

DIARY OF EVENTS

FRIDAY 2 OCTOBER **Work Party, Magdalen Hill Down**
Meet: at top of track by cemetery (SU512 295). **Time:** 10am to 4pm.

WEDNESDAY 7 OCTOBER **Magdalen Hill Down Wednesday Wander**
Meet: 10.30am in gravel car park opposite the cemetery on Alresford Rd B3404,
Winchester. **Leader:** Lynn Fomison: 10.30am. A good chance of seeing Red Admirals.

SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER **AGM and Members' Day at Littleton Millennium
Memorial Hall, Littleton, Winchester.**

WEDNESDAY 28 OCTOBER **Work Party, Bentley Station Meadow**
Meet: in corner of station car park (SU792 432) or join us on the Reserve.
Time: 10am–2pm.

FRIDAY 6 NOVEMBER **Work Party, Yew Hill**
Meet: end of Old Kennels Lane (SU451 269) or join us on the Reserve. **Time:** 10am to 4pm.

FRIDAY 13 NOVEMBER **Work Party, Magdalen Hill Down**
As for 30 September.

SATURDAY 21 NOVEMBER **National AGM hosted by Hampshire Branch at
Winchester University (formerly King Alfred's
School, Winchester).**

FRIDAY 4 DECEMBER **Work Party, Yew Hill**
As for 6 November.

FRIDAY 8 JANUARY **Work Party, Magdalen Hill Down**
As for 30 September.

FRIDAY 15 JANUARY **Work Party, Yew Hill**
As for 6 November.

WEDNESDAY 20 JANUARY **Work Party, Bentley Station Meadow**
As for 28 October.

SATURDAY 23 JANUARY **English Moth Recorders' Conference**

MONDAY 24 JANUARY **"Wandering around Wight"**
An illustrated talk at St. Barnabas Church Hall, Weeke, Winchester. Joint with Hampshire
Wildlife Trust. **Time:** 7.00 for 7.30pm. **Speaker:** Brian Fletcher.
Tel: (01962) 882 746.

SEPTEMBER 2009

WORK PARTIES

Please note the work party dates listed above. Other dates will be arranged and notified by e-mail to people who have indicated an interest. If you would like your name added to the list (we need new participants!) please e-mail me at: **Lfomison@madasafish.com** or call me on (01962) 772251.

Wear strong clothes and footwear; bring gloves, food and drink.

There is no commitment; work parties are free to attend and enjoyable, and people are welcome for even part of a day. Training will be given, but it is really just like gardening and immensely helpful to our butterflies, moths and other wildlife. The more people who come, the better we can make the habitat, and newcomers are given a warm welcome.

If you have never done conservation work and are looking for an interest that involves being out of doors, gentle exercise and friendly company (and usually cake) please come along.

Lynn Fomison, Reserves Officer

Hantsmoths Website

Congratulations to Mike Wall on the new-look Hantsmoths website where good quality images of more than 1550 species can be found. This is the most significant redesign of the website since its launch in 2002. There are now pop-up displays of flight-time graphs and up-to-date distribution maps with a scrollable gallery of available photos, designed to enhance the visual impact of the site and increase its usability. **<http://www.hantsmoths.org.uk/index.htm>** A significant further innovation is the monthly on-line newsletters that can be accessed from the home-page. These are uploaded by about the 10th of each month and contain a summary of the previous month's sightings together with ID features and upcoming events. All contributions are very welcome.

Tim Norriss

ADDITIONAL MEETING

TUESDAY 1 DECEMBER NAMIBIAN CARNIVORES

Talk by Lise Hannsen on mammal conservation in Namibia. Lise Hannsen founded AFRICAT which saved many cheetahs from slaughter by Namibian farmers and she has subsequently undertaken projects to save desert lions and spotted hyenas. **Time:** 7.00 for 7.30. **Venue:** St Mary's Church Hall (opposite St Mary's Church), Fordingbridge.

Refreshments will be available. Suggested donation £5.00 to the Predator Conservation Trust.

A Chairman's September musings

Another summer is passing and, as usual, we have had lots of weather to mutter about. This year quite a lot of it has been favourable, if we forget July. Butterfly numbers are up - a real demonstration of how many species did manage to breed last year and only required a favourable maturation/flight period to emerge in good numbers. At the time of writing there are still several rather worn Painted Ladies, a species we were all asked to look out for last year (largely in vain), which arrived in superb numbers, with a magnificent second 'flush' just as the English-born adults emerged. I am told that one transect in Hampshire recorded over 900! During July and early August it was possible to visit many sites, such as Magdalen Hill Down, and see butterflies in clouds, a phenomenon that many considered a thing of the past.

This year's AGM will be held on 24 October in Littleton Millennium Memorial Hall, a venue well received last year, hence our decision to return. During the past year your Branch's Main Committee has been considering a number of important issues, which will be reported on and discussed at the AGM. Many of you know that we own part of Magdalen Hill Down (the part we call the Extension) and lease the Original Reserve (from the Church Commissioners) and North Down (from Hampshire County Council). Some years ago the Branch raised money to finance major projects, and it was hoped that the purchase of the Original Reserve might be a possibility. A further approach was made to the Commissioners, but purchase of the land is not an option at this time.

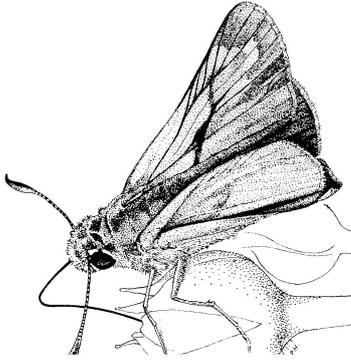
We are, obviously, an environmental charity and keen to optimise our use of new technology to reduce our 'carbon footprint'. Butterfly Conservation is gradually developing its web strategy; but it is not yet in a position, for example, to use e-mail for its mailings as its membership system does not as yet seek members' consent for their personal details to be used for this purpose. The Branch is keen to explore greater e-mail and web use, and I will be exploring this with members at the AGM. There is no question of forcing a move to e-mail and exclusive web use, but an 'opt-in' system whereby members can elect to receive information and, for example, the Newsletter by this route (or as a download from a members' area of our Branch website) are options we need to explore.

On 21 November the Branch hosts the National AGM in the Stripe Complex at Winchester University. Head Office has arranged an interesting range of speakers, and I hope many local members will wish to attend. The Branch will offer hospitality in the upstairs conference room of the Stripe. Unfortunately an exclusive catering contract precludes us from serving drinks and food, but the room should be a welcoming and relaxing venue with stands illustrating

some of our relationships and activities. The regulations do not preclude you from consuming your own food and drinks on-site!

At our AGM I will, as usual, be asking members to consider helping with Branch management. Our committees need your help: please contact me or any other Committee member if you would like to put your name forward.

Roger Buchanan, Chairman



Reserves News

Those of you who follow the sightings page on the web will have read of the delight of a family from the Netherlands. They had not expected to see many butterflies in the UK but were thrilled with the variety and quantity at Magdalen Hill Down. It comes as no surprise to Patrick, me and the army of volunteers who help to run the reserves that all three are flower-filled butterfly (and moth) paradises. This is no accident but the result of careful management and stalwart efforts. I am pleased to report that the transect recorders who operate the five transects on the reserves on a rota basis (about 5 per transect) have been reporting a much, much better year than last year. Obviously the weather is a major factor affecting butterfly numbers, but of great importance too is getting the grazing right.

Matthew Oates taught me one essential principle of habitat management for butterflies: Never do the same thing to the whole of the site at the same time. This makes good sense and is something we take into account when grazing Yew Hill and Magdalen Hill Down. The former has two different grazed areas and one ungrazed area. MHD provides six separately fenced areas that we graze at different times and to different intensities. Very useful guidance on sward heights required by different butterfly species is contained in Nature Conservancy Council booklet No. 17 published in 1992: *The management of chalk grassland for butterfly species*. This booklet is also a treasury of other advice and carries the dire warning printed in bold letters: **The wrong grazing management for even a short period can eliminate butterfly species**. Scary stuff for those of us taking decisions on how best to manage the reserves. The booklet goes on to say that the time of year that grazing takes place is a critical

factor in conserving a thriving butterfly fauna, with winter grazing from October-March being considered the least damaging.

In recent years our main strategy has been to have cattle on the reserves from October to January at Yew Hill and MHD and during October /November at Bentley, which is a much smaller area with only one fenced grazing area. The booklet recommends rotational stocking as a suitable method for most sites but it does recognize that fenced compartments are needed. Our favoured choice is cattle but we do use sheep a bit. In the early years after sowing the Extension and North Down the areas were grazed in spring and autumn by sheep (this helps consolidate the sward and prevent False Oat Grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* from becoming too dominant). In this respect the Extension will need sheep occasionally in spring, as will North Down. At this time growth is at its peak of palatability, so that grazing can help control undesirable species such as thistle.

Andy Barker has been regularly monitoring sward heights on MHD Original Reserve for many years and these data are used to help us formulate grazing plans. As recent wet summers have resulted in an increase in the summer height of the sward, we are going to ensure that one area stays short throughout the summer. This year and in future summers we are likely to be having low-level cattle grazing in one compartment (the middle one) at MHD Original. The data Andy collects also indicate levels of rabbit activity, which can be most beneficial at the right level, but exceedingly damaging if the pressure is too heavy.

We have designed and are managing MHD to provide a range of habitats, for butterflies have complex life cycles and their different life stages have different habitat requirements. For instance, Chalkhill Blue females need horseshoe vetch in a short sward (ideally 2.5–6.5 cm) but they also need plenty of nectar from flowers such as knapweed and scabious to fuel mating activity. Moreover, this species can regularly be found roosting in the evening in the long grass – which might not be found on sites where widespread summer grazing is employed.

The help with conservation work given by members is another major factor in providing ideal habitat at the reserves. Patrick Fleet and I have welcomed the help given with ragwort clearance. The winter is our busy time on scrub management and we do so hope that we shall see some new faces soon as well as the regulars. Some work party dates are given on the diary page, and other dates will be notified by e-mail. Please contact me if you would like to go onto the e-mail distribution list. There is no commitment to attend: we just welcome all who come along – even an odd hour is a help.

Lynn Fomison, Branch Reserves Officer

Butterfly Records 2009

After two uninspiring summers 2009 proved to be very interesting. This year will certainly go down as the year of the Painted Lady, but how did the other species fare? I'm looking forward to receiving your records to see what was happening across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. I'm sure this year's *Butterfly and Moth Report* will make interesting reading.

When to send

The deadline is Wednesday 4 November.

As entering the data is very time-consuming, we would be grateful if you could start sending in your records as soon as possible. Although we cannot guarantee that anything sent in after the deadline will be used in the butterfly section of the *Butterfly and Moth Report*, please send your data in, however late, as all data received will be incorporated into our database. Your data make a valuable contribution to the annual report and, as part of our database, will increase our understanding of the numbers and distribution of butterflies in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and contribute to their conservation.

What to send

- Completed site recording forms (green).*
- Completed casual recording forms (yellow).*
- Anecdotal comments (for the butterfly section of the *Butterfly and Moth Report*), i.e. accounts of field observations of behaviour, nectaring, courtship, egg-laying, predation, etc.
- Completed spreadsheets for electronic transmission. Please contact me if you would like me to e-mail you our spreadsheet template.

**These forms were sent with the April Newsletter. Please photocopy blank forms as required or contact me and will I supply you with additional forms.*

Please send all records, comments, etc., to Linda Barker: details on back page of Newsletter.

If you would like to send in your records on MapMate please contact Dave Green on alpium@clara.co.uk to make the necessary arrangements.

Linda Barker, Butterfly Recorder

NATIONAL MOTH NIGHTS 2009
FRIDAY 18 & SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER

For the first time ever National Moth Night will take place over two nights in 2009, with migration as the main theme. Recording can be carried out on either night or both. The organisers are asking recorders and members of the public to look out for moths that will be colour-marked at various sites, in the hope that we might be able to learn something about moth migration. September is a particularly productive month for observing moth migration, for home-bred progeny of spring/summer immigrations then mix with additional insects coming into the country. As with any migration event, however, the weather is an important influence; we will be hoping for a warm night with southerly winds to bring insects northwards from warmer parts of Europe or even from North Africa.

NMN was last held in September in 2006, on the 23rd (Atropos 31: 46-64): a total of 496 species was recorded from 728 sites across the British Isles, including rare immigrant species such as the Beautiful Marbled, Passenger and Plumed Fan-foot. A total of 153 *Convolvulus* Hawk-moths was recorded from 104 sites across Britain; this spectacular species with its five-inch wingspan may be seen visiting flowers, such as Tobacco Plant *Nicotiana*, in gardens at dusk: it hovers in front of the flower and takes the nectar using its enormous proboscis - a truly memorable sight.

In 2006 on NMN in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight 205 species were recorded by 59 recorders. Many of the expected migrants were seen in good numbers, from the tiny Diamond-backed Moth to the huge *Convolvulus* Hawk-moth, of which twenty were seen. If you have had the forethought to plant *Nicotiana* in your garden, watch it carefully from dusk onwards as *convolvuli* finds this plant irresistible and is almost guaranteed in autumn. Rush Veneer was recorded at 36 sites, whilst Vestal, Pearly Underwing, Delicate, Silver Y and Scarce Bordered Straw were also widespread. Unusually, Bordered Straw was rare that year with only one recorded on that night. Clancy's Rustic had turned up in numbers for the first time in 2005 and is thought to have colonised the SE corner of the county, so it was not surprising that two were seen on NMN 2006. Of the real rarities that turned up that night, Crimson Speckled was probably the rarest and certainly the most beautiful, whilst two *Antigastra catalaunalis*, one on the mainland and one on the island, were equally unexpected. The very warm spring and hot summer of 2006 resulted in several species having second generations. Most notable amongst these was a Blotched Emerald on NMN: this was the first time a second brood had been recorded in our area (this has been repeated only once since – in 2007).

So what will NMN 2009 bring? Who knows, but hopefully with good weather we will get some surprises and possibly a colour-marked moth.

Taking part

You can take part in NMN in any way you choose. This might involve running a moth-trap in your garden, looking for moths at your kitchen window or on blossom, attending or organising a public event or, for the very dedicated moth recorder, travelling further afield with moth-traps and a portable generator to search for unusual species. Wherever you record moths, please watch out for the colour-marked ones, for which we are seeking reports. Should you be lucky enough to find one of these (they are marked with coloured paint), please ensure that a good-quality photograph is submitted so that we can verify the record and determine where the moth has come from. Please bear in mind that flash can distort the colours, so it may be as well to retain the moth and photograph it the next day in daylight.

The moth records from participants across the country are combined into a fascinating summary of what was on the wing and published in the journal *Atropos*. If you take any photographs of NMN activities or moths recorded on the day/night, please e-mail them to [**atropos.editor@zen.co.uk**](mailto:atropos.editor@zen.co.uk) for possible publication in that journal.

The organisers need your data to be submitted by 1 December 2009. You can do this either by using the data submission form that can be found on the [**submit your results page**](#) of the [**http://www.nationalmothnight.info/events.php**](http://www.nationalmothnight.info/events.php) website or by submitting them to me by Mapmate sync file, spreadsheet or snail mail. My contact details are on the back page of this Newsletter. If you submit them to the NMN organisers direct, please be sure to copy them to me also. Good mothing.

Tim Norriss, Moth Officer



Dusky Thorn by Richard Coomber

MOTHS

ID Feature – The *Ennomos* genus: September, August and Dusky and Canary-shouldered Thorns

On average **September Thorn** *Ennomos erosaria* is the first of this trio to appear, often at the start of July, and a week or more before August Thorn so the name is no clue to identity. September Thorn holds its wings more upright than August Thorn: this is probably the best feature. This combined with the rather plain appearance, generally lack of discal mark, more prominent tails on the hindwing and straighter outer cross-line near the outer edge are the features to look for.

August Thorn *Ennomos quercinaria* is a more variable species, ranging from plain to heavily speckled, and can often show considerable dark areas between the outer cross-line and the outer edge – so beware of mistaking these dark ones for Dusky Thorn. August Thorn holds its wings flatter than the other two species and usually shows a wiggle in the outer cross-line near the leading edge. A discal spot or crescent is normally present.

Dusky Thorn *Ennomos fuscantaria* is the last to appear, usually not until the end of July or early August. It holds its wings angled upwards, is not very variable in colour, shows a broad dark area outside the outer cross-line and usually has a discal mark. The outer cross-line lacks the wiggle near the leading edge.

Canary-shouldered Thorn *Ennomos alniaria* has a brighter lemon-yellow thorax than the other three species, though on rare occasions it can show a paler buff thorax.

Tim Norriss, Moth Officer

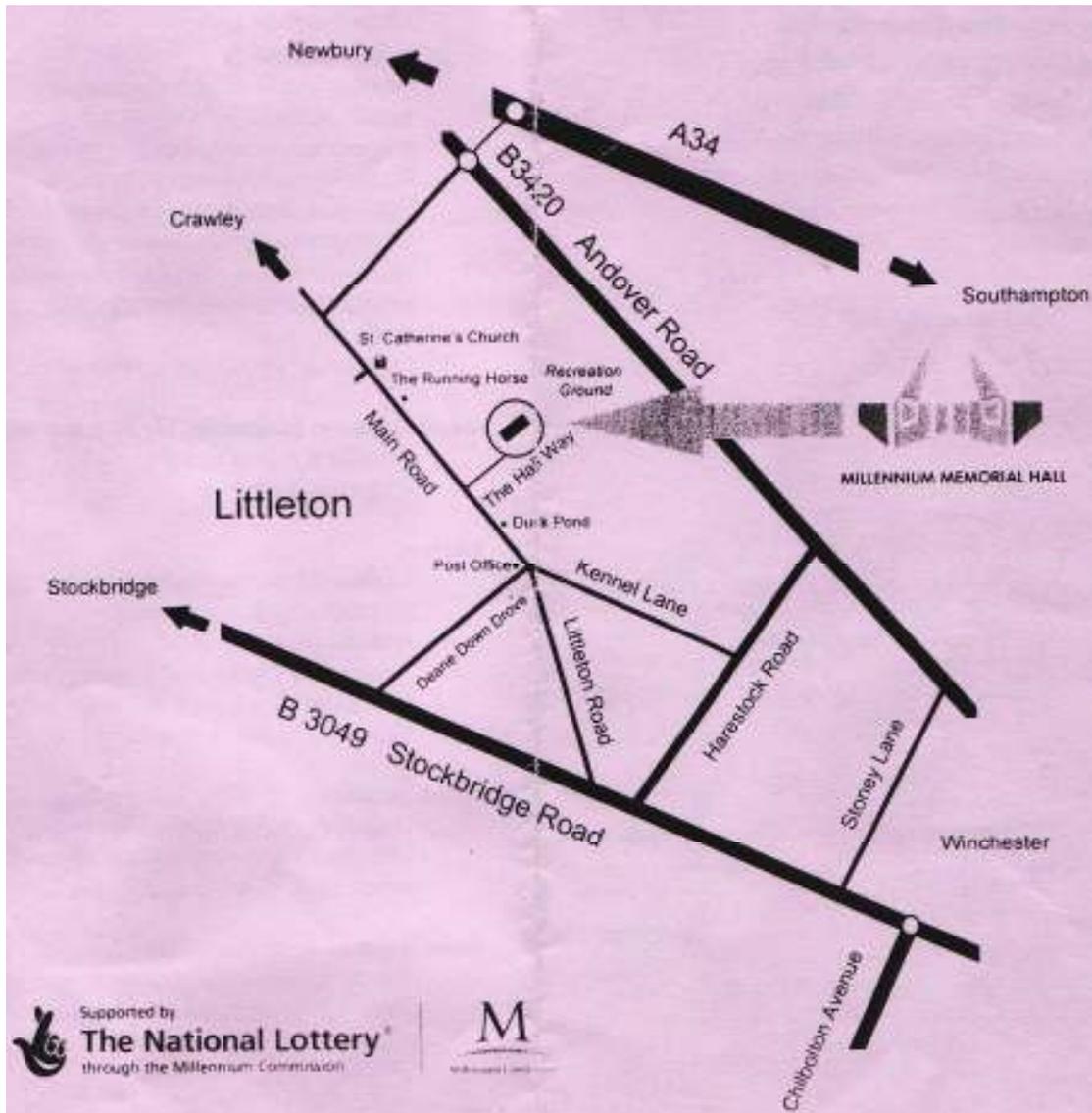


September Thorn by Richard Coomber

LOCATION FOR AGM/MEMBERS' DAY

Littleton Millennium Memorial Hall

The Hall Way
off Main Road
Littleton
Winchester
(SU455 324)



Plan shows location of Littleton Millennium Memorial Hall

M E M B E R S' D A Y
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch

Date : Saturday 24 October 2009

**Littleton Millennium Memorial Hall,
The Hall Way, Littleton, Winchester, SO22 6QL**

See map on p.11.

Programme

1.00 Doors open.

1.30 – 2.30 Annual General Meeting.

**2.30 – 3.20 Prof. R Vane-Wright:
 “Butterfly ABC: Art, Biology and Conservation”.**

**3.20 – 4.20 Refreshments, ‘mingling’ and photographic competition
 (see page 14 for details).**

**4.20 – 5.00 Dr S. Ellis, Head of Regions, Butterfly Conservation:
 “Regional Officers and new SE Regional Projects”.**

5.00 – 5.45 Results of photographic competition.

5.45 – 6.00 Roger Buchanan: Final comments and close of meeting.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2009

Saturday 24 October

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 2008 Annual General Meeting.
3. Matters arising from the minutes.
4. Presentation of accounts.
5. Reports of Conservation, Information, Records and Reserves Sub-Committees.
6. Chairman's report.
7. Election of Committee members.

In keeping with the requirement that a third of Branch Committee members should stand down at each AGM the following Members (based on seniority rotation) are standing down but seeking re-election:

Dave Green
Janet Jones
Tessa Newell

Two co-opted members seeking election:

Thelma Smalley
Robin Turner

Branch Rules allow a maximum of 15 Main Committee members. This means, subject to the above members being re-elected, a maximum of **one** vacancy remains.

Additional nominations of members willing to serve on the Main Committee are invited. Names of those wishing to stand for election should be forwarded to Roger Buchanan, Chairman, no later than 17 October.

8. Health and safety matters.
9. Any other business. Items should be notified to Chairman by 21 October.

Members' Day 2009 PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITION

All images must be prints not exceeding an image size equivalent to A4 (210x297mm) in landscape or portrait format. Prints may be mounted.

MEMBERS ARE LIMITED TO A TOTAL OF 3 PRINTS OVERALL

Prints will be displayed and judged in the following categories:

- **UK Butterflies**
- **UK Moths**
- **Behaviour**
- **Immature Stages**
- **Overseas Butterflies and Moths**

All members attending the meeting will be invited to complete a voting slip identifying their favourite image from each category and to choose their overall winning entry.

The results will be collated, and the winners announced at the end of the meeting.

As last year there will be no opportunity to show slides or digital images at this meeting. There will be an opportunity to do so at the Social Evening early in 2010 – the date will be notified on the website and published in the next Newsletter.

South-east Area Group News

White-letter Hairstreak search on the Isle of Wight

Four members of the Group descended on the hamlet of Roud near Godshill in July to search for the White-letter Hairstreak as part of the national WLH survey orchestrated by Liz Goodyear of the Herts & Middx Branch.

Alas, all the elms there had died some years ago. The Group nonetheless discovered larval webs of Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock along the banks of the Eastern Yar. But in America Wood not a single White Admiral was seen, probably owing to the head-high bracken smothering the bramble. Liz later visited the island herself and found the butterfly at four locations, ranging from Sandown Caravan Park to Niton Undercliff.

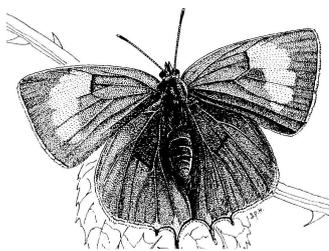
Sturmia bella

The Group again participated in Oxford University's *Sturmia bella* study, collecting 28 Peacock larvae from Great Fontley. Only 9 (32%) survived to emerge as imagines, compared with 57% last year. The parasitoid pupae were duly sent to Oxford where they have since hatched and been identified as *Sturmia bella*.

Brown Hairstreak hunt

The Group made its third outing of the year to the Isle of Wight in late August to search for the Brown Hairstreaks of Newtown. We were joined by Caroline Dudley, but the search proved vain once more, despite the apparently perfect habitat. Another potential site on the north side of Tennyson Down was searched later in the afternoon and yielded hundreds of Chalkhill and Common Blues and a handful of beautiful Jersey Tigers; but no hairstreaks.

Andrew Brookes Leader, South-east Area Group



ELM STUDY NEWS

Forestry Commission rapport

A delegation from the FC led by Simon James, South Beat Officer, visited the trials plantation at Great Fontley Farm in early July to examine the new cultivars now in commerce. Elm was once one of the six major broadleaves of English forest but, owing to the susceptibility of native trees to disease, it has not been planted by the FC or independent foresters. Simon has indicated his willingness to plant a selection of the new elms in the areas clear-felled of Hemlock this year at the West Walk Plantation near Wickham.

The East Coker Elm

Whilst the Branch's elm study essentially concerns the assessment of modern cultivars, there are occasions when it attracts the attention of those wishing to conserve old native or archaeophytic elms. These trees are usually solitary Wych Elms which have survived only because of their isolation from diseased stock, but one glaring exception is a magnificent Narrow- (Smooth-) leafed Elm *Ulmus minor* subsp. *minor* discovered in a field near East Coker, the idyllic Somerset village immortalized by T S Eliot. Following an alert by South Somerset D C's arborist last year, cuttings were taken this February for propagation by the French state forestry nursery at Gueméné-Penfao. The young trees will be tested for DED resistance by inoculation when two years old; sadly no such service is available in the UK.



The Narrow-leafed Elm is very much the 'third' UK elm, much rarer and more localized than the ubiquitous English and Wych Elms. A few old specimens survive, mostly in East Anglia, notably on the Dengie Flats in Essex. The East Coker tree, at 30m the tallest known specimen in the UK, was almost certainly planted by the Helyar dynasty in the 19th century as one of many ornamentals in their now-fragmented domain. The tree is generally treated as a subspecies of *Ulmus minor*, which has a substantial genetic diversity and is thus the one European species most likely to evolve a resistance. Like the English Elm, the Narrow-leafed was almost certainly introduced to these shores by man.

Local suppliers of 'LUTÈCE'

At our behest, the Worcestershire wholesale nursery of Frank P Matthews, which trades under the name of *Trees For Life*, is now raising the LUTÈCE cultivar in 7-litre pots. *TFL* supplies the following emporia in and around Hampshire, whence LUTÈCE may be either obtained direct or ordered for delivery within two weeks:

- Garsons Garden Centre, Fontley, nr Fareham
- In Excess Garden Centre, Ringwood
- Landford Trees, Salisbury
- Springfield Nursery, Bordon
- Stansted Park Garden Centre, Rowlands Castle

The trees will be available from October, priced at "under £15".

Andrew Brookes

BOOK REVIEWS

***New Trees – Recent Introductions to Cultivation*, by Grimshaw and Bayton**

Commissioned by the International Dendrology Society, *New Trees* is a lavish heavyweight sponsored by the likes of the Lord Heseltine and Heathcote Amory and numerous charitable trusts. Comprising almost 1,000 pages replete with colour photographs and line drawings, *New Trees* seeks to move on from where the 8th (and apparently final) edition of Bean's *Trees and shrubs hardy to the British Isles* left off over 30 years ago. Since then many changes not overtly significant to arboriculture have occurred, paramount among them the improvement in diplomatic relations between West and East, or more specifically China, the plantsman's Mecca. It is difficult to exaggerate the floral importance of such a huge country never ravaged by glaciation, and where just one mountain, the Emei Shan, hosts more than double the number of plant species native to the British Isles.

The generosity of Chinese and other arboreta to their Western counterparts has produced a substantial influx of new species, some of which are now beginning to appear in commerce. Within the same period the development of new cultivars on both sides of the Atlantic has continued apace, nowhere more noticeably than in the realm of the elm, with the release of over a dozen clones highly resistant to Dutch elm disease.

This book, which appeared in May this year, describes over 800 'trees' (defined as single-stemmed plants over 5m in height, to include eucryphia, camellia, and one astonishing buddleja) introduced to European and North American cultivation. All are described in exhaustive detail; no mere desktop search this, the authors having globetrotted tirelessly to photograph and sample many of the trees. Impossible to fault, *New Trees* (ISBN 978-1-84246-173-0) is published by the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew, price £99.

Andrew Brookes

***The Vegetative Key to the British Flora*, John Poland & Eric Clement
ISBN 978-0-9560144-0-5. Botanical Society of the British Isles. £24.99**

Identification of plants is often important for all those interested in butterflies and moths. This can be quite hard even when plants are in flower and much harder if they are not. But here is a book which promises that a diligent enthusiast can reliably name a plant, normally with three turns of page and often within a minute of study.

The book is illustrated with both black and white line drawings and colour plates and has a comprehensive glossary of botanical terms. It should be a useful addition to anyone's nature-book shelves.

Lynn Fomison

Painted Ladies

As butterfly recorder for the Whippingham Fields transect on the Isle of Wight since 1998, I have usually seen between five and 40 Painted Ladies in any year. Exceptions were 2003 and 2006, when I recorded in excess of 200.

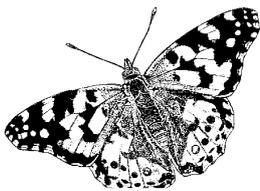
Earlier this month while holidaying at Le Jouval, Villeneuve sur Vere, in the Tarn region of France about 20 miles north of Albi, I observed that the Painted Lady was the commonest butterfly to be seen. Sitting by the swimming pool at the top of a slope with a band of trees along the southern boundary, I noticed that they were all starting to fly in a northerly direction and concluded that migration had started. At first approximately 500 per hour were channelling themselves through a 50-foot gap in the trees, and by early afternoon on 16 May I had recorded in excess of 6,000 per hour streaming through the gap from a southerly direction. The butterflies were flying at between one and three feet above the ground; mixed in with them was a much smaller number of Clouded Yellows.

I had read that several migratory species travel together along known routes each year (e.g. Red Admiral south of Paris) but had never before witnessed the phenomenon for myself.

Painted Ladies could be seen everywhere on the 500-mile drive back to the ferry port at Caen and I remarked to my wife that it could mean a record year for sightings in the U.K.

After returning home I visited Whippingham Fields on 25 May and my hopes were realised: there were hundreds of Painted Ladies in the fields around my house.

John Rowell



Painted Ladies Again

On Monday 25 May Painted Ladies were passing over my field at Ropley in huge numbers. In a 20-metre band they were going through during the afternoon at a rate of 1,000 per hour. On Thursday 28 May 130 were counted in 10 minutes late in the afternoon. Very few seemed to stop. But some must have done, for by late July/early August they were virtually too numerous to count as they zoomed around the garden – buddleias being their favourite nectar source.

Fantastic!

Lynn Fomison

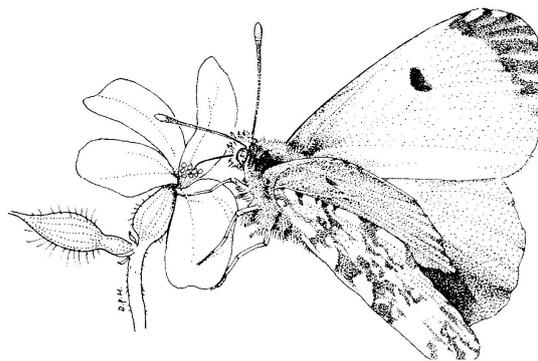
Orange Tip Larvae

In the April 2008 issue I challenged the claim that Orange-tip larvae rarely thrive on honesty pods, saying that I was awaiting the emergence of Orange-tips from four pupae, three green and one brown. I had brought them from cooler winter storage into our unheated but south-facing porch, and when days went by without emergence I was reassured to read that a Dorset member had experienced a similar situation in 2007. Oliver Hooker's Orange-tips emerged the following spring, all three on the same day in April. Frohawk in 1914 confirmed that "this species has been known to pass through two winters in the pupal stage".

Regrettably, and possibly because I hadn't returned them to winter quarters, three of my pupae showed a change of colour in early January, indicating imminent emergence, and one male emerged unnoticed and flew away. Could this have been the male I saw on 4 April, my earliest record of the year? This experience adds to my confusion about late sightings. Frohawk found it difficult to account for examples as late as September but concluded, "most probably their emergence may be in some way retarded".

Maitland Emmet in 1989 wrote "it is not known whether the adults which are occasionally seen in August or September have emerged late or constitute a very small second brood". Bob Whitmarsh in our Hampshire *Annual Report* reasonably assumed that the sighting of a male Orange-tip was of a second brood - or was it from the spring and emerged late? Is climate change confusing both butterflies and observers? Orange-tips deserve to be watched more closely, especially when the weather in spring is not good for butterflies

Joyce Gifford



Gardening For Butterflies – Gravel Gardens

I don't suppose that garden design is a topic of great interest to most Butterfly Conservation members. However, at one level garden design is just a series of decisions about where and how to grow plants in your garden; whether you aspire to something more 'artistic' or 'intellectual' is related to why you want a garden in the first place.

Most people do want something more organised, and controlled, than pure wild nature around their house. The subject of this article is a style of gardening which in a way reconciles the wild and the domesticated, the artless and the designed. In recent years gravel gardens have come to be viewed as fashionable design elements, but ironically their origin lies mainly in a desire to emulate natural landscapes. Probably the most famous contemporary example is that made by Beth Chatto in her garden in Essex; equally influential is the garden the film-maker Derek Jarman created around his house at Dungeness. Both were made as a response to challenging environments, in particular low rainfall. But we need to look back to the 1950s, and the garden at Denmans near Chichester made by Joyce Robinson, for the original inspiration. She wanted to emulate the appearance of the landscape on the Greek island of Delos, and hit on the idea of covering the ground between plants, even trees and shrubs, with coarse gravel and shingle. She realised that this would have practical benefits as well as aesthetic ones, and it is in this combination that the real attraction of gravel gardening lies for me.

Many plants, especially those from Mediterranean climates, look at home in a sea of gravel, especially if spaced a little further apart than in a normal border. They also grow better. Gravel is probably the best mulch you can use, as it is more or less permanent, is extremely effective at suppressing weeds, and insulates the soil in the winter, while reducing water loss in summer. Plants on the borderline of hardiness stand a better chance of survival with a gravel mulch, but all plants can benefit from the protection it gives. Many valuable nectar plants are well-suited to growing in gravel, and the ability of stones to absorb and re-radiate the sun's heat creates a warmer micro-climate which will be attractive to butterflies.

On a practical note, I would always recommend using a coarse grade (20mm) of gravel. Finer grades are far less effective in suppressing weeds. Also make sure you apply a thick enough layer. If the earth shows through, weeds will soon start growing in it. Don't bother with a weed-suppressing membrane under the gravel – they are more trouble than they are worth, making the job of planting new plants more difficult, and limiting the natural sideways spread of perennials and bulbs.

One final point. Apart from paving and concrete, a lawn is probably the most sterile environment for wildlife you can have in a garden. So if your garden is small, why not abandon the lawn completely, and have gravel instead. Both plants and wildlife will appreciate it, and you will save yourself a lot of work as well!

Jeremy Spon

Visit to Yew Hill

It's 8.30 am on 29 July. It's teeming with rain. The phone rings and a lady's voice asks whether the visit to Yew Hill is on. I suggest we wait until a little later to see what the weather brings, and I will be there in any event. But no, there is no time, she will ring her people and cancel.

So it was with some trepidation that I waited at the footpath leading to Yew Hill. It had stopped raining. The temperature had risen. Ten hardy souls appeared. Hurrah!

And what a visit it proved to be. The wild flowers looked gorgeous. The butterflies behaved perfectly for the camera; it was cloudy and just warm enough for the odd flutter-flutter, but most butterflies sat on stems or flowerheads and opened their wings on command! We saw 14 species in all. It was particularly rewarding to find a Small Copper, a Brown Argus and a few late Small Skippers. The Chalkhill Blues, male and female, were everywhere, together with a few Common Blues. In one area we reckoned there was a Chalkhill Blue in every square metre. Gatekeepers also abounded. And, of course, Painted Ladies put in an appearance. Will this hatch breed again and their progeny return to North Africa or will we have some overwintering?

We ventured a few yards into Hilltop and noticed areas of short turf (thanks to rabbits) but it contained many cowslips. It's looking good. The view of the surrounding area is almost 360 degrees and well worth a pause to marvel. I think we have gained one more BC member at least.

Must visit Yew Hill more frequently and blow the weather.

Ivan Arnold



Illustration by Dave Thelwell

New members since April 2009 Newsletter

The Branch extends a warm welcome to the following new members. We look forward to meeting you at Members' Day and on some of our other events.

Miss L Baker, Shirley; Mr SF Blake, New Milton; Mr G Bowen & Mrs C Jenkins, Ryde; Mr RM Brett, Winchester; Mr AJ & Mrs D Brown, Wickham; Mr RJ Bryan, Fareham; Mrs MC Burgess, Winchester; Miss CSF Burroughs, Ryde;
Mr SR Colenut, Romsey; Miss L Coles, Romsey; Mrs KP Edwards, Owslebury; Mr P Floyd, Shirley;
Dr AM George & SP Maddix, Radnage, High Wycombe; Mr TA Graham, Alresford; Mr JA Groves, Mottisfont;
Mr J & Mrs A Harris & Family, Basingstoke; Mr P Hunt, Freshwater; Mr I Hutchinson, Chandler's Ford;
Mr D J Ince, Holbury; Dr D James, Bournemouth; Mr AJ Johnson, Southsea; Mrs VE Liddell, Stockbridge; Mr W Liddell, Goodworth Clatford; M RCD Lovett, Portsmouth; Mr N R Ludford, Portchester;
Mr MD & Mrs CM Marvin, Lee-on-the-Solent; Miss JM Moetteli, Winchester; Mr R & Mr W Parker, Greywell; Mrs L Pyne, Alderney, Channel Islands;
Mr A Rackman, Timsbury; Mrs MG Reynolds, St. Brelade, Jersey; Miss P Richards & Mr S Turner, Havant; Mr ASE Robinson, Marchwood;
Mrs P St.John-Fowler, Southsea; Mr CF & Mrs AM Savage, Stubbington; Mr TA & Mrs D Searle & Family, Chandler's Ford; Dr RE Shawyer, Ropley; Mr DA Shute, Cheriton; Mr PM Smith, New Milton; Miss HA Stacey, Andover; Mrs TA Taylor, East Cowes; Mr MJ Tutton, Farlington; Mr B West, Stone, Staffordshire; Ms M Williams, Freemantle.

Defective Bindings on 2008 Reports

Regrettably a few copies of the 2008 *Butterfly and Moth Report* were found to have defective bindings and have fallen apart when used. Some people have already indicated this and have had their copy replaced. Could I ask everyone who has not already done so to check their copy carefully; if you find that pages are loose please advise either Linda Barker or Tim Norriss **straight away** by telephone or e-mail so that further copies can be arranged. Our contact details are on the back of this Newsletter.

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NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Many thanks to all contributors for their articles. The deadline for the January 2010 Newsletter is 21 December i.e. **before** Christmas, please.

Juliet Bloss, Editor

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



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