

# Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch



Newsletter 107



Butterfly  
Conservation

October 2019



# 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 17 November, 2019**.

Our theme this year is conservation in practice and our first guest speaker will be **Penny Green**, the ecologist at **Knepp Estate**, who will tell us about the Knepp Rewilding Project, sharing its journey and the extraordinary results of the project so far, with some headline success stories including nightingales, turtle doves and purple emperors. A couple of well-known Branch members will present **two conservation case studies** to show what is being done at a local level to improve the fortunes of our butterflies. Finally, our second guest speaker will be Butterfly Conservation's **Zoë Randle** who will discuss the new ***Atlas of Britain and Ireland's Larger Moths*** due to be published in November.

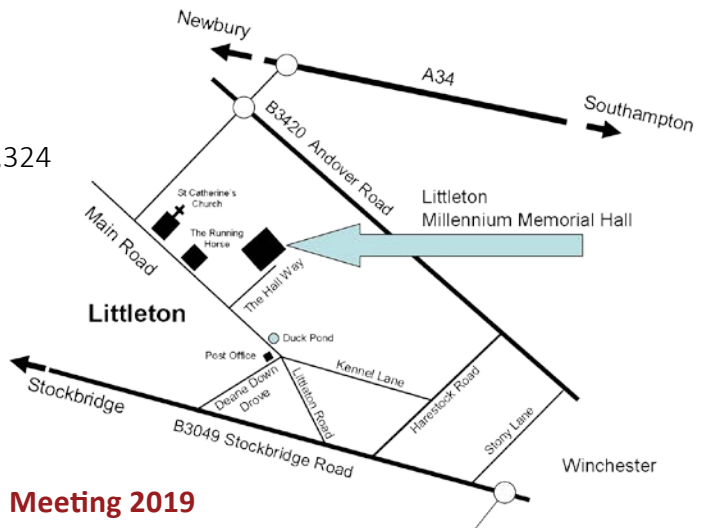
A timetable is shown below and a Littleton Memorial Hall location map is included on page 2.

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 The Knepp Rewilding Project – Penny Green, Knepp Ecologist
- 14:35-15:20 Conservation in Practice – two case studies
- 15:20-15:50 Refreshments and photographic competition
- 15:50-16:15 The New Moth Atlas – Zoë Randle
- 16:15-16:30 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 2019

### AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2018 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 2018 Annual General Meeting can be found on our Branch website <http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/> by following:  
Home > About > Minutes of AGMs > 2018

Copies will **not** be circulated at the 2019 Annual General Meeting.

**Any other business items should be notified to the Chair or Branch Secretary no later than 3 November, 2019.**

## Photographic Competition

Prints will be displayed and judged in the following categories:

- UK Butterflies
- UK Moths
- Immature stages
- Overseas butterflies and moths
- First time entrants on any of the above subjects

All members entering images into the photographic competition do so on the following terms and conditions:

1. Image(s) must have been taken by the entrants during the 18 months preceding entry into the competition.
2. Entrants agree that their images may be used for non-commercial purposes by the Branch. This includes publishing images on the Branch website, social media channels and in the Branch Newsletter and Annual Butterfly and Moth reports. Copyright will remain with the member at all times and will be acknowledged when images are used by the Branch.
3. All images must be prints not exceeding A4 size (297x210mm) in either landscape or portrait format and may be mounted or unmounted.
4. Entries are limited to three per entrant.

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 to coax the shy and retiring photographers among you, we will be continuing with the category for images submitted by first-time entrants but otherwise on the same conditions as above.

Members unable to attend the day but who wish to submit prints may do so by posting them to **Sharron and Rupert Broadway, 18 Lark Hill Rise, Badger Farm, Winchester, SO22 4LX**, to arrive by **Saturday 16 November**. Please ensure that you enclose a stamped addressed envelope if you wish your prints to be returned.





## Chairman's Message

One of the highlights of my summer was a wonderful abundance of **Small Tortoiseshells** in unexpected places. Stuart Read's lament to the decline of the Small Tortoiseshell in the Spring edition of the Newsletter prompted me to check the number of Small Tortoiseshells I have seen on all the various transects and WCBS surveys I have completed over the past three years. The grand total? Just 27 adults. None of my transects take me through glades of towering buddleia, few do, but 27 is a poor count over such a time span for a butterfly that used to be so common.

It was therefore a wonderful surprise to find 20 or so individuals feasting on a lilac bush near Redmire in Wensleydale in late July. I came across this wonderful sight whilst taking myself and my brother-in-law's dog for a daily constitutional down a small country lane. Five minutes later I was still rooted to the same spot, much to the frustration of the dog. A few Red Admirals and a solitary Peacock added to the spectacle but the Small Tortoiseshells were the star of this show. Towards the end of the same walk I came across another 15 or so feeding on thistle or basking on a 10m stretch of dry-stone wall. All were in pristine condition and all happy to ignore this observer and his panting hound. All records were duly logged via the excellent iRecord Butterflies app. I recorded over 70 Small Tortoiseshells whilst walking the dog in Wensleydale. This seemed to be a pretty decent haul bearing in mind that we only recorded c1400 adults across the whole of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight in 2018.



*Red Admiral. Rosemary Powell*

It has been a good summer for the second year running and I even enjoyed the occasional deluges that came with the arrival of August. Plants have generally avoided desiccation and our late summer butterflies seem to have responded in kind. We are working with a local landowner to restore some **remnant chalk downland** near **Up Somborne** outside Winchester through some conservation grazing and topping. The results of this work on the local butterfly population have been spectacular. Numbers have already more than doubled in just the second year of monitoring and new species have been recorded on the site. It is of course far too early to draw any firm conclusions but it just shows how butterflies can respond if we give them half a chance.

I am hoping that we have given the **Marsh Fritillary** more than half a chance with the release of over 27,000 larvae over the past two years at various sites in north-east Hampshire. The breeding and release phase of the project is now over and we have found good homes for around 5,000 Devil's-bit Scabious plants. When collated, the results of the larval web surveys in late August and early September should provide a good indication of breeding success in the wild.

It is always pleasing to know that people read the Newsletter, even my introductory piece, because three members came forward after my plea in the Spring Newsletter for someone to volunteer as **Branch Treasurer**. I am delighted to announce that **Simon Powell** is the lucky one! Simon lives in Old Alresford and is a very keen naturalist with a particular interest in ornithology. He is a former banker (but we don't hold that against him) and I know he will make a valued contribution to the work of the Branch. Simon, welcome.

Our **Annual General Meeting and Members' Day** will take place on **Sunday 17 November** from 11.30am and I hope to meet many of you on the day. We are always keen to encourage newer members to come along so do please put the date in your diaries. It's a great way to meet fellow members and learn a little more about what we do as a Branch. Our usual **photographic competition** will be held along with an excellent raffle and plentiful tea and coffee. You'll find the programme and location details elsewhere in the Newsletter.

Our guest speaker this year is **Penny Green, Ecologist at Knepp Wildland** in West Sussex. In 2001 the Knepp Castle Estate started the transition from extensive arable and dairy farming to a pioneering process-led conservation project. Natural ecological processes have been restored with large herbivores moving freely in the landscape, as they would a few thousand years ago. Each grazing species affects the vegetation in different ways which creates a mosaic of habitats from open grassland through to regenerating scrub. Penny will share

the journey of this rewilding project and the extraordinary results achieved so far, with some headline success stories including nightingales, turtle doves and Purple Emperors. It promises to be a fascinating talk.

Some members may be unaware that **John Ruppertsbery** passed away in July. John was a passionate champion of the New Forest and its butterflies. He was a larger-than-life character who made a lasting impression on everyone he met. His intimate knowledge of the New Forest fritillary colonies was second to none and he matched his knowledge with sincere conviction. An appreciation follows in the Newsletter but I shall never forget meeting John whenever he decided to reinforce a point about the conservation of the Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Once told, never forgotten. He will be greatly missed.



*Red-banded Jezebel (Delias mysis). Clive Wood*

On a happier note, I had the good fortune to visit **northern Queensland** earlier this year. The butterflies and moths can be spectacular but my favourite was a medium-sized species rejoicing in the name of a Red-banded Jezebel (*Delias mysis*). I attach an image for no other reason than to share its beauty.

***Clive Wood, Chair***





## Remembering John Ruppertsbery (1946-2019)

The news that John Ruppertsbery died in Southampton General Hospital this July has saddened so many of us, both in the New Forest and throughout Hampshire.

John was an integral part of the Hampshire butterfly scene for many years and his passion for Pearl-bordered Fritillary in the New Forest was well known and respected. His input as a member of the Branch's former Conservation Sub-Committee was particularly valued.

His encyclopaedic knowledge was nothing short of amazing – he would often recount something you had told him in the distant past with extraordinary accuracy.

He knew the boundaries of the New Forest Inclosures intimately and he had his own names for certain areas such as 'The Corsican', 'Cook's Corner' and 'The Cathedral' which he expected everyone to know!

He also had pen names for many people; 'Oracle of Stockley' springs to mind.

John always considered the New Forest Keepers as 'Guardians of the Pearls' and liaised closely with them, planning annual habitat improvements throughout the areas colonised by the species. He would then be heavily involved in the supervisory stage and would often attend when the Two Trees Conservation Team (a Forestry England volunteer group) carried out his suggestions.

John's knowledge of Pearl-bordered Fritillary was second to none; he once wrote that he had noted larvae crawling twelve inches in 8-15 seconds!

He wrote many reports and letters, which were amusing, often colourful and a pleasure to read but always strongly made his point. He would always ask someone to proof read the documents before sending which was useful as his passion would often run away with him.

No more will unsuspecting walkers be surprised by a tall be-whiskered man emerging from a ditch and then spending some considerable time educating them on the history, fortunes and future of Pearl-bordered Fritillary in the New Forest. They would always depart with a rich knowledge following this encounter.

John provided the Branch with countless records over the years, not only from the Pearl colonies, but also from visits to Brockishill Inclosure, his 'local patch', and often further a field when he monitored Silver-studded Blue and Grayling.

To conclude in John's own words: **'Thank you for the days, those endless Golden Pearl Days, those sacred days you gave me'** and thank you John for sharing your knowledge with so many. The Forest Pearls have lost their Champion, Hampshire and the New Forest a valued friend, the irreplaceable JR.

**Bob Annell**



# Garden Butterfly Survey

The Garden Butterfly Survey was introduced by Butterfly Conservation in 1990 and coordinated and managed by Dr Margaret Vickery for 25 years. Hard copy forms were distributed with issues of the Butterfly Conservation magazine and readers asked to record the presence of species in their gardens for the four seasons of the year.

Our own Peter Eeles then developed a web-based, quantitative, system which was launched in 2016 to replace the hard copy forms.

Annual results from this source are not available for inclusion in our Annual Butterfly Report and last year amounted to an additional 4,385 records bringing our total records for the year to **100,412** (433,514 butterflies), the first time the Hampshire Branch has achieved over 100,000 records in a year.

The following table summarises the results of the Garden Butterfly Survey in Hampshire over the last three years.

Species	2018	2018	Position (by Records)		
	Records	Individuals	2018	2017	2016
Small White	680	1,414	<b>1</b>	2	<b>1</b>
Large White	513	849	2	6	2
Holly Blue	396	521	3	7	5
Speckled Wood	367	546	4	5	9
Meadow Brown	347	1,450	5	9	7
Brimstone	282	584	6	3	4
Comma	281	401	7	4	11
Red Admiral	259	321	8	<b>1</b>	3
Gatekeeper	235	525	9	10	10
Peacock	178	342	10	8	6

It is interesting to note that the number of respondents using this system has fallen from 125 in 2016 down to only 62 in 2018. This may be due to the numerous other reporting systems now available in this electronic age.

**Bob Ansell**  
*County Butterfly Recorder*



# Making your Records Count

If you've been observing butterflies and moths during 2019, please make your records count by submitting them to the County Butterfly and Moth databases.

For **butterflies**, any records submitted through formal recording schemes – transects, Wider Countryside Butterfly Scheme, Big Butterfly Count, Garden Butterfly Scheme or Migrant Watch – and records entered on either the Living Records or iRecord systems will be downloaded into the butterfly database. Any other casual records can be submitted to the County Butterfly Recorder, Bob Annell, through MapMate or on the Butterfly Casual Records Sheet. Please ensure that records are submitted no later than 30 November 2019.



*Duke of Burgundy. Rosemary Powell*

For **moths**, records submitted through the National Moth Recording Scheme or Living Record will be downloaded into the moth database. Other records can also be submitted through MapMate or the Moth Casual Records Sheet to Mike Wall or Iain Outlaw (Isle of Wight records). Please ensure that moth records are submitted by 31 December 2019.

Copies of the casual recording sheets can be downloaded from the Branch Website <http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/recording.php>

If you have any good quality butterfly photos that you'd like to be considered to illustrate the Butterfly Annual Report, please also send these to Bob Annell. Those to illustrate species accounts should be in landscape format, while any to be considered for the front or rear covers should be portrait.

**Jacky Adams**  
**Chair Records Subcommittee**



## Reserves News

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

2019 was a summer of surprises on our Hampshire Reserves. It began with a couple of early sightings on the 16 May of Marsh Fritillary on Magdalen Hill Down Extension field, exactly a year to the day that they were first recorded there in 2018. This was followed with a Marsh Fritillary larval web on 2nd August seen on the downland by Graeme Davis. Other individual sightings of this butterfly were also recorded on 19 May on the nearby privately owned Matterley Estate by Bryn and Jan Jones during their monthly transect visit. This butterfly is one of our most threatened species, suffering serious declines in recent years. Unfortunately there is little chance that this species will colonise the reserve, or indeed the local landscape and we do have to ask the question - how did they get there in the first place? Covert releases are not encouraged by Butterfly Conservation for many reasons. More information can be found on BC's position statement on releases on the BC website:

**<https://butterfly-conservation.org/our-work/policies-and-statements>**



*Marsh Fritillary. Pete Eeles*

Other species of note recorded at Magdalen Hill Down were 28 Red-belted Clearwing, *Synanthedon myopaeformis*, trapped on the 2 August by Graeme Davis, and 18 Orange-tailed Clearwing, *Synanthedon andreaeformis*, which came to a pheromone trap that I set up on the 12 July on a wayfaring tree just before one of our 'Wednesday Wanderers'. This species occurs in central southern England on chalk downland, preferring woodland edges and is generally quite difficult to find. The larva lives for two years or more, boring into the stems of the wayfaring tree, *Viburnum lantana*, and Guelder rose, *Viburnum opulus*. It was great fun returning to the trap just one hour later and showing the visitors the contents. Pheromone traps and lures can be purchased relatively inexpensively online from Anglian Lepidopterist Supplies (ALS) at <https://www.angleps.com>



*Orange-tailed Clearwing. Phil Dalziel*

Tim and Sue Graham recorded a couple of Silver-spotted Skippers on Yew Hill on the 5 August. This is a lovely record and a species that is searched for in anticipation each year on Magdalen Hill Down, for which we have only one sighting in recent years.



*Silver-spotted Skipper. Rosemary Powell*



## Summer visitors to Hampshire Reserves

Our summer walks on the reserves continued throughout the season and were led by Jenny Mallett and Brian Fletcher, and Pete Flood. Do look on the website in the spring for details of the 'Wednesday Wanders' and the 'Friday Forays' at Magdalen Hill Down. All walks are free and everyone is welcome. The walk at Bentley Station Meadow on the 9 July ended with a spectacle of a Purple Emperor feeding on the ground for over 15 minutes where the group were able to get clear views of this beautiful butterfly.



*Purple Emperor studies.  
Rosemary Powell*

It is a testament to the hard work that the volunteers put into all of our reserves, in particular Magdalen Hill Down, which provides a wide range of habitats and species making it an ideal outdoor learning environment for groups and organisations. These include St Swithun's School Year 10 science group who made the most of their transect training session to monitor Tree & Shrub West throughout the spring/early summer which provided us with completed transect forms and an insight into which butterfly species favour this under-recorded area of the reserve. Merrist Wood College students returned for yet another year for a two-hour visit on grassland management. John Clements brought the U3A group to visit and John Vetterlein arranged and led the annual visit for the Southampton Home Education Group.

## HIWARG monitoring on the reserves

During the summer Pete Gillatt, the Chairman of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Amphibian and Reptile Group (HIWARG), visited Magdalen Hill Down to look at placing over 30 new tins and mats (refugia) and setting them up on their system using GPS co-ordinates and creating a long term survey transect. HIWARG-trained volunteer surveyors have access to the co-ordinates and the surveys are managed via their IT platform in accordance with HIWARG methodology. The sites are surveyed on a monthly basis, thus providing due care and consideration to limiting disturbance of the vegetation for both reptiles and other species. The reserve has good populations of Common Lizard, Slowworm and Grass Snake.



*Slowworm,  
Common Lizard,  
Grass Snake.  
Dan Powell*

## Boomtown Festival

Butterfly Conservation volunteers joined Kate Barrett and myself at the Boomtown festival between the 8-11 August, held on the Matterley Estate near Winchester. As in 2018, we shared a marquee with the SDNP (South Downs National Park) to promote the National Park and its butterflies, flora and fauna. During the event we engaged with 1,200 visitors – many of whom were unaware of the National Park and its rich wildlife. As usual I provided face-painting to pull people in, and the SDNP displayed a huge interactive art canvas that depicted typical South Downs landscapes, wildflowers, butterflies and moths for visitors to colour in. The festival organisers, their Sustainability Officer and the landowner continue to seek advice from BC over the protection of the sensitive areas of the estate during the festival. These areas are monitored for butterflies, day-flying moths, birds and wildflowers between April-September every year by four dedicated BC volunteers. If you have field identification skills for these taxa (or any other), we would love to hear from you.



*Boomtown Festival interactive art canvas. 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 take a look at the winter programme of work-party dates (see pp16-17) and consider joining us in the coming months to help manage our reserves and their special habitats for butterflies, moths and wildlife. We are particularly keen to encourage new volunteers with field identification skills for a range of taxonomic groups. If you feel like you could help, we would love to hear from you. We are currently looking for volunteers to walk a transect and carry out monitoring at Up Somborne Down and on other locally owned private sites in 2020 where we advise on specific species habitat management.



*Cakes for the hard-working volunteers. Jayne Chapman*

Do contact me if you require further information. We always look forward to welcoming new members and familiar faces to our reserves.

***Jayne Chapman, Reserves Officer***





# Winter Work Party Programme

## MAGDALEN HILL DOWN

- 1 Monday 14 October
- 2 Monday 11 November
- 3 Monday 25 November
- 4 Monday 9 December
- 5 Monday 6 January
- 6 Monday 20 January
- 7 Monday 3 February
- 8 Monday 17 February
- 9 Monday 2 March

## BENTLEY STATION MEADOW

- 1 Wednesday 16 October
- 2 Wednesday 6 November
- 3 Wednesday 4 December
- 4 Wednesday 8 January
- 5 Wednesday 5 February
- 6 Wednesday 4 March

## YEW HILL

- 1 Tuesday 12 November
- 2 Tuesday 3 December



*Orange-tip. Rosemary Powell*



## 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, and **DO PLEASE PHONE ME IF THE WEATHER IS BAD TO CHECK THAT THE WORK PARTY WILL GO AHEAD.**

*Jayne Chapman, Reserves Officer*



## 2019 Field Trips – Hampshire Walks Review

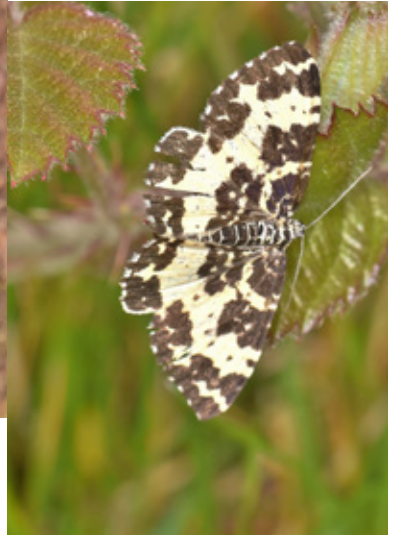


*The class of 2019. Ashley Whitlock*

The 2019 field trip programme kicked off with a visit to the New Forest at the end of April and a hunt for the Emperor Moth. To assist in this endeavour I used a lure in a netted bag, and it wasn't long before several males were flying around us giving glimpses of their colourful wings. Into May and the Duke of Burgundy was out in good numbers at Butser Hill, and also on Old Winchester Hill, where Adonis Blues were also on the wing. Back in the New Forest we saw the wonderful Raft Spider in the water-filled ditches along several rides, with good numbers of Pearl-bordered Fritillaries. This species was also seen on the Stockbridge Down field trip, where there were also good counts of Small Copper and Grizzled Skipper.

Martin Down towards the end of May produced excellent tallies of Marsh Fritillary and Adonis Blue, along with the lovely Small Blue. In Bentley wood at the beginning of June we saw several Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries but the prize sighting was a female Argent and Sable Moth, which gave us all a wonderful view of her striking colours. We were also lucky enough to observe her egg laying.

At the end of June the striking Dark Green Fritillary was out in good numbers at the base of Butser Hill. Into July, the Purple Emperor made an appearance at Havant Thicket and at Crab Wood/Pitt Down, while several individuals were spotted at a new site at West Walk. In Butter Wood, the stars of the walk were the magnificent White Admiral and the plentiful Purple Hairstreak, with individuals regularly cascading to lower oak branches affording photo opportunities.



*Purple Emperor, Apatura iris.*  
*Argent and Sable female, Rheumaptera hastate.*  
Ashley Whitlock

August started at Broughton Down and we saw lots of Silver-spotted Skippers, along with Adonis Blue and Brown Argus, and the last of the Dark Green Fritillary. At Shipton Bellinger, the beautiful Brown Hairstreak was closely observed and also at Noar Hill. The last field trip was to Beacon Hill where we saw Clouded Yellows flying with Adonis Blues and, not seen for many years at this site, a strong colony of Silver-spotted Skippers.

I'd like to thank all those who attended the Field Trips programme this year and hope to see all of you again in 2020.

**Ashley Whitlock, Field Meetings Organiser**

## An appreciation of the Branch's Walks and Field Trips



*Adonis Blue, Polyommatus ballargus. Ashley Whitlock*

The programme of walks and field trips offered by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch to its members is rich and varied. This past season alone there have been more than 40 arranged walks over our wonderful butterfly reserves and across Hampshire and Wight to some of the best butterfly habitats and most scenic spots in both counties.

There were ten 'Wednesday Wanders' and 'Friday Forays' at Magdalen Hill Down, three mid-week walks at Bentley Station Meadow and one reconnoitre of the Chalk Hill Blue paradise on the chalk downland remnant of Yew Hill. Ashley Whitlock's very varied itinerary of sites, dates and start times spoiled us with a menu of 25 routes to follow the unfolding butterfly season from early spring to late summer, taking in previously unvisited field trip destinations as well as calling in on some favourite haunts. On the Isle of Wight there were four outings from May to August, seeking out the Island's key species on coastal chine, woodland and downland sites. And not to be forgotten, the past couple of years (and seemingly on the hottest day of the year) has seen Branch members take to the water with the Skippers and Admirals Cruise on the Basingstoke Canal, a most genteel way to observe passing wildlife... and this year, having kept careful watch past a well-known, tall oak assembly point, we missed, apparently, the first Purple Emperor record of the season by less than one hour.

These informal gatherings are a fine opportunity to greet new faces as well as catch up with old friends. They are always full of fabulous photographic possibility, and with binoculars there are opportunities for closer examination of insect markings.

While some of the steeper chalk slopes of Butser Hill and one or two other chalk down reserves may not be manageable by some, the majority of the walks are suitable for a wide range of ages and walking abilities, the pace is gentle, and there is always some delightful scenery to take in and each venue presents some wonderful nature-watching opportunities. And it's not only butterflies to look out for... there are moths, of course, dragonflies and damselflies, beetles and ants as well as many of other insects, wildflowers, trees, birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians.

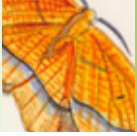
This year there were some particularly memorable close encounters: a Fox Moth in West Wood, listening to a Turtle Dove and enjoying the Burnt-tip Orchid display at Martin Down, watching a Red Kite fly almost within touching distance above our heads on the approach to Butter Wood, spotting Common Lizards in Pignal Inclosure and at Bentley Wood, and getting close-up views of a Raft Spider in the New Forest... all wonderful moments. But, of course, it's the butterflies that are the main focus of these outings, and one of the most extraordinary sights of the year occurred in May at Butser observing five Green Hairstreak adults in close proximity on one Hawthorn bush. Happy days!

***Kevin Freeborn***  
***An appreciative field tripper***



*Emperor Moth, Saturnia pavonia.*  
*Ashley Whitlock*





## Moth Trapping for Beginners

The UK has an astonishing number of moths: some 2,500 as against a paltry 58 or so butterfly species. They range from big and beautiful to tiny ones, many of which are also quite beautiful. The problem is, since they are mostly nocturnal, how to become familiar with them? Moth trapping is the method used by many people. It involves the use of light to attract the moths into a box where they can be viewed and identified and then released unharmed.

Moths respond strongly to light, and although you can attract a certain number by leaving curtains open at a lighted window, or the porch light on, greater numbers are attracted by mercury vapour (MV) bulbs or actinic tubes, the lights typically used with a moth trap.

There are two main designs of trap: the Skinner and the Robinson. The latter is more expensive but probably retains a higher number of moths. They can both be run either from the mains, in your own garden, or off a generator if you are out in the countryside. They should be filled with a number of egg trays, which can be cut to size, to provide the insects with somewhere to hide. The moths settle into the nooks and crannies and you can then lift the trays out and examine your catch. Basic equipment includes a camera, some small plastic pots and an identification guide. By far the best is *Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland* by Waring and Townsend, illustrated by Richard Lewington, which is also available in a concise format handy for



fieldwork. If you prefer a photographic guide try *British Moths* by Chris Manley, 2nd edition, or preferably both these guides. As you get more experienced and begin to look at micro moths *Micro Moths of Great Britain and Ireland* by Sterling and Parsons, illustrated by Richard Lewington, is also available.

One of the best ways to get started is to join a friend or a group. If you begin on your own, try to borrow a trap and start in early spring when the numbers are lower and less bewildering than in mid-summer. As well as a guide book you can consult *Flying Tonight* on the Hants Moths website, an excellent resource with thumbnail images. [http://www.hantsmoths.org.uk/flying\\_tonight.php](http://www.hantsmoths.org.uk/flying_tonight.php)

In your garden you have two options: you can fix up a light over a white sheet, scatter some egg trays on it, and watch the moths as they come in, or you can set up your trap and return in the morning to see what you have. In the latter case it is best to arrive before the birds, which quickly realise the potential for breakfast, and when you do either cover the trap, move it to a shady spot and return to bed, or deal with it then and there.

Records can be submitted to Mike Wall, the county moth recorder, via a programme such as MapMate or Living Record (details on the Hants and Isle of Wight Butterfly Conservation website). You will be adding to the overall knowledge of moth populations across the county. Supplies can be obtained from Anglian Lepidopterist Supplies (ALS), which has an excellent website: <https://www.angleps.com>

*Juliet Bloss*



*Skinner, Robinson & Tripod Traps. Juliet Bloss*



Merveille du Jour, *Griposia aprilina*. Pete Durnell  
Angle Shades, *Phlogophora meticulosa*. Pete Durnell  
Gold Spot, *Plusia festucae*. Juliett Bloss  
Oak Beauty, *Biston strataria*. Juliett Bloss  
Buff-tip, *Phalera bucephala*. Pete Durnell





## Autumn and Winter-flying Moths

It is well worth the effort of getting to grips with moths – although this is challenging, they are fascinating insects, and should be better known. Moth evenings are a good way of bringing family and friends together, and recording your finds adds to the vitally important database of species records.

Also, a moth trap might make the perfect Christmas gift for that difficult-to-buy-for relative.

To get you started, here is a list of moths whose main flight season typically begins in September or later, with their average flight period. If the autumn weather is favourable, flight seasons may be extended, and in good autumn conditions some summer species can continue flying into September and October.

The Delicate ( <i>Mythimna vitellina</i> )	Sept-Oct
Black Rustic ( <i>Aporophyla nigra</i> )	Sept-Oct
Merveille du Jour ( <i>Griposia aprilina</i> )	Sept-Oct
The Sallow ( <i>Cirrhia icteritia</i> )	Sept-Oct
Barred Sallow ( <i>Tiliacea aurago</i> )	Sept-Nov
Beaded Chestnut ( <i>Agrochola lychnidis</i> )	Sept-Nov
Grey Shoulder-knot ( <i>Lithophane ornitopus</i> )	Sept-Nov
Red-green Carpet ( <i>Chloroclysta siterata</i> )	Sept-Nov
Red-line Quaker ( <i>Agrochola lota</i> )	Sept-Nov
Spruce Carpet ( <i>Thera Britannica</i> )	Sept-Nov (2nd brood)
Feathered Thorn ( <i>Colotois pennaria</i> )	Sept-early Dec
Mottled UMBER ( <i>Erannis defoliaria</i> )	Oct-Jan
December Moth ( <i>Poecilocampa populi</i> )	Oct-Jan
Winter Moth ( <i>Operophtera brumata</i> )	Oct-Jan
Oak Rustic ( <i>Dryobota labecula</i> )	Oct-Dec (recent colonist)
The Satellite ( <i>Eupsilia transversa</i> )	Sept-May
The Chestnut ( <i>Conistra vaccinii</i> )	Sept-May

**Juliet Bloss**



## Corhampton Golf Club: Creating Space for Nature

Golf courses are not just for golfers! In April last year, the Branch was approached by the Head Greenkeeper at Corhampton Golf Club for advice on encouraging butterflies to a recently cleared area of scrub. The author visited the course to assess the potential of the new habitat and to look at other areas of possible habitat creation work. After a second visit in June, a report was sent to the Head Greenkeeper containing several recommendations to enhance the golf course for lepidoptera and other wildlife.

From nature's perspective, some 20-35% of a golf course typically requires intensive management involving close mowing, fertilisers and weed management control. This leaves large areas potentially available for butterflies and other wildlife.

It was clear that the greenkeeping staff at Corhampton GC were very keen to encourage wildlife onto the course. This was already being done in a number of ways including "cut and collect" grassland management on areas of rough rarely visited by golfers; good hedgerow management resulting in healthy species-rich native hedgerows; leaving piles of dead and dying wood at several sites around the course in both sunny and shaded areas; creating small areas of lightly managed or unmanaged ground between green and tee,





suitable for wild plants such as cuckoo flower (*Cardamine pratensis*) and garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolate*), the main larval foodplants of the Orange-tip butterfly, and sensitive scrub management policies.

The main recommendation was to create four large chalk scrapes extending over an area the size of three tennis courts. These would then be seeded with native plant mixes of known provenance, mainly Kidney vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*), Common Bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Wild thyme (*Thymus polytrichus*), Scabious spp., and Horseshoe vetch (*Hippocrepis comosa*). Surrounding grassed areas would be planted with fescues, Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Marjoram (*Origanum majorana*) and Dark Mullein (*Verbascum nigrum*).

It was really pleasing to see that our recommendations were implemented during a return visit to the course earlier this year, as the accompanying photos show.

The aim is to attract a broader range of widespread species to the course but also, with time, less common species such as the Small Blue, Chalk Hill Blue, Striped Lychnis, and the Dingy and Grizzled Skippers. This is a nice example of how a simple partnership between the Branch and a golf course can enhance the landscape for our butterflies and moths at modest cost and effort.

Well done Corhampton Golf Club!

**Clive Wood**

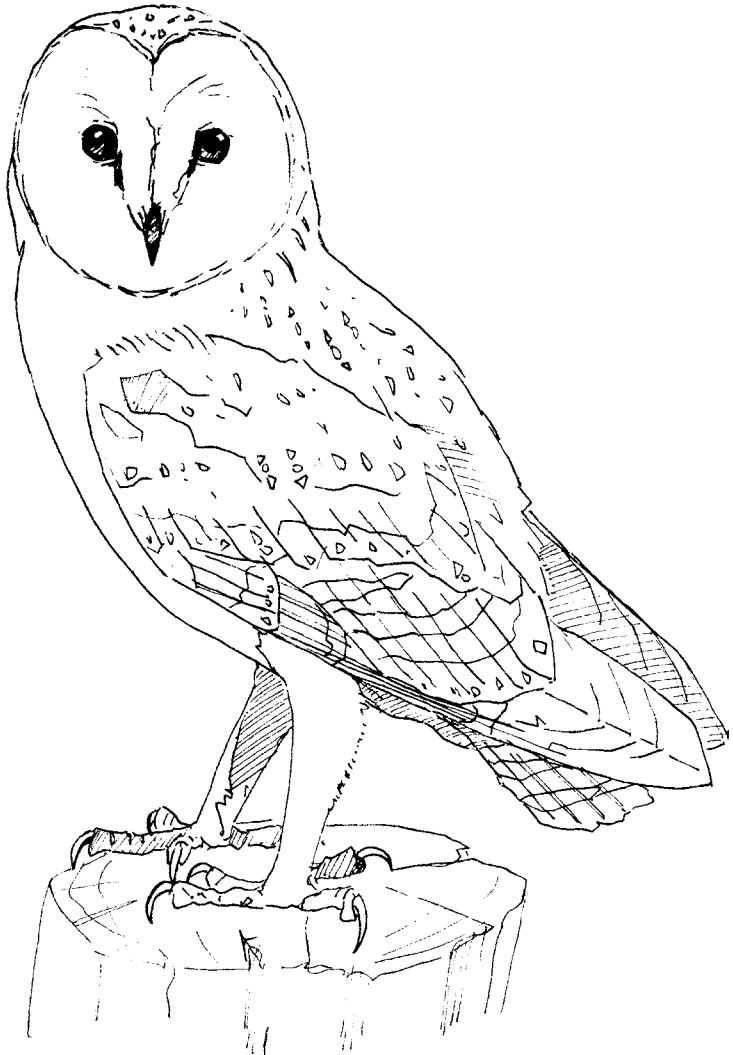
*Before and after: towards the 15th tee. Clive Wood*



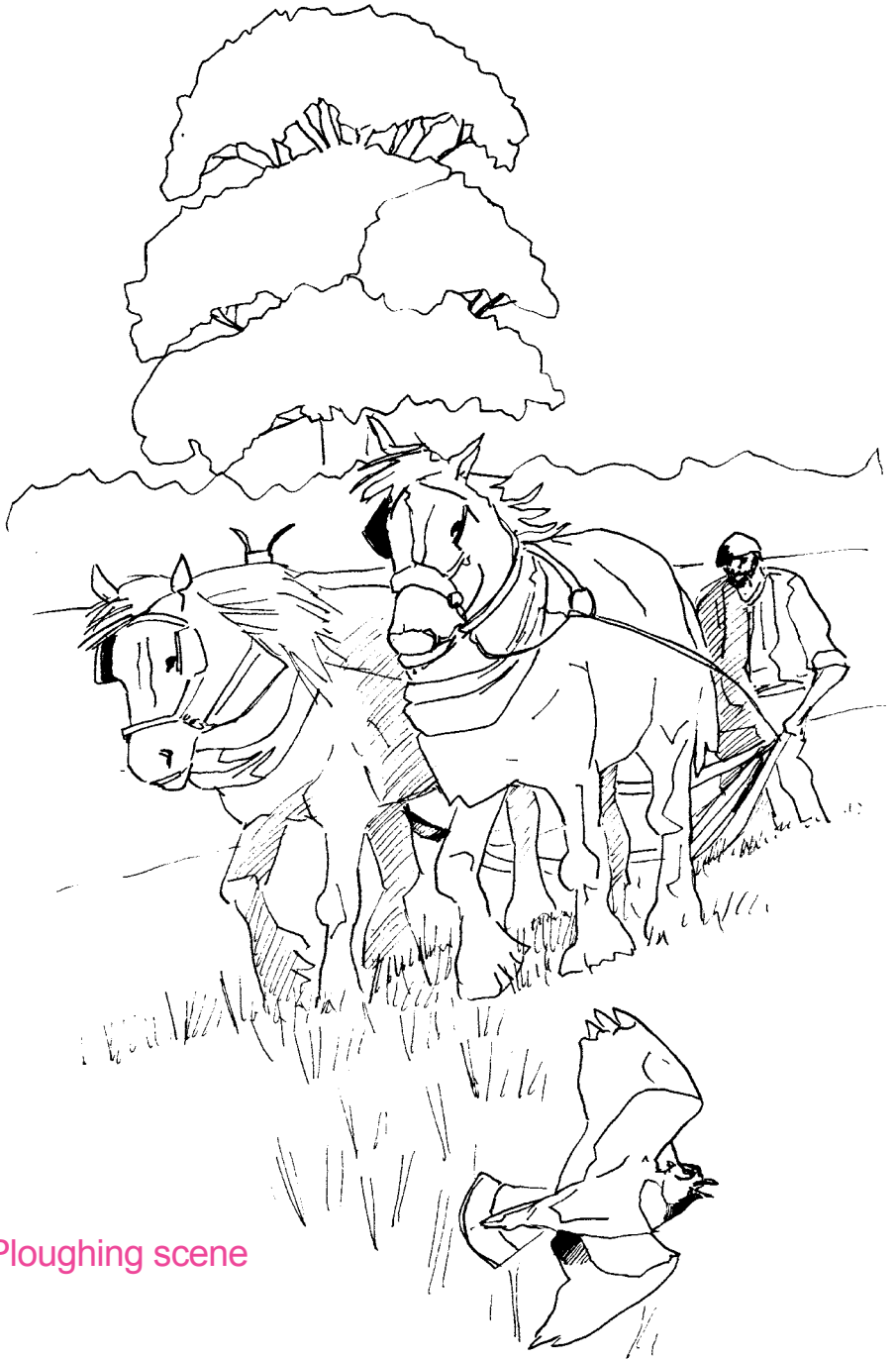


# Colour me in

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



Barn Owl



Ploughing scene



## Book announcement

### **The River Itchen at Martyr Worthy**

Published by George Mann Publications, March 2019

Hardback, 512pp, £35 – plus £3.35 p&p

ISBN: 978-1-90764-016-2

<https://www.gmp.co.uk/>

The River Itchen in Hampshire is one of the finest chalk streams in the world, famed for its wild brown trout. This book is a distillation of an observational, ten-year study of a one-kilometre stretch of the river at Martyr Worthy in Hampshire. The highly illustrated account draws upon 100,000 photographs and hundreds of hours of video recordings taken between 2008 and 2018.

The volume includes:

**The History of the Water Meadows** with contemporary accounts and scenes

**The River Year**, a month-by-month account highlighting the flora and fauna throughout the seasons

**Riverkeeping activities** showing what it takes to manage a chalk stream

**River Engineering** revealing the man-made nature of the river and the control of its flow

**Conservation**, a definition with thoughts and considerations with regard to public access

**Art Naturally**, provides an emphasis for artists and young people through art, poetry, storytelling and imagination

**On the Trail at Night**, revealing night-time visitors, such as otters, badgers and mink, together with their activities

**On the Trail by Day**, showing close-up views of animals and birds as they forage, hunt or rest during the day

**Behind the Scenes** describing fieldcraft techniques and equipment, such as night vision and underwater cameras, used to capture many hidden aspects of the wildlife.

*George Mann*



## The Newsletter in PDF form

Are you aware that the Branch Newsletter is published in both hard-copy and electronic versions?

Currently, approximately 9% of Branch Members have chosen to opt out of receiving the printed edition of the Newsletter in favour of its identical and freely available PDF version, easily downloadable from the Branch website.

Receiving your Newsletter as an electronically readable copy is an option worthy of consideration. In these times where conservation action is becoming increasingly more critical but where budgets for funding it are more hard won than ever before, every £1 available to the Branch is vitally important. Communication to our members via the Newsletter is a guaranteed commitment by the Branch. Through more members opting to receive their Newsletter in PDF format, the Branch could save appreciable expenditure on printing and postage costs, thereby boosting funds available for Branch conservation projects.

If you would like to opt out of receiving the printed copy of the Newsletter, please email [membership@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:membership@butterfly-conservation.org) expressing this wish, or telephone Butterfly Conservation on **01929 406015**. Remember to state that it's the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch Newsletter.

Having opted out, once the Newsletter is published you will receive email notification from Butterfly Conservation of its availability to download from the Branch website, here:

**<http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/newsletters.php>**

Past editions of the Newsletter are also available from this part of the website.

*Kevin Freeborn  
Newsletter Editor*





## Useful Contacts

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

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

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

**Treasurer:** Simon Powell, Mob: 07788 299591; Email: [sgpowell.t21@btinternet.com](mailto:sgpowell.t21@btinternet.com)

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

**Butterfly Recorder (Hants):** 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)

**Butterfly Transect Coordinators:** Linda & Andy Barker, Tel: 02380 270042;  
Email: [lindabarker4@btinternet.com](mailto:lindabarker4@btinternet.com) or [aj3barker@btinternet.com](mailto:aj3barker@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)

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

**Chair Records Subcommittee:** Jacky Adams, Tel: 023 8081 3671;  
Email: [jackyna7579@gmail.com](mailto:jackyna7579@gmail.com)

**Chair 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)

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

**Publicity Officer:** (vacant)

**Field Meetings Organiser:** Ashley Whitlock, Tel: 02392 731266;  
Email: [ashleyrwhitlock@virginmedia.com](mailto:ashleyrwhitlock@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.

Cover painting: Brimstone

**Printed by:** Better Printing, Southampton. www.betterprinting.co.uk

## 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. 108, is 7 February 2020

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

**The joys of the unexpected ...** When visiting a nature reserve, given the season of the year and the time of day, one arrives with a measure of expectation – or perhaps a degree of hope - about what might be seen. This might well be used at the end of the visit to gauge how 'successful' the day has been. So setting out in West Wood in mid-May on a bright and promising morning with fellow Branch field-trippers following in Ashley Whitlock's *carefully placed* (note the emphasis) footsteps, it was heartening to see target species such as Duke of Burgundy and Pearl-bordered Fritillary, but the unexpected sighting of a beautifully-coloured Fox Moth, grounded on a woodland path, was my highlight of the day.

**Kevin Freeborn**

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



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*Lepidoptera Tale Piece ...*



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

*Fox Moth – Ashley Whitlock*