



Butterfly
Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch
E-newsletter

February 2022

Dear Branch Member,

Please see the latest news from Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch, below...

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Transect news

An impressive total of 173 butterfly transects were walked in Hampshire and Isle of Wight during 2021. Transect walkers were undeterred by the cold start to the season, and although total butterfly numbers were down, the overall coverage was good. The 2021 Annual Butterfly Report, which summarises the species trends, is intended for publication in April 2022. Thanks to all transect walkers for their excellent effort!

Get involved

If you would like to get involved, most transects work as a rota, with the 26 monitoring weeks (Apr-Sept) being shared between 4-5 walkers. To fit in with our changeable weather, you would need to be available on at least 3-4 days of your allocated weeks. Potential recorders would be expected to know our common butterflies, and be able to distinguish between species such as Holly Blue and a Common Blue, or Gatekeeper and Meadow Brown. Training will be given on the transect methodology. To find out more contact Linda Barker lindabarker4@btinternet.com indicating where you would like to volunteer.

As well as counting butterflies on transect, let's not forget the day-flying moths. Brief reports for some of the most frequently seen day-flying moths have been included in the Annual Butterfly Report since 2018. If you've only recently joined the Branch, [all the back](#)

[issues are available on the Branch website](#). Currently 50% of our transects return day-flying moth data, with the most frequently recorded species being Silver Y, Six-spot Burnet, Cinnabar, Brown Silver-line, Small Purple & Gold and Burnet Companion. Don't worry if you're not confident with all the moths, just recording the ones you know is a big help, so why not give it a go in 2022?

Andy & Linda Barker (Hants & IoW Branch Transect Co-ordinators)

Latest 25-year butterfly trends

For those who may be interested, we're pleased to announce that the updated 25-year trend graphs (1997-2021), for all Hants and Isle of Wight butterfly species, are now available on the Branch website. Just click on the "transect" tab to view or download. <http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/trans25trends.php>

Andy Barker (Hants & IoW Branch Transect Co-ordinator)

2021 Tetrad Challenge update

Thank you to all those who braved the unknown to take part in last years 'Tetrad Challenge' by venturing into areas where either no (red), or few (green) records had been received during the previous five years.

Of the 46 primary unoccupied tetrads, records were obtained for 26, including the two on the Isle of Wight.

Time does not permit a detailed review of the green tetrads (i.e. those where less than five records were received in the previous five years), but it is clear that records were received from 27 of these, including four of the five on the Isle of Wight.

Of the remaining red tetrads, one in the south of Hampshire lies entirely on private land and four are in the Damerham/Rockbourne area just east of Martin Down.

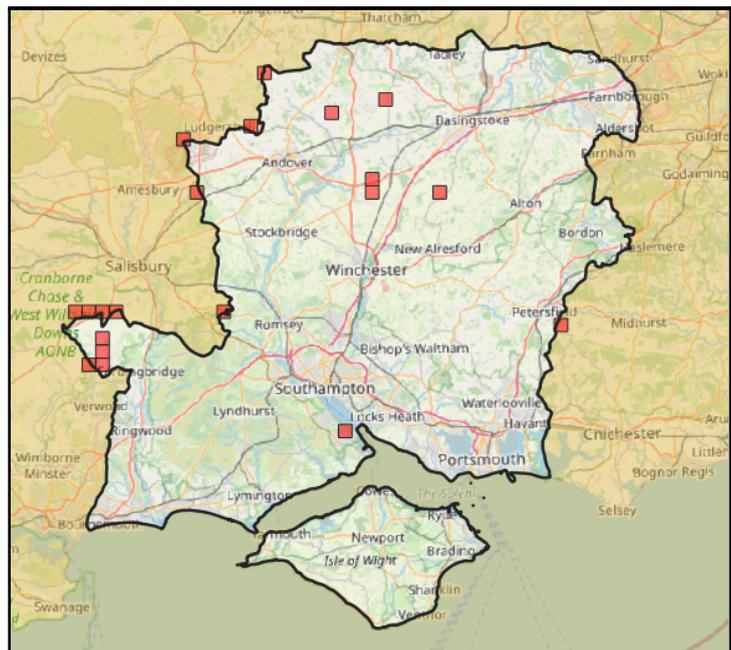
The map has been updated to indicate only the remaining unrecorded tetrads.

There are also three on the perimeter of our BC Branch boundary to the north of Martin Down, and six elsewhere around the boundary.

If you are still interested in searching any of these squares during the coming 'season', please let me know and I will provide a larger scale map to help you ensure you are in the right place. It would be good to wipe the red from the map!

As ever, please submit your records in the usual manner e.g. Branch Spreadsheet, iRecord, Living Record etc.

Bob Annell (County Butterfly Recorder)



Bentley Station Meadow update

What with one thing and another BSM was looking less than its best when I began my voluntary role as Reserve Officer last summer. Bramble and scrub were taking over large chunks and transect data was beginning to indicate a transition to a woodland habitat rather than grassy meadow. A photo from 2015 shows what we are aiming for:



Thanks to volunteer and contractor effort totalling over 300 hours since then, we have opened-up over a hectare of tangled vegetation, whilst taking care not to damage any blackthorn shrubs with those precious brown hairstreak eggs on (over 50 eggs discovered on a dedicated survey). Before and after photos of the same area as above show progress by the work party, this January:



Before and after views at BSM

Hopefully we will keep on top of the regrowth with grazing and mowing, so the tough stuff doesn't get out of hand again. I'm looking forward to seeing what comes up and if our meadow butterflies appreciate all the effort. During the last work party we discovered some hedgehog scat, saw several shrews, and found a small mammal nest on the ground, so it's obviously a good place for mammals too. I'd like to increase diversity at the reserve and there are plans to dig a pond, build hibernaculae, and monitor reptiles. I'd also like to offer butterfly walks to the local community, but would like a bit of help as my ID skills are not the greatest. **Please contact me if you'd like to be involved.**

I hope that it's not too long to wait for my first butterfly of 2022, and it's a good one for BSM and beyond.

Steve Lockett (Bentley Station Meadow, Volunteer Reserve Officer)

Magdalen Hill Down and Yew Hill update

News from the Reserves

This winter has seen lots of activity on the reserves, trying to catch up with all the scrub growth – an almost impossible task! But the volunteers are undeterred and it's great out working together and being rewarded at each seemingly small but important bit we get through. It all adds up and every bit is beneficial for the butterflies!

At Magdalen, work this winter includes scrub clearance in the Extension field, and the chalk scrape area and the Tumuli; fence repairs (kindly funded in part by the SDNP); and hedge-laying with Hans Taylor and the Winchester College students. At Yew Hill, the wildflower meadow is being scraped to bare soil to clear the dogwood and hawthorn scrub. This will enable the chalk-loving wildflowers to establish again.



MHD - bramble clearance



Yew Hill - digging the dongas



MHD - time for bed!

After the nesting season, there will be summer work parties starting in June at Magdalen. (Dates tbc.) Tasks will be keeping transect routes and footpaths open, and clearing all the bramble, clematis, and ragwort summer vegetation explosion. **We always welcome more reserve volunteers.** If you have a spare Monday or Wednesday, please do come and join us. (See the **Dates** section, below.)

Advance notice of upcoming events at the reserves

Early Bird and Breakfast walk - Magdalen Hill Down, Saturday, 21st May at 6am. Meet at the cemetery entrance. Listen to early morning bird song, enjoy a breakfast, and see what's been caught in the moth trap overnight. With Dave Stewart on birds. Moth expert Tony Davis (tbc). £10 to cover breakfast. Please email fscully@butterfly-conservation.org to book a place. Limited spaces.

Big Butterfly Count launch event - Magdalen Hill Down, Friday, 15th July (details to follow).

Butterfly Walks -

- Wednesday 8th June, 2pm to 3.30pm MHD - In search of Common Blues, Brown Argus and Green Hairstreaks.
- Friday 17th June, 2pm to 3.30pm Yew Hill - We'll be on the hunt for Dark Green Fritillaries and the elusive White Letter Hairstreak. With naturalist Rupert Broadway.
- Wednesday 20th July, 11am to 1pm MHD - Enjoy summer's glorious grasslands with Marbled Whites, Small Tortoiseshells and other summer favourites. Bring a picnic/packed lunch to finish.
- Wednesday 3rd August, 11am to 1pm Yew Hill - Fingers crossed for another good year for the Chalk Hill Blue... we'll be on the lookout to see how they are faring this year. With naturalist Rupert Broadway.
- Wednesday 17th August, 11am to 1pm MHD - We will be hoping to catch sight of the iconic Adonis Blue and another Magdalen special, the Brown Argus.

MHD Walks are led by naturalists and botanist David and Anna Stewart.

Livestock Looker needed for Sundays at Yew Hill

If you would enjoy a weekly wander up to Yew Hill, near Oliver's Battery and Compton, to check on the sweetest and friendliest sheep, please do get in touch. You will be part of a team who do daily checks on the sheep. Email fscully@butterfly-conservation.org or phone 07918073651.

I look forward to seeing you on the reserves soon!

Fiona Scully (South Downs Landscape Officer)

Dates

For Work party info, see <http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/workparties.php>

Work parties e-calendar: http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/BC_Hants_volunteering.ics

For First sightings, see <http://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/news.php>

5th Jan.	First sighting: Painted Lady (posted by Jim Baldwin)
11th Jan.	First sighting: Red Admiral (posted by Andy Barker)
30th Jan.	First sighting: Holly Blue (posted by Jim Baldwin)
Mon., 14th Feb. (10:00 - 15:30)	Magdalen Hill Down scrub clearance, etc.
Mon., 21st Feb. (10:00 - 15:30)	Magdalen Hill Down scrub clearance, etc.
Weds., 23rd Feb. (10:00 - 15:30)	- Yew Hill scrub clearance, etc.; - Bentley Station Meadow scrub clearance, etc.*
Mon., 28th Feb. (10:00 - 15:30)	Magdalen Hill Down scrub clearance, etc.
Mon., 7th Mar. (10:00 - 15:30)	Magdalen Hill Down scrub clearance, etc.
Weds., 9th Mar. (10:00 - 15:30)	Yew Hill scrub clearance, etc.
Mon., 14th Mar. (10:00 - 15:30)	Magdalen Hill Down scrub clearance, etc.
Mon., 21st Mar. (10:00 - 15:30)	Magdalen Hill Down scrub clearance, etc.
Mon., 28th Mar. (10:00 - 15:30)	Magdalen Hill Down scrub clearance, etc.

**Note: Steve Lockett is at Bentley Station Meadow most Tuesday mornings. If you're available to help, contact him first (email posteve@hotmail.co.uk / tel. 07530 044278)*

Social Media links



<https://www.facebook.com/ButterflyConservationHampshireAndIsleOfWight>



<https://twitter.com/HantsIoWBC>



https://www.instagram.com/hampshire_iow_butterflies/



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