

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch



Newsletter 94



Butterfly
Conservation

April 2013



Events

Key dates for your diary.
Field trip dates on p.15.

Website: www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk

Sat 18 - Mon 27 May

Save Our Butterflies Week

Wednesday 22 May

Main Committee

Saturday 22 June

New Members Day

9.30 for 10 am at the Masonic Hall, B3404. See p.25.

Saturday 6 July

IOW Conservation Event

See Isle of Wight Group News pp.19 & 26.

Fri 19 - Sun 21 July

Hampshire Moth Weekend. See p. 25

20 July-11 August

Big Butterfly Count

ID sheets can be downloaded & sightings reported on the website.
<http://www.bigbutterflycount.org/>

Tues- Thurs 30 July-1 August

New Forest Show

Find us in the New Forest Marquee.

Thurs - Sat 8-10 August

Moth Night. See p. 25

Friday 9 August

Butterfly Family Day

10 am to 4 pm. Hilliers Arboretum. Guided walks, craft activities.

Wednesday 4 September

Main Committee

Saturday 14 September

Romsey Show

The Branch hopes to have a stand.

Saturday 26 October

AGM & Members Day

Littleton Memorial Hall, Nr.Winchester. The speakers will include Dr. Martin Warren from BC Head Office and Professor P.Howse, who has written extensively on butterfly wing patterns and visual illusions. Full details will be available on the website and will also appear in the September Newsletter.

Saturday 16 November

National AGM at Swindon

Thurs 3 - Sun 6 April 2014

Symposium, Southampton University

Cover painting: Displaying Orange-tips and Ragged Robin by Rosemary Powell



Chairman's Report

I was hoping to start this report with news that the winter was finally receding but, since snow is falling outside as I write, I guess it will be a few weeks before spring finally arrives. However, with frog spawn in the garden pond and my first sighting of a butterfly already this year (a Small Tortoiseshell no less), perhaps I shouldn't complain. Like many other Branch members, I'm particularly keen to see how our native butterflies and moths have fared after the dismal summer of 2012.

On a related note, production of our annual *Butterfly and Moth Report* is well under way. The records that you have contributed are really helping us form an objective picture of the 2012 season. With my species-report writing duties completed I can say that, while some species had an average year, some of our commoner butterflies, such as Small White, Large White and Green-veined White, all suffered in 2012. In 2013 butterflies and moths need all the help they can get; I'm certain that all the contributions by our members will make a real difference.



The Allotments: field to the left of the white building (Masonic Lodge)

On a conservation note, the Branch has recently taken over the leasehold of the Allotments (see Reserves News on p.5), a field that adjoins Magdalen Hill Down on its western side. This is very positive news, for linking landscapes in this way is a proven recipe for successful species conservation. My thanks go to our Reserves Officer, Jayne Chapman, for going "above and beyond" to make this a reality. I'm sure it won't be long before we see some of MHD's specialist species capitalising on opportunities to colonise this area.

It was good to see so many members at the AGM and Members Day in October. I'd once again like to thank Andy Bolton and Gary Richardson, who stood down from the Main Committee, and formally to welcome new Committee members Penny Jeffreys, Nick Radford and Clive Wood. I'm sure everyone who attended will remember the highly entertaining presentation from Michael Blencowe, who took us on a hunt for butterflies and moths in his native Sussex, and the highly informative presentation from Jeremy Thomas on his favourite subject of butterflies, ants and parasitoids – absolutely fascinating!

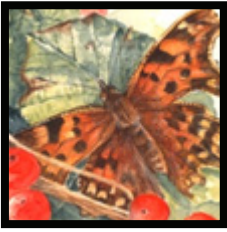
I'd also like to reiterate my thanks to all of those members who voluntarily help the Branch in so many different ways. In fact, I'm sometimes surprised at how many different areas our members do help with: recording, work parties, manning stands and, of course, contributing funds. I'm a firm believer that every member has something to offer the Branch. Do get in touch with a Committee member if you'd like to get more involved.

The Society benefits greatly from its relationships with both local and national organisations. Our Branch has received a great deal of support, both practical and financial, from several organisations, including:

- The Forestry Commission, with which we've worked to improve Bentley Station Meadow Reserve and set up a joint volunteer group for it and Alice Holt Forest;
- The South Downs National Park Authority, which has provided funding for kissing gates and hundreds of volunteer hours at Magdalen Hill Down and Bentley Station Meadow, as well as funding to support the running of the Allotments extension to MHD;
- The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust, which repaired fences after a break-in at MHD, loaned us some grazing livestock, and provided a lot of support for the recent Morn Hill project;
- Sparsholt College, which removed hedging and replaced fencing at Yew Hill. Six full-day visits amounted to an incredible 600 student hours and a further 45 chainsaw operative hours thanks to the Sparsholt lecturers.

The support the Branch receives from its members and these organisations gives me great hope for 2013, and I wish all members a very successful lepidoptera-filled year ahead.

Peter Eeles, Chairman



Reserves News

Here comes summer...

Following a very wet autumn and winter it seems that spring has finally sprung, and here is the update that you have all been waiting for. I ended the September Newsletter: "Watch out for the spring Newsletter, where I will be able to give you some very exciting news on another project that has taken much of my time over the last eight months."

That project, which has now taken 14 months to complete, involved the acquisition of a further nine acres adjoining Magdalen Hill Down (MHD) to the west, known as the Allotments. This field, as the name suggests, was for many years a community allotment, which was then converted back to grassland and grazed by ponies for a further number of years. Two thirds of the land is comprised of rough grassland species, which still dominate, but it is hoped that in time it will be possible to establish wildflowers and other plants by plug-planting and seeding by spreading green hay. In the meantime, it will be invaluable as grazing or lay-back land to give us more flexible livestock and grazing options.

The lower third of the field comprises a small steep incline of remnant chalk downland, and as such it supports the Common Blue and Brown Argus.

Before we acquired the 10-year lease from the Church Commissioners access to the Allotments was restricted, but on 30 May 2012 Andy Barker and I made a two-hour visit to carry out a quick survey; we recorded the following butterflies and moths – not bad for a site that had never been managed before.

Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	10
Common Blue	<i>Polyommatus icarus</i>	4
Holly Blue	<i>Celastrina argiolus</i>	2
Brown Argus	<i>Aricia agestis</i>	3
Brimstone	<i>Gonepteryx rhamni</i>	1
Silver-Y	<i>Autographa gamma</i>	4
Yellow Shell	<i>Camptogramma bilineata</i>	2

A number of woodland plants have also been recorded, including stinking iris *Iris foetidissima*, which is an Ancient Woodland Vascular Plants indicator. This was first recorded on the site in 1997 and again in September 2012, following a National Vegetation Classification survey carried out by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre.

Other recorded species include birds-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, which is the food plant of the caterpillar of the Common Blue, and cuckooflower *Cardamine pratensis*, on which the female Orange-tip *Anthocharis cardamines*, the true butterfly of spring, will lay her eggs.

As part of our work we look closely at landscape-scale conservation and at how, by managing larger areas of suitable habitat that are relatively close to one another, we can create corridors and stepping stones for butterflies (and all wildlife) to facilitate greater connectivity and dispersal between species. The Allotments is just that, and its acquisition extends Magdalen Hill Down to almost 120 acres.

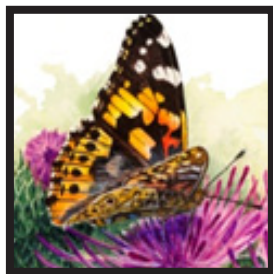
In 2012, with the help of the South Downs National Park Authority, the Wildlife Trust and Arqiva (the site owners), we brought back into active management a further 15 acres of chalk grassland to the east of Magdalen Hill Down, known as Morn Hill. This site is part of a Nature Improvement Area and also sits in the South Downs National Park. It has been under the Branch's management guidance since its development as a telecommunications site in 1999. However, before December 2012 it had never been grazed, although grazing had been a stipulation of the original agreement and the subsequent management plan. Following the fencing of the site and the installation of a water trough the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust delivered six heifers, which have spent the winter taking off the coarse grasses and thatch that had built up over the years. An alarming decline in butterfly species had been recorded on the site over the past few years; with the introduction of cattle we are now hopeful that these declines will be reversed.

This is a continuation of landscape conservation and illustrates how, by bringing parcels of land back into active management, we can increase and maintain these pockets of isolated habitat and link them up with other sites. We continue to work closely with private landowners in the surrounding valley. With the support of Natural England and other grant funding, the wider countryside is our oyster.

Just enough space left to say a huge thank you to all of our volunteers, who have turned up in all weathers (even when I once didn't) and who have carried out an impressive array of tasks, from ride-widening at Bentley Station Meadow to clearing derelict blackthorn at MHD and replacing 600m of fence at Yew Hill.

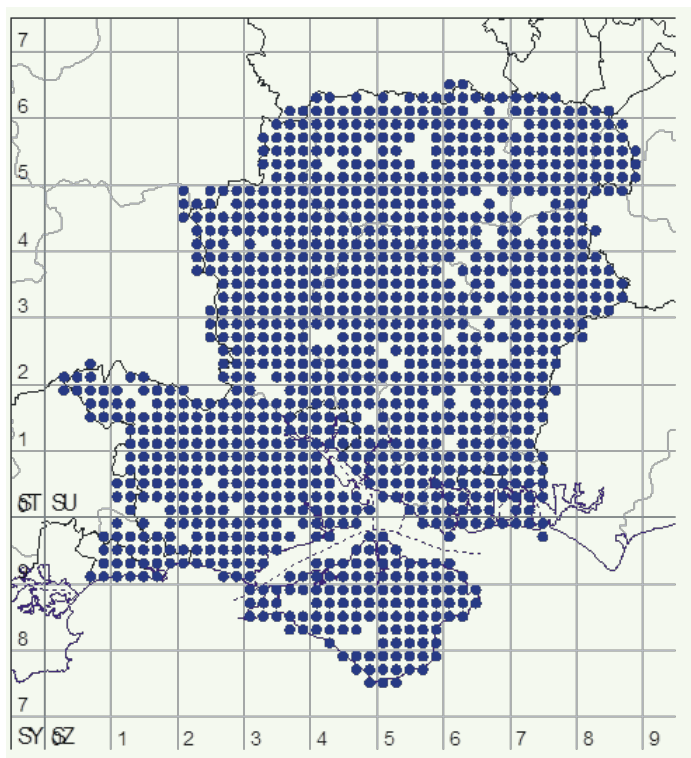
As always, we welcome new volunteers who would like to help us with our conservation work. It isn't all about scrub-bashing either... I am still waiting for the cake fairy to arrive!

Jayne Chapman, Branch Reserves Officer



Butterfly Recording in 2013

This year (2013) is year four of the current five-year recording period. We welcome records from anywhere in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Some parts are not as well covered as others, and members may be interested in exploring more neglected areas to survey the butterflies present: see 'Conservation' section of the Branch website for details of these areas. The 10-km squares where we would particularly like more recording are SU55, SU62, SU63, SU64 and SU74, where there are still quite a few gaps (thanks to members filling in certain gaps during 2012). Records from even a brief visit will be useful if you are anywhere near these areas.



Butterflies in the New Millennium 2010 to 2014. 2-km coverage 2010 to 2012

How to send in your records:

Electronic recording options

As paper records are time-consuming for Branch volunteers to enter, we ask members to select one of the electronic methods wherever possible; this safeguards the accuracy of your data.

1. Sightings form: user-friendly section of website Sightings Page, which you complete and send online; first choice for many of our members; the data is routed onto our database. See article by Robin Turner [April 2011 Newsletter, pages 7-8], reproduced on the Branch website <http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/recording.htm>.
2. MapMate: if you have a large number of records, MapMate is 'must have' software. Using it you can submit records to the Branch in addition to reviewing your own records over a period of time. If you would like to send in your data via MapMate, the Branch Cuk is 1c4.
3. Excel spreadsheet: it is still possible to send your records using a spreadsheet. Contact me and I will email you a BC-approved spreadsheet [new version for 2013], which facilitates transfer of data onto the main database (avoiding unnecessary and time-consuming administration).

Paper recording forms

For those without computer access. Approved paper recording forms can be downloaded from our website; or contact me (details on back page).

1. Butterfly site recording form (green): should be completed when visiting the same site on a number of occasions.
2. Casual recording form (yellow): should be completed when visiting a number of different sites during the season.

Forms are sent with this Newsletter only to the few members who submitted paper records in 2012.

Target species for 2013 - a plea

After a poor year in 2012 we would appreciate receiving as many records as you can manage. Despite 2012's bad weather we did manage to obtain about half the number of records received the previous year. Please check for White-letter Hairstreak in what surely must be a better year. Records are significantly down, so please have a look for these butterflies flitting around elms during late June to mid-August, particularly at the edge of woods or in a hedgerow. They occasionally visit bramble, privet and thistle flowers, amongst others, but mainly prefer aphid honeydew from neighbouring trees, often around the treetops, so binoculars are useful. Are they really absent from vast areas of Hampshire and the Island? Please make a point of looking

around any elms in your neighbourhood or on your travels in the county, but stay 30 minutes or so and watch for movement if you can. Patience is needed.



Orange-tip female

Paul Brock

Many thanks in advance. We welcome all records. If you have any queries please contact me.

How to work out a grid reference: easy to select via the Branch website Sightings Page; the Ordnance Survey has a website which explains how to read grid references. Visit: www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/oswebsite/gi/nationalgrid/nghelp1.html or contact me in the event of difficulty.



Paul Brock, Butterfly Recorder

Common Blue
Rosemary Powell

Butterfly Transects in Hampshire & the Isle of Wight

The Butterfly Monitoring Scheme was set up nationally in the late 1970s. In Hampshire we have four of the 100 original sites: from 1976 at Old Winchester Hill, and from 1979 at Ampfield Wood, Martin Down (South) and Alresford Farm, where monitoring has been continuous to the present day, producing over 30 years of data for these sites.

We currently have 96 transects in Hampshire and eight on the Isle of Wight. Some transects have been abandoned, but 24% of our current 104 transects have been running for over 20 years and 56% for over 10. Seven new transects were started in 2012, and one which had been discontinued was restarted. The habitats vary considerably: approximately 30% are on chalk downland, 30% in mixed woodland and 30% on other grassland. The remaining 10% are on heathland, in gardens and by the coast.

The scheme involves walking a fixed route around the site once a week under specified weather conditions, counting butterflies, from the beginning of April to the end of September. The advantage of the Monitoring Scheme is that you can compare one year directly with another.

Butterflies are uniquely placed amongst terrestrial insects to act as indicators of the state of the environment, allowing us to assess the impacts of habitat and climate change. Butterflies are biologically suitable as indicator species as they have rapid life cycles and in many cases high sensitivity to environmental conditions; and as they are such beautiful insects people enjoy monitoring them.

All transect data is verified at Branch level before entry in our main database. From there it goes to BC Head Office at Lulworth, where it is checked again before transmission to the Biological Records Centre at the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, a Government advisory body. The data provides a knowledge base, including indicators of change, for Government environmental policies.

At the local level the data can be used to assess the success of the management of a site. For example, you can see the benefits of grazing MHD Original to maintain a turf height of 10cm, which is perfect for Chalkhill Blues. You can also see how the colonisation of a site progresses, as at MHD (North), which had been arable land and was reseeded. Some of the data is used in our annual *Butterfly and Moth Report* to illustrate the increases and declines of different species.

We always need additional help with transects. Although the season starts on 1 April and you will be reading this in mid-April, it's not too late to get involved. If you are interested in helping please contact me. See contact details on back page.

Linda Barker, Transect Coordinator

Sightings: latest 2012 and earliest 2013

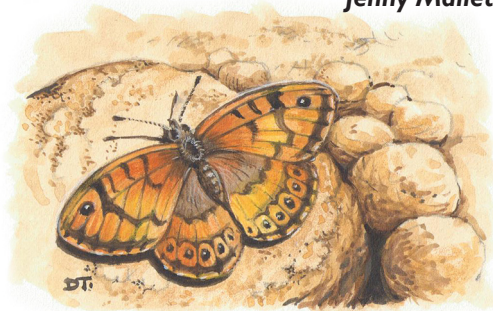
I remember December 2012 as grey, wet, miserable and butterfly-free. Nevertheless, a number of sightings were recorded on the website. Red Admirals came out of hibernation briefly on several dates, but more surprising were two sightings of Brimstone, one by Sue Lambert on 18 December outside Waitrose in Romsey, and another on the 22nd by Tim Biddulph on MOD land at Bourley. The final sighting of the year was a Red Admiral seen by Richard Merritt at Dibden on 28 December.

New Year's Day brought several Red Admiral sightings, notably one by Colin Beyer on Magdalen Hill, one in Winchester Cathedral Close by Joanna Cross, and another in Southampton Old Cemetery by Leanne Baker; but the big surprise was three separate sightings of Painted Lady: by Ian Pratt at Bonchurch, Nigel Jones at Keyhaven, and R & J Coomber at Pennington; all coastal so perhaps migrants? Mary Parker reported a very early Peacock near Mottisfont on the same day. The rest of January was pretty bleak, with just a report on the 15th of a Small White emerging from compost and a dead Holly Blue, both at Stanpit near Christchurch. On 27 January Andrew Brookes reported the first Comma, in a Cosham garden. February had few excitements, but Anne McCue saw a Small Tortoiseshell at Hook on the 16th and David Tining two in Gosport on the 18th.

The best day of the year so far was without doubt 5 March. There were over 20 reports on the website, mostly of Brimstone: from Terry Hotten at Cove, Sue Lambert in Southampton, and Hazel Rouse at Staunton Park; most notably, Anne McCue saw at least 20 on Ports Down. Also on that day Colin Beyer reported the first Speckled Wood on Magdalen Hill and Clive Wood saw Comma and Small White as well as Brimstone at St. Cross.

As I write - on 12 March - there is snow on the ground and a biting wind guaranteed to keep all butterflies, and all butterfly watchers, in hibernation. Things can only get better.

Jenny Mallett, Branch Organiser



Wall
David Thelwell

Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey

The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey runs as a partnership between Butterfly Conservation, the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. The scheme is a UK-wide survey of butterfly numbers using randomly selected 1km squares to assess the changing status of widespread butterfly species and provide an indication of the health of the countryside. The scheme has been running for four years.

We have 30 1km squares to monitor in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Since they are randomly selected they are widely scattered. We have squares in the New Forest, including woodland and heathland; on chalk downland; covering tracks and lanes in farmland areas and around villages; and two in suburban areas in Winchester and Havant. Many of the squares are set up and are already being monitored; others have recorders, and monitoring will start in 2013. We are looking for members to help out with some squares which are not currently being monitored; three in particular:

SU2206 Soarly Beeches, New Forest, just north of Burley
SU5554 Warren Bottom Copse, Hannington, north-west of Basingstoke
SU4837 West Stoke Farm, South Wonston, south-east of Sutton Scotney
SU7017 Tidpit north-west of Damerham

I am currently contacting all recorders who were involved last year, but if for any reason some are unable to take part this year there will be some untended squares. If you are interested in getting involved but don't live near any of the above-mentioned squares, please contact me as I may well have some more to add to the list, including on the Isle of Wight.

Recording involves counting butterflies along two parallel 1km survey routes within your 1km square. You will be given a map with the route marked out and full instructions on how to carry out the survey. You are asked to visit at least twice during the year, in July and August, and if possible in May as well.

In 2012, visits were made to 771 squares in the UK, including a number monitored by BTO; 114 more squares were visited than in 2011. Forty-six species were recorded. In Hampshire and the Isle of Wight we recorded 27 species from 16 squares, including Dingy Skipper, Silver-studded Blue, Chalkhill Blue, Dark Green Fritillary, Silver-washed Fritillary and Grayling.

If you would like to help please contact me. See contact details on back page.

Linda Barker, Transect Coordinator

Managing the wider countryside for butterflies (and other wildlife)

Around 58 species of butterfly (and over 2,400 moths) are found in the British Isles, and Hampshire has a good many of them. These species are present not just in well managed nature reserves in the county but also across much of our farmland and wooded areas, where they may remain unrecorded and disregarded in current habitat-management plans.

It is always worth chatting with land managers about the life cycle of butterflies: all of us enjoy seeing them in the summer months but rarely consider where they are hiding (and in what form) during the winter. Most people assume that they will be overwintering as a chrysalis, with perhaps the odd one as an adult, usually because they remember spotting a Small Tortoiseshell in the garden shed or log store. Few people know that the vast majority of butterflies, including all of the large “Brown” family, go through the winter in the larval stage as a caterpillar.

My chats are designed not only to create an interest in butterflies and other wildlife but also, and importantly, to argue that land managers can “manage” habitats for wildlife correctly only if they understand a little about the species they are dealing with.



Brown Hairstreak studies



Rosemary Powell

The Brown Hairstreak butterfly lays its eggs individually along a blackthorn hedge towards the tip of the branch, where they remain over winter - unless a hedge cutter chops them all off. When this is explained to the hedge manager, together with the fact that a hedge uncut during the winter will produce lots of blossom and berries in the following spring and summer, the whole reason for “rotational” hedge cutting becomes much clearer. The icing on the cake is that the Stewardship Scheme will pay managers to cut their hedges on a two- or three-year rotation.

Many fields now have a nice grass margin around them acting as a buffer between the arable land and the hedge or watercourse. This provides a valuable habitat for many species and doubles up as a wildlife corridor. However, farmers often take pride in making the countryside look neat and well run. Here again, when it is pointed out that many butterfly caterpillars overwinter in the uncut tussocks of grass, that Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) research has shown that an unbelievable 1,500 "beneficial" insects may be found in just one square metre of tussocky grass, and that come the spring many of these insects move into the surrounding crops and munch pest aphids (reducing the need for spraying), as well as constituting a vital food source for farmland birds - then managers can start to see the benefits of cutting only half of the grass margin and leaving half unmanaged (including the reduction of mowing time by half).

Woods where raised pheasants are released are often not particularly well managed, for until recently there was no economic value in wood. When it is explained that unmanaged woods tend to be bare in the bottom, with little shrub cover and warmth, and that the highest pheasant densities are nearly always found in well coppiced woods, without too many tall "standard" trees, where plenty of sunlight reaches ground level, then the penny drops. What woodland butterflies need to stop their worrying declines is exactly what the pheasant wants: a chainsaw to do some work.

I don't care if the driving force behind managing a wood for butterflies and other wildlife happens to be the pheasant – I just want it managed. GWCT research shows that butterfly numbers are more than double in game woods than in non-game woods and that open rides make up 13% of the area in game woods but just 8% in non-game woods. My job is not just to pass on the dos and don'ts of conservation but also to find out "what floats an individual's boat" and then to enthuse him or her to create a vibrant landscape full of wildlife, while still farming in a profitable way.

I don't think I'm living in cloud cuckoo land. It is a tremendous achievement that farmers have picked up the wildlife baton, that three quarters of them are in a Stewardship Scheme, and that many of those who are not are still managing their land with wildlife in mind. We still have a long way to go, but there has been a fantastic sea change in the farming community in addressing the issue of wildlife declines. It's time we started handing out a few more "pats on the back" as an alternative to the monotonous tabloid "bashing" to which we have grown so accustomed.

Peter Thompson, Biodiversity Adviser, Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust



Hampshire & IOW Branch Field Trips APRIL – OCTOBER 2013

Hampshire

Wednesday 17 April

Magdalen Hill Down

Leader: Jayne Chapman **Tel:** 01962 808400

Meet: 10.30 am in the gravel car park opposite the cemetery on the B3404, Alresford Road, Winchester.

Map ref: SU 512 295. **Sat Nav:** SO21 IHE.

A walk to see the cowslips and enjoy early spring butterflies.

Wednesday 1 May

Magdalen Hill Down

Leader: Jenny Mallett/Jayne Chapman **Tel:** 01962 808400

'A Wednesday Wander' on the first Wednesday of each month up to and including 7 September.

Come along to enjoy butterflies, wildflowers and a leisurely walk in friendly company. All welcome, including dogs on short leads.

Meet: 10.30 am in the gravel car park opposite the cemetery on the B3404, Alresford Road, Winchester.

Map ref: SU 512 295. **Sat Nav:** SO21 IHE

Saturday 18 May

Butser Hill NNR

Leader: Ashley Whitlock **Tel:** 023 731266

Meet: 10.30 am. Leave A3M at Clanfield, take north lane at crossroads and follow signs to Butser Hill car park.

Map ref: SU 711 199. Car park charge applies.

Very steep slopes; wear walking boots, bring drink and lunch.

In search of early flyers: Duke of Burgundy, Small Heath, Dingy and Grizzled Skippers.

Wednesday 29 May

Bentley Station Meadow

Leader: David Walton **Tel:** 01962 808400

Meet: 10.30 am in the Forestry Commission car park off Gravel Hill Road.

Map ref: SU 802 433. Leave the A31 east of Bentley, signposted Alice Holt Research Station. Go along Gravel Hill Road and over railway bridge. The car park is about 500 yards after the bridge on the right. No booking necessary.

Wednesday 29 May

Martin Down NNR

Leader: Brian Fletcher **Tel:** Mary 01962 864440

Meet: 10.30 am and 2 pm at the main car park on the south of the A354.

Map ref: SU 044 205, OS map 184. This is a joint walk with Hampshire Wildlife Trust. Suggested donation £2.50.

In search of butterflies, flowers and other wildlife.

Wednesday 5 June

Magdalen Hill Down

Leader: Jenny Mallett **Tel:** 01329 832177

Meet: 10.30 am as 1 May. **'A Wednesday Wander'**.

Friday 21 June

Bentley Station Meadow

Leader: TBC. **Tel:** 01962 808400

Meet: 7.00 pm in NE corner of car park at Bentley Station.

Evening walk to enjoy the orchids and other flowers in the meadow.

Sunday 30 June

Magdalen Hill Down

Leader: Jayne Chapman **Tel:** 01962 808400

Meet: 11.00 am at the top of the track that runs between the cemetery and Blackwell & Moody Stonemasons. Use the car park opposite the cemetery on B3404, Alresford Road, Winchester and walk up, or drive up to the top.

Map ref: SU 512 295.

Come and see summer butterflies and day flying moths.

Please bring a picnic/children if you wish. Bookings only (no charge).

Wednesday 3 July

Magdalen Hill Down

Leader: Jenny Mallett/Jayne Chapman **Tel:** 01962 808400

Meet: 10.30 am as 1 May. **'A Wednesday Wander'**.

Saturday 13 July

Havant Thicket

Leaders: Ashley Whitlock & Neil Hulme **Tel:** 023 731266 (A.W.)

Meet: 10 am PO9 6HE. Parking charges apply.

Map ref: SU 723 102

Option to visit Emperor territories at Southleigh Forest and Brickkiln Ponds later in the day. A joint venture with Sussex BC. Suggested donation £2.

In search of the Purple Emperor and other woodland species.

Friday 19 July

Magdalen Hill Down

Leader: Jenny Mallett/Jayne Chapman **Tel:** 01962 808400

Meet: 10.30 as 1 May.

One of the best times of the year to see the butterflies and wildflowers.

Wednesday 24 July

Yew Hill

Leader: Ivan Arnold **Tel:** 01962 866 706

Meet: 10.30 am at end of Old Kennels Lane at junction with Port Lane and Millers Lane, Oliver's Battery.

Map ref: SU 451 269.

In search of Chalkhill Blues, many other butterflies and wildflowers.

Saturday 27 July

Yew Hill

Leader: Ivan Arnold **Tel:** 01962 866 706

Meet: 2 pm at end of Old Kennels Lane at junction with Port Lane and Millers Lane, Oliver's Battery.

Map ref: SU 451 269.

In search of Chalkhill Blues, many other butterflies and wildflowers.

Tuesday 30 July

Bentley Station Meadow

Leader: David Walton **Tel:** 01962 808400

Meet: 10.30 am in the Forestry Commission car park off Gravel Hill Road.

Map ref: SU 802 433. Leave the A31 east of Bentley signposted Alice Holt Research Station. Go along Gravel Hill Road and over a railway bridge. The car park is about 500 yards after the bridge on the right.

No booking necessary.

Wednesday 7 August

Magdalen Hill Down

Leader: Jenny Mallett/Jayne Chapman **Tel:** 01962 808400

Meet: 10.30 am as 1 May. '**A Wednesday Wander**'.

Sat 10 August

Stockbridge Down National Trust Reserve

Leader: Brian Fletcher **Tel:** Mary 01962 864440

Meet: 10.30 am at the lower car park on the north side of the road west of the Sandy Down crossroads.

Map ref: SU 388 345.

Meet: 2 pm at the upper car park, one mile nearer Stockbridge on the south side of the road.

Map ref: SU 375 346.

A joint walk with Hampshire Wildlife Trust. Suggested donation £2.50.

In search of butterflies, flowers and other wildlife.

Sunday 1 September

Old Winchester Hill NNR

Leader: Ashlet Whitlock **Tel:** 023 731266

Meet: 10.30 am in the main Reserve car park on the minor road (south) east of Warnford.

Map ref: SU 646 214.

In search of Silver-spotted Skipper, other late flying butterflies and flowers.

Wednesday 4 September

Magdalen Hill Down

Leader: Jenny Mallett/Jayne Chapman **Tel:** 01962 808400

Meet: 10.30 am as 1 May. '**A Wednesday Wander**'.

Isle of Wight

Tuesday 21 May

Bonchurch to Wheelers Bay

Leader: Andy Butler **Tel:** 01983 854925

Meet: 10.30 am in Shore Road car park (Pay & Display), Bonchurch.

Note that this is a linear walk and we shall return along the same route.

Map ref: SZ 575 777.

Anything could turn up, including Glanville Fritillary.

Thursday 30 May

Freshwater Bay

Leader: Sue Davies **Tel:** 07702 151312

Meet: 10.30 am at the westernmost Afton Down car park.

Map ref: SZ 351 856.

Bus No. 12. After the walk there may be the opportunity to see some moths trapped the night before if weather permitted.

In search of: Small Blue, Glanville Fritillary and Wall.

Saturday 6 July

National Trust Optics Event Newtown NNR

Hampshire & IOW Branch of Butterfly Conservation will be manning a stand and plan to run some moth traps the night before. If you'd like to help, contact Caroline. **Tel:** 01983 754935.

Friday 7 June

Bonchurch Down

Leader: Andy Butler **Tel:** 01983 854925

Meet: 1.30 pm in the viewpoint car park, Leeson Road.

Map ref: SZ 580 788.

Target species: Adonis Blue.

Wednesday 10 July

Walter's Copse, Newtown

Leader: Caroline Dudley **Tel:** 01983 754935

Meet: 1.30 pm at the entrance to Walter's Copse. Park carefully on the side of the road between Town Copse and Walter's Copse.

Map ref: SZ 429 905.

Target species: White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary, Purple Hairstreak.

Friday 12 July Event

Freshwater Fruit Farm, Wilmingham Lane, Freshwater, PO40 9UG

Leader: Elaine Rice **Tel:** 01983 730187

Meet: 8.30 pm.

Map ref: SZ 358 869.

From the Newport to Afton road (B3399) turn right at the sign to Yarmouth; this is Wilmingham Lane. The drive to Freshwater Fruit Farm is about 400 metres on the right, just past a bungalow (also on the right).

By kind permission of John and Brenda Craddock. Bring a torch.
Phone if weather is poor to check that the event is still going ahead.

Moth trapping, Red Squirrels and Dormice.

Saturday 20 July

Whippingham Fields

Leader: John Rowell **Tel:** 01983 281342

Meet: 11.00 am by the gate to St Mildred's Church, Beatrice Avenue, Whippingham. Parking available at the church and in nearby roads.

Map ref: SZ 511 936. Close to No. 5 bus route.

Midsummer butterflies.

Saturday 10 August

Brading Down

Leader: Ian Pratt **Tel:** 01983 865769

Meet: 10.30 am at Brading Down viewpoint car park.

Map ref: SZ 597 868.

Target species: Chalkhill and Adonis Blues, Small Heath.

Sunday 22 September

Mottistone Down and Westover Plantation

Leader: David Biggs **Tel:** 01983 292595

Meet: 10.30 am at the Jubilee car park, Mottistone Down.

Map ref: SZ 420 845.

Late summer butterflies.

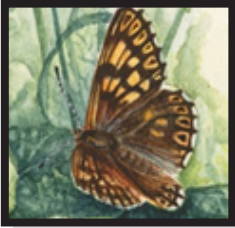
Field trips are for everyone. If the weather looks doubtful check with the leader in advance.

For additional trips or moth evenings organised at short notice through the season check the **website:** www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk.

Events on the Isle of Wight have been arranged by the Branch's IOW Group. They welcome visitors from the mainland and may be able to offer lifts.

Contact: Caroline Dudley. **Tel:** 01983 754935.

Private groups are welcome at our reserves by pre-arrangement with Jayne Chapman: jchapman@butterfly-conservation.org. **Tel:** 01962 808400.



New Members

We are very happy to welcome the 41 new members who joined between the beginning of August 2012 and the end of January 2013. We do hope you will enjoy your membership and participate in some of our events and field meetings.

Mr PM Allen, Fordingbridge; Mr SD Barfoot, Hedge End; Ms L Brayshaw & Mr A MacKenzie & Family, Southampton; Mrs BA Burfoot, Alton; Ms T Bush, Alverstoke; Mr R Catton, Selborne; Mrs W Chalk, Chandler's Ford;

Ms JP Clancy, Bishops Waltham; Mr M Coates, Alton; Miss H Cook, Bishopstoke; Miss K Disberry, Southsea; Mr CJ Downs & Miss JR Allen, Romsey; Mrs I Draper, Yateley; Mrs KA Durant, Andover; Mr NJ Floyd, Winsor; Mr ID Forder, Hedge End; Mr D Fry, Portsmouth; Ms J Goddard, Marchwood; Dr K Graham, Farnborough; Miss CJ Hadler, Mottisfont;

Mr AR Hay, Fareham; Mrs E Hiscock, Bishops Waltham; Dr MJG Holmes, King's Lynn, Norfolk; Mr L Hulin, Basingstoke; Miss N King, Gosport; Mr P Larner, Leeds; Mr M Lewis, Sway; Mrs SJ Maddison, IOW;

Mr R Mansfield, Fordingbridge; Mr S & Mrs S Outram, Old Basing; Ms D Pledge, Newport, IOW; Mr PC & Mrs N Pusey, Lymington; Miss C Rodway & Mr B McHale, Chineham; Mrs C Rose, Yateley; Mrs J Symes & Mr P Rood, Hamble; Miss Wagstaff & Miss Hale, West End; Mr FA & Mrs JM Western, IOW; Mr K & Mrs M Wilkinson, Headley; Mr T & Mrs N Williams, Seaview, IOW; Miss A Witherby, Alton; Mrs JP Wood, Winchester.



Pat Turner, Membership Secretary

Silver-washed Fritillary
David Thelwell



News, Reports & Events

Report on the Moth Conference

The 2013 Moth Conference held at Littleton Memorial Hall on Saturday 16 February was attended by about 60 members and ably chaired by Dan Hoare.

Tim Norriss reported on the year's highlights, which included *Cinnabar f. flavescens*, a first record for Hampshire. The number of records was down by about a third as a result of the appalling summer weather, but the number of recorders had also declined, maybe for the same reason. For the first time since records began (in 1990) there were no records new to the two counties. New to S. Hants was a Lace Border; new to N. Hants a Red-headed Chestnut. He noted some interesting records, including a big increase in Muslin Footman and a first breeding record for *Cydia amplana*.

Zoe Randle reported rather depressingly on the state of Britain's larger moths; the 40-year population trends between 1968 and 2007 showed 62 extinctions in the 20th century and four already in the 21st. Although many species showed declines, Least Carpet and Dingy Footman were amongst those that bucked the trend. While the situation in the north of Britain was stable, in the south the total counts of the 337 common species analysed had declined by 40%.

Tony Dobson gave an amusing account of his life as a moth-er including a stint in Kenya on National Service. He was followed by David Evans, who described surveying the Avon Estates with an array of home-made or adapted actinic moth traps. He made a plea for any old or unwanted actinic traps to be passed to him so that he could extend his survey work.

Mike Wall spoke about last season's Hampshire mothing weekend, which was ruined by the weather, with species records and moth numbers all down. He mentioned the Atlas Project to update the status of lepidoptera in Hampshire and urged people to explore and record in under-worked areas.

Phil Sterling, co-author of the new *Micro Moths of Great Britain and Ireland*, described how the book was created by a team effort and described some fascinating behaviours of micro moths.

Finally, Lynn Fomison spoke about finding and recording caterpillars; she used excellent photographs taken by Gary Palmer. A version of her talk is on p.28.

David Green

At the end of the Moth Conference Dan Hoare referred to the sad declines of moths that we had been hearing about, and thought that those present should know of an even greater impending loss: that of a local moth-er.



Dave Green at the controls during the Moth Conference

David Green is off to pastures new, to the Shropshire/Monmouthshire border area. It was fitting that Dan paid tribute to the HUGE contribution that David had made to the Branch through his work as an active committee member, with service as both Vice-Chairman of the Branch and Chairman of the Records Subcommittee. Over the years David has been greatly involved in major aspects of producing the annual *Butterfly and Moth Report* and operating the butterfly and moth database. Moreover, David's mothing skills are the envy of many. At past conferences we have both enjoyed and been informed by his splendid talks, and the events have run smoothly thanks to his IT skills. He will be greatly missed. But our loss is another area's gain!

Tim Norris

Mottisfont Wildlife Day

On 18 February a group of members took the Branch's display boards to Mottisfont as part of their Wildlife Week. We set up in a room in the stable block, near the cafeteria. The display consisted of information boards and leaflets about Butterfly Conservation in Hampshire designed to interest adults, and for children there was face painting and a table of colouring activities. Clive Woods and Jenny Mallet took turns in manning the display, Jayne Chapman did the face painting, and Juliet Bloss organised the colouring activities.



It was a gloriously bright and sunny day during the half-term week, and families with children came to visit the park and see the snowdrop display. Many of them dropped in on us; with their children entertained by Jayne and Juliet, the parents and grandparents had time to talk to Clive and Jenny about the work of Butterfly Conservation. The point of participating in such events is to promote an interest in conservation and to publicise the work of the Branch.

Future Events

We need more volunteers willing to help out in this way to come forward so that we can attend more of the events that we are invited to. We regularly have to turn down invitations for lack of support. The Branch has as usual been asked to attend a number of events in 2013. Whether or not we are able to do so depends on members coming forward to help. We are hoping to compile a list of members who would be willing to help with one or more events during the year. The experience can be a rewarding one: you will meet people and chat to them and help to spread an interest in butterflies and conservation.

18 May	Spring Fair at Sholing Valley Study Centre
9 June	Open Farm Sunday
6 July	Newtown NNR, Isle of Wight (see p. ?).
30 July-1 Aug	New Forest Show
10 August	Hilliers Arboretum
7 September	Eastleigh Wood Fair
14 September	Romsey Show

Our attendance at these events depends on people offering to help. Please contact Jenny Mallett: 01329 832177 or email: jennifer@mallett2.orangehome.co.uk if you would like to get involved.

Juliet Bloss, Editor

New Members Day: Saturday 22 June: 9.30 for 10am

This year's meeting will be held at the Masonic Hall opposite St. Swithun's School on the B3404 immediately adjacent to the western end of Magdalen Hill Down. As usual there will be a range of presentations introducing the Branch and its reserves. Weather permitting, we will take our packed lunches onto Magdalen Hill Down before a guided walk. Full details will be available on the website. The meeting is open to all members who have joined within the past 24 months, providing that they have not attended previously. We will be emailing all eligible members nearer the date.

If you wish to attend, email Roger Buchanan: roger@roger-jane.co.uk

Hampshire Moth Weekend: 19 - 21 July

The Hampshire Moth Weekend will be held again in 2013, with the objective of encouraging recorders to explore new sites for moths in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, be it in a friend's backyard or in an unexplored part of our area. As an incentive, prizes are again being offered to the individual who finds the rarest or most significant species, and for the most new 10km-square records completed over the weekend. For more details, please email Mike Wall mikewall@gofast.co.uk or Tim Norriss tim@kitsmail.com.

Moth Night 2013: 8 - 10 August

The theme for Moth Night this year is Tiger Moths, although recorders are always welcome and encouraged to do their own thing. The event will take place on three consecutive nights (Thursday – Saturday) to allow for the vagaries of the weather. Recording can take place on any one or more of these nights.

There is a comprehensive and easy-to-use online recording system for all Moth Night records. This will be available to use from the first day of the event until the deadline for data entry of Sunday, 1 December 2013. As well as reducing the incidence of data duplication, the online recording system dramatically improves the efficiency of data handling and the validation of the many thousands of records received nationally each year. It gives participants immediate feedback of their own records and information about where records have been submitted throughout the British Isles. See <http://www.mothnight.info/www/> .

The full findings of each event are published in the journal *Atropos*. Prizes for various categories are kindly donated by *Atropos Books*, *Anglian Lepidopterist Supplies*, *Apollo Books*, and *Bioquip*.

Tim Norris, Moth Officer

IOW Group News

Seventeen members met at the Bargeman's Rest in Newport last November to discuss the future of butterflies and moths on the Isle of Wight. There was particular concern over the probable loss of three butterfly species on the Island in the last six years: Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Duke of Burgundy.

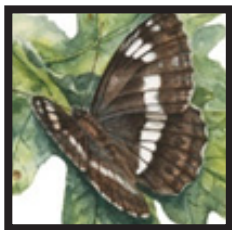
In the case of the Pearl-bordered Fritillary, which has been restricted to Parkhurst Forest since the 1990s, some very good conservation rides had been maintained by the Forestry Commission in the 1990s, but they were allowed to grow in during the early 2000s. The current Forestry Commission team are very keen to help the species, and management activities have again taken place; sadly, this may have come too late as there have been no reliable sightings of Pearl-bordered Fritillaries since 2010. In 2012, there were several sightings of small fritillaries in Parkhurst but, to our surprise, they turned out to be Glanville Fritillaries. So photographic confirmation is now required for Pearl-bordered Fritillaries in Parkhurst. Please keep looking, for they may survive somewhere in the Forest. If it does turn out that they have indeed been lost, reintroduction may be considered.

The Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary was seen in just single figures in 2011 but there were no sightings in 2012. The weather was poor during much of its flight period, which will not have helped it. There is a chance that it may survive somewhere in the Ningwood Common/Cranmore area. The Duke of Burgundy was last recorded in 2006, at Monkham Copse. The site is on private land on either side of a public foot-path; although a management plan was written, it was never implemented. There is a chance that the butterfly survives somewhere on the Island, perhaps in Brighstone Forest or on Brook Down (last sighting here in 2003), but there are no known existing colonies. The IOW Group hopes to become more involved with the conservation of vulnerable butterflies and moths on the Island and so help to prevent further species losses.

On a brighter note, I hope to see you on some of our walks this year. Other meetings may be arranged at short notice; for example, we plan to organise a count of the Graylings on Bleak Down in August. Please check the Hampshire & IOW Branch website for information on these additional meetings.

The National Trust on the Island is organising an optics event for Saturday 6 July at Newtown NNR. Various optics companies and conservation organisations will be at the event, Hampshire & IOW Branch of Butterfly Conservation among them. We plan to run some moth traps the night before; if you'd like to be involved, please let me know. We are also manning a stand on 6 July.

Finally, the Isle of Wight Group now has a second actinic moth trap for members to use. Please contact John Rowell on 01983 281342 if you'd like to borrow it.



Potpourri

Education Fund

The first award from the June Bailey Education Fund was made in December to a project at the Gilbert White Field Studies Centre in Selborne. This project is described below by Hannah Hardman, the award recipient.

The trustees of Gilbert White's House & Garden and The Oates Collection, Selborne, opened the first Field Studies Centre there in 1974, with the intention of passing on to today's students Gilbert White's lifelong fascination with the wonders of the natural world. Gilbert White pioneered the art and science of field studies in the 18th century, and he is known as the man who started us all birdwatching. He wrote the world-famous *Natural History of Selborne*.

In 2002 the Field Studies Centre moved into new premises, a restored and extended 16th century Hampshire barn, which had been moved from Weston Patrick near Basingstoke and re-erected in the parkland of Gilbert White's home. This was achieved with financial support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and Hampshire County Council.

The Field Studies Centre has a fully accessible and well equipped field study laboratory. It specialises in 'learning outside the classroom' and offers a wide range of courses to school and college students. The great diversity of the area lends itself to the development of cross-curricular themes. Programmes are designed for all ages and abilities, providing ideal opportunities to enhance and enrich the national curriculum. The topics covered include landscape, ecology, natural history, and village life, as well as the history of the Antarctic and Africa.

I would like to use the Education Fund award to establish a session to introduce students to butterflies and their habitats. I am focusing on Key Stage 2 pupils, from 8 to 10 years old, the age at which I caught the butterfly bug. I shall be using fascinating facts and photographs of butterflies and hope to inspire some budding lepidopterists. We will play games to examine a butterfly's body parts and consider how their sensory organs work. We will also carry out a butterfly survey in different habitats, such as ancient meadows and beech woodland, in the area around the Field Studies Centre. The species and numbers recorded should indicate to students some of the insects' ecological requirements. The survey will also tie in well with Gilbert White's legacy by making meteorological observations just as he did in his own work. I will encourage the school to submit their butterfly survey results to Butterfly Conserva-

tion and will introduce the concept that records help to direct conservation effort to where it is needed.

I am really looking forward to delivering my butterfly session and hope that the weather will be better for butterfly watching in 2013 than it was in 2012.

I would also like to add that The Wakes, Gilbert White's house, is a fascinating and most original museum commemorating important individuals in the exploration of the natural world. Please do come and visit, especially if it rains all summer! There is more information on the website: www.gilbertwhiteshouse.org.uk.

Hannah Hardman, hannahhardman@yahoo.co.uk

Finding and Recording Caterpillars

At the Moth Conference I gave a talk on caterpillars. I made the point that caterpillars are very under-recorded. Of the 81,200 records received for 2012 only 675 were of larval stages, and only 185 of these related to macro moths. The Branch would really like to improve this position: please send in more records this year.

Caterpillars are not always easy to find. Branch member Gary Palmer, who took the photographs for this article, offers some advice. Many of his finds resulted from looking closely at vegetation in the course of his work as a gardener. "Just get yourself down amongst the long grass and herbage – down at that level it's amazing what you can find," he says.

It is helpful to become familiar with caterpillar feeding patterns. The most productive times are bright, still, warm days in September and October. Several species such as Grey Dagger like to bask in the sunshine on large leaves. However, many species of caterpillar feed only at night and are less likely to be found on the food plant during the day; if feeding damage is observed, it is worth taking a torch and inspecting the plants at night. Half-eaten leaves spaced out down a stem are a good indication of the presence of moth caterpillars, whilst completely eaten leaves are probably down to sawfly larvae. The various species that breed on willow seem to prefer the young growth (under two metres high) to mature growth.

Another method of locating caterpillars is to look for frass (larval droppings) on the leaves, for that indicates that caterpillars have recently been feeding. Larval webs are white and often quite large and easily spotted, but beware of the irritant nature of some hairy caterpillars, especially of the Brown-tail Moth, whose hairs can cause severe rashes.

Some caterpillars, such as those in the Hawkmoth family, are easily found and identified, whilst others such as the Light Emerald resemble a twig and are well camouflaged and difficult to spot. The find of a Chamomile Shark caterpillar near Basingstoke in 2012 was very exciting. It was perhaps the first time that this species has

been found feeding on ox-eye daisy. Those wishing to encourage caterpillars in the garden can grow fuchsias for Elephant Hawk-moths and the tall verbascum-like Thapsus for the attractive caterpillars of the Mullein Moth. Plants such as forget-me-not, comfrey, brunnera and alkanet may enable Garden Tiger and Scarlet Tiger to thrive in gardens.



Vapourer Moth



Grey Dagger

The larvae of species that pupate underground will often be found wandering over paths and even roads looking for a place to pupate. This category includes Goat Moth and Fox Moth. The Hantsmoths website phenology charts can be used to check the best time to look for the larvae of a particular species. It is also particularly rewarding to look for those caterpillars that feed on only one species of plant. *The Flora of Hampshire* can be a useful reference for locating where plants grow. However, many caterpillars cannot be identified to species even by consulting the very useful identification guide by Porter (*Guide to Caterpillars of the British Isles*). Just as adult moths can be variable in colour and pattern, so also can caterpillars. This is complicated further by the fact that many species change radically in appearance from one instar to the next. There are, however, increasingly good information sources on the Internet, although they always come with the usual “health warning” on accuracy. The best advice is to accept that some caterpillars you find will not be accurately identifiable without breeding them through. If people concentrate on the ones that are do-able they will still provide a useful contribution to our database and our knowledge of the biodiversity around us.

We hope that people will be inspired to find, photograph and record caterpillars. Tim Norriss would appreciate being told straightaway of interesting finds, and Mike Wall would be pleased to receive good photographs to add to the Hantsmoths website. All larval records make a useful contribution to the database and provide useful information on the food-plants being used and the habitats where caterpillars thrive.

Lynn Fomison

Your lasting legacy

Have you ever considered leaving a gift to Butterfly Conservation in your will? An increasing number of members and friends are choosing to support Butterfly Conservation in this way. Legacy gifts, however small, are welcome and make a crucial and lasting contribution to the conservation of butterflies and moths. Accounting for over one third of voluntary income, they make a real difference to the work we can do.

As well as leaving gifts to loved ones in your will, please consider leaving a gift to Butterfly Conservation. It will help ensure butterflies and moths thrive in years to come.

For more information about leaving a gift to Butterfly Conservation and sharing your love of butterflies and moths with future generations, please contact Helen Corrigan on 01273 453313 or hcorrigan@butterfly-conservation.org or write to her at Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5QP
Thank you for your support.



Peacock - Paul Brock

Newsletter opt-out:

The Branch is very keen to devote as much of its funding as possible to conservation. As many of you already know, we have acquired the lease of the Allotments adjacent to Magdalen Hill Down. To enable us to sustain our reserves, we need to reduce the costs associated with providing our membership with a high quality of service.

We are keen to reduce our mailing of information, Newsletters and annual reports where possible and where it conforms to the wishes of individual members. Please consider providing us with your email address and to opting out of receiving a printed copy of the Newsletter and/or the annual report. Details of how to do so can be found on our website. If you decide to opt out you will be informed by email when the Newsletter can be accessed on the website. As a regular advertiser always states about potential savings, 'every little helps'.

Roger Buchanan, Chairman Information Subcommittee

Easyfundraising.org.uk

The Branch received £40 from this website in the last quarter. Members can help raise funds for the Branch at no cost to themselves when buying goods or services online. Details of how to do this are on the home page of our website: www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/.

Give As You Live

An alternative to Easyfundraising is another online fundraising initiative called Give As You Live. Thousands of brands including Amazon, Play.com, John Lewis and Expedia have signed up to donate a percentage of every purchase made online to charities - all at no cost to you and at no cost to us. The average shopper will raise £2.10 per month through what they already buy online. If you are an online shopper, please support Butterfly Conservation every time you shop at no cost to you.

Simply visit www.giveasyoulive.com/join/butterflyconservation and discover Give As You Live today.

More Thoughts on Garden Nectar Sources

I would like to add a few comments to the article 'Confessions Of A Butterfly Gardener' by Andrew Brookes in edition 93. I have recorded both butterflies and their nectaring preferences in my garden since 1996. Twenty-seven species have been recorded, four of which were not observed nectaring on any of the 46 nectar sources so far used by one or more butterflies.

Andrew Brookes mentions the success of *Erysimum* x 'Bowles Mauve' and *Verbena bonariensis*, both on my garden list, with the latter having attracted 10 different species, making it the fourth best, and the former eight, the same number as candy tuft, *Sedum spectabile* and lavender. The top three have been *Buddleja davidii* and marjoram, both attracting 15 species, and then aubretia with 12.

My experience with buddlejas does differ from Andrew's. He says that it is 'flowering for scarcely six weeks of the year', but our early variety *B. alternifolia*, with light mauve flowers, blooms in late May or June, followed by the *davidii* varieties, then the late flowering *B. weyeriana*, with yellow flowers, which have in some years attracted November Red Admirals and occasionally are still flowering in December.

Buddleja's flowering period can be considerably extended by constant deadheading, ideally with secateurs just behind the dead floret, though this is difficult with higher branches. In 2012 I deadheaded both *davidii* and *weyeriana* continually, which is my normal routine. The last session was as late as the second week of October, when both Comma and Small Tortoiseshell were still nectaring on our main *davidii* bush.

Richard Stewart, Branch Member

Andrew Brookes replies:

My remark about the relatively short flowering period of buddleja concerned individual cultivars, not the entire genus, to draw a comparison with the wallflower cultivar 'Bowles Mauve', which can flower for up to 40 weeks. Within the genus buddleja, a range of species can be selected to provide flowers throughout the year, starting with *B. tibetica* and ending with *B. madagascariensis* (planted on a south-facing wall), but none will ever attract as many species of butterfly as 'Bowles Mauve'.

Update on Elms - Plantings

Over 1,000 elm cultivars were sourced last December on behalf of the Forestry Commission (FC) and bodies such as the Chichester Harbour Conservancy. The FC took 200 for planting at four sites in the New Forest, while its Chilterns Beat took 370 simply to support its colony of White-letter Hairstreaks near Aylesbury.

The East Coker Elm, and the secret of native elm survival

This remarkable specimen of *Ulmus minor* subsp. *minor*, commonly known as the narrow- or smooth-leafed elm, was successfully cloned in France at the state forestry nursery at Guemene-Penfao in 2009. Alas, the clones have proved excruciatingly slow-growing and thus will not reach the size (>2m high) suitable for inoculation with the causal microfungus of Dutch elm disease (DED) before the nursery ceases its elm programme in 2014. However, the slow growth itself offers a significant clue as to the parent tree's survival in Somerset. Beset by diseased English Elm, it remains completely unscathed. Planted about 200 years ago by the Helyer dynasty, the tree has attained only a modest height of 30m, whereas an English elm *U. procera* would have easily exceeded 40m in similar circumstances and time, were it not the most susceptible of all the elms to DED. Its appearance remains unchanged from year to year, and it is likely that slow movement of sap, possibly owing to narrow vessels in the cambium, prevents the fungal spores from invading a critical proportion of the tree.

Hans Heybroek observed a similar phenomenon amongst the hundreds of Japanese elms grown from seed in his trials in the Netherlands in the 1970s; it was invariably the slow-growing trees which ultimately survived infection in maturity. A study of naturally regenerating wych elm woodland in the English Midlands has revealed the same pattern.

The Gittisham Elm

Less encouraging news from France was that clones of the Gittisham elm, an ancient wych elm in Devon propagated by Thornhayes Nurseries, all died after inoculation, suggesting that the parent tree's survival is probably due to nothing more than its isolation from diseased stock. Clones of old surviving Scottish wych elms from similarly isolated locations, sent by the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, will be inoculated this June, but will probably suffer the same fate.

The Morfeo Elm

The Italian cultivar 'Morfeo', which has outperformed all others in the Branch's elm trials, is now available from the Frank P. Matthews 'Trees For Life' nursery in Tenbury Wells. It is in production this year only as a grafted tree in seven-litre pots, but should be available as bare-root whips in 2014 once micropropagation has been organized. Those interested in buying the tree should contact manager Nick Dunn nick@fpmatthews.co.uk. It is advisable to plant the tree extra deep, so that the graft is about 4"/10cm below the surface, thus encouraging the scion to develop its own roots. As the rootstock is wych elm, a species unable to reproduce vegetatively (i.e. by root suckers), the grafted tree will never form a clump if planted conventionally. The deep-planting practice also eliminates the risk of graft failure, a problem which now plagues many of the elm cultivars planted in Amsterdam 40 years ago.

BBC debut

Dr Alberto Santini, Italy's chief phytopathologist and leader of the Italian elm-breeding programme, was interviewed for BBC Radio 4's 'Costing the Earth' magazine, which focused on the problem of alien tree diseases. The programme was broadcast last December and didn't pull its punches, but it offered an optimistic view on the future of forestry; it is still available on I-player, and well worth 25 minutes. Log on to <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01p9dcp>

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



White-letter Hairstreak
Rosemary Powell

Your Newsletter needs you....

We hope that you have enjoyed the changes made to your Newsletter recently. We would love to showcase more of our members' talents by including more butterfly anecdotes, photos and artwork. However, this would involve adding more pages at extra cost, which (see Roger Buchanan's plea on p. 30) is not economically feasible. We propose therefore to have an expanded electronic version of the Newsletter on the Branch website, with space for a members gallery of photos and artwork of butterflies, moths and Branch-related events.

If you would like to submit any items please contact Dan Powell by email for further details.



Small Copper

Pete Durnell



Goat Moth caterpillar

Gary Palmer



Useful Contacts continued.....

Website: www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk

Reserves Officer and Health & Safety: Jayne Chapman, Lilac Cottage, Kiln Lane, Old Alresford SO24 9DU. Tel: 01962 808400. mob: 07909 968 657. **email:** jayne.t.chapman@hotmail.com

Financial Adviser: Arthur Greenwood, 23 Kingswood Firs, Grayshott GU26 6ET. Tel: 01428 604730. **email:** greenwoodarthur@hotmail.com

Membership Secretary: Pat Turner, Bridles, Waggoners Way, Grayshott, Surrey GU26 6DX. Tel: 01428 605831. **email:** pat@turner.me.uk

Publicity Officer: Mike Creighton, 24 Blackberry Terrace, Southampton SO14 0ED. mob. 07710 456153. **email:** creightonmj@mac.com

Librarian: Brian Fletcher, 1 Abbots Ann Road, Harestock, Winchester SO22 6ND. Tel: 01962 882746. **email:** brandm@talktalk.net

Leader SE Area Group: Andrew Brookes, 126 Castle Street, Fareham PO16 9QH. Tel: 07780 606556. **email:** andrew.brookes@port.ac.uk

Field Meetings Organiser: Dan Powell, 4 Forth Close, Stubbington PO14 3SZ. Tel: 01329 668465. **email:** dan.powell@care4free.net

Isle of Wight Group:

Contact: Caroline Dudley. Tel: 01983 754 935. **email:** caroline_dudley@btopenworld.com

Newsletter Deadline

Many thanks to all contributors. The deadline for the autumn Newsletter is 1 September 2013.

Articles on foreign or domestic butterfly or moth trips especially welcome.

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





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