

DIARY OF EVENTS

FRIDAY 16 JANUARY

Yew Hill Work Party.

Meet: 10.00 at end of Old Kennels Lane at junction with Port Lane & Millers Lane, Oliver's Battery (SU451 269).

FRIDAY 23 JANUARY

Magdalen Hill Down Work Party

Time: 10.00 - 3.30. **Meet:** at top of track by cemetery off B3404 at SU512 295.

MONDAY 26 JANUARY

"All About Moths"

Illustrated talk at St Barnabas Church Hall, Weeke, Winchester. Joint with Hampshire Wildlife.

Time: 7.00 for 7.30. **Speaker:** Phil Budd. **Tel:** 07748 236 666.

FRIDAY 6 FEBRUARY

Magdalen Hill Down Work Party

Arrangements as for 23 January.

WEDNESDAY 11 FEBRUARY

Bentley Station Meadow Work Party

Time: 10.00 – 2.00. **Meet:** in the NE corner of the car park at Bentley station at SU792 432. (There is usually room to park in Station Road.)

FRIDAY 20 FEBRUARY

Yew Hill Work Party

Arrangements as for 16 January.

FRIDAY 27 FEBRUARY

Magdalen Hill Down Work Party

Arrangements as for 23 January.

WEDNESDAY 4 MARCH

Bentley Station Meadow Work Party

Arrangements as for 11 February.

SATURDAY 21 MARCH

Pre-season Social and Photographic Afternoon

Time: 2.00 – 5.00 at St. Barnabas Church Hall, Weeke, Winchester.

See p. 11.

n.b. This event is to be held in the afternoon this year.

WEDNESDAY 1 APRIL

Magdalen Hill Down: Wednesday Wander.

Time: 10.30. **Meet:** in gravel car park opposite the Magdalen Hill cemetery on B3404. **Leader:** Lynn Fomison. A regular walk on the first Wednesday of the month, April to October. A gentle stroll to enjoy seasonal wildlife. This is a new venture – tell your friends or better still bring them along!

TUESDAY 7 APRIL

Bentley Station Meadow: Walk to Health

Meet: 10.45 in the NE corner of the car park at Bentley Station (SU792 432). (There is usually room to park in Station Road.) **Leader:** Lynn Fomison. The Alton Walk2Health group is visiting BSM on the first Tuesday of the month up to and including 6 October. Come and enjoy a leisurely stroll interspersed with looking at nature. All welcome.

FUTURE DATES

Main Committee:

Wednesday 11 February
Wednesday 6 May
Wednesday 2 September
Wednesday 2 December

Conservation Subcommittee:

Wednesday 14 January
Wednesday 22 April
Wednesday 7 October

Reserves Subcommittee:

Wednesday 28 January

National Moth Night:

Fri/Sat 18-19 September

Members' Day and AGM:

Saturday 24 October at Littleton Memorial Hall, Littleton, Winchester.

National AGM:

to be held in Hampshire at Winchester University (formerly King Alfred's School) on Saturday 21 November.

Members might be interested in an evening of wildlife films by Manuel Hinge to be held in Lyminster Community Centre on **Friday 6 February at 7.30pm**. There will be a raffle in aid of the New Forest Badger Group. Admission: £5.00. Tickets available at the door or email: kay.butterworth@btinternet.com .

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

I hope those of you who managed to attend this year's Annual General Meeting approved of the change of venue. Most considered Littleton Hall to be a superior venue for such a large meeting: there were one or two minor problems that we will take into account for next year. Perhaps most important is the question of a microphone/amplification for the speakers – we were assured that this would not be necessary, but it clearly would have been an improvement for many people. I understand that the use of the hall's system also feeds into a loop that will be of benefit for those with appropriate hearing aids. We enjoyed three excellent presentations. I note that other branches have an extended meeting to allow for more presentations, but the general view is that our format serves the Branch well; it will be retained for 2009.

Next autumn, on 21 November 2009, we host the National AGM. This will be held in the Stripe complex at Winchester University. This is a splendid modern lecture facility and should prove to be a most satisfactory venue for this important meeting. The Branch is taking the upstairs conference room and we will have the opportunity of showing visiting members what we do and, we hope, have some displays to demonstrate some of our relationships with other agencies in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. If any of you have specific suggestions for bodies or groups that you would wish to see represented, please let me know.

I had hoped to report to you that our landlords on Magdalen Hill Down (original Reserve and part of the Extension), the Church Commissioners, were prepared to consider either a significant lease extension or sale of the freehold. Members had asked me why we have to continue paying rent for our reserves; sadly, the answer is that we cannot at present negotiate any other position. Neither a major lease extension nor land sale is an option that the Church Commissioners will consider at this time. The Branch does own the upper part of the Extension at MHD, as it does Bentley Station Meadow. We lease North Down from Hampshire County Council but, in return, obtain very significant support for the maintenance of this part of MHD. We also lease land at Yew Hill and, again, we are unable to effect any change in that relationship at present. So, in short, payment of relatively small rents is the way that the Branch gains access to the majority of its reserve land. Thanks to the excellent management by our Reserves Officer, we attract a combined grant income that defrays the majority of the cost of providing the very special habitat that we all feel privileged to manage – and enjoy.

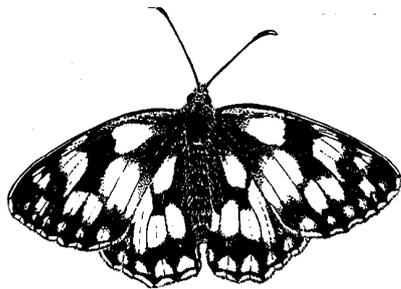
Those attending the AGM will know that Linda Barker has stepped down from the Main Committee, although she remains involved in other areas of the Branch's activities. Linda has made an outstanding contribution. On behalf of the others members of your Main Committee I would like to take this opportunity of recording my thanks to her once again.

We have been joined on the Committee by Arthur Greenwood, who also serves on the Reserves Subcommittee. He has kindly agreed to provide the Branch with financial advice as Roger Lockett is stepping down as our financial adviser. Roger has provided us with invaluable advice and we are very grateful for all the help he has given.

Notice is given in this Newsletter of the dates for our pre-season Social. As before, it will be held at St. Barnabas Church Hall in Weeke and will offer the opportunity to show images acquired during 2008 (whether home or abroad). Please join us then and kick-start what we all hope will be a better summer than those of 2007 and 2008. As last year, Peter Eeles will be running a photographic workshop. This time we have avoided a clash of dates: the workshop will be later in April.

May I wish you all a Happy New Year.

Roger Buchanan, Chairman



Butterfly Records in Gardens

In 2006 visits by Purple Emperor and White Admiral to my garden in Ropley were a cause for great excitement. Back in the 1990s the first unusual butterfly to turn up on two occasions in separate years was Wall Brown. I have recorded a White-letter Hairstreak once. On several occasions wandering Silver-washed Fritillaries and male Chalk Hill Blues have turned up. But in 2007 and 2008 I was not aware of any unexpected visitors. It was therefore nice to hear from two people that their gardens had had a first-time visit from a Dark Green Fritillary in 2008. One person had also seen a White Admiral egg-laying on honeysuckle in their garden. Observations like this will be warmly welcomed for the Butterfly Report, so do send in your records to Linda Barker or write to this Newsletter about the unexpected butterflies you have seen in your garden.

Lynn Fomison

RESERVES NEWS

Nature's Top 40: Chris Packham BBC2

What a wonderful series of programmes that was! They were screened on BBC2 in the first two weeks of December and are possibly still available on the web at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/naturestop40/>. These programmes portrayed a dazzling array of spectacular UK wildlife sights. The good news is that our reserves can provide an experience of some of them. I am not going to pretend that we can offer courting Great Crested Grebes or pods of Dolphins, but in some measure wildlife from no less than 14 of the top 40 are represented on the reserves.

Here are some examples:

- **No. 38: Glow-worms**. These can be seen at Bentley Station Meadow. If anyone succeeds in finding them at Magdalen Hill Down or Yew Hill please tell me.
- **No. 36: Moths**. There is an extensive list of moths seen at each reserve. On 28 November Patrick Fleet found 43 Winter Moths by torchlight, including two mating pairs (the females don't fly). Moth evenings are regularly held, especially at MHD, so do let us know if you would like to go on the list of interested people.
- **No. 27: Butterflies**. No problem there! Butterflies aplenty, including spectacles like hundreds of Chalkhill Blues at MHD and YH in July and August, elusive Purple Emperors at BSM and always something delightful to see on a sunny day.
- **No. 22: Birds of Prey**. At YH and MHD buzzards, kestrels and sparrow hawks are often seen. Fewer at BSM. On odd occasions Red Kites have flown over MHD, and even escaped birds of prey have been seen there.
- **No. 21: Arachnids**. With so much natural vegetation there are loads of spiders lurking. Mike Young photographed a superb crab spider on an orchid at BSM. Even in the poor summer of 2008 numerous wasp spiders were found at Magdalen Hill Down.
- **No. 18: Wild Orchids**. Yew Hill is our star reserve for orchids, with about six species. Common spotted orchids at BSM put on a good show: many of the orchids reach quite a size on the damper soil. The Extension at MHD also provides orchid excitement as pyramidal orchids are starting to colonise the grassland (previously an arable field) that was sown in 1997.
- **No. 6: Birdsong**. BSM is always lovely for birdsong in spring. It is often the first place I hear a cuckoo, and the quietness of Yew Hill also makes it a good place to enjoy listening. But MHD is a must if you want to hear and see skylarks.

- **No. 5: Summer Flower Meadow**. MHD provides what must be one of the best wildflower-meadow experiences in the Winchester area. The Extension is pretty good but the North area is spectacular. A sight not to be missed.

There were also foxes at No. 37, swallows at No. 31, bats at No. 28, autumn colours and fungi at No. 17, hares at No. 14, reptiles at No. 8, all of which can be found at our reserves (although I have had no reports of adders there).

I hope you are all thrilled about the array of wildlife that our three nature reserves support. Your membership helps to provide the funding that makes it possible.

Lynn Fomsion, Reserves Officer

For details of how you can help the Reserves team raise £5,000 without you even spending a penny – if you will pardon the expression! - read on.

Educational Access Visits Help Us Earn £5,000

Each year I, and other members of the Reserves Subcommittee and the Main Committee, lead walks at our reserves. We can claim a grant of £100 for 25 visits under each of our two funding agreements with Natural England.

Conditions apply: a minimum of six people need to attend for a minimum of two hours, and the programme for the visit must have an educational content. The walks can have different themes to suit the group attending, such as identifying butterflies and flowers, trees and shrubs or other wildlife. This can lead on to photography or painting if that is what the group wants. Another activity is discussion of management techniques – useful for other landowners and students. We have done walks to pick up on the archaeological and historical aspects of the reserves, walks for parents and children focused on sharing nature with children, or with Cub and Brownie groups to help them get badges. The list is endless.

And this is the request: if you belong to a group – gardening club, WI, village society, church group, groups of work colleagues, neighbours or friends - then please think about encouraging them to make a visit and help to earn us £100. Just give them my contact details and I will respond quickly and make the arrangements.

Lynn Fomison, Reserves Officer

STOP EXTINCTION APPEAL

£100,000 is in sight for the **Stop Extinction Appeal**.

Thanks to the marvellous support of Butterfly Conservation members we have raised a magnificent £84,000 for this appeal. However, we need a further £16,000 to meet our ambitious target to stop further extinctions across the UK. Acknowledging the tremendous response to the appeal, our Chief Executive, Dr Martin Warren, urges everyone who has not contributed so far to support the appeal with gifts of any size, either by post or online. "Every donation, whatever the amount, will make a difference. We have conservation projects ready to start immediately, as soon as funding is in place."

Your £10 can become £40 when used to match a Sustainable Development Fund grant. For example, a study on habitat restoration for the Duke of Burgundy in the North York Moors can now go ahead thanks to matching funding donated by the Yorkshire branch.

Please help **STOP EXTINCTION** today by sending your 40th Anniversary donation to Dr Martin Warren, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5QP, or go online and make a donation to the **Stop Extinction Appeal** at **www.butterfly-conservation.org**.

Butterfly DVD

On sale to raise funds for the Hampshire & IOW Branch

Sandy Harman has produced a new DVD entitled "The Best of Butterfly Days - PLUS" from some of best clips of the past five versions of "Butterfly Days" and much fresh material. The PLUS refers to a new section showing some of the rarer butterflies that visit this country and/or were once resident here - a further 11 species. This DVD can be likened to a field trip around Britain to see butterflies during the six months from April to September. Fifty-eight species (in addition to the 11 in the PLUS section) are identified by discreet captions, as are most of the other subjects. These include caterpillars, dragonflies, moths, wildflowers, etc. There is no music, minimal voice-over, and only natural sounds of the countryside. Detailed close-ups abound.

The DVD costs £8.00, including p&p; at least £6.00 of this amount goes to our Branch funds (or more if you add something to cover the postage costs, as many members do). To buy, just send a cheque, payable to 'S Harman', to 31, Upper Manor Road, Milford, Godalming, GU8 5JW. Why not get one for a friend as well? You can enjoy a beautiful view of our wonderful butterflies and help support our Branch at the same time.

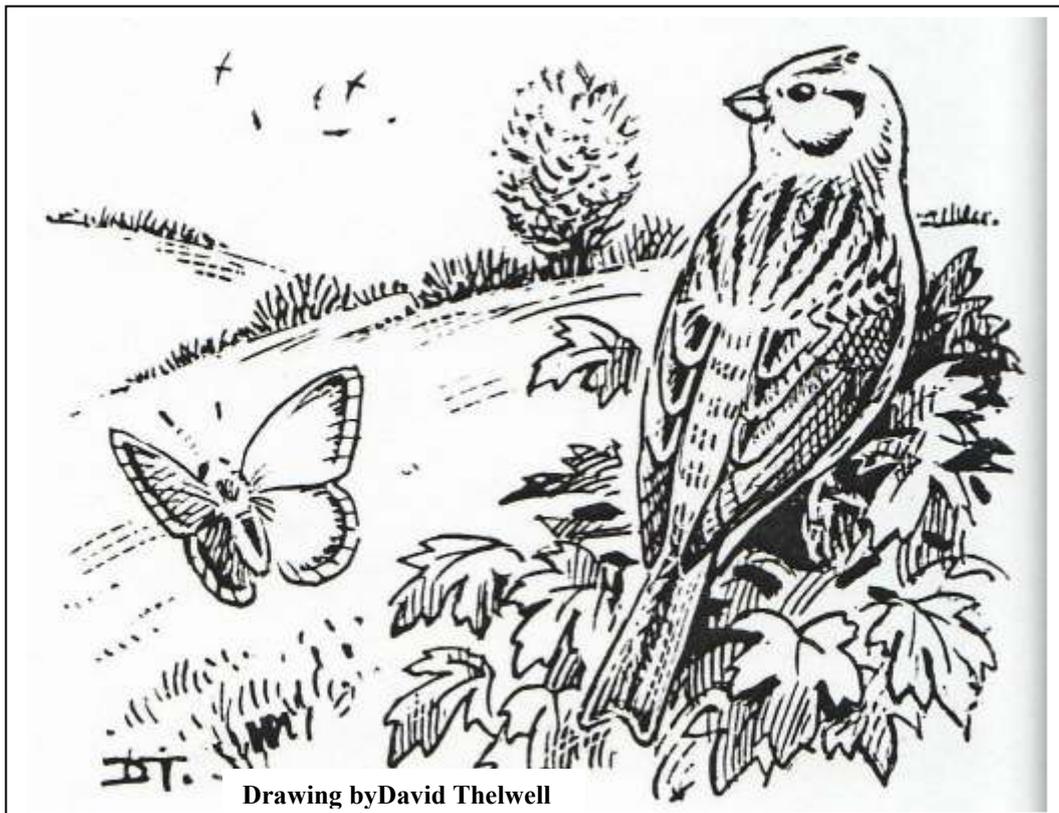
Hampshire Ornithological Society (HOS)

As well as being things of beauty, birds, butterflies and moths are important indicators of the health of the environment, both locally and nationally. In these times of rapid environmental change we are fortunate in this county to have two long established organisations, Butterfly Conservation and Hampshire Ornithological Society, actively monitoring these changes.

As part of a reciprocal arrangement we are including a leaflet to promote each other and the benefits of joining. A leaflet on HOS is enclosed. Some of you already support this organisation but if you are not already a member you might consider joining in order to help monitor and conserve Hampshire's rich bird fauna. HOS, whose president is Chris Packham, has over 1,000 members and will celebrate its 30th anniversary in 2009. Many members have been there since its inception, but renewed interest means it has recently reached its highest-ever membership. Whatever your bird interests are - birds in the garden, photographing birds or detailed bird surveys - everyone is welcome.

As a member of HOS you will receive four colour magazines a year and an annual bird report and will have opportunities to listen to talks, go on walks and attend the annual Open Day. HOS runs an instant email service - 'hoslist'. This group has some 800 members who exchange information on sightings and observations of rare and unusual birds and have general discussions about birds. HOS also has a website at www.hos.org.uk.

With your support we can make a difference.



SOUTH - EAST AREA GROUP NEWS

Peacock parasites

Dr Nia Hamer of Oxford University wrote in November to confirm that all 15 parasitoid pupae retrieved from the Peacock larvae taken into custody at Great Fontley in July are indeed *Sturmia bella*. Nia added that parasitism rates for both Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell are high, and that *Sturmia* alone has been found to parasitize between 30% and 40% of the larval broods sampled in the south-east. The Branch has been asked to assist again next summer.

Interested? Click onto <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~zool0376/small-tortoiseshell.htm>.

Horsea Island

Four unshod horses were introduced to the main meadow in the autumn. The meadow, east of the helipad, is home to the island's diminutive Small Heath colony, and was urgently in need of grazing to control scrub and the coarser grasses.

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ELM STUDY NEWS

Elms for Gateshead

Gateshead City Council wrote in October requesting help sourcing DED-resistant elms to bolster their White-letter Hairstreak colony at Derwent Water Country Park. The Group has been able to supply the Council with 25 Lutece whips, and a similar number of White Elm seedlings, at cost. Partly in response to the Council's request, a list of disease-resistant elm cultivar suppliers has now been appended to the Branch website.

New elms

Ten 'VADA' ® elm cultivars arrived from France in early December, together with two 'Accolade' cultivars from Golden Hill Plants in Kent. Meanwhile, a new hybrid clone is expected from IPP, Italy, for evaluation in the wetter northern European climate before commercial release. Only one modern cultivar still eludes us - the highly esteemed American 'Patriot', a complex clone derived from crosses and back-crosses of European and Asiatic species. The Bonte Hoek nursery in the Netherlands has succeeded in grafting the tree and has promised to send several rooted hardwood cuttings in 2010.

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**PRE-SEASON SOCIAL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC
AFTERNOON**

Saturday 21 March

2.00 pm at St. Barnabas Church Hall, Weeke, Winchester.

You are all welcome. If you wish, bring along six butterfly or moth images (prints, 35mm slides or digital), preferably themed: eg Woodland Butterflies, Hawkmoths, Butterflies of Greece.

Digital images

Members showing digital images: please arrange with Roger Buchanan **to send your pictures on a CD prior to the meeting or arrive with your CD as doors open at 2.00 pm**. As you will appreciate, it takes a little time to load the data projector, so we need the CDs in advance to ensure the meeting starts on time.

Photographs and slides

It would also be appreciated, to help with the planning of the event, if members showing slides or bringing photographs could contact Roger Buchanan before the meeting.

Programme

- 2.00 Doors open
- 2.30 UK butterflies
- 3.00 UK moths
- 3.30 Refreshments
- 4.00 Butterflies and moths from Europe and further afield
- 4.30 Close of meeting

Contact details

Roger Buchanan, 23 Grosvenor Road, Chandlers Ford, Eastleigh, SO53 5BH.
Tel. (023) 8025 2963. Email: **roger@roger-jane.co.uk**.

Nectar Plants: Hebe



Every garden needs a few shrubs to give structure and a sense of permanence, and evergreen ones are particularly useful as they maintain this effect through winter. If, in addition, the shrubs have attractive flowers that provide nectar for butterflies they are more or less indispensable! Hebes fulfil all these criteria and most are easy to grow, tolerant of drought and chalky soils, and hardy. In fact, they come in such a wide variety of forms and flower colours that you could almost have a garden planted exclusively with them. (There is, in fact, a Hebe Society: the genus is one of the few with a society devoted

exclusively to it.) For the butterfly enthusiast, of course, hebes alone would provide too little variety but there is no doubt that some hebes are very attractive to butterflies, and I wouldn't want to garden without them.

As there are about 100 species in the wild, and many more hybrids and selected forms in cultivation, this article can only scratch the surface. Garden centres usually stock a good range, especially of the dwarfier forms, so it is perhaps best to see them in flower (any time from early to late summer) and pick those you like the look of. However, there are a few that have been particularly successful in my garden. Top of the list from the point of view of attracting butterflies is one already in the garden when we moved to our present house. It was unlabelled, so I cannot be sure of the name, but it seems to match the description of *Hebe salicifolia*. It has narrow leaves and white flowers which completely cover the bush in mid-summer. (When we used to get Small Tortoiseshells in the garden (remember them?) they couldn't stay away from it.) It has made a shrub some 10 feet high and across, but with regular pruning could be much smaller. It is shown on the right of my drawing.

A smaller plant with more compact flower spikes which shade very prettily from pink to white as the individual flowers mature is *H.* 'Nichola's Blush'. For something darker, try *H.* 'La Seduisante', where the purple flower colour is also present in the leaves, which have a purple tinge when young.

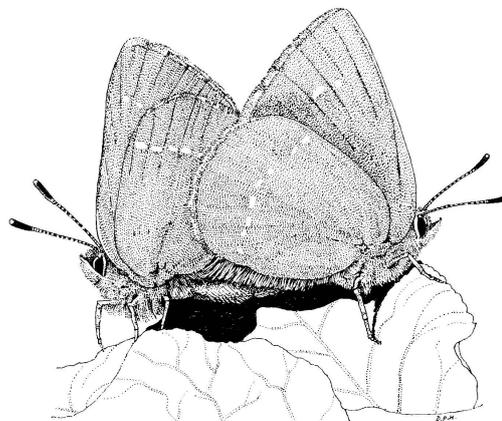
Foliage colour and form is another important contribution which hebes can make to the garden. There are several variegated forms, and others with congested glaucous foliage making dense compact domes. There are even varieties, like *Hebe ochracea* 'James Stirling', one of the so-called whipcord hebes, which look more like golden dwarf conifers (although with these the flowers are relatively insignificant). If space is limited, the compact growers are certainly worth considering; the one on the left of my drawing is *H.* 'Baby Marie', which has only grown to 3 ft high and across in nine years.

Cultivation, as I mentioned earlier, is generally easy. Good sun and reasonable drainage are necessary, and some shelter from the coldest wind will help avoid winter damage. Many hebes can put up with very dry situations, including those created by competition from tree roots. Pruning is sometimes said to be difficult, or to be avoided, but this is not necessarily true. Tidy up the bushes immediately after flowering to remove unsightly dead flower spikes, or prune hard in spring to reduce the size significantly. Some hebes will certainly regrow even if cut back to a stump, although this can be a risky operation. As late-summer cuttings usually root easily, a bit of planning could provide good insurance against killing a plant which does need severely cutting back, as well as providing plants to give to friends.

For more detailed information on this and all other aspects of growing hebes, the Hebe Society website is a good place to start. But beware: you could, like the Small Tortoiseshells, easily get hooked!

Jeremy Spon jeremy.spon@care-4-free.net

The only Green Hairstreak I've ever seen in my garden was on a large red-flowered H. 'Great Orme' growing in very dry soil in a sunny spot in front of a Leylandii hedge. Ed.



Green Hairstreaks
by Douglas Hammersley

BOOK REVIEWS

Tree books

There is currently an embarrassment of riches on the sylvan scene, from tomes to pocketbooks; three from across the spectrum, old and new, are reviewed here.

By far the heaviest burdening the Waterstone shelves, at almost three kilograms, is Cassell's *Trees of Britain & Northern Europe*, by John White (author) and David More (artist). The book's scope is enormous: over 3,000 trees are described on precisely 800 pages, from natives to introduced exotics and their cultivars. More's illustrations are superb: the leaves, flowers and fruits are portrayed actual size wherever possible, and the trees themselves often more intelligently shown as winter silhouettes rather than amorphous summer-time blobs. The book thus excels as an identification aid, though owing to its bulk clearly one intended for the drawing room rather than the field.

Alas, the notes are not of the same standard, often erratic and indifferently researched, as if the author had wearied of his Herculean labour. John White was formerly Principal Dendrologist with the Forestry Commission, and his refrain of "uncertain botanical origin" is often inexcusable, especially when applied to trees the Commission itself evaluated and publicized. Occasionally there are flights of pure fancy: the Dutch hybrid elm clone 'Plantyn' is described as a Chinese Elm cultivar (Chinese Elm was *never* used in the Dutch breeding programme). Nor are such howlers confined to any one genus; selected at random, Henry's Lime *Tilia henryana* is described as "rare" (22 suppliers in the UK according to the latest RHS *Plantfinder*) and flowering "in early summer" (actually October). A superlative picture book for those not bothered by detail, '*Trees*' is priced at £50.

Much smaller in size if not in scope is *Collins' Guide to Trees* by Storey. Lavishly illustrated with colour photographs, it tackles both the indigenous and the more common exotics, but limits itself to just 1,000 trees. Ergo: of portable if not strictly pocket dimensions. The text is inevitably concise, but accurate; at £15 the book would seem very good value.

No apologies for making the third selection a book no longer in print, the 'Observer' series having been axed by Warne's in the mid-1980s. Happily, the books are still to be found on second-hand bookstalls, and on E-bay of course. *The Observer's Book of Trees* by Herbert Edlin is a treasure. Restricting itself to just 70 species, it dwells on the UK's native trees, making exception only for the commoner introductions, notably conifers planted by the Forestry Commission. Edlin enjoyed a very rounded education at Edinburgh and

Oxford, as is evident from the numerous poetic and historical anecdotes which pepper the pages. Inevitably the illustrations are small, but they are adequate. The book is easily the most enjoyable read of the three, and well worth a little detective effort.

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WILDLIFE GARDENING

No Nettles Required by Ken Thompson. Eden Project Books, 2006. Price £10.

I imagine that almost everyone who creates a butterfly garden also wants to attract other wildlife. This book, subtitled “The Reassuring Truth about Wildlife Gardening”, covers a wide spectrum of species. The author challenges the myth that wildlife gardening is difficult, suggesting instead that it can be easier and cheaper than many believe. In contrast to many other volumes on wildlife gardening this book has no colour photos. A few small black and white illustrations by Mary Claire Smith separate the chapters. The text is easy to read, the author mixing personal opinion, research and facts with consummate skill. Each section has a boxed summary and fresh information. Some snippets are memorable, such as the one on the bat box in a Hampshire nudist colony which became home to a colony of hornets. They are interlaced with more serious observations, one suggesting that present-day agriculture could almost have been designed to discourage bees.

Relying heavily on an intensive survey of 61 varied gardens in Sheffield and on *The Ecology of a Garden – The first 15 Years* by Jennifer Owen, the author stresses the importance of small creatures: the earthworms, bacteria, etc. At the heart of the book are well-argued challenges to many assumptions about wildlife gardening, including the oft-read advice to cultivate nettles for egg-laying. He considers nettles to be usually a waste of space in any garden, since much larger beds are abundant in the countryside. Other sections challenge whether large gardens are necessarily better than small: many wildlife gardens in towns and cities are as good as or better than those in the countryside, having in many cases a resident rather than a commuting list of species. He further challenges traditional wisdom by denying any link between songbird decline and increased numbers of predators such as sparrow hawks.

The book also contains many helpful lists, such as one of the positive features of a wildlife garden, as well as advice about encouraging bees and wasps, and an extensive list of larval food plants for butterflies and moths. No book can cover everything on such a big subject, but more about ponds, smaller containers for drinking and bathing and native species in garden hedges, together with a comprehensive list of good nectar sources, would have been

welcome. The reference to nectar sources calls into question his assertion that native plants aren't always the best.

The final chapter entitled "Why You Should Care", answers the question on both a local and global level, stressing the therapeutic benefit of "reconnecting with nature" and the positive benefits for wildlife. This is a radical and thought-provoking book: I recommend it to all wildlife gardeners.

Richard Stewart

Moth Recording **Personal Highlights and Observations in 2008**

In 2008 the first Magdalen Hill Down Early Moth was recorded on 6 January. Will it eventually have to be named the Late Moth? In N.E. Hants *Tortricodes alternella* was out by 23 January and by 8 February both Common and Small Quakers had been observed.

The most unusual moth I found in March was the rather mysterious Dotted Chestnut. It has a largely unknown lifecycle, though it appears to have an association with apple trees and possibly with ants as well. As it hibernates as an adult from late autumn to spring, it was nice to see one still looking handsome, the colour of ripe sweetcorn.

Several firsts for the Dummer area began with a Scarce Prominent in late April, followed by Water Carpet and *Acleris literana* at Preston Candover. The Seraphim was another first for Dummer, recorded on 7 and 22 May. Both nights were dry with a light S.E. wind. I find it interesting to speculate where unusual moths originate from, particularly if their food plants are locally scarce or absent.

May was definitely micro-month at MHD, where Mike Wall and Malcolm Bridge added considerably to the species list. The spectacular *Ancylis obtusana* shares its food plant with the Brimstone butterfly. The maple-feeding *Pammene travniana* was new for the 10km square that the Reserve falls within. The good weather conditions of the last night of May helped to attract 50 species to the garden MV light, amongst them a Pine Hawk moth, a dark form of the May Highflyer (even the normal one is scarce here), and a first-ever Cream Wave.

As National Moth Night fell at the height of my busiest season, instead of attending an event I simply took two lights up to the local woods and then went

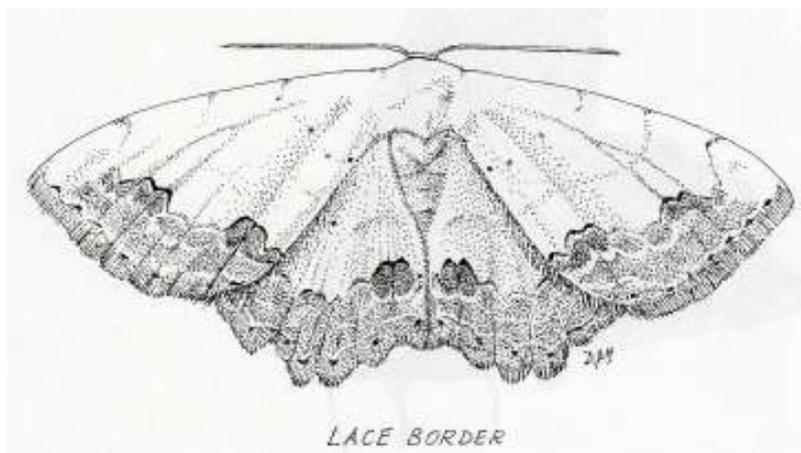
to bed! Again, nearly 50 species responded, but soon after the breezy cool south-westerlies began to dominate the summer, and moth numbers dropped alarmingly. Just 17 species appeared at the next garden night. July and August continued to blow hot and cold, though moths could certainly be around providing one chose the right night. For example, 24 species (69 individuals) on 19 July were followed six nights later by 69 species (206 individuals) at the same site. As I was participating in the National Garden Moth Scheme I was mainly restricted to Fridays, regardless of the weather.

The sheltered woods were definitely the place to be in 2008: two of the most inspiring sights were Gold Swift doing a mating dance and over 30 Twin-spot Carpets flying together. New moths for Dummer were Lesser-spotted Pinion and Satin Beauty, while Magpie and Broad-barred White returned to the garden after several years' absence.

Colin Bayer and Len Winokur helped with recording at MHD, where Four-dotted Footman, Barred Rivulet and *Ypsolopha scabella* were interesting additions.

September was rather uneventful. Several of the late-summer Noctuids were down in number, notably Setaceous Hebrew Character, Square-spot Rustic and, later on, Lunar Underwing. Other species did unusually well: Small Square-spot, White-spotted Pug and Lesser Swallow Prominent. I did not observe any uncommon migrants during the year. Good weather produced an excellent night at MHD on 18 October: Figure of Eight, Green-brindled Crescent and Brown-spot Pinion all appeared in numbers. Several good evenings in November and December culminated with a good show of Winter Moths at both Dummer Woods and MHD.

Patrick Fleet, Reserves Warden



Lace Border by Douglas Hammersley

NEW MEMBERS SINCE APRIL 2008

The Branch is delighted to welcome the following new members. We hope you will join in some of the Branch's activities and we look forward to meeting you all.

Mr K Adams, Waterlooville; Miss SL Babb, Rockbourne; Mr S D Baker, Hook; Mrs PSM Bowers, Petersfield; Mr PD Brock, Brockenhurst; Mr CN Button, Totton; Mr K Button, West Wellow; Mrs HM Byron, Fareham; Mrs PJ Callaway, Abbots Barton; Mr P Campbell, Ventnor; Mrs S Cleary, Waltham Chase; Mr JM Coppard, Baughurst; Mr DR Cooke, Freshwater, IoW; Mrs HR Cornford, Old Alresford; Mr P & Mrs A Costello, Godshill; Ms HJ Day, Eastney; Mr EJ Donnelly & Ms I Todorovska, Winchester; Mr JP Durnell, Boldre; Mr SB de Mesquita, Kempshot; Mr SJ Egerton-Read, Newport IoW; Mr SJ Evans, Neatham; Mrs KJ Evans-Prosser, Preston Candover; Mr J Faithfull, Bishops Waltham; Mr APD Flynn, Preston, Weymouth; Mr D Foote, Ropley; Professor PS & Dr BA Friedmann, Awbridge; Mr BN & Mrs A Galton, Over Wallop; Miss VE Gudgeon, Ringwood; Mr RF & Mrs CM Guildford, Hedge End; Mr PAJ Guymer, Alderbury, Wiltshire; Mrs J Hadwen, Denmead; Mr M Hallett, Porchfield, IoW; Mr R & Mrs V Harrison, Alresford; Mr CDH Haynes, Weeke; Mr M Haynes, Soberton; Mr M & Mrs L Hess, Andover; Mr M Hodson & Mrs C Cox, Little London; Mrs HM Gough-Holt & Mr D Holt, West Wellow; Mr D & Mrs R Holt, Calmore; Mr A & Mrs J Hoskins, Chandler's Ford; Ms H Hudson, New Milton; Mr A & Mrs PJ Hurrell, Lymington; Mr B & Ms C Ingamells, Dibden; Mrs S James, Rake; Mr TJ Jenvey, Hordle; Mr HE Kemm, Fareham; Mr JK Kimmance & Family, Winchester; Miss S King-Hele, Hurtmore, Surrey; Mr GI Lambell, Liss Forrest; Mr IR & Mrs D Lawrence, Southampton; Mrs CJ Lee, Farnborough; Mrs C Lewis, Fleet; Mrs LRA Lewis, New Milton; Miss S & Ms S Lynes, Brockenhurst; Mrs JF Mallett, Petersfield; Mr CP & Mrs CJ Moulton, Poulner; Miss MAP Pape, Cosham; Ms T Piper & Mr D Grubb, Chandler's Ford; Mr M Poland, Wroxall, Ventnor; Mr JF & Mrs B Powell & Family, Winchester; Mr M Reeves & Mrs K Peters, Waltham Chase; Mr & Mrs SD Robertson, Gosport; Mrs J Rossell, Denmead; Mr M & Mrs J Sayers, Alton; Miss JM Scaife, Netley Abbey; Mrs VM Scott, Sway; Miss A Sewry, Shawford; Mr JWH Solomon, Charlton; Mrs SE Southway, Fordingbridge; Mr WB Spurrell, Gosport; Mrs S Storey, Selborne; Miss J Tinker, Elson; Mr A Tinsley, Totton; Mrs CAC Thornton, Basingstoke; Mr MP Toms, Thetford, Norfolk; Mrs S Upton, Petersfield; Mr D & Mrs C Wallbank, Leyland, Lancashire; Miss S Warriss, Overton; Miss S Webster, Hampton Park; Miss KE Witcher, Boyatt Wood; Miss SJ Whitmore, Aldershot; Mr N Whines, Lower Froyle; Mr T Wilks & Dr T Paul, Ashurst; Ms R Williams, Denmead; Mrs JC Wilson, Ventnor; Mr NG Wissett-Warner; Mr AR Wynde, Kingsley.

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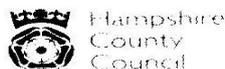
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NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Many thanks to all contributors for their articles. The deadline for the April 2009 Newsletter is 25 March.

Juliet Bloss, Editor

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



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