

DIARY OF EVENTS

FRIDAY & SATURDAY 17 & 18 SEPTEMBER: Butterfly Benefit Concert

Time: 7.30pm at St. Catherine's Church, Ventnor.

Friday's performers: Cephalodidge, Deborah Hodgson, Luke Steen, Michael Champion, Rob Wilson. **Saturday's performers:** Paul Armfield, Deborah Hodgson, Holly Kirby, The Halsey Duo, Rob Wilson. **Tickets:** £5. To book in advance, please ring 01983 730930.

FRIDAY 1 OCTOBER Work Party, Magdalen Hill Down

Meet: at top of track by Magdalen Hill cemetery and Blackwell & Moody Stonemasons on Alresford Rd (B3404) Winchester (SU512 295). **Time:** 10am to 4pm.

SATURDAY 2 OCTOBER: AES (Amateur Entomological Society) Exhibition.

See p.11.

Saturday 23 October	AGM and Members' Day at Littleton Millennium Memorial Hall, Littleton, Winchester. See pp.5-7
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FRIDAY 15 OCTOBER Work Party, Yew Hill

Meet: at roadside in Old Kennels Lane near junction of Port Lane and Millers Lane at SU451 269. **Time:** 10am to 4pm.

FRIDAY 29 OCTOBER Work Party, Magdalen Hill Down

Details as for 1 October.

SATURDAY 13 November: BENHS (British Entomological & Natural History Society) Exhibition. See p.11.

SATURDAY 20 NOVEMBER National AGM & Members' Day

Organised by Cambs and Essex Branch at Churchill College, Cambridge. See website for further information: www.butterfly-conservation.org

WEDNESDAY 24 NOVEMBER Work Party, Bentley Station Meadow

Meet: in the meadow after using very limited parking spaces in Station Road SU792 432 (or contact Lynn re alternative parking: 01962 772251). **Time:** 10am to 2.30pm.

FRIDAY 3 DECEMBER Work Party, Yew Hill

Details as for 15 October.

FRIDAY 7 JANUARY 2011 Work Party, Magdalen Hill Down

Details as for 1 October.

WEDNESDAY 12 JANUARY Work Party, BSM

Details as for 24 November.

SATURDAY 15 JANUARY 2011: Hampshire Moth Conference. See p.11.

FRIDAY 21 JANUARY Work Party, Yew Hill

Details as for 15 October.

Work Parties

Wear suitable clothes and footwear. Bring gloves and food. If it is your first time, or for additional information, contact Reserves Officer Lynn Fomison (01962 772251).

Chairman's Report

Another somewhat curious season, but this is England and perhaps the seasons always have been so! A good start; few migrants (I accompanied a visitor from Cumbria two weeks ago and he saw his first Painted Lady, my third); a long dry hot spell with some splendid emergences (lots of second-brood Brown Argus on MHD as an example); and now a very wet end to August. What a contrast to last year.

This will be my final Chairman's jottings as I complete my three-year term at the forthcoming AGM. I will take that opportunity to thank personally the many members who have contributed so much to the Branch during the past twelve months. As last year, we have two external speakers at this year's AGM: Peter Davey, Dorset County Moth Recorder, who is speaking on "Immigration of Lepidoptera"; and Chris Manley, author of *British Moths and Butterflies*, who will consider the use of photography as an ID and a reference collection. I hope that many of you will be able to attend this event. Please bring your images of butterflies and moths and contribute to the photography competition.

Several of you attended the Butterflies and Buddlejas (yes, that really is the correct spelling) event at Longstock Park Plant Centre, held at the start of Save our Butterflies Week. This was a considerable success, and our efforts were much appreciated by those who attended and by our sponsors, the John Lewis Partnership. Among the attractions was the opportunity for face-painting – one that was not missed by one or two 'post-teenagers' (see p.4). We were lucky to have excellent weather and a good number of species to see, including some Humming-bird Hawk Moths.

Head Office is holding a meeting of trustees and branch chairmen in late September to explore the relationships with branches and the vision for the charity for the coming decade. BC may be a relatively small charity when compared to, say, the RSPB, but it 'punches well above its weight' and continues to do much to increase our understanding of Lepidoptera while contributing directly to improvements in habitat by working with/advising landowners as well as managing its own very successful reserves. In this context, our Branch's reserves are amongst the charity's exemplar reserves; very much of this success is a result of the work done by our Conservation and Reserves Subcommittees and the many of you who assist the work parties. This combined effort requires 'orchestration' and our Reserves Manager, Lynn Fomison, deserves much of the credit for the excellence of Magdalen Hill Down, Yew Hill and Bentley Station Meadow.

Lynn retires next year (see p.10) and I would like to take this opportunity of recording the Branch's appreciation of the outstanding support she has offered us during her period in office: my jottings over the past three years have

regularly referred to our need for your continued support and the ongoing need for practical help where you are able to offer it. We have spaces on our subcommittees and the Main Committee, so please consider putting your name forward to help with the administration of our very successful and enjoyable branch. We are also keen to take forward the education initiatives emanating from Head Office: would anyone interested in this area (with or without teaching experience) please get in touch with me.

To those of you who are unable to attend the AGM, may I thank you for your support during my tenure of office. It has been a very real privilege to have served as your Chairman.

With best wishes,

Roger Buchanan, Chairman

Butterflies and Buddlejas

One of the highlights of the day was the extraordinary Lobster Moth caterpillar which was to be found in the Moth tent. It is reproduced here (courtesy of the face-painting artist) for the benefit of those who missed the event; you can easily see how it got its name.



There was in fact an excellent show of the moths which Tim Norriss had trapped the previous evening in the grounds. They were displayed in two glass aquarium tanks furnished with bark, twigs and leaves, where the moths could choose their own resting positions. Visitors were challenged to discover how many they could see. Sharp-eyed children were generally more successful than adults but everyone enjoyed the experience. Another innovation was to place some of the moths, including two hawk moths, on the trunk of a tree directly behind the tent, where they stayed all day.

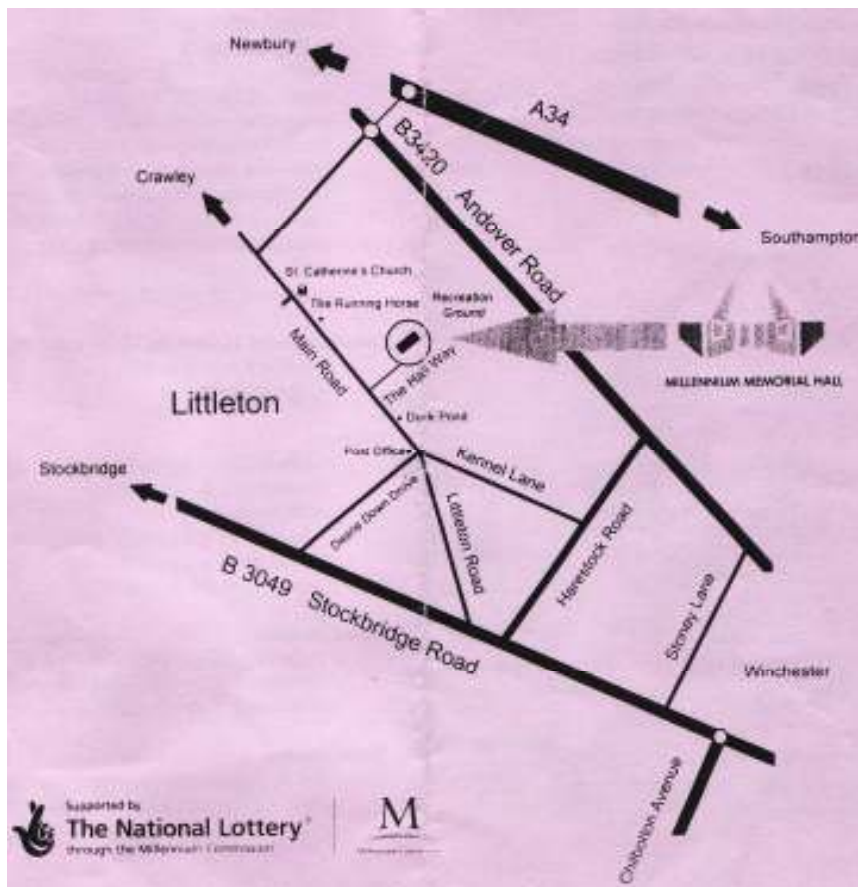
People were fascinated by their camouflaged appearance and spent a lot of time trying to find them all.

The Longstock buddlejas (one of the National Collections) were looking their best. Curator Pete ? explained that he trims them in the autumn to avoid wind rock during the winter gales and then cuts them to about two feet from the ground in March. He applies some fertiliser to stimulate their re-growth and flowering and spends time each morning removing the dead heads. The result was a fine-looking display which was very attractive to lots of butterflies.

Juliet Bloss

Plan Shows Location for AGM/Members' Day

**Littleton Millennium Memorial Hall, The Hall Way, off Main Road, Littleton,
Winchester, (SU455 324)**



Afternoon tea on Members' Day

We are looking for someone to take over organising afternoon tea at our annual Members' Day. Several members have been involved over the years but it is time to let someone else have the opportunity to have a go.

Members' Day this year is on 23 October; whoever is to take on the job will not be expected to organise the tea on their own this year but would work with me with a view to taking over in 2011. I'm confident there are a number of members who could take on this job, which is not an onerous one.

If you are interested please contact me to find out more. Contact details on back page.

Linda Barker

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

Saturday 23 October 2010

**Littleton Millennium Memorial Hall,
The Hall Way, Littleton, Winchester, SO22 6QL**

See map on p.5.

Programme

- 1.00 Doors open.**
- 1.30 – 2.30 Annual General Meeting.**
- 2.30 – 3.20 Peter Davey – Immigration of Lepidoptera.**

- 3.20 – 4.20 Refreshments, 'mingling' and photographic competition
(see page 8 for details).**

- 4.20 – 5.00 Chris Manley – Photography as an ID and Reference
Collection.**
- 5.00 – 5.45 Results of photographic competition.**
- 5.45 – 6.00 Peter Eeles: Final comments and close of meeting.**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2010

Saturday 23rd October

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 2009 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.

The following member is standing down from the Committee:

Janet Jones

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

Andy Barker
Juliet Bloss
Brian Fletcher
Tim Norris

Branch Rules allow a maximum of 15 Main Committee members. This means that, subject to the above members being re-elected, there will be **two** vacancies.

Additional nominations of members willing to serve on the Main Committee are invited. Names of those wishing to stand for election should be sent to Roger Buchanan, Chairman, no later than 17 October.

8. Health and safety matters.
9. Any other business. Items should be notified to the Chairman by 21 October.

Members' Day 2010

PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

All images must be prints not exceeding an image size equivalent to A4 (210x297mm) in landscape or portrait format. Prints may be mounted.

MEMBERS ARE LIMITED TO A TOTAL OF 3 PRINTS **OVERALL**

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 identifying their favourite image in each category and to choose their overall winning entry.

The results will be collated, and the winners announced at the end of the meeting.

As last year 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: Roger Buchanan, 23 Grosvenor Road, Chandlers Ford, Hants SO53 5BU. Those attending should bring their prints with them.

Please ensure that you enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you wish your prints to be returned.

Butterfly Records 2010

The deadline for sending in records is Thursday 4 November.

We are very pleased to be receiving an increasing amount of electronic data and would be grateful if anyone currently sending in handwritten data who has the use of a computer would think seriously about entering the data on a spreadsheet. If you are unsure about this method you could send just some of your data on a spreadsheet (the rest on recording forms) to see how you get on. Electronic transmission saves us time which can be spent doing other things related to the *Butterfly and Moth Report*. Please e-mail me (contact details on back page) and I will send you the Hampshire and Isle of Wight 2010 spreadsheet, with instructions. Please use our spreadsheet as it integrates easily into our database. If you would like to send your data using MapMate please let me know.

However, we are still interested in hand-completed recording forms (site and casual blank forms sent out with the April Newsletter): hand-written entry is time-consuming and even more so if data is sent in any format other than on the two recording forms. Please use either the site or casual form for all hand-written records.

Please continue to send your anecdotal comments, which can be used in the *Butterfly and Moth Report*. Please do not include your data only within the comments. Your comments may contain data, numbers seen, dates, etc., but all of this information must be recorded as described above.

Recorders who have filled in our on-line recording form do not need to send the data in again, as it has already gone onto our database.

Although records sent after the deadline may not be used in the *Butterfly and Moth Report*, all data will be incorporated into our database however late it arrives.

Your data is a valuable contribution and is used in the *Butterfly and Moth Report*; as part of our database, it increases our understanding of the numbers and distribution of butterflies in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and consequently helps their conservation.

Linda Barker, Butterfly Recorder

Reserves

In January attention was drawn to the fact that 21 years have elapsed since the Branch established both Yew Hill and Magdalen Hill Down as nature reserves. Bentley Station Meadow came along a little later on, in 1992, giving the Branch a total landholding of about 35 acres.

Over the years the reserves have had many friends – people willing to devote their time to helping at conservation work parties, recording butterflies, moths and plants, and leading walks. Others, such as Ken Wilmot, Colin Matthews, Peter and Nellie Beale, Maureen Thomas, Dave Payne and Phil Budd, have helped with reserve management.

Now we are responsible for over 130 acres; this involves an increasing number of people. One of my jobs as Reserves Officer is to help to co-ordinate the efforts of volunteers and to make the very best use of the skills that are offered. Pleasingly, old friends continue to give sustained support and new faces come along. I keep in touch with those who want to be closely involved with the reserves by e-mail newsletters. If you are thinking that you would like to help at a reserve either by using an existing skill or learning a new one please get in touch. I shall be leaving the post of Branch Reserves Officer in September 2011 and I do want to ensure that the reserves have a strong band of helpers. So please tell me what skills you have or would like to gain; we will be glad to have you join our team.

I have an e-mail circulation list for those interested in helping: e-mail me if you would like to be added to it. Periodic updates about the reserves are put on the web site.

Lynn Fomison, Branch Reserves Officer

ps. And just to say in their 21st birthday year that Magdalen Hill Down and Yew Hill have been entertaining their fair share of butterflies, with a few surprises popping up!



Hampshire Moth Conference

**Saturday 15 January 2011
Littleton Millennium Memorial Hall,
The Hall Way, Littleton, Winchester, SO22 6QL
See map on p.5.**

The next Hampshire Moth Conference will be held at Littleton Memorial Hall on Saturday 15 January 2011; please put this date in you diary now. Doors will open at 12.30pm for a start at 1.00pm and will close at 6.00pm. Refreshments will be provided and there will be plenty of opportunity to meet and chat with old and new friends.

There will be a range of speakers; programme details will be posted later on the Hantsmoths and Branch websites and on the Hantsmoths e-mail discussion group.

Whether you are an expert or beginner or even just thinking about the plunge to the dark side you will all be very welcome.

Tim Norriss, County Macro-moth Recorder

More Dates for your Diary

The next AES* Exhibition will be on Saturday 2 October 2010 (11.00 till 16.30) at Kempton Park Racecourse. The Exhibition and Trade Fair hosts a mixture of societies' stands and traders selling entomological equipment, livestock, mounted specimens, books and cabinets. The Exhibition is the place to buy entomological ephemera, meet fellow enthusiasts and have a great day out. It is open to members of the public and not just members of the AES. See <http://www.amentsoc.org/events/exhibitions.html>

The next BENHS* Exhibition will be held on the ground floor of the Sherfield Building of the Imperial College of Science & Technology, Imperial College Road, South Kensington, S.W.7. on Saturday 13 November 2010. The Exhibition will be open from 11.00am until 5.00pm. Refreshments and a lunchtime bar will be available. Both members and guests are welcome. See <http://www.benhs.org.uk/portal/node/18>

Tim Norriss, County Macro-moth Recorder

*AES =Amateur Entomogical Society

*BENHS = British Entomological & Natural History Society

New Branch Members since the April 2010 Newsletter

The Branch welcomes the following new members. We look forward to meeting you at some of our events.

Mrs TR Ashton, North Waltham; Mr RA & Mrs NR Austin, Farnborough; Mr J Barber, Chandler's Ford; Mr PR & Mrs J Bench, Andover; Mr M & Mrs G Berry, Clanfield; Mr RDR & Mrs L Berry, Ascot, Berkshire; Dr DT Biggs, Gurnard, IoW; Ms C Brown, Rotherwick; Mr RG & Mrs J Burgess, Freshwater, IoW; Miss MJ Burnhill, Brighstone, IoW; Mr NB Catty, Basingstoke; Mr RF Champion, Eastbourne, East Sussex; Mr DJ Chaplin, Charlton; Mr PR Crook, Headley Down; Mr FIF & Mrs JA Dyson, Sparsholt; Miss JC Evans, Church Crookham; Mrs JM Frank, Stockbridge; Mr D & Mrs R Glover, Liss; Ms K Greenland, Alton; Mr GVC Hall, Lyndhurst; Mr RMJ & Mrs JJ Helsen, Waltham Chase; Mr C Hinxman, Winchester; Mr MP Holder, Over Wallop; Mr PA & Mrs J Hooper, Petersfield; Miss R Hoyes, Brixton, London; Mr M Langridge, Gosport; Mr DW Lobb, Southampton; Mr SJ Lovick, Winchester; Mr M & Mrs J McNeill, Upper Basildon, Berkshire; Mrs EA Potter, Ogdens; Ms F Ratto, South Ham; Mrs L & Mr I Ravula, Hythe; Mr MH Rigby, Guildford, Surrey; Mrs M Slatterey, Kings Worthy; Mr MP & Mrs PR Smith, Gosport; Mrs JTF Spring-Smyth, Lyndhurst; Mr JH Sprott, Romsey; Miss R Stilgoe & Mr M Gillingham, Portsmouth; Mr B & Mrs C Turkington, Farnham, Surrey; Mr AC & Mrs S Viggers, Southsea; Mr CS Ware & Mrs HB Parnham-Ware, Andover; Mr BM Wilkinson & Mrs H Pessi-Wilkinson, Oliver's Battery; Mr CP Wood, Winchester; Mr P & Mrs L Wood & Family, Ramsdell.

Garden Sightings

Perhaps because they have a tendency to move around more in good summer weather several members have reported unusual sightings of butterflies in their gardens this summer:

- Lynn Fomison had a Silver-washed Fritillary on a least four occasions in her garden at Ropley and also had a White Admiral on a tomato plant in her polytunnel;
- Juliet Bloss (Hythe) had her first ever Silver-washed Fritillary and two graylings on three occasions;
- Roger Buchanan in Chandler's Ford also had a Silver-washed Fritillary (these seem to have been the commonest "unusual" garden visitor) and his first late-summer Holly Blue;
- and Brian Fletcher trumped the lot with sightings of Large Skipper, Ringlet, Small Copper, Silver-washed Fritillary and, best of all, two visits from Marbled White (he had only seen one other in 40 years).
- On the Isle of Wight Rob Wilson saw an aberrant Small Copper in a garden in Ventnor.

Elm Trial News

Elm Trial Report 2010

The latest, fully illustrated, Report is now available on-line; to view, click on to the hyperlink on the Branch website. The Report has already featured in the trade mag *Horticulture Week* and forms the basis of an article by Sally Hex in the October issue of the RHS journal *The Garden*. Regrettably, funding constraints will not permit printing of a hard copy of the Report.

Forestry Commission initiative

The FC has ordered £200-worth of elms through the Branch, which the FC will plant at its West Walk plantation, near Wickham, following the clear-felling of the hemlock. It is hoped to obtain the Italian cultivar ‘San Zanobi’ through the good offices of IPP Florence, as this remarkable tree is available commercially only as a standard. The planting will complement that of the ‘Lutece’ and ‘Vada’ elm cultivars established in 2008 and 2009 respectively.

Southern Water initiative

Southern Water is to plant DED-resistant elms at a number of its sites in southern England as part of an initiative to conserve the White-letter Hairstreak. While the initiative is entirely Southern Water’s own, it has sought advice from Hants Branch on suitable trees and sourcing.

The miraculous Essex Elm

The Essex Elm hit the headlines in June, broadsheets and tabloids alike extolling this miraculous tree marketed by the King Nursery. Apparently disease-resistant owing to its survival amidst dying elms, clones of this tree are now available at just £136 each. Alas, nobody has bothered actually to test the tree for resistance by inoculation with the causal microfungus, and until such time as this happens it is best avoided.

New cultivar ‘Morfeo’

The unusual elm hybrid cultivar ‘FL 509’ donated several years ago by IPP Italy is to be patented and released to commerce as ‘Morfeo’ later this year. The tree has excelled in the BC trials in Hampshire, growing strongly at all sites, even surviving three months of inundation on Horsea Island over winter. Moreover, unlike many of the cultivars under assessment, the flowers, seeds, and leaves all emerge at the same time as those of the Wych Elm, the White-letter Hairstreak’s preferred host.

The IBM North Harbour elms

The elm cultivar supporting the White-letter Hairstreak colony at IBM North Harbour, Portsmouth, has been misidentified. Largely on the basis of its assumed age, the tree was believed to be ‘Sapporo Autumn Gold’. However, more careful examination of the leaves has since identified it as ‘Regal’, another American hybrid of the Siberian Elm introduced in 1983.

Andrew Brookes, andrew.brookes@port.ac.uk

Garden-worthy Wildflowers

There is a well-known saying that a weed is just a wildflower growing in the wrong place. My selection of wildflowers for the garden excludes rampant weedy species and includes those with nectar-rich colourful flowers produced over a reasonable period of time. Compact growth, both above and below ground, is another essential, and few of the flowers chosen set so much seed that self-sown seedlings become a problem. Some of the wildflowers described are doubly useful, providing both nectar for butterflies and food for caterpillars. Most wildflowers thrive in poor, thin soil and will respond to a richer garden soil by growing much bigger than in the wild.



Good sources of nectar include Brown Knapweed *Centaurea nigra* (36ins), Greater Knapweed *C. scabiosa* (48ins), Hemp Agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum* (54ins), and three easy-to-grow Scabious; the smallest is the Small Scabious of the downlands, *Scabiosa columbaria*, which reaches 24ins in an exceptionally long flowering season, often from June to November. The Field Scabious *Knautia arvensis* has much larger flowers. Growing to 36ins or more it sometimes needs support to keep it upright. It flowers from June to September. Devil's-bit Scabious *Succisa pratensis* (24-30ins) flowers mainly in September, its bright blue globular flower-heads providing a valuable source of nectar when many other flowers are on the wane. Its wiry stems require little support.

The two Knapweeds flower prolifically and can set large amounts of seed, though in my garden the seeds tend to be eaten by goldfinches as soon as they are ripe. Dead-heading is essential and easily accomplished with Hemp Agrimony, though I have seldom been troubled by seedlings even when I have left the dead-heading a little late.

The plants in my next selection are valuable both as sources of nectar and as food plants for caterpillars. The earliest to flower is Honesty, which comes in white as well as the more usual purple. The Orange Tip lays its eggs at the base of the flower and the caterpillar hatches as the seed pod begins to develop: a race ensues as to which grows the faster: caterpillar or seed pod. Usually the seed pod is ahead until the caterpillar is nearly full-grown. A second seed pod is sufficient to bring the caterpillar to full size, when it wanders off into nearby shrubs to pupate. A single Honesty plant in my garden once hosted five

supposedly cannibalistic Orange Tip caterpillars right through their development and still provided plenty of dried seed heads for later.

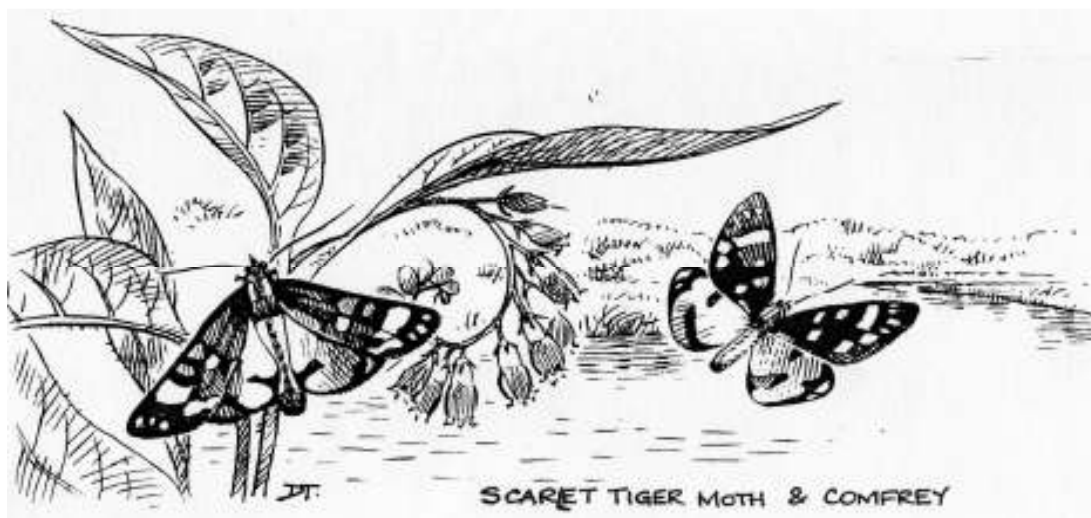
Another early flowerer is Comfrey in its various forms. Though visited by few butterflies it is popular with bees and is the larval food plant of the day-flying Scarlet Tiger moth, now regularly seen in my garden during June and July, its vivid colours the equal of any butterfly. Bird's-foot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* is mat-forming and its yellow or orange-and-yellow flowers have a pleasant honey-like fragrance. This is the food plant for the caterpillars of the Common Blue and the red and black 5- and 6-Spot Burnet Moths, which fly by day.

Marjoram *Origanum vulgare* (12-15ins) is a favoured nectar source for several butterflies, including the Gatekeeper, but it is also the food plant for the caterpillars of the double-brooded Mint Moth *Pyrausta aurata*. This small day-flying moth (wingspan 15-18mm) has bright purple-brown wings with orange markings on each and is around from May to August.

Last but not least is Dark Mullein *Verbascum nigrum*, whose graceful spires of closely-packed yellow flowers in July and August reach 50-60ins. The flowers are much visited by bees and hoverflies, and occasionally at dead of night by the rare Striped Lychnis moth. Its caterpillars, like those of the far commoner Mullein Moth (found much earlier in the year), are pale green with yellow and black markings. In most years caterpillars survive to maturity in my garden to pupate in the soil below the Mullein, though many end up as food for birds.

So far this year these wildflowers, as well as other garden flowers, including *Buddleja davidii*, have attracted no fewer than nineteen species of butterfly (and all the moths mentioned) to my suburban garden. The appearance of a Painted Lady would bring the total to record-breaking 20.

Brian Fletcher



Gardening for Butterflies – What Plants Where?

In this article I intend to start looking at ways in which I have used (successfully I hope) plants beneficial to butterflies in an ordinary garden. By ‘ordinary’ I mean one that conforms to a greater or lesser degree to conventional notions of ornamental gardening. For quite a few gardeners this excludes the really wild garden, because it is just too untidy. Now, as supporters of Butterfly Conservation, I assume that most of us would try and have at least part of our garden fairly wild, i.e. containing a proportion of native plants (aka ‘weeds’!) and not too scrupulously tidy. Doing this benefits all forms of wildlife, not just butterflies. But what do you do if you either cannot or will not allow your garden to ‘go wild’ in this way? Well, visiting well-known gardens around the country over the years has made it clear to me that plenty of butterflies can be attracted into the most carefully maintained gardens, of whatever design, if the right plants and plant combinations are employed. Even if butterflies don’t breed in these gardens, there is presumably some benefit to them in having access to plentiful nectar sources. Simply make sure you plant the maximum number of nectar plants in the most appropriate conditions. I will not go into too much detail here about specific plants, but instead look at some of the garden features where they can be used.

The herbaceous border is arguably the quintessential component of the traditional English garden. Such borders are often regarded as the crowning glories of our most famous gardens. They are sometimes said to have gone out of fashion with ordinary gardeners because of the high levels of maintenance required. But, actually, many gardeners I know still want to create successful borders, and are prepared to stake, prune, deadhead and divide to achieve this. The interesting thing is that many of the plants that are the commonest components of such borders are good nectar sources. They often come from open meadow habitats in the wild, which makes them robust and easy to grow, and one way of thinking of an herbaceous border is to regard it as a concentrated and organized form of a wild meadow, with the grasses removed.

If you stick to wild species, or hybrids not too far removed from their wild parents, include plenty of members of the daisy/thistle family (*Asteraceae*) together with some of the other key plants such as *Verbena bonariensis*, Valerian (*Centranthus ruber*) and Ice Plant (*Sedum spectabile*) you can hardly fail to attract butterflies, if there are any in the vicinity. I don’t think the exact design of the border makes much difference to the butterflies, so you can coordinate colours, heights and leaf shapes as artistically as you wish. The most important thing is to choose a site with as much sunshine and shelter as possible – which will reduce problems with plants flopping as well as benefiting the butterflies.

If you feel that a conventional, purely herbaceous, border is too bare in winter, and prefer instead the sort of mixed (i.e. herbaceous and shrubby) border, then by all means add shrubs, even evergreens, but try to include as many as possible which are nectar sources. Obviously *Buddlejas* come top of the list here, but if you want evergreens the many different forms of *Hebe* are hard to beat, and *Escallonias* are also useful. There are many further plants and combinations I could suggest, but the underlying message is that you need not feel guilty about planting a traditional border.

Jeremy Spon

South-East Area Group News

Ports Down expansion

An arable field of 9ha along the summit of Ports Down is to revert to natural chalk grassland at the end of this year, when it will join the 110 hectares already in the custody of Richard Jones, Portsmouth CC Countryside Officer. Owned by the city council, the field is to be relinquished by Pigeonhouse Farm, which has leased the site for over half a century. The field lies at the apex formed by the B2177 Southwick road and James Callaghan Drive, extending westward from the roundabout to the Qinetiq research base, dominated by the sentinel radar tower of a Type-45 destroyer. The site was originally put to the plough in the 1930s.



Fareham Borough promotions

Fareham Borough Council has elevated two of its public open spaces, Warsash Common and Holly Hill, to Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status. The sites are home to ‘Priority’ species, White-letter Hairstreak and White Admiral respectively.

Portsmouth BAP

The Portsmouth Biodiversity Action Plan workshop arranged by the Hants & IoW Wildlife Trust was held at Portsmouth City Council’s Guildhall offices on 12 July.

Bedenham Grasslands

Andrew Brookes attended a site meeting with Kevin Cooper, Environment Manager of the DSDA Gosport armament depot, to discuss management of the grasslands. They were originally mown annually simply to reduce the fire risk, but cutting was restricted some years ago to the margins of the elm thicket; and most of the area, home to the Grizzled Skipper and Small Heath among many others, is now succumbing to oak scrub.

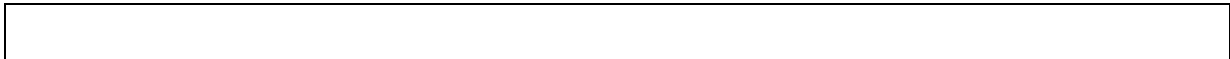
Carol Dinenage, Gosport's newly elected MP, has expressed her concern for the future of the site and has approached Natural England to explore the possibility of including it in the Portsmouth Harbour SSSI.

Horsea Island

Plans are afoot to have this terrestrial fragment of the Portsmouth Harbour SSSI grazed by goats for the first time this autumn to control the encroaching scrub. Shod horses grazed the main meadow last winter and reduced much of it to a quagmire. Sightings of the Small Heath plummeted to singletons this summer but, ironically, numbers of Common Blue rocketed, peaking at over 100 in August, the highest ever recorded.

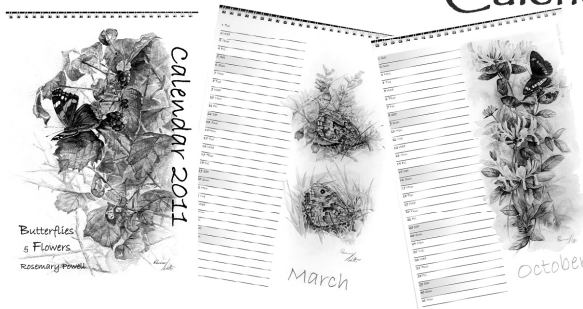
Andrew Brookes, Leader South-East Area Group

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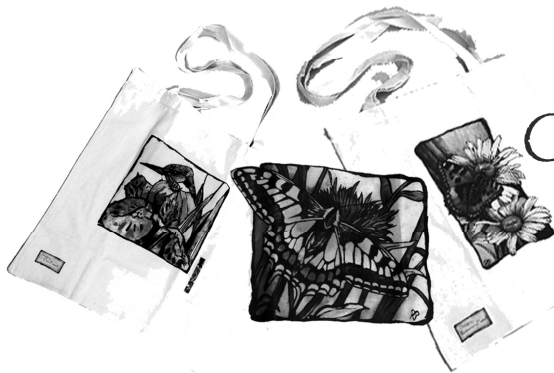


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Winter Mothing

The number of moth species flying between early November and late February is less than at any other time of year. However, most of those that do emerge can only be found during this period.

In woodland, an MV lamp isn't really necessary during winter. A battery-powered actinic is useful for attracting fast-flying species such as the Sprawler *Asteroscopus sphinx* and December Moth *Poecilocampa populi*, but virtually everything else can be found with an ordinary torch, members of the Geometer family. Many have virtually wingless females which are difficult to find, but the males spend long periods resting on tree-trunks, dead branches and brambles. Sometimes the females can be found with them. As there are very few leaves left on the twigs the moths stand out quite clearly. The two Winter moths *Operophtera* sp. and the *Epirrita* species sit with their wings up like roosting butterflies revealing conspicuous pale undersides.

Mottled Umber *Erannis defoliaria* and Scarce Umber *Agriopsis aurantiaria* normally keep their wings open but are not difficult to spot. The Scarce Umber is actually quite common in oak woodland but has only a short flight period from mid-November to early December. That is also the time when I normally find Northern Winter Moth *Operophtera fagata* and *Acleris logiana*, both in birch woodland. The latter species, a small pale bell-shaped Tortricoid, requires careful search on birch trunks. Many of the winter geometers are probably more numerous than Large Yellow Underwing *Noctua pronuba*: if I don't start finding them within twenty minutes I'll try a different location or come back a week or two later.

There is often not much to see from mid-December to late January, but as soon as the nights become milder Spring Usher *Agriopsis leucophaearia* and Dotted Border *A. marginaria* begin to emerge. Two common noctuids that may also be seen are Chestnut *Conistra vaccinii* and the Satellite *Eupsilia transversa*. Both are attracted to rose hips and we recently discovered that the Chestnut is very partial to the nectar of snowdrops.

Neglected oak/birch/hazel copses are good for all of the above species and several other moths. A word of caution though: you will not be welcome anywhere that pheasant-shooting takes place as you will be disturbing the roosting birds. The shooting season lasts until 1 February. Always seek permission from the land-owner and gamekeeper.

Patrick Fleet

This article originally appeared in the Hantsmoths Newsletter No. 8 which can be found at: www.hantsmoths.org.uk/newsletters.php

Daytime mothing: hundreds of species to see!

If you don't have the equipment or opportunity to find moths by light-trapping at night, don't despair. Guy Meredith, a moth recorder from Gloucestershire, extolls the virtues of mothing by day.

There are **hundreds** of species which can be found in the daytime as adult moths: those that normally fly in the daytime, those that will fly if disturbed from vegetation, and some more which often rest during the day in visible positions such as on tree trunks. Since concentrating on moth recording in 2002, I have found 757 species during the daytime in Gloucestershire or just over the county border; 602 of these species were found as live adults: 179 macros and 423 micros. The remaining 155 species were found mostly as larvae or as identifiable leaf mines made by the tiny larvae of some micro-moths. In 2009 alone I found 470 species in the daytime, 350 as adults, and there are still plenty of species which I haven't yet found, even some quite common ones!

For anyone starting out in daytime moth-recording a book covering the macro-moths is essential, but you will soon find that this doesn't cover many of the species that are commonly seen. There are books and websites giving just a selection of micro-moth species, but this can lead to incorrect identifications if you are unaware of similar species which are not illustrated. Specialist books are available which collectively cover all the various moth families found in the UK, but some of these books seem quite expensive. Seem expensive? Well yes, individually they can cost a lot more than a book covering all the macros. If you think of it in terms of entertainment though, each book should give you many years of use, so a price comparable with going to a big concert or sporting event lasting just a couple of hours is actually very good value for money.

Rather than trying to cover all micro families from the outset, it is easier (and less expensive initially) to build up over several years. It's probably best to start with the Pyralids, because this family includes the commonly seen "grass moths" and several other conspicuous day-flying groups such as the colourful little moths in the genus *Pyrausta* and the China-marks which can be found in wet areas. In addition to books you will probably need a digital camera with a good close-up macro mode, a fine-mesh net, some specimen tubes and a small magnifying lens (x10). Catching and keeping specimens for identification (even if you later release them) is necessary for many micros and a few of the macros. Wing markings may be sufficient but you can't carry all the necessary books in a rucksack! Of course, don't collect specimens at a site unless you have permission to do so.

So few people search specialised habitats for micro-moths that there could be a lot of scope for finding species which are new to your area or which haven't been recorded for several decades. You don't need to be an expert to find such species, you just need to spend time out in the countryside. Reading up on species you've not seen can pay dividends, but about half of my finds are by chance, including some UK rarities. Anyone can make such finds, but you will only know you have a "good record" if you are able to identify the specimen or if someone else, such as the County Moth Recorder, is able to do this for you.

Most moth-ers tend to think of their hobby as a primarily nocturnal one, but get out there in the sunshine and you'll be amazed at what you can find.

Guy Meredith, Gloucestershire Moth Recorder

First printed in the Sept 2010 Moths Count Newsletter. To read the other articles go to their website: www.mothscount.org



Argent & Sable Moth

Book review

Gardening for Butterflies, Bees and other Beneficial Insects

A how-to guide

by Jan Miller-Klein

Is there room on your bookshelf for just one more book on gardening for the creatures we love? I hope so! Jan Miller is an exceedingly active volunteer with Butterfly Conservation in North Wales and a very knowledgeable horticulturalist. This book combines her interests and skills to give newcomers to gardening for butterflies an excellent manual. Pleasingly, it offers new ideas to old hands at butterfly gardening too, especially suggestions for moraine gardens and butterfly banks.

Moths are not forgotten either, with numerous references made to plants and features to help them and their caterpillars. It is lavishly illustrated and a joy to read.

Lynn Fomison

Dark Sky Dancing

This is the title of a new book by Branch member Richard Stewart, formerly the Suffolk Butterfly Recorder. Richard, a regular contributor to this Newsletter has written a series of 112 haiku, short poems of three lines and seventeen syllables. This ancient form of poetry usually reflects the natural world and there are four sets of 28 haiku in the book spanning the four seasons of the year, each season being prefaced by a colour illustration.

Many of the haiku have been published in national magazines but the majority were written specifically for this book. Many feature the world of Lepidoptera. Here are three examples from the Spring section:

Survivors

Sunlight of hard frost
And deep within a green pine
Red Admirals stir.

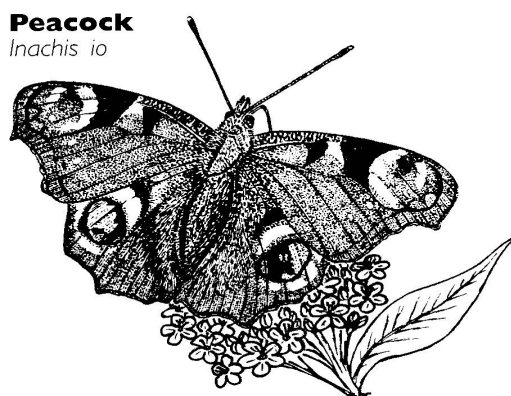
Butterflies

Two peacocks fly up
Spiralling in a bright sky
Covered by larksong.

Larvae

The green consumers
Voyagers through inner space
Instar to instar.

Copies can be obtained from: Valezina, 112 Westerfield Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 2XW. Cost: £4.00 including postage. Cheques to R. Stewart. All profits will go to Butterfly Conservation.



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NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Many thanks to all contributors for their articles. The deadline for the January 2011 Newsletter is 20 December 2010 (i.e. before Christmas, please).

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



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