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**June 2024**

Dear Branch Member,

Please find the latest news from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch...

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## Annual Butterfly Report (2023)

I'm pleased to announce that **the 2023 Butterfly Report is now available online [here](#)**. This, and previous reports can be found [here](#) on the Branch website.

Many thanks to **Bob Annell, Kevin Freeborn, Rupert Broadway, Lee Hurrell, and Andy Barker** for helping get this 'over the line'! The August edition of the branch newsletter will contain relevant species summaries and this effort will be led by Kevin.

*Pete Eeles (Branch Chair)*

## New Members Day

We will be holding a **New Members' Day at St Swithun's School, Winchester, on Saturday 3rd August 2024**, following the success of similar events over the last two years.

Following refreshments on arrival, there will be a series of short presentations in the morning focusing on some of our branch activities and how members can get involved. We will then have a break for a bring-your-own picnic lunch, followed by guided walks on the reserve at Magdalen Hill Down (which is opposite the school) at a time when butterfly numbers should be peaking.

**Any members who have joined the branch in the last two years should receive an invitation to attend in late June or early July**, following which any remaining places will be opened up to the wider branch membership on a first come, first served basis. If you are new to the branch and want to meet up with some of your fellow members, find out more about what we do, and enjoy some of the spectacular butterflies on our flagship local reserve, then do please respond to the invitation – it should be a very enjoyable event.

*Rupert Broadway (Branch Chair of the Engagement sub-committee)*

## Transect News

### **A difficult start to the 2024 season...**

After such a wet winter, we had all hoped for a bright start to the butterfly transect season. But this was not to be, as April turned out to be generally cool, cloudy and wet, making a challenging start to butterfly transect recording. For Week 4 it was virtually impossible to find suitable conditions, with virtually all sites recording a blank.

It is important to note that Transect recorders should only enter data if they are able to walk the butterfly transect when the weather conditions satisfy the minimum required by the method. **In particular, shade temperatures should be at least 13°C, with a minimum of 60% sunshine.** If these conditions are not met, few (if any!) butterflies will be on the wing, resulting in under-recording, and a reduction in the *Annual Index of abundance*. What you should do if you feel the conditions do not meet those required by the method, is simply leave that week blank in UKBMS. The software will determine an estimate for any missed week, based on the data recorded for the weeks either side. For consistency of results, this is preferable to entering poor data for weeks with borderline weather, simply to show that you've completed all 26 weeks.

I'm sure, like me, you've noticed that even when the weather was perfect (e.g. in mid-May), there were very few butterflies about. The hibernating species like Brimstone and Peacock seem to have finished early, and Whites and Orange-tips have been thin on the ground. I know of several people who have recently walked their transect, only to record zero butterflies, even though conditions were ideal. This is certainly a worrying trend. By the time you receive this e-Newsletter, hopefully Large Skipper and Meadow Brown will be present, as the summer species start to build in numbers.

Finally, I'd just like to say **thank you to all transect recorders in Hampshire and Isle of Wight**, for persevering through what has been a very difficult start to the season. **Even if you've had several missed weeks, don't give up, but keep going, as there are still lots of summer butterflies to record**, and hopefully the weather will become warmer and sunnier, improving opportunities for both butterflies and transect walkers. The data gathered through butterfly transect monitoring is so important for understanding local and national trends, that everyone's contribution is very much appreciated.

*Dr. Andy Barker (Branch Butterfly transects co-ordinator)*

## NFBTG News

On 11th May 2024, Ringwood Actions for Climate Emergency (RACE) organised their 4<sup>th</sup> Eco Fair in the town centre, which the New Forest Butterfly Transect Group attended with a stall. The aim as before was to educate visitors about butterflies and to try to recruit new transect walkers. Surprisingly, in this cool wet spring, the weather behaved itself and we had a good number of visitors and managed to sign up a few new transect walkers, helped by actively targeting the other stall holders.

## 2024 Season to end of May

The cool, changeable weather this spring has caused us problems with fitting-in valid surveys (see "[Transect News](#)", above). Whilst most weeks have had at least one day where the weather relented, week four (w/c 22nd April) was relentless and we only managed to complete a survey on nine transects out of 49, recording a grand total of 34 butterflies.

By the end of week eight (w/c 20th May) we had recorded 3,444 butterflies across 19 species, at a density (butterflies per kilometre walked) of 3.65 compared to an historic average of 4.16. As you might expect, Brimstone (1,413) and Peacock (562) have dominated, but in the last two weeks Speckled Wood have become the predominant species.

The results have not been consistent across species: seven species above average, eight below, and three the same. We also have one anomaly with **a very early Silver-washed Fritillary being reported**. Generally the species which have emerged for the start of the transect season have performed better than those which emerge later. The exceptions were Green Hairstreak which emerged a week earlier than normal - and are much more widespread this year than previously; and Small Heath which have only just emerged, but in greater numbers than previous years.



The NFBTG stall at the RACE Eco fair 2024 (© Trevor Pogson)

*Bob Taylor (New Forest Butterfly Transect Group)*

## Reserves report

### Magdalen Hill Down

As spring advances, more butterflies emerge and the sky is filled with birdsong. The cowslips have been replaced by buttercups. The Adonis is on the wing. Common Blues, Brown Argus, Green Hairstreak and Small Heath make a walk on the reserve a lovely treat. We have four young cows staying on for summer. The 29 White-faced Woodland

sheep will be taken off for shearing and a smaller number will return in a month or two. The spring rain has made everywhere so lush and vibrant.



Aurora Borealis over the Down



An early Common Blue



Salad Burnet and Horseshoe Vetch



The White-faced Woodland sheep

*All photos © Fiona Scully*

## Yew Hill

Yew Hill will be left to bloom and do its thing, and will be left pretty much untouched for summer, with no further grazing planned until late autumn. The new reservoir to be constructed by Southern Water in Hill Top won't start until 2025.



Views of Yew Hill, inc. the South-west meadow

*All photos © Fiona Scully*

## Bentley Station Meadow

Bentley is full of grass and looking like meadows again! There is some bramble regrowth but a huge amount of dense Meadow Foxtail has taken hold. The cows, provided by Pies Farm in Alresford, are being brought on to keep on top of the bramble regrowth and add some diversity and structure to the grassland. Bentley is tricky as there will

always be some plants we want to protect from trampling by the cows, such as the orchids and Herb Paris.

Hopefully, mixing up the timing of grazing over the next few years, instead of repeatedly grazing late autumn/winter when it's been so wet, will help improve the site in the long run. The aim is to keep a balance between the meadow wildflowers and the bramble and blackthorn scrub. See how it goes! We'll be monitoring the impact on the vegetation and hopefully, once the meadows are restored and not completely swamped by bramble at the end of each summer, we can relax the grazing again. This will be done in conjunction with volunteers helping to cut back the bramble and also keep the transect route open.



Herb Paris is doing well at BSM



Lovely spring meadow

*All photos © Fiona Scully*

## Chilcomb scrapes

Ox-eye daisies have taken over the sports ground chalk bank this spring. Kidney Vetch was flowering but is not so dominant as last year. Disappointingly, no sign of Small Blues. We'll be continuing the annual surveys for the Striped Lychnis caterpillar and counting Dark Mullein flower spikes along the A31 and Kings Lane scrapes when they appear in July/August. We'd welcome volunteers to help survey for Striped Lychnis in the local area. Please do get in touch if you're interested. Thanks to those who already do surveys and send records in.

## Butterfly Walks on the Reserves

Please email [fscully@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:fscully@butterfly-conservation.org) to book a place. See the Hampshire Branch website for [details of walks this summer](#). Summary in [the Dates section](#), below.

**20th August Moth Morning event:** Magdalen Hill Down 9.30 – 11am led by Kate Barrett. Enjoy light breakfast refreshments as we look at what's been found overnight from a MHD moth trap, and from Kate Barrett's wild garden!

I look forward to seeing you out on the reserves soon. Enjoy the long summer evenings and summer light. See [our Facebook page](#), for latest updates. For those not already on the list, who would like **to volunteer, please email me:** [fscully@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:fscully@butterfly-conservation.org)

Can't wait for the warm, sunny days again...

*Fiona Scully (BC South Downs Landscape Project Officer, Nature Reserves)*

## Snippets

An initiative to reach-out and engage with younger conservation-minded people, the **Butterfly Conservation Youth Panel**, was recently set-up by Head Office. The inaugural Panel has already been chosen, but if you know anyone in the age range (16-25), who is passionate about Butterfly and Moth conservation, it's worth keeping an eye out on [the Youth Panel webpage](#).

If you need to phone **Bob Annell**, our Butterfly Recorder, please use this number: 07853 082265 (not the landline number given in the Spring Newsletter, Issue 116).

## Dates

An electronic calendar (.ics), covering all Field Trips & Reserves Walks, is available from [the Butterfly Walks webpage](#), or just copy/paste this link into your Calendar application, to **subscribe** (not 'download'! - you won't get automatic updates, if events change): [https://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/BC\\_Hants\\_walks.ics](https://www.hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk/BC_Hants_walks.ics)

## Reserves Volunteering

Please check the website for updates.

Winter 2024/25 programme to be announced	Magdalen Hill Down	Please contact <a href="#">Fiona Scully</a> for details.
Winter 2024/25 programme to be announced	Yew Hill	
Winter 2024/25 programme to be announced	Bentley Station Meadow	

## Branch, and branch-related Events\*

Saturday, 20th July	'Bioblitz' (species search) event, Itchen Valley Country Park	<b>Volunteers required!</b> Open to the public 9am-9pm.
Saturday, 3rd August	New Members Day, St Swithun's School, Winchester	See <a href="#">article</a> , above
Sunday, 3rd November	Branch Members' Day, Littleton Memorial Hall	

\*The branch Events Coordinator position is currently vacant. If you are at all interested in the position, then please contact the Branch Chair, Pete Eeles, at [chair@hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk](mailto:chair@hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk).

## Branch Field trips

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

When	Where	Target species
Saturday, 22nd June (13:30)	Newton Meadows	White Admiral, Marbled White, Brown Argus, Ringlet
Wednesday, 26th June (13:30)	Broxhead Common	Silver-studded Blue
Sunday, 30th June (09:30)	Abbotstone Down	Marbled White, Dark Green Fritillary, poss. Purple Emperor, good flora & fauna
Wednesday, 3rd July (09:30)	Abbotts Wood Inclosure	Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary, poss. Red Kite, Buzzard
Friday, 5th July (09:30)	West Walk (nr. Wickham)	Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary, Purple Hairstreak
Saturday, 6th July (13:30)	Mottistone Down	Dark Green Fritillary, Brown Argus, Chalk Hill Blue

Sunday, 7th July (09:30)	Whiteley Walk & Botley Wood	Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Purple Hairstreak
Wednesday, 10th July (09:30)	Carpenters Down Wood & Basing Wood	Purple Emperor, Purple Hairstreak, White-letter Hairstreak
Sunday, 14th July (09:30)	Swanwick Lakes	Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary
Wednesday, 17th July (09:30)	Micheldever Wood	Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary
<b>Saturday, 20th July (13:30)</b>	<b>Kemphill Moor Copse</b>	<b>White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary, Purple Hairstreak</b>
<b>Saturday, 27th July (13:30)</b>	<b>Mount Joy, Carisbrooke</b>	<b>Chalk Hill Blue, Common Blue, Wall, Brown Argus</b>
<b>Saturday, 3rd August (13:30)</b>	<b>Arreton Downs</b>	<b>Chalk Hill Blue, Brown Argus, Wall</b>
Wednesday, 14th August (09:30)	Shipton Bellinger	Brown Hairstreak, Wall
<b>Saturday, 17th August (13:30)</b>	<b>Brading Downs</b>	<b>Chalk Hill Blue, Brown Argus</b>
Sunday, 18th August (10:30)	Noar Hill	Brown Hairstreak, Purple Hairstreak, Brown Argus, Clouded Yellow
Wednesday, 21st August (10:30)	Beacon Hill	Silver-spotted Skipper, Brown Argus, Clouded Yellow
Sunday, 25th August (10:30)	Soberton Down / River Meon	Poss. Brown Hairstreak
Sunday, 1st September (10:30)	Old Winchester Hill	Adonis Blue, Silver-spotted Skipper, Clouded Yellow
Wednesday, 4th September (10:30) - <b>DATE TO BE REARRANGED</b>	Portsmouth Hill	Brown Hairstreak, Common Blue, Closed Yellow, Wall
<b>Saturday, 7th September (13:20)</b>	<b>The Revetment, Ventnor</b>	<b>Clouded Yellow, Hummingbird Hawk Moth</b>
Late September / early October (date to be confirmed)	Portchester Common / Portsmouth Hill	Long-tailed Blue

## Accompanied Reserves Walks

Please check the website for updates.

When	Where	Target species	Information
Details TBA	Winterbourne RSPB reserve		
Details TBA	Thursley NNR	Grayling	A walk led by Arthur Greenwood, at Hankley Common and Thursley National Nature Reserve.
Saturday, 15th June (Meet 09:45)	Bentley Station Meadow	Silver-washed Fritillary, plus guided tour	With Alton Natural History Soc., <i>et al.</i> Contact <a href="#">Fiona Scully</a> to book.
Saturday, 28th June	Yew Hill	White-letter Hairstreak,	With Rupert Broadway. Contact

(11:00-13:00)		and more!	<a href="#">Fiona Scully</a> to book.
Thursday, 18th July (11:00-13:00)	Magdalen Hill Down	Height of summer - Marbled White, etc.	With Dave & Anna Stewart. Contact <a href="#">Fiona Scully</a> to book.
Friday, 9th August (11:00-13:00)	Yew Hill	Chalk Hill Blue, etc.	With Rupert Broadway. Contact <a href="#">Fiona Scully</a> to book.
Friday, 16th August (11:00-13:00)	Magdalen Hill Down	Chalk Hill Blue, Adonis Blue, etc.	With Dave & Anna Stewart. Contact <a href="#">Fiona Scully</a> to book.
Tuesday, 20th August (details TBA)	Magdalen Hill Down	August Moth Morning...	With Kate Barrett. Contact <a href="#">Fiona Scully</a> to book.

## [First sightings \(since February e-Newsletter\)](#)

**Note: Data extracted from [Branch 'News' webpage](#) (so, **NOT** official!)**

8th March	Brimstone	Havant Thicket
8th March	Comma	Havant Thicket
24th March	Small Tortoiseshell	Tichborne
24th March	Holly Blue	Itchen Abbas
27th March	Small White	Great Fontley
29th March	Hummingbird Hawkmoth	Lee on Solent
30th March	Orange Tip	Bishops Waltham
30th March	Speckled Wood	Havant Thicket
1st April	Large White	Monks Walk, Gosport
12th April	Green-veined White	Church Crookham
18th April	Grizzled Skipper	Magdalen Hill Down
18th April	Green Hairstreak	Magdalen Hill Down
21st April	Small Copper	Sinah Common
24th April	Duke of Burgundy	Noar Hill
30th April	Small Heath	Browndown South
5th May	Dingy Skipper	Butser Hill NNR
10th May	Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Parkhill Inclosure
11th May	Small Blue	Freshwater (Afton Down car park)
11th May	Common Blue	Freshwater (Afton Down car park)
14th May	Painted Lady	Freshwater
18th May	Large Skipper	North Baddesley
18th May	Marsh Fritillary	North Baddesley
19th May	Brown Argus	Stockbridge Down
19th May	Glanville Fritillary	Freshwater Bay
29th May	Meadow Brown	Burridge & Basingstoke
2nd June	Adonis Blue	Martin Down & Oxenbourne Down



## Social Media links, etc.



Branch FB



Our Reserves FB



Branch X  
(Twitter)



Branch Insta



Branch WWW