



[December 2024](#)

[February 2025](#)

[June 2025](#)

**August 2025**

Dear Branch Member,

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

## In this issue

|                                                   |              |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------|
| <a href="#">Branch Committee News</a>             | Ed.          |
| <a href="#">Transect News &amp; other matters</a> | Andy Barker  |
| <a href="#">Reserves report</a>                   | Fiona Scully |
| <a href="#">Snippets</a>                          |              |
| <a href="#">Dates</a>                             |              |
| <a href="#">Social Media links, etc.</a>          |              |

## Branch Committee News

For those who haven't seen the **12th June** news item on the [Branch News webpage](#)...

**Statement to branch members from Head Office.** *The future of the Hampshire Branch.*

*On June 9th staff and volunteers in Hampshire came together to discuss the current situation with the Branch and the way ahead for our work in Hampshire. We met for an hour then headed to Magdalen Hill Down for a picnic lunch and walk led by Fiona Scully, who has now been confirmed in a permanent role as Reserves Officer.*

*We talked through the significant amount of work still happening in the county; we have (at least!) 297 volunteers in the county who carry out a wide range of activities, including recording and monitoring, compiling the Branch E-Newsletter and updating the Branch website as well as key leadership roles such as Transect Co-Ordinator, WCBS Champion, Walks Leaders and County Recorders. And, of course, practical work on our reserves continues, led by Fiona and supported by a vital team of practical conservation volunteers, livestock lookers and recorders.*

*We are truly grateful to all volunteers who have contributed to our work in the county and to those who continue to do so. At a difficult time for charities across the UK and a worrying time for nature, your support is more important than ever and every act of kindness makes a difference.*

*Looking ahead, we are very aware of the challenges that all our Branches in the UK have been facing in recruiting to committee roles. Across the voluntary sector, participation in volunteering has declined 45% over the last 10 years and the appetite for volunteering in a committee role has halved. Therefore, in discussion with Andy Barker (Transect Co-Ordinator, former Branch Chair and Trustee) we have agreed to proceed in Hampshire without a Branch Committee. Instead, volunteers will continue to lead activities as they currently do and staff will set up new locally targeted volunteer groups as needed, such as survey groups or for habitat management work off-reserves. This will allow us to focus our time where we can make the most difference on the ground, helping butterflies, moths and the environment in Hampshire.*

## Transect News

### **Transect Recorders' Conference – 26 October 2025**

In the previous e-News I announced my intention to organise a Hants & Isle of Wight Transect Recorders' Conference this autumn, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of UK Butterfly Transect Recording. I can now confirm that **Littleton Millennium Hall** has now been booked for **Sunday 26 October** to host such a meeting, and I'm in the process of drawing up the programme for the day.

Following the format of previous meetings, the intention is for the meeting to run from **10:00am until 3:00pm**. It will be a great opportunity to socialise, as well as hear presentations on topics such as long-term species trends, use of transect data to guide conservation management, and how to get more from your data within UKBMS.

Further announcements will follow, and if anyone would like to help on the day I'd be very pleased to hear from you.

Contact email: [transects@hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk](mailto:transects@hantsiow-butterflies.org.uk)

### **Early impressions of the 2025 butterfly season**

Given how poor 2024 was, I think most of us were apprehensive about how butterflies would fare in 2025. But after a warm, dry and sunny spring, followed by some very hot weather during early summer, I think we've all been pleasantly surprised by the upturn in fortunes for most species and the overall increase in butterfly numbers.

The other thing that's been apparent is **early emergence**. For many butterflies, the flight season seems to have started a good two weeks earlier than usual. I fully expect the all-time earliest Hants & Isle of Wight emergence dates for several species to be broken this year, judging by what I've seen on the Branch website and have heard through conversations with friends. With the season rushing by so quickly, it may result in an abrupt end - I'm already getting the sense that hibernators, such as Brimstone and Peacock, having been busy feasting on nectar during July, are now starting to disappear as they take up their winter quarters.

Even so, there are still plenty of other butterflies to grace our gardens, especially Whites and Gatekeepers, and we can usually look forward to seeing Commas and Red Admirals on ivy flowers and fallen fruit as we pass from late summer into autumn.

*Dr. Andy Barker (Butterfly Transect Co-ordinator, Hampshire & Isle of Wight)*

## Reserves report

### **Magdalen Hill Down**

There's been a lot of activity with a site visit from the National Landscapes Conference, two reserve butterfly walks, a Southern Water visit to see the chalk scrape and thirty PhD students investigating sustainability. The Big Butterfly Count launch was filmed at MHD, with local schools taking part being filmed live by BBC and ITV Meridian.

It's also been very 'fluttery' with the Chalk Hill Blues making a come-back, following last year's worst-ever records. The second brood of Adonis Blue has emerged, together with a

good number of other species, including Small Copper, Dark Green Fritillary and Common Blue.

It's become very parched on the hillside, with so much sunshine in June and July. The five cows are off for a couple of weeks at the Wildlife Trust's Hockley Farm, for TB checks. We haven't brought the sheep back, due to very little grass growth this year.

## **Yew Hill**

We had a school visit from Oliver's Battery Primary School, Year 4. They walked from school and saw lots of wildlife along the way. It was a beautiful sunny day and Yew Hill was at its best. The children soaked-up the magic of being surrounded by dancing Chalk Hill Blues and Gatekeepers.

The butterfly walk kindly led by the wonderful Rupert Broadway, was also successful. With nine people, we counted seventeen species including Chalk Hill Blue, Small Copper, Common Blue, Brown Argus, Green-veined White, and Painted Lady. Such an enjoyable walk - thank you Rupert, and all those who came along!

## **Bentley Station Meadow**

We've had two volunteer days, cutting the transect route path and checking the fencing before the cows go in. It was so lovely to be greeted by a Silver-washed Fritillary, and quite a number of Common Blues. We saw butterflies throughout the day - which was really encouraging. Betony has spread along the ride and, with Tufted Vetch, was a haze of pink and purple.

As ever, the super-skilled volunteers sorted everything. Using scythes and a brushcutter they carefully opened-up paths and battled through the undergrowth to check all the fencing. Where it had been so dry huge cracks had formed in the ground. It was good to take time to enjoy the wildlife around us. Listening to birds, watching a lizard basking on an anthill, seeing numerous grasshoppers jumping about. And the exquisite Common Blues put on a great display. The cows should be introduced on-site by the end of August.

## **Chilcomb scrapes**

I was too late this year for the Striped Lychnis larvae count, along the Kings Lane and cycleway scrapes, everything was so early! I counted the Dark Mullein flower spikes and saw eight larvae in total - most had already pupated. The sports ground scrape was covered in flowers and had several Small White butterflies visit, while I was there.

## **Volunteer work days schedule**

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

## **Butterfly Walks on the Reserves**

See [below](#), and [our Facebook page](#), for latest updates.

**Wednesday 13th August 11am-1pm, Magdalen Hill Down.** Join us for the summer finale of butterflies, hopefully with a good showing of Chalk Hill Blue (following the worst ever year for them at Magdalen last year). Fingers crossed their fortunes improve. We will be joined by Dave and Anna Stewart.

**Parking:** For Magdalen Hill Down - park up the track past the stonemasons; for Yew Hill - park at the bottom of Old Kennel Lane, Oliver's Battery.



Please email me [fscully@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:fscully@butterfly-conservation.org) to book a place, so that I have an idea of numbers.

Hope to see you out on our nature reserves soon.

Some photos from the reserves (all photos © Fiona Scully)...



A host of Betony (BSM)



Path clearance (BSM)



Summer volunteers (BSM)



Big Butterfly Count launch (MHD)



Mowing machines! (MHD)



Longhorn Scabious moth (MHD)



Rupert leading a butterfly walk (YH)



Anthill flora explosion (YH)



Kevin helping at the Oliver's Battery Primary School visit (YH)

*Fiona Scully (BC Reserves Office, South East England)*

## Snippets

- This year's **Big Butterfly Count** is drawing to a close (Sunday, 10th August). I'm guessing the results will be significantly up on last year, for many species.
- Please email [info@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:info@butterfly-conservation.org) for any general enquiries you may have. (To keep up to date with branch News, it's worth keeping an eye on the branch [News > Latest News](#) webpage, too.)

## 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** (don't '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.

|                               |  |  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| To be advised - check website |  |  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|

## Branch, and branch-related Events

|                               |  |  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| To be advised - check website |  |  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|

## Branch Field trips

Full details of **Hampshire walks** [here](#) (PDF). **Isle of Wight walks** (PDF) is currently unavailable from the branch website (although the events are in the electronic calendar - see above).

| When             | Where                                          | Target species                                       |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Wed 13 Aug 10:00 | Soberton Down / St Claires Meadow / River Meon | Brown Hairstreak                                     |
| Sat 16 Aug 13:30 | Brading Downs                                  | Chalk Hill Blue, Brown Argus                         |
| Sun 17 Aug 10:00 | Broughton Down                                 | Adonis Blue, Chalk Hill Blue, Silver-spotted Skipper |
| Wed 20 Aug 10:00 | Shipton Bellinger                              | Brown Hairstreak, Wall, Magpie Moth, Oak Eggar Moth  |
| Wed 27 Aug 10:00 | Portsdown Hill                                 | Brown Hairstreak, Wall, Oak Eggar Moth               |
| Sun 31 Aug 10:00 | Old Winchester Hill NNR                        | Adonis Blue, Silver-spotted Skipper                  |
| Wed 3 Sep 10:00  | Beacon Hill NNR                                | Silver-spotted Skipper, Small Copper                 |
| Sat 6 Sep 13:30  | Thorness Bay fields                            | Clouded Yellow, Wall, Brown Argus, Small Copper      |

## Accompanied Reserves Walks

Please [check the website](#) for updates. Email [Fiona Scully](#) to book a place on a Reserves walk.

| When                        | Where              | Target species                                | Information                                                                      |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Wed 13 Aug<br>11:00 - 13:00 | Magdalen Hill Down | Late summer butterflies, inc. Chalk Hill Blue | We will be joined by Dave & Anna Stewart (botanical, bird and butterfly experts) |

## First sightings (09/06/2025 - 03/08/2025)

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

|            |                          |                                            |
|------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Thu 12 Jun | White Admiral            | North Baddesley                            |
| Fri 13 Jun | Dark Green Fritillary    | Portsdown Hill                             |
|            | Silver-washed Fritillary | Bouldnor Forest, Yarmouth                  |
| Wed 18 Jun | Purple Hairstreak        | Whiteley Pastures                          |
|            | Purple Emperor           | Southleigh Forest                          |
|            | Ringlet                  | Southleigh Forest                          |
| Sun 22 Jun | Adonis Blue              | Old Winchester Hill                        |
| Wed 25 Jun | Gatekeeper               | Monks Walk, Frater Fields & Woods, Gosport |
| Sun 29 Jun | Silver-studded Blue      | Broxhead Common                            |
| Tue 1 Jul  | Chalk Hill Blue          | Martin Down NNR                            |
| Tue 8 Jul  | Grayling                 | Browndown North, Gosport                   |
|            | Brown Hairstreak         | Portsdown Hill                             |
| Thu 17 Jul | Monarch                  | Lymington                                  |
| Mon 28 Jul | Silver-spotted Skipper   | Stockbridge Down                           |
| Fri 1 Aug  | Clouded Yellow           | North Baddesley                            |

## Social Media links, etc.



Branch FB



Our Reserves FB



Branch X  
(Twitter)



Branch Insta



Branch WWW