimbledon Common and in nearby streets and gardens, which suggested that the first moths had arrived in either 2000 or 2001. From this initial area of infestation, the moth has spread rapidly, and it is now present across most of south-central England, East Anglia and the Midlands. The current distribution (November 2006) extends to Wells on the north Norfolk coast, and to Derby, Shrewsbury, Cardiff and Somerset, 190-230 km from the site of the original infestation. The rate of spread in the UK (40-60 km/year) is similar to that seen on the continent.”

In six years the moth has become abundant and in 2008 there has been a further surge in the population in the south-east. Everywhere I drive in Hampshire and Surrey I see horse chestnut trees that are seriously affected, many of them completely brown with the mines. In fact, I have not seen any recently that are not affected. Many leaves have 50 mines per leaf and so I am sure some trees must have tens of thousands of mines. A picture of the adult can be seen on Mike Wall's Hantsmoths website at <http://www.hantsmoths.org.uk/> by typing *ohridella* into the Search box in the top left corner. The moth itself is tiny, only about 3-4mm long, reddish-brown in colour with three white diagonal bands, and I have caught several in my garden trap in Anna Valley in the last few weeks. It will be interesting to see how long it is before a parasite discovers that there is a rich untapped niche here!

Recently I had to go to our office in Slough and I parked my car below a badly affected horse chestnut tree. When I came to leave it was covered in about a dozen of the adult moths. Interestingly there was still one clinging to the windscreen as I drove all through the town, and when I got to my destination 20 miles later, having driven along the M25 at 70 mph, I noticed there was still one on the outside of the car! They clearly have remarkable powers of holding on – and dispersal. I have seen them several times inside underground trains in central London. According to Branch member Mark Trasenster, who lives in London, this year has seen a remarkable increase in numbers and it is now not

uncommon to get over a thousand at his MV moth lamp overnight. He has seen trees that have suffered almost complete leaf drop by mid-summer and have then had some branches re-grow their leaves and even flower again in late summer.

As ever I will be pleased to receive your records of this and other species.

Tim Norriss, Moth Officer & Moth Recorder

The Tale of a Puss Moth Caterpillar

The partly grown Puss Moth caterpillar found on a coppiced poplar tree at the edge of one of my fields was a cause for great excitement on 12 July. Although there was evidence of feeding damage when it was first seen it very soon became inactive whilst it went through what was obviously its last instar. By 16 July it had developed its characteristic “Thomas the Tank Engine” face and was growing rapidly, eating a whole large poplar leaf a day. It was lovely to watch and I developed a great affection for it and so was horrified when it disappeared on about 19 or 20 July. Eaten by a bird I guessed. Tragic. But no! It reappeared on 22 July on a different branch, only to disappear again within hours of being seen. Maybe there were two?

Anyway, someone told me that they pupate within a few days of passing through their last instar, so I hope that’s what happened. Patrick Fleet showed me the amazing wooden cocoon they construct from chewed bark (there is one at Magdalen Hill Down that he found on a tree stake). The moth emerged from it some time ago but the cocoon is as hard as the wood. Apparently, the caterpillar makes the cocoon thinner at the point where the moth will emerge. So I knew what I was looking for and I searched the poplar tree for this wonderful structure – but found none. However I am not going back to my “a bird has eaten it” theory because in *Enjoying Moths* Roy Leverton wrote about caterpillars dispersing from the larval foodplant and pupating elsewhere as a strategy to avoid concentrations of pupa that would be attractive to predators. He described finding more Puss Moth cocoons in a Scottish wood on silver birch than on aspen where the caterpillars had been feeding.

At the time of writing (19 August) my hopes of watching such a caterpillar again next year have been slightly dashed. The main trunk of the poplar was blown down in yesterday’s strong wind and the smaller trunk is leaning badly. So I hope that the caterpillar/s DID pupate off the poplar tree! And I am hopeful the poplar will regrow when I coppice it.

Lynn Fomison

Pentax Papilio: Getting Closer

Finding a pair of binoculars that really focus close enough for those interested in moths and butterflies has previously not been easy. Inquiries some years ago resulted in purchase of a pair in which “close-focus” turned out to be 2 metres. Disappointing for butterflies!

On a subsequent trip, a Californian lady with American binoculars was looking at plants at her feet with a pair of very close-focusing binoculars. These were a product of the US Eagle Optics firm: 8x32 focusing to 3 feet. We found www.eagleoptics on the web, but they were not interested in exporting them. The only alternative was to use a monocular to observe insects, which didn't appeal.

We were therefore delighted to read in 2005 in an excellent article on dragonflies in the Dorset Bird Club Newsletter, a recommendation for a new product which could focus down to one metre, available from a Parkstone, camera shop used by many local naturalists. Although the article was correct, we were shown a different pair which, we were surprised to see, claimed to focus to 0.5 metres. They were lightweight and somewhat less expensive than the product recommended in the dragonfly article. We took the plunge, and have been very pleased with them.

They are made by Pentax, and appropriately called Papilio: 0.5 metres extremely close-focusing 8.5x21 binoculars. They can be used up to infinity and so are useful for birding, and wonderfully helpful for insects such as damselflies and wasps, not just moths and butterflies. Three years later, we have had three pairs in the family for some years and they have been extremely well used! One pair needed a slight repair after a couple of years when a section of the rubber coating came off, but they have otherwise proved very resilient. They are fantastic for looking at small moths flushed as you walk, and for use at moth-trapping events. In dim evening light they are not so good, and the eye cups don't seem to work desperately well with spectacles. Nonetheless, they are marvellous for observing a whole range of organisms in the field, from lichens and small plants to the whole wonderful range of microlepidoptera, insects and spiders, at a price that is much less than the average serious birdwatcher's binoculars (currently £85 via Internet suppliers).

Keith, David & Margaret Godfrey

Cheap Moth Traps

You've heard of the "Robinson" and the "Skinner" moth traps; now try a cheap imitation: The Nash Moth Box!

You will need:

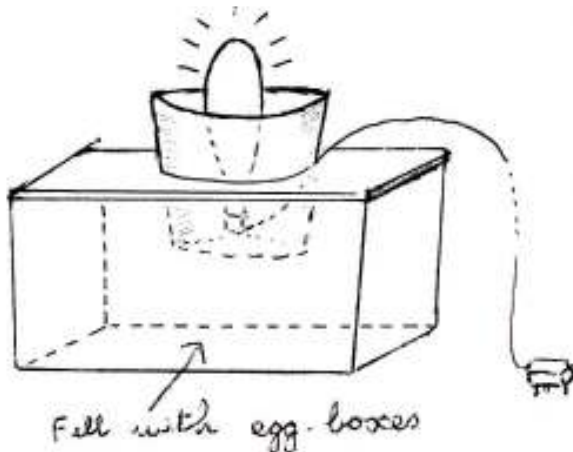
1. Large white sheet. Raid the airing cupboard. Or you could try the charity shops.
2. Large plastic storage box with lid. From Superbuys, or the market. £6.00
3. Medium-sized plain lampshade. From Superbuys, B&Q, etc. £2.50
4. Light fitting. * From Superbuys, B&Q, etc. £0.70
5. Electric plug. From Superbuys, B&Q, etc. £0.50
6. Lighting flex. I used 5 meters @ 60p per meter. £3.00
7. Plastic garden table to act as a rain shield. Try your local tip. £1.00
8. Blended bulb. From Watkins & Doncaster or ALS. £10.50
9. Egg boxes. Farm shop, Tesco, etc.

Total: £24.70

*If you are going to use an MV bulb you will need a brass three-pin light bulb fitting and a choke. Both these items are again obtainable from Watkins & Doncaster or Anglian Lepidoperist Supplies.

Method

1. Cut a hole in the lid of the box so that the lampshade fits snugly into it. I used a Stanley knife. Go slowly so as not to split the plastic. A notch for the flex is useful but not essential.
2. Wire up your plug and light fitting.
3. Screw the lampshade to the light fitting and sit it upside-down in the hole in the lid.
4. Spread out your sheet and put your "Nash box" in the middle. Cover with your table if the weather is uncertain, and away you go!



I also use a timer so that I can go to bed and leave the trap, but I have to be up soon after dawn or my over-friendly blackbird mops up all the specimens sitting on the sheet.

GOOD NOTHING!

Janet Nash

My Quest for the Fabulous Forty

Every year I keep a butterfly record in my diary in the form of a simple list at the back. This year the first entry read:-

1. Peacock 5th March. My garden.

I gleaned this idea from Matthew Oates many years ago and find it an interesting way of keeping track of each species seen in a year. If one needed an incentive to go out and see butterflies this would provide it. In 2008 I had the additional incentive of wanting to see 40 species to celebrate Butterfly Conservation's 40th Anniversary Year.

By the end of June I had got to 28. But I had missed some, like Grizzled Skipper: unforgivable! I just had not been walking at MHD at the right time and in the right weather. I was actually on different bits of the Reserve on two days when other people saw them. More understandably, I had missed Pearl-bordered Fritillary, but pleasingly Marsh Fritillary does feature on my list as it was seen on the Branch field trip to Bentley Wood on 31 May. PBF was seen that day too, but not by me!. That day another visitor was on a quest to see all 56 British species in 2008. He missed PBF too. I wonder how he fared over all?

By the end of July my list had reached 34. White Letter Hairstreak had been missed - blame a cloudy afternoon at Timsbury. The list did not yet include Painted Lady or Clouded Yellow. Time was running out. The New Forest had provided Silver-studded Blue in June but failed to reveal Grayling on a cloudy August day.

However, August did see Small Copper added, along with the much yearned for Painted Lady, found by Brian Fletcher on one of the Magdalen Hill Down walks. Silver-spotted Skipper and Wall joined the list after Branch field trips to Stockbridge Down (16/8) and Normandy Marsh (17/8). That gave a total of 38: two to go. I had to make a special visit to Hankley Common in Surrey to be sure of Grayling (though a visit to the New Forest did belatedly produce a Hampshire one on 26 August). Number 40 turned out to be one of my favourite butterflies – the elusive Brown Hairstreak, seen on 23 August on the excellent field trip at Shipton Bellinger. Andy Barker had told us how this species liked the black berries of wayfaring tree, and sure enough that was where we saw one; another was seen on bramble blossom and some were found flying around ash trees.

Lynn Fomison

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NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Many thanks to all contributors for their articles. The deadline for the January 2009 Newsletter is 20 December.

Juliet Bloss, Editor

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