



# 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](mailto:jchapman@butterfly-conservation.org)

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



# Branch AGM and Members' Day

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 18 November, 2018**.

Our guest speaker will be **Pete Eeles**, a former chair of the Branch and the driving force behind the excellent UK Butterflies website. Pete will be sharing some fascinating new insights into the life cycles of British and Irish butterflies.

We will also be reporting on:

- a **Year in the Life of Magdalen Hill Down**,
- how the **Marsh Fritillary** re-introduction project has progressed,
- and what next for our species and habitat **conservation work**.

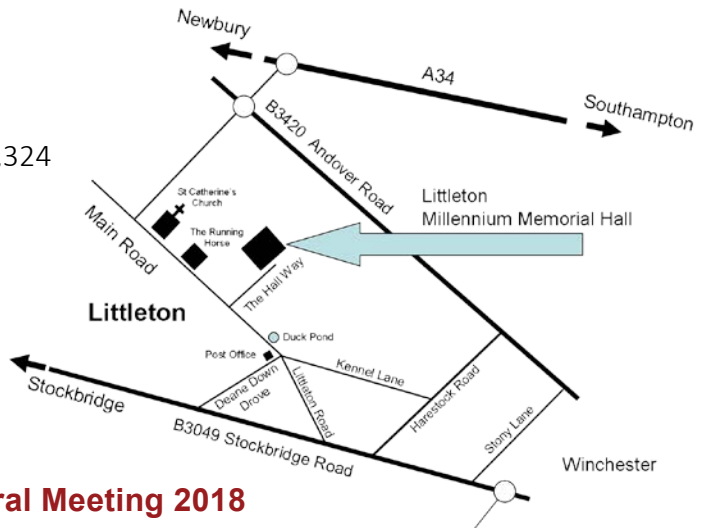
A timetable is shown below and a Littleton Memorial Hall location map is included on page 2.

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	Pete Eeles, <i>Life cycles of British and Irish butterflies</i>
14:35-14:50	Jayne Chapman, <i>A year in the life of Magdalen Hill Down</i>
14:50-15:15	Clive Wood, <i>Developing a new Branch Conservation Strategy</i>
15:15-15:45	Refreshments and photographic competition
15:45-16:10	Andy Barker and Clive Wood, <i>Re-introducing the Marsh Fritillary</i>
16:10-16:20	Presentation of Branch Conservation Awards
16:20-16:30	Results of photographic competition
16:30-16:40	Questions and answers, and close

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



## Annual General Meeting 2018

### AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting
3. Matters arising from the minutes
4. Presentation of Accounts
5. Reports of the:
  - 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

The draft minutes for the 2017 Annual General Meeting can be found on our Branch website <http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/> by following:  
Home > About > Minutes of AGMs > 2017

Copies will **not** be circulated at the 2018 Annual General Meeting.

**Any other business items should be notified to the Chair or Branch Secretary no later than 4 November, 2018.**

## 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 this element of the competition in recent years, 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 10 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 17 November**. Please ensure you enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you wish your prints to be returned.



*Comma. Rosemary Powell*



## Chairman's Message

**Well, what a summer that was!** Matthew Oates in his book, *In Pursuit of Butterflies, a Fifty-year Affair*, devotes a whole chapter to the long hot summer of 1976. This was the sun-drenched summer that came to a soggy end shortly after a Minister for Drought was appointed by the government of the day. His name was Denis Howell and members with a good memory for trivia will recall that he was subsequently appointed Minister for Floods, such was his success with the first job.

A good butterfly year is always welcome and I look forward to seeing how different species have responded to the fine weather. Those orange jewels, the Small Heath, must have had a bumper year judging by my transect records. Green-veined White and Common Blue have also done well but Small Tortoiseshell continues to elude me in any decent number. I'm also struggling to remember the last time I saw a Small Copper on transect, or anywhere else for that matter. I think I need to join some of Whitlock's Wanders.

There is, of course, a price to be paid for a summer bonanza. Both larval foodplants and nectar sources can become desiccated leading to small second broods or a poor subsequent year for some species. Cowslips and Kidney Vetch on chalk downland can be vulnerable to drought and therefore it will be interesting to see how species such as the Duke of Burgundy and Small Blue cope next year. My sense is that the drought was less severe and broke much earlier than 1976. We'll see.



*A Slovenian Silver-washed Fritillary, f.valezina. Clive Wood*

Perhaps the most commonly-recorded butterfly on my travels this year was the Silver-washed Fritillary. Woodland tracks, riverside walks and tree-lined glades in Italy and Slovenia were abundant with this magnificent butterfly. Many of the females were the beguiling *f.valezina* form. The Marbled White came into its own over meadows and tall grassland where it easily outnumbered the whites.

It was heartening to see **traditional land management practices** still used in the wilder areas of **Slovenia**, notably the Triglav National Park in the Julian Alps. Scythes are commonly used to manage small patches of open grassland above 700-800m where the land is too steep or the patch too small for tractors and mechanised cutters. It was, however, equally disheartening to realise that a small country renowned for its natural beauty is experiencing many of the same pressures on its native fauna and flora that more developed countries such as our own are experiencing. Slovenia has just one national park and yet Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) are locally abundant in too many places. A non-native bark beetle has killed many of the fast-growing (and non-native) spruce trees that were planted a few decades ago to boost the timber industry. A drift to towns and cities is leading to the de-population of small villages and the abandonment of remnant patches of open meadow. These rich habitat patches become vulnerable to afforestation by competitive, non-native tree and shrub species. Many local Slovenians are understandably concerned at the loss of bio-diversity and reduced ecological resilience to the challenges posed by climate change, non-native species and pathogens.

Tourism is exerting its own pressures and I felt guilty adding my footprint to the crowds gathered at **Vrsic Pass**, a spectacular landmark in north-west Slovenia. The numbers made it difficult to track down the mountain ringlets that were my quarry for the day but I took solace in good numbers of Alpine Heath and Chalk Hill Blue.

Our **Annual General Meeting** and **Members' Day** will take place on **Sunday 18 November** from 11.30am and I hope to meet many you on the day. AGMs can be stuffy affairs but we go to some trouble to make the day as interesting as possible for members. The formalities are dealt with as speedily as BC's rules allow and we have lined up what I hope is an entertaining programme of speakers and subjects. There will be a few surprises along the way so do please come along, especially if you have never been tempted before. Our keynote speaker is **Pete Eeles**, a former Branch Chair and a recipient of the Marsh Award for the Promotion of Lepidoptera Conservation at Butterfly Conservation's AGM and Members' Day in 2016. Pete will be sharing some fascinating new insights into the life cycles of British and Irish butterflies.

Our **Marsh Fritillary re-introduction** has required an enormous team effort over the past six months and I must place on record my thanks to the captive breeders in particular for the time, skill and effort they have devoted to the project. They are Sue Clarke, Roger Marriott, and Ched George, with Andy Barker and myself sharing the load at our breeding site near Romsey. Never have five people been so pleased to see butterfly larvae settle into their winter hibernation webs. We have provided a short update in this newsletter but a much fuller account will be given at the Members' Day. It has been a fascinating project with plenty of successes and challenges. I know you will be itching to learn whether the deadly parasite returned to infect the captive larvae. And if you want to know how to keep 20,000 hungry caterpillars fed and watered, then please come along on 18 November.



*Marsh Fritillary, first emergence on 21 May 2018. Andy Barker*

We will also be discussing our **conservation plans** and the opportunities we intend to create for more members to become directly involved in the conservation of our declining butterfly and moth communities. Our usual **photographic competition** will be held along with a raffle and there will be plentiful tea and coffee: all good reasons to put the date in your diary now, and to come to the Members' Day on 18 November.

With best wishes,

**Clive Wood, Chair**



## Branch News

### Turn old stamps and coins into cash!

A reminder please, to bring all your old coins and stamps to the Branch Members' Day and AGM on 18 November. This is how it works – a branch member collects any and all coins and stamps, of any age and from any country, and makes a donation to the Branch. All old coins and stamps apparently have some value. Stamps can be in albums or loose but taken off envelopes at a margin of around 1-2 cm. Old bank notes are also accepted from any country.

Simply bring the stamps and coins to the AGM and we will do the rest. There is no need to sort the items. If you cannot attend the AGM in person, please pass any donations to a friend or Branch Committee member. Many thanks.

**Clive Wood, Chair**



*Wall Brown, Perham Ranges. Ashley Whitlock*

### New members

A very warm welcome to the 97 new member households who have joined the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch since April, and the publication of the spring Newsletter. The Branch now has 1,660 member households.

New members are encouraged to come along to the Members' Day and Branch AGM. It's a great day for meeting other members, for learning more about the Branch and its work, and has very interesting, informative and enjoyable presentations.

New faces are also very welcome at our reserve work parties – see the inside front cover for more information and for details of this year's scheduled work see pages 14 and 15.

**Sharron Broadway, Membership Secretary**



## New Treasurer sought

We are looking for a new Treasurer to replace Bridget Grande who has done a wonderful job over several years. The main tasks of the role are:

- To prepare an annual budget of income and expenditure for the Branch in conjunction with members of the Main Committee.
- To advise the Main Committee on the financial implications of Branch activities and to monitor expenditure against plan.
- To act as a link between the Branch and the Head Office Finance Team for all financial matters including the authorisation and payment of invoices.
- To forward relevant paperwork to Head Office including evidence (i.e. invoices, delivery notes, income documents such as grant information) for payments and receipts where necessary.

The job holder will need to be a member of Butterfly Conservation and the Branch Main Committee. The number of accounting entries, and time needed to perform the role have both reduced significantly this year following the transfer of financial responsibility for the three Hampshire reserves to Head Office.

The role will suit someone with an accounting or bookkeeping background who enjoys being part of a small team and is interested in making a vital contribution to butterfly conservation in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight.

If you are interested, please get in touch with either Arthur Greenwood or myself for further information.

**Clive Wood, Chair**



*Peacock  
Rosemary Powell*



## Reserves News

### **Magdalen Hill Down, Yew Hill, and Bentley Station Meadow**

What a wonderful summer we were treated to. It certainly suited all those hoping to get out in the field to see butterflies and day-flying moths, and it definitely suited the butterflies too. From casual sightings and observation, it appears that both the Common and Chalk Hill Blues have fared very well. I am looking forward to comparing the UKBMS data after the final transect week of the season has been completed.



*Chalk Hill Blue. Christine Whiffen*

### **Summer visitors to Hampshire Reserves**

Thanks again to the weather, our summer walks and events that we hold on the reserves were well attended. Brian Fletcher led the majority of the 'Wednesday Wander' walks and Pete Flood (our new Reserves Committee member), led a couple of the "Friday Forays", all at Magdalen Hill Down (MHD). Brian also led a walk at Yew Hill, and Arthur Greenwood and Steve Easter kindly stepped in to show people around Bentley Station Meadow, including members from Surrey Branch. Other visits included a U3A walk to health group, and members of the Haslemere Natural History Society. Their generous donations were gratefully received.

## Wildlife on the reserves

Other than good numbers of butterflies, we were also treated to a new species record at MHD – the Downland robberfly, *Machimus rusticus*. Its distribution is rare and sporadic across southern England (with only 70 UK records on the NBM Atlas). There are 29 species of robberfly in the UK. A medium to large insect, it has stout spiny legs and sharp piercing mouthparts to kill other insects (*Insects of Britain and Ireland*; Paul D. Brock).

This photograph was taken by Barry Clark on Wednesday 1 August 2018 at MHD, and clearly shows the fly about to snack (by sucking the prey dry) on an unfortunate Common Blue.



*Downland robberfly. Barry Clark*

As a comparison, this Hornet robberfly, *Asilus crabroniformis*, image was taken the same day at MHD. This species is listed as ‘rare and declining’, although I would question that as I see it frequently on the reserve, perhaps because there is an abundance of cow and pony dung – both are used for egg-laying.



*Hornet robberfly. Barry Clark*

It is always a pleasure to observe other species that make their homes on the reserves, many of which are an indicator of good quality habitat. Magdalen is home to breeding Skylark populations, abundant numbers of reptiles that include Slowworm, Common Lizard and Grass Snake, all of which can be regularly seen amid the daily hovering displays of a pair of resident Kestrel, hunting for small mammals and insects. This bird is on the amber list for endangered species following declines in the 1970s, and the RSPB list the UK breeding population at 46,000 pairs.



*Kestrel hunting, MHD.  
Christine Whiffen*

## Managing meadows

Magdalen Hill Down has 27 hectares of wildflower meadows, which are managed through selective stock grazing, and cutting for hay. A percentage of each meadow is selected on rotation, so that not all of the meadow areas are cut at the same time (or in the same year). This allows for insects, small mammals and reptiles to migrate to an area of safety and adds to the diversity of the site as a whole.

In preparation for the cut, the grassland has to be 'cleaned', to remove any ragwort that could end up in the hay bales (which is toxic to horses). This year we had a total of five work parties to carry this out. The groups that turned up to help included the volunteer rangers from the South Downs National Park, the Hampshire Conservation Volunteers and an office day outing for members of staff from MACE in Winchester, all of which added up to 130 hours of much needed help. A big thank you goes to all the volunteers who gave up their time to help out.



*Staff from MACE after a hard day pulling ragwort. Jayne Chapman*



*Hay bales in the sun. Jayne Chapman*

Meadows were traditionally managed for making hay with low-level aftermath grazing to reduce the grass growth that could smother the wildflowers. If these traditional management measures are not put in place, a mat of vegetation builds up over time. This is known as thatch, which decomposes adding unwanted nutrients back into the soil, in turn affecting the growth of the wildflowers and can lead to a loss of species diversity.

50 bales are held back from the hay cut to sustain the livestock on site over the winter.

## Reserves Open Day

Kate Barrett and I were joined by members from the branch at our Open Day at MHD on 14th July. A good turn-out of families enjoyed activities such as bug hunting in the meadow, badge making, and counting butterflies as a run up to the Big Butterfly Count. The usual face-painting on offer kept the staff happy!



*Open day at Magdalen Hill Down. Jayne Chapman*

## Social media

With the huge interest in social media, we are very lucky to have access to stunning images from talented photographers. The Branch has one Facebook page (**Butterfly Conservation Hampshire & Isle of Wight**) and two Facebook groups (**Butterfly Conservation in Hampshire Public Group** and **Magdalen Hill Down Nature reserve**). The pages are informative and interactive, so please do join them if you are a Facebook user.

## Call for volunteers

Please do take a look at the winter programme of work party dates: on the next page – and please consider joining us in the coming months to manage our reserves and their special habitats for butterflies, moths and wildlife. Do contact me if you require further information. We look forward to welcoming all members to our reserves.

**Jayne Chapman, Reserves Officer**



## Winter Work Party Programme

### MAGDALEN HILL DOWN

- |   |           |          |
|---|-----------|----------|
| 1 | Monday 15 | October  |
| 2 | Monday 12 | November |
| 3 | Monday 26 | November |
| 4 | Monday 10 | December |
| 5 | Monday 7  | January  |
| 6 | Monday 21 | January  |
| 7 | Monday 4  | February |
| 8 | Monday 18 | February |
| 9 | Monday 4  | March    |

### BENTLEY STATION MEADOW

- |   |              |          |
|---|--------------|----------|
| 1 | Wednesday 17 | October  |
| 2 | Wednesday 7  | November |
| 3 | Wednesday 5  | December |
| 4 | Wednesday 2  | January  |
| 5 | Wednesday 13 | February |
| 6 | Wednesday 6  | March    |

### YEW HILL

- |   |            |          |  |
|---|------------|----------|--|
| 1 | Tuesday 13 | November | Clear fence-lines of unwanted species      |
| 2 | Tuesday 4  | December | Clear bridleways of overhanging vegetation |



## Meet details

**Magdalen Hill Down**, East entrance: 10am - 4pm. Meet in the car park at the top of the track between the Stonemasons and Morn Hill Cemetery SO21 1HE (SU 512 295).

**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.

**Yew Hill**: Meet at 10am in Old Kennels Lane, near the junction with Millers Lane, on the outskirts of Oliver's Battery; or walk up on to the reserve from Old Kennels Lane and meet on the reserve – it's only a small reserve so you'll find us easily.

If you cannot get to the meet points at 10am, please find us on the reserves. A note directing you to the location will be written on the blackboard at MHD.

We appreciate any time that you have to spare – even if it is just for the odd hour or so.

Please wear suitable clothing, and bring a packed lunch and refreshments. Tools, training, gloves and cakes will be provided.

Practical conservation tasks could include any of the following, and will generally involve a bonfire:

- Scrub clearance, raking and burning
- Tree popping (to remove unwanted woody species from the grasslands)
- Creating bare ground and planting caterpillar food plants
- Hedge laying and pleaching
- Clearing fence-lines of clematis and hawthorn

The work parties will be led by me, a contractor or a BC volunteer. On certain dates, a contractor may join us to carry out any necessary chainsaw work, or this might be done the day before in preparation for a work party.

## 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](mailto:jchapman@butterfly-conservation.org)

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

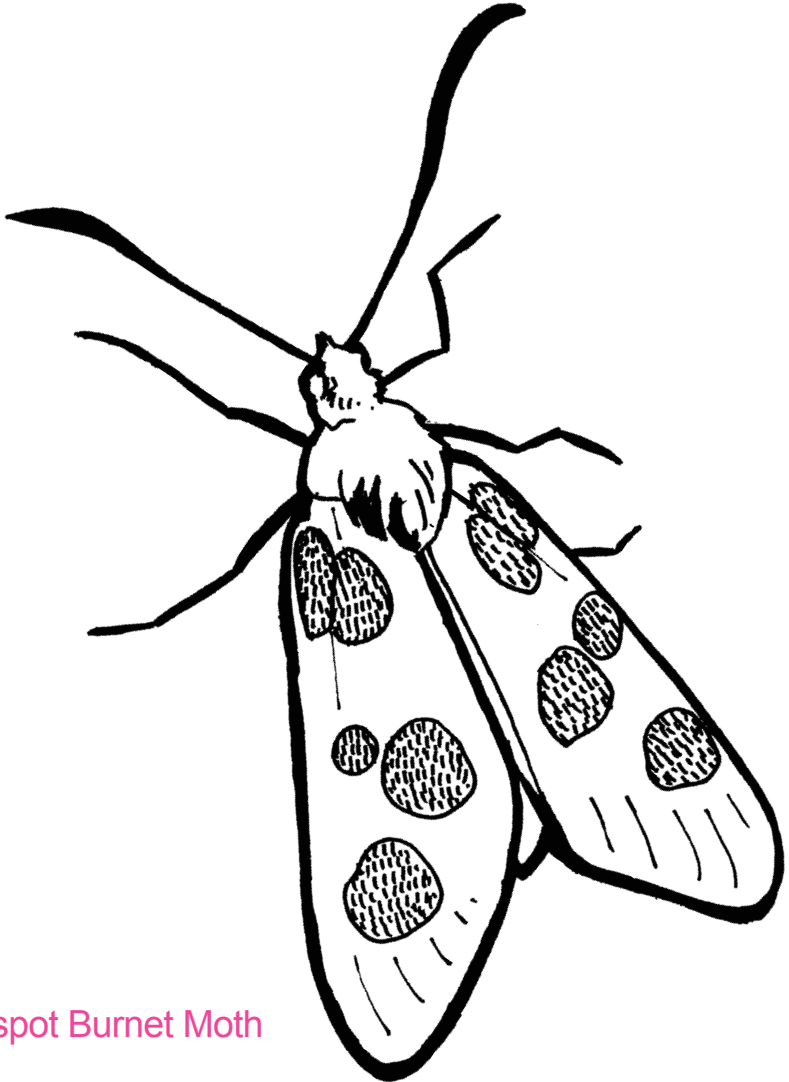
*Jayne Chapman, Senior Reserves Officer*





## Colour me in

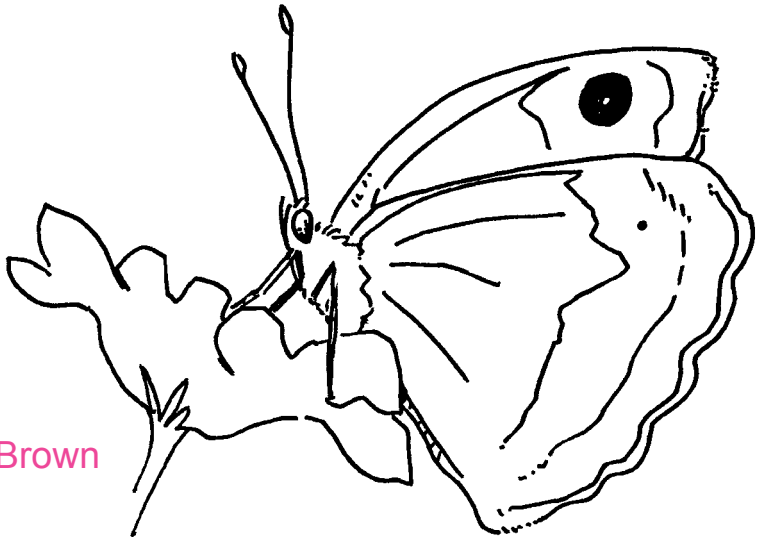
Share your coloured pictures with us by posting on the branch Facebook page.  
<https://m.facebook.com/ButterflyConservationHampshireAndIsleOfWight>



Five-spot Burnet Moth



Cinnabar Moth caterpillar



Meadow Brown



# Hampshire Walks Review



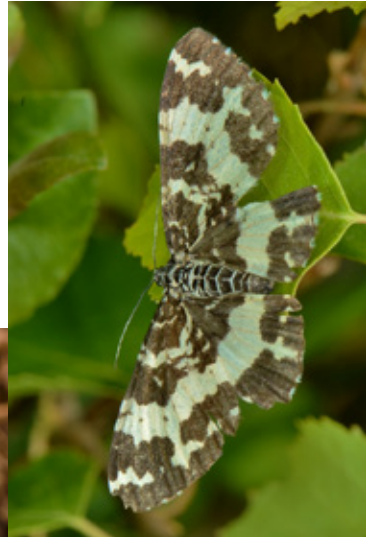
The field trip season in 2018 can be best described as generally very warm and sunny. There were only a couple of walk cancellations and re-arrangements in a summer of incredible weather. **Micheldever Woods** kicked off the walks programme, looking at the glorious display of Bluebells. Then into May, which turned out to be one of the best on record, at **Oxenbourne Down** we saw good numbers of Brimstone; at **Butser Hill**, one of the few re-arranged walks we had good counts of Duke of Burgundy, along with the singing Cuckoo and thermal-gliding Red Kites. Another highlight of the spring season was the visit over the border to **Sidney Wood** with the Surrey Branch where we saw the very rare Wood White. **Stockbridge Down** produced incredible amounts of Grizzled Skipper, and Small Copper, while in the coppiced woodland areas we saw the enigmatic Pearl Bordered Fritillary. In the latter half of May, **Martin Down** had the best count of Adonis Blue with well over 100 being seen, along with everyone's favourite, the Marsh Fritillary.

Into the summer, the now rare Small Pearl-Bordered Fritillary was seen at **Bentley Wood**, along with the Argent and Sable Moth. At **Bramshott Common** there were good counts of Silver-Studded Blue, and at **Butser Hill** at the end of June we had good numbers of Dark Green Fritillary. The summer heat was building with temperatures into the upper 20s Celsius for weeks on end, giving rise to Purple Emperor emergence three weeks earlier than average, and the field trips just managed to catch its last week of flight at **Abbotts Wood** Inclosure, with good counts at **West Wood** and **Pitt Down**.

*The class of 2018. All images Ashley Whitlock*

At **Whiteley Pastures** we espied the lovely *Valezina* Silver-Washed Fritillary, and at **Swanwick Lakes** fruitful wanderings in the meadow there produced egg-laying Small Skippers, and wonderful dragonflies. **West Harting Down**, one of the longest walks in the programme, usually has a surprise for us and this year a rather bedraggled female Purple Emperor was seen in the last moments of its life after egg-laying.

*Argent and Sable, Rheumaptera hastate*



*Wood White, Leptidea sinapis*

Impromptu field trips are always an option and one to **Shipton Bellinger** produced my best ever count of Brown Hairstreak. At **Perham Ranges** we all expected Silver-spotted Skipper and Brown Hairstreak but a very welcome rarity, a Wall Brown, was the star of the day. A few Grayling turned up at **Yew Tree Heath** plus a late Silver-studded Blue.

The penultimate field trip for the 2018 season ended at **Old Winchester Hill** with lots of Adonis Blue on the wing and the popular Silver-spotted Skipper still 'whizzing' about.

Here's to 2019!

**Ashley Whitlock, Field Meetings Organiser**



## The 'field trip' with a difference – the Skippers and Admirals Cruise



The Skippers and Admirals cruise took place on Saturday 7 July 2018. Our vessel – *John Pinkerton* – is a 21metre-long canal boat capable of carrying 50 passengers, with a well-stocked bar, serving light refreshments, tea and coffee. The setting was the Basingstoke Canal, in a quiet backwater just outside the town of Odiham in north Hampshire. The weather couldn't have been better, with hot sunshine as we embarked at 10:15 prompt. After a health and safety brief we settled down to a canal cruise, which was extremely relaxing and a lovely, congenial way to catch up with old friends and to make new ones.

The canal is well maintained. As we slipped gently along at a very slow walking pace, joggers and cyclists on the canal towpath regularly overtaking us, we saw many lovely dragonflies and damselflies, all close-to and near eye level along the oak and willow-strewn banks. Personally I was looking for the elusive Purple Emperor, which had been reported a week or so before this trip. I could understand why this might be reported here as there are good stands of sallow, but unfortunately I didn't see it. However, there were excellent counts of Purple Hairstreak, flying like silver sixpences amongst the oak sprigs just above our heads.

*Waiting to board the John Pinkerton, Colt Hill Wharf, Odiham. Ashley Whitlock*



I noted seventeen species of butterfly. After a relaxing hour, we disembarked to walk along the canal towpath whilst the crew turned the boat around for the return journey. We walked for about 15 minutes to reach the entrance to Greywell tunnel, built in 1789, where there is a very good bat colony. The tunnel, now sealed at one end due to a collapse, is one of the best sites to see some of the rarest bats in the country. I also noted very good stands of Wych Elm on both sides of the canal here, and I suspect there are unrecorded White-letter Hairstreak colonies. We also saw the ruins of Odiham Castle, where King John resided before signing Magna Carta.

We all got back on the boat and enjoyed a really good fish and chips lunch, washed down with whatever beverage we fancied.

This was a great way to relax and watch canal-side wildlife, especially on such a hot and sunny day. This certainly was a field trip with a difference!

***Ashley Whitlock,  
Field Meetings Organiser***



*Along the Basingstoke Canal.  
Ashley Whitlock*



## Re-introducing the Marsh Fritillary to north-east Hampshire

The Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) has once again flown over north-east Hampshire! Our efforts to restore this beautiful butterfly to its former stronghold sites in the county were rewarded on 21 May 2018 when the first adults were seen on the wing by Richard Hennessey, a Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT) Reserves Officer. It was a wonderful moment and a major milestone after six years of planning and hard work by members of the Hampshire Marsh Fritillary Action Group.

In April and early May this year, some 2,057 late instar larvae were released at the receptor sites managed by the HIWWT. Many of the larvae will have fallen prey to wolf spiders, solitary wasps, shrews, voles and even grazing slugs but enough made it through to pupation to emerge as adults in late May and June. The good news is that we know from survey work that many of these adults successfully mated. The resulting larvae are therefore the first Marsh Fritillaries to be born in the wild at the receptor sites for over 20 years.



*Marsh Fritillary larva, April 2018.*

Late instar Marsh Fritillary larvae are prodigious feeders on Devil's-bit Scabious. Analysis of foodplant consumption by 152 fifth-instar larvae kept in two breeding tubs showed that, when feeding, just fifteen larvae were capable of consuming one plant per day. This rate of consumption placed very significant time and husbandry pressures on the breeders. Andy Barker and myself as joint project leads are therefore indebted to Branch members Roger Marriott and Sue Clarke and to Upper Thames member Ched George for the time and skill they have given to the project over the past couple of years, and to Tim Bernhard in the initial phase.

Pupation and emergence as adults in the breeding cages reduced the pressure on food supplies but this was only a short-lived respite. Once mated, the females laid abundant egg batches which all too quickly developed into hungry first-instar larvae. The productivity of the female adult Marsh Fritillary is hugely impressive. In four breeding cages at a site near Romsey, around 70 females laid 149 egg batches containing some 23,721 eggs. The latter figure was calculated by Andy Barker with the aid of photographs taken of each egg batch through a 5x5mm grid and some diligent observation and assessment work. Take a bow, Andy.



*Massive larval webs, August 2018. All images, Andy Barker*

This level of productivity is far more than the four breeding sites (and breeders) can reasonably look after through the winter and early spring. The decision was therefore taken to release 18,000 pre-hibernation larvae at the receptor sites in August. This brought the total number of larvae released to just less than 21,000. All the over-wintering larvae retained by the breeders will be released in spring 2019 to mark the end of this phase of the project.

We cannot tell at this stage whether the project will succeed in its main aim. That assessment will have to wait several more years but the signs are encouraging and we remain confident that a new Marsh Fritillary population will establish itself in north-east Hampshire.

**Clive Wood,  
Hampshire Marsh Fritillary Action Group**





## Notable Moth Records on the Isle of Wight

Since April there have been some excellent moths recorded on the Island including three new species for VC10.

**Double Line (*Mythimna turca*)** is a Nationally scarce B species, meaning that it occurs in 31 to 100 10km squares in Great Britain. One was recorded in Totland.

On 23 May, lepidopterists visiting Mottistone Down found larvae of **Scythris crassiuscula** on Common Rock-rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*). Some larvae were collected and bred through to confirm the species, which is also Nationally scarce B.

**Zelleria oleastrella** is a rare but increasingly recorded migrant moth from southern Europe. Two were recorded from Hampshire in 2016 but the first for the Island were seen in Shanklin on 18 June. The larvae mine the leaves of Olive trees.



*Zelleria oleastrella*



*Agrotera nemoralis*

The good weather has seen a decent run of migrant moths reported with a **Druid (*Aedia funesta*)** trapped in Totland on 1 July. There are only 12 previous UK records of this species, two of which were from the same site in Totland. A **Light Crimson Underwing (*Catocala promissa*)** was recorded at St. Catherine's Point on 4 July and a **Dark Crimson Underwing (*Catocala sponsa*)** at Bonchurch on 7 July. Other good migrant moths have included **Splendid Brocade (*Lacanobia splendens*)** and four *Catoptria verellus*, all from Shanklin.

Another presumed migrant is **Agrotera nemoralis** which was first recorded on the Island in 2015 at Borthwood Copse and with five records up to the end of 2017. There have been a further five records in 2018. The first was seen at Ventnor Botanic Gardens on 30 May, two have been trapped in Bonchurch and three in Shanklin with a single on 9 June and two on 8 July.

The non-migrant highlight was undoubtedly finding four **Suspected (*Parastichtis suspecta*)** at St. Catherine's Point on 4 July. There are only two previous county records, from July 1897 and August 1963. It is hoped that there is a viable population in that area. The larvae feed on Birch and Sallow.

Of course there have been many other interesting finds including ***Scythris picaepennis*** and ***Epermenia insecurella*** on Mottistone Down, the latter not seen here since 1926. Seven ***Endothenia nigricostana*** were recorded in Shanklin. This is an unobtrusive moth that is associated with the larval food plant Hedge Woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*). It is probably widespread but there are just four previous records.

There have also been records of **Boxworm (*Cydia perspectalis*)** from Totland, Cowes and Shanklin; this potential pest species is clearly increasing on the Island.



*Suspected (Parastichtis suspecta)*  
All photos Iain Outlaw

*Dusky Hook-tip (Drepana curvatula)*



The run of rare migrant moths has continued. A **Dewick's Plusia (*Macdunnoughia confusa*)** was recorded in Bonchurch on 13 July and trapping at Niton on 20 July produced the first **Dotted Footman (*Pelosia muscerda*)** and second **Dusky Hook-tip (*Drepana curvatula*)** for the Island. Over in Shanklin, ***Psammotis pulveralis*** was recorded on the same night. The following evening saw a stunning male **Beautiful Marbled (*Eublemma purpurina*)** trapped at Wheelers Bay, another new species for Wight. Incredibly, a female Beautiful Marbled was trapped in Bonchurch and another Dusky Hook-tip was trapped in Shanklin on 22 July. Finally, a **Light Crimson Underwing (*Catocala promissa*)** was trapped in Shanklin on 30 July.

**Iain Outlaw, Moth Recorder IOW**



## Wildlife Gardening – Habitat Creation

If you want to attract butterflies and moths to breed in your garden rather than just visit it for nectar, you'll have to provide the foodplants that their larvae feed on. There are quite a few species that need specialised habitats, such as chalk downland, heathland, wet meadows, etc., so that even if you grow their larval foodplants they will not breed in your garden. The more you think of your garden as a "habitat" the better it will provide for wildlife in general. You need a canopy layer formed by a tree or trees, a shrub layer, and the understory, which can be your garden plants, plus an area of rough grass, preferably with nectar-rich flowers growing in it. Since butterflies are cold-blooded they also need a warm, sheltered sunny environment to thrive; and it goes without saying that the use of pesticides should be avoided.

The best way to determine which species you might be able to attract is to look at the surrounding area and see what naturally occurs there. The size of your garden will also have an influence on what you can hope for. The easiest species to cater for are: Holly Blue, whose caterpillars eat holly flowers in late spring and ivy flowers in autumn; Orange-tip and Green-veined White if you grow lady's smock or hedge garlic (*Alliaria petiolata*); and any brassica (not just cabbages), including nasturtiums, will attract Small and Large Whites. Brimstones lay on Alder Buckthorn, and Common Blues on Birdsfoot Trefoil, but for both these species other conditions have to be right before they will breed. The larvae of the vanessids (Peacock, Red Admiral, Comma and Small Tortoiseshell) are well-known for feeding on nettles, but the nettles they go for have to be in full sun and preferably growing vigorously. Not many people want this on their plot, while growing nettles deliberately for them tends to be a waste of time.



Probably the best thing you can do to attract a range of butterflies to breed in your garden is to have an area of mixed long grasses. Skippers, Gatekeepers, Meadow Browns, Ringlets and Speckled Wood all breed on a range of native grasses such as bents, fescues and others. You can provide such an area by using part of your lawn. The easiest way is to stop mowing a section of it. Decide on a nice shape and let it develop, cutting it in spring and autumn, but not too close as the larvae shelter in the tussocks. Remove the cuttings to cut down on soil fertility and encourage wildflowers to grow.

Most butterflies overwinter as eggs, larvae or pupae, and are usually well hidden. Leaf litter is a valuable habitat for butterfly and moth chrysalises, and some caterpillars pupate in dead plant stems, or at the base of grassy tussocks, so that the old adage of “don’t be too tidy” holds good.

It is not enough to provide the right conditions for the larvae: the adult butterflies will need all the nectar-rich flowers you can provide from about March to November - to cater for early emerging species as well those that are still flying in late autumn.

### ***Juliet Bloss***





## Garden Dukes

Most days we monitor our Redenham garden (near Andover) for any wildlife and on 2 June 2018 only one butterfly was seen, late in the day. It turned out to be a drab looking Duke of Burgundy – a first for us.

The following morning at 10:30, we found this butterfly again; it stayed in the same area all day until around 18:00. It spent its time sitting on top of plants such as redcurrant and raspberry, mostly with wings partly open and we decided that this confirmed it to be a male holding his territory. Just before 11:00 a much more colourful specimen appeared within a metre of the male, settling low down on plants, mainly primrose before disappearing into the undergrowth. We concluded that this butterfly was female. We did not witness any interaction between the two butterflies or any egg-laying by the female.

The following day (4 June), the drab looking male held his territory from 9:30 but was not seen after 11:30.

What a wonderful experience to have these lovely butterflies in our garden. We will keep an eye out for any caterpillars eating primrose leaves. The lane where we live has areas of primrose on the edges of the woods, so possibly the Duke of Burgundy has previously been resident nearby but we have not seen them before. Our garden is rather overgrown and contains a lot of primroses that grow in the flower beds and in the lawn.

**Janice and Ian Bowes**



*Duke of Burgundy - female & male. Ian Bowes*



## Butterflies Overwintering as Adults

There are four resident Hampshire and Isle of Wight species that spend the winter months as butterflies: Brimstone, Comma, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell. Individuals of each of these species emerging as adults in late summer can live for eight months, or perhaps even longer, hibernating during the worst of the winter weather, and flying again when the lengthening and warming days of spring come around.



*Peacock, Brimstone & Small Tortoiseshell. Dan Powell*

It is not uncommon on a mild winter's day, or even on a frosty day in a very sheltered location that has a south facing aspect and experiences direct sunshine, to see any one of these four butterflies brightening the season. Garden sheds and dense ivy covering on fences and walls are typical overwintering places. Keeping dry is essential to survival from autumn through to spring. It is not so much the temperature that is critical to survival, but exposure to wind and rain that is more likely to be fatal.

It is possible in particularly favourable south coast locations that Red Admiral, Painted Lady and Clouded Yellow might be seen – records do exist. These are migrant species arriving here in the summer and continue to breed, if the weather, nectar sources and larval foodplant conditions are favourable, and so it is possible to see these butterflies late into autumn. The vast majority though fail to overwinter.

Do please report any late autumn, winter and early spring butterfly sightings. The best way to do this is via Living Record: <https://livingrecord.net/>

**Kevin Freeborn**



## Book Review

### **Beyond Spring by Matthew Oates**

Published by Fair Acre Press, October 2017

Paperback, 258pp, £9.99

ISBN: 978-1-91104-823-7

Matthew Oates is one of our best known 'butterfly ambassadors' and after writing *In Pursuit Of Butterflies* a few years ago he has now produced a follow-up book. This isn't really a sequel as it paints a much broader natural history canvas, the sub-title being 'Wanderings Through Nature'. Nevertheless butterflies are well represented in species, locations, and behaviours such as roosting techniques. Matthew's vast knowledge, especially of birds and flora, is evident throughout with many memorable descriptions. To mention just three, he writes magically about goldfinches, summer rain and the dawn chorus. Poetry is plentiful though a few examples are of questionable quality. Literature quotes from a wide variety of sources enrich the text and there is the usual somewhat earthy humour, especially about being bitten by deer flies. Matthew has deliberately adopted a style of short chapters for 'snatch reading' during lunch breaks or 'sneakily behind a pile of papers during pointless office meetings'. This is now retrospective comment since the author has now retired after many years of conservation work for the National trust.

He as usual has strong and eloquent opinions, describing serried rows of conifers as 'a hell on earth representing the darkest shadows of the mind' and adds that 'we are living in a world which has fallen still further from grace for nature's church is now being rapidly eroded away'.

Considering his great love of Purple Emperors it shows remarkable restraint not to include any detailed comments until page 142. Then, however, he does go somewhat 'over the top' quoting from Isaiah 'the people who walked in darkness have seen a great light' unless of course his source is the repetition of this quote in the gospel of Matthew. I was also surprised that he wrote of the Holly Blue being dependent on holly for one of its broods as way back in 1999 Ken Willmott, in a Butterfly Conservation booklet about this species, listed twenty eight probable larval food sources. Also our British Swallowtail is not 'wholly dependent' on just milk parsley as it can occasionally use other plants if the adult emerges early and finds the normal larval foodplant not sufficiently developed.

Nevertheless this is a rich and well written addition to our natural history catalogue and it was short-listed for the 2017 Richard Jefferies literature award, and for *Countryfile Magazine* 'Country book of the year'.

**Richard Stewart**

A Paul Brock  
Photo Gallery



*White-letter Hairstreak*

*Clifden Nonpariel  
defence display,  
Brockenhurst*



*Small Blue*





## Useful Contacts

[www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk](http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk)

**Chairman:** Clive Wood, Tel: 01962 852620; Mob: 07833 088150;  
Email: [clivepwood@gmail.com](mailto:clivepwood@gmail.com)

**Vice-Chairman:** Mike Wall, Mob: 07981 984761; Email: [mike@hantsmoths.org.uk](mailto:mike@hantsmoths.org.uk)

**Branch Secretary and Organiser:** Mary Macmillan, Tel: 01590 719563;  
Mob: 07803 022389; Email: [marymacmillan.mm@gmail.com](mailto:marymacmillan.mm@gmail.com)

**Treasurer:** Bridget Grande, Wield Manor Cottage, Upper Wield, Alresford, SO24 9RS;  
Tel: 01420 562876; Mob: 07768 741273; Email: [grande.bridge@gmail.com](mailto:grande.bridge@gmail.com)

**Minutes Secretary:** Kate Barrett, Email: [kneame@gmail.com](mailto:kneame@gmail.com)

**Butterfly Recorder:** Bob Annell, Tel: 02380 840316; Email: [grahants23@gmail.com](mailto:grahants23@gmail.com)

**Butterfly Recorder (IoW):** Andy Butler, Email: [a.butler321@btinternet.com](mailto:a.butler321@btinternet.com)

**Transect Recorders:** Linda & Andy Barker, 13 Ashdown Close, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, SO53 5QF; Tel: 02380 270042; Email: [lindabarker4@btinternet.com](mailto:lindabarker4@btinternet.com)

**Moth Recorder (Hants):** Mike Wall, Email: [mike@hantsmoths.org.uk](mailto:mike@hantsmoths.org.uk)

**Moth Recorder (IoW):** Iain Outlaw, Email: [zoothera@live.co.uk](mailto:zoothera@live.co.uk)

**Chairman Information Subcommittee:** Abby Sullivan,  
Email: [abby.sullivan1990@outlook.com](mailto:abby.sullivan1990@outlook.com)

**Chairman Records Subcommittee:** Bob Annell, 23 Ashleigh Close, Hythe, Southampton, Hampshire, SO45 3QN; Tel: 02380 840316; Email: [grahants23@gmail.com](mailto:grahants23@gmail.com)

**Chairman Reserves Subcommittee:** Jenny Mallett, Great Fontley Farm, Fareham, PO15 6EA; Tel: 01329 832177; Email: [jbm.gff23@gmail.com](mailto:jbm.gff23@gmail.com)

**Webmaster:** Bob Whitmarsh, Email: [webmaster@hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk)

**Newsletter Editor:** Kevin Freeborn, Mob: 07929 278582;  
Email: [kevinfreeborn@btinternet.com](mailto:kevinfreeborn@btinternet.com)

**Reserves Officer and Health & Safety:** Jayne Chapman, Tel: 01962 808400;  
Email: [jchapman@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:jchapman@butterfly-conservation.org)

**Financial Adviser:** Arthur Greenwood, Tel: 01428 604730;  
Email: [greenwoodarthur@hotmail.com](mailto:greenwoodarthur@hotmail.com)

**Membership Secretary:** Sharron Broadway, Email: [sharron\\_broadway@hotmail.com](mailto:sharron_broadway@hotmail.com)

**Field Meetings Organiser:** Ashley Whitlock, Tel: 02392 731266;  
Email: ashleywhitlock@virginmedia.com

### **Isle of Wight Group:**

**Caroline Dudley (events):** Tel: 01983 754935;  
Email: caroline\_dudley@btopenworld.com

**Stuart Read (all other enquiries):** Tel: 07877 333734, Email: s.jread@btinternet.com

**Newsletter Designer:** Dan Powell, Email: danpowell11@btinternet.com

**Artworks:** Rosemary Powell. [www.powellwildlifeart.com](http://www.powellwildlifeart.com)

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## **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. I want to continue 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 conservation interests 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 spring Newsletter, edition no. 106, is 11 February 2019**

### **Lepidoptera Tale Piece... your story behind the picture**

Chatting to Ashley Whitlock on the field trip to West Wood and Crab Wood at the height of a very good Emperor season, and at the time that the England football team had recently thumped six goals past the Panamanians in the Russia World Cup, Ashley commented that he had two wishes for the year: 2018 to be the best Purple Emperor season on record and England to lift the World Cup. We'll need to wait another four years for the World Cup to come round again, but what will 2019 hold for the Purple Emperor following an excellent showing this year?

***Kevin Freeborn***

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



**Hampshire**  
County Council



**Portsmouth**  
CITY COUNCIL

Butterfly Conservation is a charity registered in England & Wales (254937) and in Scotland (SC039268).  
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*Lepidoptera Tale Piece ...*



*... for the full story go to the inside back cover.*

*Purple Emperor – Ashley Whitlock*