



August 2023

Dear Branch Member,

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

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Branch committee vacancies

As you will know, the branch is completely run by volunteers. Unfortunately, we have a number of main committee members standing down at the next AGM in November. If you have any interest in any of these roles, and are open to a discussion, then please [email Pete Eeles](#) in the first instance (or call him on 07796 331061).

Current and post-AGM vacancies are:

- Chair of the Conservation and Records Subcommittee
- Branch Treasurer
- Membership Secretary
- Events Coordinator.

Pete Eeles (Branch Chair)

Obituary notice

The Branch is sad to report that Jean Annell passed away on Sunday, 30th July after a short illness. Bob (County Butterfly Recorder) and Jean have worked tirelessly for many years to support conservation and recording of butterflies in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Jean will be missed by all who knew her. Our condolences go to Bob and his family, who continue to ask that Bob is not contacted directly at this difficult time. Further information, when available, will be posted on the Branch website.

easyfundraising

Did you know that whenever you buy anything online, you could be raising a free donation for Butterfly Conservation - Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch?

There are over 7,000 brands including John Lewis & Partners, Argos, Uswitch, eBay, M&S, Just Eat, Now TV, Domino's Pizza and Audible ready to give a free donation every time you shop online via **easyfundraising**. It only takes 2 minutes to sign up. Plus, if you sign up and raise £5 in donations, easyfundraising will give us a bonus £5 donation.

All you have to do is:

- 1) Go to the easyfundraising website, using [this link](#).
- 2) Click on 'support this cause', and create an account.
- 3) Choose from over 7,000 brands to do your online shopping as normal and our cause will receive a free donation with every purchase you make.

Thank you for your support, you'll be helping to make a real difference to Butterfly Conservation - Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch.

Graham Nicol (Branch Treasurer)

Transect News

2024 Butterfly Transect volunteers required

I would like to take the opportunity to make **an early request for volunteers to help with recording on two important chalk grassland butterfly transects in 2024**. Both sites have a rich diversity of butterfly species.

If you would like to get involved, be aware that 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 4 days of your allocated weeks. Potential recorders would be expected to know Hampshire's common butterflies, and be able to distinguish between species such as Holly Blue and Common Blue, Gatekeeper and Meadow Brown. Training will be given on the transect methodology.

Pitt Down, Winchester

This site has been running since 2016, and includes one of the strongest Dark Green Fritillary populations in central Hampshire, as well as a diverse mix of other chalk grassland species. To find out more, or give an expression of interest to volunteer with this transect, please [email Iain McIntosh](#)

Meon Valley site

After a couple of years without regular monitoring, we are hoping that 2024 will see the resumption of a butterfly transect at a private site in the Meon Valley. The particular focus will be the Duke of Burgundy flight season from April to mid June, but subject to volunteer availability, we may continue for the full season. Because of the sensitivity of the site we are only intending to involve two or three volunteers at most. To find out more, please [email Andy Barker](#)

Reserves & volunteering News

After a slow start, there has been an incredible abundance of butterflies notably Red Admiral, Small White, Brimstone, Brown Argus, Ringlet, Small Copper, Holly Blue and Small Skipper. Our nature reserves have shown again how they are a vital stronghold for our butterflies and moths. One species I've not seen in high numbers is the Common Blue, so it will be interesting to see how this has fared from the transect results.

Magdalen Hill Down

We've been blessed with sunshine on the butterfly walks (so far) and they've been a wonderful experience, observing and learning about the different species with a good number of people attending. Thanks to Dave and Anna Stewart for their help leading these walks.

The South Down National Park Ranger Volunteers spent one day clearing footpaths and three days clearing hawthorn regrowth from the Skylark fields, to prevent too much scrub developing and shading out the wildflowers.

BC volunteers Richard Lemon and Rupert Broadway attended the **Bioblitz** at Old Winchester Hill, run by our partners Natural England. One of the Reserve Managers gave an excellent talk on how they manage the sheep grazing to maintain this magnificent display of chalk grassland flowers. Our butterfly walk was well attended with over 30 people.

Butterfly Conservation is running a Youth Ranger programme over the summer holidays for 13 to 17 year olds doing various activities and having a taster of managing a chalk grassland nature reserve.



MHD Butterfly walk



MHD White-faced Woodland sheep



SDNP Ranger volunteers

Magdalen's neighbours

Special thanks to Anna Stewart for driving forward improvements for managing the cemetery more sensitively for our wildflowers, relaxing the regular mowing to allow more plants to flower. We appreciate all the team at the Cemetery for being so open to suggestions to adjust the management where possible to enable more of the chalk grassland flowers to bloom and planning for more space for biodiversity. Zoe the Winchester City Council ecologist has also been instrumental in making these positive changes.

Anna also made connections with the staff and grounds maintenance team at St. Swithun's School to allow more space for long grass and wildflower areas.

Proposed pond

If all goes well, and we secure planning permission, it will be dug out this October in Tree & Shrub West, near the St. Swithun's school entrance on the former arable land. The pond is funded by the South Downs Trust and will be about 8m x 5m in size. It's part of a network of ponds in the farmed landscape around Winchester. Dave Stewart has been an enormous help, producing GIS maps for the planning application.

Yew Hill

Following all the scrub clearance work by the volunteer team, Yew Hill has been left to itself this summer, with no grazing and just doing its thing. So the volunteers can enjoy the rewards of all their hard work. There have been sightings of White Letter Hairstreak along the bridleway track and a few other surprises...

A confirmed sighting of a Silver-studded Blue, spotted by Branch Vice-chair Rupert Broadway. There were several subsequent sightings.

Bentley Station Meadow

The Blacknest Field volunteers Sarah Womersley and Alison led a butterfly walk following a circular route they have developed. The woodland trail includes Bentley Station Meadow and opens out onto the wildflower meadows of Blacknest Fields. John Oates explained about Bentley, its importance and management. The reserve took our breath away for its numerous Silver-washed Fritillaries sweeping through the glades, Ringlets and Gatekeepers, with a Purple Hairstreak making an appearance. There are 5 cows currently grazing here.

The Bentley Station Meadow volunteers had a workday, with another planned, to clear footpaths and start replacing the waymarker posts for the transect route.



Rupert's indisputable Silver-studded Blue at Yew Hill



Volunteers at Bentley Station Meadow



Striped Lychnis moth caterpillar at MHD

Volunteer Field Trip – Martin Down

The second volunteer field trip this summer, led by Pete Durnell (HCC), featured more day flying moths than butterflies, but was stunning for orchids, and a real mecca for chalk grassland. A fascinating history, and interesting to learn how it's managed.

Volunteer work days

These will resume in October so please do come and give a hand.

- **Magdalen Hill Down** - every Monday, starting 2nd October
- **Yew Hill** - starting Thursday October 12th, every two weeks including some weeks at **Bentley Station Meadow** – dates tbc.

Thank you to all the volunteers for their help. I hope that you managed to enjoy the intoxicating sight of so many butterflies before the weather changed!

I look forward to seeing you out on the reserves soon..

Fiona Scully (BC South Downs Landscape Project Officer)

Isle of Wight group - update

The weather has been playing havoc with the walks schedule, but Kay Shaw has been doing a great job of rearranging, where possible.

On the events front, so far I have managed to attend them all! The Big Butterfly Count launch weekend at Carisbrooke Castle was greeted with strong winds and squally showers on the Saturday, so instead of walks it was butterfly talks! Thankfully the weather was slightly better on Sunday and I managed to lead two walks during the day and we saw ten species of butterfly and three species of moth.

I will have a table at the **Gift to Nature Tales and Trails** event at Pan Country Park, Newport (11am-3pm) on Sunday 13 August.

Finally, I am back at the **Donkey Sanctuary** on Saturday 19 August (8:30am start) for a public moth event where we will be checking the overnight moth trap and talking about the species present. As per the butterfly walk, booking is needed to attend, so [hop on over to their website](#). Hope to see some of you there.

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

Dates

Reserves Volunteering

Mondays (starting 2nd Oct.)	Magdalen Hill Down	Fiona Scully
Alternate Thursdays (starting 12th Oct.)	Yew Hill	
Dates to be confirmed	Bentley Station Meadow	

Branch, and branch-related Events

Sunday, 13th August (11am - 3pm)	BC table at Gift to Nature Tales and Trails event at Pan Country Park, Newport, IoW	Contact Jim Baldwin
Saturday, 19th August (starts 8:30am - booking necessary)	Moth Recording event at the Donkey Sanctuary, Wroxall, IoW	Contact Jim Baldwin
Sunday, 8th October	Blackmoor Apple Day	Contact Suzie Brown
Date to be confirmed	Test Valley Wood Fair	Contact Suzie Brown
Sunday, 5th November	Branch AGM and Members Day,	

Branch Field trips

Full details of Hampshire walks 2023 [here](#). Full details of **Isle of Wight** walks [here](#).

Sunday, 13th August (09:30)	Shipton Bellinger (SU222465)	Target Species: Wall Brown, Brown Hairstreak, good flora and fauna
Wednesday, 16th August (10:30)	Noar Hill (SU745316)	Target Species: Brown Hairstreak, Clouded Yellow
Wednesday, 23rd August (10:30)	Idsworth Down / Charlton Down (SU735151)	Target Species: Clouded Yellow, Brown Argus, Dark Green Fritillary, poss. Silver Spotted Skipper
Sunday, 27th August (10:30)	Butser Hill (SU712205)	Target Species: Adonis Blue, Silver Spotted Skipper
Wednesday, 30th August (10:30)	Beacon Hill NNR (SU605227)	Target Species: Silver-Spotted Skipper, Brown Argus, Clouded Yellow & spectacular views
Saturday, 2nd September (3rd, if wet) (13:30)	The Revetment, Ventnor	Target Species: Clouded Yellow, Hummingbird Hawk Moth
Sunday, 3rd September (10:30)	Old Winchester Hill (SU640208)	Target Species: Adonis Blue, Silver-Spotted Skipper, Clouded Yellow

Accompanied Reserves Walks

Friday, 18th August (11:00-13:00)	Magdalen Hill Down	With Dave & Anna Stewart. Contact Fiona Scully for details.
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First sightings (since June e-Newsletter)

June 4	Meadow Brown	Wallington Valley, Boarhunt
June 7	Small Skipper	Bouldnor Forest, Yarmouth, IoW
June 8	Silver-washed Fritillary	Frater Woods, Gosport
June 9	Painted Lady	Magdalen Hill Down
June 9	Marbled White	Magdalen Hill Down
June 10	White-letter Hairstreak	IBM Lakeside, Cosham
June 16	White Admiral	Chandlers Ford
June 16	Ringlet	Yew Hill
June 16	Silver-studded Blue	Lyndhurst
June 16	Essex Skipper	Browndown North, Gosport
June 19	Gatekeeper	Monks Walk, Gosport
June 20	Purple Hairstreak	Browndown South, Gosport
June 21	Purple Emperor	Southleigh Forest
June 22	Grayling	Browndown South, Gosport
June 25	Dark Green Fritillary	Beaulieu Heath
June 27	Long-tailed Blue	Freshwater, IoW
July 9	Chalk Hill Blue	Chalton Down
July 19	Brown Hairstreak	Alton

Social Media links



Branch FB



Our Reserves FB



Branch Twitter



Branch Insta



Branch WWW