

Hairstreak

No 94

Autumn 2015



Butterfly
Conservation



Upper Thames
Branch

Autumn Moths



Vestal



Lilac Beauty



Dusky-lemon Sallow



Yellow-line Quaker



Orange Sallow



Marbled White Spot



Green-brindled Crescent

All photographs are by Dave Wilton

Articles and photographs for inclusion in this newsletter are welcome. Photographs should be sent as separate files and not embedded in the text.

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

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Cover photo: Holly Blue by David Ferguson

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE, registered in England & Wales (2206468)

Registered Office: Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5QP

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

Hopefully, you've all had some exciting encounters with butterflies this summer. For some it will be their very first sighting of a species, or a species seen in the garden for the first time. For me the most exciting thing is finding rare species of butterflies and moths in new places and seeming to represent new colonies. I had the great pleasure of seeing a male Chalkhill Blue at BBOWT's College Lake last week flying around a patch of Horseshoe Vetch (its larval foodplant) that Upper Thames Branch members planted there last millennium. It seemed to signal a new colony. Then two days later I was viewing both Dark Mullein plants that members have grown and caterpillars of the Striped Lychnis on our Holtspur Bottom reserve – eating Dark Mullein plants. On my previous visit there, the commonest butterfly was Small Blue, another species which has colonised following our preparations for it.

Yesterday I was at a meeting discussing the creation of habitats for the rarest hairstreaks with Network Rail. They are working with our species champions to design new habitats (hopefully as good as the M40 compensation area – probably the country's densest Black Hairstreak colony) and next week I shall be helping check for the presence of the Duke of Burgundy at a site we hope the species has colonised this summer (after our work to make it suitable over the last two winters).

It is pleasing to see rare species surviving despite all the odds against them and totally wonderful to see them doing so because of our efforts. Thank you to everyone who has helped in any of the myriad ways that members find to help. I hope you share my thrill in knowing that we are making a real difference.

Changing tack, you will soon have the option to take this newsletter in an electronic form. We spend hours creating it and we want you to enjoy receiving it. I know many say it is easier to read in paper form and that will continue to be possible, but as more of us move to electronic devices (and as postage keeps on rising) we will make it possible to choose to move to an electronic version; perhaps more suited to your lifestyle and certainly making a difference to our coffers.

Speaking of making a difference, there are several tasks that we could use a hand with. Here is a flavour of a few of them: If you have reasonable computer skills you could do a really helpful job transcribing the information from the butterfly sightings page of the UTB website into an excel spreadsheet so that we capture all the information there for our records (we have no automated method to do this). Maybe you have social skills and like chatting on the phone? We would love a volunteer who wants to chat to our members, to see what they would like



Chalkhill Blue

from the society. Maybe you can come along to our Members' Day and help arrange chairs before we start? It would really help the few that do it now. Or perhaps you could take some pictures at that or any of our other various events. We need images for our media presence (Facebook, Twitter and the website). Any one with basic gardening skills could help us with the ever increasing range of butterfly and moth food plants we grow from seed and if you like to walk around outdoors, observing butterflies, then we have an opportunity for someone to visit a biological rich, private woodland near Quainton, North Bucks once a month, to report on the butterflies and moths they see there. If that interests you please contact Hilary (hilary@bucksbatgroup.org.uk). For all the other tasks please contact me (see contact details on back cover).

May I thank all of you once again for your fantastic support? Without your literally tens of thousands of records and thousands of hours of volunteer effort hundreds of our rarest butterflies and moths would, quite simply, not exist. Hopefully the sight of the many butterflies in your garden this summer and autumn will be reward enough for your help in making us probably the most effective small conservation body around.

Please submit all surveying records

The recorders are listed below

Garden butterfly recording - Margaret Price (gardener_price@hotmail.com)

Churchyard butterfly recording - Helen Hyre (small_skipper@btinternet.com)

Site recording and **general** (atlas) surveying - Jim Asher (jim.asher@btinternet.com)

10 km square coordinator - Jan Haseler (jan.haseler@btinternet.com)

Transect recording on key sites - Mike Wilkins (mikeawilkins@googlemail.com)

Wider countryside recording (random 1km squares)
Records can be entered online at <http://www.ukbms.org/wcbs>
or sent to Mike Wilkins at (mikeawilkins@googlemail.com)

Single species recording - individual species champions

Moth records from moth traps and all other sightings should be sent to the relevant vice-county recorders:

Berks: Martin Harvey (kitnetter@googlemail.com)

Bucks: Martin Albertini (malbertini@onetel.com)

Oxon: Martin Townsend (martin.townsend@ntlworld.com)

Butterfly Conservation - Upper Thames Branch
Members' Day & Annual General Meeting
Saturday 31st October
St Peter's Church Hall, Church Road, Earley, Reading, RG6 1EY

PROGRAMME

09:45	Doors Open - Registration and Coffee	
10:30	Introduction and Welcome	Nick Bowles
10:35	Review of Upper Thames Butterflies in 2015	Nick Bowles
10:55	Review of Upper Thames Moths in 2015	Marc Botham
11:15	Monitoring Brown Hairstreak and other canopy species	Tom Brereton
11:55	Do the egg-cellent Speckled Wood mothers know best?	Casper Breuker
12:35	Lunch	
	Vote in our annual photographic competition, have a go at the quiz, buy raffle tickets, and view the displays. Richard Lewington will be selling his artwork, and Pemberley Books will have a bookstall.	
14:00	BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING	
	Agenda	
	1 Apologies for absence	
	2 Minutes of last AGM and matters arising	
	3 Chairman's Report	
	4 Treasurer's Report and approval of accounts	
	5 Election of Officers	
	6 Any Other Business	
14:30	Holtspur Bottom Reserve – latest news	Tony Gillie
14:50	All the UK butterflies in a year – by cheating	Martin Davies
15:45	Tea and raffle	
16:25	Photographic Competition Results	David Dennis
	Quiz results and winner	
16:50	Round Up of the Day and Closing remarks	Nick Bowles

Members' Day Speakers

Dr Tom Brereton completed a PhD on the ecology and conservation of the Grizzled Skipper butterfly in 1997 and has subsequently worked for Butterfly Conservation. He is currently Head of Monitoring and manages the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme for BC. Tom is also involved in research and monitoring of seabirds and cetaceans and Research Director for the charity Marinelife.

Dr Casper J. Breuker is a senior lecturer in biology at Oxford Brookes University. The main aim of his research is to investigate how butterflies such as Speckled Woods adapt to environmental change, in particular the underlying developmental mechanisms.

Martin Davies was one of the co-founders, and for 27 years a co-organiser, of Birdfair at Rutland Water. He worked for the RSPB for 35 years, heading the International Funding Unit, where his team secured many large grants for conservation projects in the UK and worldwide. As well as contributing to butterfly and moth recording in Huntingdonshire, he is a committee member of Butterfly Conservation's European Interests Group. He travels widely throughout Europe in search of butterflies every year and has taken part in many EIG surveys, including most recently the international efforts to save the Danube Clouded Yellow in Romania.

Speakers from Upper Thames

Nick Bowles is Chair of Upper Thames BC. He is our Chalkhill Blue species champion and a voluntary Conservation Officer for Bucks. Nick is also a regular contributor to the columns of British Wildlife magazine.

Tony Gillie is a member of the Upper Thames BC committee and has been instrumental in a number of initiatives relating to Holtspur Bottom, including its dedicated website.

Marc Botham of the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology at Wallingford processes the records from all the butterfly transects in the UK to determine trends in numbers and other important indicators of the status of our species.

Directions to Earley St Peter's Church Hall, Reading, RG6 1EY, SU745721

By road:

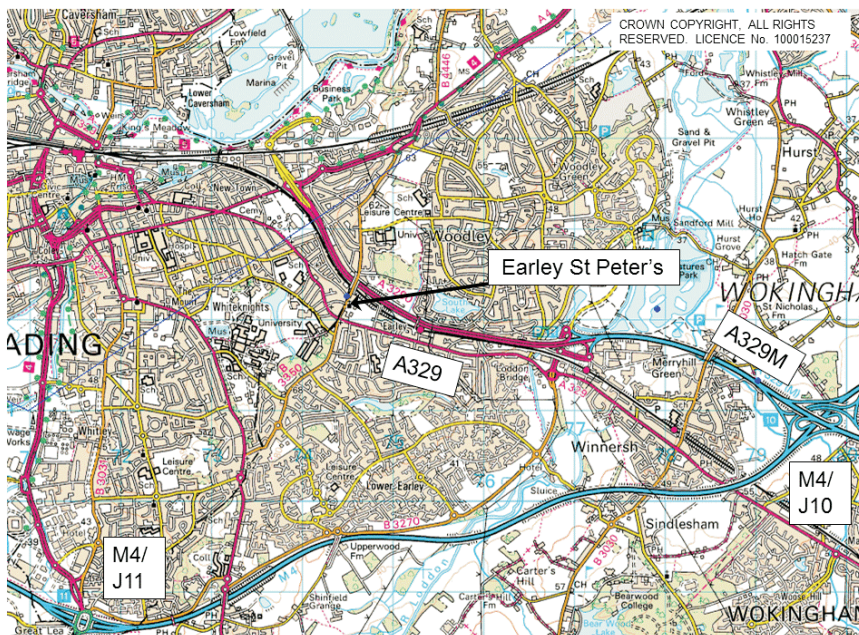
From M4 Junction 10, follow the signs to Reading (East) north-west along the A329M. Leave the A329M at the first exit, signed Winnersh and Woodley. At the first roundabout, take the 3rd exit (signed A329); at the second roundabout take the 1st exit and at the third roundabout take the 3rd exit (A329, signed to Earley). Continue east along the A329 for about 2 miles to a crossroads with traffic lights. Turn right into Church Road (B3350) and St Peter's Church is on the right after about 200 yards.

By public transport:

Exit Reading Station on the south (town centre) side, turn left along Forbury Road for about 50 yards, then turn right into Blagrove Street, where bus stop EO is on the left hand side of the road. Take the Number 17 bus, which runs every 8 mins. Get off at the last stop (the Three Tuns pub), turn left at the crossroads into Church Road and St Peter's is on the right after 200 yards. The bus fare is £1.90 single, £3.70 return, with no change given.

Parking:

St Peter's Church Hall has a limited amount of parking. We hope also to be able to use the Primary School playground as an overflow car park (it is on the same side of the road, about 100 yards away), but have so far been unable to confirm the arrangement with the school. Please check the Upper Thames website closer to the date.



I'm writing this in mid-July with the rain pouring down – in fact, right now it's being blown sideways! After two rather good summers on the bounce, we seem to be back to something sadly familiar, so you may need to be quick to take any fleeting opportunities to use your camera, but please get outdoors, dodge the showers, and set your sights on this year's photo competition for Members' Day.

New rule!

As last year, you can enter a maximum of ten images in total across all categories, **but in the case of UK Butterflies, it's now a maximum of just six (so look out your very best!).**

There will be prizes for the most popular photos in each category, and an additional prize for 'best in show'. All photos entered should be prints, taken in the wild since last year's Members' Day. Please write the photographer's name and telephone number on the back, plus the category being entered (see below). Mounting on card, and adding a title, can enhance any photo, but this is optional.

As usual, there will be two separate competitions, and the winners in each will be selected by popular vote:

1. Members' competition – open to all members (apart from recent winners of the overall 'best in show' prize, who have been individually notified.)

There will be **five** categories, as shown below.

1. UK butterflies 2. Overseas butterflies 3. Moths 4. Immature stages

All photos entered for these first four categories should be **without digital alteration**. For this purpose, 'digital alteration' means making changes to the subject matter content of the image by digital means – such as removing or replacing parts of the image, deleting grass stems or blemishes. It does **not** preclude the use of cropping, brightness and contrast adjustments, or some degree of sharpening that happens anyway in most cameras and printers. All these are allowed.

5. Digital creativity

Last year we trialled a new category for images that were **deliberately** digitally altered for artistic effect. There were not many entries, but we're going to give it one more go!

This is your opportunity to be really creative and show the beauty of our insects in a very different way. Alterations to lighting, background and colour – or using distortion, collage, superimposed images or anything else you can think of – are all specifically encouraged in this category. What about a purple Orange-tip or a scattergun of Marbled Whites?

All Members' Competition prints should be a maximum of 7"x 5" including mount.

2. Recent Winners' Competition

Recent overall winners of the members' competition have put on an inspiring display in recent years, and we are again asking each of them to contribute any 6 prints, preferably mounted on grey card, with an overall maximum size, including mount, of 12"x10".

Finally, I would like to clarify that by entering our competitions, you are giving UTB permission to use any of your images in our newsletters or electronic media. So get your creative and technological juices flowing and help us to create an even better display than last year – in spite of the weather!!

Members' Day Lunch and Tea

Your food offerings are welcome!

In the hope that we can continue to feed everyone at lunchtime and teatime on Members' Day, I am asking again ALL members who are attending on the day to bring along a contribution. It can be either savoury or sweet. If possible, it would be helpful if you could let me know what you might bring during the week before the meeting. Also, if you could help behind the scenes, please do come and see us in the kitchen. I look forward to hearing from you and to seeing you on the day.

Gillian Oldfield – 01993 891565 (all messages left on the answer-phone will be listened to!)

A plea for photographs

Once again the Editor is seeking photographs. The lack of photographs from members means that the cover photo is, once again, the Editor's. Also, there are no photos of butterflies taken at field meetings. This is an unsatisfactory state of affairs. This publication would like to be inclusive so any appropriate photo is welcome. All will, of course, be credited.

Surveying for Striped Lychnis caterpillars at our Holtspur Bottom Reserve Tony Gillie

As some of you will know, we have a small population of the nationally scarce Striped Lychnis moth on our reserve at Holtspur Bottom. Since the adult moth rarely comes to light traps, the best way of estimating numbers is by counting the caterpillars on their food plant, Dark Mullein during July and August when they're easy to find. Last year, Dave Wilton counted them for us while he was moth trapping at the reserve, and discovered 36 caterpillars in all.

This year we were delighted to welcome Elaine and Matt who wanted to survey our Dark Mullein plants to see how many Striped Lychnis caterpillars we had, and where. Elaine is doing a Higher National Diploma in Field and Conservation Ecology, looking in part at how factors such as size of plant, proximity of other plants, leaf size, number of flower spikes and so on affect the number of Striped Lychnis caterpillars present. She currently works for BBOWT, and came to our reserve to conduct the survey on her day off! After several hours of meticulously searching every single Dark Mullein flower spike on the reserve and recording its exact location with GPS, they arrived at a total of 34 caterpillars, having found 42 flowering plants. Although this is two fewer caterpillars than we found last year, it was a relief to find the numbers were comparable, given the low numbers of flowering Dark Mullein plants we had on the reserve this year.

Apart from counting caterpillars on our own reserve, there is also a wider survey of Striped Lychnis caterpillars taking place this year, following detailed surveys in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire in both 2005 and 2010, and it will be interesting to see whether the results from Holtspur mirror the population trend in the rest of our region.

We're still hoping to be able to boost the numbers of this scarce moth in our area. One of the ways we are trying to do this both on our reserve at Holtspur, and more widely in the Holtspur Valley is by providing more Dark Mullein plants, and I described this project in the Spring 2015 Newsletter (No 92). I'm delighted to say that at the time of writing, we have already planted around 200 more Dark Mulleins on our reserve, and we probably have at least another 100 plants to put in later in the Autumn. On the other side of the valley, both Holtspur School and Holtspur Bank Local Nature Reserve have planted Dark Mullein, and several people with gardens and



allotments in the area also took advantage of our offer of free seeds to grow plants for themselves.

Hopefully next year we'll have many more flowering Dark Mullein plants both on the reserve itself, and in the surrounding area. Fingers crossed we also have lots more caterpillars. We'll let you know in due course!

If you'd like to help us in this ongoing project by growing some plants, please contact either Tony Gillie (tony.gillie@gmail.com) or Nick Bowles (and see Nick's request in his *Chairman's Notes* for help with growing other plants from seed for our Holtspur Reserve). For more information on Striped Lychnis, see <http://holtspurbottom.info/stripedlychnis.html>







Elaine and Matt

Tony Gillie

In the last issue we dealt with the identification of the two types of blue butterfly most commonly seen in gardens, Holly Blue and Common Blue.

Both male and female Holly Blue and male Common Blue are blue on their upper surfaces. If they sit still and show you their upper wings their separation is fairly easy. However, more rarely, but still an annual garden visitor for most of us, is the Brown Argus. Telling the female Common Blue apart from the near identical male and female Brown Argus presents a trickier identification puzzle.

Common Blue		Brown Argus	
<p>Circular black dots in a smooth arc on the hind wing and usually some red crescents, on a pale brown or silvery background. 'Extra' black dot on forewing.</p>			<p>Circular black dots in an irregular arc on the hind wings. Usually the red crescents, are larger and only on a silvery background.</p>
<p>Female</p> <p>Sometimes has a bluish tinge near her body.</p>			<p>Male & female</p> <p>Both sexes look near identical to female Common Blue, however the Brown Argus never has any blue.</p>

A good way to separate the two is by watching the behaviour of potential Brown Argus butterflies. Female Common Blue butterflies are normally seen on flowers, in low vegetation and on the ground, or egg laying on birds-foot trefoil, medicks and clovers in very short turf. Female Brown Argus are similarly seen on flowers but eggs are laid on rockrose and cranesbill species of plant in very low turf.

In flight Brown Argus males look very similar to the female Common Blue but these males will deliberately chase other insects from a favoured patch. Females

do not do this. Male Brown Argus can easily be spotted by this frequent behaviour.

You may also notice that in flight despite the brown upper surfaces, female Common Blues seem bluish; both sexes of Brown Argus seem a more greenish shade of blue.

We suspect that the Brown Argus is under-recorded in gardens because it is so similar to the Common Blue. Please take the opportunity to examine all those brown 'Blue' butterflies carefully and then report them, to help us build a more accurate picture of butterfly distribution.

Leave a butterfly behind

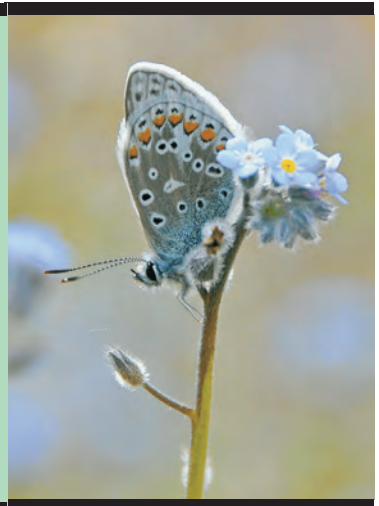
Writing a Will is about protecting the things most precious to you.

After you have taken care of your family and friends please consider leaving a gift to Butterfly Conservation.

We promise your gift will be used to protect butterflies and moths and the place they live, making the environment a healthier place and allowing future generations to take delight in our natural world.

Make your legacy the flutter of wings in a wildflower meadow.

Remember Butterfly Conservation in your Will.



For more information about leaving a gift to Butterfly Conservation and sharing your love of butterflies and moths with future generations please contact Helen Corrigan on 01273 453313 or hcorrigan@butterfly-conservation.org
Alternatively please write to Helen at Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard,
East Lulworth, Wareham, BH20 5QP

From now on, all references to a micro-moth in this publication will include the English name. The reasons for this decision are outlined in the following article.

English names for micro-moths

David Ferguson

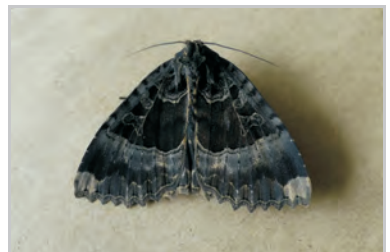
Inexplicably, the excellent *The Aurelian Legacy*, which is a history of British butterfly and moth collecting, fails to describe how the wondrous names of our moths came about. And those names are indeed wondrous. Open a British moth identification guide and you are amongst a crowd of quakers, conformists, non-conformists, rustics, ushers and footmen. The inanimate is represented by carpets, clays, darts and daggers while who can resist a Frosted Orange? The inspired character of our moth names can perhaps best be summed up by the German name for the large moth *Mormo maura* whose English translation is Black Underwing - efficient but boring. We call it Old Lady because it looks remarkably like a Victorian lady in a sombre crinoline.

I believe the naming involved copious amounts of alcohol. The Aurelian Society and its eventual successor the London Entomological Society would have had a Naming Committee whose job it was to give English names to the species discovered since the last meeting. These meetings would have taken place in a tavern where ale and wine would be taken as they went through the list, and as the evening wore on so the names would get more and more fantastical. Thus, that pair of tongue-twisting and mind-bending names, the Brown-line Bright-eye and the Bright-line Brown-eye would have received their names amidst gales of laughter towards the end of a long and convivial evening. Also only a drunken haze could have inspired the surreality of the names Lutestring, Vapourer and Pug. There were signs of existential angst,

though. The Confused and the Uncertain indicate the difficulties of identification (my wife thinks there should be a moth called the Bewildered, having witnessed my efforts at identification) while Maiden's Blush and True Lover's Knot indicate a certain sentimentality among the Committee.



Common Footman



Old Lady

Alas, very little of this was applied to the naming of micro-moths. We have Mother-of-Pearl, Tapestry Moth, the Erminals, various House-moths but not much else. Thus we were lumbered with the scientific names.

If my response is anything to go by, the publication of *Field Guide to the Micro-moths of Great Britain and Ireland* triggered a great change in the recording of these species. Before this wonderful book appeared, my identification of micros consisted of a cursory glance, an identification if it was something very easy, otherwise it was a quick release into the garden. Now I have a go. Sometimes identification is surprisingly easy, sometimes it is a slog, and sometimes it is impossible which is then a recourse to the expertise of members who know a lot more about micros than I do. But all this means that I am now recording micros whereas before I didn't. I suspect I am one among many.

The publishers and authors of the book missed a trick though. With a few exceptions, the moths in the book only have scientific names which is, I suggest, a turn-off for many potential recorders. It isn't as if English names don't exist because they do. The National Biodiversity Network website (<https://data.nbn.org.uk/>) has them. These names don't have the joyous flair of many of the macro moth names but their advantages over the scientific names are obvious. English names usually have a meaning, they can be remembered, they are less intimidating and they can be pronounced. Who can say *Pseudargyrotoza conwagana* first time of asking? But the English name is easy - Yellow-spot Twist.

This name also imparts the useful information that the moth has yellow spots; the scientific name tells you nothing. I first found *Epiblema sticticana* a couple of years ago at a landfill site and after some effort identified it to my own satisfaction. The identification process would have been a lot shorter if the English name had been in the book. It is Coltsfoot Bell. The moth was sitting on a Coltsfoot leaf, one of thousands at the site.

The argument that scientific names are more stable than English names is plain wrong. *Pieris napi*, the scientific name of Green-veined White in my youth, is now *Artogeia napi*. The Peacock's scientific name has gone from *Nymphalis io* to *Inachis io*. In contrast, no British species of butterfly has changed its English name for well over a century.

So there we are. I propose abolishing the use of scientific names for micro-moths and



Yellow-spot Twist
Pseudargyrotoza conwagana



Coltsfoot Bell
Epiblema sticticana

bringing their naming in line with the rest of British lepidoptera. Their recording would then become less of a niche activity.

Opinions expressed in this article do not necessarily reflect the views of the Branch or Butterfly Conservation.

Our Publicity Events in 2015

Marion Gillie and Brenda Mobbs

In April Brenda Mobbs, Marion and Tony Gillie took the UTB stand to the *Buckinghamshire Wildlife Recorders' Seminar*, a very inspiring and informative day. Butterflies and moths were well represented in the talks, including the nationally scarce Striped Lychnis moth and both the Black and Brown Hairstreak butterflies. Spiders, beetles, flies, dragonflies, soldier flies, bee flies and various amphibians were also covered, together with biological recording, validating records, and the importance of "brownfield sites" for invertebrates and other wildlife. Special mention must go to Rose however, the "educational" Noctule bat cared for by the North Bucks Bat Group. Following an injury, she can no longer fly (though she can glide), and so couldn't survive in the wild. She now spends her time socialising with people at exhibitions, and posing for photos! An absolute sweetheart!

Later in April Clive Simms, Brenda, and Peter and Tess Ogden were our representatives at the Lindengate *Spring Fair* near Wendover. Lindengate provide social and therapeutic horticulture to support people with mental health needs. They have also very kindly been growing Dark Mullein plants for our Striped Lychnis project at our Holtspur Bottom reserve, and may also grow some Horseshoe Vetch for us to support the small colony of Chalkhill Blues we have at Holtspur Bottom. The day was blustery to say the least, but we just about managed to stop our gazebo and leaflets blowing away!

In May Martin Kincaid and Wendy Wilson spent an enjoyable Saturday afternoon manning a stall at the well-attended *Garden and Craft Fair* in the village of Stoke Hammond near Milton Keynes. The children loved the Emperor moth eggs and larvae that were on display, and the adults were interested to learn about butterflies in the locality and how to attract them to their gardens. Some immediately went and bought nectar plants from the garden stalls.

In June Marion, Tony and Brenda took our stall to *Beaconsfield Now! 2015*, a local event on the village green involving many of the organisations who are actively involved in the Beaconsfield community. We were there principally to tell more local people about our Holtspur Bottom reserve. Although many people know about our "sister" reserve, Holtspur Bank on the opposite side of the valley, many fewer know about our reserve. Sadly the weather was not in our favour and whilst we managed to stay dry under the gazebo, many people decided not to brave the rain!

In July Brenda, Marion and Tony supported Cadmore End School at their *Summer Fete*. Joining many wonderful stalls (amongst them face painters, a nail bar and an amazing cake stall) we talked to parents and children about butterflies and the need to give them a helping hand. Our neighbouring stand was the North Bucks Bat Group, so we were delighted to meet Rose the Noctule bat once more!

We have a few more appearances planned later in 2015. We're going to the Greenacres Woodland Burial Site's *Working Woodland Day* in August; the Bessesleigh Wood group's *Woodfest* in September, and the Lindengate *Autumn Fair* in October.

If you can think of any events we could attend to promote Butterfly Conservation in the Upper Thames region next year, or you would like to give us a hand on the stall talking to people about butterflies moths and gardening, just get in touch. We'd love to hear from you!



Marion and Brenda at *Beaconsfield Now!*

Tony Gillie

Butterfly Conservation: Upper Thames Branch

Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31st March 2015

INCOME	2015			2014		
Membership						
Subscriptions	5292.00			4449.00		
Legacies/donations (inc. Gift Aid)	633.00			882.50		
Events/fundraising	172.00			250.00		
Publications						
Restricted Donation	0.00			0.00		
Stock sales	105.00			0.00		
<i>Sub-total</i>		6202.00			5581.50	
Conservation						
Holtspur Bottom Reserve	1828.04			1089.79		
Atlas	0.00			0.00		
Holtspur Legacy	0.00			500.00		
<i>Sub-total</i>		1828.04			1589.79	
Finance/Admin						
Bank Interest	0.00			300.00		
VAT Refund	121.60			44.00		
Bank Charges refunded	22.74			0.00		
Holtspur Bank HLS	1484.99			987.21		
<i>Sub-total</i>		1629.33			1331.21	
Total income			9659.37			8502.50
EXPENDITURE						
Membership						
Newsletter	3255.02			2748.68		
Survey Forms	149.00			88.00		
Events/fundraising	135.41			890.60		
Stock purchases	231.00			0.00		
Other	0.00			8.75		
<i>Sub-total</i>		3770.43			3736.03	
Conservation						
Holtspur Bottom Reserve	4373.00			347.95		
Holtspur Legacy	0.00			1619.84		

Atlas Update	0.00			0.00		
Equipment/other	115.21			424.35		
HLS re Holtspur Bank	1484.99			987.21		
Other Projects	1037.60					
Subs/donations	1696.00			5096.00		
<i>Sub-total</i>		8706.80			8475.35	
Finance/Admin						
Admin/Insurance	162.81			153.75		
VAT	958.52			380.00		
<i>Sub-total</i>		1121.33			533.75	
Total expenditure			13598.56			12745.13
Net income/ expenditure			-3939.19			-4242.63
Cash b/f			19031.32			23273.95
Total cash available for future activities			15092.13			19031.32
STATEMENT OF NET ASSETS AT 31 MARCH 2015						
NET ASSETS						
Fixed assets (after depreciation)		0.00			0.00	
Stock, debtors & creditors (net)		0.00			0.00	
Cash		15092.13			19031.32	
Total			15092.13			19031.32
ALLOCATION OF NET ASSETS						
Endowment		0.00			0.00	
Restricted		1950.00			1950.00	
Designated		8400.00			13660.00	
Unallocated		4742.13			3421.32	
Total			15092.13			19031.32

Field Meeting Reports 2015

Aston Upthorpe, 17 May 2015

Gerry Kendall

The weather for the Aston Upthorpe spring Field Trip proved a little better than the forecast – some sunny spells pushed the temperature up a little despite the chill wind. Seventeen people met to see whether we could find our four main targets: Grizzled and Dingy Skippers, Green Hairstreaks and Small Blue. Jim Asher had done some prospecting, so we went first to the bushy area where Green Hairstreak had been seen earlier and were rewarded with some splendid views. Will Atkinson remarked that while green is, in principle, a good camouflage colour, this butterfly had overdone it and selected an iridescent shade more suited to a teddyboy's socks (ask your Granny).

To try to keep out of the wind we climbed a fence onto part of the transect where bushes provided some shelter. This strategy was also successful and we soon found a few ground-hugging Grizzled Skippers along with Small Copper and some early Small Heaths. In fact the first of our Grizzled Skippers wasn't so much hugging the ground as sheltering upside down under a nettle leaf. A single person would almost certainly have missed it, but 34 eyes pick up much more. We moved closer to our target when we found two Dingy Skippers – or “beautiful Turkish Carpet Skippers” as it was suggested they be called. Maybe a newly emerged specimen deserves a better name but the battered ones are certainly Dingy. As well as the adults, sharp eyes spotted some Dingy Skipper eggs (organic and free-range).

In Juniper Valley we found a couple of nice bright Common Blues and more Dingy and Grizzled Skippers. But the wind was keen enough to keep them close to the turf. At the top of Juniper Valley we turned east onto the Fairmile. This can be a good area for Small Blue and sure enough we found a couple of sheltering specimens which gave the photographers a fair chance. A few hundred metres later came one of the moments that make butterflies so fascinating. In contrast to the Skippers and other target species that we had planned for, a Painted Lady appeared out of nowhere, paused for a couple of minutes and disappeared to goodness knows where. In fact, of course it appeared out of Southern Europe and disappeared to Northern Britain but you certainly couldn't have planned for it.

As we returned we found a pair of Holly Blues circling round the tops of some Hawthorn. This put the total number of species up to fourteen, including all four of our targets. The complete list was: Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper, Brimstone, Green Veined White, Orange Tip, Green Hairstreak, Small Copper, Small Blue, Common Blue, Holly Blue, Painted Lady, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Small Heath.

We should not forget a number of moths including Burnet Companion, Cinnabar and Mother Shipton; some other insects, notably a fine Wasp Beetle; birds such as Corn Bunting; and flowers, in particular Pasque Flowers in the

Valley. Among the other plants were the nettles I found along the way. Or perhaps they found me. Anyway, it was a close encounter of the stinging kind.



Examining a Dingy Skipper

Tony Gillie



Tony Gillie

Eighteen Members met on Lardon Chase for the first Adonis Field Meeting of 2015. Butterflies were very elusive in the cool and cloudy weather but thinning patches of cloud brought short periods of warmth and we did eventually discover 9 species of butterflies, the most plentiful of which was the Common Blue.

Our search for the Adonis started at 10.30 and by 12.30 I was beginning to admit that this would be my first ever Adonis meeting when we failed to find a single Adonis! As many of the group left for home the sun suddenly came out, the temperature rose and within ten minutes the few remaining members were rewarded with just one pristine male Adonis who posed beautifully for the photographers.

Butterflies seen: Common Blue 19, Small Blue 3, Dingy Skipper 1, Meadow Brown 1, Small Heath 5, Small White 1, Brimstone 1, Orange Tip 1, Adonis 1.
Moths seen: Cinnabar 1.

I hope that those who left before our one Adonis appeared managed to see others when the weather improved, if not there is always our second brood Adonis Field meeting on 15th August.

One of the few people who did see, and photographed, our one Adonis was the butterfly enthusiastic brother of an UTB member on a visit from Australia, who was trying to see as many UK species as possible. He remarked to me that he wished they had some organisation akin to ours in Australia as people there were so lacking in knowledge about their butterflies.



Marion Gillie

Despite poor weather for the day of the field trip, it was a success. The forecast had been for a fairly wet day and the previous day I had several calls to ask if it was still going to take place, to which my reply was "I would be going to the meeting point just in case people turn up but would not recommend anyone travelling just to see the butterfly".

On the morning I travelled to the meeting point and 12 of us set out to try and find Black Hairstreaks in damp windy conditions. I did have an almost guaranteed sighting in that I knew the positions of two pupae which I hoped to show everyone, having checked one and found it still intact. I refound it, the adult had still not emerged and photographs were taken. We then moved to check the second only to be called back because one of the group had found an adult Black Hairstreak under a leaf. This gave everyone plenty of opportunity to take pictures as it was not going to fly off in the damp cool conditions.



Sometimes it rains!

Tony Gillie

The second pupae was still intact and, unusually, was situated on a Hawthorn twig; they are normally on a Blackthorn leaf or twig. The only other butterfly seen was a brave Speckled Wood.



Black Hairstreak pupa
Stuart Hodges



Black Hairstreak
Tony Gillie

Bernwood first excursion, 11 July 2015

Tony Gillie

Over 40 people joined us on our Field Trip today (Saturday), and set off in high expectations of seeing His Majesty. Most of us managed two fleeting glimpses at tree-top height, but no more. Still, we did see several White Admiral, Purple Hairstreak, literally hundreds of Ringlets and Large Skipper, together with odd sightings of other things. Eighteen species of butterfly in all. We also saw several Scarlet Tiger moths and numerous Dragonflies and Damselflies. A very pleasant morning in good company. Thank you to everyone who came along!

Bernwood second excursion, 12 July 2015

Nick Bowles

Twenty-four persons joined me, which was a surprise considering the very poor weather forecast. We walked straight down to the second crossroads, hung about for 20 minutes and gave up. Instead we agreed to go and look at the flowers in Bernwood Meadows. At least they were not weather dependent and we knew they were to be mowed for hay in a few days time. They were wonderful and so were the numbers of 'brown' butterflies. But it was windy there and with the time approaching 12.30 pm, I headed the group back to the car park.

As we turned onto the footpath from the main ride at SP612112 I saw a Purple Emperor very briefly over trees to the north of the path. About 30 mins later, as we walked along the ride at SP610112, I spotted another fly across the ride (this time Tony Croft had seen it too). We hung about for a minute and a



Our Chairman demonstrating his ingenuity in pointing out a female Purple Emperor.

Tony Gillie

female appeared and landed on a silver birch leaf in full view but about three metres up. A male flew around while she sat still and we watched her for about ten minutes. As we walked off, we saw two more a little further on (both males, engaged in a territorial battle) at about SP611113. Probably one of these was seen repeatedly as we stood to look at a Purple Hairstreak about 50 metres further up this track and then another male, probably not one of those seen a minute or two previously, came from the north, flew over the 'first' crossroads at SP612114 and flew away to the south-east.

When most people had left, a few of us who stayed to eat lunch saw one Purple Emperor fly through the car park, but it didn't stop. So, I think we had a total of six Emperors although it was possibly only four.



Female Purple Emperor - the very individual being pointed out by Nick.

Marion Gillie

We also saw (but I didn't count) many roosting butterflies on the walk: Large Skipper, Small Skipper, Essex Skipper, Large White, Green-veined White, Purple Hairstreak, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary, Comma, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Marbled White and Ringlet.

Scarlet Tiger and Silver Y were also seen plus Cinnabar caterpillars.

Thanks to all attendees, especially those making the effort for the second day in a row.

New Members

Brenda Mobbs

Since the last newsletter 56 new members have joined and the membership is now 1316. 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 and work parties listed in the newsletter and on the website.

BERKSHIRE

Mr R Stacey
Mr H Gough
Mr A Graham
Mrs S Chatfield
Mr & Mrs R Stainthorpe
Mr T Sweetland
Mr R Isenor
Ms G Carwardine
Mr S Dobson
Mr T Collins
Mrs J Slyfield
Mrs F Taylor
Mr N Hollis
Miss C Stevens
Mr & Mrs R Mountain & Family
Mr N Holness
Dr D Jukes
Mrs J Stables
Mr & Mrs L Henderson & Family
Mrs H Glew

Midgham, Reading
Caversham, Reading
Tilehurst, Reading
Sandhurst
Woodley, Reading
Bracknell
Reading
Cold Ash, Thatcham
Sunningdale, Ascot
Church Hill, Maidenhead
Finchamstead, Wokingham
Theale, Reading
Woodley, Reading
Twyford, Reading
Compton, Newbury
Reading
Woodley, Reading
Purley on Thames, Reading
Wantage
Windsor

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

Mr & Mrs T Spencer
Mrs E Dickson
Ms A Wyllie
Mr A Marshall
Miss S A Robson
Mr A Garner
Mr & Mrs M Kelly
Mr R Ruiz Sanabria, Ms K Gaches & Family
Mr G Card
Mr J Pink & Ms W Duddy
Mr O Bevan

Old Farm Park, Milton Keynes
Kingsmead, Milton Keynes
Farnham Common
Bletchley
Bradville, Milton Keynes
Great Linford, Milton Keynes
Amersham
High Wycombe
Hughenden Valley, High Wycombe
High Wycombe
Haddenham, Aylesbury

OXFORDSHIRE

Mr & Mrs R Gulliver
Mr P A Shaw
Mr & Mrs P Hirst
Mrs H Saunders
Miss E Norris
Mr M Butt
Dr P Bateman
Mr S A Johnson
Mrs S Dawson
Mr & Mrs R Cole & Family

North Newington
Banbury
Abingdon
Kennington, Oxford
Bicester
Kidlington
Headington, Oxford
Abingdon
Hampton Poyle, Kidlington
Lower Brailes, Banbury

ELSEWHERE

Ms R Allen
Mr J Vowles
Mr S Wheatley
Mr C MacGregor

Aldbury, Tring, Hertfordshire
Twickenham, Middx
Lewes, East Sussex
St. Neots, Cambridgeshire

Conservation Work Parties

Much of our winter effort is at our own Holtspur Bottom reserve near Beaconsfield. 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 are a variety of tasks and no great strength is required.

Tools and full instructions are provided. **Please bring a drink and a snack.**

All work parties start at **10.00 a.m.** unless otherwise stated. At Holtspur Bottom they usually finish about 13.00 though in good weather conditions they may continue until about 14.00.

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

Details frequently change according to weather, number of volunteers etc..

Holtspur Bottom Meeting point: SU918906 HP9 1BT Contact: Nick Bowles 01442 382276	
8 Nov 2015	Guided walk, planting & raking
6 Dec 2015	'scrape' weeding & hedging
10 Jan 2016	Scrub removal, hedging & bonfire (if dry)
31 Jan 2016	Scrub removal, hedging & bonfire (if dry)
28 Feb 2016	To be decided (may not run)

Brown Hairstreak winter egg hunts

Because the adult Brown Hairstreak is quite an elusive beast, looking for eggs on blackthorn during the winter months is the best way to map the distribution of the species. A limited number of sites, spread across our local population, are also visited annually by a group of us and searched thoroughly, the results enabling the Branch to monitor the health of the butterfly from year to year.

Anyone is very welcome to join us – no previous experience is required! It would be useful if you could bring a hand lens (x10) or small magnifying glass but otherwise no equipment is needed. Please wear warm clothing and waterproof footwear. It is also a good idea to bring a warm drink to revive you after a couple of hours in the field.

*In the past the weather or other circumstances beyond our control have sometimes caused a search to be cancelled, occasionally at the last minute, so if you do intend to join us it is important that you **please let Dave Wilton know by the evening before**, preferably by e-mail to wilton@burnhamlodge.plus.com (otherwise via text or telephone to 07751 472004). Where changes are known about in sufficient time, information will be posted on the branch website (<http://upperthames-butterflies.org.uk/>).*

This winter's programme of searches will include the following:

Sunday 15th November 2015: Slade Camp, Shotover, Oxford (10.30am – 1pm)

Meet in the retail car-park at grid reference SP555050 on the west side of the A4142 Oxford Eastern By-pass (turn off the A4142 at the Horspath Driftway traffic lights then take the first left into the retail park). The area to be searched is immediately opposite on the east side of the by-pass.

Sunday 13th December 2015: Rushbeds Wood BBOWT Reserve (10.30am – 1pm)

Meet in the small BBOWT car-park at grid reference SP672154. This is accessed from Kingswood Road via a track across the railway, the entrance to which is about 100 metres north of the junction with the Wotton to Brill road. If the car-park is full then further space for parking is available by the road junction.

Friday 1st January 2016: Otmoor RSPB Reserve (10.30am – 1pm)

Meet in the RSPB Reserve car-park (grid reference SP570127) for our traditional New Year's Day egg search. The car-park is accessed via Otmoor Lane, leading north out of Beckley.

There are likely to be further searches in the New Year but details have yet to be finalised. They will be posted on the branch website when available.

Butterflies that hibernate as adults



Brimstone



Small Tortoiseshell



Comma



Peacock



Red Admiral

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

Have your butterfly sightings and photos posted on the website by sending them to: 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

Holtspur Bottom Reserve

<http://www.holtspurbottom.info>

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