

# BUTTERFLY & MOTH NEWS & EVENTS in Dorset

No. 72

Autumn 2012



Compiled by the Dorset  
Branch of Butterfly  
Conservation

## *Chairman's Letter*

As you will all be aware, Bobby Knowles, our long-standing Newsletter Editor, has at last retired from the position. Our appeals for someone to take over had not yielded any volunteers, but in August, a notice about the vacancy on the Branch Website was seen by someone who has offered to take over from Bobby. His name is Guy Freeman and he lives in Lytchett Matravers. He is a student in his final year at Exeter University studying for a degree in Ecology, based in Falmouth. Guy has previously done some work which Bill Shreeves speaks very highly of, surveying Silver-studded Blues, consistently covering large numbers of squares & finding colonies which had been "lost" for years.

So this somewhat shortened newsletter is Guy's first "production" for us, largely consisting of the Events List plus this short letter from me. We are delighted that Guy has offered to take over as Newsletter Editor, and welcome him to the Branch. Obviously producing future editions will need to fit in with the demands of Guy's studies, but we hope that they will have a wider content than this somewhat truncated issue, to which end, articles for the newsletter are always welcome.

The weather this summer has not been good for butterflies, particularly in the early summer. The wettest summer for a hundred years, following a cold spring, has resulted in declines in many common species, as we have noticed from their absence in our gardens. Fortunately, the weather improved in the late summer, bringing welcome numbers of butterflies into our gardens at last. Not all butterflies did badly over the summer, and in meadow areas with long grass and wild flowers, of which we have many in Dorset, grassland species such as Meadow Brown, Ringlet and Marbled White have done very well. As a result of the recent improved weather, migrants have been doing well, with many sightings of Clouded Yellows, Red Admirals, Silver Ys, and two Monarchs, one in Portland attracting a lot of national publicity as it was around for several days.

As a nation, we are probably fortunate that some of the best weather coincided with the Olympics and Paralympics. Those of you who visited the Olympic Park will surely have been as impressed as I was with the extensive planting of wild flowers over large areas of the park, attracting good numbers of butterflies including Small Tortoiseshells, Red admirals, Peacocks, Small and Large Whites, and Common Blues.

We have had mixed fortunes with our website this summer. Lyn has worked hard developing the website, with many new features and improved news pages. However, we have suffered two setbacks: the first involves the online sightings facility, which ceased in June following technical changes after a viral attack on our host server. We have developed a stop-gap solution to enable sightings to be logged and manually input for display on the website, and have also been developing a new sightings facility which will automate the process between a sighting being logged on the website, and being displayed. We are tantalisingly close to this being completed, but sadly Steve Bennett, who provides technical support for the website, has been unwell, delaying completion.

As the summer draws to a close, we start the work of inputting transect and casual sightings data sent in by you all for inclusion in the national recording databases. We also begin the hard work on maintaining our reserves and other butterfly sites – see the Events List for details of work parties over the next few months if you would like to help.

I hope you have a good autumn and winter, recharging your batteries for a good summer next year!

*Jane Smith*

## *Butterflies indoors*

As Jane has mentioned, this newsletter will be somewhat shorter than our usual publication, although normal service will be resumed in the spring! However, with winter rapidly approaching, the following advice from Lynn Formison seemed particularly appropriate for use in this current edition.

Lynn notes that it is often at Christmas time that butterflies, particularly Small Tortoiseshells, are discovered hibernating indoors. In this holiday season people who have extra guests might start heating the spare room, thereby awakening a butterfly from its slumbers.

A number of our butterflies spend the winter as adults and hibernation is an important part of the lifecycle. To ensure that any butterflies which have been disturbed can resume hibernation as soon as possible, Lynn offers the following advice:

If it is a sunny day, release the butterfly outside, where it will be able to seek out a new spot to hibernate.

If weather conditions are unsuitable for release outside, then, using a container and a piece of card, gently capture the butterfly and place it in the fridge (not the freezer!) for half an hour. This will cool the insect down and render it inactive again.

Next, relocate it to a shed, garage, or unheated room in the house – preferably with gaps to allow the butterfly to make its own exit in the spring.

It is common for Peacocks to be disturbed in outside locations. Lynn reports that in the past she has found them in her log shed and in stacks of hay bales. When they sensed her presence they emitted their characteristic hissing sound! Lynn also heard from a lady who, at the onset of cold weather, took down her horse rugs which were hanging in an open fronted barn only to find many Peacocks hibernating there.

It is always interesting to learn more about the hibernation habits of our butterflies, so if you encounter any this winter please do share your discoveries with us via our website: [www.dorsetbutterflies.com](http://www.dorsetbutterflies.com).

## Butterfly Conservation Dorset Branch

Butterfly Conservation is an organisation dedicated to saving wild butterflies and moths and their habitats. Dorset has a very active branch of the Society, which as well as carrying out conservation work, organises guided walks and survey days.

- **Everybody is welcome to all events**, except the few marked 'members only'
- **Most events are free** - if there is a charge it will be mentioned in the listing, unless it is an event put together by another organisation, when we may not have received the relevant information
- **Butterflies will not fly unless it is fairly warm and sunny**, so if the weather makes you dubious you are welcome to phone the contact listed for each walk
- **Some of the walks are on private land** which is not open to the public at times other than those stated
- **Conservation Work Days start at 10.00 am** (ending around 3.30 pm) and are suitable for all the family except the very young. Children should be accompanied. Please wear stout footwear and protective gloves, and bring a packed lunch. You are advised to ensure your tetanus injections are up to date.

**For further information about the Society, please contact the  
Branch Secretary Sue Rawles on  
01305 268471 or [srawles11@btinternet.com](mailto:srawles11@btinternet.com), or visit the website:**

**[www.dorsetbutterflies.com](http://www.dorsetbutterflies.com)**

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

Company limited by guarantee

Registered in England (2206468)

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Charity registered in England & Wales (254937) and in Scotland (SCO39268)

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[www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org)

### **SUNDAY 7 OCTOBER CONSERVATION ACTION DAY Lankham Bottom Reserve**

We continue the task of gorse and thorn scrub clearance on this important downland reserve with Dorset Countryside Volunteers who will also be working there on the Saturday.

Meet 10.00 am. The reserve entrance is off the minor road from Cattistock to the A37, about ½ mile from the A37. Park inside the metal gate at map reference ST 606004.

Contact is Nigel Spring on 01963 23559 or 07981 776767, or email [nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk).

### **SATURDAY 13 OCTOBER WOODLAND MANAGEMENT DAY**

#### **Duncliffe Hill (North Dorset)**

Work parties meet monthly at this Woodland Trust site to carry out a variety of conservation tasks, such as coppicing, tree thinning and scrub clearance aimed at creating better and more varied habitats for butterflies and the other fauna and flora of the wood.

Meet 10.00 am in Scotchey Lane, Stour Provost, adjacent to the west entrance to the wood. Map reference ST 816223.

Contact is Ian Hounsell on 01747 841089.

### **SUNDAY 14 OCTOBER CONSERVATION ACTION DAY Alners Gorse**

We continue the woodland and

scrub management work. There will be a bonfire with soup and baked potatoes for lunch.

Do join us if you can between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm.

Alners Gorse reserve entrance is on the road from Hazelbury Bryan to Kings Stag beside the Hazelbury Bryan village sign and 30 mph sign. Park on the road verge well away from the bend, map reference ST 736100.

For further information please contact Nigel Spring on 01963 23559 or 07981 776767 or email [nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk).

### **SATURDAY 20 OCTOBER CERNE DOWNS ECOLOGY PROJECT**

There will be a practical conservation day from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm along the downland at Giant Hill, Cerne Abbas, to continue restoration of the ancient chalk grassland for many important butterfly species.

We shall be managing scrub and tree clearance, whilst potatoes cooked in the bonfire can be enjoyed at lunchtime. Hand tools are provided but please bring your own gloves.

The initial meeting point is the picnic area car park opposite the village hall, map reference ST 663015, from where we shall walk to the activity areas. We look forward to meeting with everyone who might be interested and available.

For further information contact Adam Gale on 01935 508842 or 07557 358587 or e-mail [scrump5@hotmail.com](mailto:scrump5@hotmail.com).

**SATURDAY 27 OCTOBER**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Broadcroft Quarry Butterfly Reserve, Portland**

Broadcroft is a Dorset Butterfly Conservation reserve managed specifically for butterflies, notably the Silver-studded Blue. To find the reserve, turn off Easton Road into Grove Road and about 100 yards on, turn right onto a track (opposite Portland Football Club) which leads to the car park, map reference SY 695723. Meet 10.00 am.

Contact is Bernard Franklin on 07711 304412 or Nigel Spring on 01963 23559.

**SATURDAY 27 OCTOBER**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Fifehead Wood (North Dorset)**

Organised by the Woodland Trust, conservation tasks primarily involve the continuation of rotational hazel coppicing and general maintenance of rides and paths. Meet 10.00 am at the lay-by on the road from the A30 (mid-way between Sherborne and Shaftesbury) to the village of Fifehead Magdalen, map reference ST 779217.

Contact is Tony Copper on 01963 250415.

**SUNDAY 28 OCTOBER**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Lydlinch Common (North Dorset)**

Lydlinch is part of an area that is crucial to the Marsh Fritillary, and conservation work is vital to ensure that the habitat is kept suitable for its survival at this site.

Meet 10.00 am and park in the lay-by just outside the village on the Sherborne to Sturminster road, map reference ST 736137.

Contact is Colin Burningham on 01935 873219.

**SUNDAY 4 NOVEMBER**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Cashmoor Down (North Dorset)**

Today's task is scrub removal from banks as well as strimming the cleared areas.

Meet 10.00 am at the top of the bridleway that leaves the A354 at the eastern end of the Cashmoor 50 mph speed restriction, map reference ST 980139.

Contact is Arthur Bryant on 01202 892816.

**SATURDAY 10 NOVEMBER**  
**CONSERVATION ACTION DAY**  
**Alners Gorse**

See October 14 for details.

**SATURDAY 10 NOVEMBER**  
**WOODLAND MANAGEMENT DAY**  
**Duncliffe Hill**

See October 13 for details.

**SUNDAY 11 NOVEMBER**  
**CERNE DOWNS ECOLOGY PROJECT**

See October 20 for details.

**SATURDAY 17 NOVEMBER**  
**NATIONAL ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

This year's AGM will be held at the Nottingham Belfry Hotel.

Full details in national magazine 'Butterfly' 111 and on BC national website [www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org).

**SATURDAY 17 NOVEMBER**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Fifehead Wood**

See October 27 for details.

**SUNDAY 18 NOVEMBER**  
**CONSERVATION ACTION DAY**  
**Lankham Bottom Reserve**

See October 7 for details.

**SUNDAY 25 NOVEMBER**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Lydlinch Common (North Dorset)**

See October 28 for details.

**SUNDAY 2 DECEMBER**  
**CONSERVATION ACTION DAY**

Broadcroft Butterfly Reserve,

Portland

See October 27 for details.

**SATURDAY 8 DECEMBER**  
**Butterfly and Moth Wing Patterns: What birds see and we don't**

**A talk by Professor Philip Howse**  
2.30 pm at Bournemouth Natural Science Society, 39 Christchurch Road, Bournemouth.

Contact is Mark Spencer on 01202 760621.

**SATURDAY 8 DECEMBER**  
**WOODLAND MANAGEMENT DAY**

**Duncliffe Hill**

See October 13 for details.

**SUNDAY 9 DECEMBER**  
**BROWN HAIRSTREAK EGG SEARCH and CONSERVATION WORK DAY**

**Alners Gorse**

As well as the regular scrub management work there is the chance to take part in the annual Brown Hairstreak egg search for some or all of the day.

Meet 10.00 am at Alners Gorse, map reference ST 737100.

Brown Hairstreak eggs are quite easy to see once you know what to look for and are more readily counted than the elusive butterflies, so this is an important exercise.

Training will be given. Wear waterproof footwear and bring a packed lunch if attending all day. The afternoon egg search will be carried out on Rooksmoor Common and the meeting time for this is 1.00pm at the reserve entrance. Alners Gorse reserve entrance is on the road from Hazelbury Bryan to Kings Stag beside the Hazelbury Bryan village sign and 30 mph sign. Park on the road verge well away from the bend, map reference ST 736100.

For further information on the work party please contact Nigel Spring on 01963 23559 or 07981 776767 or email [nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk) For further information on the Brown Hairstreak egg search please contact Brian Dicker on 01963 32453, or call 07817 301203 on the day.

**SATURDAY 15 DECEMBER**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Fifehead Wood**

See October 27 for details.

**SUNDAY 16 DECEMBER**  
**CERNE DOWNS ECOLOGY**  
**PROJECT**

See October 20 for details.

**SUNDAY 30 DECEMBER**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Lydlinch Common**

See October 28 for details.

**SATURDAY 12 JANUARY**  
**WOODLAND MANAGEMENT**  
**DAY**

**Duncliffe Hill**

See October 13 for details.

**SATURDAY 12 JANUARY**  
**CERNE DOWNS ECOLOGY**  
**PROJECT**

See October 20 for details.

**SUNDAY 13 JANUARY**  
**CONSERVATION ACTION DAY**  
**Lankham Bottom Reserve**

See October 7 for details.

**SATURDAY 19 JANUARY**  
**MEMBERS AFTERNOON**

This is our annual social event where, after some formal presentations, members can share their experiences, meet new members and chat. We meet at the Village Hall, The Recreation Ground, Morden, near Wareham BH20 7DL from 2 to 5 pm with tea and cakes. Parking is available at the hall. Map reference SY 911950.

There is a charge of £3 to cover running costs. Enquiries and offers of assistance to Brian and Sylvia Dicker on 01963 32453. Also please advise of any dietary requirements e.g. gluten free, and please get in touch if you would like to car-share or need a lift to the event.

**SATURDAY 19 JANUARY**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Fifehead Wood**

See October 27 for details.

**SUNDAY 20 JANUARY**  
**CONSERVATION ACTION DAY**  
**Ainers Gorse**

See October 14 for details.

**SUNDAY 27 JANUARY**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Lydlinch Common**

See October 28 for details.

**SATURDAY 2 FEBRUARY**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Langford Valley, for the Duke of Burgundy**

Meet 10.00 am at the field gate beyond Langford Farm Cottages, near Lower Magiston, map reference ST 639958. Take the minor road northwards from Stratton to Sydling St. Nicholas along the Sydling Water. At the crossroads turn right into the Langford valley and to the farm.

Contact is Brian Dicker on 01963 32453, or call 07817 301203 on the day.

**SATURDAY 9 FEBRUARY**  
**CONSERVATION ACTION DAY**  
**Broadcroft Butterfly Reserve,**  
**Portland**

See October 27 for details.

**SATURDAY 9 FEBRUARY**  
**WOODLAND MANAGEMENT DAY**  
**Duncliffe Hill**

See October 13 for details.

**SATURDAY 9 FEBRUARY**  
**WOODLAND MANAGEMENT DAY**  
**Duncliffe Hill**

See October 13 for details.

**SUNDAY 10 FEBRUARY**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Langford Valley**

See Feb 2 for details.

**SATURDAY 16 FEBRUARY**  
**CERNE DOWNS ECOLOGY**  
**PROJECT**

See October 20 for details.

**SATURDAY 16 FEBRUARY**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Fifehead Wood**

See October 27 for details.

**SUNDAY 17 FEBRUARY**  
**CONSERVATION ACTION DAY**  
**Ainers Gorse**

See October 14 for details.

**SATURDAY 23 FEBRUARY**  
**BUTTERFLY TRENDS IN WEST**  
**DORSET AND PORTLAND**

All are welcome to this presentation of the results from butterfly recording in West Dorset in 2012. Please come along if you might be interested in taking part in the monitoring in 2013. Walks covered are Brackett's Coppice, Black Hill, Chard Junction, Cerne Giant, Southfield Hog Cliff, Kingcombe, Lankham, Lorton Meadows, Powerstock, Portland (Broadcroft, Perryfields and Tout), Radipole and Stonebarrow. There will also be a review of the special site surveys carried out for the Regional Action Plan in this part of the county and other interesting general and garden records. N.B. The venue is Toller Porcorum Village Hall, start time 2.00 pm.

The map reference is SY562980 and the postcode DT2 0DT.

From the A356, drive down into Toller Porcorum, over a small bridge then second right (School Lane) then left into Church Mead to Village Hall. From Bridport follow sign to Toller Porcorum, then down into village, over old railway bridge, then first left (School Lane)

Contact is Keith Miller on 01300 321007.

**SUNDAY 24 FEBRUARY**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Lydlinch Common**

See October 28 for details.

**FRIDAY 1 MARCH**  
**BUTTERFLY TRENDS IN EAST DORSET**

All are welcome to this presentation on the trends in butterfly numbers revealed by the surveys monitoring east Dorset in 2012. Walks and Regional Action Plan (RAP) surveys covered are those at Avon Heath, Badbury Rings, Garston Wood, Hengistbury Head, Iford Landfill, Kinson Common, Moors Valley, Mude Valley, Pamphill Moor, Sopley Common, Sovell Down, Stanpit, Stour Valley, Upton Heath and Wimborne St. Giles.

7.30 pm at St. Catherine's Church Hall on the corner of Leigh Road and Lewens Lane, Wimborne.  
Contact is Bill Shreeves on 01747 852587.

**SUNDAY 3 MARCH**  
**CONSERVATION ACTION DAY**  
**Lankham Bottom Reserve**  
See October 7 for details.

**THURSDAY 7 MARCH**  
**BUTTERFLY TRENDS IN SOUTH DORSET**

All are welcome to attend this presentation of the results of the south Dorset Transect and Regional Action Plan (RAP) surveys in 2012 and the resulting trends in butterfly numbers. Please come along if you might be interested in joining any of our many butterfly counting walks, including those at Ballard Down, Bindon Hill, Corfe West Hill, Corfe Common, Durlstons, Hethfelton, Higher Hyde, Langton Westwood,

Lulworth Estate, Studland & Ferry Road West, Tadnoll, Townsend, Wareham Walls, Winspit and the miniature walks along the Purbeck Chalk Ridge.  
7.30 pm at the Methodist Hall, North Street, Wareham.

Contact is Jon Bellamy on 01929 450182.

**SATURDAY 9 MARCH**  
**WOODLAND MANAGEMENT DAY**  
**Duncliffe Hill**

See October 13 for details.

**SUNDAY 10 MARCH**  
**CERNE DOWNS ECOLOGY PROJECT**

See October 20 for details.

**TUESDAY 12 MARCH**  
**LIFE CYCLES OF DORSET BUTTERFLIES and MOTHS**  
**Joint with DWT Poole Group**

An illustrated talk by Mark Spencer.  
7.30 pm at Carter Community School, Blandford Close, Hamworthy BH15 5BQ.

Contact is Ken Yeates on 01202 674998.

**FRIDAY 15 MARCH**  
**NORTH DORSET WALKERS AND REGIONAL SURVEYORS MEETING**

All are welcome to hear reports on 2012 recording and plans for the 2013 campaign, as well as a report on recent moth recording in the area. Please come along if you are interested or wish to help on any of the Regional Action Plan (RAP) surveys or butterfly counting walks, which are: Alners Gorse, Cashmoor Down, Clubmen's Down, Deadmoor Common, Duncliffe Wood, Fifehead Wood, Fontmell Down, Hod Hill, Jerry's Hole, Lydlinch Common, Melbury Down, Milldown, Piddles Wood, Rooksmoor and Stubhampton Bottom.  
7.30 pm at East Stour Village Hall, map reference ST 804234. This is next to the playing field on the left of the road from East Stour to Gillingham.

Contact is Bill Shreeves on 01747 852587.

**SATURDAY 16 MARCH**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Fifehead Wood**

See October 27 for details.

**SATURDAY 23 MARCH**  
**BRANCH MEMBERS DAY AND AGM**

Your yearly opportunity to find out about the latest news and developments within the Branch.

The programme will consist of:

- \* AGM and Chairman's summary of the year
- \* A talk by Professor Jeremy Thomas - 'Butterflies, ants and parasitoids'
- \* Tea
- \* Members' slides and digital photos - show your slides/photos of butterflies, moths, life stages and Branch events. It will be helpful to know in advance if you wish to contribute, so please contact Brian Dicker on 01963 23559 or by email [briandicker@talktalk.net](mailto:briandicker@talktalk.net).

**2.00** - 5.30 at Puddletown Village Hall DT2 8RX, map reference SY 757942. There is free parking in the adjacent school car park. If you require any further details or can offer help on the day, please contact Sue Rawles on 01305 268471.

**SUNDAY 24 MARCH**  
**CONSERVATION WORK DAY**  
**Lydlinch Common**

See October 28 for details.

*Look at Butterfly Conservation's website [www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org) and the Dorset Branch website [www.dorsetbutterflies.com](http://www.dorsetbutterflies.com) to find out more about our reserves*