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Dear Branch Member,

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

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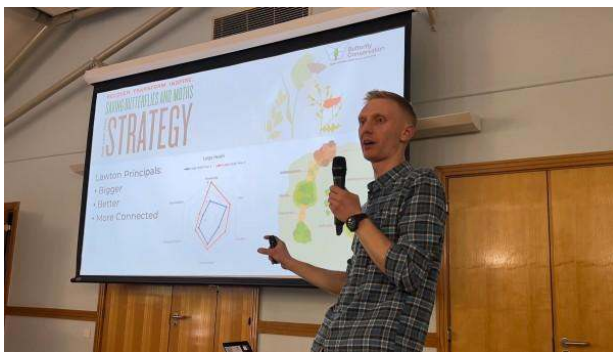
Branch Members' Day 2024 Report

Our Members' Day (3rd November) was well-attended, which is not surprising given the wonderful line-up of speakers. First up was an introduction from our SE England Conservation Manager, **Steven Lofting**, who provided an overview of [Butterfly Conservation's 2021-2026 Strategy](#) and how species are faring, with some winners and many losers among our butterfly fauna in particular. **Andy Barker** then provided an overview of the Forest Ringlet (*Dodonidia helmsii*) - an elusive and endangered New Zealand endemic butterfly. This was followed by **Peter Marren** who entertained us all with a smattering of 'The Weird and Wonderful Names of Butterflies and Moths'. Finally, **Martin Warren**, former BC Chief Executive, provided us with insights into butterfly biology, with some wonderful examples from the butterfly world.

The [following article](#) covers the Photo Competition, that was voted-on, on the day.

The main committee is looking to see whether the current location of the annual Members' Day, where it has resided for a number of years, remains the most suitable and convenient; or whether we could attract a higher attendance by relocating to an area that may be easier to reach by public transport, such as a city centre. Any one who has an opinion on this (one way or the other) is welcome to contact (email) us at engagement@hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk with their thoughts.

My thanks to all that attended and, especially, everyone that helped with organising the day, and helping things run smoothly.



Steven Lofting's "Saving Butterflies and Moths Strategy" talk



Andy Barker's talk on the N.Z. Forest Ringlet



Peter Marren's "Weird and Wonderful Names of Butterflies and Moths" talk



Martin Warren's "Sex, Life and Death in the world of butterflies" talk

All photos © Pete Eeles

Pete Eeles (Branch Chair)

Members' Day photo competition

The branch's annual photographic competition was held at the Members' Day in November. The standard of entries was once again exceptional and I am pleased to confirm that the winners were:

Category	Rank	Subject
Overall Winner		Small Skipper by Sheila Williams
UK Butterflies	1st	Painted Lady by Sheila Williams
	2nd	Small Skipper by Sheila Williams
	3rd=	Long-tailed Blue by Peter Hunt
	3rd=	Brimstones by Helen Pinchin
UK Moths	1st	Hummingbird Hawk-moth by Brian Cartwright
	2nd	Silver Y by Anne Hobbs
	3rd	Jersey Tiger by Rachel Bebb
Immature Stages	1st	Miller moth by Chris Evans
	2nd	Elephant Hawk-moth by Lesley Benson
	3rd	-
Overseas Butterflies and Moths	1st	Wood White by Francis Plowman
	2nd	Swallowtail by Helen Pinchin
	3rd	Cleopatra by Denise Healey
First-time Entrants	1st=	Painted Lady by Lindsay Clifton
	1st=	Pale Tussock by Chris Evans
	3rd	Chinese Character by Michael Jones

Congratulations to all of the winners on a well-deserved podium place.

The standard of images submitted this year was phenomenal, and there were many more wonderful photos on display on the day. Thanks again to all who took part, and we

look forward to another competition next year. Only a few weeks to go until the season starts once more - get your cameras ready...

Here's the category winners:



Small Skipper © Sheila Williams



Painted Lady © Sheila Williams



Hummingbird Hawk-moth © Brian Cartwright



Miller moth © Chris Evans



Wood White © Francis Plowman



Painted Lady © Lindsay Clifton &
Pale Tussock © Chris Evans

Lee Hurrell (Chair, Conservation & Records sub-committee)

Reserves report

Magdalen Hill Down

The Magdalen Monday team have been working hard cutting-back paths and scrub across the reserve. They are doing impressive work each week helping clear an exceptional amount of growth this year. They make Mondays very enjoyable and special and it means a lot to have such a reliable team.

Volunteers from MACE came for their annual scrub clearance day at MHD, which was great fun. They cleared a good amount of bramble and hawthorn scrub along the bottom of the hillside revealing lots of anthills, which was very satisfying. Bramble seems to be spreading more rapidly each year so volunteers are essential to prevent it taking over! Bramble clumps are still very valuable for shelter and nectar, and a whole variety of birds make use of it.

The Grazing Team brought-on 11 cows from Winnall Moors, earlier than usual as the ground was so wet. This gave an opportunity to graze the Old Allotment field down for six weeks before going onto Extension field to get the winter grazing underway. The 15 rams were exchanged for 41 ewes which are smaller and will graze here until early summer. Clustered Bell Flower, Hawksbeard and Harebell have been flowering until mid-November. Insect activity on the ivy, especially Red Admirals and hoverflies, and active wasp burrows in the grass have continued well into November..

Yew Hill

The volunteers have been doing mostly brush-cutting and raking due to so much growth – too much for the sheep to deal with! The sheep won't arrive until mid-December, a bit

delayed, but they will stay until March. The Southern Water meadow has been cut and raked after Southern Water cleared a small plot in the meadow so they could do a pipe inspection - with one marvellous anthill appearing in the middle. We are working closely with their ecologist team to ensure any works have minimal impact, and affected land is restored.

The small triangular piece of land outside the main reserve is registered Common land. The water pipes that supply Winchester go under that meadow to the main reservoir. These were laid down in 1910 which shows just how old those anthills are. Work is on track to start constructing the second reservoir (in Hill Top field) in the Spring next year.

Bentley Station Meadow

The volunteers continued their work cutting-back bramble from the meadow, restoring the grassland with all its glorious anthills. After last summer, when it was just a thicket of bramble, I like to think we are making progress - even though the transect results this year were really low. We can only hope this improves. After just a quick search the volunteers found 3 Brown Hairstreak eggs (much lower than last year's count of 15), but at least they were present this summer (although not recorded on transect). Thanks to the volunteers who have given so much time and dedication to this reserve over many years. Another fantastic team to be part of! There's a lot of great work being done.

Some recent photos from our reserves...



Bentley Station Meadow - work party



MHD - Ovine work party



MHD - Monday volunteers



MHD - Clematis tug o' war



MHD - in all weathers!



Yew Hill - a friendly Red Admiral

All photos © Fiona Scully

Working with volunteers and partners to save chalk grassland

We held a joint volunteer day at Butser Hill with Hampshire County Council National Nature Reserve team, the SDNP Rangers, volunteers, and our own BC volunteers. We all came together to clear scrub to restore breeding habitat for the Duke of Burgundy and save our chalk grassland wildflowers. It was really great seeing everyone in action. We had advised them where to target their scrub clearance to benefit the Duke of Burgundy, and the day really had a Feel Good Feeling, and a bit of hope that we'd helped improve things for this very threatened butterfly.

Volunteer work days schedule

Please see the [Reserves Volunteering](#) sub-section of the Dates section, below.

Butterfly Walks on the Reserves

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

Hope to see you at one of our sites soon...

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

Snippets

- **The National Trust** has a new landscape-scale nature recovery **project at Hinton Ampner Estate, near Winchester**. They will be embarking on a 60-hectare woodland creation project, planting 60,000 trees, and are looking for volunteers and community groups to assist. The planting period is Dec 24-March 25. If you're interested, please email their ranger, steph.wood@nationaltrust.org.uk
- A reminder that **Transect walkers are always required**, please contact Iain McIntosh, if you're interested. Send him an email - iain@bay-trees.co.uk
- **The 2024 New Forest Butterfly Transect Group data** has just been released and is [available on the branch website](#).
- Mike Wall (the Hampshire County Moth Recorder) tells us that **The Hampshire Annual Moth Report for 2023** is [now available here](#) on the hantsmoths website. Note that currently the Isle of Wight isn't included, as validation has not been completed, but this will be added retrospectively when available. Many thanks for everyone who sent records in - as ever, it's much appreciated!
- And finally, fancy a slice of pastoral music inspired by an unexpected visit from a Swallowtail butterfly? Well, [here's just the thing for you!](#)

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

Reserves Volunteering

Please check the website for updates.

Every Monday (exc. 23/12 & 30/12) until 24th February 2025 inclusive. Start 10am, finish 3pm	Magdalen Hill Down	Please contact Fiona Scully for details.
Fortnightly on Thursday (exc. 26/12) until 27th February, 2025. Start 10am, finish 3pm	Yew Hill	
First Wednesday of the month from 6th November until 5th March 2025 inclusive. Start 10 am, finish by 3 pm	Bentley Station Meadow	

Branch, and branch-related Events*

26th January, 2025 10:30-16:00	New Forest National Park Volunteer Fair (Brockenhurst Village Hall)	Please contact NFBTG if interested - nftg-inbox@googlegroups.com
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*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.

Branch Field trips

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

When	Where	Target species
To be advised - check website	-	-

Accompanied Reserves Walks

Please check the website for updates.

When	Where	Target species	Information
To be advised - check website	-	-	-

First sightings (since August e-Newsletter)

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

30th July*	Brown Hairstreak	Fort Purbrook
9th August	Silver-spotted Skipper	Stockbridge Down
16th August	Wall	Wolverton

* Oops! - should have been in the August e-Newsletter.

Social Media links, etc.



Branch FB



Our Reserves FB



Branch X
(Twitter)



Branch Insta



Branch WWW