

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch



Newsletter 111



Butterfly
Conservation

October 2021



Branch Vacancies

We are still seeking volunteers to fill the following vacant posts:

- **Branch Secretary**
- **Branch Organiser**
- **Chair of Information Sub-Committee**

Please contact Branch Chair, Andy Barker, if you have a little spare time, some enthusiasm and skills for any of these roles. Andy's email address is: aj3barker@btinternet.com

Volunteering Opportunities

Winter Work Parties/Volunteer Task Days will run as follows:

Magdalen Meadow Mondays on each Monday starting on 18 October and running until 6 December 2021.

Wednesday Works Yew Hill on the following Wednesdays: 20 October, 3 and 17 November, 1 December.

An updated list of dates will be sent out in the next Volunteer Bulletin. Please email Fiona Scully if you would like to receive this: fscully@butterfly-conservation.org



At **Bentley Station Meadow** work parties are scheduled for:

Saturday 23 October

Tuesday 30 November

Saturday 18 December

Wednesday 26 January

Wednesday 23 February

Please email Steve Lockett for further details: posteve@hotmail.co.uk



Chairman's Message

Although the butterfly season is drawing to a close, I'm sure like me, you have plenty of happy memories of great moments over the spring and summer. Hopefully many of you will have had a chance to visit one or more of Butterfly Conservation's nature reserves, either in Hampshire, or further afield. Such sites are so important for the conservation of some of the UK's rarer butterfly and moth species, and it's great to see many of the key species doing well in Hampshire. Chalk Hill Blues seem to have done especially well at both Magdalen Hill Down and Yew Hill, and the numbers of Dark Green Fritillaries at Yew Hill this year were probably the highest we've ever seen. Having volunteers help with the ongoing monitoring and practical management on reserves is so important, that I'd like to say a special thank you to all those who have helped. If you are not yet involved, but would like to be, please contact Fiona Scully or Steve Wheatley (see inside back cover for contact details), as we're always looking for extra help.



*Meadow Brown.
Rosemary Powell*

So what else has been happening over the summer and what were my personal highlights? To start with, we took up the "Tetrad challenge" laid down by Bob Annell (County Butterfly Recorder) for members to fill in a few gaps around Hampshire and Isle of Wight where butterflies are under-recorded. We picked on some out of the way areas in west Hampshire, where there were gaps, and set about finding a public footpath that might lead somewhere interesting. We certainly weren't disappointed and turned up some lovely woodland edges and country lanes. One particularly sheltered woodland edge had a bramble patch that was alive with butterflies when we visited in July, producing no fewer than 14 species, including an impressive 137 Meadow Browns!

Another surprise came when visiting a beautiful garden near Winchester, open as part of the National Garden Scheme (yellow book) programme. The owners were clearly interested in wildlife, as they had Swift boxes under the eaves of their house, and a lovely wildflower meadow adjoining the property. Around the meadow I spotted some Dark Mullein plants, the larval foodplant of the rare Striped Lychnis moth, and to my surprise, found 20 larvae on the flower spikes, including a few in the garden. It just goes to show the contribution that sensitively managed gardens can make to butterfly and moth conservation. In our own garden, we recorded 20 butterfly species this year, including our first Essex Skipper, which brings our all-time garden tally to 26 species. So, whenever you're out and about, even in your own garden, or local park, keep looking, as there's always something interesting to discover.

Fiona Scully, the South Downs Landscape Officer, who is involved with both Yew Hill and Magdalen Hill Down, will be the Keynote Speaker at our AGM and Members' Day on 7 November. If you'd like to find out more, and possibly get more involved with our nature reserves, please read Fiona's article on page 11, and be sure you join us for what should be a great mix of talks at Members' Day. At this point I should say that when I wrote for the April Newsletter, we had intended to have the AGM and Members' Day as an indoor event at Littleton Millennium Hall, but unfortunately, due to the continuing Covid uncertainty and Covid-related restrictions associated with the venue, we decided that a Zoom webinar, as held last year, would be the safest and most realistic option. Full details of how to register for this are in the separate article about the AGM and Members' Day (see page 4). We're disappointed not to be able to have the indoor social meeting that we had originally planned, but on balance we felt it was the best course of action. Although we'll miss out on meeting friends and socialising, you will at least be able to enjoy some inspirational talks from the comfort of your own home.

As always, we're still looking for additional volunteers to help with Committee work and particular roles where we have vacancies. One such role is for the "Shows and Events Organiser". Our involvement with events this year was extremely limited due to Covid-related concerns, but our intention is for much greater participation in 2022, especially at those events where we have traditionally been involved. This can only happen, however, if we have someone to co-ordinate the programme, as myself and other volunteers are already fully committed with other work. If you feel this is something you might like to do, I'd be very pleased to hear from you. Existing Branch volunteers with

experience of shows and events would be available to provide advice and guidance.

To keep in touch with members on a more regular basis, we intend to produce e-Newsletters at two-monthly intervals. Once fully working this will mean that between the existing printed Branch Newsletters (April, October) or electronic versions of these if that's your preference, you will also receive Branch e-Newsletters in February, June, August and December. This will give us the opportunity to bring you up to date on the latest Branch news, including upcoming events. Remember, however, you will only receive such e-communications if your "mail preferences" have this as one of your chosen communications options. If you did not receive the June Branch e-Newsletter, for example, you will need to contact BC Head Office to let them know that you would like to receive Branch e-Newsletters. It is not something that we can do at Branch level, as we do not have access to the centralised database. Once correctly assigned, you should then hopefully receive Branch e-Newsletters, and you can of course opt-out at any time.

It's always great to share news of butterfly and moth sightings, especially when accompanied by lovely images. We have some regular contributors to the "News" page of the Branch website and, of course, you can also join in via the Branch social media channels. It would be great to have a few more contributions to brighten the day as we enter the autumn and winter months, so if you've got hibernating butterflies in your garage, or interesting moths to report, do consider uploading something for the enjoyment of all.

Whether you live in an urban setting or in the countryside, I'd like to finish by saying make the most of the environment around you, stay safe, and enjoy nature.

**Andy Barker,
Branch Chair**



Small Blue. Rosemary Powell



Branch AGM and Members' Day 2021

This year's AGM and Members' Day on **Sunday 7 November** will take place online as a Zoom webinar, commencing at **12.00 noon**.

We had intended to hold the event at Littleton Millennium Memorial Hall, as announced in the April 2021 Newsletter, but due to rising Covid-19 cases at the time of planning and continuing uncertainty around the pandemic, we decided that it would be unwise to plan for an indoor winter event. Whereas last year's event was simply an AGM, this year we plan to hold an AGM and Members' Day. Although we won't be able to enjoy the usual socialising of a Members' Day, we have nevertheless arranged a full programme of online presentations that we hope you will find appealing. I would like to extend a warm invitation to all Members to attend what I'm sure will be an enjoyable and informative event. Details of how to register (free of charge) are given below.

The full programme for the AGM and Members' Day is outlined opposite. Unfortunately, given the complexity of what we have to organise, it has been decided not to include a photographic competition this year, but we hope it will return in 2022.

How to Register for the Branch AGM and Members' Day

If you would like to attend the online AGM and Members' Day Zoom webinar to be held on 7 November 2021, you will need to formally register, using the **Eventbrite link <https://tinyurl.com/hiowAGM>** by no later than Thursday 28 October.

BC Head Office has recommended that we use Eventbrite to manage this process, as it is GDPR compliant. Once registration has closed and using the email addresses supplied, we will send an email with a Zoom link (and instructions) to all Members who have registered. The intention is to do this early in the week commencing 1 November.

Timetable for the day

- 11:50-12:00 Join Zoom webinar (a link will only be sent to those who have formally registered through Eventbrite by the deadline of 28 October – see below)
- 12:00-12:05 Chairman's Welcome
- 12:05-13:00 Branch AGM – see separate Agenda below
- 13:00-13:30 Lunch Break
- 13:30-14:10 Magdalen Hill Down and Yew Hill nature reserves – Fiona Scully, BC South Downs Landscape Officer
- 14:10-14:15 Questions
- 14:15-14:35 Photographing butterflies – Lee Hurrell
- 14:35-14:40 Questions
- 14:40-15:00 Break
- 15:00-15:20 Ecology of the Black-veined White butterfly – Dr Fabrizia Ratto
- 15:20-15:25 Questions
- 15:25-15:45 Tiger Moths of the Isle of Wight – Jim Baldwin
- 15:45-15:50 Questions
- 15:50-16:00 Chairman's closing remarks

Annual General Meeting 2021

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2020 AGM (with acceptance vote using Zoom functionality)
3. Matters arising from the Minutes
4. Presentation of Accounts
5. Chairman's Report
6. Election of new Main Committee members (vote using Zoom functionality)
7. Health and Safety Matters
8. Any other business (notified to Chairman no later than 31 October 2021)
9. Close of AGM

Information about the 2021 AGM will be available via a link on the Home Page of the Branch website – **www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk** – from where you'll be able to find the draft 2020 AGM Minutes and Branch Accounts for financial year 2020-2021.

Details of those Members standing for election to the Branch Committee will be given in a finalised 2021 AGM Agenda posted on the Branch website no later than 29 October. Please note:

For those Members without internet access who would like to receive a copy of the draft 2020 AGM Minutes or 2020-2021 Branch Accounts, or would like to arrange a proxy vote, please contact the Branch Chairman by no later than Friday 22 October.

If you disagree with anything in the draft 2020 Minutes and/or have any comments or questions on them, please email these to the Branch Chairman **aj3barker@btinternet.com** to arrive no later than 31 October.

As all Branch accounts are now handled by BC Head Office and are consolidated as part of Butterfly Conservation's fully audited accounts, there is no longer any legal requirement for Branches to present their accounts to Branch Members for approval at their Branch AGM. Our Branch Accounts are, therefore, presented for information only.

The draft Minutes of the 2021 AGM will be posted onto the Branch website **www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk** a few weeks after the meeting. You will be able to find these Minutes by following:
Home > About > Minutes of AGMs > 2021.

***Andy Barker,
Branch Chair***



Peacock. Rosemary Powell



Reserves News – Meet the BC Staff

Fiona Scully

I started at BC in December 2020, having worked in the South Downs for the past 12 years as Area Ranger for the National Trust. I've always worked in nature conservation and this role provides great scope in managing two outstanding chalk grassland reserves and working beyond their boundaries to strengthen butterfly and moth populations.

The long-term aim is to link nature reserves by creating more habitats to benefit wildlife across the countryside. There is a lot to be done working with partner organisations, farmers and other landowners. I've learned a lot about Magdalen Hill Down and Yew Hill. The wide range of plants and butterflies they support is intoxicating! It's been great to meet local people and volunteers who have known the reserves for many years and give so much of their time to help. And of course there's nothing better than working with the HIWWT cows and sheep, an essential part of the team!



Steve Lockett

I have been a member of BC for about 5 years, lured in by a one year free membership offer for taking part in the Big Butterfly Count. When I moved to the Surrey/Hampshire border from the Isle of Wight, I was automatically enrolled into the Surrey group, but I was having none of that, and remained a HIOW branch member (although I know Surrey have some great butterflies too).

I went along to a couple of tasks at Bentley Station Meadow, also signing up to the transect team at Straights Enclosure in Alice Holt Forest. Due to the difficulties of the past 18 months work on the site has been limited, but by taking on the role of Volunteer Reserve Officer I hope to become part of a team that turns back the tide of bramble and scrub, and get the reserve looking more like a meadow again.

I also work part time as a gardener and am a seasonal ranger at Frensham Common.



Conservation News – South East England Region

What a year across the South East! This has been one of my busiest and most intense years with Butterfly Conservation, not least because of the scale of the challenge, the pandemic and lockdown early in the year, a very cold start (the coldest April nights in 99 years), and then the intense flight season and growing season.

In the last year, six new staff have joined Butterfly Conservation in our Region – Emma and Rebecca in Kent (delivering our Kent's Magnificent Moths project), Paul on the Sussex/Surrey border (completing the Wood White project), Steve B and Ellie (delivering Big City Butterflies in London) and Fiona (taking on the management of Magdalen Hill Down in Hampshire). There are now more paid staff active in the Region than ever before.



Our dedicated volunteers have also been really busy this year; more transects have been walked this year than ever before – meaning more sites and more butterflies are being counted and recorded. This is providing the invaluable feedback and evidence to inform nature conservation.

We've also undertaken extensive searches and surveys for some of the Region's rarest moths including: the rare Sloe Carpet, Drab Looper, Striped Lychnis and Silvery Arches (all Hampshire moths). Elsewhere in the region we've covered Heart Moth, Lace Border, Fiery Clearwing and Straw Belle. They might not have the mass appeal of our butterflies but I hope you agree there are some wonderful names and they have just as important a role to play.

2021 also marks us passing the half way point in the delivery of Butterfly Conservation's ten-year Regional Action Plan. Of course, a plan is worth nothing unless it delivers action. I'm really pleased with the progress that we've made in the first five years.

We have made progress in almost all of our 23 highest priority landscapes in the South East (12 of which are at least partly in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight). Together we have engaged extensively with land-managers in at least 16 of these landscapes. We have also engaged directly with land managers of at least 15 of the 35 highest priority sites outside our priority landscapes.



*British White cows grazing at Magdalen Hill Down.
Work party at Magdalen Hill Down.
Fiona Scully*

In the last five years Butterfly Conservation has directly delivered or funded conservation action for 20 of the highest priority butterfly and moth species. In addition, our conservation partners such as the Wildlife Trusts, National Trust, Natural England and National Parks have worked with us to deliver bespoke conservation action for at least 18 of these.

We have made progress on all ten highest priority butterfly species, seven of which are in Hampshire and Isle of Wight. Populations of at least four of these have increased and the populations of four others are assessed to be stable. Only the Grayling is showing a possible and worrying decline, especially on the Isle of Wight. Excellent work by volunteers and conservation partners is producing good results across its heathland range in the north and east of the county.

The Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary remains one of our priorities that we are struggling to keep in the South East. Climate change appears to be driving the loss of this butterfly in our region, and the recent IPCC report indicates that this process is only likely to increase. Interestingly the Small Pearl is not even a high conservation priority in Scotland, where populations are faring relatively well without any direct intervention.

From the coldest April to the concern of increasing global warming, our challenges are going to continue, but we now have more staff and brilliant volunteers delivering essential action and recording the impacts. Thank you to everyone who delivers action, champions species or records butterflies, and to the people doing so much behind the scenes to enable all this to happen. And here's to the next five years of action for our beautiful butterflies and moths.

***Steve Wheatley,
Regional Conservation Manager, South East England***



***Pearl-bordered Fritillary.
Rosemary Powell***



Reserves News

Magdalen Hill Down

Magdalen, with such a wet and warm summer, just bloomed and grew and flowered more. The flower-rich meadows supported a huge biomass of invertebrates, in turn attracting dragonflies, Mediterranean gulls and even a nightjar to join in the feast of insects.

Early summer was worrying with butterflies in low numbers, but things picked up and proved a good year for Dingy Skippers, Green Hairstreaks, Small Blues, Dark Green Fritillaries, clouds of Chalkhill Blues and a good number of Adonis Blues.



*Butterfly spotting on Magdalen Hill Down. Fiona Scully.
Andy Barker looking for Dark Mullein, Magdalen Hill Down.
Fiona Scully*



Yew Hill

Yew Hill had excellent results for butterflies with higher numbers of Small Blue and Dark Green Fritillary. Rupert Broadway confirmed the White Letter Hairstreak is still in residence. The site needs hard grazing and sheep have been brought back. Plans are in place to clear and dig out more scrub this winter.

Summer Highlights

Kate Barrett led school activities, ably supported by volunteers. Children were captivated by the moth trap. The site continues to be used by St.Swithuns Forest School and a group of Winchester College students come weekly to help with practical tasks.

We had one student from Sparsholt College and two work experience girls from Henry Beaufort School. They helped lay out the Butterfly quiz trail, part of the Big Butterfly Count. This was launched at the Winchester Science Centre with Chris Packham who was filmed on the reserve, with lots of media coverage.

Tony Davis did two moth surveys to provide a species list for Magdalen and was joined by volunteers for a bat and moth evening.

The Butterfly Walks were really enjoyable and focused on different species through the season. It was a good opportunity to meet people who knew the site well.

Volunteers

The team of livestock lookers has been outstanding. We couldn't graze the reserves without them, so an enormous 'thank you!'

The Reserve Volunteers sprang into action tackling ragwort in the hay cut areas and the Allotments – it was a brave effort with great team work. Volunteers are busy clearing scrapes, paths and tackling invasive plants. We need more helping hands, so do please come and join us.

Volunteer Task Days

A list of dates and locations will be sent out in the next Volunteer Bulletin. Please email me if you would like to receive this but don't already.

You can contact me on **fscully@butterfly-conservation.org** or phone 07918 073651.

Looking Forward – What's On
Christmas Party/BBQ for all volunteers
Friday 10 December, 1pm at Magdalen Hill Down

A Dawn Chorus special – Birds, Breakfast and Butterflies
May 2022, date TBC

Magdalen Hill Down Butterfly Conservation Facebook page – please do add your photos and stories.

Stay well and see you soon.

Fiona Scully,
South Downs Landscape Officer

Bentley Station Meadow

I have been spending the past few months getting to know the reserve and thinking about ways to get the habitat as good as it can be. As a starting point, I carried out my Big Butterfly Count there and can report a decent 10 species tally – something to build on. Two ash and an oak tree have been felled and stacked due to safety issues, and several fallen willows have been cleared from the butterfly transect route.

The cows will return in the next month, following a couple of days brush-cutting. The cows will eat into the bramble and scrub that otherwise risks becoming dominant in the meadow.

I will be leading monthly work parties to tackle the overgrowth and I'd like to invite you to join me on any or all of the following dates:

Saturday 23 October

Tuesday 30 November

Saturday 18 December

Wednesday 26 January

Wednesday 23 February

We will meet at Gravel Hill car park at 10.00 and walk down to the North reserve entrance for a 10.15 start. Tools are provided, but bring your own lopper/pruning saw if you prefer. We break for lunch at 12.30 and carry on until a finish no later than 15.00.

I plan to be at the reserve MOST Tuesday mornings from 10.00, so if you are unable to make the above dates or are super keen to do more, please contact me and we can tackle yet more scrubby growth.

Best for now,

Steve Lockett,
Bentley Station Meadow Reserve Officer
07530 044278
posteve@hotmail.co.uk



Re-introduction of the Marsh Fritillary Project Update

Our project to re-introduce the charismatic Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*) to north-east Hampshire now has a rhythm of its own. Covid restrictions have stopped us from undertaking a full cycle of adult and larval web surveys but Andy Barker and myself visited all three release sites in north-east Hampshire in late May. We should have left it until early June as ground conditions were prodigiously wet and our wellies were in danger of filling up from over-topping water. More importantly, the cold and wet conditions of April and May meant that adult emergence was at least a week or so later than usual.

Several adults were seen on the wing but the transect walkers enjoyed much greater success in the following weeks. Some 26 adults were seen on transect on one of the release sites on the 31 May, an excellent result. We know from the survey work that all three release sites are being used for breeding; that breeding is taking place away from the immediate release areas, and that adults are moving through the landscape into adjacent areas of both suitable and unsuitable habitat. We will use larval web surveys next February and March to assess whether breeding and egg laying is taking place away from the release sites themselves. We also know that the specific parasitic wasp, *Cotesia bignelli*, is present on one of the release sites.

A key focus for this winter is to work with the landowner of one of the release sites to control the amount of birch and willow scrub that is beginning to encroach into the core breeding habitat. Grazing is no longer a viable option for various reasons but we hope to organise some work parties to get on top of the problem.

The project has been a wonderful partnership between the Branch, the Ministry of Defence and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust. Each year, the MoD Sanctuary team recognise outstanding sustainability and conservation efforts across the MoD estate in both the UK and British Overseas Territories. Competition is stiff, so Andy and I were delighted to receive a Highly Commended award for the Marsh Fritillary re-introduction in the Environment Protection and Enhancement category. This is a great achievement for all the organisations involved.



Two's company, three's a crowd! Steve Wheatley

A YouTube link to the award ceremony can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WLaabAMWQks>

Our project can be found at about 15 minutes in followed by the overall winner, a curlew translocation programme.

Clive Wood



An Inspirational Neighbourhood Meadow

Residents of a small community in north Hampshire have turned a non-descript mown field into a stunning three-acre haven for butterflies, moths and other pollinators, and their work is inspiring others in the area to do the same. This is a superb and inspiring wildflower meadow creation project.

Ten years ago, the residents on a lane near Whitchurch clubbed together to purchase the field in front of their homes. They then embarked on a programme of ground preparation and sowing of wild flower seeds. Advice and flower seed came from renowned grower Charles Flower. Just one kilogram of seed and regular care is all it has taken to turn a species poor grass field into a superb spot for wildlife, and for the residents to endlessly enjoy. Interestingly, the use of yellow rattle to reduce the coarse grasses appears to have allowed the prolific emergence of pyramidal orchids. Also important plants like Bird's-foot Trefoil and Scabious are now thriving.



Striped Lychnis larva on Dark Mullein. Richard Elston

The Marbled White is one of the most recent arrivals, and more species are likely to colonise. The residents are now looking out for the Small Blue, the flourishing abundance of Kidney Vetch giving rise to optimism that the smallest British butterfly will find a happy home here.

In 2020 the rare Striped Lychnis moth was recorded here, and this year 113 of its caterpillars were counted on the Dark Mullein that had been sown two years previously. The Striped Lychnis is a rare UKBAP moth and a speciality of Hampshire. This meadow shows just how effective it can be to sow foodplants for specific butterflies and moths.

The project has been so successful that neighbouring landowners are now looking to do the same; the community is working with a neighbour to enhance the diversity of a five-acre former arable field, and a neighbouring woodland is being opened up to provide opportunities for White Admirals, and Silver-washed Fritillaries, as well as providing a valuable corridor for the meadow species.

The meadow is cut annually and the cuttings are removed. This prevents a build up of nutrients and mulch and helps to encourage further diversity of the less dominant and competitive plants that grow well in lower nutrient conditions.

The wildflower meadow has become a source of great pleasure to the residents of this community which includes a number of young families. The children are beginning to take an interest in the insects and butterflies which now inhabit this area and were keen participants in the Big Butterfly Count. This year 48 butterflies of 12 species were counted during the 15-minute Big Butterfly Count survey.

To get started on your own butterfly haven visit the Butterfly Conservation website: <https://butterfly-conservation.org/our-work/reports-and-fact-sheets/habitat-creation>

*Steve Wheatley,
Regional Conservation Manager, South East England*



Looking splendid, the neighbourhood meadow. Steve Wheatley



2021 Field Trips – Hampshire Walks Review

The 2021 season of field trips draws to a close. While, frustratingly, the inclement weather caused several walks to be cancelled and several more to be rescheduled in an on-off-and-on-again programme, after the 'lost' year in 2020 it was really good to have some well attended and successful field trips.

We started in the New Forest in April looking for the Emperor Moth, and we were successful in attracting one fresh male with my 'lure'. In early May the Duke of Burgundy was beginning to emerge in reasonable numbers on the slopes of Butser Hill and, later in the month, the weather on the re-arranged Bentley Wood and Martin Down trips turned up trumps.

At Bentley Wood, Pearl-Bordered Fritillaries were past their best and we didn't see the Small Pearl-Bordered Fritillary as it a little early in the season, but the Martin Down trip on the last day of May was a triumph, seeing the Duke of Burgundy at this site for the first time and also plenty of Marsh Fritillaries and Adonis Blues.

In mid-June, Dark Green Fritillaries adorned Abbotstone Down, which also appears to be one of the best sites for the Green Hairstreak. Due to the wet weather, several summer walks were rearranged but this turned out to be a blessing in disguise as the Purple Emperor was late to emerge in 2021.



In July we had two Emperor field trips in the space of three days: to Alice Holt Forest and West Wood and we saw an extraordinary 24 Purple Emperors, and also another male of this impressive species was seen at West Harting Down the following week. In addition the beautiful Silver-washed Fritillary *Valezina* was seen in Crab Wood on the West Wood field trip.

August was no better weather wise but we managed to get in one of the best field trips to Shipton Bellinger, where all the target species were seen. The Brown Hairstreak was noted about a dozen times despite the weather being cloudy with short periods of sunshine, and the elusive Wall Brown was encountered at least three times, along with good counts of Magpie Moths.

The New Forest at Beaulieu Heath produced the Grayling and in September the Adonis Blue and the lovely Silver-spotted Skipper were seen in reasonable numbers at Old Winchester Hill and Beacon Hill.

It was a great pleasure to meet new field trippers this year and for the good overall attendance on most of the walks. I would like to thank all those who joined me in 2021 and hope to see you all in 2022.

***Ashley Whitlock,
Hampshire Field Trips Organiser***

Engrossed in the hedgerows at Shipton Bellinger. Ashley Whitlock





2021 Isle of Wight Group Roundup and Walks Review

It has been a year of transition for the Isle of Wight Group after our leader, Stuart Read, sadly decided to stand down in mid-April due to other commitments. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Stuart for his work in the role and I have enjoyed taking on the additional responsibility.

Thankfully, this year we were able to stage a programme of walks. Our Field Meetings Organiser, Kay Shaw and her husband Colin, organised six excellent walks which were well supported and enjoyed by all. Even the weather did not dampen spirits with one walk postponed to the following Saturday when it was glorious sunshine while the final walk of the year saw the attendees dashing for cover from a heavy shower before continuing their walk.

Kay says that the really good attendances have encouraged her to run an additional walk early in the season at Firestone Copse, so look out for details of this next year. Kay's field trip highlights include seeing six *Valezina* forms of the Silver-washed Fritillary at Kemphill Moor Copse on 26 July, more than ever before, and the first *Valezina* of the year was seen on 1 July, the earliest on record.

The group was invited by English Heritage to run a table at Osborne House as part of their Blooming Gardens event on 12 and 13 June. The weather was lovely on both days, and it was great to engage with the public about butterflies and moths in the garden and beyond. Many thanks to my fellow volunteers Kay Shaw and Tina Whitmore who helped me at the table on the Saturday and Sunday respectively. There has also been a Tiger Moth project running in the Isle of Wight this year, encouraging the public to report their sightings. There will be more about this at the online meeting.

The highlights of the year have included five sightings of Large Tortoiseshell, between 27 February and 5 May, and three new species of moth for the Isle of Wight: two micros – *Anarsia innoxia* and *Elachista maculicerusella*; and this eye-catching Ringed Border at Osborne House on 22 July.

Thanks to everyone for your support this year and we hope to stage more events in 2022.

**Jim Baldwin,
Isle of Wight Group Leader**

*Ringed Border moth. Iain Outlaw
At the Blooming Gardens event, Osborne House. Tina Whitmore*



MOTH SURVEYING
Moths fly at night and are attracted to light. They are most active from dusk to dawn. They are attracted to light and are most active at night. They are attracted to light and are most active at night.



OSBORNE
BUTTERFLY SURVEYING
SUPPORTS THE TIME
SPENDING OF THE
SCHOOL TEACHERS
IN THE CLASSROOM
EFFORTS TO
TEACH THE
LIFE OF THE
MOTH



Images for the Annual Butterfly Report

I am sure, like me, you have many butterfly and moth photographs taken during the course of the 2021 season. If you would like to have any of your pictures considered to illustrate this year's Annual Report, please feel free to email them to me, at **lee.hurrell1@gmail.com**

I need one image for each Hampshire and Isle of Wight species and will choose from all those submitted. The deadline for receiving these is end of December 2021.

Lee Hurrell





Rannoch Brindled Beauty

Prompted by the pandemic and the travel restrictions we have all experienced over the past 18 months or so, I've been thinking about butterflies and moths in other parts of Britain. I thought it might be fun, as well as enlightening, to widen our horizons by introducing a species and a landscape/habitat not encountered down these parts.

To that end, I am deeply indebted to Margaret Currie and Andy Scott of BC Highland Branch, as far from Hampshire and the Isle of Wight as it is possible to get in terms of the BC branch network, for permission to reproduce in full their account of this rare and wonderful moth. It really is an insight into another world, in more ways than one. So, seat belts on, and enjoy the trip. Ed.

'Very rare in East Ross and known only from Oykel Bridge where it appears to persist.' That was written by the moth recorder for VC106 in 2010.

It was two years before the situation changed, in late March 2012 we received a message that some of these very rare moths had been found near Garve and did we want to see them! Well yes, indeed we did, so a few days later at 6am (the early start was possibly so the cows on the croft got their breakfast on time) we set off up the hillside to the site.



*Typical habitat of the Rannoch Brindled Beauty.
All images by the authors*

We knew it was usual for the moths to be found resting on fence posts during the day, and eventually arrived at a typical high forestry fence. Following the fence upwards for only a short distance there was our first male Rannoch Brindled Beauty, quite obvious, not hidden in any way, and perfectly still. What attractive, chunky little moths they are with a smart white, grey and black pattern on the wings and a flash of red on the furry body.

The females being flightless look rather different, furry little bundles with dark bodies and a red stripe, they must have lost the ability to fly a very long time ago, only a very few showing scant remains of wings.



Rannoch Brindled Beauty, male.

Unlike the males, the females can be quite active when intent on reaching the top of a post, once in position they are presumably in the best place to attract a male moth.

We followed the fence for approximately 200 yards and counted 34 males and 15 females. They have been recorded at this location regularly since then. The highest count to date here was on 3rd April 2017 when 91 males and 11 females were present.

It was into 2017 before we eventually went in search of the original site for the moths near Oykel Bridge in the very far reaches of the VC. We stopped at the known grid reference which is just before Oykel Bridge and looked about. There was only one fence nearby and it was very hard to search due to waist high vegetation, but we found no moths.

Driving on through Oykel Bridge and spotting a likely looking fence we started another search, the temperature that day, 10th April, was 5 degrees but felt much colder in the wind. The fence we searched was a fairly new forestry fence and all we found was 1 male and 1 female. Disappointing, but at least the moths were still to be found in the area. On this occasion both insects were very close to the base of the posts, almost in the vegetation sheltering from the freezing wind.



Three Rannoch Brindled Beauty, females.

The following year 2018, on 17th April we were back at Oykel Bridge at the site where we had found the moths the previous year, and on this occasion, I realised we had been searching the wrong fences. There was an older fence a few yards back from the road, it was almost falling down and covered in moss and lichen, but that's where the Rannoch Brindled Beauties were to be found, all 70 of them, 68 females and 2 males spread along approximately one mile of posts.

A new site came to light in 2017 when a Rannoch Brindled Beauty larva was found near Loch Glascarnoch. Then in 2018 yet another new site, also larval, in Glen Orrin. By this time, in 2019 we were wondering if there were other areas worth searching. So by 19th March we were on a foray into the countryside starting at Aultguish on the road between Garve and Ullapool. There are ancient fences on both sides running parallel with the road for approximately 20 miles between Garve and Braemore Junction. This looked a suitable area for a search. In places the fence was missing, it also crossed two rivers, but the moths were on both sides of the obstacle! That day we followed this fence for several miles, 130 Rannoch Brindled Beauties (96m 34f) were scattered along it, at random? Occasionally a post would have several moths on it both male and female, some posts only 1 moth and some none at all.

Now knowing that these moths were somewhat easier to find than we had thought, on 21st March 2019 Glen Orrin was the target area. In the previous year caterpillars had been found here so it was an obvious place to look.

Along the miles of old fence posts near the Orrin Dam a total of 237 moths were present, 58 male 179 female. The moths were also scattered over quite a large area on both sides of the dam and for the first time both sexes were well distributed in the heather and bog myrtle. There were even some females on top of the trig point! Occasionally, in the summer months, we have found a female Rannoch Brindled Beauty dead on top of a post.





There is clearly a very healthy population of Rannoch Brindled Beauty in East Ross but, apart from the original site at Oykel Bridge, they are mostly found very much towards the west of the VC. To date, just beyond Achnasheen and into the neighbouring VC.

Could they be found more to the east since they exist at Oykel Bridge which is over 20 miles away from Garve? The top of the Struie seemed a likely place, but no, only more of the Drinker larvae we had been seeing in good numbers elsewhere.

By now time was passing, April had arrived, perhaps it was getting late in the season? So far, we have found moths in flight between 19th March and 18th April. The 16th April found us optimistically heading up the Strath Rory track, an offshoot of the Struie. It was soon evident that a large forest was being planted in this area. Despite this disturbance we were very pleased to find 3 female Rannoch Brindled Beauties, on fence posts of course. Will they survive as the trees grow up around them, all the sites we know of are in wide open country with little shelter. Perhaps the moths would welcome a bit of shelter from the trees? It has been noticeable that in really extreme weather conditions the moths move to the sheltered side of the posts or into the vegetation around the posts. Having made enquiries we now know this new wood has been planted on private ground. Though it is comprised of a good mix of native trees some of them are very close to the fence. A company planning a big project once contacted us for information about the presence of moths, but that was the only occasion. Strangely that was regarding Rannoch Brindled Beauty. Even in this enlightened age moths are very rarely taken into account.

On the plus side there are now 10 sites in the VC where Rannoch Brindled Beauty seems to be thriving, and another season coming soon!!

***Margaret Currie and Andy Scott,
BC Highland Branch***

Originally published in the Spring 2020 edition of the Highland Branch Newsletter

Rannoch Brindled Beauty larva on Bog Myrtle.



Communications



Members are the lifeblood of any organisation and effective communication is central to the health and vibrancy of the Branch.

Sharing our butterfly and moth encounters across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight strengthens the bonds of our mutual interest in and concern for Lepidoptera and their habitats. It enhances our sense of community and conservation purpose within the wider world.

Whether it's more informally and spontaneously via social media, or through one of the Branch's own means of passing on news such as e-Newsletters and Newsletters, we are always seeking contributions in words and pictures...

- 1) from a wider circle of members,
- 2) relating to the whole of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight,
- 3) and on any aspect of butterflies and moths from egg to adult and other interesting wildlife.

Here's how you can get involved.

Social Media

Share your butterfly and moth moments. Show your amazing photos or films.

Facebook: **@ButterflyConservationHampshireAndIsleofWight**

Twitter: **@HantsIoWBC**

Compared to other BC branches, Hampshire and Isle of Wight is much less active on social media. We are looking for a volunteer to join Freya to generate more activity, post/re-post your day-to-day butterfly and moth encounters, and to create a buzzing and vibrant social media scene. Contact Freya at: **freyajanebrown91@gmail.com**

Website

As well as via social media, members can upload their latest sightings and newsworthy updates throughout the year to the News page of the Branch website at: **www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk**



Communications from the Branch

Produced by Branch volunteers with essential contributions from across the membership in addition to Branch Committee members, these take three forms:

e-Newsletter, an email sent direct to your inbox from a central mailing list held at BC Head Office. They feature upcoming dates of events, field trips, talks and work parties, and other Branch news, published as a quarterly diary prompt in short bulletin form. The intention is to publish four of these a year.

Newsletter, published twice a year, in spring and autumn editions, a 32-page, A5-format newsletter, with news, views and features reflecting the wide range of Branch activities and member interests, available in two forms:

- As a printed edition, received through the post.
- As a PDF edition, filed on the Branch website, with the notification of publication sent by email from a central mailing list held at BC Head Office.

Annual Butterfly Report, a 64-page booklet published annually, a summary of distribution, flight season and comparative abundance with previous seasons of each species in Hampshire and Isle of Wight.

Publication plan

February:	e-Newsletter
April:	Spring Newsletter
June:	e-Newsletter
August:	e-Newsletter
October:	Autumn Newsletter
December:	e-Newsletters

Volunteering and contributing

Our aim is to have two **e-Newsletter** editors. The role involves liaising with the Branch Chair or Branch Organiser, event and work party leaders, and reserve walk and field trip coordinators, to publish a listing of forthcoming Branch activities, as well as summarising recent Branch news. If you can spare two or three hours twice a year to create these, please contact Josie: josiehewitt98@gmail.com

The **Newsletter** has carried a broad range of features over recent editions and endeavours to reflect the huge range of wildlife-related interests from across the membership, from fungi and bees, to gardening tips and moth trap evenings.

Encouraging new contributors is in turn a great way of inspiring readers to contribute themselves or to volunteer in some other essential way, whether this might be walking a transect, joining a work party, creating a butterfly/moth friendly garden or even filling one of the vacant posts on the various Branch committees. Newsletter articles are welcomed by Kevin: kevinfreeborn@btinternet.com

Receiving Branch Communications

e-Newsletters

- 1) Members, clearly, must have an email address
- 2) And must have given BC Head Office permission to receive Branch email communication.

Newsletters and Annual Butterfly Reports

- 1) Printed copies – posted to each membership household upon publication
- 2) Unless you have opted not to have printed copies, preferring instead to read PDF versions downloadable from the Branch website. BC Head Office will need your email address to notify you when the PDF version is published and available for download.

GDPR

Since May 2018, GDPR, General Data Protection Regulation, means that holding names and addresses and contact details of members is no longer in the hands of individual branches. Such details are held on a central database at BC Head Office.

Recently, a new database system has been installed at Head Office and it would appear (and I know this from personal experience!) that individual member preferences that were previously stored may not have transferred accurately to the new system.

If you have NOT received an e-Newsletter, Newsletter or Annual Butterfly Report from the Branch this year, and you had been receiving these prior to 2021, the advice is to contact **Membership** at BC Head Office, tel: **01929 406015**; email: **membership@butterflyconservation.org**

Again, speaking from personal experience, it may take Head Office some weeks to respond, so either be patient or be persistent.

Back copies

The Branch website has an archive of back issues of the Newsletter, e-Newsletter and Annual Butterfly Report.

Newsletter: **www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/newsletters.php**

e-Newsletter: **www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/enewsletters.php**

Annual Report: **www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/annualreports.php**

*Kevin Freeborn,
Newsletter Editor*

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Annual Moth Report 2020

I would like to announce the online publication of the annual review of moth records reported to the county recorders of Hampshire and Isle of Wight for the year 2020. Over 100,000 records were received across both counties, for 1,339 species, one of the best returns in recent years, no doubt due to increased activity during the lockdown months. This is the first report for five years, but now I have streamlined the process of producing it, I expect to be able to increase the speed to publication in coming years, and will be looking to retrospectively produce reports for 2019 and before to fill the gap.

Please see **https://www.hantsmoths.org.uk/Report2020_0.php** and if anyone has any additions, or corrections, I would be very glad to hear from you.

*Mike Wall,
County Moth Recorder
mike@hantsmoths.org.uk*



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www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk

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Newsletter Deadline

Please send your Lepidoptera-related newsworthy pieces and features to Kevin Freeborn... and you don't have to wait until February!

The deadline for the spring Newsletter, edition no. 112, is 18 February 2022

Lepidoptera Tale Piece... your story behind the picture

This image was taken back in May at the foot of Butser Hill. I spotted this pair of Grizzled Skippers and, trying not to disturb them, had to very carefully get down low in front of them to capture this shot in what might be termed the 'sniper position'.

Ashley Whitlock

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



Hampshire
County Council



Portsmouth
CITY COUNCIL

Butterfly Conservation is a charity registered in England & Wales (254937) and in Scotland (SCO39268).
Registered Office: Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5QP. Vat. No. 565 9070 16.

Lepidoptera Tale Piece ...



*...for the full story, go to the inside back cover.
Grizzled Skipper mating pair – Ashley Whitlock*