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June 2025

Dear Branch Member,

Please find the latest news from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch...

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Branch Committee News

For those unaware, the Branch Main Committee resigned *en-masse*, in late February. The reasons behind the resignations were covered in the Branch April Newsletter ([large!] PDF [available here](#)) - see the article "Branch Main Committee Statement to Members". There was also a related statement from BC Head Office - see the article "Butterfly Conservation Senior Leadership Team Statement".

BC Head Office convened a meeting, in Winchester (June 9th), to discuss the current situation with the remaining Branch officers and other volunteers. Please check the Branch website's [Latest News](#) webpage for a summary of that meeting.

The Editor

Transect News

As you will have seen from the April Newsletter, BC Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch is currently in a state of flux, following the resignation of all members of the Branch Main Committee. Even so, the Branch remains active on a number of fronts, due to the continuing efforts of several of us in key roles.

I'm pleased to report that for once, the start of the butterfly transect recording season was marked with warm sunshine, indeed, all of April and most of May was generally warm,

dry and sunny, making it easy to choose a day to do the transect walk. Hopefully, those of you who are transect walkers have managed to complete all your weeks and seen plenty of butterflies. As always, the picture seems to be mixed, with some species such as Brimstone doing well, but others such as Small Tortoiseshell being virtually absent. I've yet to see one myself in 2025, and many people I've spoken to have had the same experience. Who would have thought this once very common garden butterfly should have declined so dramatically.

I know that most of you enter your transect data straightaway, which is fantastic, as it helps build up a picture of how all the species are doing. If, however, you have yet to input your transect data via the UKBMS website, could I give you a gentle nudge to do it as soon as you can. It makes the verification process much easier for me and Local Authority Area Transect Coordinators, as it spreads the work through the season rather than having to do it all at the end.

Related News - Jim Baldwin

This brings me to the very sad news of the recent passing of Jim Baldwin who was an extremely active Butterfly Conservation member and great all-round naturalist. As well as being Isle of Wight Butterfly Transect Co-ordinator, he was also Isle of Wight Butterfly Group leader, and IoW County Moth Recorder. He was such a helpful, knowledgeable and generous person that he will be greatly missed both as a friend and a key member of the butterfly and moth recording community.

Related News - Member's Day 2025

As we don't currently have a Branch Main Committee, it's uncertain whether there will be a Branch Members' Day in early November, which I know for many of you is a social event that you like to attend, to meet up with friends, listen to some great talks and join in with the annual photographic competition. As **2025 is the 50th anniversary of UK Butterfly Transect Recording**, I'm keen we should do something, so I was thinking of organising a Transect Recorders' Conference in late October (date to be decided). I've organised such events in the past, but not for a while, so I thought it might be an ideal opportunity to bring everyone together for a social event and an update on transect recording and trends with invited key speakers. **If any of you would like to help with the organisation of such an event, [please let me know](#), as we'll need to fix the date and book the venue fairly soon.**

Finally, I'd just like to wish you all plenty of warm sunshine and lots of butterflies (and day-flying moths) for the remainder of the butterfly transect recording season.

Dr. Andy Barker (Butterfly Transect Co-ordinator, Hampshire & Isle of Wight)

Branch 2024 Butterfly Records

Although I passed on responsibility for the production of the Branch Annual Butterfly Report in 2023, given the current uncertainty about broader feedback, I feel it is important to give members a quick update on how butterflies fared last year.

This year the media have focused on the numbers of butterflies being recorded and the table below shows the average number of individuals noted by each recorder for our most common and widespread species in 2024. This somewhat crude statistic reduces the impact that different numbers of recorders have on figures in each year.

As will be seen, 2024 was a poor year, with none of our widespread species having a particularly good year locally and eleven of the 18 having their worst numbers in recent years.

I have also included figures for Pearl-bordered Fritillary, one of our high-priority habitat specialists, that had an exceptionally poor year in 2024 - in fact the lowest for this species on our database this millennium.

My thanks go to all recorders for their continued interest and support in gathering information about local butterflies. In 2024, transect walkers recorded 185,051 butterflies of 47 different species, within the Branch area, on walks totalling over 5,500 miles last year - well done!

Year	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Tetrads Occupied	1,033	1,061	994	1,061	1,065
Records	102,334	150,860	106,704	115,001	123,018
Individuals	340,242	555,895	404,646	431,788	541,271
Recorders	3,810	4,531	2,908	4,253	4,155
Recorded Days	319	309	303	293	289

'Common' Species	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Meadow Brown	56.2	65.2	63.2	53.6	63.5
Gatekeeper	24.9	29.4	28.5	21.2	25.7
Marbled White	19.6	33.0	32.0	26.6	33.2
Ringlet	18.0	19.5	38.4	17.4	20.3
Brimstone	13.6	14.0	13.8	12.6	9.2
Common Blue	11.8	9.6	14.7	19.4	16.0
Speckled Wood	11.2	13.5	16.0	13.5	11.6
Small White	9.1	14.8	13.1	15.8	14.8
Peacock	7.0	9.9	7.1	8.1	10.3
Large White	6.9	9.9	9.2	9.9	11.6
Orange-tip	6.4	6.9	7.2	8.0	8.5
Green-veined White	5.5	5.8	8.2	5.7	7.0
Red Admiral	5.2	12.3	4.4	7.1	5.8
Holly Blue	4.0	8.2	6.0	4.5	6.3
Comma	3.5	4.7	5.6	4.1	4.4
Small Copper	3.3	4.9	3.4	4.3	5.5
Painted Lady	2.2	2.7	3.0	3.0	1.8
Small Tortoiseshell	1.9	2.9	4.5	4.4	4.3

Pearl-bordered Fritillary	9.3	20.3	26.8	29.4	27.9
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 Lowest

 Highest

Bob Annell (Butterfly Recorder, Hampshire and Isle of Wight)

email: grahants23@gmail.com

2024 - Unrecorded areas

I would like to offer some ideas for useful areas to investigate during this year. Whilst producing analyses for various local organisations **it became apparent that records had not been received from a number of Hampshire County Council Countryside Sites, including some Local Nature Reserves.**

Details of these countryside sites (with the exception of Blackwater Common and Castleman Trail) can be found on the County Council 'Countryside Finder' web page:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/thingstodo/countryside/finder> I also have individual maps available on request, which would give an idea of location and the site boundaries. The following table lists some of these, giving location details. I can also provide maps on request to define the boundaries. Some of these areas are quite small so high resolution grid references (say 8 figure) are suggested to ensure any records fall within the confines of the site when plotted. I would recommend checking on the above web page before visiting a site and taking all necessary precautions to have a happy and safe visit (Assemble registration, etc.).

HCC Site	OS Gridref	What3words	Approx location
Avington Park	SU528321	///skips.november.pianists	Kings Worthy
Bishops Waltham Rail Path	SU548171	///encoder.extent.influencing	Bishops Waltham
Blackwater Common	SU845597	///origin.trendy.butterfly	Blackwater
Buckland Rings	SZ315967	///anchors.dome.fidgeting	Lymington
Castle Shore	SU622050	///bulb.regime.mild	Portchester
Castlemain Trail	SU164039	///scrapping.tolerable.mini	Ringwood
Dundridge Meadows	SU563180	///flippers.slurs.compress	Bishops Waltham
Gutner Point	SU734019	///cringes.savings.mural	Hayling Island
Hacketts Marsh*	SU486093	///string.sobs.spaces	Bursledon
Kites Croft	SU527066	///drifting.solutions.revealing	Titchfield Common
Mercury Marshes	SU485076	///juggles.luckier.wallet	Hamble
Rye & Hillside Commons	SU771502	///dodges.thatched.embraced	Odiham
The Kench	SZ692996	///encounter.priced.trains	Hayling Island
Whiteley Woods**	SU525093	///pilots.capillary.fewer	Whiteley
Zebon Copse	SU800517	///daunted.agreeable.shadows	Crookham Village

* Hacketts Marsh seems to be currently closed to the public according to the above website, but there is a public footpath to the western boundary of part of the marsh.

** The Whiteley Woods area is three separate coppices: Berry Coppice, Gull Coppice, and Round Coppice.

Bob Anell (Butterfly Recorder, Hampshire and Isle of Wight)

email: grahants23@gmail.com

Reserves report

It's been an astonishing spring with so much sunshine and warmth that (incredibly) the butterflies have bounced back! Last year's results were terrible, but this year has seen good numbers of Adonis, Small Blue, Brown Argus and Green Hairstreak, with early emergence for most butterflies. It shows how important our nature reserves are to maintain and strengthen populations.

Magdalen Hill Down

Following last year's epic growth and the site being under grazed, we decided to have an extra cow over summer to help keep on top of it all. Typically, it's now the driest spring ever, with much less grass growth. Instead there's been fantastic displays of Horseshoe Vetch and Rock Rose across the Hillside. Somehow, there's still plenty of grass for all five cows!

I was delighted to host a field trip to Magdalen as part of a Meadow Management course, showcasing the grazing, scrub management and chalk scrapes to an audience of ecologists and fellow site managers. It's full credit to all those who have been involved from the start, nearly thirty years ago, to see it doing so well now. We did a Habitat Condition Assessment on the Extension field, showing the ratio of wildflowers to grass and

looking for positive and negative indicators, where plants such as Dock, Nettles and Ragwort are seen as negative (although they are important and valuable!) and positives would be Scabious, Cowslip and Knapweed.

There have been good numbers of species so far this year, including a Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth. Small Tortoiseshell is still just hanging on, but Common Blue, Small Blue and Large Skipper are doing particularly well.

Our Reserve Volunteer, Caroline, did the first pond survey in April; and we were thrilled to see the pond teeming and bursting with life. Finds included Great Diving Beetle, dragonfly larvae, Water Boatmen, Whirligig beetles, Pond Skaters and three types of pond snail.

Over at Chilcomb sports ground, the chalk scrape which was first planted up with the help of volunteers, had a grand Bee Orchid growing on the far bank amongst a spray of Ox-eye Daisies and Kidney Vetch, with a Small Blue recorded. It's looking good.

Yew Hill

The Southern Water ecology team will be visiting Magdalen Hill Down, to look at the chalk scapes and see how to use the chalk that's been excavated for the new reservoir at Hill Top. This is work in progress on designing chalk banks for Hill Top, to ensure maximum benefit for butterflies. Although the reservoir has been completed, we don't know the timescale yet for moving the excavated chalk or reinstating grazing. But the main reserve is doing well, just a flush of hawthorn growth to keep the volunteers busy later in the year!

Bentley Station Meadow

Bentley has also responded well to the sunshine, and the meadows have attracted the butterflies back; and a Broad-bordered Bee Hawkmoth was recorded. Fingers crossed for the Silver-washed Fritillary, which had its worst year last year...

We are trialing caterpillar searches using UV torches. Hairstreak caterpillars photoluminescence (glow in the dark), so this is a new method to help establish numbers and understand life cycles more. In fact, as I write this, I will be heading to BSM later this evening, with a UV torch to search amongst the Blackthorn scrub for Brown Hairstreak larvae. [Breaking news: 6 larvae found, 3rd June. *Ed.*] This survey technique has proven very successful. It's also quite thrilling to go out wildlife watching at night. It's something we'll do with the volunteers once we've had a trial run - [see here for some useful information about using UV in the field](#).

Volunteer work days schedule

Please see the [Reserves Volunteering](#) sub-section of the Dates section, below.

Butterfly Walks on the Reserves

See [below](#), and [our Facebook page](#), for latest updates.

Friday 13th June 11am -1pm, Magdalen Hill Down. We'll be on the lookout for Green Hairstreak, Small Blue and, of course, the exquisite Brown Argus amongst others, along with any day-flying moths that we might encounter. We will be joined by Dave and Anna Stewart, for their botanical, bird and butterfly knowledge.

Friday 18th July 11am-1pm, Yew Hill. Join us for a butterfly walk to see our summer butterflies and hopefully the return of the Chalk Hill Blue. Led by Rupert Broadway.

Wednesday 13th August 11am-1pm, Magdalen Hill Down. Join us for the summer finale of butterflies, hopefully with a good showing of Chalk Hill Blue (following the worst ever year for them at Magdalen last year). Fingers crossed their fortunes improve. We will be joined by Dave and Anna Stewart.

Parking: For Magdalen Hill Down - park up the track past the stonemasons; for Yew Hill - park at the bottom of Old Kennel Lane, Oliver's Battery.

Please email me fscully@butterfly-conservation.org to book a place, so that I have an idea of numbers.

Butterfly Conservation Restructure

The restructure has resulted in a new Reserves Officer role, which also includes the Surrey and Sussex reserves. I'm hugely thankful to have secured this role, and also indebted and full of gratitude for all the amazing support and kind words that I received from so many of you. Thank you all so much! So, I'm still here after all the uncertainty and totally over the moon and incredibly happy to be working on the Hampshire Reserves and back with the volunteers again.

Wishing you a lovely summer, Fiona.

Some photos from the reserves (all photos © Fiona Scully)...



Pond-dipping (MHD)



A view of the chalk scrape (MHD)



Blooming Hawthorn (MHD)



Bee orchid (Chilcomb Sports Ground)



The final pile! (YH)



The all-important anthills (YH)

Fiona Scully (BC Reserves Office, South East England)

Snippets

- Congratulations to branch member **Mike Coker, who won the national Volunteer Mentor Award**, at [this year's Butterfly Conservation volunteer awards](#).
- Are you ready, willing & able? - This year's **Big Butterfly Count** is 18th July - 10th August. Pick-up some handy tips and information [here](#).
- As per the advice in the Spring Newsletter, whilst we are without a branch Main Committee, please email info@butterfly-conservation.org for any general enquiries you may have. Thank you.

Dates

An electronic calendar (.ics), covering all Field Trips & Reserves Walks, is available from [the Butterfly Walks webpage](#), or just copy/paste this link into your Calendar application, to **subscribe** (don't 'download' - you won't get automatic updates, if events change): https://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/BC_Hants_walks.ics

Reserves Volunteering

Please check the website for updates.

To be advised - check website		
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Branch, and branch-related Events

To be advised - check website		
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Branch Field trips

Full details of **Hampshire walks** [here](#) (PDF). **Isle of Wight walks** (PDF) is currently unavailable from the branch website (although the events are in the electronic calendar - see above).

When	Where	Target species
Sun 22 Jun 10:00	New Forest: Hawkhill Inclosure / Beaulieu Heath	Dark Green Fritillary, Clouded Buff Moth, Silver-studded Blue, reptiles
Sat 28 Jun 13:30	Newtown Meadows / Walters Copse	White Admiral, Marbled White, Brown Argus, Ringlet
Sun 29 Jun 10:00	Alice Holt Forest	Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary
Wed 2 Jul 10:00	West Walk	Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary
Sat 5 Jul 13:30	Mottistone Down	Dark Green Fritillary, Brown Argus, Chalk hill Blue
Wed 9 Jul 10:00	Whiteley Walk	Purple Emperor, Purple Hairstreak, White-letter Hairstreak
Sun 13 Jul 10:00	Farley Mount	Purple Emperor, Scarlet Tiger Moth, Dark Green Fritillary
Wed 16 Jul 10:00 / 14:00	Micheldever Wood (a.m.), Abbotstone Down (p.m.)	Purple Emperor, Silver-washed Fritillary, Dark Green Fritillary (a.m.) Marbled White, Dark Green Fritillary, Scarlet Tiger Moth (p.m.)
Sat 19 Jul 13:30	Kemphill Moor Copse	White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary (inc. ab Valesina), Purple Hairstreak
Sat 26 Jul 13:30	Mount Joy, Caribrooke	Chalk Hill Blue, Common Blue, Wall, Brown Argus
Wed 13 Aug 10:00	Soberton Down / St Claires Meadow / River Meon	Brown Hairstreak
Sat 16 Aug 13:30	Brading Downs	Chalk Hill Blue, Brown Argus
Sun 17 Aug 10:00	Broughton Down	Adonis Blue, Chalk Hill Blue, Silver-spotted Skipper
Wed 20 Aug 10:00	Shipton Bellinger	Brown Hairstreak, Wall, Magpie Moth, Oak Eggar Moth
Wed 27 Aug 10:00	Portsdown Hill	Brown Hairstreak, Wall, Oak Eggar Moth
Sun 31 Aug 10:00	Old Winchester Hill NNR	Adonis Blue, Silver-spotted Skipper
Wed 3 Sep 10:00	Beacon Hill NNR	Silver-spotted Skipper, Small Copper
Sat 6 Sep 13:30	Thorness Bay fields	Clouded Yellow, Wall, Brown Argus, Small Copper

Accompanied Reserves Walks

Please [check the website](#) for updates. Email [Fiona Scully](#) to book a place on a Reserves walk.

When	Where	Target species	Information
Fri 13 Jun 11:00 - 13:00	Magdalen Hill Down	Green Hairstreak, Small Blue, Brown Argus, etc. and day-flying moths	We will be joined by Dave & Anna Stewart (botanical, bird and butterfly experts)
Fri 18 Jul 11:00 - 13:00	Yew Hill	Summer butterflies, esp. Chalk Hill Blue	Leader: Rupert Broadway
Wed 13 Aug 11:00 - 13:00	Magdalen Hill Down	Late summer butterflies, inc. Chalk Hill Blue	We will be joined by Dave & Anna Stewart (botanical, bird and butterfly experts)

First sightings (27/02/2025 - 08/06/2025)

Note: Data extracted from [Branch 'News' webpage](#) (so, NOT official!)

Thu 27 Feb	Peacock	North Baddesley
Sat 01 Mar	Comma	Peartree Green LNR
Tue 18 Mar	Painted Lady	North Baddesley
Fri 21 Mar	Small White	Enham
Mon 31 Mar	Speckled Wood	Longparish / Freshwater
Mon 31 Mar	Orange-tip	Rooksbury Mill LNR
Mon 31 Mar	Green Hairstreak	Portsmouth Hill
Thu 03 Apr	Green-veined White	Portsmouth Hill (East)
Fri 04 Apr	Small Tortoiseshell	Test Way (Kimbridge)
Tue 08 Apr	Holly Blue	Test Way (Kimbridge)
Wed 09 Apr	Large White	Portsmouth Hill (Fort Widley)
Wed 09 Apr	Grizzled Skipper	Freshwater Bay (NT car park)
Fri 11 Apr	Small Blue	Freshwater Bay (NT car park)
Fri 11 Apr	Small Copper	Freshwater Bay (NT car park)
Thu 17 Apr	Brown Argus	Magdalen Hill Down
Thu 17 Apr	Dingy Skipper	Magdalen Hill Down
Thu 17 Apr	Small Heath	Magdalen Hill Down
Fri 25 Apr	Duke of Burgundy	Stockbridge Down
Mon 28 Apr	Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Brockenhurst
Wed 30 Apr	Glanville Fritillary	Freshwater Bay (NT car park)
Wed 30 Apr	Common Blue	Freshwater Bay (NT car park)
Wed 30 Apr	Marsh Fritillary	Martin Down
Sun 25 May	Large Skipper	North Baddesley
Sun 25 May	Meadow Brown	Great Fontley
Wed 04 Jun	White-letter Hairstreak	IBM Lakes, Cosham
Wed 04 Jun	Marbled White	IBM Lakes, Cosham
Fri 06 Jun	Small Skipper	Bouldnor Forest, Yarmouth

Social Media links, etc.



Branch FB



Our Reserves FB



Branch X
(Twitter)



Branch Insta



Branch WWW