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Dear Branch Member,

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

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Branch Members' Day 2024

The 2024 Members' day will once again be held at Littleton Memorial Hall, on Sunday 3rd November.

Martin Warren, Head of Development at Butterfly Conservation Europe, and former Chief Executive of Butterfly Conservation, will be one of the speakers, discussing "*Sex, life and death in the world of butterflies*".

Pete Eeles (Branch Chair)

Branch vacancies

The branch currently has a number of vacancies, listed below. If you are at all interested in any of these, then please contact the Branch Chair, Pete Eeles, at chair@hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk or on 07796 331061.

Events Co-ordinator	The main events season is typically March - October.
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Membership Secretary	Liaise with B.C. Head Office on matters relating to our branch's membership.
Newsletter support role	Previous editorial, journalistic or publishing experience would be an advantage, but not essential, as guidance will be given. Biannual publication.
Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) Champion	Promote the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS), and co-ordinate and support the volunteers surveying the WCBS 1km. Squares. (See WCBS article , below.)

Pete Eeles (Branch Chair)

NFBTG at the New Forest Volunteers Fair 2024

The last Sunday in January in the New Forest means only one thing, the National Park Authority Volunteer Fair in Brockenhurst.

This year 47 organisations were represented, seeking to attract volunteers to join their organisation. The opportunities on offer varied from helping out in local hospitals, heritage organisations and wildlife groups - one of these being [the New Forest Butterfly Transect Group \(NFBTG\)](#).

It was a busy day, with a good number of visitors expressing an interest in butterflies, which kept the volunteers who were looking after the stand busy. We recommended that those people who would like to get involved but had a limited amount of time because they were working or still at school or college, to download the [iRecord App](#) and record their sightings that way. Those who were more flexible either left their details or are going to email their interest. Visitors came from across the forest, not just the area local to Brockenhurst, with one person saying that they mostly lived in Portugal!



The lovely NFBTG stand at this year's New Forest Volunteers Fair (photo © Trevor Bumfrey)

Trevor Bumfrey (NFBTG)

Annual Trend Tables - 2023

For many years now, I have produced a tabulated annual summary of butterfly species trends on transect for the most recent season, relative to the previous year. It's the table that has regularly appeared on pg.64 of our Annual Butterfly Report. I'm pleased to say that [the tabulation comparing 2023 relative to 2022 is now available](#) from the "Transect" section of [the branch website](#). The 'percentage change' figure is currently missing for certain species poorly represented on transect (we are still in the process of verifying the large volume of non-transect data received). Once we have final figures for these species a revised version of the table will be uploaded.

25-year trend graphs

In case you missed it in the December 2023 e-News, I thought I should remind you that a .pdf of **25-year trends for all Hants & Isle of Wight butterfly species** is available on the Branch website. Simply [click here](#) to view it (or go to [the branch website](#) "Transects" tab, and select "25 Year trends").

2024 Butterfly Transect volunteers required (N. Hants)

On behalf of Simon Holloway of Forestry England, **I would like to invite volunteers to help with two new "heath-woodland" butterfly transects at Bramshill Forest in the far north of Hampshire.** Both sites support a rich diversity of woodland and heathland butterfly species, and are being established primarily to monitor Grayling and Silver-studded Blue. You might also see Purple Emperor if you are lucky!

To fit in with our changeable weather, you would need to be available on at least four days of your allocated weeks. Potential recorders would be expected to know Hampshire's common butterflies, and be able to distinguish between species such as Silver-studded Blue and Common Blue. Training will be given on the transect methodology. If you would like to help, please email Simon.Holloway@forestryengland.uk

UKBMS 2022 Report

For those interested, the 2022 UKBMS Annual Report, is now available as [a downloadable .pdf](#). This report provides the latest UK-wide summary and analysis of latest trends for all the UK butterfly species

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

New transect walkers are always welcome!

Sharpen up your butterfly ID skills by recording transects a few times between 01-Apr and 30-Sep. Please contact Iain McIntosh: iain@bay-trees.co.uk for more info.

Iain McIntosh (MHD Transects Co-ordinator)

Magdalen Hill Down

The birdlife has kept the reserve feeling alive in the depths of winter with Fieldfare, Goldfinch, Long-tailed tit, Stonechat, and Kestrel. They survive, somehow, through the storms, rain and frosty chill.

The volunteers are also surviving through the storms and have managed to continue their excellent work. Much of the scrub clearance work takes place in the more hidden parts of the reserve (e.g. down at the bottom of the hill). They are a great team, transporting tools over rough terrain and steep slopes, and taking on every challenge.

The winter grazing is underway, with the fantastic British White cows now well used to all the walkers and joggers. They have a great presence across the reserve. The cows will leave around March, but we'll retain four for the summer months. In addition to the 19 cows, we currently have 29 Whitefaced Woodland sheep.



British White cows having a drink (© Peter Read); curious Whitefaced Woodland sheep (© Fiona Scully)

The new pond goes live!

The pond has been completed. It was designed at 8m x 5m x 1.5m depth. The design called for a layer of sand; then a geotextile layer; then the butyl liner; then *another* geotextile liner over that, *plus* around 6-8 cm depth of soil spread across the liner. All of which seemed to fill the hole up again! I'm assured the topsoil is fine, that it will protect the liner, and once it's planted-up in April it will look much better. I hope so! It's always such a big learning curve, and you look back and think of all the other ways you could have done it. But, now we have a pond at Magdalen - which is great.



Volunteers getting stuck-in (Jan 29), and our lovely new pond (All photos © Fiona Scully)

Yew Hill

You can actually see the difference the sheep are making now. The grass is finally shorter! It will only be a few weeks now before the sheep will head off and we can sit back and enjoy the wonderful display of wildflowers. The volunteers have continued to manage and look after the site, keeping the chalk grassland free of scrub.



No time for idle chat at Yew Hill! (Dec 14)



The Bentley crew (Jan 3)

All photos © Fiona Scully

Bentley Station Meadow

Bentley has certainly been at the centre of a lot of volunteer action this winter, with the reserve's regular Volunteers, the SDNP Volunteers, and Hampshire Conservation Volunteers, who spent a weekend clearing scrub and opening up the meadows and transect route. It will be grazed hard in spring to try and prevent the bramble from taking over everything again. Bramble was covering the entire site at the end of last summer. It has rooted and embedded itself through the heart of what was a species-rich meadow, at the expense of the other plants. Whilst it's a valuable nectar source, it spreads so rapidly. This is a 'work in progress', to try and restore the meadows so they are filled with flowers again.

Additionally, Blackthorn was invading the meadows. This has been cleared in places, whilst leaving some thickets, cutting scallops into some areas and taking care to leave plenty of blackthorn of different ages for the Brown Hairstreak!

Winter 2024 Volunteer work days

- **Magdalen Hill Down** - every Monday, until March. Meet at 10am, up the track to the right of the cemetery entrance, off Alresford Road, Winchester SO21 1HE
- **Yew Hill** - Thursdays Feb. 15th, 29th. Meet 10am at the bottom of Old Kennels Lane, Olivers Battery SO22 4JT
- **Bentley Station Meadow** – Wednesday Feb. 21st. Meet 10am at Gravel Hill Road car park, near Alice Holt Lodge (or 10.30 at the reserve)

See [our Facebook page](#), for latest updates. For those not already on the list, who would like to volunteer, please email me: fscully@butterfly-conservation.org

Please see [the Dates section](#) (below) for our programme of Walks, etc. Can't wait for warm, sunny days again. It will be great to see you out on the reserves.

Fiona Scully (BC South Downs Landscape Project Officer)

Isle of Wight Group - update

White Cliffs and Wight Downs Species

Recovery Project is a project being run by the National Trust, covering the White Cliffs of Dover and the downland on the Isle of Wight. Among the species which the project is surveying is the **Dew Moth** in 2024 both for adults and larvae. A Nationally Scarce species, it is only found in small, scattered populations in the UK, one of which is in the West Wight. The larvae feed exclusively on lichen found at ground level on stones while the males are on the wing in daytime. Group members will be helping with the surveys during the adult flight period and the larvae period. If you would like



Dew Moth © Sue Davies

to be involved in the survey, please email me at wightmoths@gmail.com and I can forward your details to the National Trust to be included in their training sessions.

A reminder that **2023 Isle of Wight moth records** need to be sent to myself by the end of February 2024. Many thanks to all recorders who have forwarded their 2023 records to date.

Finally, many thanks to Kay Shaw, Isle of Wight Field Meetings Organiser for arranging an interesting programme of Isle of Wight walks for 2024. The walks [can be viewed on the branch website](#) (or see [the 'Dates' section](#), below)

Jim Baldwin (County Moth Recorder (Isle of Wight) / Isle of Wight Group Leader)

Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) - update

If you're interested in monitoring butterflies but don't have time to commit to a transect, can you perhaps help with a WCBS 'square'?

The WCBS is a UK-wide 'light touch' recording scheme designed to monitor butterfly numbers across the UK, with results feeding into national statistics. Ordnance Survey 1km grid squares are randomly selected for monitoring, and can include urban and agricultural areas as well as more butterfly rich environments. **Volunteers take 'ownership' of 'their' square, and are asked to undertake 2-4 walks, along an agreed route each year. (Typically, once in July and once in August.)** Walks should take place in good weather, between the hours of 10.45am and 3.45pm, typically 1-hour duration, and use similar methodology as for butterfly transects. Further details about the scheme can be found on [the UKBMS website](#), inc. an excellent video [here](#). Square owners need to identify all butterflies seen during walks and support with this is available for those who are new to recording.

There are a number of squares in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight that currently need owners. A full list can be found on [our Branch website's dedicated WCBS page](#). If you are interested in getting involved in this scheme, please contact me on 07521 577035 or by email to wcbbs@hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk - I'll be happy to provide further information and support.

Please also feel free to contact me (see previous para.), if you are interested in taking-on the WCBS Champion role (see the [Branch Vacancies](#) item, above) and would like a chat about the scheme, and what is involved.

Jacky Adams (Branch WCBS Champion)

Snippets

[A fantastic online talk by our very own Ashley Whitlock](#), given to Hampshire and Isle Of Wight Wildlife Trust (HIWWT), on the subject of **Chalk Stream Butterflies and Moths**. Some really beautiful images, and interesting facts.

Some breaking news... hopefully, the 2024 Walks programme of events will include a 'first' - **Target Species: Long-tailed Blue!** The trip is yet to be confirmed, so keep an eye out on [the website Walks page](#). We may have an update in the June e-Newsletter...

Dates

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

Reserves Volunteering

Please check the website for updates.

Every Monday (until March)	Magdalen Hill Down	Please contact Fiona Scully for details.
Thursdays 22nd Feb., and 7th March	Yew Hill	
Wednesday, 21st February	Bentley Station Meadow	

Branch, and branch-related Events

Saturday, 20th July	'Bioblitz' event, Itchen Valley Country Park	Volunteers will be required!
Sunday, 3rd November	Branch Members' Day, Littleton Memorial Hall	

Branch Field trips

Full details of **Hampshire walks** [here](#) (PDF). Full details of **Isle of Wight walks** [here](#) (PDF).

When	Where	Target species
Saturday, 27th April (13:30)	Parkhurst Forest	Orange-tip, Brimstone, Comma, Peacock
Sunday, 28th April (13:30)	Park Hill	Orange-tip, Speckled Wood, early invertebrates, Hares, Raptors
Sunday, 5th May (10:30)	Butser Hill	Duke of Burgundy, Grizzled & Dingy Skippers, Emperor Moth, Red Kite, Cuckoo
Wednesday, 8th May (10:30)	Broughton Down	Green Hairstreak, Grizzled & Dingy Skippers, poss. Duke of Burgundy
Saturday, 11th May (13:20)	The Revetment, Ventnor	Glanville Fritillary, other Spring species
Sunday, 12th May (09:30)	Farley Mount	Duke of Burgundy, Pearl-bordered Fritillary
Wednesday, 15th May (10:30)	Standing Hat & Pig Bush	Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Speckled Wood, Emperor Moth, Cuckoo
Saturday, 18th May	Mottistone chalk pits	Glanville Fritillary, Grizzled & Dingy

(13:30)		Skippers
Sunday, 19th May (09:30)	Martin Down	Adonis & Small Blues, Marsh Fritillary, Brown Argus, poss. Duke of Burgundy, rare invertebrates, good flora & fauna
Wednesday, 22nd May (10:30)	Danebury Hill Fort	Poss. Wall
Saturday, 25th May (13:30)	Compton Chine	Glanville Fritillary, Green Hairstreak, Small & Adonis Blues
Saturday, 22nd June (13:30)	Newton Meadows	White Admiral, Marbled White, Brown Argus, Ringlet
Wednesday, 26th June (13:30)	Broxhead Common	Silver-studded Blue
Sunday, 30th June (09:30)	Abbotstone Down	Marbled White, Dark Green Fritillary, poss. Purple Emperor, good flora & fauna
Wednesday, 3rd July (09:30)	Abbotts Wood Inclosure	Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary, poss. Red Kite, Buzzard
Friday, 5th July (09:30)	West Walk (nr. Wickham)	Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary, Purple Hairstreak
Saturday, 6th July (13:30)	Mottistone Down	Dark Green Fritillary, Brown Argus, Chalk Hill Blue
Sunday, 7th July (09:30)	Whiteley Walk & Botley Wood	Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Purple Hairstreak
Wednesday, 10th July (09:30)	Carpenters Down Wood & Basing Wood	Purple Emperor, Purple Hairstreak, White-letter Hairstreak
Sunday, 14th July (09:30)	Swanwick Lakes	Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary
Wednesday, 17th July (09:30)	Micheldever Wood	Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary
Saturday, 20th July (13:30)	Kemphill Moor Copse	White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary, Purple Hairstreak
Saturday, 27th July (13:30)	Mount Joy, Carisbrooke	Chalk Hill Blue, Common Blue, Wall, Brown Argus
Saturday, 3rd August (13:30)	Arreton Downs	Chalk Hill Blue, Brown Argus, Wall
Wednesday, 14th August (09:30)	Shipton Bellinger	Brown Hairstreak, Wall
Saturday, 17th August (13:30)	Brading Downs	Chalk Hill Blue, Brown Argus
Sunday, 18th August (10:30)	Noar Hill	Brown Hairstreak, Purple Hairstreak, Brown Argus, Clouded Yellow
Wednesday, 21st August (10:30)	Beacon Hill	Silver-spotted Skipper, Brown Argus, Clouded Yellow
Sunday, 25th August (10:30)	Soberton Down / River Meon	Poss. Brown Hairstreak

Sunday, 1st September (10:30)	Old Winchester Hill	Adonis Blue, Silver-spotted Skipper, Clouded Yellow
Wednesday, 4th September (10:30)	Portsdown Hill	Brown Hairstreak, Common Blue, Closed Yellow, Wall
Saturday, 7th September (13:20)	The Revetment, Ventnor	Clouded Yellow, Hummingbird Hawk Moth

Accompanied Reserves Walks

Please check the website for updates.

When	Where	Target species	Information
Details TBA	Winterbourne RSPB reserve		
Details TBA	Thursley NNR	Grayling	A walk led by Arthur Greenwood, at Hankley Common and Thursley National Nature Reserve.
Monday, 10th June (14:00-16:00)	Magdalen Hill Down	Small Blue, Green Hairstreak	With Dave & Anna Stewart. Contact Fiona Scully to book.
Saturday, 15th June (Meet 09:45)	Bentley Station Meadow	Silver-washed Fritillary, plus guided tour	With Alton Natural History Soc., <i>et al.</i> Contact Fiona Scully to book.
Saturday, 28th June (11:00-13:00)	Yew Hill	White-letter Hairstreak, and more!	With Rupert Broadway. Contact Fiona Scully to book.
Thursday, 18th July (11:00-13:00)	Magdalen Hill Down	Height of summer - Marbled White, etc.	With Dave & Anna Stewart. Contact Fiona Scully to book.
Friday, 9th August (11:00-13:00)	Yew Hill	Chalk Hill Blue, etc.	With Rupert Broadway. Contact Fiona Scully to book.
Friday, 16th August (11:00-13:00)	Magdalen Hill Down	Chalk Hill Blue, Adonis Blue, etc.	With Dave & Anna Stewart. Contact Fiona Scully to book.
Tuesday, 20th August (details TBA)	Magdalen Hill Down	August Moth Morning...	With Kate Barrett. Contact Fiona Scully to book.

First sightings (since December e-Newsletter)

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

27th January	Peacock	Pennington
1st February	Red Admiral	Romsey

Social Media links, etc.



Branch FB



Our Reserves FB



Branch X
(Twitter)



Branch Insta



Branch WWW