

UPPER THAMES BRANCH

Hairstreak

ISSUE 115 | AUG-DEC 2022



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

**Upper Thames
Branch**



www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk

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Cover image: Small Copper *ab. caeruleopunctata*, Fence Wood, Berks (© David Hastings)

Opinions expressed in the articles in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the views of the Branch or the Society.

Next edition: **JAN-MAR 2023 (EDITION 116) [DEADLINE FOR COPY: 31st DEC '22]**

Email: **Derek Haynes, Newsletter editor**
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Editorial

Welcome to this edition of *Hairstreak*.

After last time's record-breaking edition, it is unsurprising, perhaps, that the volume of contributions to this edition has dwindled somewhat. Due to the timing of newsletters, many contributors earlier in the year were keen to have their articles aired in the spring edition, citing their relevance to the months ahead.

Nevertheless, there's plenty to engage with in this edition – not least the 2 articles that describe in much detail how the respective authors have gone about creating wildlife gardens at home. Both pieces are well worth the read.

Elsewhere, 2022 has seen an increase across our region in the number of Guided Walks offered, with many resulting in a report being produced from the walk leader and/or participants, some of which are reproduced here.

However, the numbers attending many of the walks have proved disappointing – especially in west Oxfordshire.

This time's front cover shows a lovely image of a Small Copper aberration *caeruleopunctata*, taken by David Hastings at Fence Wood, Berks. Not many of us are fortunate to see such

rarities, so if a reader has images of any of the more uncommon variations in our species which they'd like to share with others, please send me the details, in consideration for inclusion in a future issue of the newsletter. We'd all like to share a little in your good fortunes in the field.

Do others agree that 2022 has been a great year for the Marbled White? In a field-cum-meadow near me on 20th June, there must have been literally thousands. In just 1 photo taken on my phone whilst dog-walking, I can count at least 12...



...but I wonder just how many offspring will have survived now that the field has been cut?



Enjoy your newsletter!
Derek Haynes

Please send contributions for future issues of the newsletter to newsletter-editor@upperthames-butterflies.org.uk, and attach any photographs as individual .jpg (or similar) files or provide a link to either a cloud-based storage location or to a location provided by an email file transfer agent. Microsoft Word is the preferred hosting word processor for all articles (ideally using a 'standard' font). Thank you. **NEXT DEADLINE IS 31st DECEMBER 2022**

View from the Chair

Chair's notes, July 2022

Hello everyone, and I really hope that you have been able to get out and enjoy the largely lovely weather and see plenty of our fantastic butterflies and moths.

Numbers of most July-flying species were high in the first half of the month, and walking around any space where people are working to make it better for wildlife was an immense joy - with so many butterflies and moths responding to the sympathetic management.

Sadly, I've had messages from members who live in areas surrounded by land that doesn't get sympathetic management, reporting very low numbers in their gardens, despite their planting buddleias and such-like. This proves (if more proof was required) that conservation work to improve the habitat for caterpillars is the only way to maintain the numbers of butterflies and moths. The incredible loss of butterflies and moths from so much of the UK over the recent past has seen numbers decline to a point where now more than half our native species are on lists of species of conservation concern.

Given this news I have to say that I'm delighted that many UTB members are always very quick to offer to help us in everything we do, but very sad that – despite rising membership numbers – we are getting very few offers from anyone that wasn't active before Covid-19 arrived (and some who started to work with us shortly before then seem to have dropped out too). I hear that this is a problem for all charities that rely on volunteer effort, but that doesn't really

make it easier to accept. I'm urging you as strongly as I possibly can to please look at the very long and varied lists of things we do, and get more involved. As I have said, it is really obvious that where conservation work is being conducted to create conditions that make it more likely that caterpillars will survive and become adult butterflies and moths (sadly by dwindling numbers of volunteers), there is a very positive outcome. We must maintain that effort and hopefully increase it, but we can't do that without you.

Obviously, I'm hoping to see far more of you joining us on the winter conservation tasks, but those are only one of the very many activities we get involved with.

Such tasks don't appeal to everyone, but there are many other ways to help. This picture shows children interacting with our stall at a public event: we get an amazing response from the public at each event; but this year I had to turn down offers of spaces at three events simply because there were no volunteers to help run the stall.



We are always looking for volunteers to help with every single aspect of running the Branch and delivering conservation, both directly and indirectly. Please let me know how you can help us.

Best wishes,
Nick Bowles, Chair UTB

Howe Park Wood Walk, 7th May

The follow-up to the Zoom presentation entitled Identifying Spring Butterflies was held at Howe Park Wood on Sat 7th May, as a joint walk for the UTB and The Parks Trust.

Despite a drizzly daybreak and some thick cloud at the start time, which may have deterred some from attending, we (4) were treated to some lovely warm, sunny spells. These brought out various unidentifiable too-distant whites and, in total, 7 identifiable species. We managed to catch and scrutinise Small and Green-veined White closely, plus observe Holly Blues, Speckled Woods, Orange-tips and Brimstones, with a solitary Peacock. We also saw what must have been 'just-hatched' Moorhen chicks: small black fluff-balls with a red patch on their heads; Spindle Ermine moth larvae in their webs starting to defoliate the bushes, and Early Purple Orchid among the many Bluebells, Stitchworts and near-finished Wood Anemones.

After an enjoyable walk through the wood, Dawn (from Parks Trust) treated us to a drink at the on-site café. Buying the walk leader a beverage at the end of a walk isn't compulsory - but it is a very good way to finish a meeting!

Nick Bowles



Members' Day & AGM October 2022

Please make a note in your diary of the upcoming Members' Day & AGM which, once again, will be held online (via Zoom):

**** SATURDAY 22nd OCTOBER 10.00 – 13.30 ****

The following is the provisional agenda; confirmed details will be posted on the UTB website in due course. So, please check there (under Events/Members Day & AGM) nearer the date, to view the finalised agenda (and confirmed timings) for the event.

09.45 - 10.00 - Login to Zoom

10.00 - 10.30 - Introduction and Review of UTB Butterflies - Nick Bowles

10.30 - 10.55 - Review of UTB Moths – speaker tbc

10.55 - 11.15 - Holtspur Bottom Reserve update – speaker tbc

11.15 - 11.30 - Break (with members' Photo Slideshow - tbc)

11.30 - 11.50 - UTB Moth Atlas – speaker tbc

11.50 - 12.25 - AGM

12.25 - 12.30 - 5-minute break

12.30 - 13.15 - Butterflies and Rewilding – speaker tbc

13.15 - 13.30 - Closing Remarks



Any matters to be brought to the attention of the organising committee in advance of this event should be sent in good time to Grahame Hawker at:

vice-chairman@upperthames-butterflies.org.uk

The Branch is hopeful that 2023's Members' Day & AGM will revert to its more familiar format, with its being hosted at a location yet to be confirmed.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

Since the last newsletter, 25 new households have joined the Branch. At present there are 1730 households in the Branch. The more members we have, the more we can achieve as a Branch. Please encourage your friends to join Butterfly Conservation, either on the website or by leaflet. Please let me know if you would like any membership leaflets to pass on.

A warm welcome to all new members who have joined since the last newsletter was published. All of you are welcome to join field meetings, work parties and attend Members' Day. Up-to-date news on activities can be found on our website: www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk

Brenda Mobbs UTB Membership Secretary, email: bc.upperthames@gmail.com

Winter Conservation Tasks 2022-2023

The most important single type of activity that we undertake is our conservation tasks.

Unless we act to create and maintain suitable habitats, many of the butterflies and moths we love will eventually vanish. We can all see that built-up areas and those with intensively farmed land host very few species, and, although fallow land is good for a time, it goes through a 'sweet spot' and then loses the diversity that made it so good, as scrub develops and it becomes woodland.

We will undertake about 50 conservation events this winter, and we need you to come along and help.

Much of our winter effort is at our own Holtspur Bottom reserve near Beaconsfield. Details of these tasks – and those at **Aston Upton**, on the old **Didcot-Upton Railway Line** and ones jointly run by **UTB & Chiltern Rangers** – are given overleaf, but many of the tasks are not yet fixed - so please check the Events page of the UTB website www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk/events to see when and where you might be able to help.

You might combine a walk around the site with a brief session of work. Nobody has to work for the entire session - but obviously you may. There is always a variety of tasks, and no great strength is required. At many events we would welcome a photographer to document what is done.

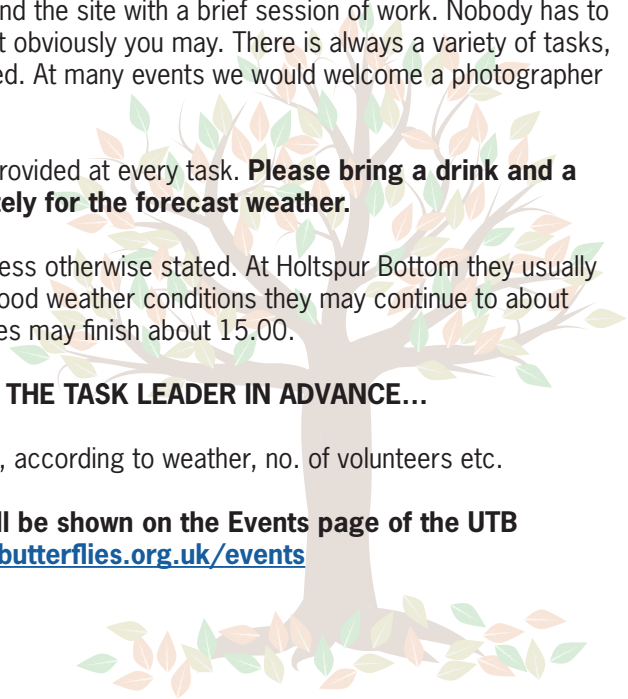
Tools and full instructions are provided at every task. **Please bring a drink and a snack, and dress appropriately for the forecast weather.**

Work parties start at 10.00 unless otherwise stated. At Holtspur Bottom they usually finish about 13.00, though in good weather conditions they may continue to about 14.00. Some other work parties may finish about 15.00.

PLEASE, ALWAYS CONTACT THE TASK LEADER IN ADVANCE...

... as details frequently change, according to weather, no. of volunteers etc.

Full details of each event will be shown on the Events page of the UTB website: www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk/events



Holtspur Bottom Winter Work Parties

O.S. ref of meeting point
SU918906

nearby Postcode
HP9 1BT

whathreewords
manage.banana.chimp

Leader & Contact: Nick Bowles, 07727 441376
nick.bowles@ntlworld.com

Date

Tues 09.08.22
Weds 17.08.22
Thurs 25.08.22
Sun 06.11.22
Sun 04.12.22
Sun 08.01.23
Sun 29.01.23
Sun 19.02.23

Probable tasks

Ragwort and dogwood control
Ragwort control
Ragwort and fencing repairs
Guided walk, planting, scrub control & fence repair
'Scrape' weeding, scrub control & hedge laying
Hedging and scrub control
as above, plus planting
to be decided - please check before attending



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Aston Upthorpe Winter Work Parties

Scrub clearing and coppicing.

All helpers welcome; training provided.

Meeting point at the grain dryer, SU550844. Start time 10.00, finish time 13.00, possibly extending to 14.00 in good weather.

Leader & Contact: Jim Asher, 01865 391727

jim.asher@btinternet.com

All dates below are Sundays

Please contact the work party leader in advance, as details may change.

30th October 2022

27th November 2022

18th December 2022

15th January 2023

5th February 2023

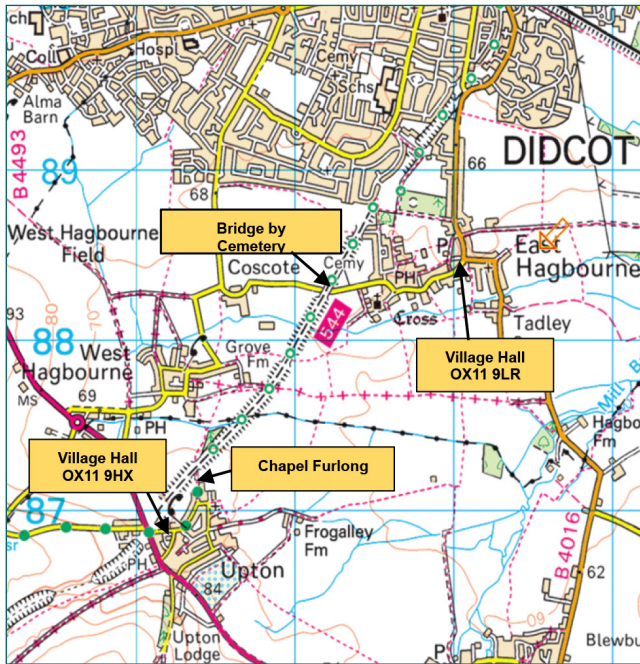
5th March 2023



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Didcot-Upton Old Railway Line Work Parties

These work parties will take place along the Sustrans (National Cycle Network) route of the old Didcot-Upton railway line – a long, narrow chalk upland route in a clay vale.



© OpenStreetMap contributors

The site is accessible by bicycle. If coming by car, parking is available at village halls. If people can only make part of the session, they are welcome to join and leave at other times. There are some access points if people have equipment that they need to transport by car, but please contact me **Karen Sax (01235 818574 or 07528 969055)** in advance if you intend/need to do this.

Work will start on all days at 10.30, and finish at 12.30-13.00.

Sunday 16 October: Removal of saplings/shoots from the top of the line – rough ground but not steep slopes. Meet at East Hagbourne Village Hall (OX11 9LR) at 10.10, or at the bridge by Hagbourne Cemetery at 10.20

Sunday 20 November: Removal of saplings/shoots from the top of the line – rough ground but not steep slopes. Meet at East Hagbourne Village Hall (OX11 9LR) at 10.10, or at the bridge by Hagbourne Cemetery at 10:20

Sunday 11 December: Removal of saplings/shoots from the top of the line – rough ground but not steep slopes. Meet at Upton Village Hall (OX11 9HX) 10.00, or at the end of Chapel Furlong at 10.20

Sunday 12 February 2023: Removal of overgrowth from embankment next to access ramp – mainly clematis – steep slope but some work on top of the old line. Meet at Upton Village Hall (OX11 9HX) 10.00, or at the end of Chapel Furlong at 10.20

Sunday 12 March 2023: Removal of saplings/shoots from top of the line – rough ground but not steep slopes. Meet at East Hagbourne Village Hall (OX11 9LR) at 10.10, or at the bridge by Hagbourne Cemetery at 10.20

UTB & Chiltern Rangers Joint Tasks

Tasks jointly run with Chiltern Rangers begin at 10.00 and finish at 15.00 (attending part sessions is appreciated).

Chiltern Rangers supply hot drinks, tools and safety gear - but we still advise bringing your own. Full details of each task at www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk/events

Please note that while we expect to be working on the given dates, most are still not confirmed with the landowners. Please check the website closer to the expected task date to confirm that which is printed here.

- 10/10/2022 Winchester Wood, near Princes Risborough (Bucks.)
- 11/10/2022 Winchester Wood, near Princes Risborough (Bucks.)
- 25/10/2022 Buttlers Hangings, near West Wycombe (Bucks.)
- 07/11/2022 Sands Bank, High Wycombe (Bucks.)
- 08/11/2022 Sands Bank, High Wycombe (Bucks.)
- 14/11/2022 Sands Bank, High Wycombe (Bucks.)
- 15/11/2022 Sands Bank, High Wycombe (Bucks.)
- 22/11/2022 Buttlers Hangings, near West Wycombe (Bucks.)
- 01/12/2022 Coombe Hill, near Butlers Cross (Bucks.)
- 14/12/2022 Dean farm, Deanfield, Saunderton (Bucks.)
- 19/12/2022 Network Rail Triangle & Tunnel, Saunderton (Bucks.)
- 03/01/2023 Far Kingdom, parking at Risborough GC (Bucks.)
- 05/01/2023 Upper Wardrobes, near Princes Risborough (Bucks.)
- 12/01/2023 Small Dean Lane Bank, near Bradenham (Bucks.)
- 16/01/2023 Christmas Gorse, Granborough (Bucks.)
- 23/01/2023 Far Kingdom, parking at Risborough GC (Bucks.)
- 26/01/2023 Dean farm, Deanfield, Saunderton (Bucks.)
- 06/02/2023 Westcott disused rail line, Westcott Venture Park (Bucks.)
- 10/02/2023 Westcott disused rail line, Westcott Venture Park (Bucks.)
- 28/02/2023 Christmas Gorse, Granborough (Bucks.)
- tba Chequers Knapp, near Kimble (Bucks.)
- tba Wadborough Field, near Ivinghoe (Bucks.)
- tba Strawberry Bank, near Lane Ends (Bucks.)



Planting sessions dates to be agreed (in spring 2023):

Horseshoe Vetch at Ellesborough Golf Course, near Butlers Cross (Bucks.)

Dog Violets at Grendon and Doddershall Woods near Edgecott (Bucks.)

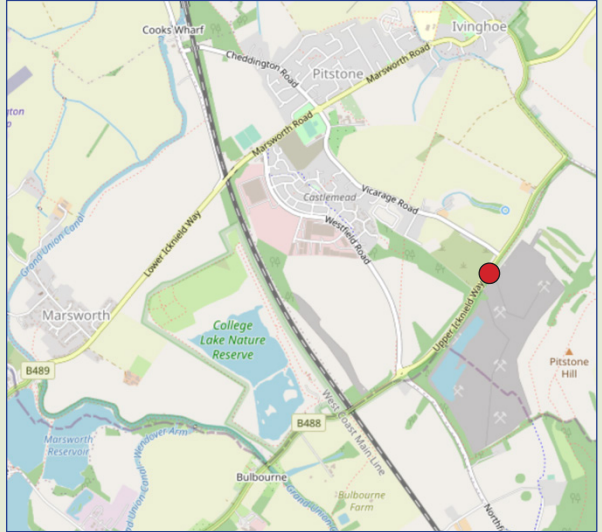
If you know of tasks near your home that could benefit butterflies and moths (but which are not on this list), we are happy to display relevant information on our webpages. Please email the details to nick.bowles@ntlworld.com

Pitstone Quarry Walk, 21st May

There were eight people on this walk, led by **Tom Dunbar** and **Brenda Mobbs**.

We started at Pitstone Church and walked towards the disused chalk quarry. After a slightly cloudy start the sun came out and the temperature rose.

We were rewarded with over 120 Small Blues around the meadows (Photo below, left ©Brenda Mobbs). Two Small Blue eggs were spotted on kidney vetch flowers.



© OpenStreetMap contributors



Other species seen were 23 Common Blues, 1 Grizzled Skipper, 7 Small Heaths, 1 Dingy Skipper, 1 Small White, 1 Holly Blue and 2 Brimstones.

Moths seen were Yellow Shell, Silver-Y and Cinnabar moth and Emperor moth caterpillars (Photo of the latter, below ©Sue Taylor).

This was a good start to this year's Upper Thames walks' programme.



Would you be interested in becoming a Species Champion?

The Species Champion Programme aims to improve protection of our rarer butterflies (and we are hoping to extend it to a few moth species, too) - by having somebody who specialises in that species.

The idea is that the Champion will study their chosen species and become as knowledgeable as possible on it, by studying its behaviour, abundance, range, habitat requirements and – if possible – increase the conservation effort for it. They will share that information with the membership, for example, through articles in *Hairstreak* or perhaps through leading a walk for other species.

The Champion also writes an annual report on their chosen species (which can be a brief overview of how it fared last season: it doesn't need to be a scientific paper). Help will be available in terms of maps, data and suggestions. Many Champions enlist help from a team that share their interests in working to protect the species.

Don't feel you have to be an expert! It is a learning curve, and it is very enjoyable to study a single species in depth.

We are hoping to find new Species Champions for the following species:

Silver-spotted Skipper

This attractive little butterfly is on the wing from July to early September, and is a Chilterns specialist.



Dingy Skipper

A charming little butterfly of warm downland and unimproved grassland.



Striped lychnis

Another largely Chilterns specialist. This species is surveyed by searching for the brightly coloured larvae by day.



Drab looper

Don't be put off by the name! This rare day-flying moth is found in west Berkshire.



Forester Moth

A beautiful day-flying species, much declined.



If you think you would be interested in becoming a Species Champion for any of the above species (or wish to obtain further information), please contact:

Nick Bowles for the Skippers
nick.bowles@ntlworld.com

or **Peter Cuss** for the moths
pj.cuss@gmail.com

Photos:
Dingy Skipper ©Derek Haynes
Others ©Peter Cuss

Our Back Garden Butterfly Haven

In the autumn of 2013, my wife spotted on the internet that a beautiful Victorian house, further up our street, in Reading, was for sale. We attended the estate agent's open day with no real intention of purchasing (mainly because we believed we couldn't afford it).

However, we fell in love with the 120ft back garden, with its ancient, hollow, fruit trees and a profusion of butterflies (mainly Peacocks and Red Admirals as I remember). We already had a butterfly patch in our small back garden, but this offered a much greater opportunity.

Even before we bought the house, an idea was developing in my head that we could create a garden to attract the maximum number of butterfly species (20 was my initial target) just by appropriate planting and landscaping.

Both the garden and house were in the autumn of their lives, and the first year was difficult. We knew the house needed substantial renovation, but had no real idea of the cost and effort this would involve.

Moreover, what we didn't know – until the spring of 2014 – was that the garden was infested with ground elder: the estate agent's gardeners had carefully removed the evidence! I spent much of the first year digging it up, on the principle that if I removed it quicker than it could grow, we would eventually be triumphant.

By the end of the summer of 2014 I had photographed 17 butterfly species, all of which were the 'classic garden ones'.

However, on 16th August I spotted a butterfly that I couldn't identify without looking it up. I posted the picture on the Butterflies UK Facebook group and got confirmation that it was a Brown Argus.



Brown Argus ©Peter Scott

I then looked at my second-hand copy of Jim Asher's *Butterflies of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire*. This included a table of butterflies in this region, listed in descending order from the most common to the rarest. I was awed to discover that the Brown Argus was number 25 on the list! So, I decided that 30 butterfly species might be within my reach. It was only months later that I discovered that since 1992 (when the list was compiled), the Brown Argus had undergone a population explosion in our region, by changing its caterpillar food plant from Rock Rose to plants in the Cranesbill family (we still have a patch of Common Rock Rose planted before we found out). However, by this time my target of 30 was firmly set in my mind – it's also just over half of the 59 UK butterfly species and around two-thirds the number found in the Upper Thames region.

I remember our second full year in the house (2015) mainly for the house renovation, which had turned from an enjoyable project into a relentless grind.

Nevertheless, on the garden side we were making progress. The ground elder was finally losing the battle and we were planting our first wildflower plugs (largely copying the plant species that grew in the University of Reading's wildflower meadow, 15 minutes' walk away). During 2015 we added the Large Skipper, Essex Skipper and Painted Lady to the list, plus a White Admiral, unseasonably late on 9th August and in a very bedraggled condition. Sadly, it remains the only one I've seen in the garden.

2016 saw my first, unsuccessful attempts to grow Kidney Vetch for any Small Blues that might be flying over. We later had better luck using a "gravel mound" area we had inherited from the house's previous owners (gravel covering building waste).



We only saw one new butterfly species (Common Blue), though our wildflower planting was becoming more extensive. We took guidance from the UK Butterflies online list of nectar and caterpillar plants, to provide the right plants for those butterfly species that we thought we

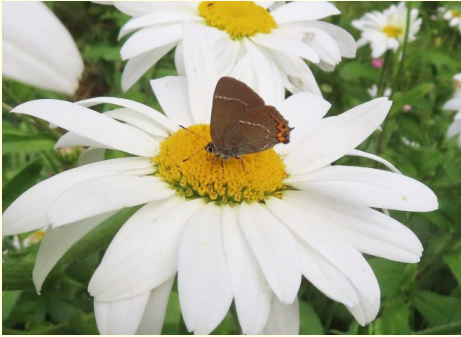
had any chance of attracting. The house renovation was also getting more under control, so we could put more time into the garden. We added a nature pond, that proved very valuable in improving the garden not only for butterflies, but for moths, dragonflies, amphibians and birds too.

In 2017 we saw 20 species of butterfly, but no new ones. Nevertheless, the planting continued with the addition of a bog garden to the pond, which enabled us to introduce plants such as Purple Loosestrife; Hemp Agrimony; and (British) Fleabane. We were also becoming more sophisticated in our planting – considering not only the direct value of a plant as a butterfly food source, but also its importance to the garden's overall environment.

We introduced Yellow Rattle to keep the grass down and extended the number of plants to include such as Birds-foot Trefoil, Wild Marjoram, Meadow Cranesbill and the Small and Field Scabious. As the years pass, the planting and environmental elements have become just as interesting to me as the butterflies. However, we are not above using non-native plants if they serve a useful purpose (a look through our butterfly pictures shows that a large number of them are feeding on Shasta Daisies).

2018 was a very successful year, mainly owing to sightings of two butterflies I had never expected to see in our garden... the Silver-washed Fritillary and the White-letter Hairstreak.

I had ruled out the White-letter Hairstreak, both because of its general



White-letter Hairstreak ©Peter Scott

rarity (though I later discovered that they are actually relatively common in this region) and the absence of any elms in our garden. We have since planted several Wych Elms, which are now around three metres tall. We were lucky enough to see another White-letter Hairstreak in 2021. Something keeps eating the leaves of our elms' higher branches, but all I ever found on them was a Comma caterpillar. We have seen Silver-Washed Fritillary several times since 2018 - the main problem being, however, that our Gatekeepers, living up to their name, seem determined to mob them. On more than one occasion I have seen a large rapidly-moving orange butterfly being chased by smaller ones, moving too fast for any ID.

In 2019 we saw our first Purple Hairstreak (and we had a second sighting in 2021). On both occasions I think they had come down from the trees in search of moisture, on what were extremely hot days. We have a fairly large oak in the garden, but I can't link this to their presence. By the end of 2019 we had identified 26 butterflies in the garden (all with photographic ID). One of the benefits of the project is that I am now a much better photographer than when

I started. 2020 and 2021 saw 21 species each year, but no new ones. I was beginning to think that going beyond 26 would be a long process, almost certainly ending in failure.

However, on 20th June this year I noticed a very tiny blue butterfly feeding on our Birds-foot Trefoil (about 20 feet away from our Kidney Vetch). I was only able to take one photo before it flew away, but the picture was at least good enough to clearly ID it as a Small Blue.



Small Blue (underside) ©Peter Scott

Whether I will ever get to 30 species is debatable. There are species widespread in the area that might possibly visit (for example, Green Hairstreak; Clouded Yellow; Small Heath; and Dark Green Fritillary), but ultimately the journey is more important than its conclusion. Hopefully what we have learned will prove useful for others, regarding the potential for attracting butterflies to gardens (even in the inner suburbs) by using the right planting and landscaping.

An encouraging sign this year was a joint initiative with other residents in our street to collectively purchase wildflower plugs for our gardens. Butterflies don't respect garden boundaries, and the participation



The garden in July 2022 ©Peter Scott

of several adjoining gardens could no doubt achieve more than any single garden.

Another positive outcome that we didn't fully anticipate was the impact on other flora and fauna further up the food chain. We have spotted 33 species of birds in our garden, with regular visits from nuthatches, sparrowhawks, both green and greater speckled woodpeckers, blackcaps, goldfinches, and occasional goldcrests; 18 dragonfly/damselfly species; and a good variety of mammals, including wood mice, pipistrelle bats, hedgehogs and foxes.

We can't link these to the butterflies, or to the planting, but we have seen an increasing number and diversity of wildlife over the years.

We continue to experiment with introducing further plants that might attract particular butterfly species, even if we don't always expect the experiments to work. We have even planted three dwarf goat willows near our oak... after all, you never know!



Peter Scott

PS. Since writing the article Peter added Chalk Hill Blue to his list in July.

Aston Upthorpe Downs Walk, 22nd May

A perfectionist might have said that it was a bit windy, but conditions really were very good for the annual UTB walk at Aston Upthorpe Downs, looking for spring butterflies. Our main target species were the two spring skippers – Dingy and Grizzled – and Green Hairstreak. Of course, our wish-list was longer, certainly featuring Small Blue and maybe even Adonis Blue. But to miss these three core species would have been a disappointment. There is one practical problem: the skippers like to fly close to the ground, while the Green Hairstreak is more inclined to flutter up bushes. It is very hard to concentrate simultaneously on the ground around your feet and the bushes by your head, but this is where the advantage of a keen group comes in and with ten pairs of eyes, we had all bases covered.

We started on steep chalk grassland with hawthorn bushes. Immediately we found Grizzled Skippers, and a few minutes

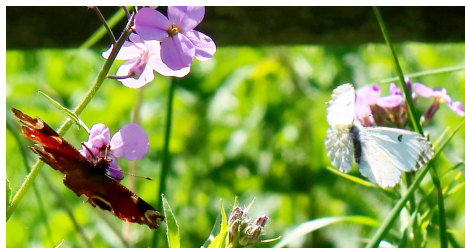


later, Green Hairstreak: but both were skittish. Getting a reasonable view was not easy, and taking a good photograph was even more

tricky. So we made our way to Juniper Valley, hoping that the flat terrain on the connecting track would encourage the insects to take life a bit more slowly. It worked – up to a point – and as well as the slightly more sessile Green Hairstreaks, we found our first Dingy

Skippers. However, Grizzled Skippers were much the more common.

Things changed dramatically in Juniper Valley itself. Here Dingy Skippers were common, if fidgety, and Grizzled Skippers distinctly thin on the ground. Those who had not visited the valley this year were struck by the large scrapes and associated scrub clearance. This is to encourage the juniper and discourage the rabbits which have set themselves to eat any sign of Pasque Flower that is not protected by armour.



As well as our target species we saw good numbers of other butterflies, particularly whites and Vannesids. Our final list comprised fifteen species: Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper, Brimstone, Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Orange-tip, Green Hairstreak, Brown Argus, Common Blue, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Painted Lady, Peacock, and Small Heath.

We also enjoyed almost continuous birdsong, with blackcaps, willow warblers, chiffchaffs, robins and skylarks very much in evidence - with minor contributions from yellowhammers. Less musical and more unusual was the “Pruk” of a pair of ravens.

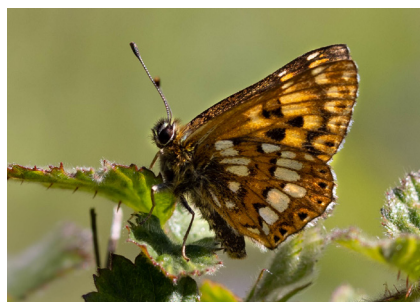
Gerry and Penny Kendall

The Duke Should Be Grateful

I'm not sure that he is, but the Duke should be grateful!

Possibly because the Duke of Burgundy spends the late summer, autumn, winter and early spring dormant under the mosses and soil surface of the few places that they still survive in the UTB area, they don't seem to notice or show any gratitude to the small army of people that turn out to ensure their continued existence at those times.

This is a butterfly with a period of dormancy (after pupation) longer than its flight period. Obviously, this is a butterfly of such high breeding that it can't be doing with such vulgar inconveniences as autumn rains, winter frosts or early spring's constant alternation from warmth to freezing.



Male Duke guarding territory on land south of a known colony at Saunderton, June 2022

In Spring 2010 only two colonies still existed in the Chilterns, and we knew of possibly three on the Berkshire Downs. Invertebrate expert Ched George led a UTB group that – with the assistance of the National Trust teams at a donor site on the Ashridge Estate and at the recipient site at the Bradenham Estate – collected larvae for a trial re-introduction. Ched cared for the eggs and larvae collected largely from Steps Hill, and released them onto two parts of the Bradenham reserve the following spring (that is, in 2011). These sites had

both held Duke colonies until one reverted to secondary woodland and thick scrub, becoming too shady for the Duke, and the other (though also slowly scrubbing over) was periodically cleared of all scrub, becoming intermittently too open for the Duke.

This tells you all you need to know about why the butterfly is so scarce. It has the sort of exacting requirements of anywhere it might deign to live that may be expected of an arrogant aristocrat. The spot mustn't be too hot in the summer sun, but have plenty of shady recesses in the scrub. In spring, though, there must be warm, sunbathed nooks in which it can warm itself after chilly nights. As with our conception of spoilt, haughty nobility, the butterfly is not prepared to move long distances to find these two contrasting habitats, but requires them immediately adjacent to the spot where it emerges from its pupa. Furthermore, the Duke cannot abide any draughts and will only stay in residence if these two requirements are provided in an area protected from any wind.



Cowslip leaves growing under the edge of low scrub, tattered by Duke larval feeding at a known site, July 2022

The re-introductions worked, and now the UTB had four Chiltern Sites. To ensure that the snooty butterfly continued to grace these locations with its presence, a tremendous amount of work went in at all those sites, and at various other surrounding sites. We wish to publicly acknowledge the generosity of the owners of several private sites where not only have the owners turned out to get on bended knee and work to create and maintain Duke-friendly habitat, but each has also contributed towards the costs of employing the wonderfully effective Chiltern Rangers in managing those sites.

It was also in spring 2010 that we had to accept that a small colony of Dukes that had been breeding in clearings in the woods at BBOWT's Dancers End reserve had finally succumbed to their own fastidious and over-reaching need for precise habitat conditions which had been lost. The warden of Dancers End (Mick Jones) and his loyal band of volunteers spent years of winter work sorting out the habitat until they felt that it would be fit for a queen, let alone a Duke, and once more with Ched's help staged a re-introduction with larvae collected from the Ashridge and Dunstable Downs NT estates.



BBOWT and UTB volunteers working at Dancers End
Photo ©Mick Jones

In 2018 the Duke reappeared at Dancers End, after the successful breeding of relatively small numbers of released Dukes (just 17 female 'Duchesses' and 25 Duke males) in the previous late spring (2017). The re-introduced colony never really took to this site. Despite – like every other site where the Duke still lives – its being the subject of countless hours of work to create small pockets of warm turf between stands of scrub stuffed full of cowslip and primroses (the Duke's larval food), His Grace the Duke of Burgundy made his feelings known about his appreciation of all this work with a year-on-year decline in numbers. Finally, this spring (2022) the Duke was not seen, and is presumed lost again.

There is a saying that the Queen presumes that everywhere smells of fresh paint. In the same way the Duke must assume that everywhere resounds to the rasp of the bow saw and the smell of freshly cut scrub on a bonfire. Despite providing this ambient background at Dancers End, the colony failed.

So, what is the future for the Duke elsewhere within the UTB area?

Happily, provided that our incredible volunteers continue to come out and work at providing habitat to the exacting standards of His Grace the Duke and the Duchess of Burgundy, things are looking slightly more positive. In 2021 a DOE student found eggs of the Duke on a cowslip plant in Wadborough Field, between Stepps Hill and Pitstone Hill: the first recorded attempt to breed west of the Ivinghoe Hills complex that we know about since the colonies at Pitstone (around the old Castle Cement factory),



Discovery of eggs at Wadborough Field 2021

College Lake and Albury Nowers were lost in the 1990s. This year I found both a female Duke egg laying in that field and, later, signs that larvae were feeding on the cowslips there. The National Trust know of this and want to manage to help the Duke, so we assume that the colony's footprint will expand. Within a short time we should see the Duke reaching and breeding at the adjacent Pitstone Hill, several areas of which seem suitable and where the same

student found tantalising indications of the sort of damage that 1st instar larvae cause on cowslips, in 2021.

Elsewhere, the private colony at Saunderton which had been cared for by a previous owner with annual sheep grazing is now in the care of new owners who have worked even harder to secure and expand the colony. With agreement of another landowner nearby, our volunteers (with Chiltern Rangers) created suitable habitat adjacent to the site on land east and south of the main colony, and found good evidence of the Duke's presence at both in 2022. A further three landowners in the area are working and spending their own money to assist us in creating Duke-friendly habitat. And there's good evidence of increasing numbers of the Duke at a site south of the main colony, with peak counts of two males here in 2021 and 4 males in 2022 - and more telling, extremely compelling evidence of larval feeding damage on cowslips at that site (and indications at the site to the east) to prove that females too are using these habitats after the work we have done to bring them up to the Duke's highly exacting standards.



'Windows' eaten into cowslip leaves, 2022, at land south of the main colony, typical of damage done by Duke larvae.



Less certain indications of Duke feeding on Cowslip leaves east of the main colony

For whatever reason the two re-introduced colonies at Bradenham show no sign of expanding to apparently good habitat nearby. We will continue to work with the National Trust to identify ways that we can assist the Duke to make the same progress here that it is making at the Saunderton and NT Ashridge sites.

In Berkshire, in 2021, studies by an Oxford University Student (Aga Bogucka) found the Duke in four sites, and two of these seem to be strong colonies that have existed on private land for many years. The owners welcomed the news of the rare butterfly and studies at those sites continued in 2022. Thanks to Aga's persuasive way, the owners are happy for further work. Another of the sites,



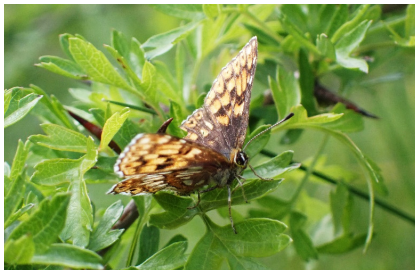
NT Ranger with hedge planted to provide a windbreak at Bradenham adjacent to Duke colony and around a field full of cowslip

also private, has a small, introduced colony of Dukes. We were extremely concerned when the death of the enthusiast that established this colony saw it move to new owners. Amazingly, the new owner is not only happy that part of his farm stays as unproductive Duke habitat, but very keen to expand the area of suitable habitat and enlarge both the colony size and hopefully improve its resilience to the many threats that this over-demanding butterfly faces.

Until Aga started her Berkshire studies we were uncertain of the situation in the Downs, but now feel fairly sure that three of the sites have a secure future, although at least one colony reported a few times in the early 2000s seems to have been lost. Conserving this butterfly is not simple or achieved easily with a single operation. However, given the tremendous support we have had from many UTB volunteers and with donations to fund the work of the Chiltern Rangers, we are definitely making headway.



Duke at the large colony on the Ivinghoe complex, May 2022



A relatively worn 'Duchess' at Wadborough Field, June 2022, some 500m from the main colony, resting between egg laying

We urge you to make sure you report all sightings of this butterfly so we are absolutely certain we know where it has been seen and can investigate every location to establish if the species could be breeding there (or nearby). We urge you even more strongly to look at the website and see which of the many conservation tasks planned for this winter and next spring you can join. Unfortunately, the August publication of this issue of *Hairstreak* means that those dates are not yet agreed -

but they will be added to www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk/events as soon as each date is set.

Please don't let the inconvenience of needing to check back at some distant time put you off getting involved in the conservation work. The recent loss of Duke colonies from sites in both Buckinghamshire and Berkshire, despite knowledge of the species' scarcity, shows us how perilous the continued existence of the remaining seven UTB colonies are.

Nick Bowles

Yoesden Walk, 26th May

May seems a long time ago now, so it is nice for me to be able to remember, as I write, a good day out in a lovely location.

The walk was at Yoesden, a steep south-facing slope near Bledlow Ridge, with superb chalk grassland and a renowned hot-spot for butterflies.

There were eight of us including Brenda Mobbs, who was co-leader for the walk. At first the weather didn't seem perfect for butterflies, so I did my usual and looked for all and any invertebrates I could find, and there were lots. But I won't bore you with all the non-lepidoptera we found – well, maybe just one, *Microdon devius* (photo ©Sue Taylor, below)...



... which is an increasingly rare hoverfly dependent on ant hills on good chalk grassland, so it was good to see it again.

In the end there were good numbers of butterflies and day-flying moths for the conditions, including the main target species Adonis Blue (3), which was only just starting to emerge, and unexpectedly large numbers of Small blue (37).

The other butterflies seen were Common Blue, Red Admiral, Green Hairstreak, Small Heath, Holly Blue, Dingy Skipper, Green-veined White, Orange-tip, Brimstone and a single (presumably released) Marsh Fritillary. That is 12 species in all.

The day-flying moths were Narrow-bordered five-spot Burnet (photo ©Sue Taylor, right), Burnet Companion, Yellow Shell, Mother Shipton, Common Carpet, Straw Dot, Cinnabar, Common Purple and Gold, Wavy barred Sable, Green Carpet and Silver ground Carpet - that's 11 species.





We also found a really smart-looking moth caterpillar which was provisionally identified as *Aphelia paleana* (photo ©Sue Taylor, left)...

... a rather drab-looking adult moth that uses Timothy grass as a foodplant.

Thank you to all who came on the walk.

Sue Taylor

Tips and Hints (2) For the Butterfly Wonderer...

If you are looking for butterflies and moths, it matters what you wear...

Butterflies and moths can see ultraviolet, so if you use washing powder with optical whiteners, your white T-shirt will look like a high vis jacket as far as the insect is concerned. So, avoid wearing white.

If you want to avoid being bitten by horseflies, avoid black or dark colours, which are attractive to them. (It has been shown that white horses get bitten less than dark horses!)

If you wear bright orange or yellow, these are the colours most attractive to flies generally, which some people may not like.

Light colours are good, both to keep you cool and to make it easier to see any tics that may crawl onto you.

So, what to wear? I favour cream, tan or khaki... boring but practical.

Sue Taylor



Upon These Shores...

Overseas butterfly visitors appear on our shores every year – in greater or lesser numbers.

Now and then, we have huge numbers passing through, and we are doubtless familiar with terms such as ‘Painted Lady Years’.

To qualify as a British resident, a species must be able to survive our winters in at least one stage of its life cycle. Until very recently, even the Red Admiral was not considered a resident – although in milder winters it has been able to survive as a hibernating adult. Recently, however, some immature stages have been discovered in winter-early spring in the south of England, which signifies it must now be considered a resident.

Many migrants will produce offspring here in Britain, but – in general – each year’s ‘first brood’ adult sightings are indeed of overseas visitors to these shores.

As our climate warms, it is possible (perhaps even likely) that some migratory species will take up permanent residence here. Such species could include the Long-tailed Blue, which is becoming a more frequent visitor to Britain



Long-tailed Blue (female) ©Geoff Dymott

(especially in southern coastal areas). Having said that, Geoff Dymott chanced upon the following example at Letcombe Ridge (Oxon) on 20th July this year:

Clouded Yellows are a welcome sight (almost anywhere), with autumn examples being either fresh migrants or the offspring of a spring migration (as there is no shortage of suitable caterpillar foodplants, such as clovers and Lucerne). Steve Harley took the following superb photograph at Crowthorne (Berks) on 14th July this year:



Clouded Yellows ©Steve Harley

Many of us, however, will ‘have to make do’ with photographing Red Admirals or Painted Ladies instead, as David Hastings managed here at Aston (Oxon) on 15th July this year:



‘Freshly-emerged’ Painted Lady ©David Hastings

Some moths, too, are migratory: the Silver Y, for example, is considered Britain’s only confirmed obligate (‘hard-wired’) migrant moth.

Derek Haynes

Guided Walks



Thinking of attending a guided walk?



Our guided walks are aimed at everyone, from complete beginners to experts. They can be enjoyed by anyone: young or old, children (with adult supervision), photographers, first-time participants, etc. **You are all welcome. If the weather looks doubtful for any walk, please check with the leader before attending.**

We have put together an extensive programme of guided walks, to allow you to see some of our beautiful butterflies. We have arranged walks across our three counties and covering all of our regular butterflies and some of our day-flying moths. However, there is **no guarantee** of seeing a particular species. A butterfly field guide and a pair of binoculars may well help. **Enjoy.**

[Map View](#)

[Calendar View](#)

Please check our website for further details and for any amendments/postponements/cancellations

https://www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk/field_meetings

Just 3 walks left in 2022...



Saturday 13th August at 10.30am

Lardon Chase, Streatley, Berks

Target species: **Adonis Blue** and other other grassland butterflies.

[Further details](#)



Sunday 14th August at 10.00am

Aston Rowant NNR, Oxon

Target species: **Silver-spotted Skipper** and other chalk downland species.

**BOOKING
REQUIRED**

[Further details](#)



Sunday 21st August at 10.30am

Buckler's Forest, Crowthorne, Berks

Target species: **Grayling** and other neutral and acid grassland species.

[Further details](#)

Recommended Videos

Nothing on the telly? Try some of these suggested videos:

Puss moth caterpillar develops from 1st instar to adult

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xix6MPHQRa4&t=17s>

The life of the Narrow Bordered bee Hawkmoth (which seems to be spreading into the UTB area).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CS3YeORKrOY>

Parasitoid Tachinid fly cautiously egg laying on processionary moth caterpillars

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ePS8BtTA_w

Moths in a wildlife garden

<https://youtu.be/TUPfY3nWleo>

An introduction to micromoths

<https://youtu.be/CEF7w0EoeSo>

Final instar Painted Lady caterpillar develops to adult

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOgYFSvkqIA>

Conversation with Chris Packham about Butterflies

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g3yYV56bzM&t=21s>

New insights into the lives of butterflies and moths

<https://youtu.be/AXDXL4CfMw8>

How to draw a WCBS route

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3sJzmrDEwsU&t=39s>

BC Moth Recorders' Meeting Feb 2022

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2tiQNgPs9w0>

BC Recorders' Meeting March 2022

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0QwQEtijPGE>



Conservation: what's best, 'wilding' or targeted conservation work?

Targeted conservation action – which attempts to halt succession at some desired stage, through relatively intensive inputs of time and energy – has been the predominant method of enacting conservation action in the UK for the last half-century.

No-one could convincingly argue that this prevalent method of conserving biodiversity has been

an unmitigated success. Without doubt, some very large-scale, so-called Landscape Scale conservation actions, working with a mosaic of habitats where each is allowed to cycle through stages of succession repeatedly, have been effective at slowing

the rate of species loss. Some landscape-scale projects have had considerable success, for instance for Small Blue butterflies which rapidly discover and utilise patches of Kidney Vetch across a landscape.



patches can be cleared down to bare soil, and the cycle restarts with Small Blue recolonising after the Vetch has regrown.

However, many species have more complex requirements, and the need for far larger areas of mixed habitat. For instance, the Dark Green Fritillary lays its eggs in vegetation in partial shade (usually under the edge of scrub), near violets. The eggs overwinter in the scrub and the caterpillars move out and find violets in the spring. Later, the adults require rich sources of nectar to sustain them in their very active lives, moving very rapidly across large open areas in search of mates and suitable egg-laying sites. If the ground is cleared (as for Small Blue) there will be a lack of scrub, which needs to redevelop patchily with areas of grass containing nectar sources and plenty of violet leaves between scrub clumps. Obviously, achieving such a mix, by chance, is unlikely. Add to this the issue that the very active adults often fly far from the spot where they emerge; and if the area of suitable habitat is small, they can



leave it without finding any other suitable habitat. Managing very large areas to maintain the mix of small clumps of scrub with plentiful flowers and violet leaves is very labour intensive. Just to make things harder, Dark Green Fritillaries rarely discover suitable patches surrounded by woodland as they tend to fly around woods.



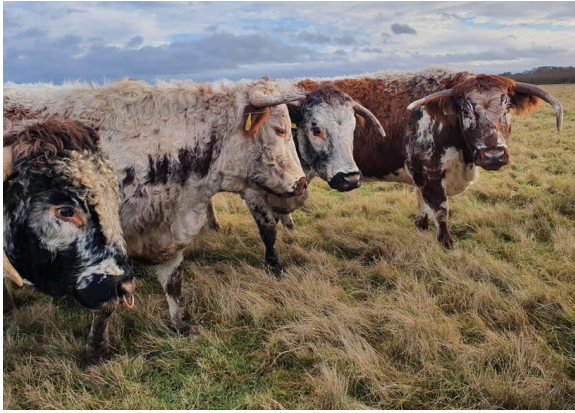
Re-wilding (or Wilding) has become a more popular means to conserve biodiversity as it is apparently equally effective and yet less demanding in terms of the time and energy that needs to be invested. Given a very large area, a small flock of wide-ranging large herbivores (such as English Longhorn cattle) will create the type of scrub and grassland mosaic that many species require. Ideally, the large herbivore numbers are checked by natural predators, but that is impractical in the densely populated UK.

Given a large enough area, the herbivores will favour some parts, creating areas of the type that we associate with early successional habitats, with near-bare soils and early colonising plants (like Kidney Vetch). Other areas are largely ignored, becoming very overgrown and turning to woodland, whilst all the types of successional habitats in between can emerge if the stocking density is correct. It is important that the grazing animals are big enough to maintain open routes through scrub and churn up the ground to make bare patches. It is also important that the surrounding landowners tolerate the various 'weeds' that will grow and spread onto their land.

Because no fine-scale management is employed and there are relatively few grazing animals, the costs are lower with Wilding than with targeted conservation management.

It seems probable that a mixture of these two methods will be adopted in future. Where large enough areas exist that can be 'wilded', this technique seems to offer great returns for relatively little input. Sadly, for the UTB, most of our nature reserves and biodiversity hotspots are too small for such techniques to operate successfully.

Probably, some hybrid method will be developed with herbivores employed in small numbers all year, and targeted management for certain species employed where the stock is not creating precisely what is required. An issue in our densely populated area is dogs (or perhaps dog walkers). Leaving grazing stock to fend for itself in unfenced areas will cause conflict, as dog walkers have become accustomed to free access to many nature reserves and will resist efforts to reduce access.



Large cattle of the type best suited to these projects are a genuine threat to dog walkers, but smaller stock, for example, sheep, are killed in their thousands by dogs every year.

SheepWatch UK, a voluntary body that encourages farmers to report all cases of dogs worrying sheep, estimated that - UK-wide - 15,000 sheep were killed in 2017.

Unsurprisingly, finding farmers willing to put stock onto nature reserves and into biodiversity hotspots to which dog walkers have access, is becoming increasingly hard.

Nick Bowles

Best of Mates!

A few images of mating butterflies taken this year by our members:



Duke of Burgundy (Incombe Hole) ©Roy McDonald



Common Blue (Ivinghoe Beacon) ©Michael McNeill



Chalk Hill Blue (Watlington Hill) ©John Kearns

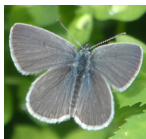


Dingy Skipper (Homefield Wood) ©John Kearns

All Things Winged and Wonderful...

*All things Lepidopteral
All species Large and Small
Browns, Blues, Whites and colourful
We watch and love them all*

*Each Kidney Vetch that opens
Each Small Blue that it brings
Observe their glowing colours
Behold their tiny wings*



*All things Lepidopteral
All species Large and Small
Browns, Blues, Whites and colourful
We watch and love them all*

*The Purple Hairstreak flaunting
The Ringlet flying by
The Brimstone and the Comma
That brighten up the sky*



*All things Lepidopteral
All species Large and Small
Browns, Blues, Whites and colourful
We watch and love them all*

*The pupae in the winter
The Orange-tip in spring
The Peacocks in the garden
Each one a gaudy king*



*All things Lepidopteral
All species Large and Small
Browns, Blues, Whites and colourful
We watch and love them all*

*He gave us eyes to see them
Record them in Excel
Rejoice in all things flighty
That hold us in their spell!*

ColRef	Date	Species	Unsexed	Adults
SP249009	19 May 2022	SWW		1
SP249009	19 May 2022	OT		3
SP249009	19 May 2022	SWW		1
SP249009	19 May 2022	RA		2
SUB50902	23 May 2022	HB		1
SUB50902	23 May 2022	SWW		4
SUB50902	23 May 2022	CRW		1
SUB50916	08 May 2022	OT		2
SUB50916	08 May 2022	P		2
SUB50916	08 May 2022	HB		1
SUB50916	08 May 2022	SWW		1
SUB50916	08 May 2022	P	B	1
SUB50916	08 May 2022	OT		1
SUB50916	08 May 2022	HB	B	1

*All things Lepidopteral
All species Large and Small
Browns, Blues, Whites and colourful
We watch and love them all*

Inspired by a post by Darren Follant in Facebook Group "Butterflies and Moths UK"

Andy Spragg

Holtspur Bottom Walk, 25th June

Eight of us had a relaxing walk at our reserve at Holtspur Bottom. It was a bright and breezy morning. We soon saw a good number of Peacock caterpillars on the nettles near the path (pictured right).

Despite the breeze we saw a very high number of Marbled Whites. There were also large numbers of Small Skippers, Meadow Browns and Ringlets.

Other species seen were Red Admiral, Essex Skipper, Silver-washed Fritillary, Small Blue, Small Heath, Comma, Speckled Wood, Large Skipper, Small White and Small Tortoiseshell.

We also saw large numbers of Pyramidal Orchids across the reserve, and a few Bee Orchids.

The Dark Mullein (bottom photo) is just coming into flower. This was planted for the Striped Lychnis caterpillar, and hopefully these will be seen in the next few weeks.

The reserve looked very good, which is a testament to the hard work put in by the volunteers in the winter.



Marbled White & Small Skipper

Brenda Mobbs

Photos ©Mark Chapman



There's always tomorrow...

Many of us yearn for nuggets of knowledge that will improve the enjoyment of our passion for butterflies and moths. The internet is, of course, a great resource for those who ask themselves, "How can I discover/improve upon/create/learn about/etc...?" Sometimes, perhaps, we 'resort to lethargy', and take no action: after all, there's always tomorrow.

Every reader of this newsletter is likely to 'know stuff' that could benefit others – and *Hairstreak* is the ideal medium by which to share such knowledge.

You may know:

- how to take the best nature photographs
- what time of day is best to look for particular butterflies
- where and when to search for the immature stages of some species
- how to promote habitat corridors
- how to identify potentially new sites for species
- which are the best providers of nectar in the garden
- where to find the most useful information (other than on our website!)
- 'all there is to know' about a 'specialist' species
- which sites are under-recorded
- how best to match a nectar source with relevant caterpillar foodplants
- what camera equipment 'works best in the field'
- how to create a successful wildlife garden
- how to differentiate species when in flight
- etc... [the list is almost endless]

When the next edition of *Hairstreak* is published in early January '23, we will all be looking forward in anticipation to the spring, and the early appearance of a few hibernators. What better time than in the dreariness of winter to contemplate how we might 'improve the lot' of both ourselves and the creatures we enjoy, making 'this year better than last'?

So, please ask yourself, "Do I have knowledge to share with other members?". If yes, why not spend a little time during the autumn and early winter months, transcribing that knowledge into written form?

Contributions always welcome at:
newsletter-editor@upperthames-butterflies.org.uk

And remember: tomorrow never comes!



Derek Haynes

Black Park Walk, 7th July

This was the first jointly-organised Black Park (Bucks) walk, with the target species being Purple Emperor, Purple Hairstreak, White Admiral and Silver-washed Fritillary.

It was a beautiful morning as 11 of us (including Park Rangers) set off on the 3½-4-mile walk. After a 'slow start', we soon started to see butterflies. But due to the rather warm conditions, most were not providing photographic opportunities... instead being quite restless, and largely remaining on the wing.

The first target species seen was a lone Silver-washed Fritillary, but it wasn't long before we had sight of a couple of Purple Hairstreaks in an oak. Unfortunately, all of our PH sightings were of ones or twos too high up to get to see much if any of their purple sheen.

We then chanced upon a White Admiral, and were lucky to see another 3 or 4 during the walk.

But we were foiled in our attempts to see Purple Emperor – despite remaining close to a known 'master tree' for about 10 minutes.

There were further sightings of SWF, though none was nectaring other than momentarily.

Other species seen in greater or lesser numbers were Meadow Brown, Green-veined White, Large White, Large Skipper, Gatekeeper, Ringlet, Peacock, Comma, Holly Blue, Speckled Wood,

Small White and Red Admiral – giving us a total species count of 15.

With very few photos taken during the 3 hours (and with my having neglected to ask for anyone with 'half decent' images to send them through to me!), I have elected to provide a couple of my own images taken previously in Black Park.

Everyone seemed to have enjoyed themselves, and there is every chance that this walk will become an annual event in the calendar.

Thanks are greatly extended to the Bucks Country Parks Rangers Team, led by Head Ranger Dawn Morland.

Derek Haynes



Silver-washed Fritillary (male)



White Admiral

Photos ©Derek Haynes

UTB Species Surveys

The UTB runs a number of surveys across land that has limited access. If you wish to know more about the teams surveying these areas, because you think you might like to join them, please get in touch with nick.bowles@ntlworld.com

Arcott MOD, near Bicester, Oxfordshire

Survey teams admitted after security clearance

Ashbury and Ashdown, near Faringdon, Oxfordshire

Private farmland and National Trust land

Bradenham, near Saunderton, Buckinghamshire

National Trust land

Ditchley Estate, near Charlbury, Oxfordshire

Private estate with limited access

Farmoor reservoir, near Botley, Oxfordshire

Thames Water owned site with a request for regular surveys of the adjacent meadows and an opportunity to set up moth trapping sessions

Green Farm and Hughenden, near High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire

National Trust land with limited public access

Hall Farm, near Dagnall, Buckinghamshire

Private farmland with no footpath

Otmoor MOD, near Beckley, Oxfordshire

Survey teams admitted after security clearance

Piddington MOD, near Bicester, Oxfordshire

Survey teams admitted after security clearance

Road Farm, near Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire

Private farmland with no footpath

Strawberry Bank, near Lane End, Buckinghamshire

Private estate with limited public access

Tilehouse Estate, near Lillingstone Dayrell, Buckinghamshire

Private farmland with no footpath

Wapseys Wood, near Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire

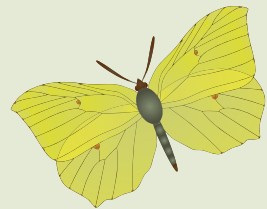
Veolia-owned site with footpaths but currently no organised surveying takes place

Wendover Woods, near Wendover, Buckinghamshire

Forestry England – open access but currently no organised surveying takes place

West Woodhay Estate, near Inkpen, Berkshire

Private estate with limited public access



Bradenham Walk, 11th June



Small Blue ©Lorraine Evans

We had eight people for the walk at Bradenham, an area managed by the National Trust. The target species was the Small Blue as well as other early summer species. It was a mainly sunny, if breezy morning. After a short while we spotted our first Small Blue, and overall we saw over thirty.

Other species included good numbers of Meadow Brown, Large Skipper, Marbled White, Speckled Wood and Small Heath.

Also seen were Common Blue, Green-veined White, Green Hairstreak, Brimstone, Red Admiral and one Small Skipper. We also saw about ten Dark Green Fritillaries. This was a first sighting of the species this year for all the group. Also spotted were Burnet Companion and Cinnabar moths.

A very enjoyable walk with a very observant group of people.

Brenda Mobbs

Stonesfield SSSI Walk, 9th July

Attended by Gillian and the guide leader.

Weather: sunny and warm (23C), but with some cloud.

Report: the site looked parched and most of the species were worn. Compared to last year, not nearly as many butterflies seen nectaring on the flowering *Origanum vulgare*, *Clinopodium vulgare*, *Centaurea Scabiosa*, and *Knautia arvensis*. Other interesting plant species in flower included: *Lathyrus sylvestris*, *Salvia pratensis*, *Linaria vulgaris* (just starting to flower) and, in abundance, Wild Parsley (*Pastinaca sativa*) which was attracting hundreds of Red Soldier beetles (*Rhagonycha fulva*). Exiting the common, a Stoat (*Mustela erminea*) was seen running down the road before jumping into the grass verge.

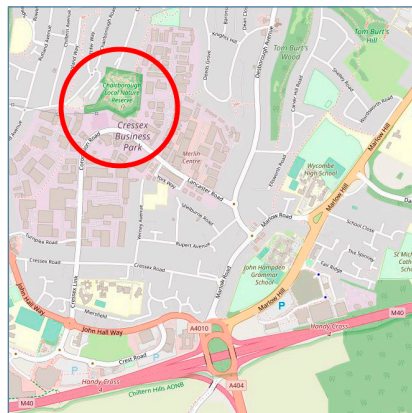
Butterflies seen: *F. aglaja* Dark Green Fritillary (1 specimen) - it appears that the butterfly benefits from leaving some of the Hawthorn bushes to mature. The specimen seen today, and those yesterday, were all seen flying around *Crataegus* bushes, occasionally resting in the shade. Possibly, this is where its host plant, *Viola* sp., grows; *P. c-album* Comma; *A. urticae* Small Tortoiseshell; *M. galathea* Marbled White; *A. hyperantus* Ringlet; *P. tithonus* Gatekeeper; *T. sylvestris*; Small Skipper; *T. lineola* Essex Skipper; and *O. sylvanus* Large Skipper.

Martin Gascoigne-Pees

[Ed.: This is another example of a walk in west Oxfordshire attracting just one attendee.]

Chairborough Local Nature Reserve: High Wycombe's Hidden Oasis

Handy Cross (M40 J4) is one of the busiest motorway junctions in the UK. Imagine that someone told you of a site, less than 1 mile away from Handy Cross as the crow flies, less than 10 acres in size, surrounded on all sides by suburban sprawl of housing and industrial estate, where no less than 25 species of butterfly were recorded in 2021. You might well think that person had eaten too much cheese the night before! But you'd be wrong: that site exists, centred on SU848923 (circled, right), and this article will introduce you to it.



Despite working on the adjacent industrial estate for 17 years, from 1994 to 2011, I only really became aware of Chairborough Local Nature Reserve (CLNR) as a potential butterfly site in 2011, when I made a lunchtime visit and saw a Green Hairstreak. And despite moving house in 2012, to a location less than 10 minutes' walk away from CLNR, I didn't return there until 2021, when I eventually realised that it offered convenient sanctuary from continuing COVID restrictions (I can be very slow on the uptake sometimes).

When I started recording in 2021, CLNR had just three butterfly records (for Brimstone, Meadow Brown and Common Blue; four counting my Green Hairstreak, which I added retrospectively). I made a total of 23 visits to CLNR in 2021, between 18th April and 23rd September, recording a total of 25 species. 1st August was a standout date, when I recorded both Silver-washed Fritillary and Chalk Hill Blue for the first time. Small Copper and Small Heath were added to the species list on 1st September and 12th September respectively.



This year I have made another 13 visits to date. On 18th May I was delighted to add Dingy Skipper to the list (now 26 species), and to confirm the presence of Silver-washed Fritillary on 5th July. It's going to be a struggle to add any more, but I remain optimistic! The odds are good, for example, that at least some of the "Small"

Skippers are actually Essex Skippers, but it needs someone with better eyesight and/or photographic skills than myself to confirm it. Also, Grizzled Skipper is a more plausible possibility, now that the presence of Dingy Skipper has been confirmed - and perhaps a wandering Adonis Blue might drop in from Sands Bank (which is most likely where the Chalk Hill Blue was on a day-trip from).

To put this species count into some kind of context, CLNR has a total area of 9.6 acres. It could fit approximately one hundred times into a single 2k square, or tetrad, and yet for the ten-year period beginning 2012, 15 out of the 25 tetrads in SU79 (my 10k square) have 26 species or fewer recorded!



I am also pleased to report that after working with Chiltern Rangers, who manage the site, as of May 2022 there are four “Butterflies of Chairborough” notice boards around the site, to introduce visitors to seven of the common and eye-catching species to be seen there.

The table below lists all the species recorded at CLNR since 2021, and the number of visits on which each species has been recorded.

Species	Visits Seen
Brimstone, Speckled Wood	19
Peacock, Comma, Meadow Brown	15
Holly Blue	13
Common Blue	11
Small White	9
Marbled White, Large White	8
Ringlet	7
Small Tortoiseshell, Orange-tip, Small Skipper, Large Skipper	6
Red Admiral, Gatekeeper, Green-veined White	
Brown Argus	5
Green Hairstreak	4
Small Copper	3
Silver-washed Fritillary	2
Painted Lady, Chalk Hill Blue, Small Heath, Dingy Skipper	1

Andy Spragg

In Praise of Buddleia

Every year I hear one or more members saying how disappointed they have been with butterfly numbers on their Buddleia.

There may of course have been a period of bad weather during flowering, but there can be other reasons. Buddleia is known as 'the butterfly plant', and in the annual BC National Garden Butterfly Survey formerly organised by Dr. Margaret Vickery, Buddleia came top of the two hundred listed nectar sources, attracting 37 butterfly species.

One problem can be over-reliance on just summer-flowering *davidii*, whereas in our garden we have the long cascades of early flowering purple *alternifolia* and the yellow *globosa* also flowers early.

At the end of the season, we have yellow *weyeriana*, and in a mild early winter some flowers can still be present until early December.

Also, the spring pruning back can be staggered so that all flowering does not occur at the same time, and regular deadheading will extend the flowering period: we usually have at least four deadheading sessions between July and August.

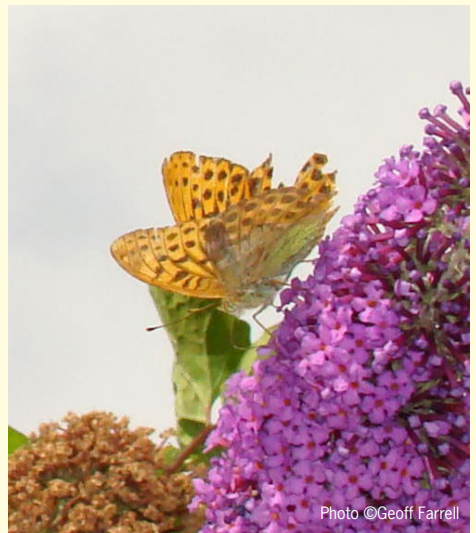
Buddleia also attracts other forms of wildlife. In our garden we have had nesting Goldfinches, foraging bands of Long-tailed Tits, hunting Hornets and leaves with a neat cut: the work

of Leaf-cutter Bees which use our nearby 'insect houses'. Moths are also attracted, including the migrant Silver Y and Hummingbird Hawk moth; not just in daylight hours but also...

***Within night's stillness
Ghost moths on hovering wings
Hunt the perfumed dark.***

Richard Stewart
(Branch Member)

[Ed.: Geoff Farrell was delighted to have the 'first-ever' visit of a Silver-washed Fritillary to his Maidenhead garden buddleia on 29th July this year:]



Wychwood Forest Trust: A Walk at Honeydale Farm, 14th July

There was an abundance of wildflowers across the site, at Honeydale Farm in Shipton-under-Wychwood (Oxon), with plenty of suitable (uncut) grass, on this **Come Fly With Me Butterfly Walk**, arranged jointly by Wychwood Forest Trust and UTB, with its 'mission to address the surprising lack of butterfly records across the Wychwood'.



Small/Essex Skippers, Meadow Browns, Ringlets, Gatekeepers and Marbled Whites were plentiful, and we added Brimstone, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Large White and Common Blue to our tally.

A few of the party were already butterfly “experts”, which proved helpful in sharing identification tips.

It is disappointing to discover that only one member of the group had responded to the UTB notice of the event, while WFT had readily filled their 10 places. Three of these dropped out at the last minute, but we were able to make up the numbers through local contacts and social media.

Clearly, **we need to stimulate a more active interest in butterflies across west Oxfordshire**. If we get a good response to our churchyard survey this year, we can compare results across the Wychwood Forest area and with results from other churchyards in the UTB region.

For more information on activities in the area, visit www.wychwoodforesttrust.co.uk or contact Roger Newman at info@wychwoodforesttrust.co.uk

Highlights from South-East Berkshire (SU86)

The last 2½ years (2020-early July 22) has seen a pretty respectable 32 butterfly species recorded in 10km-square 'SU86', which covers the area south of Bracknell and east of Wokingham down to the county boundaries with Hampshire (along the River Blackwater at Sandhurst) and Surrey (along the Wish Stream across the MoD training ranges).



The square includes quite a lot of urban areas, but considering the enormous pressure for house-building in the vicinity there is a very diverse range of habitats present on the sandy gravelly soils to the south, and the London clay to the north. The top tetrad is SU8262 with 29 species, but at least 10 tetrads have records of 20+ species, and we are sure that with a little more targeted survey effort most of those could add quite a few new species.

Much of the woodland is conifer plantation, but there are also ancient semi-natural woods, some of which – like

Wykery Copse – have seen improved management in recent years. There are ancient and recently created flower-rich grasslands in countryside sites and places such as churchyards. The council planning system has seen large areas of former industrial or farmed areas restored to flower-rich grassland and other habitats with public access. Such places include Peacock Meadows, Broadmoor Farm Meadows and Buckler's Forest. All are free to visit, and support a range of species where previously there were few or none. Seeing the wildlife return or recover has been really encouraging. Common Blue, Marbled White, Green Hairstreak and Burnet moths are amongst the species seen at those sites last year, as well as the uncommon Forester Moth. Buckler's Forest has become something of a hotspot for the Grayling, and Silver-studded Blues seen there in July this year were a most unexpected but very welcome surprise for one regular recorder.

There are also sites with heathland, scrub and areas of acid grassland, which are the best places to see local specialities like the Grayling and Silver-studded Blue. You may also be lucky enough to see day-flying moths like the Emperor, Grass Wave or Clouded Buff. The rides and verges in Swinley Forest are good places to see Grayling, and the habitat corridor created between Caesar's Camp and Lower Star Post has seen the gradual colonisation of Silver-studded Blues spreading north from the MoD ranges. Do try a visit to Caesar's Camp, Wildmoor Heath or Wishmoor

Bottom to see heathlands in square SU86. Some of the restored gravel pits in the Blackwater valley also have flowery grassland, scrub and woodland habitats and are worth a visit: try Horseshoe Lake and Moor Green Lakes NR, which also have plenty of bird interest.

SU86 also includes a large MoD Range Danger Area with lots of heathland, scrub and woodland habitat - but with no public access! With the kind permission of the MoD and Surrey Wildlife Trust, UTB members have been able to access this area on special occasions in the last few years to do targeted surveys for Silver-studded Blues. These group visits have proved successful in 'adding more dots to the map' for that priority species, and also for finding other local goodies like the Small Heath.

For such a 'busy' part of the UTB region there are a wealth of accessible sites and habitats; most are quite busy with people, yet still support quite a lot of wildlife. There are 23 'tetrads' which include land in Berkshire, and of those we have had records of Green Hairstreak in 4 tetrads, Grayling in 11 and Silver-studded Blue in 5. The Small Heath is fairly widespread but rarely abundant, and was seen in 8 tetrads. Silver-washed Fritillary seems to have been doing very well locally and was seen in 10 tetrads, whilst the rarer Dark Green Fritillary has been seen a few times in just 2 tetrads, and we have not really discovered whether or where it has breeding colonies. There are very occasional records of Purple Emperor, and more recently the Brown Hairstreak has been seen. We are sure the Purple Hairstreak is under-recorded so do get out there

looking - there is plenty of variety to reward those who put in the time and effort searching. And don't forget the day-flying moths – at least 2 stunning Hummingbird Hawk-moths have already been seen in SU86 in 2022 so far.

Many thanks to everyone who has provided butterfly records from this part of the world.



Photo above: Flower-rich grassland and scrub at Broadmoor Farm Meadows. Green Hairstreak, Small Heath and Small Copper all seen last year, as well as Forester moth.



Photo above: A wide heathland verge through conifer forestry. These habitat corridors are good places to see Grayling and Silver-studded Blues, as well as the more common skippers and 'browns'.

**Des Sussex (with Robert Godden,
SU86 10 km-square Champions)**

Building My Wildlife Garden

On March 10th 2022 I moved into a house in Aston, West Oxfordshire. This article describes what I've done towards creating a wildlife garden in the four months since the move. It will also describe the local environment and look at some of the wildlife observed so far.

Location

Aston is a small village in west Oxfordshire, five miles south of Witney and two miles east of Bampton. The area around the village is largely arable farmland, but my house is surrounded on two sides by a hay meadow, and on the north by a horse paddock (although I haven't seen any horses in it since the move). Further to the west is a line of what looks like Black Poplars. To the north of the property, before reaching the horse paddock, there is what may have originally been a hedge, but it now contains a couple of Field Maples, an Elm, an Elder, two Sallows and a Horse Chestnut. Bramble, nettles and ivy are present in abundance.

The garden

The property has two gardens. The south-west-facing one is used for growing vegetables. The other faces north-east, and is approximately 12 x 8m in size. A wide concrete path runs up the east side, so the available space is about 78 square meters. A 1.8m tall fence runs along the west side. This means that the garden gets quite a lot of sun up to around lunchtime, and then progressively less in the afternoon. How much it will get in the winter remains to be seen.

A previous occupant of the property had a "low-maintenance" garden here – lots of shrubs with gravel around them. The people I bought from had removed the shrubs, but the gravel is still there, especially at the north end of the garden. There is a 1m-wide herbaceous border along the west side, a small area of decking, and the rest was down to grass. The underlying soil is pretty poor. However, for a wildlife garden, this doesn't matter very much.

Plants

There were some interesting plants in the herbaceous border, including three quite large clumps of Lungwort (*Pulmonaria*). When I moved in these were flowering, which bees were taking advantage of. Other plants included a Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), a Knapweed cultivar (*Centaurea*), Geraniums, Rosemary (*Salvia rosmarinus*), Lemon Balm (*Melissa officinalis*), Feverfew 'Aureum'



The garden on 11th March 2022

(*Tanacetum parthenium*) and Purple Toadflax (*Lunaria purpurea*). A Beauty Bush (*Kolkwitzia amabilis*) was planted against the north wall of the house.

The first plant I bought was a Flowering Currant (*Ribes sanguineum*) to provide a nectar source for bees in the spring. The second one was Buddleja 'Pink Delight', which has fragrant pink flowers, and is of course well known for its attractiveness to butterflies and other insects.

I planted Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*), a Globe Thistle 'Ritro' (*Echinops*) (both plants are good for bees and butterflies), a few *Dipsacus fullonum* (Teasel), Vervain (*Verbena bonariensis*) and a Phlox (which had come from my previous garden). I sowed Teasel and Honesty (*Lunaria annua*) seeds in the garden, which being biennials will (hopefully) flower next year. I also sowed some Borage (*Borago officinalis*) and Corn Cockle (*Agrostemma githago*) seeds.

The next plant to go in was Honeysuckle 'Hall's Prolific' (*Lonicera japonica*). This is an evergreen honeysuckle with fragrant flowers in the summer, followed by small purple berries.

The next lot of plants were Erysimum 'Bowles' Mauve', Sedum 'Autumn Joy', Marjoram, Osteospermum, Pyracantha and Holly 'Alaska' (*Ilex aquifolium*). All of these are attractive to wildlife in one way or another. A later addition was Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*).

During May, Geraniums, Ox-eye Daisies (*Leucanthemum vulgare*) and Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium cultivar*) came into flower, followed by Purple Toadflax (*Linaria purpurea*) and Feverfew (*Tanacetum parthenium*) in early June.

The pond

Getting a pond dug was a high priority, as it needed to be ready for dragonflies in June. Digging the hole was quite an effort – I had to remove some large stones. All the turf and (sieved) soil was reused in raised beds in the other garden. The hole ended up about 1.8m in diameter and 0.5m deep, although much shallower on one side.



I lined the hole with old curtains, then added a proper pond underlay, and put the liner on top. Some of the surplus liner was used to create a bog garden – water overflow from the pond goes into this.

I added cobblestones at the shallow end to provide a location for birds to drink and bathe, and to allow animals to get in and out of the pond easily.



The completed pond, and bog garden

I planted up the bog garden first, as I had plants that were waiting: Yellow Flag Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Hemp Agrimony (*Eupatorium cannabinum*) and Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*). I later added a Ragged Robin (*Lychnis flos-cuculi*) and a Cuckooflower (*Cardamine pratensis*).

I planted Gardener's Garters (*Phalaris arundinacea v. picta*), Pendulous Sedge (*Carex pendula*) and Hard Rush (*Juncus inflexus*) around the pond margin. These were put in to provide something for dragonfly nymphs to climb up before emergence. I splashed out on a Waterlily (*Nymphaea*) 'Barbara Dobbins', which went into the deepest section.

Additional plants added to the margins were Water Plantain (*Alisma plantago*), Variegated Water Dropwort 'Flamingo' (*Oenanthe javinca*), Marsh Woundwort (*Stachys palustris*), Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*), Crystal Confetti (*Hydrocotyle sibthorpioides variegata*) and Lesser Water Plantain (*Baldellia ranunculoides*).

The wildlife

Birds – I was surprised by what came into the garden once I started putting out food. As well as the usual garden birds I had Stock Dove (*Columba oenas*), followed by Rook (*Corvus frugilegus*), Pheasant (*Phasianus colchicus*), Jay (*Garrulus glandarius*) and Great Spotted Woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*).

Up to four Stock Doves were visiting at one time. A pair of Red-legged Partridges (*Alectoris rufa*) made one appearance. These birds were consuming a large amount of food, and also wasting a lot of it. This spillage inevitably attracted rats, so I moved the table much closer to the house and didn't leave anything out overnight.

Animals – I was too late building the pond to get any frogs, but I'm sure they will turn up. I did find a Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*) in the garden. A couple of Brown Rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) were not welcome, but reducing the availability of food persuaded them to move on. There is a Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) about, but it can't get into the garden. At the end of May I started looking for bats at dusk, and on

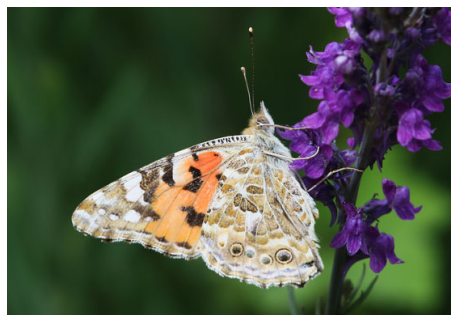


The garden on 17th June 2022

most evenings there were one or two flying around. These were probably Pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus spp.*).

Butterflies – By mid-July I'd seen 20 species of butterfly in the garden. Apart from Meadow Browns, numbers have been fairly small.

Small Skipper	Red Admiral
Essex Skipper	Painted Lady [right]
Large Skipper	Peacock
Brimstone	Comma
Orange-tip	Small Tortoiseshell
Large White	Speckled Wood
Small White	Meadow Brown
Green-veined White	Ringlet
Holly Blue	Marbled White
Common Blue	Gatekeeper



Moths – By mid-July I had recorded 120 species of macro-moth in the garden (most caught in my 6W actinic trap), and 38 species of micro-moth (although not all micros have been identified). The most notable macro was a Pinion-spotted Pug (*Eupithecia insigniata*), which is regarded as being nationally scarce. I've had the smallest British moth *Glyphipterix simplicella* (*Cocksfoot Moth*) and the largest native species, the Privet Hawk-moth (*Sphinx ligustri*) [photo below].

The Verbascum plants I put in specifically for the Mullein moth (*Cucullia verbasci*) came up trumps! I found seven larvae on them in early June.



Macros:

Barred Straw	Early Thorn	Riband Wave
Barred Yellow	Elephant Hawk-moth	Ruby Tiger
Beautiful Hook-tip	Eyed Hawk-moth	Rufous Minor
Blood-vein	Fan-foot	Rustic
Blue-bordered Carpet	Figure of Eighty	Rustic Shoulder-knot
Bright-line Brown-eye	Flame	Sandy Carpet
Brimstone Moth	Flame Shoulder	Satellite
Brindled Beauty	Freyer's Pug	Scalloped Oak
Brindled Pug	Garden Carpet	Scarce Footman
Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing	Green Carpet	Scorched Carpet
Brown Rustic	Green Pug	Scorched Wing
Brown Scallop	Heart and Club	Setaceous Hebrew Character
Buff Ermine	Heart and Dart	Shears
Buff-tip	Hebrew Character	Short-cloaked Moth
Chocolate-tip	Herald	Shuttle-shaped Dart
Cinnabar	Iron Prominent	Silver Y
Cloaked Minor	Kent Black Arches	Silver-ground Carpet
Clouded Border	Large Nutmeg	Single-dotted Wave
Clouded Drab	Large Yellow Underwing	Small Blood-vein
Common Carpet	Least Carpet	Small Quaker
Common Emerald	Lesser Swallow Prominent	Small Square-spot
Common Footman	Lesser Yellow Underwing	Smoky Wainscot
Common Marbled Carpet	Light Arches	Snout
Common Pug	Light Emerald	Spectacle
Common Quaker	Lime-speck Pug	Spruce Carpet
Common Rustic	Maiden's Blush	Straw Dot
Common Swift	Marbled Green	Treble Lines
Common Wainscot	Marbled Minor	Turnip Moth
Coronet	Middle-barred Minor	Twin-spotted Quaker
Currant Pug	Mottled Pug	Uncertain
Dark Arches	Mottled Rustic	V-Pug
Dark Sword-grass	Mullein (larvae)	Vine's Rustic
Dingy Footman	Muslin Footman	White Ermine
Drinker	Muslin Moth	White-point
Dotted Border	Nut-tree Tussock	Willow Beauty
Double Square-spot	Oak Beauty	Yellow Shell
Double-striped Pug	Pale Mottled Willow	Yellow-tail
Dun-bar	Pale Tussock	
Dusky Sallow	Pinion-spotted Pug	
Dwarf Cream Wave	Poplar Hawk-moth	
Early Grey	Privet Hawk-moth	
	Red Twin-spot Carpet	

Micros:

Acleris forsskaleana (Maple Button)
Aethes smeathmanniana (Yarrow Conch)
Aglossa pingualis (Large Tabby)
Anania coronata (Elder Pearl)
Anania hortulata (Small Magpie)
Anthophila fabriciana (Common Nettle-tap)
Aphomia sociella (Bee Moth)
Archips xylosteana (Variegated Golden Tortrix)
Aspilapteryx tringipennella (Ribwort Slender)
Blastobasis lacticolella (London Dowd)
Celypha lacunana (Common Marble)
Chrysoteuchia culmella (Garden Grass-veneer)
Crambus lathoniellus (Hook-streak Grass-veneer)
Crambus perlella (Satin Grass-veneer)
Diurnea fagella (March Tubic)
Emmelina monodactyla (Common Plume)
Endrosis sarcitrella (White-shouldered House-moth)
Epiphyas postvittana (Light Brown Apple Moth)
Evergestis forficalis (Garden Pebble)
Glyphipterix simplicella (Cocksfoot Moth)
Hofmannophila pseudospretella (Brown House-moth)
Hypsopygia costalis (Gold Triangle)
Mompha subbistrigella (Garden Mompha)
Myelois circumvoluta (Thistle Ermine)
Nomophila noctuella (Rush Veneer)
Notocelia cynosbatella (Yellow-faced Bell)
Patania ruralis (Mother-of-Pearl)
Phycitodes binaevella (Ermine Knot-horn)
Plodia interpunctella (Indian Meal Moth)
Plutella xylostella (Diamond-backed Moth)
Pterophorus pentadactyla (White Plume)
Pyrausta aurata (Small Purple & Gold)
Pyrausta purpuralis (Common Purple & Gold)
Scoparia ambigualis (Common Grey)
Scoparia mercurella (Small Grey)
Udea olivalis (Olive Pearl)
Yponomeuta padella (Orchard Ermine)
Ypsolopha mucronella (Spindle Smudge)



Dragonflies & Damselflies

– The first species to appear in the garden was a male Large Red Damselfly (*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*) on May 14th, followed by a male Banded Demoiselle (*Calopteryx splendens*) on May 27th. On June 2nd a male Broad-bodied Chaser (*Libellula depressa*) and a female Black-tailed Skimmer (*Orthetrum cancellatum*) [photo above] both paid visits. But I hadn't seen any more by mid-July.

Bees – Many were taking advantage of Sallow flowers in March. Honeybees were frequently seen taking liquids from the edge of the pond, and Bumble-bees were very attracted to Purple Toadflax flowers at the beginning of June.



Other Insects – Long-legged flies (*Poecilobothrus nobilitatus*), diving beetles, two Cockchafer (*Melolontha melolontha*), two Black Sexton Beetles (*Nicrophorus humator*), various caddisflies, a Wasp Beetle (*Clytus arietis*) [photo above] and a *Chrysotoxum cautum* hoverfly (the latter two are both wasp mimics).

UTB Income and Expenditure for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

INCOME	2022	2021
Membership		
Subscriptions	8715.00	8715.00
Legacies/donations (inc. Gift Aid)	7067.50	17201.33
Events/fundraising	0.00	0.00
Other (Grants)		700.00
<i>Sub-total</i>	✔ 15782.50	✔ 26616.33
Conservation		
Holtspur Bottom Reserve	0.00	683.88
<i>Sub-total</i>	✔ 0.00	✔ 683.88
Finance/Admin		
VAT Refund		550.62
Holtspur Bank HLS		668.12
<i>Sub-total</i>	✔ 0.00	✔ 1218.74
Total income		✔ 15782.50
EXPENDITURE		
Membership		
Newsletter	199.00	0.00
Events/fundraising	0.00	0.00
Stock purchases	0.00	0.00
Other	0.00	0.00
<i>Sub-total</i>	✔ 199.00	0.00
Conservation		
Holtspur Bottom Reserve	630.00	0.00
Equipment/Training	983.70	103.55
HLS re Holtspur Bank	0.00	668.12
Other Projects	3850.00	11699.45
Subs/donations	46.00	46.00
<i>Sub-total</i>	✔ 5509.70	✔ 12517.12
Finance/Admin		
Admin/Insurance	0.00	44.40
VAT	289.00	0.00
<i>Sub-total</i>	✔ 289.00	✔ 44.40
Total expenditure		✔ 5997.70
Net income/expenditure		✔ 9784.80
Cash b/f		✔ 29880.49
Total cash available for future activities		✔ 39665.29
STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS AT 31 MARCH 2021		
NET ASSETS		
Fixed assets (after depreciation)	0.00	0.00
Stock, debtors & creditors (net)	0.00	0.00
Cash B/fwd	39665.29	29880.49
Total	✔ 39665.29	✔ 29880.49
ALLOCATION OF NET ASSETS		
Endowment	0.00	0.00
Restricted	960.00	1407.50
Designated	4600.00	5900.00
Unallocated	34105.29	22572.99
Total	✔ 39665.29	✔ 29880.49

If any member not attending the AGM has any questions on the accounts, please email Treasurer Chris Woodrow on lepidoptera45@btinternet.com

Ivinghoe Hills Walk, 14th July

Just before the record-breaking heatwave took hold, it was my pleasure to lead a walk on my home turf. The omens were good: it was a sunny, 19°C morning with light winds, and on my stroll from home to Beacon car park, I counted 51 Chalk Hill Blues.

Omens in the car park were less good. At a minute to 11, nobody had made themselves known to me. I tapped on a few windows to ask if the occupants were there for the butterfly walk: they weren't. I missed out one chap who was vaping and from whose car loud music of a genre unappreciated by me was blaring. Then I recalled my diversity training and how one should not judge on appearances. Was he here for the butterfly walk? "No bro."



On the dot of 11, though, I heard a voice: "Are you Rikki?". I had a customer! Sam, from Aylesbury, was not a BC member but had found out about the walk on Facebook. She was new to butterflies, which made the whole endeavour very rewarding for me - and, I hope, her.

The advertised target species was Dark Green Fritillary. Two to three weeks earlier, dozens of bright males and a

few pristine females would have made themselves known. As it was, plenty of females and a few males were still around, albeit somewhat jaded. One female, though, was kind enough to give Sam an excellent first-ever view of its spectacular underside.

The few Silver-washed Fritillaries that we found were much brighter and very obliging. For me, the sighting of the day was a Small Copper, the first I had seen since spring.

The commonest species by far was Ringlet – way too many to count. Indeed, counting whilst introducing a newcomer to our lepidopteran delights was pretty futile, so here are the 17 species we clocked (without numbers): Essex Skipper, Large Skipper, Brimstone, Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Small Copper, Chalk Hill Blue, Painted Lady, Peacock, Comma, Dark Green Fritillary, Silver-washed Fritillary, Marbled White, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, and Ringlet.

I think we were dead unlucky not to get Brown Argus, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Small Heath and Speckled Wood, and hence make the 20 species - which, perhaps unwisely, I had given Sam as the target. Indeed, I saw two of those species on my walk home.

I think I'd rather have one newcomer than ten stalwarts. It's a huge pleasure to introduce somebody to certain species for the first time. And who knows, we might have a new member!

Rikki Harrington

Tales of the Unexpected

Occasionally, we come across something that we weren't quite expecting: perhaps a species aberration or some unusual behaviour?

One example that comes to my mind occurred on Ballard Down, near Swanage, Dorset, a few years ago. Whilst enjoying the richness of butterflies on show with an old schoolfriend enthusiast, I saw something that didn't look quite right: a butterfly, flying around with lots of Marbled Whites and Meadow Browns, which flew exactly like a Marbled White (gliding gracefully) but which looked like a Meadow Brown (which has a skittish flight form).

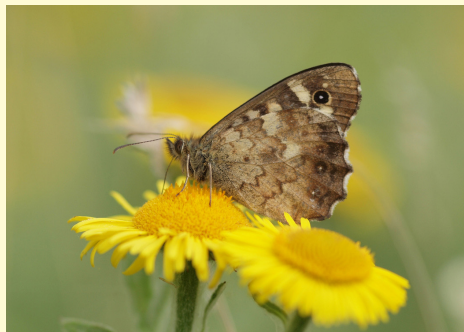
I managed to get these 2 photos, which are obviously of a Meadow Brown – yet without any of the typical golden-brown colour.



It could have been an alba aberration – but aberration or not, why was it flying just like a Marbled White? I can find no reference to this behaviour anywhere, and I'm just glad I had a friend there to witness it. Pity I didn't shoot a video!



Elsewhere, we are all used to seeing Speckled Woods either perching or patrolling in dappled woodland shade, but I can't recall very often (if ever?) having seen one taking nectar from flowers:



They're better known for taking honeydew from leaves up in the tree canopy, but will (so the book says) descend to take nectar in the spring and autumn if honeydew is in short supply. However, this photo was taken in the second week of August – and, once again, it was in Dorset. There must be something in the air down in that part of the country!

As we sometimes have a spare half-page or more to fill in the newsletter, do you also have an encounter a bit out of the ordinary? Especially one from our own region. If so, let us know – and we'll see if we can fit your story into a future issue. Please do supply at least 1 photo, if possible.

It would be rather nice if we could make it a regular feature.

Derek Haynes

Photos ©Derek Haynes

I Am Thankful For... Butterflies

UTB member Des Sussex expressed obvious delight when his 5-year-old granddaughter, Hazel, brought her schoolbook home, and showed him this page...

Well done, Hazel – a budding conservationist in the making, perhaps?

Do you have a young relative with an eye on our planet and the natural wonders it offers us, who may merit inclusion in a future edition of *Hairstreak*?



Solution to last time's CRYPTIC CROSSWORD

ACROSS

2. MOTHER SHIPTON
4. GRAYLING
5. HOMEFIELD
7. RED ADMIRAL
8. MAIDENHEAD
11. MARBLED WHITE
14. BRADENHAM
16. ASHAM MEADS
18. SMALL BLUE
20. IVINGHOE BEACON

DOWN

1. SPECKLED WOOD
3. JIM ASHER
6. CLOUDED YELLOW
9. iRECORD
10. HARTSLOCK
12. THE BLACKNECK
13. CINNABAR
15. WOOD TIGER
17. RINGLETS
19. MOOR COPSE

If you are able to contribute a 'teaser' for the next edition of the newsletter, please submit it to the editor for consideration, at the address given on the Contents Page of this edition.

In Buckinghamshire, the Bucks Invertebrate Group organises a lot of field trips which include studying butterflies and especially moths. Their list of field trips is available on their website <https://sites.google.com/site/bucksinvertebrategroup/>

In Berkshire, the Berkshire Moth Group holds regular meetings on the second Thursday of every month. They organise other events as well. Refer to their website for details <https://sites.google.com/site/berksmoths/Home>

Upper Thames Branch Website

www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk

<https://butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/upper-thames-branch>

Have your butterfly sightings and photos posted on the website by sending them to: sightings@upperthames-butterflies.org.uk

Upper Thames Branch Moth Sightings Blog
<http://upperthamesmoths.blogspot.co.uk>

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Holtspur Bottom Reserve

www.holtspurbottom.info

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