



Butterfly
Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Hampshire and
Isle of Wight Branch
Celebrating our 40th Anniversary!
1982 - 2022

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch
E-newsletter

August 2022

Dear Branch Member,

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

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Committee vacancies – update on vacant roles

Following my appeal in the June e-Newsletter I'm very pleased to say that we have a volunteer with a strong financial background who has stepped forward to take on the role of Branch Treasurer, when the present Treasurer steps down at the Branch AGM and Members' Day on 6 November.

Whilst the Branch Treasurer role has been filled, **we do still have opportunities for volunteers who would like to take on roles such as "Branch Secretary" and "Shows and Events Organiser"**.

- We have a Minutes Secretary, but the Branch Secretary role has a wider administrative remit, principally involving liaison between the Branch and BC Head Office.
- The Shows and Events Organiser role is for someone who has good organisational skills, and would like to take the lead in coordinating the shows and events the Branch participates in. For the most part these take place from May to September, but our involvement depends on a volunteer being able to take the lead for each event.

If you think you might be able to help with either of these important roles, and ensure the continuation of all the great work the Branch does to benefit butterflies and moths, I would be very pleased to hear from you. Further details of the specific requirements for each

role, can be supplied on request. Contact me at aj3barker@btinternet.com Many thanks for your support.

Andy Barker (Hants & IoW Branch Chair)

Hold the date - Branch AGM and Members' Day

Full details of the **Branch AGM and Members' Day** to be held on **Sunday, 6th November 2022**, at Littleton Millennium Hall, Littleton, near Winchester, will appear in the autumn Branch Newsletter. You will receive this in early October, but I wanted to take this opportunity to remind you to put the date in your diary. Timings are still being finalised, but the whole event usually runs from midday until 4.00 pm, with the first hour being the AGM.

Andy Barker (Hants & IoW Branch Chair)

Isle of Wight Group update

It has been a busy summer with tables run at six events across the Island so far, with further events planned. On September 3rd & 4th, we will be at the Wolverton Manor Garden Fair, in conjunction with the IW Natural History & Archaeological Society. October 15th and 16th is the Hullabaloo event at Sandown while our current last event of the year is the IW Recorders Conference at Arreton Community Centre on Saturday 4th November.



All set up for an event at the Wildheart Animal Sanctuary at Sandown

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

Magdalen Hill Down

It's been a summer of group walks and visits. The Hampshire Flora group and local Natural History groups came and saw Magdalen offering its mix of grassland and wildflowers, its colours and scents, Skylark song and buzzing insects. **It takes your breath away** where you see restored land becoming wildlife-rich again.

For the summer holidays a Butterfly Quiz Trail aimed at children and families will start from the Winchester Science Centre. You may see some of the questions laid out along the route as you walk around the reserve. Please do join in - pick up an answer sheet from the Science Centre, follow the trail, and answer the 20 questions you find along the marked route. You can check your answers back at the Science Centre.

The **Reserve Walks** have been well attended, and Rupert Broadway recorded 21 species on one visit at Yew Hill! We managed to equal that at Magdalen - including Small, Chalk Hill, and Adonis Blues, Clouded Yellows, and *many* Gatekeepers.

Since an unsettled Spring, the weather has been worryingly dry. The land is parched, which has kept the grass down, but not stopped the Bramble, Clematis, Privet and Hawthorn, which are as invasive as ever! We've had several volunteer groups with the SDNP volunteers and Hampshire Conservation Volunteers helping to battle through overgrown footpaths, and pull up Ragwort in the Allotment field. Thankfully there was far less Ragwort this year compared to last year's infestation in the Allotments.

It was a pleasure to have Ioan Clifton, from Henry Beaufort School, join me on work experience for a week. He helped on practical tasks, tree surveys, butterfly walks and researching projects.

A hay cut is planned for parts of Roadside and the Extension field, which should be completed by mid-August. A few 'islands' will be left as refuges and shelter for insects and small mammals. Last August it took nearly 4 days to turn and dry out, whilst this year it's already hay by mid-July...

The permissive footpaths in the Extension field will be reopened this August.



Work experience student Ioan



Volunteer Peter tree safety surveying



Striped Lychnis moth caterpillar

Yew Hill

Yew Hill and Hill Top are looking good but the amount of young Hawthorn growth and Dogwood on the main reserve is still enormous, even after all the work the volunteers put in last winter. **The [dongas](#) are looking better, especially where the line of scrub has been dug out.** We plan on using contractors to give some extra help this winter. Yew Hill had an explosion of Chalk Hill Blues - definitely one of their best years so far.



Yew Hill walk, led by Rupert Broadway

Bentley Station Meadow

See separate news item, from Steve Lockett.

Chilcomb Sports Ground Butterfly Scrape

It's alive! From a square of bare white chalk (see previous e-Newsletter), it now has a covering of Mignonette and is attracting a lot of bees - which is an improvement from the sports field mown lawn. Kidney Vetch is also abundant, so will hopefully flower next year.

A very small Corn Marigold was flowering - how they cope with the heat, exposure, no rain, and no soil I've no idea! Small, but super tough plants. Sadly, I don't think many of the plug plants survived, with such little rain. The long grass area complements the scrape, and it's looking promising this will develop into a really special place for butterflies...

Volunteers

The Volunteer BBQ transformed into a picnic, due to the extreme hot weather and fire risk. Despite the small numbers, it was a sweet get together. The occasion was a thank you for all the time and dedication that volunteers give to the Reserves. Thanks to Kate Barrett for letting me use her kitchen and fridge.

The Twyford Waterworks exchange visit was really good. Their site was a fascinating story of how volunteers saved the steam pump, buildings and lime kilns and restored the grounds for wildlife. Their complementary visit to Magdalen was on a cool, grey day after all the sunshine, but we were rewarded with lots of butterflies and birdlife. The story here is also of the dedication and vision of volunteers and we hope to meet with the SDNP to investigate the potential to create corridor(s) between the two sites - we are all part of the same chalk landscape.

If you're not already on the volunteer list, please email me for details if you would like to join us: fscully@butterfly-conservation.org

Volunteer Task Days

These will resume on Monday 3rd October - every Monday, until March at Magdalen Hill Down; and from 5th October at Yew Hill.

Closing thoughts

It was wonderful to meet people who knew Magdalen Hill Down from when it was first taken on by the Hampshire Branch, along with many experienced naturalists and some people new to the reserve. And, a special thank you to Anna and Dave Stewart for organising several well-attended group visits - all thoroughly enjoyable. Finally, thank you to all the recorders.

I do hope you all had a good butterfly summer, and I look forward to seeing you on the reserves soon.

Fiona Scully (BC South Downs Landscape Project Officer)

Bentley Station Meadow Reserve update

I hope some of you have been able to visit BSM over the summer. My neighbour Alan sent me a nice photo of a large skipper taken on a visit there in June (see below).

I hosted a nursery school visit from Frensham Heights . On arrival the 4- and 5-year olds seemed disappointed I wasn't Steve Backshall, but I can understand that. They explored in small groups, but conditions weren't great for butterflies, although they did find Drinker moth caterpillars - and one sharp-eyed lad found a mat of grasshopper eggs on a grass blade (I had to Google to ID...).

I was also invited to Binsted Primary School, where I took some simple fact sheets from Butterfly Conservation's [Munching Caterpillars website](#), to get children discussing life-cycles and food plants. The school has a nice wildflower patch, but (again!) it was unfavourable weather to go out looking for butterflies.



We are in the process of improving access to Bentley, and anyone who has visited in the winter knows why this is needed. A grant from Veolia Environmental Services will

facilitate getting onto the reserve; and log benches will be installed to encourage visitors to sit and enjoy nature.

We will continue to manage the scrub with contractors and soon there will be a programme of volunteer task days, watch this space. We have plans to install a pond in the wet woodland, and hope to see life in it next spring.

Enjoy the rest of the summer!

Steve Luckett (Reserves Advisory Group; Volunteer Reserves Officer, BSM)

News from the County Butterfly Recorder

Online Identification Courses

In conjunction with Butterfly Conservation, the Fields Study Council is running two FREE courses aimed at helping beginners to identify distinctive butterflies and moths . To enrol for either or both, please follow these links. Butterflies on 26th August & Moths on 2nd September:

- [Identifying Distinctive Butterflies](#)
- [Identifying Distinctive Moths](#)

Both courses will cover thirteen species and will be followed by optional live webinars a few days later.

The *Migrant Watch* survey

After many years, Butterfly Conservation have decided to stop running their 'Migrant Watch' Survey. This was established some years ago to specifically capture records of Painted Lady & Humming-bird Hawkmoth. Times have moved on and recorders are now asked to record these species as appropriate on either [iRecord](#), [iRecord Butterflies](#), [BNM Online](#) or [National Moth Recording Scheme](#).

Bob Ansell (County Butterfly Recorder)

Dates

First sightings (since June 2022 e-Newsletter) see the website Events > News page			
June 9	Silver-studded Blue	Andy Barker	Dibden Bottom
June 9	White-letter Hairstreak	Andrew Brookes	Great Fontley
June 10	Marbled White	Mike Smith	Portsdown Hill
June 10	Dark Green Fritillary	Mark Pike	Martin Down
June 12	White Admiral	Kevin Ross	North Baddesley
June 14	Silver-washed Fritillary	Peter Hunt	Bouldnor Forest, IOW
June 16	Ringlet	Andrew Brookes	Huntbourn Wood, Soberton
June 17	Essex Skipper	Kevin Ross	North Baddesley
June 17	Small Skipper	Rupert Broadway	Yew Hill

June 20	Purple Emperor	Barry & Margaret Collins	Havant Thicket
June 25	Gatekeeper	Nic Burns	Yew Hill
June 26	Purple Hairstreak	Mark Wagstaff	Browndown (South)
July 3	Chalk Hill Blue	Lee Hurrell	Magdalen Hill Down
July 4	Grayling	Mark Wagstaff	Browndown (South)
July 4	Queen of Spain Fritillary ¹	Lyndon Hatfield	Portchester Common
July 19	Brown Hairstreak	Heather Rowe	Creech Wood
July 28	Silver-spotted Skipper	Dave Pearson	Broughton Down

¹ *Unconfirmed*

Work parties, etc. (see the website [Events > Work Parties](#) page, for latest info)

**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

