

# BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION UPPER THAMES BRANCH

## White-letter Hairstreak 2018 report

The WLH had an excellent year in the Upper Thames area with about 275 butterflies being recorded from 61 locations. Many of the sightings were in areas where it had not been recorded in recent times, such as Ascot, Wokingham and Watchfield. There was also a higher than usual number of garden records. We received the excellent news that the butterfly has colonised the disease-resistant elms planted on our own Holtspur reserve. We also found the WLH on the approach road to the National Grid's site at Sandford Brake (south of Oxford), which (along with also finding Brown Hairstreak there) has led to them taking a more determined approach to the sympathetic conservation of their trees and scrub.

Adrian Cadman found exceptionally good numbers in Bucks at Old Wolverton Church, Flood Plain Forest Reserve and Great Linford, and Sue Taylor recorded double figures at Bradenham. BBOWT's Homefield Wood, Maidenhead Thicket and Chazey Heath all proved to be very reliable places to see this species. The prize for the most unusual WLH report goes to Paul Black who managed to attract one into his moth trap!

It was once again an early flight season with the first sighting on 10<sup>th</sup> June and the last on the 4<sup>th</sup> August.

Planting of disease-resistant Elms to support the WLH has continued this winter and, with more scheduled planting coming up soon, the total number planted since the project began should be close to 200 trees by winter's end. Due to the biosecurity risk of bringing in diseases from the continent the decision was taken not to import any more Elms. We are currently planting *U.laevis*, as this can be grown from seed and we will also be experimenting with cuttings from established resistant elms as well as receiving kind help from Lindengate in growing plants from seed collected from the disease resistant elm from Holtspur Bottom.

Peter Cuss

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