

# Hairstreak

No 93

Summer 2015



Butterfly  
Conservation



Upper Thames  
Branch





Some of our volunteers in 2014: Thank you to everyone that helped!



*Articles and photographs for inclusion in this newsletter are welcome.  
Photographs should be sent as jpg (or similar) files and not embedded in  
a document or album.*

*Copy dates are: 1st January for Spring Issue  
1st April for Summer Issue  
1st August for Autumn Issue*

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Cover photo: Green Hairstreak by David Ferguson

Opposite page: montage by Tony Gillie

**BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION**  
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It has been a very busy time since I took over the running of the Branch. To list all the things we have achieved in the last four months would make an enormously long list and become tedious so I shall simply describe a selection of our wonderful work. I shall not describe achievements mentioned elsewhere in this edition of the newly named 'Hairstreak'. To learn about them, simply read on.

I hope that I was clear in my inaugural piece that I want to see us achieving even more conservation effect than we previously managed. It is pleasing therefore to report that two individuals, with whom we share conservation objectives, told me that of all the organisations that they ask for assistance with their practical conservation tasks, the members of the UTB are the ones that respond most positively. Well done team! As you can imagine I was very proud to hear that.

I had direct evidence of this when my phone number was given as the contact for anyone able come to a private site and get stuck in with preparations for the return of the Duke of Burgundy. I soon had phone calls offering help, but in this case there was a limit on just how many people we could take along, and it really distressed me to have to turn down offers of help from four UTB members as we already had 12 volunteers for both days of work. I can fully understand people's enthusiasm to get involved in these exciting initiatives so my sincere apologies and let us hope that everyone who wishes can get along to some events on at least one occasion. If it is any consolation, the work put in was outstanding and the site, which was very heavily scrubbed over, is now looking suitable (and resplendent) again.

Our practical conservation work has been amazingly successful, largely down to so many of you lending a hand. As an example, we actually had to sit about, enjoy the sun and eat biscuits for an hour at the last Holtspur Bottom (Buckinghamshire) conservation task of the year. All the season's planned work, and even the tasks I dreamt of doing but never seriously expected to see finished, were completed by the tea break on that last session! Work in Oxfordshire and Berkshire was also very well supported and many images of happy workers and the results of their efforts decorate the pages of the UTB Facebook site:

<https://www.facebook.com/Butterflies.Berkshire.Buckinghamshire.Oxfordshire>

Speaking of the Facebook pages, our publicity has been far stronger and more prevalent. We featured in the BBC news and on local BBC radio, the latter in a piece about growing Dark Mullein seeds for the Striped Lychnis moth. This campaign, headed by Tony and Marion Gillie was another total success. The Gillies started out thinking they would do well to get the seed they had harvested from our own reserve grown into seedlings by a few volunteers, but appearances at Holtspur school, on the radio and various follow up stories in local newspapers and periodicals, saw them buying extra seed to give to the multitude of fascinated would-be Striped Lychnis champions. In total over a million seeds have been distributed!

We also now have a Twitter account which is becoming as lively as the

Facebook page and both are worth a visit when you have a spare moment. Actually, you might need more than a moment; they are too absorbing to deal with in moments.

Neither of these detracts from the effort and effectiveness of the UTB website. An increasing number of reports (ranging from daily sightings to full blown Species Champions reports) and news and events lists, are appearing here. Surely it's an essential site to add to your 'favourites'.

I have already written far more than I intended and still haven't mentioned an effort to return the butterfly that is the rarest of Europe's species resident in the UK to Oxfordshire. I didn't mention the New Members' Day either (invitation only - sorry) or the extensive field trip list. I haven't space to describe the work being done to safeguard butterflies and moths at numerous sites where development threatens them, or the increasing amount of survey work planned for this year; next edition perhaps.

However, I must end with a thank you and a plea for this tremendous effort to be maintained (dare I ask increased?). Perhaps there is still a member who hasn't helped out? If so, come and join us. It's a great feeling to be part of a successful team and there is a tremendous variety of tasks that you could help with.

Finally, don't forget that you can record your butterfly sightings on your smart phone these days. No need to try and remember what you saw until a pen and paper are to hand. *iRecord Butterflies*, is completely free and available for iOS and

Android devices. What's more, all sightings logged in this way go directly into our national recording scheme. For some ideas about what other members are seeing, visit our website and our twitter pages. What more could you want to lure you out to start surveying? Enjoy the summer.



Egg hunt at Otmoor

Nick Bowles



Ditto at Long Crendon

Tony Gillie

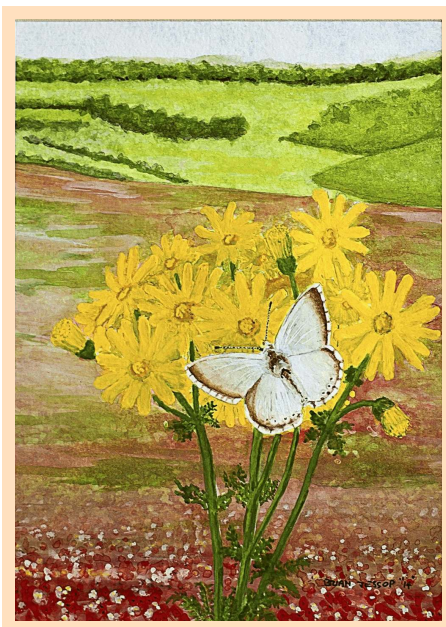


## Watercolour of Chalkhill Blue at Holtspur Bottom for sale!

Last year Brian Jessop kindly donated a watercolour to our Branch for us to sell to raise funds for our conservation work. Some of you will have seen the painting at our Annual Members' Day in October 2014, where it was on display in the photo competition room. We intend to auction the watercolour using a "closed bids" process. A colour photo of the painting and more information about it, can be found at:

[www.holtspurbottom.info/brianjessop.html](http://www.holtspurbottom.info/brianjessop.html)

To make a bid for the painting, please send an email to our Branch Chairman, Nick Bowles at [nick.bowles@ntlworld.com](mailto:nick.bowles@ntlworld.com) saying how much you would like to offer. Remember, the money raised goes directly to support our conservation work. Please be generous!



Dimensions:  
unframed: 12.5cm x 18cm  
framed: 25.5cm x 30.5cm

### Diary date

Saturday 31st October 2015 - Upper Thames Branch Members' Day  
and AGM 2015

Our annual Members' Day and AGM will take place on Saturday 31st October 2015 at  
St Peter's Church Hall, Earley, Berks RG6 1EY.

### Photographs

Some of the uncredited photos in this issue are by the editor. To prevent Hairstreak becoming the ed's photo gallery, photographs from members are very welcome. They will be held by the editor and used where appropriate. All will, of course, be credited. Photos suitable for the cover are particularly welcome; they need to be capable of being cropped to portrait format and have a plain area at the top.

## New Year's Egg Hunt and the TV Cameraman

Nick Bowles

Every year the Upper Thames Branch's (UTB) members turn out and count the Brown Hairstreak eggs at selected locations. We deliberately visit new areas (like the Calvert Jubilee reserve in N. Bucks, where in February this year we proved that this is yet another UTB site with all 5 Hairstreak species) and we also return annually to regular sites. The reason for the annual return is that it gives us data to compare year on year and to see how local management at sites affects the numbers of eggs laid. For example, repeat counting in one hedge showed us that the removal of another nearby hedge (that ran parallel to the first) reduced the number of eggs laid in the first hedge even though nothing at all happened to the first hedge. We believe this is because the removal of one hedge made the other more open to the wind (and wind chill).

Every New Year UTB members turn out at Otmoor in Oxfordshire under the tutelage of Dave Wilton (Brown Hairstreak Species Champion). He instructs on the technique used to locate the tiny white eggs on the bare twigs of the host plant, Blackthorn. Dave hands out coloured information leaflets showing the appearance



Nick and Brennan

Wendy Wilson

of Hairstreak eggs and those of moths that also lay eggs on Blackthorn. Once discovered, the eggs' positions are marked so that a small team can return throughout the summer and make a careful record of the way that the Brown Hairstreak larvae develop.

This year, among those turning out, was cameraman Brennan Nichols from BBC South. Initially, he explained that he would need to make a quick recording of a couple of the team and leave within 20 minutes. However, it didn't go like that. The enthusiasm of the team evidently made an impact. Brennan actually stayed with us for three hours and was not only filming the team at work but joining in our egg hunt! If you want to get a flavour of the morning, visit

<http://youtu.be/bH7fauuyPKM>

That morning, 18 UTB members helped to tag the position of 41 Brown Hairstreak eggs. This number of eggs is about half the best ever count here (before the removal of the parallel hedge) but better than the worst numbers ever. It shows that as the removed hedge re-grows and once more acts as a wind-break, the hedge we target is becoming more attractive to egg-laying Brown Hairstreak females.

As the 41 eggs hatch and develop, each one will be closely monitored to improve our understanding of the various pressures facing a Brown Hairstreak larva. This painstaking research is partly responsible for the current expansion of the species locally. We are better able to explain to landowners how they can help the Brown Hairstreak through the type and timing of the hedgerow management they employ.

It is always a pleasure to get out into the countryside, but when you know that your time there, has, as in this case, really helped the conservation of a rare species; it seems all the more rewarding.

For ways that you can join in our stimulating and effective conservation effort, visit the web pages of our website at:

<http://upperthames-butterflies.org.uk>

or Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/Butterflies.Berkshire.Buckinghamshire.Oxfordshire>

or catch us on Twitter

<https://twitter.com/UpperThamesBC>



Website



Facebook



Twitter

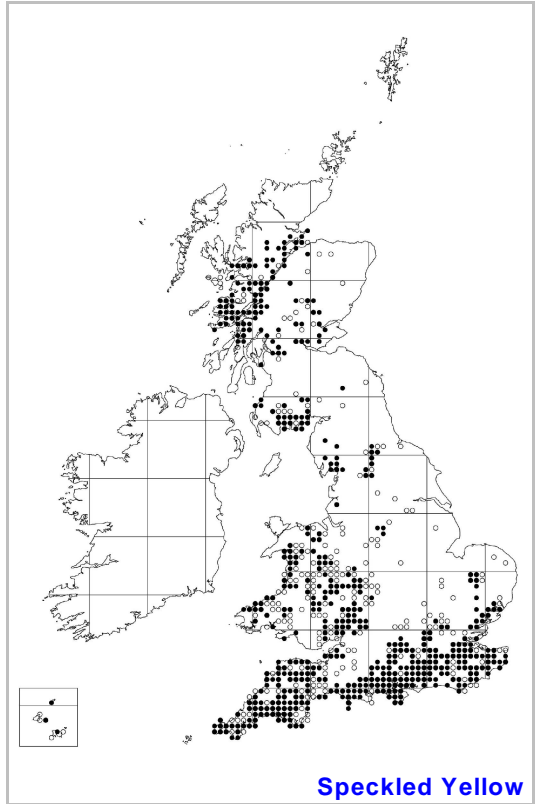


## Day-flying moth and caterpillar recording

Zoe Randle and Richard Fox

Butterfly Conservation would love butterfly recorders to record day-flying moths and moth caterpillars when they are out and about. In 2018, in collaboration with MothsIreland, we will be publishing a Macro-moth Atlas for Britain and Ireland. The majority of moth recorders use light-traps and, as a result, the many species of day-flying moths may be relatively under-recorded compared to nocturnal ones. Butterfly recorders can make a huge contribution to the forthcoming atlas by submitting records of day-flying moths such as Speckled Yellow and indeed distinctive caterpillars (e.g. Cinnabar) that they encounter while out looking at butterflies.

The National Moth Recording Scheme run by Butterfly Conservation will provide the UK moth data for the forthcoming atlas. The scheme already holds over 17.3 million moth records and geographical coverage of the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man at 10km resolution is very good (97% have at least one moth species recorded). There are only 113 10km squares for which we do not have any records from the year 2000 onwards (see figure 2). However, in addition to these, there are 613 10km squares which we consider to be under-recorded - they possess 50 or fewer records of 25 or fewer species. You could really help by targeting these unrecorded or under-recorded squares for moth sightings during your



Pam Parsons

butterfly recording. To find out which 10km squares, or tetrads, are under-recorded in your area please contact the relevant County Moth Recorder; Martin Harvey, [kitenetter@googlemail.com](mailto:kitenetter@googlemail.com) (Berkshire); Martin Albertini [malbertini@onetel.com](mailto:malbertini@onetel.com) (Buckinghamshire) or Martin Townsend [martin.townsend4@ntlworld.com](mailto:martin.townsend4@ntlworld.com) (Oxfordshire).

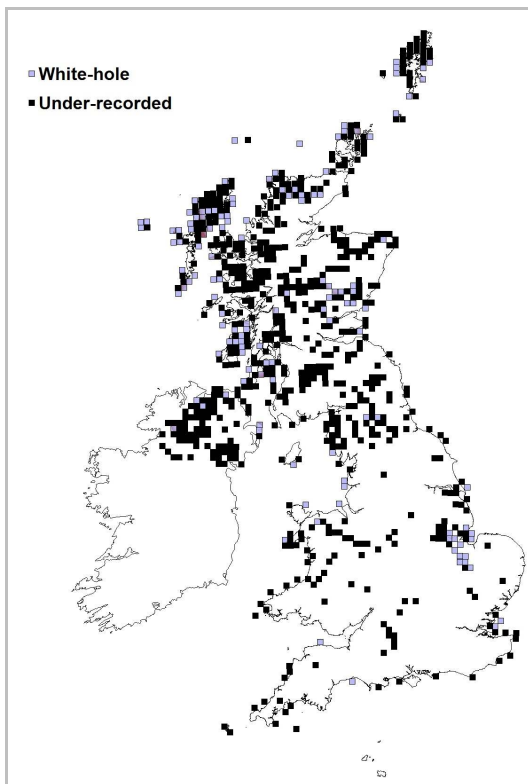
If you wish to venture further afield, the list of County Moth Recorders can be found on the Moths Count website [www.mothscount.org](http://www.mothscount.org).

Many butterfly recorders already record the moths they see along their transects. In 2013, the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (BMS) team extracted moth records entered into Transect Walker software. The data extraction exercise revealed data

for 109,485 individuals of 123 moth species, with 13,622 records from 403 sites. The five most frequently recorded species (in descending rank order) were Silver Y, Six-spot Burnet, Cinnabar, Burnet Companion and Speckled Yellow. These records will be re-patriated to County Moth Recorders in due course.

Participants in the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey are also encouraged to record day-flying moths in their squares. In 2014 a record of Blood-vein in Gloucestershire was only the second for SP10 and the first since 1974.

In the run up to the forthcoming *Macro-moth Atlas for Britain and Ireland* all butterfly recorders can help boost coverage by recording moths, whether on butterfly/WCBS transects, during 'casual' butterfly recording or by specifically targeting areas that are under-recorded for moths. Your help will be very gratefully received. Records are best submitted to your local County Moth recorder on an annual basis by the end of the year to enable incorporation into local datasets and ultimately the National Moth Recording Scheme.



## Moths at Holtspur Bottom

Dave Wilton

During 2014 a concerted effort was made to improve the Branch's knowledge of the flora and fauna at our Holtspur Bottom reserve near Beaconsfield, Bucks. As part of this project I undertook to do some surveying for moths. This involved making ten night-time visits to the reserve between March and October, spaced at three or four-week intervals, in the hope of finding the early-spring and late-autumn species as well as those which fly during the summer months.

Two moth traps were employed on each visit, one a 'Robinson' and the other a 'Skinner', both run from a small portable generator. Both types of trap employ a very bright 125 watt mercury vapour bulb to draw the moths into the trap, which is basically a large circular plastic tub (the 'Robinson') or a large wooden box (the 'Skinner'), each filled with egg-boxes to give the moths somewhere to settle down. Most do end up inside but some moths are drawn close to the light but then tend to settle outside it rather than entering, so a white sheet is laid out under the trap to make them more obvious than they would otherwise be if they landed on the surrounding vegetation.

For the survey the lights were turned on at dusk and run for three hours, after which the moths were identified and counted. They were then released on site, hopefully none the worse for the experience! The traps were employed at exactly the same two positions on each visit, one at the top of 'Triangle Bank' just outside the upper meadow and the other on the footpath just above the lower meadow. There was no particular reason for choosing those sites other than for ease of being able to run the electric cable along the footpath between them, but they did provide good coverage of each meadow and the lights were well separated from each other.

435 different moth species were identified during the ten visits and the total known from Holtspur Bottom has now risen to well over 500. Just to put those numbers into context, a moth trap run in even the most urban of



Privet Hawk-moth 3/7/14



Maple Prominent 19/5/14



Kent Black Arches 3/7/14



Tree-lichen Beauty 13/8/14



Mocha 13/8/14



gardens two or three times a week should produce at least 400 species in a year (after all, there are about 2,400 species resident in the UK), but to get that number from just ten visits, each of only three hours duration, is quite an achievement. It is certainly true that further species remain to be discovered at Holtspur but we now have a far better idea of what lives there. While the vast majority are common and widespread moths, it is very encouraging to see just how many specialist chalk down-land species have managed to find the reserve, which after all was still part nondescript agricultural land and part waste tip only 15 years ago!

Full details of the moths now known from the reserve can be found on the Holtspur Bottom website <http://holtspurbottom.info/mothsandotherinsects.html>. The photos show just a few of the species seen during the survey in 2014. Even the occasional butterfly was recorded, the Essex Skipper having been found roosting right next to where one of the traps was placed. It didn't get much sleep that night!



Dotted Fan-foot 3/7/14



*Acompsia schmidtellus* 23/7/14



Essex Skipper 3/7/14





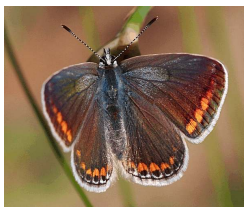

## Garden Blues

Nick Bowles

Not that feeling of desperation you get when next door's cat leaves you a little something, again, but the blue butterflies in gardens.

There are two types regularly seen in gardens. The earliest in most gardens, even as early as March, is the Holly Blue. The Holly Blue can then appear any time until November but is most likely in the summer (May - September) when the Common Blue will be around too.

Telling them apart is part science and part dark art. If they sit still and show you their wings the science bit is in visible differences.

| Common Blue   |   | Holly Blue  |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| Circular black dots & usually some red crescents on a pale brown or silvery background. |  |  | Dashes and dots and hardly any markings at all on a pale blue background. |
| Male<br><br>Wing tip clear of black   |  |  | Male<br><br>Has narrow black wing-tips                                    |
| Female<br><br>Variable: brown to deep blue. Orange spots.                               |  |  | Female<br><br>Has broad black wing-tips                                   |

But, if as butterflies often do, they simply fly past and you don't get a good view then the dark arts apply.

A good way to separate the two is by the height at which they fly. Holly Blue butterflies will normally not be seen below shoulder height and they seek out hedges and shrubs as perches. Common Blue butterflies are normally seen at below hip height, choosing to perch on flowers, in low vegetation and on the ground.

Common Blue males and Holly Blue males look very similar in colour in flight but the male Common Blue is more likely to hang about on your lawn, often for days. Holly Blue males are more likely to call in and leave in a short time; though both will spend time feeding from flowers.

Female Common Blues are brown, so no chance of confusion there. Well, be careful as in flight they can seem silvery. Worse still, even if you are sure they are brown, these brown Common Blue females look almost exactly like the Brown Argus - also seen regularly in gardens. Telling those two apart will be the subject of the next identification article.

Butterflies and moths are parasitized by a number of insects. The Small Tortoiseshell is mainly parasitized by Tachinid flies who lay their eggs on nettles near to where the caterpillars are feeding. The caterpillars eat the eggs which hatch into maggots who then eat the caterpillars from the inside. Small Tortoiseshell populations went into severe decline between 2003 and 2008 for reasons which are not entirely clear but were probably related to the invasion into the UK of *Sturmia bella*, a Tachinid fly, which, in turn, was probably related to global warming. This article is a study into the effect two parasitoids have on Small Tortoiseshell numbers.

## 2014: A Small Tortoiseshell Year

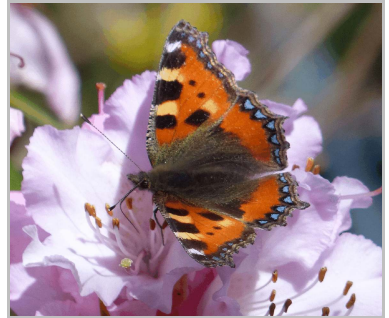
Stuart Hodges

After a number of poor years, the Small Tortoiseshell had a better year in 2014. My experience was that numbers had recovered considerably, but only to about half the number one would have expected to see in the early 1990s.

Previously I have written of my efforts to rear caterpillars through to adults, trying to monitor the impact that parasitoids are having - the difference between a parasite and a parasitoid is that a parasite lives on its host without killing it, whereas a parasitoid eventually kills its host. The Small Tortoiseshell is subject to attack from five different parasitoids of which the ones I have seen so far are *Sturmia bella* (*SB*) and *Phobocampe confusa* (*PC*) of the parasitic fly family *Tachinidae* and *Cotesia vanessae* (*CV*) of the family *Braconidae*. *SB* and *PC* usually emerge from the butterfly pupae as a single larva which quickly becomes a pupa, whereas *CV* usually emerges from the last caterpillar instar as a large number of smaller larvae which spin for themselves a wool-like cocoon in which they pupate some time later. *SB* arrived here from the Continent in 1998 and has spread widely since. A national scheme ran from 2008 to 2010 to monitor the spread and impact of this parasitoid.

In 2008, I constructed three cages from wooden offcuts and some net-curtain material and have monitored Small Tortoiseshells (*ST*) ever since. I usually collect caterpillars at the final instar, when they are fully-grown. Close by the house is a paddock with about 28 small patches of nettles that I am able to check, and by the house is another large patch.

Locally, the butterfly's cycle was delayed in



*Sturmia bella*



the wet summer of 2012. In August 2012 we had only seven groups of caterpillars, whereas in July 2013 we had 40, and during winter 2013/14 we had several more adult Small Tortoiseshells hibernating in the house and shed than usual. The foundations were set for better numbers!

Checking my diary for ST references, I noted on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2014: "Checked side field again - this year has an explosion of ST caterpillars". A few days later, when they had reached the final instar (i.e., after the last change of skin), I collected and caged two groups of 30 caterpillars for two local schools to observe, plus one group of 20 for myself. From my group, seven failed at the caterpillar stage (reason unknown), one caterpillar succumbed to the cotton-wool CV type parasitoid, one pupa succumbed to SB, and one released 11 adults (i.e., 55% of the caterpillars succeeded). Of the two groups that were taken to schools SB appeared in both and 25 adults (42%) were released.

During June I noticed higher numbers of Peacock caterpillars than for many years, so on 30<sup>th</sup> June I collected 35 from close to home and by 24<sup>th</sup> July I had released 31 adults (89%). Although Peacock caterpillars are supposed to be subject to the SB parasitoid, the only parasitoid to come from these was two PC.

The grass in the paddock was cut for silage on 9<sup>th</sup> June, and by 23<sup>rd</sup> July the young nettles were being browsed by vast numbers of ST caterpillars to the extent that there was insufficient nettle foliage to sustain some of them. With all the nettle leaves gone, some could be seen on grass presumably searching for more nettles. Over the whole paddock, more than 90% of the nettles had been eaten, just leaving the stems, and in each patch of nettles several cotton-wool CV parasitoids could be seen.

Again I collected three groups of 30: one group was passed to neighbours' children to observe, one to our own grandchildren, and a group collected a few days later to observe myself. By this time, the only ones I could find were by a stream on nettles that had not been cut earlier; these were a more evenly-sized group, because there were ample nettles here for the caterpillars.

From a total of 90 caterpillars, 14 adults emerged, 73 SB and several CV. From our daughter's group, 5 adults and 29 SB emerged, some of which were only half the size they usually are, probably due to undernourished caterpillars but maybe due to sharing the host.



In both 2013 and 2014, in my local patch I found the Small Tortoiseshell attempting a third life cycle. On 8th September I collected 74 second-instar caterpillars, which I removed from the paddock because with lower autumn temperatures their growth would have been slow, and a second cut of silage was imminent. I was able to hasten their progress by keeping them in the house, collecting nettles from where I removed the caterpillars, because *SB* only lays its eggs where caterpillars have been feeding. Eight died (reason unknown), 11 were lost to *CV*, 53 made it to adults (72%), but not one to *SB*, which is quite a puzzle.

As I write this, I have two Peacock and two Small Tortoiseshell butterflies hibernating in the outdoor shed, which is two fewer *ST* than this time last winter, but with such a small number one cannot make a prediction as to what we will be seeing in 2015.

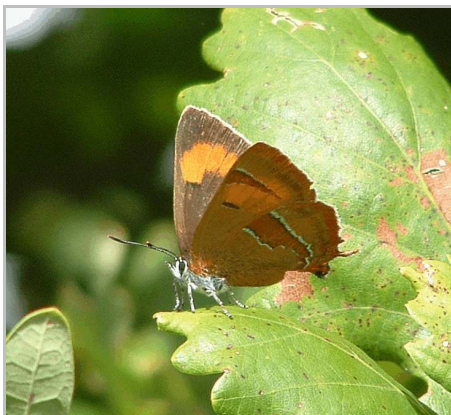
Although at the start of this venture I had little knowledge of how to proceed and what to expect, it has turned out to be an interesting exercise that I would recommend to anyone.

## The Brown Hairstreak in 2014

Dave Wilton

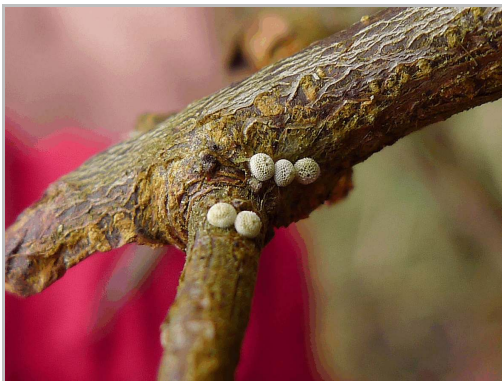
During 2014 our adult Brown Hairstreaks seemed to be even more elusive than usual because it was a poor year for sightings with just 64 individual butterflies seen (42 records from 20 different kilometre squares). The first was spotted quite early, on 16th July in Bernwood Forest near the epicentre of our population, while the final one was on 18th September in woodland towards the north-eastern edge of the map. This compares to the rather later season in 2013 when the first sighting was not until 31st July but butterfly activity continued into the first week of October (the final sighting was on the 4th). As usual, the majority of records in 2014 were from repeated visits to Otmoor and Whitecross Green Wood. However, the highlight of the season must be Marc Botham's discovery of an adult female at Little Wittenham, not far from Dorchester-on-Thames. This is so far south of the rest of our population that it won't fit onto my maps!

As usual, mapping the Brown Hairstreak's range was carried out by searching for its eggs because they are far easier to find than the butterfly itself. This was done across the full extent of our local population between the end of August 2014 and the end of March 2015



and more than 1,500 eggs were recorded by our happy band of volunteers. We were particularly busy early in the 'egging season' and about 50% of our efforts this winter had been completed even before the blackthorn leaves had dropped (it is well worth starting early in case of inclement weather in later months). Eighteen new kilometre squares were added, of which six were new tetrads (2km squares) and one a new 10km square. This compares to 13 new kilometre squares, six tetrads and no new 10km squares during the winter of 2013-14. Our local population is now known from 376 kilometre squares (or 124 tetrads) in 13 different 10km squares.

For a few years now it has been logistically impossible for us to get to every kilometre square in a season so we initially concentrate on achieving egg finds at the tetrad level, driving to a likely spot and finding an egg then moving on to the next tetrad. We were successful in all but six of our 124 tetrads this winter. However, eggs had been found in five of those six tetrads during the previous season so they are no great cause for concern. This leaves just the one which is giving us any difficulty and that is the area around Garsington to the south-east of Oxford where a single egg find in 2009 has unfortunately never been repeated.



Rushbeds Wood produced this find from a lazy female. *Phil Penson*

After more than ten years of intensive searching we can now be reasonably sure that we've mapped the core of our population. The edges must fluctuate from year to year depending upon how far our pioneering females manage to fly, but looking in areas outside the known range which in previous years have been searched unsuccessfully does bring in occasional new records and suggests that some expansion of range is taking place. The butterfly was found to the south of Thame, Oxon for the first time in 2013 and repeat egg finds were achieved in that area during 2014. The north-eastern corner of the map, in the area due to be affected by the HS2 high-speed rail development, received a lot of attention this season and several new kilometre squares were added there. They include a very welcome find of two eggs by Tony Croft at the northern end of the Calvert Jubilee Nature Reserve during a search there by BC and BBOWT volunteers. On the western side of the map there have been further finds to the west of the A34, including a particularly pleasing one by Wendy Wilson at Kirtlington which takes us into a new 10km square, while another discovery to the west of Wytham Wood by Tony Croft becomes our westernmost square.

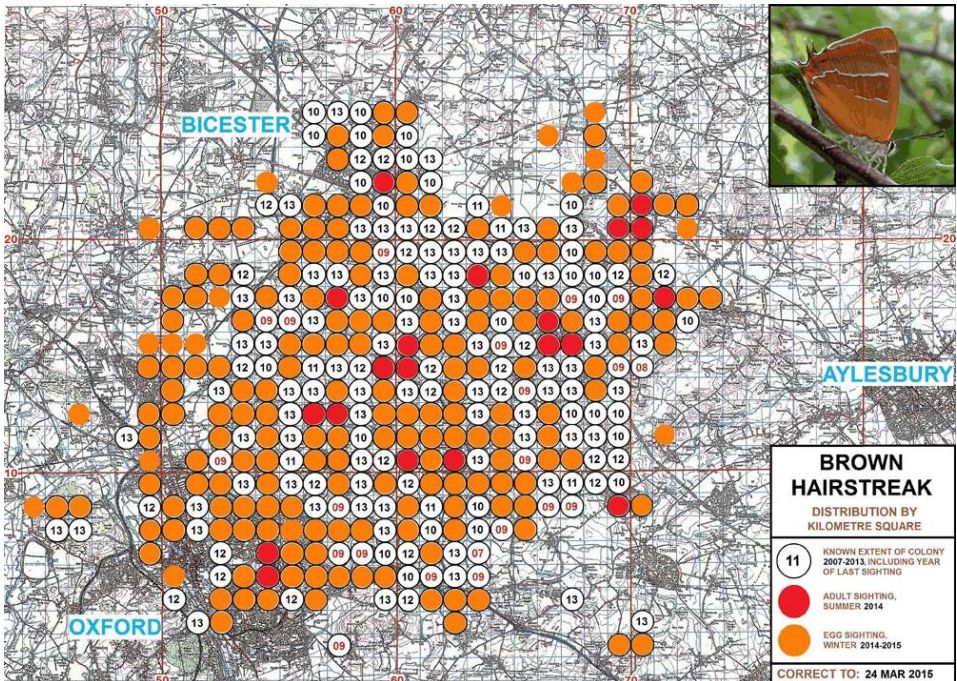
Once we had covered most of our tetrads, Wendy Wilson and I went back to



look at individual kilometre squares within the known range which were last 'egged' prior to 2010. At the start of the season they numbered more than 50 but have now been reduced to 21, all of which will be targeted again next year.

At four strategic sites we carry out annual 'egg transects', completing timed counts of specific hedgerows in an attempt to monitor the health of the population. The results were mixed but I think show that Brown Hairstreak had a relatively healthy year in 2014:

|                                     |                                       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Bernwood Meadows, Bucks             | 403 eggs (3rd best total in 11 years) |
| Otmoor, Oxon                        | 41 eggs (down from 70 last year)      |
| Rushbeds Wood & Lapland Farm, Bucks | 264 eggs (an average result)          |
| Shotover (Slade Camp), Oxon         | 44 eggs (3rd best total in 10 years)  |



Upper Thames Brown Hairstreak population by kilometre square, as at 24th March 2015

Our annual New Year's Day search at Otmoor produced fewer eggs than anticipated but at that site we only look at one particular hedge which was specifically planted by the RSPB to benefit the Brown Hairstreak. There is now so much young blackthorn in the scrubbed-up fields behind the hedge that the butterfly probably has too much good-quality foodplant to choose from! Otmoor is a special case, though, in that we monitor hatching and larval progress there, a job carried out meticulously each year by Shelagh Harlow and Wendy Wilson. During our search there this year we were accompanied by BBC South Today news reporter and cameraman Brennan Nicholls who filmed the proceedings as well as interviewing our illustrious chairman Nick Bowles.

In addition to the four transect sites, Steve Woolliams carried out a count at Doris Field Nature Park in urban Headington, Oxford where he found 87 eggs (a very good total although well down on the 212 from the previous season), while Phil Penson and Karen Saxl tackled the many hedgerows at Gavray Drive Meadows in Bicester, a site which is still under threat of development for housing. Despite the fact that almost all of the hedges there had been flailed to death they managed to find 181 eggs so this is still a core location for the north-west of our area.

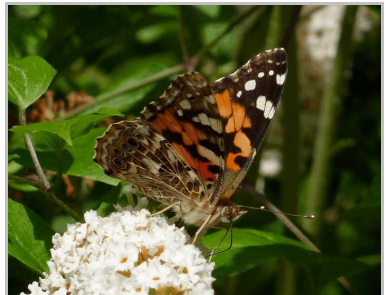
My grateful thanks go, not just to those already named, but to *everyone* who came out to help us with egg-searching during the winter of 2014-15. We'll be doing it all over again at the end of the year if you'd like to join us!

## Garden Survey Report for 2014

### Margaret Price

As I write this towards the end of February it is raining, windy and cold outside but it is a cheering thought to realize that the recording season starts once again in only two weeks time when hopefully the jet stream will have moved north to enable warm sunshine to arrive from the west. This was certainly the case in the early spring of 2013 when the 9th March was the first day many recorders sighted the emergence of the hibernators. However, for favoured spots they had already been recorded in January and February with the Small Tortoiseshell appearing on the 2nd January, four weeks earlier than the previous winter.

The recording season started well and looked promising but for many recorders and species it wasn't the best of years. Comments have been varied from 'overall somewhat disappointing especially during the autumn' to 'a good year'. Others have asked 'where are the Peacocks, Painted Ladies, Holly Blues and



Painted Lady

Orange Tips', and a comment that Small Tortoiseshells were 'scarce but making progress'. However, it was the Whites that did particularly badly. After the spectacular blizzard in 2013 they trickled down to a mere light drizzle, although one recorder noted Green-veined Whites did well in his garden.

Apart from Small and Large Whites, which appeared at virtually the same time as the previous year, all others that emerge in the spring were earlier by up to three weeks. Of the summer species, Essex Skipper, Meadow Brown and Small Heath were noted about the same time as last year whilst the others were seen up to several weeks earlier, seven in the case of Small Skipper. The exception was Common Blue which was the only species to be seen later. Of the migrants, Clouded Yellow was seen six weeks earlier and the last one eight weeks later. It was the second year running they had been recorded after a gap of three years. Painted Lady was three weeks earlier and five weeks later. The good autumn weather certainly suited these two species.

There was a very welcome improvement in the sightings of Small Tortoiseshells, the best since 2003 and 2004 and, prior to that, 1998. Ringlets and Silver-washed Fritillaries continue to do well despite being slightly lower than last year. Small Copper and Common Blue numbers continue to fluctuate. Small Skipper had its best year since 2003 and Marbled White sightings were the second highest in 10 years. It was extremely disappointing that no Purple Hairstreaks were recorded and Holly Blues were at their lowest for 20 years.



Small Heath

Overall Peacocks, together with Small Tortoiseshells, did well, sometimes exceptionally, with the former dramatically peaking in the week of 20th July and the latter peaking over a period of several weeks from the 6th July to 17th August. This was earlier for both species compared to 2013 when Peacocks peaked in the week of 4th August and Small Tortoiseshells the last two weeks of August. Perhaps this was due to the very dull, damp and cool conditions that were experienced for most of August. One recorder noted an 'explosion of Small Tortoiseshells both early and late'.

Highlights in the gardens included the finding of caterpillars of the continental race of the Swallowtail on fennel in the third week of July which emerged over a period of 10 days in September and caused great excitement. A 'nest' of Peacock caterpillars were seen in mid-September with some adults finally emerging, but sadly many were parasitized. An aberrant Peacock and Clouded Yellows cheered up one observer. A Dingy and Grizzled Skipper were seen for the first time in a garden near Reading. I always enjoy reading the notes recorders include with their forms together with photos. A highlight this year was a Purple Emperor and a Dark Green Fritillary on the same day in the same garden! How I wish we could spend every daylight hour in the garden observing the wildlife because we just do not know



what is about when we are not!

Moths were recorded in most gardens and one memorable sighting was a Jersey Tiger in mid-July. Scarlet Tigers were mainly seen in ones and twos, occasionally up to five, but on the 21st June there were 12-15 flying around in the early evening in one member's garden which must have been a fantastic sight. An exceptionally early Hummingbird Hawk Moth was seen on the 8th March but most were recorded from the week of 18th May to the week beginning 12th October. Cinnabar Moths were few and far between apart from one recorder who had over 20 in his garden over a period of several weeks. There were not many Silver Ys but several were found in moth traps.

There are now over 1,300 members of the UTB branch of Butterfly Conservation yet I am only receiving about the same number of garden butterfly forms each year, which equates to less than 10% of the membership although I also have non-members recording. This year there have been 16 new or lapsed recorders. Forty-five percent of recorders saw more species, up to six more, 24% recorded the same but 31% saw fewer, up to five fewer. The number of species seen each year is

about the same but the number of each species is dropping so it is important to try to grow butterfly friendly plants for all stages of their life cycles. Nectaring plants favoured in the spring are Primroses for Brimstones and Aubretia for Small Tortoiseshells. Buddleias continue to be a great favourite with most species of butterfly and also the Scarlet Tiger moth. Another popular plant is marjoram favoured by butterflies and the micro and pretty day flying *Pyrausta aurata* moth. Ivy in the autumn continues to be an excellent food source for Red Admirals although once again numbers were down.

I know that all those who record get a great deal of pleasure finding out what butterflies are in their gardens so hopefully more of you will be inclined to do the same. It doesn't matter how big or prolific your garden is because all records are important. So, please don't throw away the recording form you received with the Spring Newsletter but walk around your garden each week and fill it in! The more records received the more interesting the results become. Good luck and have fun.



Scarlet Tiger

Dave Maunder



*Pyrausta aurata*

## Garden survey data - percentage of recorders reporting species

|                       | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 | 2009 | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 | 2005 |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Peacock               | 100  | 98   | 96   | 85   | 89   | 100  | 96   | 99   | 96   | 92   |
| Small Tortoiseshell   | 97   | 94   | 84   | 78   | 81   | 93   | 61   | 79   | 82   | 88   |
| Red Admiral           | 97   | 84   | 98   | 97   | 86   | 93   | 94   | 96   | 99   | 97   |
| Orange Tip            | 96   | 93   | 93   | 96   | 87   | 86   | 80   | 84   | 89   | 97   |
| Small White           | 96   | 96   | 92   | 94   | 86   | 96   | 94   | 92   | 95   | 93   |
| Meadow Brown          | 93   | 92   | 87   | 76   | 79   | 81   | 80   | 82   | 93   | 90   |
| Large White           | 93   | 94   | 93   | 93   | 87   | 94   | 97   | 96   | 98   | 90   |
| Brimstone             | 92   | 98   | 99   | 96   | 89   | 97   | 87   | 96   | 99   | 98   |
| Speckled Wood         | 86   | 77   | 71   | 84   | 74   | 84   | 77   | 70   | 72   | 78   |
| Comma                 | 85   | 91   | 93   | 85   | 84   | 94   | 88   | 86   | 93   | 91   |
| Gatekeeper            | 84   | 84   | 81   | 79   | 86   | 89   | 87   | 89   | 92   | 93   |
| Green-veined White    | 71   | 79   | 62   | 75   | 74   | 73   | 64   | 70   | 66   | 69   |
| Ringlet               | 67   | 69   | 62   | 61   | 61   | 66   | 46   | 47   | 51   | 47   |
| Holly Blue            | 63   | 88   | 87   | 96   | 81   | 81   | 96   | 99   | 88   | 99   |
| Painted Lady          | 49   | 44   | 24   | 31   | 40   | 100  | 28   | 61   | 93   | 37   |
| Common Blue           | 48   | 53   | 33   | 55   | 73   | 54   | 39   | 30   | 56   | 57   |
| Small Skipper         | 48   | 44   | 26   | 25   | 31   | 31   | 20   | 32   | 45   | 42   |
| Marbled White         | 41   | 38   | 25   | 36   | 24   | 33   | 26   | 24   | 47   | 35   |
| Small Copper          | 36   | 38   | 16   | 31   | 50   | 33   | 19   | 29   | 52   | 29   |
| Large Skipper         | 33   | 37   | 36   | 46   | 39   | 33   | 25   | 28   | 31   | 36   |
| Silver-washed         | 21   | 24   | 12   | 9    | 23   | 10   | 4    | 1    | 13   | 3    |
| Essex Skipper         | 15   | 10   | 8    | 6    | 9    | 4    | 9    | 12   | 20   | 12   |
| Brown Argus           | 14   | 13   | 8    | 18   | 30   | 20   | 7    | 9    | 22   | 12   |
| Small Heath           | 12   | 17   | 15   | 19   | 10   | 7    | 12   | 13   | 14   | 8    |
| Clouded Yellow        | 5    | 7    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 6    | 0    | 1    | 11   | 2    |
| Dark Green Fritillary | 5    | 4    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 3    | 0    | 0    | 2    | 2    |
| Dingy Skipper         | 3    | 3    | 1    | 4    | 3    | 1    | 1    | 4    | 1    | 1    |
| Green Hairstreak      | 3    | 1    | 2    | 4    | 0    | 3    | 1    | 1    | 1    | 2    |
| Chalkhill Blue        | 2    | 5    | 1    | 1    | 4    | 3    | 0    | 1    | 7    | 8    |
| Small Blue            | 2    | 2    | 1    | 1    | 6    | 0    | 1    | 3    | 6    | 2    |
| White Admiral         | 2    | 1    | 1    | 3    | 3    | 0    | 0    | 5    | 5    | 2    |
| Grizzled Skipper      | 1    | 1    | 0    | 3    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 3    | 0    | 1    |
| Purple Emperor        | 1    | 1    | 0    | 1    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| White Letter          | 1    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 3    | 1    | 0    | 3    | 5    | 0    |
| Brown Hairstreak      | 1    | 0    | 2    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0    |
| Wall                  | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    |
| Purple Hairstreak     | 0    | 4    | 1    | 4    | 4    | 1    | 1    | 0    | 4    | 3    |
| Grayling              | 0    | 1    | 0    | 1    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 2    | 1    |
| Silver Spotted        | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Adonis Blue           | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 1    |
| Small P-b Fritillary  | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    |
| Camberwell Beauty     | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    | 0    |
| Duke of Burqundy      | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 1    |

|           |  |          |  |          |  |
|-----------|--|----------|--|----------|--|
| 100 - 90% |  | 89 - 70% |  | 69 - 50% |  |
|-----------|--|----------|--|----------|--|

### Flight periods 2014

| Class          | Species             | Earliest record | Latest record week beginning |
|----------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
| Hibernators    | Brimstone           | *15 February    | *31 October                  |
|                | Red Admiral         | *21 January     | *19 December                 |
|                | Small Tortoiseshell | *2 January      | *10 November                 |
|                | Peacock             | *16 February    | *29 November                 |
|                | Comma               | *24 February    | *9 November                  |
| New Generation | Small Skipper       | *5 May          | *30 August                   |
|                | Essex Skipper       | * July          | 24 August                    |
|                | Large Skipper       | *3 June         | *17 August                   |
|                | Large White         | *3 April        | *31 October                  |
|                | Small White         | *9 March        | *3 November                  |
|                | Green-veined White  | *8 April        | *16 October                  |
|                | Orange Tip          | *23 March       | *21 June                     |
|                | Small Copper        | *21 April       | *22 October                  |
|                | Common Blue         | *15 May         | *18 October                  |
|                | Holly Blue          | *31 March       | *25 October                  |
|                | Speckled Wood       | *6 April        | *20 October                  |
|                | Marbled White       | *15 June        | *2 August                    |
|                | Gatekeeper          | *12 June        | *14 September                |
| Meadow Brown   | *7 June             | *2 October      |                              |
| Ringlet        | *12 June            | *29 August      |                              |
| Small Heath    | *1 June             | *2 September    |                              |
| Migrants       | Clouded Yellow      | **8 June        | *30 October                  |
|                | Painted Lady        | *25 May         | *1 November                  |

\*definite date

\*\* during week beginning

For many recorders the first sightings of hibernators was on the 9 March.

We had a good mix of new and existing churchyards in 2014. Thank you to everyone who took part. Sixteen sites were in Berkshire, 30 in Buckinghamshire and 23 in Oxfordshire. The highest number of butterflies over four visits was 373 at Holy Trinity, Henley. The highest number of species was 17 at Cholsey and Stanford in the Vale (Oxon) and at Hardwick (Bucks). There were 16 species at Stone (Bucks), 15 at Ellesborough and Radnage (Bucks) and Whitchurch Hill (Oxon), and 14 species at Oxford (Cowley Road).

**New churchyards** included Iffley (Oxford) with 11 species. There were nine species at Sandhurst including Brown Argus (first in tetrad). Garsington had nine species and North Stoke had seven species.

**Small Tortoiseshell** had its best result for ten years, with 42 of the 69 sites recording them. Numbers were not high and only three sites had more than two or three adults per visit.

**Meadow Brown** was found on 78% of sites, although in low numbers. Most sites had under five per visit, often due to grass cutting.

**Gatekeeper** had consistent good numbers at Stanford in the Vale. Mid July visits produced 37 Gatekeeper at Stratfield Mortimer, 33 at Whitchurch Hill, 26 at Hardwick and 14 at Cowley Road.



Gatekeeper

**Holy Trinity, Henley** was good for brown butterflies in 2014, as in 2013. There were dozens in June and July, flying all over the churchyard and on wild flowers and grasses. In the long grass it was hard to count them – there could have been many more than the surveyor's estimate. There were reasonable numbers of brown butterflies in Cholsey and Radnage. At Grazeley there were 20 Ringlets and 15 Meadow Browns on 30th June, and 30 Ringlets at Wendover on 5th July.

**Holly Blue** was at its lowest level for ten years. Colnbrook had six on 4th May, other sites had ones and twos. There were some reports of ivy being removed due to concern about walls, so this may have affected Holly Blue. **Common Blue** had small numbers, with seven at Stone being the best for one visit. There was one **Chalkhill Blue** at Streatley but no **Small Blue** this year.



**Essex Skipper** had its best percentage since 2006. Maybe the weather was better, or are they more abundant? (Cholsey was the best site and has an area managed for butterflies). It could also be because we are better at identifying them! Good digital cameras are more affordable than ten years ago and identification help is better, both online and via the iRecord Butterflies app.



Essex Skipper

Unusual visitors were **Small Heaths** at Benson (Oxon) and Frieth (Bucks). A **Purple Hairstreak** egg was found on an oak tree on 19th January at Denham and two eggs at Iver on 16th February.

**Habitats:** best habitats as noted by surveyors were A (hedges and trees), C (area not mown) and D (mown once or twice). The desire for tidiness led to shorter grass and neater hedges than some surveyors would have wished. It is a difficult balancing act, with churches wanting to be tidy for weddings and burials, and some butterflies liking long grass and nettles! Some changes to mowing had a negative impact on butterfly numbers but in other places people are working together for a better churchyard. This collaboration has run for many years in a few locations with good results. In the past couple of years it is good to hear that more butterfly surveyors are working with their local church to establish wildlife-friendly areas.

## Milton Keynes and North Bucks churchyard surveyors needed

Are there any butterflies in Milton Keynes churchyards or in the far north of Bucks? We don't know, because no churchyards are being visited. That could change, if you have time to visit urban or village churches and cemeteries in May, June, July and August. The Spring UTB magazine has a recording form and the UTB website has a churchyard section with more information - look for our Facebook page at <http://goo.gl/yW1uUF>

If you would like to take part, please contact Helen Hyre at [small.skipper@btinternet.com](mailto:small.skipper@btinternet.com)

## Percentage of churchyards where species were seen in 2014, and comparison with previous years

| Year                     | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 | 2010 | 2009 | 2008 | 2007 | 2006 | 2005 |
|--------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>No. of Sites</b>      | 69   | 68   | 50   | 54   | 45   | 36   | 36   | 40   | 47   | 42   |
| Meadow Brown             | 78   | 81   | 66   | 56   | 56   | 78   | 81   | 70   | 87   | 86   |
| Small White              | 65   | 87   | 60   | 74   | 76   | 75   | 69   | 80   | 79   | 83   |
| Speckled Wood            | 62   | 54   | 26   | 46   | 47   | 72   | 69   | 55   | 49   | 60   |
| Small Tortoiseshell      | 61   | 47   | 14   | 22   | 29   | 44   | 11   | 25   | 19   | 33   |
| Gatekeeper               | 58   | 54   | 42   | 39   | 36   | 36   | 44   | 65   | 70   | 76   |
| Green-veined White       | 46   | 35   | 28   | 46   | 42   | 58   | 28   | 38   | 36   | 48   |
| Large White              | 45   | 81   | 32   | 67   | 60   | 89   | 75   | 60   | 79   | 95   |
| Red Admiral              | 43   | 22   | 36   | 52   | 36   | 28   | 42   | 65   | 70   | 50   |
| Brimstone                | 42   | 34   | 22   | 30   | 29   | 33   | 22   | 45   | 36   | 36   |
| Comma                    | 42   | 40   | 22   | 20   | 27   | 44   | 42   | 35   | 40   | 40   |
| Peacock                  | 42   | 43   | 12   | 19   | 24   | 44   | 36   | 38   | 36   | 36   |
| Ringlet                  | 42   | 44   | 50   | 28   | 40   | 53   | 31   | 35   | 17   | 26   |
| Orange-tip               | 39   | 37   | 32   | 52   | 33   | 42   | 22   | 28   | 43   | 31   |
| Small Skipper            | 23   | 18   | 10   | 6    | 9    | 22   | 25   | 15   | 43   | 33   |
| Common Blue              | 20   | 22   | 4    | 22   | 36   | 31   | 17   | 5    | 26   | 33   |
| Holly Blue               | 17   | 34   | 32   | 67   | 33   | 33   | 42   | 60   | 45   | 60   |
| Marbled White            | 16   | 16   | 10   | 13   | 13   | 8    | 14   | 18   | 32   | 12   |
| Essex Skipper            | 12   | 4    | 2    | 4    | 2    | 0    | 3    | 3    | 9    | 5    |
| Large Skipper            | 12   | 15   | 6    | 9    | 16   | 14   | 6    | 8    | 6    | 19   |
| Small Copper             | 12   | 13   | 12   | 19   | 18   | 17   | 11   | 13   | 15   | 12   |
| Brown Argus              | 6    | 4    | 2    | 17   | 2    | 8    | 3    | 0    | 6    | 0    |
| Painted Lady             | 4    | 4    | 2    | 0    | 9    | 56   | 3    | 5    | 26   | 5    |
| Purple Hairstreak        | 3    | 1    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 3    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Small Heath              | 3    | 4    | 4    | 0    | 2    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| Chalkhill Blue           | 1    | 0    | 2    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 2    | 0    |
| Small Blue               | 0    | 3    | 2    | 2    | 4    | 8    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 2    |
| Clouded Yellow           | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 2    | 0    |
| Silver-washed Fritillary | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 2    |      |      |      |      |      |

|           |  |          |  |          |  |
|-----------|--|----------|--|----------|--|
| 100 - 70% |  | 69 - 50% |  | 49 - 30% |  |
|-----------|--|----------|--|----------|--|

Since the last newsletter 41 new members have joined and the membership is now over 1,298. This is a slight decrease as several members have either lapsed or cancelled their membership. 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 the following new members who have joined since the last newsletter was published. All of you are welcome to join field meetings in the spring and summer.

**BERKSHIRE**

|                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Mr J Cooper                | East Ilsley, Newbury    |
| Mr & Mrs C Mather          | Sonning Common, Reading |
| Mrs L Hunter               | Tilehurst, Reading      |
| Ms S Maher                 | Northcourt, Reading     |
| Dr & Mrs D Kidd & Family   | Sunninghill, Ascot      |
| Mr & Mrs D Blows & Family  | Eton Wick, Windsor      |
| Mr & Mrs R Brimmer         | Wokingham               |
| Mr M Prior & Miss L Clarke | Windsor                 |
| Mr & Mrs C Bounds          | Kintbury, Hungerford    |
| Mr C Kelly                 | Earley, Reading         |

**BUCKINGHAMSHIRE**

|                            |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mr & Mrs A Hancock         | Radnage, High Wycombe          |
| Mr D Bennett & Miss A Nash | Monks Risborough               |
| Mr J Shaw                  | High Wycombe                   |
| Mrs H Price                | Winslow, Buckingham            |
| Miss H Ruth                | Aylesbury                      |
| Mr B Smith & Ms A Merton   | Cockmarsh, Bourne End          |
| Mrs N Das                  | Newport Pagnell                |
| Mr & Mrs G Blakey          | Hughenden Valley, High Wycombe |
| Mrs J Barnes               | Long Crendon, Aylesbury        |
| Miss I Newman              | Beaconsfield                   |

**OXFORDSHIRE**

|                                       |                            |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Mr P Hayter                           | Charlton, Banbury          |
| Mr D Griffiths                        | Wallingford                |
| Mr H Anderson-Elliott & Mrs R Elliott | Oxford                     |
| Miss W Hicks                          | Goosey, Faringdon          |
| Mr K Sheridan & Ms J Oldhouse         | Oxford                     |
| Mrs A Dillon                          | Aston Tirrold, Didcot      |
| Mr & Mrs R Leyland & Family           | Spelsbury, Chipping Norton |

**ELSEWHERE**

|              |                       |
|--------------|-----------------------|
| Mrs J Gammon | Abergwili, Carmarthen |
|--------------|-----------------------|

## Field Meetings

**Saturday 6th June 10.30am**

**Bradenham, Bucks**

A fairly flat walk to see a good colony of Small Blues and other spring species. Turn east off the A4010 at the Red Lion pub into Bradenham Wood Lane. Meet in the small car park on the left hand side of the road. Grid reference SU829972 on Landranger map 165.  
**Leader and contact Paul Bowyer 01625 526225.**

**Saturday 13th June 2.30pm and Sunday 14th June 11.00am**

**Holtspur Valley Reserves, Bucks**

Follow up meetings for a civic event in Beaconsfield and a chance to see our flagship reserve after all the winter conservation work. Meet at the Holtspur Bottom reserve entrance in Riding Lane. Grid reference SU918906 on Landranger map 175  
**Saturday leader and contact Brenda Mobbs 01494 712486**  
**Sunday leaders and contacts Peter and Tess Ogden 01628 528297**

**Tuesday 16th June 11.00am**

**Salcey Forest, Northamptonshire**

A joint meeting with the Beds and Northants branch. About a mile from the Bucks border to see the Wood White. Meet at the "Horsebox" car park on Midshires Way. Grid reference SP801509 on Landranger map 152  
**Leader and contact Doug Goddard 01604 408670**

**Saturday 20th June 11.00am**

**Finemere Wood, Bucks**

Our Black Hairstreak champion leads a walk to see his butterfly. Meet at the reserve entrance on the Edgcott to Quainton Road. Grid reference SP 720209 on Landranger map 165  
**Leader and contact Stuart Hodges 01296 730217**

**Wednesday 24th June 10.30am**

**Small Dean Lane and Park Wood near Saunderton, Bucks**

Help monitor the progress of the Duke of Burgundy reintroduction on these sites. Learn how to identify larval food plant damage on cowslips and primroses. Heading north along the A4010, turn right at Saunderton into Smalldean Lane. Proceed for just under a mile meet at the N.T. car park on the right. Grid reference SU823989 on Landranger map 165.  
**Leader Sarah Meredith. Contact Paul Bowyer 01625 526225.**

**Saturday 27th June 10.am**

**Iver, Bucks**

A morning walk in the village to see summer butterflies. Meet in Swan Road next to the Swan pub in Iver. Grid reference TQ039812 Landranger map 176  
**Leader and contact Wendy Wilson 01753 883465**



**Sunday 28th June 9.30am**

**Horsenden Hill, Middlesex**

An early start to look for the White-letter Hairstreak in a neighbouring county. Meet in Horsenden Farm car park off Horsenden Lane North, Greenford. Grid reference TQ163839 on Landranger map 176. Public transport 5 mins walk north from Perivale tube station. Bus 297 from Ealing Broadway, 2 mins walk north from the bus stop at the junction of Horsenden Lane South and Bilton Road. Terrain is a little uneven, insect repellent is advisable.  
**Leader and contact Paul Bowyer 01628 526225**

**Saturday 4th July 9.30 am**

**Bowdown Woods, Berks**

A field trip to try to see the White Admiral led by its champion. Meet at the BBOWT reserve car park. Grid reference SU501655 on Landranger map 174.  
**Leader and contact Julia Huggins 07879066876**

**Sunday 5th July 11am**

**Silchester Common, Hampshire**

Only just in Hampshire, this is a reliable site for the Silver Studded Blue. The ground is uneven so wear suitable footwear. There is a lot of gorse so it is advisable to wear long trousers. Meet in the car park on the west side of Pamber Road in Silchester. Grid reference SU625622 Landranger map 175.  
**Leader and contact Bryan Williams 0118 9792177, mobile 07919921910**

**Saturday 11th July and Sunday 12th July 10.30**

**Bernwood Forest, Bucks**

A good day out for butterfly watching with the main attractions:- Purple Emperor and Dennis Dell its U.T.B. champion. Meet in the main Oakley Wood car park. Grid reference SP611117 on Landranger map 164.  
**Leader and contact Dennis Dell 01296 397039**

**Saturday July 18th 10.30am**

**The Holies, Berks**

It is a long time since the branch visited this site. Summer butterflies and day flying moths. Steep slopes. Meet at the National Trust car park off the A4009 at the top of the hill out of Streatley. O/S grid reference SU583807 on Landranger map 174.  
**Leader and Contact Jan Haseler 0118 9414750**

**Sunday July 19th 10.30am**

**North Bucks Way, Bucks**

Summer butterflies in an area we have ignored recently. Meet Shenley Wood car park off V2 Tatternhoe Street Milton Keynes. Grid reference 824357 on Landranger map 152.  
**Leader and Contact Martin Kincaid 01908 235362**

**Tuesday July 21st 10am**

**Pitstone Hill, Bucks**

Pitstone Hill is part of the Ivinghoe hills and has very similar butterfly species. It has spectacular views but also some very steep slopes and uneven ground. Car park is at grid reference SP 954149 on Landranger map 165. Note that there is a height restriction barrier. The single track road needs to be tackled carefully. The safest route is probably via Aldbury. We will gather just inside the National Trust property (i.e. out of the car park) on the hill and walk for approx. 2 hours to enjoy the butterflies, day-flying moths and the flora. Participants could walk over to Ivinghoe Beacon in the afternoon (approx.30 minutes walk to the north east or to Aldbury Nowers approx. 30 minutes to the south west) but this would be a personal decision, not a guided walk.

**Leader and contact Nick Bowles 01442 382276**

**Saturday July 25th 3.00pm**

**Hagbourne, Oxfordshire**

An afternoon walk along part of the disused railway line which runs from Didcot to Newbury.

Meet at the car park next to Hagbourne village hall in East Hagbourne. East Hagbourne is a mile to the south of Didcot on the B4016. At East Hagbourne turn west. The village hall is at the far end of the village.

Grid reference 524884 on Landranger map 174.

**Leader and contact Karen Saxl 01235 818574**

**Sunday July 26th 10.30am**

**Oven Bottom, Oxfordshire**

Butterflies of high summer.

From the A417 a mile east of Blewbury turn south along the narrow lane opposite the turning to Aston Upton village. Park and meet by the grain drier half a mile along the lane. Grid reference SU550884 on Landranger map 174. Steep chalk slopes. The walk will proceed to the near end of "Juniper Valley" then bear right up the hill, turn right onto Grim's Ditch by the dew pond and then on to Oven Bottom returning by descending "Juniper Valley".

**Leader and contact Malcolm Brownsword 01235 850668.**

**Sunday 2nd August 10.30am**

**Hackpen Hill (also known as Crowhole Bottom, Devil's Punchbowl) Oxon**  
Chalk Carpet and summer butterflies. Steep slopes requiring suitable footwear. Meet at The Ridgeway car park at Sparsholt Firs on the B4001 grid reference SU343850 on Landranger Map 174. The site itself is at grid reference SU355847.

**Leaders and Contacts: Mike and Gillian Taylor 01235 751646**

**Saturday 8th August 11.00am**

**Holtspur Valley Reserves, Bucks**

Summer butterflies, hopefully Chalkhill Blue at our own reserve.

Meet at the Holtspur Bottom reserve entrance in Riding Lane.

Landranger map 175 grid reference SU918906

Leader and contact Brenda Mobbs 01494 712486

**Sunday August 9th 11.00am**

**Aston Rowant, National Nature Reserve, Bucks/Oxon borders**

A walk to see the Silver-spotted Skipper on prime chalk downland. Plenty of other butterflies should be present. Very steep grass slopes. Meet at the

N.N.R. car park off the Stokenchurch to Christmas Common road.

Grid reference SU731967 on Landranger map 165.

Leader and contact: Paul Bowyer 01628 526225

**Friday August 14th 10.00am**

**Whitecross Green Wood, BBOWT reserve, Bucks/Oxon borders**

A trip to see the Brown Hairstreak in a delightfully quiet nature reserve.

After all our egg hunts let's see if we can see the adult butterfly.

Meet in the reserve car park just off the Murcott to Boarstall road.

Grid reference SP599149 Landranger map 164.

Leader and contact Wendy Wilson 01753 883465

**Saturday 15th August 10.30am** **Lardon Chase, National Trust reserve, Berks**

The second brood of the Adonis Blue should be seen with other summer butterflies. Very steep grass slopes. Meet at the National Trust car park off the A4009 at the top of the hill out of Streatley.

Grid reference SU583807 on Landranger map 174

Leader and contact Maureen Cross 01491 871239

**Sunday 23rd August 11.00am**

**Wishmoor Bottom Berks (MoD "Barossa" training area)**

A reliable place to see the Grayling. The site is open heathland and is part of the Thames Basin Heaths' Special Protection Area. Directions: From the A30

at the eastern end of Camberley there are traffic lights by a VW dealer

(Martin's). Kings Ride is opposite the VW dealer. Go straight up King's Ride to the end (about 0.75 mile) and park at the road side.

Grid reference SU875621 on Landranger map 175

Leader and contact Des Sussex 01344 772000 mobile 07747 472494

**Sunday August 30th 11.00am**

**Bernwood Forest, Bucks**

Autumnal butterflies at the end of season.

O/S grid reference SP611117 Landranger map 164

Leader and contact Paul Bowyer 01628 526225

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

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

## Upper Thames Branch Website

[www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk](http://www.upperthames-butterflies.org.uk)

Have your butterfly sightings and photos posted on the website by sending them to: [wendy.campbell@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:wendy.campbell@tiscali.co.uk)

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

Follow us on Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/Butterflies.Berkshire.Buckinghamshire.Oxfordshire>  
and Twitter  
[@UpperThamesBC](https://twitter.com/UpperThamesBC)

Holtspur Bottom Reserve  
<http://www.holtspurbottom.info>

## Upper Thames Branch Officers

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