

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch



Newsletter 103



October 2017



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

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

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

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



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

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



Chairman's Message

It seems to have been a funny old year butterfly-wise. An abundance of some species seems to have been balanced by a dearth of others. Looking through my transect records this summer I have recorded good numbers of Brimstone, Gatekeeper, Speckled Wood, Silver-washed Fritillary and even Brown Hairstreak. Peacock and the Common Blue also seem to have had a decent year but where have the Small Tortoiseshell and Small Copper gone? I did see several thousand Small Tortoiseshell caterpillars in July but that was on a hedgerow in the Loire and probably does not count for our purposes. I look forward to seeing how the numbers shake out when all the records are in and processed.

It was certainly a good year for **Silver-washed Fritillaries** in northern Umbria, Italy. On one patch of stony ground near the summit of Monte Cucco, in the eastern Apennines, I counted around forty Silver-washed Fritillaries in an area about half the size of a tennis court. They were all vying for space on thistle heads with assorted Clouded Yellows and Dark Green Fritillaries. It really was quite a sight. Italy is a superb destination for butterfly-spotting and I was untroubled when the owner of the old tobacco barn where we were staying advised that there were few



An Italian Silver-washed Fritillary, looking very much like its Hampshire cousins. Clive Wood

butterflies to be seen on and around his property. “Non abbiamo molte farfalle nel giardino”, said the owner. By the end of the first week I had recorded 30 different species in his modest-sized garden including Scarce and Common Swallowtail, Wall Brown, Wood White, Clouded Yellow, Adonis Blue, Chapman’s Blue, assorted Fritillaries and Lulworth Skipper by the score. I think he preferred his jazz over his farfalle.

Returning home in mid-July I was delighted to see **Magdalen Hill Down** and **Yew Hill** in fine condition. (It’s always useful to check what the Reserves Officer has been up to whilst you’re away!). An evening stroll around MHD on a warm July evening was a wonderful experience. Bees and hoverflies were filling their boots on the wildflowers whilst I counted around thirty butterflies near the cemetery end of the reserve, all well after 5pm. I was not the only one to enjoy MHD this July. Two visitors took the trouble to write to Jayne to say:

‘... what an absolutely wonderful place it is. We saw extraordinary numbers of butterflies and bees - also birds, particularly whitethroats, yellowhammers and goldfinches – all set in a magnificent landscape covered in wildflowers. It’s one of the most beautiful and inspirational places we have ever seen.’

If you are a new member or simply haven’t yet made it to Magdalen Hill Down or either of our other reserves, pick a fine day and get along. You will find location details on our website.

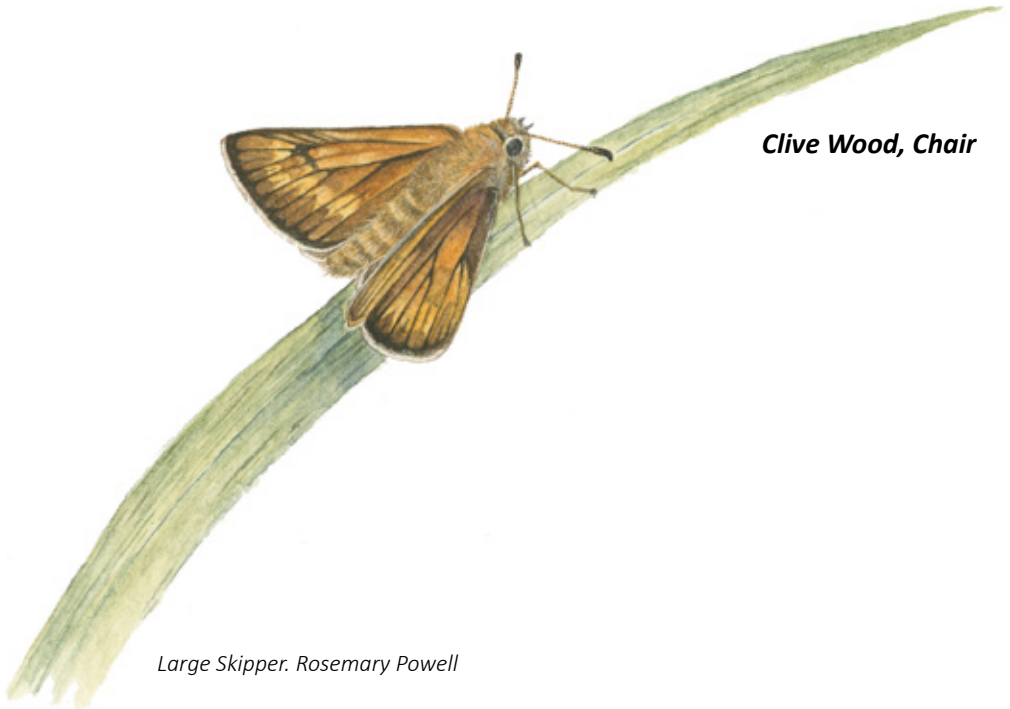
We recently introduced a ‘Dogs welcome but only on a lead, please’ policy onto our reserves. Our primary concern was the continued welfare of our grazing livestock but the new policy has had several ancillary benefits. These include making our reserves more family friendly by reducing the spread of dog waste and by helping parents and children feel less vulnerable to a drooling pooch or marauding lurcher.

Our **Annual General Meeting** and **Members’ Day** will take place on Sunday 19th November from 11.30am and I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible on the day. I’m delighted that Neil Hulme has kindly agreed to be one of our guest speakers. Neil is leading Butterfly Conservation’s *Fritillaries for the Future* project in Sussex. He is a great butterfly enthusiast and a devotee of His Majesty the Purple Emperor. We will be joined by Jay Doyle, Senior Ecologist at the Forestry Commission, who will be discussing the conservation of butterflies and moths in the public forests of southern England. I’m looking forward to two fascinating talks.

We will also be reporting on our work to re-introduce the **Marsh Fritillary** to north-east Hampshire. This is a major project for the Branch and a great deal of work has taken place since the last AGM. If you would like to know just how many braconid wasps can emerge from three small parasitised Marsh Fritillary larvae, and I'm sure you do, then please come along on the 19th and we'll answer that question!

Finally, I would like to share with you the wonderful news that we have secured a very significant grant from Sharing Heritage to help fund our **Wild in Winchester** collaboration with the Winchester Science Centre. We will provide more details about this ambitious project at the AGM but work is well in hand to put the necessary agreements in place and recruit an Education Officer. We must reach out to a younger generation to share something of our enthusiasm for nature in general and butterflies and moths in particular. This is a big challenge but Wild in Winchester will help us continue the good work that we started with the June Bailey Education Fund some four or so years ago.

Best wishes,



Clive Wood, Chair

Large Skipper. Rosemary Powell



Members' Day and Branch AGM

All members of the Branch are warmly invited to attend this year's Annual General Meeting at the Littleton Memorial Hall, Littleton, near Winchester, on **Sunday 19 November, 2017.**

Our guest speakers will be **Neil Hulme**, the Fritillaries for the Future Project Officer for Butterfly Conservation, and **Jay Doyle**, Senior Ecologist with the Forestry Commission. We will also be reporting on the Marsh Fritillary re-introduction programme and sharing some good news about our collaboration with the Winchester Science Centre: Wild in Winchester.

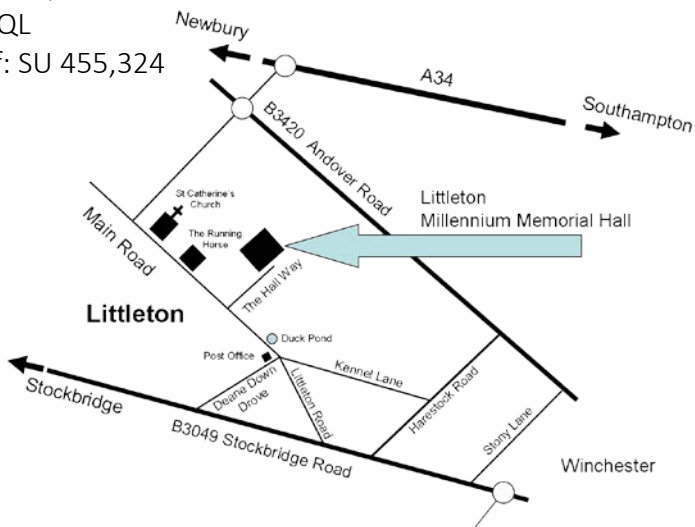
A timetable is shown below and a Littleton Memorial Hall location map is included opposite.

Members are asked to bring a packed lunch to the meeting. There will be a break after the formal business of the AGM itself for these to be eaten with the opportunity for some mingling with fellow members.

Timetable for the day

11:30	Doors open
12:00-12:05	Chairman's Welcome
12:05-13:00	Branch AGM – see separate agenda on next page
13:00-13:45	Lunch – please bring your own packed lunch; complimentary tea and coffee will be provided
13:45-14:30	Neil Hulme, <i>Fritillaries for the Future</i> Project Officer
14:30-15:15	Jay Doyle, Senior Ecologist with the Forestry Commission
15:15-15:45	Refreshments and photographic competition
15:45-16:00	Wild in Winchester project
16:00-16:15	Marsh Fritillary project update – Andy Barker and Clive Wood
16:15-16:25	Results of photographic competition
16:25-16:35	Questions and answers, and close

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



Annual General Meeting 2017

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2016 Annual General Meeting
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Presentation of Accounts
5. Reports of the:
 - Conservation Sub-committee
 - Information Sub-committee
 - Reserves Sub-committee
 - Records Sub-committee
6. Chairman's Report
7. Election of Main Committee members and any changes
8. Health and Safety matters
9. Any other business
10. Close of AGM

Any other business items should be notified to the Chair or Branch Secretary by 12th November, 2017

Photographic Competition

Prints will be displayed and judged in the following categories:

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

All images must be prints not exceeding an image size equivalent to A4 (297x210mm) in landscape or portrait format. Entries are limited to a total of three prints per member.

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

First-time entrants

Following the success of the competition last year, and to encourage new member entries and coax the shy and retiring photographers among you, we will be continuing with the category for first-time entrants. Images for ***this category only*** may be sent digitally to **clivepwood@gmail.com** by no later than midnight **Saturday 11 November**. Entries are limited to three per member. All entries will be reviewed by a member of Main Committee and the best six entries in the opinion of the judge(s) will be printed and displayed at the AGM.

Members unable to attend but who wish to submit prints may do so by post to: Clive Wood, 68 St Cross Road, Winchester, SO23 9PS- to arrive by **Saturday 18 November**. Please ensure you enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you wish your prints to be returned.



Comma. Rosemary Powell

NEW MEMBERS

We warmly welcome all our new members and hope that 2017 has been a good butterfly summer for you. We look forward to seeing some of you at the Members' Day, and encourage all of you to enter the photographic competition in the first-time entrant's category.

Mrs D Reid, Basingstoke
Mr P M dos Santos Pieres, Southampton
Mrs W Doel, Hook
Mr J & Mrs S Dodds, Basingstoke
Miss A Ellis & Mr N Henretty, Southampton
Ms M Rosato & Ms E Burtenshaw, Ventnor
Ms E O'Driscoll, Waterloooville
Miss R Elliot, Andover
Ms E Stradling, Farnham
Mr M Wooldridge, Basingstoke
Mrs C Davies, Stockbridge
Ms N Williams, Fareham
Mrs C Van Delft, Petersfield
Mr P Hollies, Tadley
Mr O K Crabbe, Portsmouth
Mr A & Mrs L Frearson & Family, Portsmouth
Mrs C & Mr M Cobb & Family, Winchester
Ms R Tyrrell, Fareham
Mr B Briggs, Southampton
Mr T Miller, Tadley
Miss C Barcaru & Mr A Cowles & Family, Fareham
Mr M Cannell & Miss S Gray, Sandown
Mr R & Mrs S Garrard-Abrahams, Romsey
Mrs R E Anderson, Ryde
Mr J Bleach, Petersfield
Mr M Power, Waterloooville
Mrs A & Dr C White & Family, Winchester
Ms L Duffey & Mr W Simpson, Southampton
Miss C Mockridge & Mr B Smith, Southampton
Mr R Verney, Hayling Island
Mr M Wyss, Southampton
Miss C Martin, Andover
Miss J Hobbs, Winchester
Mrs M Gardiner, Southampton
Miss C Whiffen, Southampton
Miss L Peters, Winchester
Miss L Shakespeare, Whitchurch
Mr R Bell, Eastleigh
Ms H Terrey & Mr J Ketchell & Family, Winchester
Mr N Heasman, Petersfield
Mr P Stray & Ms C Smart, Southampton
Mrs J Winterbone, Liss
Ms P Thompson & Mr D Bradley, Portsmouth
Miss V Howell, Andover
Mrs S & Mr D Carter & Family, Bordon
Miss J Havard & Mr T Halliday & Family, Southampton
Ms C Ovenden & Family, Southampton
Ms A Schier, Southampton
Mrs J Johnson-Crouch, Waterloooville
Mrs J Saunders, Yateley
Ms C Eden, Southampton
Miss F Prince, Alton
Mr M Melvin, Farnborough
Ms M Woolley & Mr C Scotson, Southampton
Mrs C & Mr M Canning & Family, Southampton
Mrs G Paul, Southampton
Mrs S Visser, Waterloooville
Mrs S & Mr D Jarvis & Family, Yateley
Mrs M Mort, Southampton
Mrs L & Mr J Driscoll, Aldershot
Miss Z Harrison & Mr L Reynolds & Family, Southampton
Miss Z Kemp, Liphook
Mr C Hartland, Southampton
Mr P Hadfield & Miss W Gawne, Douglas
Mrs C Cowen, Winchester
Miss S Vass & Mr L Dennison, Southampton
Mrs E Harvey, Winchester
Mrs B Davis, Southampton
Mrs A & Mr J Parker, Fareham
Mr D Parry & Miss N Whittle & Family, Newport
Mrs J Corney, Sandown
Mrs J & Mr G Boddington, Ventnor
Ms G Hastings, Southampton
Mr A J B Astridge, Christchurch
Ms L Lewis & Mr M Goss, Portsmouth
Mr C Crane, Waterloooville
Mr S Farmer, Southampton
Dr H & Mr S Brown, Portsmouth
Ms A Zaslawska, Andover
Miss J Overton, Andover
Miss M Gainey, Stonehouse
Mr L Hurrell, Farnborough
Mrs R Ingram, Southampton
Mrs A & Mr D Caulk & Family, Havant
Mr C Cook, Winchester
Mrs K Ash, Newport
Mrs B Cooper, Gosport

Mr J Summers & Ms G Ritter, Waterlooville
Mr P Brockman, New Milton
Mrs S J Dawson, Waterlooville
Miss C Hancock, Fareham
Ms P Cattle, Southampton
Mrs M E Thompson, Farnborough
Ms J Edwards, Eastleigh

Miss R Ash, Newport
Mrs C Wilkinson & Mr A Todd, Fareham
Mrs W Collyer, Lymington
Miss L Sharpe, Eastleigh
Mr M & Mrs S Martin, Farnborough
Mrs D & Mr B Hanna & Family, Southampton
Mr P Coley & Mrs A Smail, Lymington

Sharron Broadway, Membership Secretary



Bake for Butterflies

Let's get baking

Raise funds to protect butterflies, moths and our environment



Join our team of butterfly-bakers and we will send you everything you need to start planning an event, from fundraising tips to butterfly bunting!

www.butterfly-conservation.org/bakeforbutterflies



Butterfly Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

To find out more visit:

www.butterfly-conservation.org



facebook.com/savebutterflies



twitter.com/savebutterflies

Butterfly Conservation is a charity registered in England and Wales (254937) and in Scotland (SC039268)



Butterfly Records and Recording

New Transect page on Branch Website

The Branch website has a new section dedicated to butterfly transects. Some parts are still under development but those completed include: Transect News, which will include updates from Ian Middlebrook, at Head Office, and Linda and Andy Barker, Hampshire and Isle of Wight co-ordinators; Introduction, which has links to resources, national and branch level; 25 year Butterfly Trends, Annual Trend Tables, Risk Assessments and Getting Involved. The section, 'Getting Involved' will list transects where help is needed in 2018. If you would like to help with a butterfly transect, please look at this section over the winter. Sections of the Transects area on the website that require development are Transect Locations, Recorder Conferences, Training Days, Transect Contacts and Area Groups.

Transects 2018

Currently we know of one new transect for 2018 which will be set up in a wood just north of Basingstoke. If you are interested in helping, please contact Linda Barker on lindabarker4@btinternet.com

Transect and WCBS Recorder Conference

The next Recorder Conference will be held on Saturday 17 February 2018, from 10am to 3pm, at Littleton Millennium Memorial Hall. Please check the Transects page of the website where details will be posted.

Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey

Many thanks to all those who volunteered to take on a WCBS square following the request in the Spring newsletter. As a result of the positive response, all squares had a designated 'owner' by the start of July, in time for the key recording months for this scheme.

Your Records

Please can all casual recorders of butterflies ensure that their records are up to date and submitted to the County Recorder, Bob Annell, to reach him no later than 30 November 2017 so that they can feed into the Annual Butterfly Report. As ever, please use the recognised recording methods, i.e. Branch Spreadsheet, Living Record, iRecord. It is important to remember that valuable records could be missed if sightings are only reported on the 'News' page of the website or on Facebook. His contact details are:

Bob Annell Hampshire and Isle of Wight Butterfly Recorder (on behalf of Branch Records Sub-Committee) grahants23@gmail.com

23 Ashleigh Close, Hythe, Southampton, SO45 3QN Tel. 023 8084 0316

Photographs

To illustrate the Annual Butterfly Report, Bob Annell is also looking for good quality photographs of any of the species seen in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. If you would be happy for him to use your images in this publication, please send them to Bob.

Linda Barker



Reserves News

Magdalen Hill Down, Yew Hill and Bentley Station Meadow

What a beautiful start we had to the summer, the warm weather favouring a multitude of butterflies with species appearing two weeks earlier on average than in previous years, culminating in good numbers on transect. But, this spell of sunshine was not to last and the summer came to an abrupt halt the very day the schools broke up for the holidays! Looking back on the transect data for the year to date, week 19 was excellent, with a total count of 538 butterflies of 12 species on Magdalen Hill Down Original, the highlight being 184 Chalk Hill Blues!

While our chair, Clive Wood, sensibly assessed the UK weather front and spent the best part of the year sunning himself in Italy, work on the Hampshire reserves continued at a pace. This included the final phase of the path repairs and the installation of metal kissing-gates at Magdalen Hill Down.



The Monday Group. Jayne Chapman

A new 'Monday Group' of volunteers, which began as an assisted support group to help people gain confidence, or to keep active in between careers, has proved very successful, and is open to anyone who can commit to one fixed morning a week. I would like to take this opportunity to thank (from left to right) Hadrian, Kyle, Tom and Rob for getting it off the ground and for tirelessly and relentlessly tackling problems such as creeping thistle and ragwort, to checking livestock and learning to identify butterflies and day flying moths. Thank you boys, I have thoroughly enjoyed working with you all.



Kate and young listeners enjoy The Very Hungry Caterpillar. Jayne Chapman

Educational access

Kate Barrett has worked exceptionally hard to encourage Key Stage 1-4 children on to the reserves. Kate has successfully organised workshops and story-telling for local pre-school children and other schools within the vicinity.

In July we welcomed students from Leigh House hospital to Magdalen Hill Down to participate in the Big Butterfly Count, and from September we will be working with a conservation group of students from St Swithun's School who hope to gain insight into habitat management to assist with their Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Nick Baker (him off the telly and Vice Chair of Butterfly Conservation) also visited Magdalen with the Winchester College Natural History Society group. It was an enjoyable walk, culminating in the photo below showing Nick Baker- not proposing- but begging me to allow him to volunteer in the future.



'I will' ... Nick Baker at Magdalen Hill Down. Jayne Chapman

Grazing news

Keeping livestock on the reserves sometimes calls for hands-on management, and especially with our five semi-feral Exmoor ponies that are the sole responsibility of the branch (i.e. me). Domestic animals need a robust programme of parasitic control to ensure the animals remain healthy and in good condition. The main objective is to control the worm burden. Samples of dung have to be collected from each animal and sent away to a laboratory to assess the worm burden in each individual. Leesa Hicks – a Sparsholt student volunteering with me over the summer – was given the task of following the ponies around to collect samples. Easier said than done! Three of the ponies turned out to be rather shy and refused to co-operate when watched. Eventually all samples were collected and sent off for analysis. The next stage was to get the correct dose of worming paste into the horses. We devised a cunning plan and filled scooped out apples with worming paste, I approached each pony slowly and stealthily, offering the ‘poisoned apple’ on the palm of my hand, feeling like the Wicked Stepmother in Snow White, and muttering “here you are my pretty”. Needless to say, I failed miserably.



*Cor blimey, you must be havin' a laugh!
Filled apple treat anyone?...*
Jayne Chapman

I am delighted to welcome three new volunteers who have signed up to check the livestock on the reserves. If anyone would like to be added to the rota, there are slots available at Yew Hill on Tues/Fri/Sat. Full training will be given, so please do contact me for an informal chat if interested.

New project

This autumn sees the start of an exciting new project to encourage rare arable plants back to Magdalen Hill Down by cultivating an area where they have previously been recorded. Below is an abridged extract taken from Phil Wilson's ***Management and Monitoring Proposals for the Arable Flora at Magdalen Down, Winchester*** (Philip Wilson, February 2017).

'Britain's arable flora has undergone massive changes since the 1940s. These have been in response to the intensification in arable farming during this period which resulted in large increases in the area of the country under arable cultivation and great increases in crop yields. This intensification has included increases in the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus applied, the near-universal use of broad-spectrum herbicides for weed control, the replacement of horse-power by the internal combustion engine, simplification of crop rotations, field enlargement and loss of less-intensively farmed field margins and, more recently, the replacement of ploughing by minimum cultivations.



Small-flowered Catchfly. Dan Powell

A combination of these developments and many others has meant that species such as *Caucalis platycarpus* lesser bur-parsley, *Arnoseris minima* lamb's succory, *Bupleurum rotundifolium* thorow-wax and *Galeopsis segetum* downy hemp-nettle are now extinct in Britain, while many others including *Ranunculus arvensis* corn buttercup, *Centaurea cyanus* cornflower, *Valerianella rimosa* Broad-fruited corn-salad and *Silene gallica* small-flowered catchfly have become extremely rare. At the same time a very restricted range of species such as *Alopecurus myosuroides* black-grass, *Bromus sterilis* barren brome and *Galium aparine* cleavers have become major agronomic problems. The chalklands of southern England are of particular importance for the surviving remnants of our arable flora. The most important part of this area is that lying between Salisbury and Basingstoke which contains populations of rare species including *Adonis annua* pheasant's eye, *Valerianella rimosa* broad-fruited cornsalad, *Torilis arvensis* spreading hedge-parsley and *Galeopsis angustifolia* red hemp-nettle.

Annual plants need regular seed production in order to maintain populations. The seed of most have however the ability to remain dormant in the soil for a period depending on the species. This is a valuable property for plants that occur in unpredictable environments, and for these arable plants it can allow them to persist through periods during which fields remain uncultivated. One of the few exceptions is *Agrostemma githago* corn-cockle the seed of which usually has very limited persistence, although when buried deeply in anoxic conditions it can remain dormant for many years. In the case of Magdalen Hill Down, this means that the areas where rare arable species were recorded in the relatively recent past may still contain dormant seed in the seed bank which can be brought to the surface by cultivation.'

Please do contact me if you are interested in becoming involved in this project through monitoring and recording.

And finally, remember to put a few work-party dates in your diaries- the more the merrier!

Jayne Chapman, Reserves Officer



Orange-tip. Rosemary Powell



Winter Work Party Programme

MAGDALEN HILL DOWN

October – Monday 9th; Leader – Jayne Chapman

Chalk Corner. Meet at East entrance
Cut back encroaching vegetation near bench.

November – Monday 6th; Leader – Jayne Chapman

Old Allotments. Meet at West entrance
Clear up, rake and burn after hedge trimming/grass cutting.

November – Monday 20th; Leaders – Jayne Chapman and Charlie Evans

Top Area 4. Meet at West entrance
Cut bramble banks to reclaim grassland; rake and burn.

December – Monday 4th; Leader – Jayne Chapman

Old Allotments. Meet at West entrance
Clear fence lines and burn grass heap.

January – Monday 8th; Leaders – Jayne Chapman and Charlie Evans

Tumuli. Meet at West entrance
Clear bramble and scrub; rake and burn.

January – Monday 15th; Leader – Jayne Chapman

Extension. Meet at East entrance
Clear up, rake and burn after hedge flailing.

January – Wednesday 17th, Thursday 18th and Friday 19th;

Leader – Dean Gregory

Original, areas 1 and 2. Meet at West entrance
Clear scrub at top of A1 and burn.

February – Monday 5th, Tuesday 6th and Wednesday 7th; Leader – Dean Gregory

Original, area 3. Meet at West entrance
Clear scrub and burn, and reduce scrub block 8

February – Monday 12th, Tuesday 13th and Wednesday 14th;

Leader – Dean Gregory

Original, area 4. Meet at West entrance
Clear scrub encroachment and burn.

March – Monday 5th; Leader – Dean Gregory

Tree and Shrub East. Meet at East entrance
Practical habitat management for Duke of Burgundy butterfly.

March – Saturday 10th; Leader - Dan Hoare

Tree and Shrub East. Meet at East entrance
Practical habitat management for Duke of Burgundy butterfly.

BENTLEY STATION MEADOW

October – Wednesday 4th; Leader – Jayne Chapman

Oak Copse

Clear oak/ash regeneration; pollard buckthorn and lay dead hedge.

November – Wednesday 1st; Leader – Jayne Chapman

North Meadow

Scrub/sallow management.

December – Wednesday 6th; Leader – Jayne Chapman

Central Area

Scrub/sallow management.

January – Wednesday 3rd; Leader – Jayne Chapman

Central Area

Scrub/sallow/ride management.

February – Wednesday 7th; Leader – Jayne Chapman

South Meadow

Scrub/sallow/ride management.

March – Wednesday 7th; Leader – Jayne Chapman

To be decided during the winter

Scrub/sallow/ride management.

Magdalen Hill Down, East entrance: 10am- 4pm. Meet at the top of the track between the Stonemason's and Morn Hill Cemetery, SO21 1HE (SU 512 295)

Magdalen Hill Down, West entrance: 10am- 4pm. Meet in the car park immediately to the east of the Masonic Lodge entrance, SO21 1HD.

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

If you cannot get to the meet points at 10am, please find us on the Reserves. We greatly appreciate any time you have to spare, even if it is just the odd hour or so.

How you can get involved

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

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

Jayne Chapman, Reserves Officer



2017 Field Trips Round Up



Purple Emperor Class of 2017, Havant Thicket. Ashley Whitlock

The 2017 season started at **Park Hill** in the Meon Valley, a new site on the field trip programme, but gloomy weather stopped any good sightings on the day. A week later at **Ramsdean Down**, we saw our quarry – the **Duke of Burgundy Skipper** – with a count of up to 40 individuals, along with **Dingy Skipper** and **Grizzled Skipper**. Another new site in the programme was our visit to **Small Down**, nestled on a steep hillside close to Butser Hill; here the scrub clearance has revealed some good clumps of Cowslips. Surely it can only be a matter of time before this site is colonised by the Duke of Burgundy? But the highlight of this outing was the number of hares seen chasing across the down.

Stockbridge Down revealed good work by the National Trust, coppicing areas for the future of the **Pearl-bordered Fritillary**, and the Primrose-based **Duke of Burgundy**. We were lucky to see individuals of both species on the scrubby coppiced downland. **Martin Down** is always a favourite field trip and this year it produced astronomical numbers of **Adonis Blue**. They were everywhere and it is always a delight at this site in May to see **Small Blue** and **Brown Argus**, and the lovely **Marsh Fritillary** patrolling up and down the chalk grassland.

The nationally rare **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** was seen at **Bentley Wood (Eastern Clearing)** just inside the Hampshire Border, and also the rare **Argent** and **Sable Moth**, at the end of May in glorious sunshine.

The **Dark Green Fritillary** was very much in evidence at **Butser Hill** at the end of June. On the Duke of Burgundy caterpillar hunt field trip, we witnessed plenty of evidence of good feeding on the cowslip leaves by the Duke larvae,

but they had hatched out so early and we were unfortunately a little late to see any of the caterpillars.

The first day of July saw us in the New Forest at **Hawkhill Inclosure**, where we all enjoyed seeing plenty of **Silver-studded Blues** on the heathland, and the Dark-Green Fritillary on the heath and in the woodland clearings. Also, our first **Grayling** of the season was seen.



Female Purple Emperor in West Wood. Christine Whiffen

The **Purple Emperor** had emerged three weeks early due to exceptionally hot weather in June, which meant that the field trip programme was not timed as well as I would have liked; consequently the male Purple Emperor was something of a rarity, being seen at the Assembly Point at **Havant Thicket**. But all was not lost as a lovely female showed herself to us in the afternoon, and we were very happy to see such beauty flying in and out of the willow just above our heads! The same thing happened at **West Wood** a week later, where another female gained our attention with flights around our heads and posing on wide-leaved willow, where she had been egg laying.

The August programme saw the **Brown Hairstreak** on the wing at **Shipton Belling** and the **Silver-spotted Skipper**, with a second generation **Adonis Blue**, at **Old Winchester Hill**. I would like to thank everybody who came along on the butterfly walks in 2017 for making it another most memorable year... long may it continue, and here's to 2018.

Ashley Whitlock, Field Meetings Organiser

A very special field trip to Porton Down

Sunday 21st May was definitely one of my 2017 butterfly highlights. This was a rare and eagerly anticipated opportunity to count spring butterflies under the supervision of the ranger, deep within MOD-owned land, untouched by farming of any type for more than a century. After an initially cool start and some early morning cloud, the day transformed to one of almost perfect weather. Up to twelve recorders were briefed and we all looked in at the large woods just inside the Hampshire-Wiltshire Border, known as Isle of Wight Hill. This is mainly scrubby areas of grassland surrounded by beech forest, hence the area's alternative name of Isle of Wight Woods.

As we parked up after a circuitous drive across the savannah-like downland, we saw many Marsh Fritillaries, all pretty fresh. Their main foodplant here is Small Scabious, which was a surprise to me, as there is no Devil's-bit Scabious on the site. On previous visits, in 2011 and 2015, we had our lunch at this spot and no Marsh Fritillaries were seen. I suspect they were having an exceptional year, and only wish we had had time to undertake a wider Marsh Frit. count. The open beech woods and scrubby meadows have extensive tracts of primroses, an ideal habitat for woodland Duke of Burgundy, and good numbers were seen on the wing.



Male Duke of Burgundy on Primrose. Ashley Whitlock

The only disappointment was the lack of Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Individuals were noted by the ranger on the previous Friday, so we knew it was about, but only two sightings were reported on our visit. We moved through the woodlands looking in on various old meadow sites with large ant hills, and these in turn were covered in Common Rock-rose, hence the very good numbers of Brown Argus; we even had Green Hairstreak egg laying on Rock-rose. Very rare wildflowers were on show such as Bird's Nest Orchid and Meadow Clary, which is almost unique to the area. On the downland we saw several Dark Green Fritillary caterpillars moving very swiftly across grassy paths and old land rover tracks. Dan also set a Forester Moth lure, which worked a treat with remarkable results.

I could go on but the counts were as follows: Cinnabar Moth (10), Six-Spot Burnet Moth (2), Dingy Skipper (18), Duke of Burgundy (43), Brimstone (7), Small Heath (8), Garden Tiger Moth (2), Mother Shipton Moth (9), Small Copper (6), Forester Moth (15), Common Blue (25). I found one Common Blue struggling with a Crab Spider; the butterfly soon became paralysed by the poison injected into it. There was also a female Duke of Burgundy with a Crab Spider hanging off its abdomen. Dan managed to net it and got the little critter off, with the Duke being none the worse for wear.



*Marsh Fritillary &
Meadow Clary. Ashley Whitlock*



Also seen were: Grizzled Skipper (5), Brown Argus (25), Green Hairstreak (6), Green-veined White (1), Large White (1), Peacock (1), Red Admiral (1), Marsh Fritillary (21), Comma (1), Pearl-bordered Fritillary (2), Speckled Wood (5), and the Silver-‘Y’ Moth. There were loads of Micro moths and other moths going unregistered. All in all, a richly rewarding day in a beautiful, unspoilt landscape that hasn’t changed for decades.

Ashley Whitlock, Field Meetings Organiser



Marsh Fritillary re-introduction

Members may recall that we collected 300 Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) larvae under licence from the wild in September 2016. The larvae emerged from winter hibernation in the week commencing 13 February 2017 at all three of our breeding sites. This was the trigger for a great deal of hard work by our captive breeders and by those involved with the care of some 6,000+ Devil's-bit Scabious plants, the main larval foodplant.



l - 4th and 5th instar larvae basking on Devil's-bit Scabious & r - Marsh Fritillary egg batches on the underside of a Devil's-bit Scabious leaf. Andy Barker

The larvae grew quickly on a diet of scabious and sunshine. As they develop through successive stages (called instars) they moult their skin and become larger and darker. The adults emerged in May and quickly mated, laying batches of between 50 and 300+ eggs on the underside of Devil's-bit Scabious leaves.

The plants have been stored and nurtured in rabbit-proof (netted) enclosures at three (now four) horticultural sites in Hampshire and Buckinghamshire. The locations were selected to be near to the breeders for ease of transfer of plants on demand. The plants require a great deal of care and attention from planning how many are needed (including pots and compost), ordering, taking delivery, potting-on plug plants, liaising with the storage site owners, and ultimately supplying the breeders with adequate numbers of the right size of plant at the right time.

At nurseries, watering has generally taken place via automated watering systems having first established that insecticides are not used. At other sites, watering has been undertaken by staff and volunteers as necessary, again ensuring no insecticide treatments. One of our sites is at Lindengate, a mental health charity near Wendover in Buckinghamshire, which offers specialised gardening activities to help those with mental health needs in their continuing recovery.



Devil's-bit Scabious (late summer 2017) at one of our horticultural sites. Andy Barker

Parasitism

After the larvae had emerged from hibernation it became clear over time that stock from all six donor sites had been parasitised by the braconid wasp *Cotesia bignelli* prior to collection. This is a unique parasite of *E.aurinia* and is commonly found in *E.aurinia* colonies in southern England and increasingly in more northerly colonies.

Many larvae failed to develop due to parasitism. Larval mortality rates were highest at the final 5th and 6th instars and parasitism was the largest cause. Parasitism is invariably fatal to the host larvae. However, despite the heavy parasite load we currently have between 6-7000 2nd instar larvae distributed between four breeders plus several thousand Devil's-bit Scabious plants to tend.

Our plan to re-introduce the Marsh Fritillary to receptor sites in north-east Hampshire therefore remains firmly on track. The habitat at the receptor sites is currently in ideal condition and was re-surveyed in August to determine the precise release locations. The new generation of larvae should be parasite-free so we anticipate greatly reduced mortality rates over the coming year.



*A beautiful Marsh Fritillary pupa.
Andy Barker*

All being well, the great news is that we plan to release the offspring of the first captive-bred butterflies into the wild next spring. A second, larger release will take place in spring 2019.

Clive Wood and Dr Andy Barker, Hampshire Marsh Fritillary Action Group

Fungi on Magdalen Hill Down

Being found crouching over a cow pat is not the most glamorous way to make a new acquaintance but this is how I met Jayne Chapman, the Reserves Officer, on Magdalen Hill Down late one afternoon in April 2017. I was photographing *Peziza bovina*, a rare fungus growing on cow dung. There are only 16 records for this species on the Fungus Conservation Trust's database (CATE2). Unless, like me, you are a mycologist, this is probably not one of our most picturesque fungi but Jayne did show a genuine interest in any other fungi I had recorded on the reserve and asked me to highlight a few in this article.



Peziza bovina.

Magdalen Hill Down (MHD) has a varied selection of fungi. The above mentioned *Peziza* is an Ascomycete or spore shooter, where spores are ejected from a fertile surface, in this case the inside of the cup like structure. During late summer and autumn several Basidiomycete species (fungi with gills or pores) can be found on the calcareous grassland. Probably the most interesting are the colonies of *Cortinarius* toadstools or web caps, so called because of the cobweb-like attachment between the cap and the stem. All *Cortinarius* species form a mycorrhizal relationship with the roots of woody plants, usually trees. For some years the occurrence of several *Cortinarius* species found in open grassland was a puzzle until it was realised that Common Rock-rose *Helianthemum nummularium* was the mycorrhizal partner, which undoubtedly it is on the reserve. *Cortinarius amoenolens* (photo 2) with its yellow cap contrasting with the deep violet gills and large rounded bulb at the stem base is one of the more colourful fungi to be found on the reserve. The Inky Mushroom *Agaricus moelleri* (photo 3), named because of its unpleasant smell of ink, has also been known to make an impressive display. This is a poisonous relative of the Field Mushroom *Agaricus campestris* which, to the best of my knowledge, has never been recorded on MHD.

One surprising find was made on the reserve in November 2015. A solitary specimen of the Winter Stalkball *Tulostroma brumale* (photo 4) turned up on the south facing slope. This is a sand dune species, formerly only found inland on old stone walls where lime rather than Portland cement was used. Its occurrence away from dunes is now rare though a colony has been recorded on Hampshire's Noar Hill. The Stalkball is a Gasteromycete or stomach fungus where the spore material is contained within the fungus in a sac, being released at maturity, in this case, via a small pore.



Cortinarius amoenolens.



Agaricus moelleri.



Tulostroma brumale.
All photos. Graham Mattock

I have been recording and photographing fungi for over 30 years. Their diverse forms and sudden, sometimes unexpected, appearances never fail to amaze me.

Graham Mattock, former Chair and Recorder Hampshire Fungus Group

Alternative Autumn and Winter Mothing

As the autumn and winter months draw in and the days get shorter and colder, many less dedicated moth surveyors put away their moth traps waiting for warmer times. I often give up at the end of November and put away my trap as the catch in my garden drops to numbers of 1 on a good night, 0 on most nights.

Although in previous years I dabbled with leaf mines when I saw them, last year I decided to take a closer look at methods such as this for recording moths during the 'dry' periods. For those that get bored in the autumn/winter of the low moth catches there is actually a lot to keep you occupied.



*l - Apple Leaf Miner Moth (*Lyonetia clerkella*) in October 2016.*

*r - Nut Leaf Blister Moth (*Phyllonorycter coryli*) larvae in September 2016 feeding in Hazel leaves.*

I found myself recording leaf mines in summer, but then continued into the winter months, using great websites like British Leaf Miners www.leafmines.co.uk, a very good site to get you started. Beware though, that not all mines are moth larvae, and so I also took an interest in recording flies and beetles. Also some mines are abandoned and should be recorded as such, if you can identify them! Some mines are easier than others to identify, but it's a great little project to get practice on. What I will say is that you need a good light source when looking at mines. You need to get a light-box or good flatbed with strong light source on which to place leaves for identifying the larvae from the pattern they leave on the leaf. Even the frass patterns (poo to you and me!) can be used to aid identification.

If you have a microscope, this is a great way to observe them too, and you can see the larvae, sometimes several in one leaf, munching their way through it. If you like playing around on the cheap, like I do, you can always use the macro setting on your camera to video their activity. Once mines get harder to find there is still no need to give up the search.

Many larvae and pupae are still out there to find. I spent some time adding to my local records by doing things like dissecting teasel and burdock heads looking for larvae. The moths *Endothenia marginana* and *Endothenia gentianaeanana* inhabit teasels and can be found by carefully opening up the plant heads to

find the larvae inside. As an added bonus, you can put them back in their snug little homes by tying up the teasel heads afterwards with string and placing them back where you got them from. The adults themselves are harder to identify requiring dissection; however the larvae can be identified using a good hand lens and/or microscope. Full instructions can be viewed on the UK Moths website.

Suffolk Moth group has a very good hints and tips page on things you can look for in seed heads and stems –

www.suffolkmoths.org.uk/cgi-bin/field/viewcurrent.cgi



Endothenia gentianaeana in teasel head,
January 2017.

Exit holes in a Scots pine cone, January 2017.

Larval case of *Luffia ferchaultella*, December 2016.

All photos Graeme Davis



Another moth I was out to find this winter was the ‘Nationally Scarce’ (Nb) *Cydia conicolana* which leave exit holes in pine cones, especially Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris*.

Graveyards are good hunting spots for some of the case bearing moths. Find an especially lichen encrusted gravestone or wall and you will likely find *Luffia ferchaultella*.

So, as you can see, there are a variety of activities in the autumn and winter months to keep you busy, and an added bonus is that because not everyone looks for them, it’s likely you may find a new record in your area. Happy hunting!

Graeme Davis,
TARCA (The Anton River Conservation Association) Vice Chair and Press Officer
www.antonriver-conservation.org.uk

Gardening for Butterflies, Bees and other Insects

'Early' and 'late' are two of the buzz words for those trying to design a wild-life-friendly garden. This refers, of course, to plants that flower at the beginning and end of the season. Early nectar is of great importance to insects emerging from hibernation, and late-flowering plants help them to build up resources to see them through the winter period.

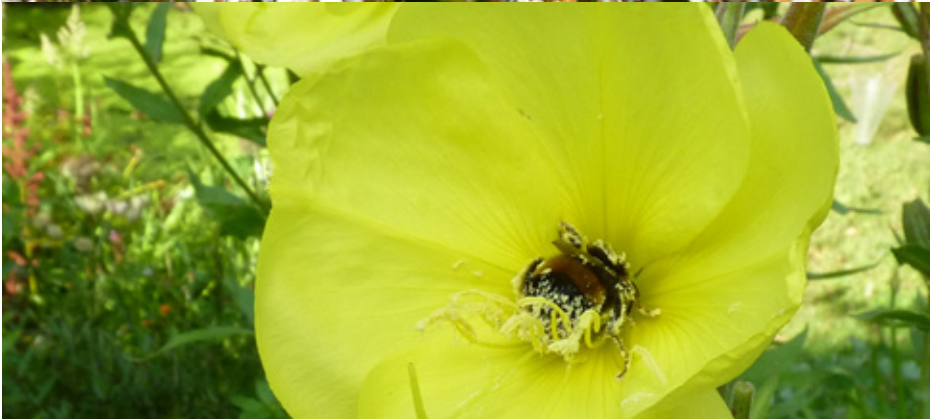
Spring flowers such as crocuses, grape hyacinths and primroses are useful, but one of the most insect-friendly plants in my garden is *Pulmonaria* (lungwort). Planted in a sunny spot it acts as a magnet to bees and hoverflies. There are literally dozens of different varieties to choose from: they come with plain, silvered, spotted or splashed leaves in a range of colours from plain red, through blues and purples to white. They are all good and make wonderful ground-cover plants, their foliage adding interest to the garden all year.



Narrow-leaved Lungwort.
Rosemary Powell

Winter flowering heather is another plant that comes in a number of attractive colours and forms. It is in flower through the coldest months, providing a life-line for bumblebees and solitary bees which do not store food and which often emerge during mild spells. It needs trimming back in April when flowering has finished.

For a shrub, single-flowered camellias have pulling power. Their open flowers and prominent stamens give easy access to foraging insects. This is also true of *Cistus*, which flowers later in spring, and has the same kind of flower form.



*Red Admiral on heather &
Bombus terrestris on Evening Primrose. Juliet Bloss*

It also pays to give a thought to moths, which are 96% of our Lepidoptera. These 'butterflies of the night', as the French call them, play an important part in the food chain: consumed as adults in large quantities by bats, preyed upon by owls, spiders and small mammals, their caterpillars a vital source of food for birds, any wildlife gardener should certainly spare them a thought! While moths nectar on a wide variety of plants, those which are night-scented and tubular, such as summer Jasmine, Honeysuckle, Evening Primrose, Sweet Rocket and Night-scented Stock seem to be especially attractive to the night visitors. Evening primroses have a long flowering season and produce scented blooms each evening which fade gradually through the next day, and although they can look quite tatty by late afternoon, especially in warm sunny weather, their evening scent and lovely lemon yellow colour make up for it each evening. Bees love them, too, burying themselves in the flower and emerging covered in pollen.

Juliet Bloss

On the Trail of the Two-tailed Pasha

My membership of ten different branches of Butterfly Conservation has, over the years, given my wife and I several opportunities to participate in branch-organised holidays abroad. These have invariably included not just members with great knowledge of the many different European species, but others with wider natural history expertise. Three of these holidays, from spring through to early summer, were at Casa Guilla, high up in the Spanish Pyrenees and regularly advertised in our national magazine until the property was sold a few years ago. Many of the species recorded were in the flower-rich meadows and scrub areas close by, though in latter years an increasing proportion of these were purchased for vineyards, creating instead an unattractive habitat for butterflies. Here we were able to see species that were relatively common but rare in our country, including Queen of Spain Fritillary, Large Tortoise-shell, Glanville Fritillary and Wood White. Undoubtedly the most atmospheric moments were very early in the morning, gazing down from the balcony to a valley still shrouded in mist and hearing the calls of unseen birds, including nightingale, hoopoe, golden oriole, quail and turtle dove. Trips further afield produced the first Spanish Festoon, with incredible colouring for such a small butterfly. The first Apollo was seen in a meadow alongside an old smuggling route close to the border with Andorra, and in later years a holiday to the Lake Kerkini area of Greece added more species to the incredible variety of whites, blues, fritillaries, ringlets and hairstreaks.



*Iolas Blue &
Queen of Spain Fritillary
- Lake Kerkini.
Rosemary Powell*



One magnificent species always eluded me, mainly because our holidays did not include coastal habitats, its preferred location. This was the Two-tailed Pasha, the sole representative of a genus with a stronghold in North Africa. In his book *A Photographic Guide to Butterflies of Britain and Europe* Paul Sterry describes it as 'a magnificent butterfly with a powerful flight' then adding a description of rich brown upper wings with a creamy margin bordered in black. The under wings are beautifully marbled with chestnut, purple-grey, white and cream. It was no wonder I wanted to see one.



Two-tailed Pasha. DR. Mario Langourov

In late April we visited Crete, in a promising coastal area. Another perusal of the above book suggested a first brood in early May, though we were returning on the 4th. It also wasn't a butterfly holiday but we were soon finding Swallowtails, Clouded Yellows and Painted Ladies. On our last day we visited the monastery at Ayia Triadha, a very attractive location and, while we were there, a tour of the church was included. My wife, Marie, decided to go in but I took one look inside at the incredibly rich and ornate decorations and opted out. I prefer my religion to be simple and unostentatious. Sitting outside in the sun, with a few men from our group, I suddenly saw a large unidentified butterfly go past. Making a quick excuse I followed after it at some speed. Fortunately it landed low down, close to the monastery wall and with my close-focus binoculars I was able to identify it very quickly, even getting a long distance photo as well for further verification. Then it was away, flying up and over the tall monastery wall and not returning. I was elated and the only disappointment was that my wife was still inside the church and therefore didn't see it.

Richard Stewart



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Clouded Yellow. Rosemary Powell

Newsletter Deadline

I am grateful to all who have contributed with words and images for this issue. It is always heartening to receive copy from new contributors. In this publication I want to reflect the very deep interest in butterflies **and** moths, the work and events that support our branch and encourage articles representative of the wider picture throughout Hampshire and Isle of Wight. Please send your Lepidoptera-related newsworthy pieces and features to Kevin Freeborn... and you don't have to wait until February!

The deadline for the autumn Newsletter, edition no. 104, is 12 February 2018

Lepidoptera Tale Piece... your story behind the picture

This photograph was taken on the very special field trip to Porton Down on 21 May 2017. The Forester *Adscita statices* is a day-flying species, found across Britain but typically occurring in local pockets and absent in wide areas in between. It is on the wing from late May to July on warm, sunny days. The larval food plant is Common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*. A pheromone lure was hung from a bush in one of the scrubby grassland meadows in the vicinity of Isle of Wight Woods on the MOD-owned Porton Down site. Within seconds (or so it seemed) several male Foresters were attracted by the lure and we had an overall count of 15 individuals on the day.

Ashley Whitlock

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



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... for the full story, go to the inside back cover. Forester Moth— Ashley Whitlock