

Butterfly Sightings 2004 - Upper Thames Branch

November & December 2004

22/11/04 - **Maureen Cross reports** seeing a male **Brimstone** in her garden in **Streatley** today.

October 2004

26/10/04 - **John Notton sent in these results on behalf of his daughter who lives in Bicester.** She has noticed other species throughout 2004 but unfortunately without dates:

10/10/04 - Holly Blue

26/10/04 - Small Tortoiseshell

John says "If I have read the distribution map correctly, this is an under-recorded square, being largely urban (probably ex council house, with small gardens)."

26/10/04 - **Tom Dunbar sent in this report:** "I have had a daily two Red Admirals in my Aylesbury garden over the last four days. They were joined by another RA and a Painted Lady this morning. All are in excellent condition. The absence of Small Torts and Commas is perhaps significant. I hope the Torts have not suffered another serious decline. Here's hoping that they have simply gone into hibernation early this year.

09/10/04 – **The following news from Dave Wilton:** "I decided to go out to the **Rushbeds** tramway this afternoon to check on the Comma population (it was the only place I could think of to go to locally that might still have butterflies in double-figure quantities!). Sure enough, I found **16 Commas** sunning themselves on the more sheltered areas of bramble, accompanied by three Speckled Woods and a single Red Admiral."

08/10/04 - On Saturday 2nd October **Dave Wilton's garden at Westcott** was graced by the appearance of a late **Hummingbird Hawk Moth**.

On Thursday 7th October he spent a pleasant hour and a half in the sunshine at **Finemere Wood** and recorded a grand total of seven butterflies from five species: Small White (2), Small Copper (2), Red Admiral, Comma and Speckled Wood.

Thursday 7th October - Paul Bowyer spent his lunch time in search of butterflies close to the **Haymill nature reserve** on Britwell, close to the Slough Trading Estate. He was surprised to find a Small White searching for nectar among the wild flowers in the area.

05/10/04 - **Phil Coles went to Asham Meads** and recorded Green Veined White and Speckled Wood.

04/10/04 – **Report from Tony Croft:** "After this morning's deluge brilliant sunshine tempted me to **Whitecross Green Wood** and it proved quite productive. Three Commas lazily feeding on blackberries or so it seemed, one very active small copper, one male Brimstone and a surprise female **Brown Hairstreak**. Although a little worn she was flying quite strongly along the ride leading from the car park and then settled high on blackthorn giving some really good views. On returning home I was greeted by a Painted Lady, Red Admiral and Small Tortoiseshell."

Tom Dunbar sent in this report on 2nd October: “Setting off home from the branch AGM I encountered heavy driving conditions until I approached the Chilterns where I was welcomed by blue skies. A quick visit to **Coombe Hill** was too tempting to pass up in my attempt to secure my first October sightings. I was rewarded by singletons of Small Copper, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown and Small Heath.”

30th September 2004

28/09/04 - Dave Maunder's butterfly sightings, seen around Aylesbury over the last week (9th-25th): Red admirals(5), Commas(4) - feeding on rotting blackberries and ivy bloom; Sm. tortoiseshell(1), Large whites(4), Small whites(13), and Speckled wood(1). On Sunday 26th Dave had a stroll down to Eythrope and saw Peacock(1), Red admirals(4), Commas(3) - all on ivy bloom; - also Small whites(2), and Speckled wood(1).

27/09/04 - Dave Wilton spent an hour and a half at Finemere on Monday afternoon: “It was painfully obvious that the season is now drawing to a close as only six species were active: Small White (6), Green-veined White (1), Small Copper (3), Brown Argus (1), Comma (1) and Speckled Wood (7). The Small Coppers and Comma were in good condition but the remainder were looking very faded and battered.”

Phil Coles sent in a number of sightings for this month:

18/09/04 **Rushbeds Wood** - Speckled Wood

20/09/04 **Asham Meads** - Green Veined White

28/09/04 **Aston Rowant NNR (South)** - Small White, Green Veined White, Small Heath

Here's Dave Maunder's list of butterflies seen around Aylesbury last week:- Red admirals(8), Comma(1), Large white(1), and Small whites(15).

Dave Wilton called at Whitecross Green Wood on his way home from work Wednesday 22nd September. The weather was overcast and breezy, but the temperature was 18C and he managed to record 2 female **Brown Hairstreaks**, Large White (2), Green-veined White (4), Comma (2) and Speckled Wood (1).

Dave Wilton spent 19th September doing some long-overdue tidying up in his garden at Westcott: “Several Large and Small Whites and a **Hummingbird Hawk Moth** were attracted to what's left of the Phlox, but it was the Marigolds that brought in a couple of surprise visitors: a **Brown Argus** (first confirmed sighting for my garden this year) and a rather battered **Gatekeeper**. I haven't seen a Gatekeeper since early August so I wonder where this one had been hiding!”

Sunday 19th September 2004

Mick and Wendy Campbell went for a walk in the Piddington area today, 19th: they saw 5 species of butterfly

despite the blustery conditions – Small White, Small Heath, Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Comma.

Dave Wilton's sightings for Saturday 18th were as follows: “By 3.30pm today (Saturday) the showers had stopped, the wind had died a little and the temperature had risen to 17C so I went out to [Lapland Farm](#) and [Rushbeds Wood](#) to search the blackthorn and ash. In the two hours that I was there I saw plenty of dragonflies and hornets but the only butterfly that showed itself was a solitary bedraggled **Meadow Brown** that I nearly stepped on in the Rushbeds tramway. Not even a White or a Speckled Wood! By 5.30pm it was quite sunny and the temperature had gone up another degree but there was still no sign of Brown Hairstreak activity anywhere.”

News from David Redhead for 15th September: “In spite of it being windy and the temperature being only 16C I had rather a good day. In the morning on the second flush of flowers on the garden buddleia a Red Admiral, Comma, Large White, Small White and Hummingbird Hawk moth. Then off at midday to do the [Swyncombe Down](#) transect - 20 Meadow Brown, 4 Common Blue, 2 Speckled Wood, a Large White and a Small White. But the prize was right at the end two pristine **Small Coppers**. Surprisingly no Small Heaths. Later at [Whitecross Green Wood](#) with Becky Woodell, 5 **Brown Hairstreaks** (4 definitely female and the other probably so) having supper and going to bed in ash and oak trees. Becky also reported a pristine **Small Copper**.”

14/09/04 - Dave Maunder saw these butterflies in Aylesbury last week:- Painted lady(1), Red admirals(2), Commas(2), Sm. tortoiseshells(4), Large whites(16), Small whites(60+), Green-veined white(1), Speckled woods(6), and Common blues(5, all female).

Sunday 12th September - Tom Dunbar sent in this report: “I went on a visit to [Arncott MOD](#) land today. Blustery conditions with occasional sunshine and showers prevailed. Adult butterfly sightings were limited to a Small White, two Small Tortoiseshells and a Speckled Wood. However during about 90 minutes of searching **17 Brown Hairstreak eggs** were located over a wide area. I look forward to revisiting this site later in the year and feel confident that at least several dozen eggs can be found at this location where adults were seen this year for the first time.”

Another ninety-minute search by Dave Wilton on 12/9/04 for Wall Brown along the southwest edge of the landfill site near [Edgcott](#) (not the most pleasant place in the world for a late-afternoon stroll!) drew a blank, which was hardly surprising given the showers and generally blustery conditions. However, he did disturb several **Small White**, **Small Copper** and **Small Heath** along the way, as well as single examples of **Common Blue** and **Painted Lady**.

Dave Wilton visited the village of Blackthorn on Saturday 11th September and was pleasantly surprised to see a single female **Brown Hairstreak**, seemingly in reasonably good condition, fly at head height along the hedgerow and then briefly came to rest on some Blackthorn. It took off again and promptly disappeared across the field on a strong gust of wind. There was no other activity in or around the field apart from a pair of **Small Heaths** and a single **Small Tortoiseshell**.

Friday 10th September 2004

The following is UTB Brown Hairstreak Champion David Redhead's summary of the Brown Hairstreak Weekend (4/5th Sept), when a total of 22 adult Brown Hairstreaks were seen. Thanks to everybody who

participated.

Saturday

Whitecross Green Wood : Four females seen by Paul Huckle & Dave Dennis - three at low-level and one in an ash tree.

Noke Wood : Dave Ferguson saw two adults at low-level just north of the wood - one was definitely identified as a female.

Blackwater Wood : Dave Ferguson's next port of call where he saw a low-level female in the field to the east of the wood.

Woodeaton & Elsfeld : This area visited by David Redhead proved unproductive.

Bernwood Forest & Meadows: Two visits (Dave Dennis & David Redhead) but no sightings.

Sunday

Bernwod Meadows: Chris Lamsdell reported 3 females

Woodside Meadows : Dave Wilton saw an adult in the reserve and on his way back to his car saw a low-level female just south-east of the Wendlebury M40/A34 interchange. This sighting extends the north-west range by about 0.5km.

Piddington : Wendy & Mick Campbell saw three females near Piddington and found 15 eggs in the same locality.

Waterperry Wood : Dennis Dell reported a single female on transect and one off-transect

Whitecross Green Wood : Jim Asher saw two adults in an ash tree and a low-level female in the first ride.

Asham Meads : Jim's next port of call where he saw two females in the north meadow.

Stanton Little Wood : David Redhead saw two probables in flight and found lots of promising habitat.

Danesbrook Farm : Another probable here seen by David Redhead just east of the farm buildings.

Bernwood Forest & Meadows : Two visits (Jim Asher & David Redhead) but no sightings.

The lack of sightings in Bernwood Forest & Meadows is surprising in view of the reported sightings from there over the previous fortnight. Activity in ash trees is continuing, much later than last year, but most sightings were of low-level females. No definite male sightings were made

This news received from Derek Brown on 10/9/04: "I managed a quick trip to Aston Rowant last Sunday, 5th, – 2 x **Silver-spotted Skipper**, 2 x **Clouded Yellow**; 2 x **Chalkhill Blue** and 3 x 2nd brood **Brimstone**."

September 9th - Francis Gomme found that Silver-spotted Skippers were still flying at Beacon Hill, Aston Rowant this afternoon: "3 rather tired specimens seen (I saw my first SSS this year on 18th July near Risborough so they have enjoyed a good flight period!). A few Common Blue and Brown Argus - all now very faded – but good numbers of Small Heath and Meadow Brown. **Small Coppers** were everywhere - 100+ including some very fresh specimens. Speckled Wood 5+ along Icknield Way below Beacon Hill and 1 **Clouded Yellow** on open

hillside.”

David Gantzel went to Lodge Hill on September 9th and found that the most numerous butterfly was **Small Heath**. Also a few Meadow Brown, Small Copper, Common Blue and one Brown Argus.

8th September - David Redhead, having had no definite sightings during Brown Hairstreak weekend, was beginning to suffer withdrawal symptoms so went to Stanton Little Wood, Bernwood Meadows & Whitecross Green Wood today. *Stanton Little Wood* proved frustrating with a probable Brown Hairstreak flying about but never settling in view to allow a definite identification. *Bernwood Meadows* was disappointing with only a single Meadow Brown seen. *Whitecross Green Wood* proved interesting. The first butterfly he saw was a pristine **Small Heath** (only 12 previous records for this site). Four Brown Hairstreak eggs were found and after much searching a **female adult Brown Hairstreak** in an ash tree. So over 3 hours searching resulted in only one Brown Hairstreak sighting. Numbers appear to be on the wane. *Other butterflies seen were* Large White, Small White, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown, Common Blue, Red Admiral, Comma.

Dave Wilton reports for Tuesday 7th September: “At lunchtime today I went to the section of the dismantled *Woodham to Wotton* railway line that lies immediately west of Westcott airfield. Twelve species were active in the sheltered cutting there, comprising Large White (1), Small White (4), Green-veined White (1), **Common Blue (51)**, Brown Argus (10), Small Copper (1), Red Admiral (1), Comma (5), Small Tortoiseshell (1), **Painted Lady (1)**, Speckled Wood (10) and Small Heath (6). Unfortunately there was no sign of second-brood Dingy Skipper, which is what prompted my visit. Rather than walk from home I drove to Wotton Underwood village because it is located in the centre of one of Jim Asher's unreported squares. Unfortunately I didn't see a single butterfly along the footpath from Wotton to the cutting (which is in an adjacent square). Next port of call was *Lapland Farm* on the off-chance that a Brown Hairstreak might show itself. Nothing doing, of course (far too windy) - all that I found were Common Blue (4), Small Copper (2), Red Admiral (2), Speckled Wood (3) and Meadow Brown (3, two of them very battered). Final destination was the *Hewin's Wood Drain* - still no sign of second-brood Wall, but **3 Clouded Yellows** were active, as were Common Blue (25), Brown Argus (11), Small Copper (2) and Small Heath (14).”

and on Monday 6th September Dave had a look at the BBOWT-owned Long Herdon & Grange Meadows along the banks of the River Ray south of Marsh Gibbon: “Although the western side of these two meadows had already been partially mown, it came as a great surprise to me to find that they are at least comparable to, if not better than, the meadows at Lapland Farm for their variety of flora. They must support a good selection of butterflies during the summer. The north-eastern section contains a mass of Devil's-bit Scabious which was still in flower (now THIS would be a nice place to find Marsh Fritillary!). The majority of the surviving butterflies were feeding from the Scabious and comprised: **Small White (1), Green-veined White (6), Small Copper (6), Common Blue (11), Brown Argus (2) and Small Tortoiseshell (1)**. A probable female Brown Hairstreak was seen flying along the low Blackthorn scrub that divides the north and south sides of the eastern meadow but she was lost to view in a gust of wind before I could get a positive identification.”

On a short walk around Grangelands on Sunday 5th, Dave Maunder saw: Red admirals(2), Comma(1), Meadow browns(18), Small heaths(17), Speckled woods(4), Small whites(8), Green-veined whites(3), Common blues - female(7), male(3), Brown argus(3), and Small coppers(3). “I also noted Vapourer moths(2), Treble-bar moths(2), *Pyrausta purpuralis*(1), and *Pyrausta aurata*(1). Near the car park I also saw a Hornet- they seem to be appearing widely in the Chilterns these last few years!”

Tuesday 7th September 2004

5/9/04 – Tim Watts was at the Calvert landfill today and saw 1 female **Wall Brown**: “This was same one seen on 15/8 & 22/8, patrolling the same 10 mt area and has the same damaged wing. Now very faded. Also 4 **Red**

admiral, 20+ small heath & lots of Whites. I also checked [Rushbeds](#) yesterday and 2 of the Black Hairstreak sites near the landfill for Brown Hairstreak, but no luck.”

Tom Dunbar sent in this report on his Brown Hairstreak Weekend “I went Brown Hairstreaking in Surrey and UTB with some success. To see my full report [click here](#).”

The following report was received from David Redhead for 5th September: “This afternoon Wendy & I spent over two hours in [Bernwood Forest](#) looking for Brown Hairstreak but in the parts not usually associated with this species. We were unsuccessful but had sightings of another 11 species. These included 22 **Comma** (all nectaring on Devil's-bit Scabious), 7 **Brimstone** & 5 **Red Admiral** - all these butterflies were beautifully fresh. Also seen - everywhere - Speckled Wood & Small White; several - Green-veined White, Common Blue, Meadow Brown; one only - **Painted Lady**, Large White & Brown Argus.”

Monday 6th September 2004

4th September - Dennis Dell was doing his Waterperry Wood transect and saw two female Brown Hairstreaks: “One was within Waterperry at the northern end flying around and landing on Hawthorn. The other sighting was very nostalgic for me, for it was at the same spot where I had seen my 1st BrH about 26 years ago, namely, along the road between Hell Coppice and Waterperry. It landed very low down on a fresh Blackthorn shoot about one metre from the ground. It crawled all the way along this shoot in a very deliberate manner; maybe it was ovipositing but it was in the middle of bramble and I could not get close enough. This behaviour, I know, is familiar to all BrH enthusiasts. It never fails to fascinate me, however, since few species apart from the Hairstreaks go in for crawling such long distances!

Chris Lamsdell sent in two reports on 5th September: “A few **Silver-spotted Skippers** still present at [Aston Rowant](#) today, with numerous Small Copper, Small Heath, Common Blue, Large White, Meadow Brown, GV White & 2 **Clouded Yellows**

At least 3 **Brown Hairstreaks** at [Bernwood Meadows](#), plus someone bashing the bushes with a long pole trying to get them to fly out - is this really necessary?”

Tim and Colleen Watts saw a **female Brown Hairstreak** low down at [Rushbeds](#) wood railway hedge at 3 p.m. on 3rd September. Also a **Hummingbird Hawk moth** feeding on honeysuckle for the last 3 days in their garden in [Whitchurch](#) and a **Red Underwing** at the [Calvert reserve](#) last week and another seen at [Grendon Underwood churchyard](#),

Friday 3rd September 2004

On Friday 3rd September Adrian Cadman got the Brown Hairstreak weekend off to an early start:

“Unfortunately I shall not be able to take part in the weekend activities, but I did manage to spend a couple of hours around the [Bernwood Meadows](#) (2.30pm to 4.35pm) where I encountered 2 **female Brown Hairstreaks** - 1 fresh insect at the NW corner of the meadow between York Wood and Hell Coppice (where the footpath from the meadow car park emerges), which I probably disturbed - it then spent about 5 minutes on various leaves of a crab apple before flying up onto an Oak. It was still there half an hour later. The other was on the roadside hedge north of the meadow car park on the meadow side where the meadow is at its narrowest. This rather worn individual was constantly receiving the unwelcome attention of 2 Speckled Woods between bouts of feeding on over-ripe

blackberries. I could only spend 30 minutes at the [tramway meadow \(Rushbeds Wood\)](#) inspecting the woodland edge from the gate along to the SW corner of the wood - no sightings at low, medium or high levels.

Brendan McCartney sent this news in on 2nd September: “Ruth and I were out at [Jubilee River](#) today and saw a beautiful **Clouded Yellow** butterfly. We had seen our first of this species at the same site 2-3 years ago. It was in the area just south of the river and west of the bridge. Unfortunately I did not have a camera with me.

Wednesday 1st September - report from Tom Dunbar: - “Today Mick Campbell and I had an excellent day looking for **Brown Hairstreak**. We checked out 4 sites including a short stretch of the A41! Our count of BHS was 5 adults. Other butterflies seen included Small White, **Clouded Yellow**, Common Blue, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell and Speckled Wood.

Thursday 2nd September 2004

A report from David Redhead of his day spent in Bernwood on 31st August, starting from the Hell Coppice car park: “After seeing a couple of Speckled Woods and a White my fourth butterfly was a female **Brown Hairstreak** flying up and down the ride. The main ride up towards Oakley Wood car park gave me my first Red Admiral and Painted Lady and turning right towards the Meadows resulted in a couple more Painted Ladies and Red Admirals and another female Brown Hairstreak! This one kept settling on the ride edge vegetation and then moving on and finally left the ride disappearing from sight. Going up the shaded and damp ride from the Meadows my eye was caught by something large flying high (above transect range) in the top of an oak tree. It was a Red Admiral and it then flew down to a branch about 20ft high in another oak. As it settled on the branch, totally in the shade, I realised there was another Red Admiral already settled there and two more flying about the branch. Closer examination through binoculars showed there were half a dozen hornets crawling over the branch as well. I watched the four Red Admirals flying around and settling on this branch for about 10 minutes and at one time all four Red Admirals were settled on it. Then a Speckled Wood joined the party. Presumably all these insects were attracted to this shaded branch by sap oozing from it. Next stop [Bernwood Meadows](#) and on the road side of the west meadow I found another female Brown Hairstreak. Further searching of the meadows only produced a **Clouded Yellow**.

Total count for the day 96 - Speckled Wood 30, Small White 28, Common Blue 10, Red Admiral 9, Meadow Brown 4, Brown Hairstreak 3/4, Painted Lady 3, Large White 3, Green-veined White 2, Small Tortoiseshell 1, Small Copper 1, Clouded Yellow 1.

Dave Wilton's first report after returning from holiday, received on 31st August: “To get back into the swing of things I went out to the Hewin's Wood Drain and Finemere Wood this morning. [Hewin's Wood Drain](#) produced four **Clouded Yellows** as well as good numbers of Common Blue (40+) and Brown Argus, but no sign of the second-brood Wall that I hoped I might find there. [Finemere](#) has changed significantly in the three weeks since I was last there. With the rides having now been mown, gone are the Skippers, Meadow Browns, Ringlets and Gatekeepers, although a single Small Heath was present in the meadow just outside the reserve entrance. The most numerous butterfly seen was the **Speckled Wood (50+)**, while the only other species recorded were Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Common Blue, Holly Blue, Small Copper, Brown Argus, **Purple Hairstreak** and Red Admiral. This afternoon I spent some time on the western slope of [Muswell Hill \(west of Brill\)](#) looking for Brown Hairstreak but none was seen. Again, the most numerous butterfly present was the Speckled Wood. There were even two of them in my [garden at Westcott](#) when I got back home.”

Tuesday 31st August - Tom Dunbar sent in this report: “I located a further two new sites for **Brown Hairstreak** today. I consider both to be highly significant if not very exciting”.

31st August - Butterflies seen in Aylesbury last week by Dave Maunder were:- Painted ladies(7), Large whites(8), Small whites(40+), Green-veined white(1), Speckled woods(5), and a single Holly blue - weather not so good last week!

Wednesday 1st September 2004

30th August 2004 - Despite high winds Tom Dunbar continued to survey for new Brown Hairstreak sites today. He reports: "A green lane north of the *Ambrosden to Merton* road produced good habitat but no BHS sightings. I have noted this as a site to return to later in the year for an egg search.' I then drove down *Ploughley Road towards Upper Arncott*. A glimpse of another green lane (logged in the BHS 'locker' 10 days ago) necessitated sharp application of brakes. The lane was overhung with mature blackthorn which was perhaps too shady. Working to the notion that 'nothing ventured nothing gained' I eventually found my way to the south facing / field side of the hedgerow which as expected was more sheltered from the blustery wind. The result was **4 female BHS**; three on ash and one initially in flight then to settle on hawthorn. I consider this an exciting and perhaps significant find being the most northerly adults in my records. The quality of the blackthorn and ash trees seemed to be good enough for a colony to exist at this location. It will be interesting to attempt to confirm this notion in future seasons."

Sunday 29th August 2004

Pete Eeles visited the Wildlife Trust site at Hartslock on Saturday 28th and saw 1 male **Adonis Blue** (very worn), 2 **Clouded Yellow**, 1 Holly Blue, 7 Small Heath, 4 Common Blue, 7 Small White, 1 Small Tortoiseshell and 26 Meadow Brown.

David Redhead's Brown Hairstreak report for Thursday 26th: "There was no sign of Brown Hairstreak activity in the southern of the two Bernwood Meadows. However, in *Whitecross Green Wood* where sightings of a low level male and female had been seen that morning, I saw two **Brown Hairstreaks**, one which flew down to the blackthorn where I lost sight of it and the second in a small oak tree in front. The latter remained settled on a leaf for some time before opening its wings to reveal itself as a female. A further trek through the rides accompanied by Tony Croft produced no further Brown Hairstreaks but two **Vapourer Moths** were seen flying – both obligingly settling in positions allowing definite identification."

Saturday 28th August 2004

Adrian Cadman sent this report on 26th August: "I spent a couple of hours along the southern edge of *Rushbeds wood* on Saturday 21st August looking for **Brown Hairstreak**; eventually I encountered 1 female near the small pond (50 yards west of the entrance gate to the wood) where it alighted for a few moments before flying up into the ash trees behind. No other BHS seen. I then went up to the *Laplands Farm* drove where I saw 1 male making its way west along the blackthorn hedge, obligingly alighting on an Oak before disappearing to the other side of the hedge. I also saw about 10 **Small Coppers** in ones and twos, **Common Blues** were living up to their name, a couple of **Clouded Yellows** together with 5 **Small Heaths** on the flower meadow at Lapland Farm."

The following updates and reports were received from David Redhead on 26th August:

Sunday 22nd Bernwood Forest Field Trip: Ten UTB members and two guests from Beds & Northants Branch turned up for what was to prove to be the most successful UTB Brown Hairstreak Field Meeting ever with a total **Brown Hairstreak count of 11 adults and 6 eggs**. The species count for the day was 15 - Small Skipper, **Clouded Yellow**, Brimstone, Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Brown Hairstreak, Small Copper, Common Blue, Holly Blue, Red Admiral, **Painted Lady** (a count into double figures), Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper & Meadow Brown. A truly successful and memorable day!

Saturday 21st Whitecross Green Wood. "An afternoon walk I lead here for the Oxford Meads BBOWT Group was successful in seeing the **Brown Hairstreak**. Three were flying in ash tree A (although they spent most of the time in the neighbouring oaks) and one was definitely identified as a female when it settled. In the main ride half the party had a short viewing of a female at low level. The final sighting was a brief flight by another adult (of indeterminate sex) in another ash tree. Another 11 species were seen of which the most interesting were two late and fresh looking **Large Skippers** (a second brood?)."

Friday 20th Bernwood Meadows. A late in the day visit produced no adult Brown Hairstreaks but **two BHS eggs** were found on the blackthorn and marked for the forthcoming UTB Field Meeting.

Thursday 19th Wychwood Forest. "Patrick Boston obtained permission for a visit and we were accompanied by Una Fenton. The aim was to assess the site for the presence of Brown Hairstreak last recorded here in the mid 1980's. There are plenty of ash trees and blackthorn, although a lot of the latter is rather aged and does not look suitable for egg-laying. Some of the best looking blackthorn was searched for eggs without success but there was a brief glimpse of a "might have been but probably a Vapourer" disappearing into the foliage. Conclusion: definitely worth some more thorough egg searching this coming winter. 11 butterfly species were definitely seen including two **Silver-washed Fritillaries** (my first in the UTB area this year). More correctly it was one and a half as the first was extremely faded with half its wing area missing but still able to fly. In several areas the Meadow Saffron made a wonderful show."

Tuesday 24th August 2004

Butterflies seen by Dave Maunder in Aylesbury over the last week were:- **Painted ladies**(2), Red admirals(2), Comma, Sm. tortoiseshells(3), Large whites(14), Small whites(100+), Green-veined whites(3), Meadow browns(2), Hedge browns(3), Speckled woods(8), Holly blues(5), Common blues(35), Brown argus (3), and Small coppers(5).

Wendy and Mick Campbell recorded 17 butterfly species on Sunday 22nd August during visits to Wendover Woods – checking Silver-washed Fritillary numbers and Coombe Hill – hoping to find Silver-spotted Skipper. In *Wendover Woods* they did a wider circuit of the site to see the range of the **SWFs**. 10 were recorded altogether, the best numbers being seen in sunny clearings where females were nectaring on wild flowers. One (probable) male was seen flying strongly south out of the wood! Other notable species included a **Brown Argus**, **Red Admiral**, **Small Copper**, **10 Speckled Wood** and the usual more common species. Later on at *Coombe Hill* 4 further species were added to the list: Brimstone, **Chalkhill Blue** (8), Small Heath and a **Clouded Yellow**. No SSS seen unfortunately.

David Redhead recorded Silver-washed Fritillary in Wychwood Forest on Thursday 19th August.

Monday 23rd August 2004

Peter Eeles has asked me to pass on the following request. He's moved his excellent website (which was www.eeles.net/butterflies) to www.ukbutterflies.co.uk. This website is now open for you to contribute your photos - something that Peter has been meaning to allow for some time. If you'd like to consider contributing to the website, to the benefit of your fellow enthusiasts, then details are shown on the "Contributing" page of Peter's website.

David Fuller reports a new butterfly for his garden in Maidenhead: "I was surprised to see a **Clouded Yellow** on my *Verbena bonariensis* on Saturday, what a good addition to the garden list. A supporting cast of: Comma x 2, Red Admiral, Small White, Large White x 9, Painted Lady x 2, Meadow Brown, all in the space of an hour.

David Gantzel recorded two **Painted Lady** butterflies in Hazlemere on Sunday August 22nd.

Maureen Cross, Adonis Blue Species Champion, reports that the Adonis Blue is alive and well on Lardon Chase. With fears that they had disappeared from this National Trust sight 3 UTB members set out on the Saturday 21st August field trip to search the hillside and were rewarded with **4 Adonis Blues**, 2 males and 2 females. Their reward was, besides the Adonis, 12 other species of butterflies as follows: Small Copper, Small White, Green-veined White, Meadow Brown, Speckled Wood, Small Heath, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Common Blue, Chalkhill Blue, Holly Blue, Brown Argos and these moths: Treble Bar, Yellow Shell, Silver Y.

Tim Watts had another attempt at photographing the Wall Brown at Calvert Landfill yesterday, 22nd, and was pleased that he managed to get some better shots. A definite count of 2 different **Wall Browns** (see photo above) as one was in good condition and the second had a damaged wing. Tim also noticed that the one he saw last week was very bright. Also seen on site 2 **Clouded Yellow**, 2 **Painted Lady**, 25+ small heath & 3 small copper.

Saturday 21st August 2004

Mick Campbell and Tom Dunbar continued their surveying on 20th August at 2 sites in the Bucks area. Tom reports on their findings: "The first site was the *Coombe Hill* area on the Chiltern escarpment. The target species was Silver Spotted Skipper. Despite likely habitat being found no SSS were located. Photographers would have thoroughly enjoyed the magnificent light conditions that prevailed over the Vale of Aylesbury and indeed on Bacombe Hill as an enormous thunderstorm swept the hillside. It was interesting to note how quickly butterflies were back on the wing post storm. 17 **Chalkhill Blue**, 3 **Painted Ladies** and 1 **Red Admiral** were the butterfly highlights. Our second port of call was the water pumping station at *Dancersend*. Target species was Brown Hairstreak following a reliable report of it being seen there last year by a warden of a local nature reserve. We found likely habitat to include blackthorn and ash but no BHS. A **Clouded Yellow** was the highlight at this site."

Thursday 19th August -Mick Campbell and Tom Dunbar visited the Arcott location where Brown Hairstreaks were located yesterday. Their intention was to familiarise themselves with the site and possibly find more BHS adults or eggs.

One egg was found near previous egg finds. Then 3 further eggs were located nearly a kilometre away in a distinctly separate part of the site. Having walked a good deal of the area, Mick and Tom suspect that

the butterfly might be widespread here. Tom says: “We would hope to return later in the year to do a more thorough egg survey when the leaves have fallen.”

Nick Bowles reports a single Silver-spotted Skipper on his transect at the foot of Coombe Hill, Wendover on 18th August. This is the first SSS on a transect anywhere for Nick and his first at Coombe Hill, although others have reported them there. Further evidence of their continued spread to new sites.

Tom Dunbar sent in this report for Wednesday 18th August. “AJP, Nick Bowles and Tom broke some more new ground on the **Brown Hairstreak** front with the following sightings in the *Arncott* area:

- 2 fresh BHS eggs
- 2 female BHS on separate ash trees

Nick adds: “These could be some of the first eggs seen in UTB this season though probably not the first laid. Also recorded on the day were **3 Purple Hairstreak** and the ubiquitous **Painted Lady**.”

David Redhead sent in this Brown Hairstreak report on the 18th August: “Matthew Oates has belatedly reported seeing a female **Brown Hairstreak ovipositing in Whitcross Green Wood on Sunday 15th August.** The egg was laid at 8 feet - obviously she had not read the books!”

David also reports seeing two **Painted Ladies** in his garden on Tuesday 17th. **Speckled Woods** seem to be out in good numbers again – with lots being seen in *Bernwood Forest* on the 18th. Also **Purple Hairstreaks** are still about - three seen in ash trees and one at ground level.

On 14-8-04, a hot and sunny day, Dave Maunder visited Coombe hill near the Monument and recorded: **Chalkhill Blues(60+)**, Common Blues(5), Brown Argus(5), Small Coppers(11), - “a pair mating and I also watched a female laying eggs on Sorrel – they were quite numerous up here.” Small Heaths(20+), Meadow Browns(55+), Hedge Browns(9), Essex Skipper(1), Brimstones(2), Small Whites(5), Green-Veined White(1)

Then on 15-8-04 Dave walked over the fields to Hartwell cemetery and back. Sightings included: Chalkhill Blue – Female – “A rare sight in the football field near Fairford leys and a vagrant from the Chilterns, I expect.” Common Blues(5), - “a nice little colony of these and Brown Argus in Hartwell cemetery!” Brown Argus(5), Holly Blues(6), Meadow Browns(10), Hedge Browns(8), Speckled Woods(13), Large Whites(2), Small Whites(8), Green-Veined Whites(12), Red Admiral(1), Sm. Tortoiseshell(1)

Dave’s other sightings in and around Aylesbury during 8th-13th August: Painted Lady(1); Red Admiral(1); Sm. Tortoiseshells(2); Hedge Browns(9); Speckled Wood(1); Brimstone; Large Whites(20+); Small Whites(100+); Green-Veined White(1); Holly Blue(1); Common Blues(20+); Brown Argus(4); Small Copper(1).

Wednesday 18th August 2004

AJP Wingrove (member of Surrey branch) sent in this report for Tuesday 17th August: “I joined Tom Dunbar in searching for my first **Brown Hairstreaks** of the season. We located 1 on the ash trees at *Laplunds Farm*. Another was found at the *Rushbeds Tramway railway bridge* despite the windy conditions. We next looked in the area north of *Otmoor* and found a male close to the Merton M40 bridge. Is this the most north-westerly sighting to date in the UTB area? Our final location was *Holly wood* where we found 2 adults on very tall ashes. We hope to make contact with the landowner to seek permission to survey here more thoroughly in the future.”

Michael Robinson reports a **Clouded Yellow** on the footpath between *Ibstone and Northend* on Saturday 14 August and it was the same place that he saw a couple of Clouded Yellows last October.

Monday 16th August 2004

David Newland (Cambs & Essex BC) sent in the following: "After a walk round *Bernwood* starting about 2 pm on Sunday 15 August (where there were two reported sightings of **Brown Hairstreak** at ground level, one male, one female), I saw one unidentified hairstreak at high level on an oak in the far meadow (a tree suggested by David Redhead and Tony Croft). Moved on to *Whitecross Green Wood* about 4 pm. There was again a report of one each male and female at low level, but it was now dull and further activity seemed unlikely. However at 5.00 pm a **male BHS** settled on a clump of wild angelica about 200m from the Wildlife Trust sign on the west side of the path. It remained there for 47 minutes. After about 10 mins it made a short flight, returning to an adjacent cluster on the same plant. After about 30 mins it hopped over to a third cluster. I was joined by 3 other observers and numerous photos were taken by two of us. Eventually at 5.47 pm the BHS flew several circles around the small adjacent oak tree and settled on a leaf near its top (height estimate about 7m). The temperature was about 24 C and it remained humid and overcast throughout."

David Redhead spent Sunday morning, 15th August, in Bernwood with Tony Croft and Gerry Kendall. Later in the day David & Tony met a couple from Cambs & Essex Branch who had been inspired by the UTB Website to come looking for Brown Hairstreak. Here is David's report: "Today Bernwood Meadows eventually succumbed to the combined might of Tony Croft, Gerry Kendall (armed with scope) and myself. Along the southern boundary we found an oak with an ash tree either side. Just as we were about to leave to examine the next ash along a movement in the oak arrested our step - eventually **one female** and **two male Brown Hairstreaks** were identified. Although a couple spent a little time in the ash to the right the oak seemed their home. Gerry lined his scope up on what he thought was a fourth at the very top of the oak tree to find a **Small Copper** staring back at him. No other ash trees (and quite a few were searched) gave any evidence of Brown Hairstreak activity. Next I walked the *Shabbington Wood* transect which yielded only 34 butterflies (compared to just over 300 a fortnight ago) but did include a late **Marbled White**. Returning to my car through the Meadows I met an East Midlands Branch Field Trip looking for Brown Hairstreaks. Some of them had seen a female briefly on the small oaks on the way down to the Meadows but they had had no further success, except for a **Clouded Yellow** (which I did not see). I took them over to the trees discovered this morning, collecting a loner from Lancashire Branch on the way. I am pleased to report the Upper Thames Branch was not let down. A male was perched near the oak tree top and did not move for the half hour I was there. Then another hairstreak flew from the oak and settled near the bottom of the right hand ash. It remained there for a couple of minutes before flying deeper into the ash but the orange flash from its upper wings made it a definite **female Brown Hairstreak**. Finally one of the party focussed in on a settled (but tatty) **Purple Hairstreak** and I left them a much happier band than I had found them."

Tim Watts visited Calvert landfill Sunday 15th: This is a mostly private site but with some public footpaths across and around it. These butterflies were all seen on a public footpath that skirts the site near the Quainton to Edgcott road. (the Hewin's drain road) - **3 Wall Brown** (certain at least 3 as 1 bright, 1 faded + another a long distance away), **3+ Clouded Yellow**, **1 Painted Lady**.

On a short trip to Hewin's drain on Sunday 15th August, in search of the second-generation of Wall Brown, 4 UTB members recorded 14 species of butterfly, including **1 Wall Brown**, a staggering **11 Clouded Yellow** (all heading north) and **29 Small Copper**, along with good numbers of Common Blue and Brown Argus, **1 Painted Lady** and a few Small Heath.

David Hutchinson visited Wendover Woods this weekend and sent in the following news: "I had imagined

there to be a huge buddleia bush so was a little surprised to see the size of it. Nevertheless, there were **4 Silver-washed Fritillary** (females I think) on the bush along with a few browns & whites. They were rather worn & tatty although I did manage to take a couple of reasonable pictures.

Mike Wilkins led a Field Trip to Aston Rowant NNR, 14 August 2004.

The day was ideal for the dozen participants who included visitors from Hertfordshire and Worcestershire. It was cloudy and humid but pleasantly warm on Beacon Hill so the butterflies were active but not too much, making it ideal for the photographers. **Butterfly species recorded were:** Small Skipper; Large Skipper; **Silver-spotted Skipper**; Brimstone; Large White; Small White; Green-veined White; Small Copper; Brown Argus; Common Blue; **Chalkhill Blue**; Holly Blue; **Painted Lady**; Peacock; Speckled Wood; Marbled White; Gatekeeper; Meadow Brown; Small Heath; (Clouded Yellow).

Moths recorded were: Vapourer; Six-spot Burnet; Dusky Sallow; Yellow Shell; Silver Y.

Tom Dunbar sent in this report for Saturday 14th August: “Mick and Wendy Campbell, Tom and Rosaleen Dunbar went in search of **Brown Hairstreak** today. Initially the team looked at a site by the railway line in [Dorton](#) where Dave Wilton had located Black Hairstreak in June. We didn't find any. There was a consensus that the blackthorn was unsuitable. Our next port of call was the [Piddington](#) area. We found 6 adults all on ash in 3 separate sites - 2 male, 3 female and one indeterminate. We also had a useful chat with the farmer and praised his successful management of the habitat.”

Saturday 14th August 2004

David Redhead reports on his Brown Hairstreak sightings today: “Firstly I went to NT's [Boarstall Duck Decoy](#) - quite interesting but not too good for butterflies although their guide leaflet does state White Admiral (not that I saw any honeysuckle). Lots of mature ashes and two stands of blackthorn but definitely not suitable for egg-laying. Speckled Woods & Green-veined Whites reached double figures and a **Red Underwing** on the information hut wall was a bonus. Next [Panshill](#), i.e. the hill down from the motorway bridge towards WXGW. There are superb blackthorn hedges with some ash trees growing out of them and the two most prominent held a brace of **male Brown Hairstreaks** each. **We are now up to 32 active trees and 122 sightings.**

Today, 13th August, Dave Ferguson recorded 100+ Chalkhill Blues, 1 Silver-spotted Skipper at [Yoesden Bank](#), 50+ Chalkhill Blues, 20 Silver-spotted Skippers, 1 male Clouded Yellow at [Aston Rowant](#) NNR (on the most southerly slope).

13/8/04 - David Redhead's update on the Brown Hairstreak survey is as follows: “[Tony Croft](#) reported a male and female in an ash tree in the first meadow at [Asham Meads](#). [Matthew Oates](#) has just let me know that he saw 3 in the ashes alongside the [Rushbeds Tramway](#) and another at [Holly Wood](#). Meanwhile I spent over two hours SW of [Otmoor](#) without success. There were compensations - lots of **fresh Common Blues** in the field margins alongside [Noke Wood](#). The Holly Blues are happy but the Vannesids have vanished.”

Adrian Cadman reports from [Great Linford](#) a female **Clouded Yellow** on August 10th amongst the commoner species *[photo supplied and will be posted in the next few days.]*

Thursday 12th August 2004

Thursday 12th August - Tom Dunbar reports: “Mick Campbell and I had an exceptionally successful day today searching for new **Brown Hairstreak** sites in the *Piddington Village* area. We located 4 males on ash trees in 3 different locations and then Mick used his eagle eye to spot a female down on blackthorn in egg-laying mode at one of these sites. Our observations today indicate that it is very worthwhile scanning both ash and blackthorn at this stage of the butterfly's life-cycle.”

A couple of sighting reports from Tony Croft: “On 10th August, at *Wendover Woods* we saw 3 **Silver-washed Fritillary**. Then, on a two hour visit to *Whitecross Green* on 11th, in bright sunshine following heavy rain, revealed 3 purple hairstreak, 6 small copper, 3 small skipper, 2 meadow brown, **1 male brown hairstreak** flying near the ground and 1 **silver washed fritillary**. Is this a first at WXG?”

[As far as we can tell from the records, this is a first sighting of SWF at Whitecross Green Wood.]

Welcome to the website, new contributor David Gantzel, who visited the buddleia bush in Wendover Woods on 10th August. He saw two battered females and one quite nice male **Silver-washed Fritillary**. On the ride leading to the bush one **Dark Green Fritillary**, others included brimstone, gatekeeper, meadow brown, and GV white, large and small white.

A Red Admiral on his buddleia at *Hazlemere*, on 10th.

David also made the following comment regarding the note on Gomm Valley [see entry for 1st August]. “I was the warden here for many years and by constantly keeping the scrub under control we had good numbers of DGF. Now it has got badly overgrown, so not surprised none seen. Pity. Enjoyed the moth evening. The small insect with the hood has been tentatively identified as **Horned Leafhopper Centrotus cornnutus**.”

Tom Dunbar sent in this report of two field trips made on Tuesday afternoon with Dave Wilton: *Yeosden Bank* failed to deliver the promised Adonis Blues. However the species count totalled 17 including 1 **Clouded Yellow**, 2 **Painted Ladies** and **104 Chalkhill Blues**. Then at a site *near Goring* Dave saw his first **Adonis Blue** of the season - well 21 of them actually – taking him to 40 species for the season. They were accompanied by **32 Chalkhill Blue** and a handful of Brown Argus, Meadow Brown and Gatekeeper. He is off to the US of A in the near future and will no doubt attempt to misdirect some Monarchs across the pond to settle in Finemere to improve his total.

David Redhead reports on his Brown Hairstreak surveying on 10th: I went to *Woodsides Meadow* near Wendlebury this afternoon where I drew a blank - perhaps not surprising as it is on the very edge of known egg-laying area. Came back via *Charlton-on-Otmoor* and lost count of suitable looking roadside ash trees. Stopped of at Nick Droy's group of trees opposite the entrance to *Whitecross Green Farm* and got a single male after a short wait. Ash trees and blackthorn are ubiquitous - so why does this apparently mobile butterfly have such a low occupation density and such a restricted range?

Dave Maunder has sent in his regular list of butterfly sightings for the last week and says it's good to see Brown Argus doing okay in Fairford Leys this year: Brimstone(1), Large Whites(30+), Small Whites(100+), Green-Veined Whites(12), Red Admiral(1) - on a patch of nettles, Peacocks(6), Commas(3), Sm. Tortoiseshells(2), Meadow Browns(6), Hedge Browns(65+), Speckled Woods(7), Small Skipper(1), Essex Skippers(13), Holly Blues(14), Common Blues(45+), Brown Argus(6) – found along the Fairford Leys on trefoils, Small Coppers(4).

Tuesday 10th August 2004

Robin Carr reports that he had 2 Silver-washed Fritillaries on his transect at *Dancers End* last Friday. This site is only about a mile east of Wendover Woods.

Dave Wilton's report for Monday 9th is as follows: "Having seen a **Hummingbird Hawk Moth** feeding from Phlox in my garden in the pouring rain at lunchtime, I was tempted out mid-afternoon when (all too briefly!) it stopped raining. Even though it was drizzling at the time, I managed to confirm another **Brown Hairstreak** site at the southeast corner of *Rushbeds* with a single specimen seen flying about in the top of an Ash beside the gravel parking area right at the road junction.

Mike Collard reports there were just three Silver-washed Fritillaries on the famous bush in Wendover Woods when he visited it on 9th August. 1 GV White and a few common species, no Peacock and not many flowers left and that was before the rain.

On Sunday afternoon, 8th August, David Redhead went to the SW corner of Bernwood Forest to survey the ash trees for Brown Hairstreak: "Within about 10 mins a couple of large hairstreaks were sighted and a little later a third flew and settled on a leaf allowing a good view to definitely confirm it as a **Brown Hairstreak**. I had another brief flight by a large hairstreak followed by a much longer one by a small hairstreak which went into the first ash tree where I was able to id it as a **Purple Hairstreak**. This is another difference I am noticing between brown and purple - the purples seem to fly for much longer with a fidgety flight. I next went to the small *Bernwood Meadows* car park and scrutinised the ash trees on the west (less visited) part of the meadows but without success except for a pair of purples in a half dead ash. Wandering back across the meadows a skipper settled very obligingly for me to get a full on view of the antennae - it was a hit you in the eye no doubt **Essex Skipper** with its bulbous antennae ends glossy black as though they had just been dipped in Indian ink"

Adrian Cadman managed to spend a late lunch at Rushbeds Wood Friday 6th August hoping to see SWF: "No luck (in fact no luck here at all this year for SWF). I then went to the tramway meadow which had just been cut for hay where 2 fresh looking **Clouded Yellows** were nectaring on knapweed lying on the ground. Along with commoner species there were at least 3 **Small Coppers** on the bramble flowers and **Holly Blues** (v active & difficult to count) along the woodland edge, but no sign of Brown Hairstreaks on the wing."

Darren Ward travelled down from Cumbria on Saturday 7th to visit the infamous 'Buddleia bush' in Wendover Woods: "It held 6 **Silver-washed Fritillary**, 3 males 1 reasonably fresh, plus Brimstone & 3 Common Whites & Marbled. Going back to the car a cracking male SWF Very fresh. Later on at *Watlington Hill*, **Silver-spotted Skipper** was ace (photo below) +24 all males that were sexed, but were very mobile in the hot weather, plus 3 Brown Argus."

Derek & Cathy Brown went to Hartslock on Sunday 8th for the Adonis Blue: "It was very hot (11.00-12.30pm), - the butterflies would not settle, and even when they did they wouldn't open their wings! We're sure that we did see some male Adonis in the far field, but unfortunately no photos. However see below because I think I got a couple of shots of a more sedentary **female Adonis** - but again with closed wings? I'm not sure about the underside on this one. I should mention that the Chalkhills were common over the other fields but noticeably not the last field - so maybe ABs? However the Commons were there

too. In addition we saw 5-6 **Clouded Yellows** - again see below for a rather poor photo. Having moaned about the lack of migrants, of course they prove me wrong by suddenly showing up, as we have now had 10 **Painted Ladies** in the garden this weekend as well as the CY at Hartslock.”

On Saturday 7th August Paul Bowyer went back to Sands Bank to check on the Chalkhill Blues he had seen earlier in the week and spotted a couple more. Also identified were Gatekeepers(14), Small White (4), Brimstone (4), Peacock (2), Ringlet (2) Meadow Brown (21), Small Skipper (2), Small Copper (1), Brown Argus (4), Marbled White (2), **Painted Lady** (2), Silver Y (1) and Six Spot Burnet (4). Also for future football ground sightings, Common Blue, Meadow Brown and Small White on the pitch at the Wycombe Wanderers' match.

Sunday 8th August 2004

Martin Mitchell visited Lardon Chase today and recorded the following: **Painted lady** (1), Brown Argus (1), At the *Holies* he saw **Clouded Yellow** (2).

Tim & Colleen Watts visited Finemere Wood this afternoon and saw 1 **Clouded Yellow** in the field at the top of wood.

Also 1 **Painted Lady**, 4 Small Heath, 2 Purple Hairstreak.

Dave Wilton reports on his findings today: “Tom and I spent some considerable time searching locations around Stanton St John, Boarstall and Dorton but the high winds limited any chance of success. The only **Brown Hairstreak** seen, apart from those while we were with 2 other UTB Members at the entrance to Lapland Farm, was on the west side of the *M40 bridge at Honeyburge*.”

Wendy & Mick Campbell visited 2 sites today. The first was *Chinkwell Wood* where they recorded an astonishing sighting of a **Silver-washed Fritillary** which emerged briefly from the wood out into the field, did a complete u-turn and shot back into the wood again! Other interesting species seen were Brown Argus, Common Blue and a **Clouded Yellow**. As the strong wind was greatly reducing any possible Brown Hairstreak activity in the Ash trees they then decided to find a more sheltered location and headed for *Lapland Farm*, They were immediately successful and saw **2 BHS** in the railway bridge area where Tom Dunbar had directed them. One was in an Ash tree and the second posed for photos low down in a nearby hedge. They positively id'd another **2 BHS** in a large Ash tree in the left-hand corner of the field from the gate.

Dave Maunder saw 2 Clouded Yellows, both newly emerged males, yesterday afternoon near *Fairford Leys in Aylesbury* - a nice town sighting!

Welcome to Tim Hearn, new contributor to the website, who sent in the following report today: “I'm not a member, but thought you might like to receive some sightings from yesterday at *Wendover woods*. Having failed to locate the legendary buddleia, we set off down the Orientation ride. About 100m in from the car park/toilets is a bank of what I think is probably wild Thyme or similar. This was alive with butterflies at 2.30pm. Small Skippers (12), large skipper (1), 1 rather battered Marbled White, 1 brown argus, 100+ Gatekeeper, 50+ Meadow Brown, 4 Brimstone, **10 Silver Washed Fritillary** and a solitary **Clouded Yellow** in a big hurry! Also what I'm reasonably sure was a purple hairstreak but since I could only observe it on the wing, I can't claim it as certain. All in 20

minutes! Hope this is of some interest to your members.”

*Peter Hall reports seeing a **Clouded Yellow** yesterday at BroomWade sports ground next to *Hughendon Manor*, High Wycombe.*

*The following report was received from **David Redhead**: “Saturday morning in bright sunshine I was approaching the top of the south face of The Holies when I was met by a shimmering carpet of **Chalkhill Blues**. Closer examination showed there was an area of about 40 by 10m which had been fenced off in the past and presumably subjected to a different management regime at some time The turf height and floristic density here was intermediate between the area outside the fence and the bottom of the hill below an electric fence. The area below the electric fence was being grazed and was devoid of Chalkhills. My estimate of numbers in the relatively small previously fenced area was of the order of **600** - taking the hillside as a whole they must have been into four figures. A beautiful and interesting sighting.*

*7th August - Tom Dunbar sent in this report for today: “One **Brown Hairstreak** was located on a mature ash in the *M40 / Worminghall* area adjacent to Bernwood. I have seen good numbers of eggs and 2 adults in an adjacent area over the last 2 years. This fact prompted me to check the area again today. A return to the *Smiths Lane* area of Bernwood brought zero returns. The local lane was flailed last winter, which obviously removed what would have been a good crop of eggs. A **Clouded Yellow** offered some compensation - 4th day on the trot for CY. One further BHS was found in the *Stanton Little Wood* area, again on ash. Mick Campbell and I looked on this ash on the 5th. Mick was fairly confident he located a BHS at the time but didn't get a good enough sighting to id it. So far I have seen 18 Brown Hairstreaks at 9 locations. I am avoiding the 'hotspots' i.e. Whitecross Green Wood and Bernwood Forest.”*

*This interesting news was passed on by **Dave Ferguson** and came from **Don Otter of Bucks Birders** – “Also had a **Silver-washed Fritillary** on Buddleia bush in my garden at *Ringshall* yesterday. I have seen these on the estate on a handful of occasions but not often enough to make me think we have a resident population. If anyone knows different... I'd like to hear from you! There are, of course, Dark Green Frits on the Ivinghoe Hills.”*

*New contributors to the website, **David & Sally Irven (Members of Beds & Northants branch)** paid a visit to *Hartslock* this morning, 7th August. It produced sightings of; **dozens of Chalkhill Blues**, several Brown Argus, **one male, two female second-brood Adonis Blue**, several Common and Holly Blues, two **Clouded Yellows** & many Meadow Brown, Small Heath and Gatekeeper.*

*Mick & Wendy Campbell decided to do a short walk around *Penn Wood* on Saturday 7th and were very surprised to find a **Brown Argus** and a **Small Blue** in an open, sunny clearing of the wood. Some wild flowers were growing in the clearing, such as Bird's foot Trefoil and also Heather which was being used for nectar, but the foodplants for these 2 species of butterfly could not be located.*

Saturday 7th August 2004

*Dave Wilton's report for Friday, 6th August: “I made another brief stop at *Span Green* this morning before*

heading off down the A34 to work. I parked at the eastern (Touchbridge) end and ambled off down the track towards where I'd seen **Brown Hairstreak** activity a few days ago. I'd walked less than a hundred yards, only half way to the first southside field entrance, when I espied these two [see the rare photo of Brown Hairstreaks pairing at the top of this page] on Brambles on the right (north) side. Lucky or what?! The Brambles are beneath a substantial Ash tree (the first Ash that you come across in that hedgerow) but the nearest suitable Blackthorn would appear to be some distance away. I walked down as far as the point where the farm track narrows into a footpath, checking all the fields as well, but the only other confirmed Brown Hairstreak activity that I saw in the hour that I was there (10.15 - 11.15) was back at where I'd started. The mating pair were still on the Brambles, while another male was seen flying about in the Ash above them. That's at least four different trees they've been recorded in at Span Green - makes me wonder if this "Master Tree" idea has much substance!

Other activity besides the three Brown Hairstreaks comprised Small Skipper (6), Essex Skipper (2), Large White (3), Small White (12), Green-veined White (7), Small Copper (6), Common Blue (1), Marbled White (1), Speckled Wood (2), Gatekeeper (49) and Meadow Brown (17)."

Friday 6th August Tom Dunbar saw a Painted Lady at [Prestwood Picnic Site](#) and a **Clouded Yellow** at [Beacon Hill Ellesborough](#) during two short visits. "Are migrants now hitting the UTB shores in numbers?"

Paul Bowyer went to Finemere on 5th August to see the much publicised Clouded Yellow: "I was not disappointed, I found 1 in the area of wild flowers before the gate to the woodland and another in the cleared area behind the fence near the turning circle. This latter area is supporting more butterflies than I can ever remember. I also noticed the good numbers of Brown Argus near the entrance to the wood and even along the main ride. The species I identified were **Clouded Yellow**, Large White, Small White, Green Veined White, Large Skipper, Small Skipper, Essex Skipper, Common Blue, Brown Argus, **Purple Hairstreak**, **Painted Lady**, Peacock, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Ringlet, Small Copper, and Brimstone."

Dave Maunder comments on the butterflies he's seen in Aylesbury during the last 2 weeks of July: "Not many Vanessids about this week (1st week of August), compared to this time last year when I was recording 100+ painted ladies and sm. tortoiseshells on the Buddleias around Aylesbury - not one tortoiseshell yet this week!

Red Admirals(6), Sm. Tortoiseshells(34), Commas(9), Large Whites(60+), Small Whites(300+), Green-Veined Whites(10), Marbled Whites(2), Meadow Browns(10), Ringlets(3), Hedge Browns(60+), Speckled Woods(4) – 1st of 3rd brood on 21/07/04, Small Skippers(7), Essex Skippers(16), **Holly Blues(20) - good numbers of Holly Blues around this season!** Peacocks(8), Marbled White(1), Large Skipper(1), Small Coppers(3).

Thursday 5th August 2004

Tom Dunbar and Mick Campbell found 2 new sites for Brown Hairstreaks today. In the [Boarstall](#) area they located one on an ash tree. Near the M40 at [Honeyburge](#) they located **2 Brown Hairstreaks, 2 Purple Hairstreaks and 2 White-letter Hairstreaks** all on the same small mixture of ash and elm. A search in the [Stanton Little Wood](#) area was interrupted by a threatening thunderstorm. They resolved to return another day having spent 2 hours on site. A search in the [Ludgershall](#) area also failed to turn up any further sightings of Brown Hairstreak but did deliver one **Clouded Yellow**. The above site-visits followed up egg finds from previous egg searches. This has proved to be a very successful strategy in locating adults.

Wednesday 4th August 2004

Tim & Colleen Watts visited Aston Clinton Ragpits on Monday 2nd and recorded **Chalkhill Blues** and Brown Argus. They also went to [Beacon Hill Ellesborough today](#) and recorded lots of **Chalkhill Blues**, 3 Small Copper

and Brown Argus.

David Fuller went to Wendover Woods this morning for the **Silver-washed Fritillary** and saw 8 on the 'buddleia bush' - 4 females, 2 worn males and 2 fresh males. Also there 200+ GVV/SW, 4 Holly Blue, 4 Peacock, 60+ Gatekeepers, some Meadow Browns and Large and Small Whites all along the ride.

David Fuller also went to Watlington Hill yesterday, 3rd August, looking for and counting butterflies. He saw **29 Silver-spotted Skippers** of which only 4 females. He met Mick Campbell and Tom Dunbar who at the time had seen 14 others in a different area. Also seen were **Chalkhill Blue 24**, Green-veined White 6, Speckled Wood 2, Holly Blue 2, Common Blue 33 including 4 females, Brimstone 10, Marbled White 3, Large White 11, **Painted Lady 1 very fresh**, Small Heath 3, Small Copper 3, Brown Argus 3, Large Skipper 1, Small White 1, Meadow Brown 85, Gatekeeper 24

Tom Dunbar reports that he and 3 other UTB members, David Redhead, Mick Campbell and Dennis Dell, spent a full day searching for Brown Hairstreak on the Bucks / Oxon borders today. "Our branch Chair and Brown Hairstreak Champion was found champing at the bit in *Widnell Lane Piddington* - our pre-arranged meeting place - in search of his first BHS of the year. We soon put this to rights with sightings of three adults on a suitable ash tree. Next port of call was *Piddington Wood*. Over the following two hours several ash trees were searched. Eventually we came upon two BHS in an ash on the outer hedgeline of the woods. The group then took themselves off to *Upper Span Green* (Green Lane area). Four adults were located here to the delight of the party. One member also recorded a single specimen on an ash in *Whitecross Green Wood* on the way to the meeting place earlier in the day. **A total of 10 BHS on four sites was deemed a great success.**

Please note:- female BHS are now on the wing although not yet ovipositing; the sites were chosen because eggs were previously found there in good numbers; Purple Hairstreaks commonly fly in the same ash trees and can cause mis-identification of Brown Hairstreaks - always carry binoculars!"

One of the party dropped into *Rushbeds 'Tramway'* on the way home. No BHS were found on the ashes there. However a **Clouded Yellow** did compensate to some degree and also at *Lapland Farm* where a **Painted Lady** was on offer as compensation for the lack of BHS.

Dave Wilton's report for today: Having got home from work yesterday afternoon I popped out to have a look at the eastern end of Span Green at Touchbridge. There was some Hairstreak activity a couple of hundred yards along the track in a small Ash a few yards to the right of the entrance to the first field on the left (south) side, but a thunderstorm arrived at the same time and I had to beat a hasty retreat. I went back to the same spot this morning (0930am - 1000am) and found two male **Brown Hairstreak** in the same Ash. I had a brief sighting of what may have been another that flew up the field's hedgerow blackthorn tops to land in different small Ash just the other side of the field entrance, but it didn't fly again while I was there so no positive ID. Didn't have time for any more exploring but at least this is another site with confirmed activity. Several **Speckled Woods** and **Small Coppers** also noted while I was there.

News received today from David Newland (Cambs & Essex BC): "I had an opportunity to call at *Aston Rowant* on 2nd August. I didn't see any **Silver-spotted Skipper** on the north side of the motorway but saw **6 SSS** (both males and females, nectaring on dwarf thistles and basking) during about 15 minutes spent on the south side on a hot but overcast afternoon."

Tuesday 3rd August 2004

Paul Bowyer went to Whitecross Green Wood early yesterday morning, 2nd, but did not take binoculars.

There were **likely Brown Hairstreaks** in the trees but I could not identify them. I did find one on the ground however. Other species seen were **White Admiral, Painted Lady**, Peacock, Marbled White, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Ringlet, Large Skipper, Essex Skipper, Small Skipper, Large White, Green Veined White, Small White, Brimstone and Small Copper.

In the afternoon, Paul then went on to Sands Bank for about 20 minutes and had a very **significant sighting of 2 male Chalkhill Blue**, which he hasn't seen there since about 1990. Horseshoe Vetch does grow on the site and has prospered since Wycombe Wanderers used the lower slopes as a car park.

Colleen and Tim Watts went to Wendover Woods on Mon 2nd afternoon and saw at least 6 different **S.W.Fritillaries** around the buddleia.

David Ferguson tried for SSS at Yoesden Bank on 31/7 without success. However, he was more successful at **Bernwood** where he saw a **Brown hairstreak** by the meadow entrance yesterday. Also a **Clouded Yellow** at **Wormsley**.

Dave Wilton called at a couple of places in the afternoon of 2nd August on his way home from work: At **Muswell Hill** he found one **Brown Hairstreak** (definitely a male) in the top of an Ash in the middle of the copse. He thought there may have been more but two Purple Hairstreak and a Speckled Wood (would you believe!) were also active in the top of the same tree. In the end it was definitely just the one Brown. He checked all of the associated blackthorn and brambles but there was no sign of any females. In the hedgerow a few yards to the south of the copse there's another Ash and there was a Hairstreak active in that as well but he couldn't get a positive ID due to looking towards the sun.

Second stop was the western end of Span Green where two **Brown Hairstreak** (assumed to have been males) were recorded in the top of the same Ash tree. Once again there was no sign of any females yet.

After going home Dave nipped out to Finemere, determined to track this SWF down. No joy, yet again, but the **Clouded Yellow** that he found in the cleared area behind the turning circle two days ago was still there, hiding amongst the bird's foot trefoil.

On 31/07/04 at Paices Wood, Aldermaston, Eddie Napper saw at least **4 Silver washed Fritillaries**, one on Buddleia adjacent to car park. The site is accessed through Youngs Industrial Estate and is a West Berks reserve.

Also, at **Finemere Woods on 30/07/04** a Brown Argus in the meadow just before the woods.

Sunday 1st August 2004

Derek & Cathy Brown had a look for Adonis at Hartslock this morning without success – “lots of **Chalkhill**, a few Holly, 2 Common Blue males and a Brown Argus but none of the target! Perhaps too early - we'll try again. Also a complete lack of clouded yellows and still no Painted Lady in the garden - as I mentioned the Hummingbird Hawk Moths are back - where are the migrant butterflies! However we did have 3 new species for the garden today - 2 small skippers, a Small Copper and best of all a Purple Hairstreak that landed on our swing-chair.”

Dave Wilton had a look at the Gomm Valley nature reserve near Loudwater this morning: “My final attempt to track down Dark Green Fritillary locally ended in yet another failure so I'm not going to put any more effort into it – the butterfly will just have to come and find me now! Common Blue (4), Holly Blue (2) and Peacock (3) were amongst the dozen species recorded in this small reserve. I then went to see the "infamous buddleia" in **Wendover**

Woods. There I was greeted by four male **Silver-washed Fritillaries** fighting for space with nine other butterfly species (Brimstone, Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Marbled White, Gatekeeper and Meadow Brown) and at least one Six-Spot Burnet Moth, not to mention the bees and hoverflies. It really is a sight to behold - especially as the bush isn't all that big as buddleias go! A walk into the woods further up the hill brought my final - and very conservative - **SWF count up to 15, including two mating pairs.** Eight males and three females were confirmed, the sex of the other four remaining undetermined (just you try chasing them through brambles wearing shorts!). On returning to the buddleia two hours later the SWF count there was five, again all male."

Mick & Wendy Campbell continued their hunt for Silver-washed Fritillary, visiting 3 woods today in ideal weather conditions. They started in **Homefield Wood** and were on their way back to the car when they spotted **2 SWF** flying rapidly north through the wood. They then went to the **privately owned Hatchet Wood** and recorded **7 SWF** from the public footpath. The females were nearly all nectaring on bramble, while the males were far more active. The final destination was **Crowsley Wood** near Henley where moderate numbers of SWF have been recorded in previous years. They counted **10 SWF**, mostly along the main ride, but were unable to find any good quality foodplant. A total of 19 for the day!

Saturday 31st July 2004

Wendy & Mick Campbell decided to carry out a more thorough Silver-washed Fritillary survey in Wendover Woods today to try and establish whether or not a colony was present. A very conservative count of 10 females and 20 males, plus the discovery of the dog violet foodplant, followed by observation of females ovipositing on the trunks of fir trees seems to confirm that there is a sizeable colony present in Wendover Woods.

Derek & Cathy Brown didn't have any luck at Finemere for the PE or SWF today, but saw 3, presumably male, **Brown Hairstreaks** at **Whitecross** at the top of a large Ash tree in the main ride.

Tom Dunbar sent in the following report and observations today: I added two further sites, both in the Piddington area, to my **Brown Hairstreak** total for this season. I recorded 3 males at one and a single male at the second. I have seen 8 males at 4 sites over the last 3 days. I base my searches on the outcomes of egg searches carried out the previous autumn / winter. This has so far proven a very productive approach. I watched a male today perched on an ash leaf where it remained stationary for at least half an hour. It had presumably taken its fill of honeydew for the day. I had the feeling it had arrived on the dancefloor before the band had turned up! Unlike last year I have so far failed to spot a BHS at ground level. There is evidence that the males do so prior to the emergence of females. But once the females emerge perhaps the males are too busy attending to potential partners and warding off other males which necessitates their constant presence on the tree tops. What happens to the males after mating is complete? We know that the females disperse to egg lay. I have never seen further male activity at this stage atop the ashes. It will be interesting to discover if the emergence gap between the sexes is a constant year on year.

Dave Wilton only had time today for a two-hour trip to Finemere mid-afternoon. The warm sunshine brought out a very respectable 23 species altogether, but still no Silver-washed Fritillary! Best of all was a single pristine **Clouded Yellow** in the cleared area behind the turning circle. This area has often been a butterfly-free zone on my previous visits but today it held several Brown Argus and Common Blue as well as about ten Peacock (the latter all on teasels). 23 Peacock were seen altogether, while other notables included Brimstone (11), Small Copper (3), Holly Blue (1), Purple Hairstreak (17), **Painted Lady** (1), Small Tortoiseshell (2), Comma (1), Marbled White (8) and Speckled Wood (2).

Tim Watts saw a single Purple hairstreak on Calvert BBOWT reserve yesterday. Rather out of its habitat as there's only the odd oak on site and it was seen on brambles in an open area.

Friday 30th July 2004

The buddleia bush in Wendover Woods found by Dennis Dell is attracting more than butterflies! Today, another 3 UTB members went to see the Silver-washed Fritillaries reported by Dennis:

Dave Ferguson reports: The buddleia is amazing - there were 12 species on it, including up to **5 male Silver-washed Fritillaries** and a fresh **Painted Lady**. A **female SWF** was seen along the path that goes off the main track opposite the bush. A picture of one of the SWFs is attached. *[Photo will be posted tomorrow.]*

Mick & Wendy Campbell also visited the now famous buddleia today and initially didn't see any SWF. However after 5 minutes or so the first one arrived, followed shortly by another 2, all males. On turning round towards the wood to see where they were coming from, several more SWF could be seen flying higher up the hill across the bramble patches and amongst the trees. They were able to count a definite **8 male and 1 female SWF** altogether.

Tom Dunbar, armed with new bins, had a late visit to the Piddington area today where one **Brown Hairstreak** was located on an ash tree at 5.30 pm. This ash was identified last year as a potential 'muster' tree.

News received from Tony Croft today: "I went to **Aston Rowant** this morning to search for the SSS. As I was lying prone on the hillside trying for a photo Dave Wilton turned up, so as he had his notebook and pencil with him I think he will furnish you with all the facts and figures of what we saw there. I did manage to cosy up to a **Silver-spotted Skipper** and get this photo. *[See photo above.]*

Dave Wilton's daily report as follows: This morning I decided to go off to the **Aston Rowant Nature Reserve** in pursuit of Silver-spotted Skipper. I started on the **south side** of the motorway, hoping that I might see Dark Green Fritillary as well, but the area in which they have previously been seen has now been mown. The **Chalkhill Blue was out in force, with 67 males and 7 females** recorded (including one mating pair, of which the female was a non-flyer with deformed wings). Small Copper (4), Brown Argus (1), Small Tortoiseshell (2), Peacock (1), Marbled White (12) and Small Heath (21) were present along with quantities of the regulars - Whites, Small/Essex Skippers, Gatekeepers and Meadow Browns. Having seen no sign of **Silver-spotted Skipper**, I decided to have a quick look at the **north side** of the motorway. Practically my first sight on entering the reserve was Tony Croft lying in the grass photographing one! We saw four in the short time that I had available, with a single Common Blue being the only additional species noted.

Yesterday, 29th, Adrian Cadman had the good fortune to pass Bernwood during his working day and managed an hour on the Butterfly trail from 10.50am in glorious hot sunshine! He says: "Whilst watching a Hornet catching bite size insects on the inflorescences of Wild Carrot (?) I noticed a **Brown Hairstreak** nectaring. It was noticeably smaller and paler than other BHs I've seen, so presume it was a male???" (Unfortunately no other butterfly folk in the vicinity to ask, I continued to the Meadow Gate site, nobody there either). I retraced my steps and inspected every Wild Carrot head and immediately found another (presumed) male, this poor thing had a beak shaped piece missing from both wings! and very worn hind wing edges. Further inspection of Wild Carrots produced more hairstreaks, this time **3 Purples**. At the crossroads where the grassy butterfly walk leaves the ballasted main track there were further Purples on the profusion of Wild Carrot and remarkably another BH, this time in pristine condition. I spent about 15 minutes in its company but it never obliged with an upperside view, again

I presume it was a male. Eventually it flew up on to a sallow before fizzing away. Unfortunately I had to fizzle away as well. How many BH were nectaring on Wild Carrot yesterday? All the hairstreaks were very vulnerable - could almost touch them before they would move."

Thursday 29th July 2004

Today, 29th, Dave Wilton couldn't resist the temptation of going to Rushbeds Wood in the morning after Tom's success with Brown Hairstreak there yesterday. The only Hairstreak activity around those Ash trees at the Lapland entrance when I arrived at 9am was of the Purple variety, so I went off to walk through the wood and then check the meadow along the southern edge. The habitat also looks perfect there for Brown Hairstreak but none was seen. It was only when I returned to the [Lapland](#) entrance before going home that two **Brown Hairstreaks** showed themselves in the Ash tree tops. One decided to do a little sunbathing, providing confirmation that it was indeed a male. Twenty species were recorded altogether, including Brimstone (6), Small Copper (4), Common Blue (1), **White Admiral** (1), Peacock (6), Comma (3) and Small Heath (10).

In the afternoon he had to go to Tring so made a short visit to [College Lake](#). Six second-brood **Small Blue** were found on the eastern side of the reserve. Brown Argus (5), Common Blue (16) and Peacock (5) were also recorded. The usual quantities of Small/Essex Skipper, Small/Large White, Marbled White and Meadow Brown were present but they were outnumbered many times over by the Gatekeeper which was active everywhere.

Yesterday, 28th, Dave Wilton called briefly at Whitecross Green on his way to work but there was no sign of Brown Hairstreak – he wonders if he should have gone to Lapland Farm instead! However, it's great to know that they are out there at last.

[Please note – if you're visiting Lapland Farm, it's best to park at the public road junction and walk the short distance down the private road leading to the Lapland Farm entrance.]

Wednesday 28th July 2004

Dennis Dell visited Wendover Woods today and was pleased to be able to report the following: At the southern end of Wendover Woods, there is a very large open grassy area in a shallow valley. This area is not suitable for many of the blues because there are no short cropped grassy areas (it is not grazed). I came across a small, isolated, Buddleia bush in this area which was absolutely covered in butterflies: an astonishing sight! All the expected species were there, but what caught my eye in particular, were **three Silver-Washed Fritillaries**, which were enjoying the nectar as much as the Peacocks etc. There is plenty of Marjoram nearby, but the Buddleia was definitely favoured. Species seen in the whole area: Small, Large, and Green-Veined Whites, Comma, Holly Blue, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Gatekeeper, Marbled White, Small and Essex skippers, Silver-Washed Fritillary, Brimstone, Red Admiral, Peacock, Large Skipper, Small Tortoiseshell.

No Dark Green Fritillaries or Chalkhill Blues, however (grass too long, probably, so vetches and trefoils don't have much chance).

Tom Dunbar saw his first Silver Spotted Skipper today: The **SSS** was seen at [Happy Valley](#) in the Chilterns. He then paid a late visit to [Laplunds Farm](#) where he joined [Tim and Colleen Watts](#) who were already on site. This resulted in **3 Brown Hairstreaks** being spotted on the same assembly ash trees as last year. It was Tim and Colleen's first ever Brown Hairstreak sighting. The gender could not be confirmed but we assumed they were males. On arrival home Tom instantly ordered a decent set of binoculars over the net!

Welcome to Pete Eeles, new contributor to the website, who visited Greenham Common today and

observed the following: 25 Grayling; 12 Essex Skipper (yes, I checked their antennae!); 2 Small Skipper; 14 Common Blue (13 male, 1 female); 56 Gatekeeper; 12 Meadow Brown; 1 Small Tortoiseshell; 3 Small White; 1 Brimstone (female, very fresh, which was unexpected).

[Peter runs an excellent website at <http://www.eeles.net/butterflies/index.html>]

Tuesday 27th July 2004

The following report was received from Dave Wilton today: Having seen mention of Silver-washed Fritillary just down the road from me at [Finemere](#) I thought I had better have a look myself before going to work this morning. At 9am the sun was out, **21 species were recorded in the 90 minutes** that I was there, but unfortunately no Silver-washed put in an appearance (and neither did Purple Emperor for that matter). A fresh **Brown Argus** was the best thing on offer, while of the four **White Admirals** seen two were in pristine condition, making me think that maybe they emerge over quite a long period. The full list of species comprised Large Skipper, Small Skipper, Essex Skipper, Brimstone, Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Small Copper, Brown Argus, Common Blue, Holly Blue, Purple Hairstreak, Peacock, Comma, Small Tortoiseshell, White Admiral, Marbled White, Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown and Ringlet.

Monday 26th July 2004

[Thank you to those of you who have sent photos. These will be posted in the next day or two.]

26/07/04 - Tim and Colleen Watts had good views of **female Purple Emperor** at [Finemere Wood](#) resting on sallow at the bend in the main track at 5:30 p.m. today. Also a **Silver-washed Fritillary** briefly in the same spot. 1 tatty **White Admiral**, 3 Peacock, Holly blue, female common blue and 6 Purple hairstreak.

Tim Watts has passed on this news: 2 **Dark Green Fritillaries** were reported at [Steps Hill Bucks](#) on the Bucks bird club e-group website today, 25th July.

Cathy and Derek Brown visited Greenham Common on 25th July and recorded 12 **Graylings** as well as a single second-generation **Small Blue** and 3 male Common blues amongst others. At [Bowdown](#) they saw **3 White Admirals** but no SWF.

Tom Dunbar and Alan Wingrove visited Pitstone Fen this morning, 25th July: "Amongst 14 species were 15 second brood **Small Blue**. This compares very favourably with 17 seen here in May. Does the species generally have a second brood in our area? Other second broods to note were **Brown Argus**, Common Blue and Small Heath. We had hoped for a second brood Dingy Skipper but no joy. The afternoon saw a decline in the weather conditions. A visit to [Leckhamstead Wood](#) in search of second brood Wood White was curtailed as a consequence. None was seen. However other species included 1 Large Skipper, an estimated 1000 mixed Large / Small / Green Veined Whites in a set-aside field, 1 Red Admiral, 2 Small Tortoiseshell, **3 Brown Argus**, 1 Purple Hairstreak, 15 Gatekeeper, 15 Meadow Brown, 7 Speckled Wood. There are reports that the Brown Argus is expanding its range and that it is colonising set-aside fields adjacent to its 'normal' habitat to this end. A visit to [a third site in North Bucks](#) for possible Purple Emperor and second brood Wood White was abandoned with increasing cloud cover and the distant call of the teapot."

Saturday 24th July 2004

Welcome to Paul Gee, new contributor to the site and keen photographer who is in the process of creating his own website – [click here to see Paul's progress so far](#). Paul is a BC member, Herts & Middx Branch, and visited Finemere today. His photograph of a **Purple Hairstreak** is shown at the top of the page.

The following was received from Tim Watts today: “This morning at 11 a.m. in Finemere wood I saw my 1st ever **Silver-washed Fritillary**. It was bombing up and down the 1st ride on your left once through the gate. It landed on a bush but not long enough for photo. A photographer told me he had seen one there last week.”

On a short trip to Finemere this afternoon, Wendy & Mick Campbell recorded a **White Admiral** and a female **Purple Emperor** in the main ride.

Derek & Cathy Brown opted to head north in search of Purple Emperor and Brown Hairstreak today: “We went to **Waterperry Wood** this morning - really nice spot but unfortunately no Emperors while we were there. Never mind, we saw lots else - 18 species. (Multitudes of GK, SS, LS, MB and some ES. As well as 12 SW, 4 GVW, 20 LW, 12 Brims, 1 Holly Blue, 1 **Brown Argus**, 1 Red Admiral, 20 MW, 30 Ringlet, **12 Speckled wood**, 2 **white admiral**, 8 Peacocks and 20+ Purple hairstreaks. The Peacocks were really pristine but the PHs were a bit moth eaten. If the Peacock was a rare butterfly only found in the tropics everyone would rave about it! They really are stunning). We then paid a quick visit to **Whitecross** - nothing new here but saw 4 WA. Again no PE, and no Brown HS. On the way back we stopped for an hour at **Aston Rowant** and added 4 CHB, 2 SC, 2 ST, 6 SH, 1 Comma and best of all a single **Dark Green Frit**. Unfortunately it didn't settle for long and I didn't get a photo - yet again. This beast continues to elude me! No sign of SS Skips, but **24 species all told!**

Several UTB members decided independently to head south in search of Grayling today. Here's how they got on:

Dave Wilton managed to escape from work early this morning and made the most of the good weather by stopping at Newbury to visit Bowdown Wood (hoping for Silver-washed Fritillary) and Greenham Common (for Grayling). He wasn't disappointed! **Bowdown** produced Large Skipper (1), Large White (2), Small White (1), Green-veined White (8), Purple Hairstreak (2), Small Copper (4), Holly Blue (1), **White Admiral** (2), Red Admiral (2), Peacock (2), Comma (1), **Silver-washed Fritillary** (2, both towards the eastern end of the reserve – *see photo above*), Speckled Wood (7), Gatekeeper (32), Meadow Brown (14) and Ringlet (18). Across the road at **Greenham Common** he bumped into **Paul Bowyer** and they set off to find a Grayling. There was a stiff south-westerly breeze which reduced the number of active butterflies to a minimum, but after walking about a mile to the west (and spotting a Fox Moth caterpillar on the way) we eventually disturbed a **Grayling** from its hiding place amongst some stones.

Tom Dunbar and Alan Wingrove reported that high winds on this very exposed site restricted their species count to fifteen, contrasting with Paul Bowyer's 20 earlier in the day. Their species count included 2 Essex Skipper, 3 Small Skipper, 2 Small White, **7 Common Blue 2nd brood**, 1 Holly Blue, 12 Small Copper, 2 Peacock, 1 Tortoiseshell, 1 **Purple Emperor**, 13 **Grayling**, 23 Gatekeeper, 12 Meadow Brown, 1 Ringlet, 2 Speckled Wood, 10

Small Heath. UTB records indicate the presence of the Purple Emperor in the vicinity in past years.

Dennis Dell reports seeing his first two summer generation Holly Blues in his garden on 23rd July. He also checked out the Aylesbury Park Golf Course on the western edge of Aylesbury near Stone. Plenty of rough grassy areas divided by hedgerows with mature trees surrounding the fairways and greens make this an ideal habitat for our grassland species. 93 Gatekeepers, 65 Meadow Browns, and 21 Marbled Whites seen. Other species: Peacock, Small and Large Whites, Small and Essex Skippers, Small Tortoiseshell, Green-veined White, Holly Blue, Comma, and the first summer Small Copper, making 13 species. Additional species seen in early June (7th) were: Large skipper, Brown Argus, Common Blue, Red Admiral, and Speckled Wood. A total of 18 species, which is not bad for a golf course!

Friday 23rd July 2004

Tim and Colleen Watts visited Finemere wood this afternoon and having seen 1 **White Admiral**, 10 **Purple hairstreaks** and a **Holly blue** they then hit the jackpot with 3 views of a **Purple Emperor**. The 1st view was in flight but low and close - Tim thinks it may have been feeding or resting and they had disturbed it. Then seen again, both times gliding around top of oaks. Finally, seen on the bend on the main track, 5 -5:10 p.m,

Friday 23rd July - on a warm and bright afternoon Wendy and Mick Campbell and Paul Bowyer went to Waterperry Wood mainly in search of **Purple Emperors**. 2 were spotted (both female) along the main ride through the wood. There was much excitement when the first of the two swooped and glided from sallow to sallow giving us very good views of this impressive butterfly. Other species recorded were: Small Skipper and **Small Copper** (in Bernwood), Gatekeeper (35), Meadow Brown (4), Speckled Wood (3), Marbled White (10), Ringlet (4), Brimstone (13), Large White (4), Small White (4), Green Veined White (3), Large Skipper (6), Essex Skipper (4), Holly Blue (1), Peacock (5), Red Admiral (1), Comma (1), Small Tortoiseshell (1), **White Admiral (4)**, and **Purple Hairstreak (22)**, a total of 21 species.

Mick and Wendy then continued on to Rushbeds Wood but no Purple Emperor or White Admiral were seen. In Rushbeds Meadow they located 2 **Small Heath** and a single male **Common Blue**, bringing their total species count for the day to 23. No Brown Hairstreaks were found.

Tom Dunbar reports on his visit to Ivinghoe Beacon today Friday 23rd July. What a relief to set off in glorious weather with the prospect of unbridled sunshine for a change! The target species were Dark Green Fritillary, Chalkhill Blue, Common Blue, Brown Argus. The first two were achieved. Common Blue and Brown Argus are obviously not yet on the wing in this northerly location (seen in Surrey yesterday). The species list included 7 Small Skipper, 3 Essex Skipper, 4 Large Skipper, 8 Brimstone, 20 Small White, 4 GV White, 3 Large White, 2 Purple Hairstreak, 13 Small Tortoiseshell, 2 Comma, 1 Red Admiral, 5 Peacock, 1 Small Copper, 6 Holly Blue, **6 Dark Green Fritillary, 30 Chalkhill Blue**, 110 Marbled White, 53 Gatekeeper, 14 Meadow Brown, 8 Ringlet, 24 Small Heath. I tried all the favoured locations for Speckled Wood but to no avail. I feel this butterfly is having a poor season.

Thursday 22nd July 2004

Dave Wilton decided to give his neck a well-earned rest from Purple Emperor surveying and visited the National Trust site at Granglands this afternoon. "The **Chalkhill Blue** hadn't seen me yet this year and I was pleased to record 27 of them altogether. Small White (17), second-brood Brimstone (25), Gatekeeper (30) and Meadow Brown (15) were also present in abundance. Lesser numbers of Small &

Essex Skipper, Large White, Small Tortoiseshell, Marbled White, Small Heath and Ringlet were recorded, along with single examples of Large Skipper, Green-veined White, **Small Copper** and Comma.”

Mick & Wendy Campbell chose Hodgemoor Wood in Bucks, as their target location for White Admiral this afternoon to confirm that a colony was still resident there. They were pleased to record 4 in different areas of the wood, along with 45 **Purple Hairstreak**, 9 **Holly Blue** and 7 other species. On returning to the car park they discovered Elm growing in the nearby lane and watched closely to see if any **White-letter Hairstreaks** were present. The first few turned out to be Purple Hairstreaks, but then one landed near the front of the tree, quite low down and they were able to positively id it as White-letter. After a minute or two it flew off into the wood.

Wednesday 21st July 2004

Tony Croft went to Aston Rowant this afternoon and although the weather wasn't all that brilliant (mainly cloudy 21C) there were good numbers of butterflies around: 15 **Chalkhill Blue** (all male); 30+ **Small Heath**; 30+ **Small Skipper**; 3 **Essex Skipper**; 8 **Marbled White**; 5 **Small Copper** (nice surprise); 3 **Small Tortoiseshell**; 1 **Brimstone**. There was one **possible Silver Spotted Skipper** but I got only the briefest glimpse of it before it flew off. I should think this weekend would be a good time to get back there with all this fine weather we are being promised. I am working unfortunately so I guess someone else will probably have the privilege of the first positive sighting.

Dave Wilton's report for today: I could only manage a couple of hours this afternoon, co-incidentally at the time the weather was at its worst! I decided to go to **Boarstall Wood** where the 'high point' can be scanned from Span Green (a known **Brown Hairstreak** site). I spent an hour staring skywards but neither species came out to play. I then decided to walk the footpath that goes along the northern edge of the wood and as I passed **Boarstall Wood Cottage** I was amazed to see a **Purple Emperor** do an orbit above its back garden and land in a nearby oak! This private wood belongs to the Ernest Cook Trust and one day needs to be properly surveyed for its butterfly content. I did manage to see a single **White Admiral** in the only ride that is visible from outside.

Tuesday 20th July 2004

Allen Beechey, surveying for Purple Emperor in the Bernwood complex, sent in the following report of his last 2 days' sightings: "19th July - I spent 4½ hours at **Bernwood** (10:45 am until 3:15 pm) at both known PE assembly areas plus visiting two other suspected areas. Unfortunately, PE's failed to show. I had to console myself with conducting a count of the other butterflies that were around and finished up with: large Skipper 8, Small/Essex Skipper 29, Essex Skipper 5, Small Skipper 3, Speckled Wood 4, Marbled White 36, Meadow Brown 37, Ringlet 103, Gatekeeper 69, **Purple Hairstreak** 32, Green-veined White 5, Small White 4, Large White 7, Brimstone 4 & **White Admiral** 1.

20th July – I spent 4 hours at **Bernwood** (10:30 am to 2:30 pm) looking at all of the known and suspected PE assembly areas and drew a blank (again!). I walked practically the whole of the Bernwood complex but failed to see any PE's the whole day long. I did, however, see 8 **White Admiral** which all refused to be photographed and most significantly, 3 **Silver Washed Fritillary!** I saw the first one flying along the main path right next to the Oakley Wood car park at about 10:40 am. This individual thought about landing for about half a second before flying off over the trees. About 3 hours later I saw another individual feeding on Bramble flowers right at the eastern most end of the wood (past the turning circle which is at the end of the main, gravel ride). It fidgeted around the same bramble bush for about 5 minutes before flying off down the ride (with me in hot pursuit!). Having lost sight of him (my one photo of this individual confirms my assumption of its gender!) I walked back up the path to fetch my bag, only to see another SWF fly onto the same bramble bush. Initially I thought that this was the same insect that I had

just followed down the ride, but it differed from the previous one in that it had no damage to its right hind wing.”
[This is a very significant report of Silver-washed Fritillaries in Bernwood as there have only been 9 reported sightings since 1995. Please send in all sightings to this website or to [Mick Campbell](#) who is the Silver-washed Fritillary Species Champion for UTB.]

Mick and Wendy Campbell made a return visit to Huntshill Wood, Naphill, today (20th) searching for White Admiral which, according to UTB records, has not been seen in this wood before. There is an abundance of good quality, old Oak trees in this wood and patches of bramble, ferns and honeysuckle. There's also a pond/water-logged area. They spent about 1-2 hours in the wood and, on their way back to the car, Wendy spotted the unmistakable flight pattern of a **White Admiral** as it flew through a sunny clearing. Fortunately it landed on a small oak tree sunning itself, enabling a positive id. They recorded 13 species in total in the wood, the other notable sighting being of **11 Holly Blues**, which seem to be having a very good year. In the afternoon they went to the [Aston Rowant reserve](#) where they recorded excellent numbers of **Small Tortoiseshell (50+)** feeding on large patches of thistle, **39+ Small Heath** and **10 Chalkhill Blue** – all male apart from one.

Dave Maunder saw the following butterflies in Aylesbury last week:- Commas(9), Sm. tortoiseshells(15), Large whites(2), Small whites(20+), Marbled whites(4), Meadow browns(11), Ringlets(12), Hedge browns(15), Large skipper(1), Small skippers(14), Essex skippers(5), and **Holly blues** (2).

Dave Wilton surveyed Chinkwell and Whitecross Green Woods today, 20th, the target species being the Purple Emperor. Here are his records and observations for the day: “This morning I spent a couple of hours at Chinkwell Wood near Brill. Unfortunately no Purple Emperors appeared but the early sunshine meant that there was still a plentiful supply of other butterflies within the wood. Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown and Ringlet were present in large quantities, there were smaller numbers of Large Skipper, Small, Large and Green-veined Whites, **Purple Hairstreak**, Comma, Small Tortoiseshell, **Red Admiral** and Speckled Wood, as well as single examples of Brimstone, **Holly Blue** and Marbled White. The only notable absentee was White Admiral although I did see some here back in June. I didn't make a thorough check of the meadow to the south of the wood but it certainly held good numbers of Marbled White, Gatekeeper and Meadow Brown. This afternoon I spent some time at [Whitecross Green Wood](#). The main rides have all now been mown, but despite the cloudier weather the species total was similar to that at Chinkwell with the addition of Small Skipper, **White Admiral** (2) and a fresh Peacock. I bumped into Tony Croft here and he pointed out one of the likely Brown Hairstreak sites, but none of the butterflies seem to have emerged yet. Having seen no sign of my main target species within the wood either, I decided to walk the public footpath that climbs up to the high point at the southeast corner (actually called Oriel Wood in that area). There I had two brief glimpses of a **Purple Emperor** patrolling the treetops, my only sighting for the day.”

On July 19th Paul Bowyer decided after work to go to Cocksherd Wood, which is just inside the Slough Border. Paul reports the following: “I saw **Purple Hairstreaks**, Commas, Large White and Small White. It was fascinating to see what looked like Commas of different generations on the wing at the same time. I then walked north towards the council dump to look for **White-letter Hairstreaks** once again. This time there was fresh purpose as the fountain of all knowledge (M.C.) had advised me to look for the combination of elm and ash rather than just elm to find these elusive butterflies. I did this and I found an ash standing proud amongst surrounding elm. There were **2 perhaps 3 hairstreaks** at the top flitting between the ash and elm. Also in the area were Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Ringlet, Essex Skipper, Large White, Small White, Small Tortoiseshell and **Painted Lady**. Thanks Mick!”

Monday 19th July 2004

Here is an account of today's butterfly tour by Dave Ferguson: A quick stop at [Oakley Airfield](#) produced **150+ Small Whites** flying over bean fields. The only other butterflies were 2 Small Tortoiseshells. A search in [Piddington Wood](#) for PEs failed but I did see 1 **White Admiral**, 1 Comma, 1 Speckled Wood and many Ringlets. The adjacent meadow was full of Gatekeepers, Meadow Browns, Marbled Whites, Small Whites, as well as 1 Green-veined

White, 4+ Small Skippers and 4+ Essex skippers, Next stop was [Rushbeds Wood](#) where I saw a **Purple Emperor** flying at tree-top height over one of the rides. Other new species for the day were 1 **Purple Hairstreak**, 1 Large White, 4 Large Skippers and 1 **Brimstone**. Another **White Admiral** was nice. There were 2 **Small Heaths** at [Lapland Farm](#) as well as thousands of grasshoppers. Final stop was [Grangelands](#) where I found 2 **Chalkhill Blues** and a **Holly Blue**. There was a Peacock and a Red Admiral on the buddleia in the garden, which brought the day's species total to 22.

Wendy & Mick Campbell continued their hunt for Purple Emperors today. On the way they checked the blackthorn at Bernwood Meadow just in case the Brown Hairstreaks had started to emerge. No luck there, so they carried on to their target location, [Waterperry Wood](#), seeing 2 **White Admirals** on the route through Bernwood. They arrived at [Drunkard's Corner](#), a suspected assembly point for Purple Emperors, at 2.00 p.m. and immediately observed a **male PE** soaring high up in the canopy, flying quickly between the line of tall Poplars, about 80 feet high, and settling periodically to sunbathe in the tree tops. This continued on and off for about 40 minutes during which time they were joined by Dennis Dell who was also able to observe the behaviour. All 3 of them then walked back along the main track where Mick spotted a **female PE** flying overhead. It settled low down in a fairly small oak tree close to sallows sunbathing with wings open allowing good opportunity of viewing it through binoculars. Altogether 20 species of butterfly were seen during this warm and mostly sunny day.

Dave Wilton spent this afternoon looking at Purple Emperor sites once again, starting with Piddington Wood near Arcot. This is how he got on: My second attempt at finding one here resulted in another failure, although a fresh Holly Blue and Brimstone did make the visit worthwhile. I then walked to nearby [Little Wood](#), which proved more successful. From the footpath that runs along its south-eastern side I managed to find two **Purple Emperors** patrolling the oaks at the wood edge (they were accompanied by a single **White Admiral**). Next stop was [Rushbeds](#), where a quick stop on the railway bridge at the south-eastern corner was again successful with a single **Purple Emperor** sighting, this time to the east of the railway line. My final port of call was [Finemere](#) where I drew another blank, although it was nice to find a rather battered **Painted Lady** flying at the top of the hill near Finemerehill House. Within the wood itself, three **White Admirals** showed themselves in the early evening sunshine.

A cautionary note for Brown Hairstreakers: twice today (at the entrances to Piddington Wood and Lapland Farm meadows) I thought I'd struck gold, finding a Hairstreak flying at the top of an ash tree adjacent to a big stand of blackthorn. On both occasions it turned out to be a Purple Hairstreak!

Sunday 18th July 2004

Tom and Rosaline Dunbar and Ali Latham sent in these reports of their search for Purple Emperor today:

Ali Latham - Charged off up [Tring Hill](#) with Tom and Ros, more or less a waste of time! Found the site mentioned in the PE study near the 2 Buddleias and sallows but nothing doing! In fact there is a worrying lack of any butterflies up there! 3 Red Ad, 1 Gatekeeper, 2 Large White, 1 S W, 1 Sm Tort and a few Marbled W down on the flowers on the lower slopes. What is going on there? And why does the sun always manage to shine here at 5 p.m. onwards?!!!

Tom Dunbar - Saturday's cancellation of homely tasks (fit new cooker) allowed a visit to [Kingswood](#) to survey for Purple Emperor (restricting myself to public access areas). Good habitat for PE and White Letter Hairstreak was noted but zero sightings recorded. A hairstreak was seen on elm but the sighting could not be confirmed. Hopes of better things at [Rushbeds Wood](#) were not realised. This wood normally hosts good numbers of **Purple Hairstreaks** but only one was seen. Alas no Purple Emperor or White Admiral.

The weekend at least showed some consistency with a visit to [Tring Park](#) across the County border in Hertfordshire with with Ali Latham and Rosaleen Dunbar . This is a known site for Purple Emperor. Some very 'likely' PE territories were found but no Purple Emperors were seen. The incredibly low number of butterfly numbers was noteworthy the highlight being a lone Red Admiral.

It only goes to show that the lot of the lepidopterist does not always run smooth. It is always interesting and important to experience the 'lows' in our recording which often raise questions and allow comparisons with seemingly similar habitats which are producing an abundance of species and numbers at the same time as the dearth elsewhere.

Dave Maunder report on his visit to Heythrop park, near Enstone, Oxon today: I saw my first **Hummingbird hawk moth** of the year feeding on Buddleia; also a few yards away resting on reeds in a pond I found 3 **Scarlet tiger moths** - a nice find! Butterflies seen here were:- 3 Commas, 2 Red admirals, 2 Sm. tortoiseshells, 1 Small skipper, 6 Green-veined whites, 1 Small white, 2 Meadow browns, 4 Hedge browns, 1 Ringlet, 1 Speckled wood.

Paul Bowyer and Mick Campbell spent a few hours looking for Dark Green Fritillary and Purple Emperor this afternoon: At [Butler's Hangings](#) they struggled to locate a very faded **Dark Green Fritillary**, a single, fresh **Chalkhill Blue** and a **Small Copper**. Other species seen included good number of Marbled White, MB, Ringlet, Gatekeeper, Small & Large White. They also surveyed [Hodgemoor Wood](#) car park which is a potential location for Purple Emperor, this being the high point of the Oak Wood which has lots of good quality Oak trees and the odd Sallow. No PE seen, but they did record 6 **Purple Hairstreak** and 1 **Red Admiral** in dull, overcast conditions. Looking for the same habitat in nearby woods, they then visited [Huntshill Wood and Naphill Common, Bradenham](#), by which time it was quite late and still very overcast. They still managed to find 20+ **Purple Hairstreak** and 1 **Red Admiral**, but no PE.

Dave Wilton also surveyed Rushbeds briefly both yesterday afternoon and this afternoon and says: "I had Brown Hairstreak in mind as well as Purple Emperor. [Yesterday's visit](#) produced eleven species active within the wood (large numbers of Ringlet and Meadow Brown, a handful of Small Skipper, Large Skipper, Large White, Green-veined White, **Purple Hairstreak**, Marbled White and Gatekeeper, plus single examples of **White Admiral** and Speckled Wood). The [Lapland Farm meadows](#) were full of Meadow Brown (100+) and good quantities (30+) of Marbled White, Gatekeeper and Small/Essex Skippers, while I also found a **single Small Heath**. [Today's visit](#) was basically more of the same, although I was luckier with **Purple Emperor** in that one showed itself above the treetops in the southeast corner while I watched from the railway bridge. **No sign of Brown Hairstreak at all, although they must start appearing any day now.**

Saturday 17th July 2004

Ali Latham and Wendy & Mick Campbell decided to go to Bernwood again today, their target species being Purple Emperor and the long shot of an early Brown Hairstreak. The weather looked promising with more blue sky than clouds for a change and the air temperature was warm. They started off at the main car park where Ali saw a **Purple Emperor** immediately after getting out of the car. They then went into a small clearing nearby where they were delighted to see a pristine **Silver-washed Fritillary** sunning itself on the bramble, along with many Gatekeepers, Skippers (Large & Small), Meadow Browns, Ringlets, Marbled Whites, Large Whites, Green-veined

White, Comma, Speckled Wood, Red Admiral and good numbers (100+ during the day) of **Purple Hairstreak**. Their second Purple Emperor was seen right down the other end of the wood, by the 'old' car park. They then headed off to the [M40 Compensation Area](#) seeing 2 Common Blues, 2 **White Admirals**, a **Brimstone** and 4 second-generation **Peacocks** on the way. Finally at the Compensation Area they added Small Whites, Essex Skippers and 7 Small Tortoiseshells to their list. A very enjoyable day, with a total of 21 species recorded.

Thursday 15th July 2004

Success for Derek Brown today in his hunt for the White-letter Hairstreak (see photo at top of page): I went to [Maidenhead Thicket](#) today and finally managed to see the WLH (3 of them). Also picked up **Purple Hairstreak** here as well and **Essex Skipper** at [Decoy Heath](#) (no SSBs there, although I saw 8 at Silchester.) In total 22 species today, (I also went to Pamber) - not bad for a mixed weather day.

Nigel Parsons sent the following message yesterday: I have been spending most of my "butterfly time" in places outside the UTB area so haven't had much to report. However, I do go to local sites near to home or work and often see good numbers of butterflies and numerous moths that I can't identify - yet! Only yesterday (13th July) I went to a park in [Slough](#) after work and saw 12 marbled white, 2 ringlet, 2 gatekeeper, 5 GV white, 25 meadow brown, 3 large white, 5 small white, 1 speckled wood, 2 small Ts and good numbers of skippers of which I definitely confirmed 3 Essex and 5 small.

At another public recreation/amenity site in [Iver Heath Fields](#), a local conservation group makes efforts to manage the site with nature as well as dog walkers in mind. A visit here on 7th July produced 39 marbled white (only ones or twos were seen 3/4 years ago), 2 ringlet, 25 gate keepers, 38 meadow brown, 6 large white, 5 small white, 10 small Ts, 1 comma, 2 PHS, 3 large skipper, 2 **holly blue** and numerous skippers (at least 7 small and 11 Essex).

Wednesday 14th July 2004

Allen Beechey is surveying for Purple Emperors in Bernwood and sent this report in today: The one PE sighting I have had so far was pretty good. On the 12th July at 1:20pm a female flew overhead and settled low in a willow bush on the shady side of the York Wood - Hell Coppice ride. I say shady side .. if there was any sun it would have been the sunny side! Anyway this particular female had a large chunk of its left hind wing missing and once settled on a Willow leaf (about 7ft up) proceeded to try to lay an egg. She gave up pretty quickly and flew up to a nearby Oak where she sat and basked (in vain!) for about 10 minutes before sluggishly flying off in a South Easterly direction. [I went over to Bernwood again yesterday evening](#) 6pm onwards and saw a few active Ringlets, Small Skippers, one Gatekeeper, and **hundreds upon hundreds of Purple Hairstreaks**. I gave up counting at 235 and that was after only half a mile down the main ride that runs from the Oakley Wood car park! Truly a fabulous sight.

Two more sightings for you:- For the last four nights a **Hummingbird Hawk moth** has been visiting the Buddleia in our front garden in Didcot. Tonight it was accompanied by a **Red Admiral**, which was still very active at 7:30pm!

Perhaps the most interesting sighting of the lot however, is that my Father reports that today - and for the third year running! - he has seen a **White Letter Hairstreak** in his garden in **Chesham**. Anyone familiar with the area will

know that it is a Beechwood dominated area. I haven't got a clue where the elm is in the location but it has to be close. I'll have another look this weekend!

Jan Haseler had a close encounter with a Purple Hairstreak at the Harris Garden, University of Reading yesterday (Tuesday 13th), which was the 21st species of butterfly she has seen there over the last 2 years. Then when Jan arrived home in Tilehurst, she saw her first garden **Small Skipper**.

A **Large Skipper** was a garden first on *Friday 9th for Keith Mitchell in Stoke Goldington*.

Tuesday 13th July 2004

A few more butterflies seen by Dave Maunder in Aylesbury during the last week were:-

7 Commas today, 2 Holly blues, Sm. Tortoiseshells (15), Large whites(2), Small whites(15+), Marbled whites(4), Meadow browns(11), Ringlets(12), Hedge browns(10), Large skipper(1), Small skippers(14), and Essex skippers(5).

Paul Bowyer went to Homefield Wood this afternoon: “The weather was warm with some very bright spells of sunshine. The species recorded were as follows :- Ringlet (20+), Meadow Brown (20+), Gatekeeper (5), Speckled Wood (2), Marbled White (8), Large White (6), Small White (3), Large Skipper (7), Essex Skipper (3), Small Skipper (3), Comma (9), Small Tortoiseshell (2), **White Admiral (2)** and **1 Silver Washed Fritillary.**”

Coincidentally, Mick Campbell and Tom Dunbar also visited Homefield Wood this afternoon arriving at about 4.30 p.m. Skies were overcast but the conditions were still and the temperature was warm. They saw 7 species of butterfly: **2 White Admiral**, 1 Small Tortoiseshell, **8 White-letter Hairstreak**, 3 Ringlet, 1 Green-veined White, 2 Meadow Brown and 3 Marbled White.

Dave Wilton was out and about again for most of today looking for Purple Emperor, his final opportunity for a few days: “This morning I went to *Piddington Wood* near Arcott (where the butterfly has already been seen this season), *Boarstall Wood* and *Rushbeds*. My only sighting was a brief glimpse of one in flight at the southeast corner of Rushbeds. This afternoon I went back to Finemere and at about 3.20pm had two separate sightings (probably of the same butterfly) flying amongst the oaks along the main ride in roughly the same spot that Tim Watts found one yesterday. Having subsequently done a complete circuit of the wood, I was surprised to count no less than **53 Purple Hairstreaks** flying around the oaks as I walked back down the main ride at about 4.30pm. It was quite dull under the overcast skies at that stage and, apart from the odd Ringlet, they were the only active butterflies to be seen!”

Monday 12th July 2004

The following report was sent in by a very patient Tim Watts today, intent on spotting his first Purple

Emperor:

I spent 5hrs in Finemere today - 3 hrs in the same spot eventually produced my 1st ever **Purple Emperor**. It landed in the top of an oak tree and with my telescope on 60x zoom with digi camera attached I managed to get some photos. It stayed in the same spot for 1hr 5mins. I could only see the underside and out of 60 photos taken only 1 with wings closed showing the eye spot and this was a split second before it flew off when the sun came out for the first time. I saw White Admirals as well, but they didn't make me jump out of my seat like the Purple Emperor did, so I think I should be okay with the id from now on!

After Dave Wilton had shared Tim's view of the Purple Emperor through the scope and with sunshine appearing from the northwest he decided to carry on up the wood to check out the highest points: "I didn't see any other Purple Emperors at Finemere but while at the very top of the hill by Finemerehill House I decided to take the bridleway down to the entrance of Greatsea Wood because the high point there was rather more sheltered from the strong northwesterly breeze. My luck was in - one **Purple Emperor** was patrolling the treetops as I arrived and I disturbed another from the track in front of me, which promptly flew up into the canopy to do battle with the other one. Wonderful stuff - fighting **Purple Emperors** two days running! There was nothing else noteworthy at Finemere apart from the lack of **White Admirals** (I only saw one)."

Here is the full list of butterflies recorded yesterday by Dave Wilton in Chinkwell Wood : Small Skipper (1), Essex Skipper (3), Large Skipper (3), Green-veined White (1), Red Admiral (1), Marbled White (30+), **Gatekeeper** (25), Meadow Brown (30+) and Ringlet (18), as well as several Five-spot Burnet sp. and Six-Spot Burnet Moths on thistles and numerous Cinnabar Moth caterpillars on ragwort. The footpath that runs from south to north through the centre of the wood produced Large Skipper (1), Large White (1), Green-veined White (1), Purple Hairstreak (2), Comma (2), Speckled Wood (2), Meadow Brown (5) and Ringlet (22).

Sunday 11th July 2004

A reduced team of 4 UTB members braved the forbidding skies today to continue the Purple Emperor survey. 3 of them started at the *old car park to the South of Bernwood* and walked up the main ride stopping at suitable locations on the way to search the canopy. Unfortunately the weather was too cold and overcast and after about an hour they headed back to the car. The next survey point was the small *Holly Wood* nearby. This is not a known site for Purple Emperor but needed surveying to see if there was suitable habitat. However, no willow could be found from the footpath round the wood and it was deemed unlikely to be attractive to Purple Emperors (they did find a nice stand of blackthorn which looked very interesting for possible Brown Hairstreak, with good Ash trees and bramble close by). Finally, with a patch of blue sky opening up, the team dashed back to the *main Bernwood car park* and searched for another half an hour in a sheltered clearing just off the main path. After watching a **White Admiral** feeding on bramble, they were finally rewarded with a lone **Purple Emperor**, which circled a sap-covered birch tree before disappearing from view.

The fourth member of the team, Dave Wilton, decided to survey Chinkwell Wood. He recorded **two Purple Emperors** in the treetops, watching them for about 20 minutes. More details to follow.

Saturday 10th July 2004

The UTB Purple Emperor Survey began today with ten members of the group meeting in Bernwood car park. The weather started off sunny with some cloud and the group spent some time hoping to see a

Purple Emperor in the area of the car park where at least two had been sighted earlier in the week. **Purple Hairstreaks** were seen in good numbers in the Oak trees and some even came down low enough to be photographed. Also seen were 2 **Gatekeepers** and a **Red Admiral**.

The group carried on down the main ride recording a female **Common Blue**, Meadow Browns, Ringlets, Large Skippers, Green-veined White, Small White, Comma, Speckled Wood, a single **White Admiral** (numbers possibly reduced by the heavy rainstorms?) and Marbled White. At a site near the centre of the wood where a line of tall Oaks bordered a field they at last saw a **Purple Emperor**. It flew down from the canopy, heading at first towards the group of surveyors and then veered off suddenly and flew rapidly towards the cover of a large area of conifers. Shortly after the rain started to fall and promptly turned into a hail storm (did the Purple Emperor know something we didn't when it headed for the conifers?). A very wet group of surveyors beat a hasty retreat back to the car park by which time the sun had broken through once more and the Purple Hairstreaks were dancing in the tree tops again!

Derek and Cathy Brown popped in to Lardon Chase today and amongst other things saw 6 **Chalkhill Blues**, 5 Small Skippers and a single Gatekeeper - all new species for them this year [*photos of Chalkhill Blue & Small Skipper below*].

Friday 9th July 2004

Tony Croft sent in this news today: I have just returned from Whitecross Green Wood. A profusion of Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns and Ringlets. 6 **Purple Hairstreak** and the same number of **White Admiral**. Lots of Small Skipper and one **Gatekeeper**.

On my return to the car park there was a **Purple Emperor** on the ground just by my car. Its long yellow proboscis seemed to be brushing a tar covered stone. It had its wings open and as it moved them I could see the colour change from brown to purple and back to brown. I got to within a couple of feet of it and watched it for a long time before it flew off. Unfortunately I had left my camera at home so missed out on a potentially great shot.

Dennis Dell reports another sighting of a Purple Emperor today at the same location he saw one on July 5th along a public footpath through a wood near Finemere: "It's a 'classical' high point territory, with Oaks on either side of the path. The specimen was high up and landed on one of the Oaks before flying across the path twice, backwards and forwards, landing briefly on both sides high up. It disappeared after a few minutes.. Dave and I met members of the Cornwall (!) and Bedford sections sitting half way up the main Finemere ride. They'd been sitting there for hours, and had seen just one landing briefly on an Oak there."

Dave Wilton continued his surveys of Finemere wood today:- I spent several hours in Finemere this afternoon searching for Purple Emperor, but once again without any luck. They are in there somewhere, though, because for the third visit running I've met someone in the wood who has succeeded in seeing one! **Seventeen other species were recorded** and they comprised Small Skipper (8 confirmed), Essex Skipper (1 confirmed) plus several more Small/Essex that wouldn't sit still long enough to be positively identified, Large Skipper (8), Large White (1), Small White (4), Green-veined White (2), **Purple Hairstreak** (19), Common Blue (3), **White Admiral** (15), Red Admiral (4), Small Tortoiseshell (4), Comma (4), Speckled Wood (1), Marbled White (18), **Gatekeeper** (1), Meadow Brown (30+) and Ringlet (30+).

Having seemingly been declared a butterfly-free zone over the past few weeks, activity in my garden at Westcott has picked up now that the Buddleia have started to flower. Small Tortoiseshell, Marbled White and Meadow Brown have all begun making regular appearances over the past few days. Activity so far is not a patch on last year, though.

On Tuesday 6th July Matthew Oates visited various Oxford woods surveying for Purple Emperors. The following is an extract from his report:

Whitecross Green produced only 4 males, all fresh, and should have done better. The main territory appears to be in the garden of two houses outside the wood.

Shabbington. Very disappointing. Only 1 battered female and 2 males briefly. Failed to see any on several candidate territory sites, I think the problem is mainly that the Bernwood population is very low at present (little good fallow) and the males need company in order to be properly active and visible.

Piddington Wood, Arncott. A small Woodland Trust derelict coppice + standards wood SE of Bicester. Only here for 1 hour. Straight in on a classic iris territory: 3-4 males active inside the wood's NE corner, though visibility is limited by coppice regrowth. Small woods and copses should not be under-estimated for iris, they can reveal relatively good colonies.

Wednesday 7th July 2004

The following was sent in by Paul Bowyer today: On Saturday 3rd July I went to Silchester Common to see the Silver Studded Blues. This is outside the UTB area so I then went to Decoy Heath, which is UTB. There were no blue butterflies there but I did see the following species:- Meadow Brown, Essex Skipper, Large Skipper, Small Heath, Small Tortoiseshell, Marbled White and Ringlet.

On Sunday 4th July in the afternoon I went to Finemere. It rained most of the time, but it was warm rain and I was surprised to see many butterflies on the wing as well as resting. The species seen were as follows:- Ringlet, Small Tortoiseshell, Marbled White, Essex Skipper, Large Skipper, White Admiral, Purple Hairstreak, Large White, Meadow Brown and Speckled Wood. The highlight of the visit was a recently emerged male Purple Hairstreak drying its wings, perched on grass about a foot from the ground. At this stage the butterfly's wings were a pastel shade of purple not the deep shade they become later in life.

Yesterday (6th July) Dennis Dell was pleased to see a Comma, several Tortoiseshells, Whites, and a Large Skipper which all arrived on the Buddleia in his garden at the same time.

David Redhead reports an Essex Skipper seen yesterday on rough grassland near his house.

Tuesday 6th July 2004

Exciting news from Dave Ferguson today who reported the following: "Bernwood today produced 3 Purple Emperors (2 on the ground by the main car park, 1 flying over the main ride between York's Wood and Hell Coppice), 7 White Admirals and 8 Purple Hairstreaks" (see photos above).

The first Purple Emperor sighting was reported by Dennis Dell on 29th June in Finemere. He has since had 2 further sightings, both in the Finemere area, on 5th and 6th July and comments as follows:

- All three sightings were at high points.
- On June 29th and July 5th, the specimens were both actually about 100 metres outside the wood, flying very close to the ground and not returning to the wood!
- On July 5th, the sighting was on an Oak just inside the wood at the highest point: a possible 'assembly' tree which needs confirmation.

Dave Maunder also saw his first second-brood Holly Blue on the wing near Aylesbury vale park this afternoon: “Three males having a battle in the afternoon sun was nice to see! Also seen were a single **White-letter hairstreak** on the usual elm near the Oxford Road, 5 Marbled Whites, 30+ Ringlets, Meadow Browns, my 1st Hedge Brown (yesterday) - and one more today, 2 Red Admirals (both quite worn), 4 Commas, 20+ Sm. Tortoiseshells, Large Whites (2), **Small Whites** coming out in good numbers today, and 12 **Small Skippers** and 4 Large Skippers.”

Dave Wilton spent an hour or two at Aston Rowant NNR this morning, both north and south of the M40. **Marbled White** (50+) and **Small Heath** (60+) were active everywhere, while numbers of Large Skipper, **Small Skipper**, Comma, Small Tortoiseshell, Ringlet and Meadow Brown were also to be seen in the sunshine.

Monday 5th July 2004

The following report received from David Redhead today: I can confirm Tony Croft's observation that **Holly Blues** are back on the wing - one seen from car by Cowley Tesco's roundabout followed by a second in our garden.

The Shabbington Wood Transect today produced my first **Gatekeeper** (1) and **Purple Hairstreaks** (5). Also 177 Ringlets, 38 Small Skippers, 35 Large Skippers, 32 Meadow Browns, 15 Marbled Whites, 4 **White Admirals**, 3 Speckled Woods, 2 Green-veined Whites and singleton Comma, **Common Blue** & Small Tortoiseshell. A total of 313 butterflies and 13 species. The Common Blue seemed in very good condition, which made me wonder if it was first of the second brood but it seems rather too early.

Dave Wilton spent two hours in Finemere this morning. He saw plenty of butterflies, including **White-letter Hairstreak** (1) and **Purple Hairstreak** (8), but still no Purple Emperor!

A walk in the Little Marlow area this morning by Dave Ferguson produced: 2 **Small Skippers**, 1 Large Skipper, 1 Brimstone (fresh), 4 Large Whites, 24 Small Whites, 1 Green-veined White, 1 Common Blue, 1 Red Admiral, 23 Small Tortoiseshells, 4 Commas, 17 Marbled Whites, 2 **Gatekeepers**, 32 Meadow Browns, and 12 Ringlets. *This afternoon Hedgerley Hill* turned up 2 **Essex Skippers**, 11 **Small Skippers**, 2 Small Whites, 35 Marbled Whites, 1 **Gatekeeper**, 47 Meadow Browns, and dozens of July Belles. There was also a **Holly Blue** in our garden.

Sunday 4th July 2004

Tom Dunbar and Ali Latham visited 2 sites today Sunday, Warburg Reserve and Wildmoor Heath in Berks.

The wind was not as strong as on recent days but sunshine and consequential temperatures were low. The only butterflies of note were **Dark Green Fritillary** at Warburg and a single **Silver Studded Blue** at Wildmoor Heath. Butterflies in general were in very low numbers.

Tony Croft was delighted to see a Holly Blue in his garden in Aylesbury this morning: “We do have both holly and ivy in the garden which I have been leaving to its own devices over the last couple of years in the hope of encouraging the few I have seen to increase, so fingers crossed!”

Dave Ferguson reports seeing 1 Essex Skipper at Mop End today.

Jan Haseler chalks up another first sighting for the season: “We saw 3 **Chalkhill Blues** at **Lardon Chase** today. There were also some very cooperative Skippers - 1 **Small** and 3 **Essex Skippers** perched long enough on grass stems for us to be able to sort them out.”

Mick and Wendy Campbell spent the day dodging rain bursts and managed successful visits to 3 sites, recording well over 100 butterflies of 17 species. They started in **Homefield Wood** looking for **White-letter Hairstreak** and were very pleased to record 4, along with Comma; **Holly Blue**; Large Skipper; Marbled White; Meadow Brown; Red Admiral; Ringlet; Small White and Speckled Wood. They continued on to **Aston Rowant** and added another 6 species to their list: Small Tortoiseshell; **Small Heath** (40+); Small Skipper; Large White; **Common Blue** (female – in good condition); **Dark Green Fritillary** (2 – pristine condition) and then finally at **Bradenham Bank** they saw **Essex Skipper** (2).

Saturday 3rd July 2004

Jan Haseler was in her garden in Tilehurst today and saw the first 2 **Gatekeepers** of the season.

A return visit to Penn Wood by Mick Campbell today in search of the Purple Hairstreak was looking fruitless until he moved into the middle of the wood where it was somewhat sheltered from the strong wind. Here he managed to find a single **Purple Hairstreak**. Also seen were good numbers of Meadow Browns, Ringlets and Large Skippers. A lone Red Admiral was also observed flying in the sunshine at the top of an Oak tree.

Friday 2nd July 2004

News from David Redhead today: Even in the very windy conditions today we had a couple of **Commas**, a Small White & **Red Admiral** in the garden and several each of Meadow Brown, Marbled White, Ringlet & **Small Skipper** on the adjacent rough grassland plus a single fresh Small Tortoiseshell.

Bird enthusiast Brendan McCartney sent in this butterfly sighting: Thursday 1st July Ruth and I were out walking in **Pheasant Hill Woods, near Hermitage**, when we saw our first **White-letter Hairstreak**. We'd seen plenty of Meadow Browns and Speckled Woods but were alerted to the very dark wings of this butterfly. As luck would have it, it settled about 3 ft above the ground and right next to the path we were on. We were able to study it at about 1 foot range, but sadly did not have a camera. It was a brilliant specimen and it really made our day.

Thursday 1st July 2004

Dave Wilton had another unsuccessful search for Purple Emperor in Finemere today, but on the plus side he did see a **White-letter Hairstreak** (on the farm track), six **Purple Hairstreaks** (all along the main ride) and no less than **17 White Admirals**, seven of which were fighting over one small patch of bramble flowers (*see photo at top of page*).

Dave Wilton thought he would venture a little further afield this morning with a short visit to the Warburg BBOWT Reserve at Bix near Stonor, Oxon. Unfortunately no Fritillaries of any description were to be seen, nor were they mentioned yet on the blackboard in the Visitors Centre. However, before the weather deteriorated there was a plentiful supply of Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns and Ringlets as well as smaller numbers of Large White, Common Blue, Large Skipper, Speckled Wood and Small Tortoiseshell.

Dave Maunder reports the following butterflies seen in Aylesbury over the last week: Red admiral, Large skippers (15), **Small skippers** (6), Meadow browns (30+), Ringlets (10), Marbled white (1), Speckled woods (3), Sm. Tortoiseshells (10), Common blues (3), Small copper (1), Commas (2). **On 28th June** I was very pleased to find 2, maybe 3 **White-letter Hairstreaks** flying around a small Wych elm tree near the Oxford road on the west side of Aylesbury! (Last time I saw one around here was in 2001).

This report received from Paul Bowyer today: Tuesday 29th June - after work I returned to Allerds Road near the Slough Council dump where I had been the previous day. I saw 4 further species of butterfly. These were Small Tortoiseshell (2), Red Admiral (1), Marbled White (1) and **Small Skipper** (3). It was good to see the Marbled White so close to the Slough border.

During a visit to Strawberry Wood, Black Park Country Park in Bucks yesterday morning (29/6) Dave Ferguson saw 9 **White Admirals**, a **Purple Hairstreak** and a Red Admiral.

Tuesday 29th June 2004

***** News received today that Purple Emperors are on the wing – please start looking out for them *****

Dave Wilton spent three hours in Finemere over lunchtime today searching for Purple Emperor without success:

I thought I might be lucky because it was certainly a bumper day for butterflies, 14 different species being recorded along the farm track before I'd even got into the wood! The final total was 18 species (257 butterflies), although unfortunately none of them was new to the list or indeed to previous Finemere reports. The highlight was a single very battered **Black Hairstreak**, while others worthy of note included **Purple Hairstreak** (1), Red Admiral (4, including an egg-laying female), **White Admiral** (11), Comma (6), Small Tortoiseshell (8) and Small Skipper (3).

Dave also saw several moths in Finemere: A **Hummingbird Hawk Moth** kept landing in front of me as I walked up the main ride, while other moths included a Light Emerald, a couple of Silver-Ys and several Burnets (both five and six-spot). A Burnet caterpillar was also seen on Lady's Bedstraw (*photo below – click on it for a larger image*).

Tom Dunbar visited College Lake today, 29th. Butterflies seen were Large Skipper 6, Small Skipper 3, **Essex Skipper** 1 (first sighting this season), Small White 1, Small Tortoiseshell 2, Comma 1, Common blue 1, Small Blue 1, Marbled White 46, Meadow Brown 20, Ringlelet 30, Small Heath 2. ***He then paid a late visit to Rushbeds Wood*** where the butterflies seen included **Purple Hairstreak** 3, **White Admiral** 1, Meadow Brown 5, Ringlelet 10, Speckled Wood 3.

Tony Croft's three hour visit to Wytham Woods, Oxford today revealed large numbers of Ringlet, Meadow Brown, Marbled White and Speckled Wood. Half a dozen Large Skipper, one Red Admiral, and a **Dark Green Fritillary** being mobbed by Meadow Browns. I was hoping to see Silver Washed Fritillary and Purple Hairstreak but no joy.

[Please note: Wytham Woods is an SSSI site and can only be accessed by obtaining a walking permit. Follow this link for details: <http://www.wildcru.org/links/wytham/wytham.htm>]

News from Paul Bowyer for Monday 28th June: At about 5.30p.m. I went to an area to the south of Burnham Beeches and to the north of Britwell in Slough where there are a lot of scrubby elm trees. I hoped to see White Letter Hairstreaks, which I had seen there a long time ago. I didn't find any but I did see my first **Purple Hairstreaks** of the season. Also there were 6 Meadow Browns, 3 Ringlets, 3 Large Skippers and a newly emerged Comma.

Monday 28th June 2004

Mick Campbell's 3-hour visit to Homefield Wood today failed to produce a White-letter Hairstreak. However he did manage to find a **White Admiral** plus many Ringlets and Meadow Browns. A dozen Marbled Whites, Large Skippers, a couple of **Commas** and Speckled Woods were also recorded.

Sunday 27th June 2004

Mick and Wendy Campbell decided to try their luck in Bowdown Wood today in search of the Silver-washed Fritillary. Bowdown Wood is in the most southerly extremes of Berkshire, just within the UTB area and next door to Greenham Common. The weather was rather mixed – intermittent sunny spells with a lot of cloud, warm when the sun shone through. On arrival at the car park, and with the sun shining, they were staggered to see a female **Silver-washed Fritillary** nectaring on the brambles. A **White Admiral** appeared, followed by the sighting of a **Purple Hairstreak** in the Oak trees above. They then continued their walk around the site to check for more Silver-washed and to search for the foodplant of violet. On returning to the car park they met Jim Slater, a regular visitor to the wood, and while they were exchanging notes a male SWF came down to nectar on the bramble, joined soon after by the female. Jim managed to photograph the male SWF with his disposable camera, so a picture might be in the post! A total of 13 species of butterfly, including Purple Hairstreak (6), Painted Lady (2), Red Admiral, Large Skipper, 2 of each of Comma, Small Tortoiseshell and Marbled White, a single **Small Skipper** and Speckled Wood and good numbers of Ringlet and Meadow Brown. Moths seen were Silver-Y and the less common **Scarlet Tiger**. Also a very distinctive **Golden-ringed Dragonfly**.

Tom Dunbar paid a short visit to Finemere today and saw his first **Small Skipper** of the season. Also 5 **White Admirals**.

Derek and Cathy Brown went to Finemere for an hour or so this morning, 27th, hoping to see White-letter Hairstreaks: We saw several **White Admirals** and hundreds of **Ringlets** but unfortunately not a single Hairstreak of any sort. Never mind we might try again next week as it's a really nice spot.

This **Comma** was very considerate in posing for me at Finemere on Friday 25th. I thought you might like it for the website. [Dave Wilton](#). (Click photo for larger image.)

Friday 25th David Redhead went to Whitecross Green Wood: My first **White Admirals** of the season - at least 14 seen. Almost certain I saw a Small Skipper but unable to get a positive id. Surprisingly no Purple Hairstreaks seen.

Thursday 24th June 2004

Dave Wilton spent a couple of hours tree-spotting at Finemere this afternoon with Dennis Dell: Dennis kindly pointed out likely Purple Emperor collection points for me to keep my eye on over the next few weeks. Despite the gale force winds it was remarkably calm in the centre of the wood where we stumbled across a **Purple Hairstreak** and 3 **White Admirals**.

Wednesday 23rd June 2004

Another update received from Dave Wilton yesterday, 22nd, before the rain set in: Contrary to the forecast it was a beautiful morning here and I managed to spend a couple of hours walking the Hewin's Wood bridleway as far north as Decoypond Wood. I found 4 **Black Hairstreak**, one of which was at a new site along the railway line. Eight other species on the wing too, although nothing particularly noteworthy.

Monday 21st June 2004

After work Paul Bowyer went to the Gore in Burnham: The evening was warm and I saw my first **Small Skipper** of the year. There were 2 other skippers but I failed to get close enough to identify them. I also saw 2 Ringlets and a recently emerged Small Tortoiseshell.

Dave Wilton's daily report as follows: I was foolhardy enough to want to continue the quest for **Black Hairstreak** sites this morning (Monday) with a visit to **Bernwood Forest** despite the low temperature and the threat of thunderstorms. Nevertheless I did find three of them (at two separate locations). Actually, apart from when it rained there were butterflies active everywhere, notably Ringlets which easily outnumbered the Meadow Browns. Two **White Admirals** showed themselves, and I found a **Small Skipper** (reasonably sure it wasn't an Essex) flying amongst its larger cousins in the fields adjacent to the north side of **Shabbington Wood**.

Dave Ferguson recorded a Purple Hairstreak at Stoke Common this morning, 21st June (*see photo below and click on it for a larger image*). A female **Stag Beetle** landed on our patio on its back about three minutes before Zidane scored his first goal against England on 13 June. What with the footie and seeing one of these magnificent insects for the first time it was quite an exciting few minutes!

Mick Campbell made a short visit to Aston Rowant on Sunday 20th and saw 8 species of butterfly, including 100+ Small Heath, a very tatty Dingy Skipper and 2 Painted Lady. No Dark Green Fritillary unfortunately.

Dave Wilton was out and about again yesterday, 20th: It might have been a bit chilly today but the butterflies were still out there! Despite the threat of showers I went to **Chinkwell Wood near Brill** this morning in search of Black Hairstreak. I found the following on the public footpath through the centre of the wood and in the meadow to the south of it: Large Skipper (2), **Clouded Yellow** (1, at last!), Green-veined White (2), **Black Hairstreak** (2), Common Blue (2), **White Admiral** (3), Small Tortoiseshell (1), **Comma** (2), Speckled Wood (4), Marbled White (1), Meadow Brown (10) and Ringlet (2). I also had an unconfirmed sighting of what may have been a Purple Hairstreak at the top of a young oak in the wood just prior to a shower of rain. Once it landed it refused to fly again! Moths in the meadow included **6-Spot Burnet** (2) and Cinnabar (1).

Tom and Rosaleen Dunbar accompanied by AJP Wingrove and Dr John visited 2 sites on 20th June: At **Laplads Farm**, in mixed weather conditions they saw **2 Black Hairstreaks**. Other species included Large Skipper, Marbled White, Ringlet, Meadow Brown, Small Heath. Then at **Whitecross Green Wood** they recorded the same species as above as well as 1 **Wood White** and 4 **White Admirals**. I wonder if this weekend's sightings of Black Hairstreak signifies the end of its flight season?

Sunday 20th June 2004

As the weather is somewhat cooler today and not so favourable for butterfly pursuits, here's a report from Alastair Driver which some of you might find interesting: I recently led a nature walk at Thames Valley Park nature reserve near Sonning and apart from the largest **Grass Snake** I have ever seen - a 4 footer - we saw loads of **Four-spotted Chasers** (photo below). I also took along the first **male Stag Beetle** of the year (photo below), which my son caught trying to break into a bank in Woodley precinct! I know they're not Lepidoptera, but they're amazing insects, so I hope you'll forgive the photos!

Coincidentally, Derek Brown took the photo below of a female Stag Beetle in Pamber Forest on 13th June and also managed to get a picture of this early **Silver-washed Fritillary**, spotted by Paul Bowyer, on the same day in Pamber F.

[Silver-washed Frits will soon be on the wing in the UTB area – please start keeping a watch for them (or ask for a list of sites to visit) and report any sightings to Mick Campbell, our SWF Species Champion. Thanks!]

Nick Bowles reports today: I'm pleased to hear that Dave Wilton was able to positively ID a WLH on that stretch (see Dave's report on 19th June), as I walked my transect there about lunch time and saw a Hairstreak at the road entry which flew from the blackthorn and then pirouetted around a tall elm at the entrance. I lost sight of it and wanted to continue the walk while the sun stayed out. On my return to the car I spent 15 mins staring at the entry with no further sign but I am now happy that it was (as I suspected) a WLH. I also saw a hairstreak fly at about waist height across the turning circle in the middle of the wood. Could have been either species. **Black Hairstreak** were evident in several of the blackthorn bushes in the 'meadow'. Also **3 White Admirals**.

Saturday 19th June 2004

This report received from David Redhead today: In far from ideal conditions the **Swyncombe Down** transect produced a very good haul - 13 species and 225 butterflies - Small Heath (101), Small Blue (50), Common Blue

(31), Meadow Brown (16), Large Skipper (13), Ringlet (4), Speckled Wood (3), Brimstone (2), Marbled White (1), Green Hairstreak (1), Small White (1), Painted Lady (1) and, leaving the best to last, **1 pristine Dark Green Fritillary** (which I think may be the first seen in the UTB area this year). A wonderful site with a public footpath running through it - well worth a visit.

Dave Wilton spent a couple of productive hours at Finemere early this morning, 19th: The temperature was only 14 degrees but the sunshine meant that there was plenty of activity with 12 species recorded while I was there: Large Skipper (30+), **Grizzled Skipper** (1), **Black Hairstreak** (7, although I didn't spend too much time searching for them on this occasion), Brown Argus (1), Common Blue (3), **White Admiral** (1), Red Admiral (1), Small Tortoiseshell (2, both fresh), Speckled Wood (11), Meadow Brown (50+) and Ringlet (10).

On my way back up the farm track I noticed something shoot out of the hedgerow into the Wych Elm that Mick pointed out to me last week and, needless to say, at that point the sun went in and whatever it was never re-appeared. I spent the next fifteen minutes searching the tree with binoculars and finally found what I hoped I'd see - one very fresh-looking **White-letter Hairstreak** sitting on a leaf. Excellent! The Emperor Moth caterpillars have all disappeared. Whether they've wandered off elsewhere or been "borrowed" by someone I don't know. I just hope they haven't given the local bird population a hearty meal!

Welcome to Nigel Parsons, new contributor to the website, who visited Whitecross Green Wood - Wed 16th

June: I took the afternoon off work on Wednesday 16th and went in search of Black Hairstreak. I was rewarded with a very enjoyable afternoon in the sun, meeting two other butterfly people - one had come all the way from Devon for BHS and of course seeing a good number of butterflies. I recorded the following:

BHS - 14; White Admiral - 5; Wood White - 10; Marbled White - 3; Large Skipper - 50+; Meadow Brown - 29; Common Blue - 11; Large White - 3; Speckled Wood - 3; P Lady - 1; Comma - 1 (very large and brightly coloured - on first sighting thought could have been SWF).

I went on to **Bernwood Meadows** for a quick look round - by now a bit too windy. However, saw 1 BHS and 1 Ringlet (first for me this year) in addition to a few MW, several MB, CB and Large Skippers.

Wednesday 16th June 2004

An update on the status of the Black Hairstreak from Species Champion Stuart Hodges:

So far we have seen the **Black Hairstreak at 18 sites this season**. One of these is a re-discovery, last seen in 1987 at a site now belonging to the Woodland Trust. **Plus at least 5 new locations**. And, of course, we have to emphasize the explosion of numbers, which gives the chance to re-discover colonies not seen for many years. One other small point I have been asked several times is about the unusual growth of some of the sloes on the Blackthorn. Last week I was told they are called Pocket Plums caused by a fungus and if you cut one open they are hollow almost like an empty pocket. I have to admit to having spent 20 minutes looking at likely Blackthorn on the farm at 9.30 this morning!

Dennis Dell saw 4 White Admirals in Romer Wood today, and also his first Ringlet of the season. "I don't think I've ever seen *camilla* so early. This means that *iris* will probably appear next week!"

Tony Croft spent another afternoon at Whitecross Green Wood today. This time six **White Admiral** sightings so they are well and truly on the wing. **Black Hairstreak** activity was mainly in the green lane, with quite a few coming really close on the bramble. It was difficult to tell how many were there but four at any one time was the maximum. Two **Marbled White** near the car park. One Ringlet, one Brown Argus, six Meadow Brown, lots of Large Skipper and a very scary looking **Hornet!**

Dave Wilton made a quick trip to Finemere today to check on the Black Hairstreaks again and located at least 21.

Best of all, though, was my first **White Admiral**, which was patrolling the area around the first sign board! Other sightings were Grizzled Skipper (2), **Ringlet** (1), Speckled Wood (9), Common Blue (4), Meadow Brown (29), Large Skipper (27). *Warning: horseflies everywhere (I've got the bites to prove it!).*

Dave Wilton decided to check some new sites for Black Hairstreaks on Tuesday that seemed to have potential. A possible site at Chilton drew a blank and he then went to the railway at nearby Dorton. Much to his surprise, he found two definite BH and the possibility of a third, all on blackthorn on the southern side of the railway. Another new site?

Tuesday 15th June 2004

Mark Calway, Species Champion for the White-letter Hairstreak sent the following today: To add to recent Hairstreak news, I'm advised that **White-letter Hairstreaks** have been seen on the wing over the last week or so. I've not seen any yet, but I did see two **Purple Hairstreaks** in Shinfield, Berkshire this lunchtime. Thanks to those who have contacted me to advise of sightings of the early stages of the White-Letter. Now it is time to really keep your eyes peeled and record the adults. I'd be particularly interested in any observations of egg-laying especially if it is not on Wych Elm. Happy hunting. Mark

Tom Dunbar visited Blacklands Farm, North Bucks after work today in search of the Black Hairstreak. No BHS was seen. The last record there was 1994(?). Butterflies seen included 10 Large Skipper, 1 Brimstone, 3 Common Blue, 1 Marbled White, 10 Meadow Brown, 1 Speckled Wood and 3 **Ringlet** (new species for me this season).

Butterflies seen by Dave Maunder in the last couple of days in Aylesbury were:- Painted ladies (10), Red admiral (1, laying eggs on nettles), Small Tortoiseshells (3), Brimstone (a late male), Green-veined whites (3), Small whites (2), Speckled woods (9), Meadow browns (6), Small coppers (3), Common blues (14, mostly Fairford leys), Brown argus (1, also at Fairford leys, and my 1st this year), and Large skippers (4) - also my 1st this year. The **Painted ladies seem to be arriving in reasonable numbers over the last few days, so lets hope for another good `Painted lady year`!**

Monday 14th June 2004

Tim & Colleen Watts visited Aston Clinton Ragpits today and recorded: 1 definite **Ringlet**, 1 Small Copper, a few tatty Common Blues, a Brimstone and 5 species of Orchid.

Dave Ferguson saw single Black Hairstreaks today on the south edge of Runt's Wood and on a hedge nearby. Ten in as many minutes on the south edge of Finemere Wood. Also 2 **Ringlets** and a **Comma (summer form)** in Finemere Wood. Yesterday he saw 4 Small Blues and a Green Hairstreak at the site near Saunderton.

Thank you to Adrian Cadman, new to the website, for this report: June 13th Finemere Wood, 12 sightings of **Black Hairstreak** between 11am and noon at the principal site on the southern edge of the wood, including some

dashing encounters (who says BH can't fly?). Then moved into the centre of the wood just beyond the seat; after about 20 mins search found egg-laying female on very low, thin, scrubby blackthorn. At the same time another BH was fluttering over the larger blackthorn against the woodland edge on the other side of the path.

Welcome to Allen Beechey, a member of Butterfly Conservation who has recently moved to the Oxford area:

I thought that you might be interested in some butterfly sightings that my partner, Kathryn, and I had at Whitecross Green Wood this afternoon, 13th June. Having not seen either Wood Whites or Black Hairstreaks before, we decided to have a look around Whitecross Green Wood. I thought that it might be hard work to find the Black Hairstreaks but as we walked out of the car park we spotted our first two. Nectaring below the Blackthorn bush that the Hairstreaks were flying around, were two Wood Whites! Mission accomplished! However, we decided to carry on for a bit and counted **51 Black Hairstreaks, 30+ Wood Whites** and Large Skippers, Meadow Browns, Speckled Woods, Common blues, all in numbers too prolific to count. There were also **9 Painted ladies** all flying purposefully in a North Westerly direction. We missed out on the early White Admiral but it had been seen today.

A visit today, 13th June, to some rough ground near David Redhead's home, which borders the Oxford Ring Road, gave them their first **Ringlets** of the season, plus 7 other species - Common Blue, Large Skipper, Meadow Brown, Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Small White and Speckled Wood. David was very surprised not to see any Ringlets on the **Shabbington Wood** Transect the following day, 14th - only Large Skipper (23), Meadow Brown (15), Common Blue (12), Speckled Wood (6) and (unusually for a transect) **Black Hairstreak (2)**.

Dave Wilton noted four Grizzled Skippers still active at Finemere when he went yesterday, 13th, while looking for Black Hairstreaks (9 seen). Dave says: "The Emperor Moth caterpillars that I found on the track near the road are now about an inch and a half long, look quite chunky and are starting to turn more green-looking. I could only find three of them (there were eleven originally) so perhaps the others have wandered off in search of another Blackthorn sapling."

Nick Bowles reports the first UTB Ringlet near Quanton on 12th June, on the rail line of the extant Aylesbury to Calvert single track. He also saw a single **Clouded Yellow** (Finemere Wood), about 7 Painted Lady and 4 Red Admiral. Migrants are definitely here and the next few days should see their numbers swell rapidly (unless they simply steam north straight through our area).

Saturday 12th June 2004

A team of UTB members and others had a very successful day today, seeing in excess of 84 Black Hairstreaks at 12 sites. Click here for the full Black Hairstreak report.

Also seen were **Clouded Yellow**, several **Painted Ladies**, Large Skippers, Speckled Woods, Common Blues, Small Heaths, and Brown Argus. A newly emerged **Marbled White**, still in the process of pumping up its wings, was spotted by Derek Brown – see the photo below. Moths seen included Burnet Companion, Cinnabar, Blood Vein, Silver-Y and a probable Forester.

The following report received from David Redhead today: I spent much of Thursday 10th on **Otmoor**. I saw a total of **25 Black Hairstreaks** and think I have discovered a new colony. Also my first Meadow Browns of the year along with Large Skippers, Brimstone, Green-veined White, Common Blues, Small Coppers, a faded Peacock, Burnet Companions & Common Heath plus a Brown Hairstreak caterpillar.

In poorer weather conditions the following day a short visit to the old **Slade Camp area at Shotover** gave two

sightings of **Black Hairstreak** but I think they were probably the same individual. Also a Large Skipper and two Common Blues.

Another Finemere report from Dave Wilton from 10th June: Here's what the reserve had to offer this morning despite the overcast conditions. **Black Hairstreak** (4), Meadow Brown (7), Large Skipper (9), Common Blue (9), Small Heath (2), Red Admiral (1), Speckled Wood (13), Small Copper (2), Brown Argus (2), Grizzled Skipper (1). The Black Hairstreak and Red Admiral, plus yesterday's Painted Lady, bring me up to **21 different species** recorded there over the last four weeks.

Thursday 10th June 2004

Tony Croft and his wife had a brilliant afternoon today at Whitecross Green Wood with the sighting of **14 Black Hairstreak**, **12 Wood White** and an astonishingly early **White Admiral**. Tony remarks "We were quite close to it and saw all its markings clearly. There is absolutely no doubt at all that it was a White Admiral." They also saw several Large Skipper, 2 Brown Argus and lots of Common Blue. The Black Hairstreak were observed in several locations which seems to indicate that they are spreading out.

Dave Maunder reports the following sightings: Thought I would mention that today I saw my first **Meadow brown** of the year in Aylesbury, also my 1st **summer-brood Sm. Tortoiseshell**. I must be up to 19 in my species count by now - I don't know if you're still updating this?

Also, butterflies I've seen during the last few weeks are:- Common blues (15)- most in Fairford leys, Small coppers(10), Holly blue (1- a late one on 6th), Brimstone (female, on 23rd may), Large whites (2), Small whites (18+), Green-veined whites (7), Orange tips (2, both male, on 8th- late specimens?), Speckled woods (8- 1st of 2nd brood on 5th), various stages of **Small tortoiseshell larvae**; also my 1st Red admiral of the year in town on 7th, and my 1st **Painted lady** today, 8th June. The Small coppers seem to be doing well again this spring after last year's population increase - they're popping up in various places around town, especially along the Fairford leys stream. That's all for now - with best wishes from Dave.

Wednesday 9th June 2004

Four UTB members, including the Black Hairstreak Champion, had an impromptu field trip to the Greater Finemere area this afternoon, 9th.

They had a stunning 2 hours with **45 Black Hairstreaks** sighted at 3 sites; 33 seen at one location which contrasts with a more normal 7 or 8 there last year. The weather conditions were overcast but warm, possibly 23 degrees. Other species seen were **Large Skipper** 16, Brimstone 1, Common Blue 11, Small Copper 1, **Painted Lady** 2, **Meadow Brown** 1, Small Heath 12. Wonderful!

8/6/04 - 4 Painted lady on farmland at Berryfields Aylesbury. Certainly 4 as 2 were tumbling together on a track and 2 doing the same about a mile away reached by car. **Tim & Colleen Watts**

David Redhead reports that things have been a bit quiet in their garden recently but a Speckled Wood & worn **Comma** were seen on the 7th and then yesterday (8th) a **Painted Lady** and a worn Red Admiral. Our first Silver-Y moth of the year as well yesterday.

Derek & Cathy Brown have just returned from a few days in Argyllshire where they went to see the Chequered Skipper:

"Nearly got drowned and got eaten alive by midges but they finally came out on our final visit to Glasdrum Wood NNR as we were preparing to head back. Photos of male, female, and underside below.

Tuesday 8th June 2004

David Fuller saw 2 **Painted Ladies** in Windsor Park today, his first of the season.

On Monday 7th June Paul Bowyer went to the football ground at Derehams Lane Loudwater at about 5.30 p.m. in search of the Small Blue. I saw 3 butterflies - 1 Small Copper, 1 Common Blue and 1 **Painted Lady**. This was my first sighting of a Painted Lady within the U.T.B. area. Not only were there no Small Blues, but I could find very few Kidney Vetch plants in the whole area. This was an area where Kidney Vetch covered the bank for the whole length of the football pitch.

Monday 7th June 2004

Dennis Dell reports: Extraordinary, so far today: I did my transect at Finemere and saw the 'expected' things plus my 1st **Meadow Brown** and Grizzled Skippers (which I note someone has already seen there a couple of days ago). I then came home for lunch, and saw something tiny land on our French Marigolds....a **Grizzled Skipper!** A few minutes later a **Small Copper** came in to the garden too. Amazing as our garden is tiny and in the middle of a housing estate, although it is just 200 metres from a golf course.

**** Adonis Blue is doing well in the Chilterns – special report ****

*A team of UTB members have been busy this week surveying in the Chilterns for the elusive **Adonis Blue**. This followed concerns expressed at the UTB Champions meeting held in March 2004 that this butterfly had suffered a serious decline in recent years. Its status on a number of public access sites was of particular concern.*

*We are very pleased to report that **3 adults were seen at Hartslock near Goring** on 2.06.2004 after an absence of 5 years (based on reported sightings to UTB). However it does not seem to be present on the nearby **Lardon Chase** where it was a regular occurrence until 2002.*

The really good news is that the Adonis is present on at least three further sites in the Goring area. They are privately owned. One of these sites contains a very strong colony. 40 individuals were seen here on 6.06.2004. Perhaps the area contains a meta-colony with movement between sites. Indeed there may be further colonies in suitable adjacent habitats.

*A further colony was located at **Yoesden Bank, Radnage** on 04.06.2004 when 2 males were seen flying in poor weather conditions. The butterfly has appeared sporadically at this site in past years, the last sighting being in 2000. The status of this colony is unknown, the suspicion being that it may be an introduction. However there have been other singular sightings in the Chilterns in recent years, notably at **Aston Rowant** in 2003.*

The Adonis Blue has been expanding its range in Sussex and Dorset in recent years, which may explain our relative success in finding colonies in the Chilterns.

It is imperative that any further sightings of Adonis Blue are reported to the UTB Adonis Blue Champion Maureen Cross at maa.cross@btinternet.com

Sunday 6th June 2004

Tim & Colleen Watts visited the Calvert landfill today and recorded: 30+ small Heath, 50+ common blue, 1 grizzled skipper, 1 large skipper, 1 dingy skipper (tatty), 2 small copper, 10 Cinnabar moth, 2 small white, + 1 medium sized dark brown virtually unmarked butterfly that we didn't get a decent look at, but think it was a Ringlet. If that's too early maybe a dark meadow brown?

Dennis Dell found that Small Heath was the most abundant species on Ivinghoe Beacon today: about 20 seen; several Brown Argus, and one Small Copper too.

Kerry Taylor went to Broughton Grounds near Milton Keynes, North Bucks, today 6th June: I stopped counting Small Heath at 30, must have been easily 50 plus. Also noted approximately **15 Brown Argus** along with 2 Common Blue, and one each of Large White, Brimstone and Small Copper. Moths noted were Silver Ground Carpet and Cinnabar. The best area was the edge of the set-aside field on the eastern side of Broughton Grounds.

Dave Wilton paid another quick visit to Finemere this morning before going to work. This produced one new species – and the first UTB sighting for 2004 - a single **Meadow Brown**. Other sightings comprised Common Blue (7), Brown Argus (2), Small Copper (1), Speckled Wood (4), Large White (1), GV White (1), Orange-tip (2), Small Heath (2) and Grizzled Skipper (2). Also found about half a dozen all-black "spiky" caterpillars about a half-inch long beside the track leading to the reserve. They looked like Peacock but were feeding on new Blackthorn growth.

[Anyone know what the caterpillars might be?]

Kerry Taylor went to Little Linford Wood, North Bucks, on 5th June: Despite being a cool overcast day I decided to have a look for **Wood Whites**. None were flying but I did eventually find 1 **female** settled on the grass. Apart from the Wood White all I saw butterfly wise was one Common Blue and 1 Speckled Wood.

Saturday 5th June 2004

A group of 5 UTB Members, keen to see an Adonis Blue, decided on a visit to Yoesden Bank today, after David Ferguson's success yesterday. Despite the weather being rather cool and cloudy they were delighted to spot at least **2 Adonis Blue** males. There were quite a few **Common Blues** present (a total of approximately 50 was counted) and a good presence of **Small Blues** (10+). Other species seen were: 3 Brown Argus, a Dingy Skipper, 3 Small Heath, one **Large Skipper**, Red Admiral and a Green-veined White. About 20 Small Tortoiseshell larvae were in different stages of development on a patch of nettles.

Moths noted were: Burnet Companion, Pyrausta sp., Straw Dot, Heart & Dart, Cinnabar, Yellow Shell.

David Redhead, Mick & Wendy Campbell carried on to Finemere Wood after Yoesden Bank, in the hope that the sun would come out (no luck unfortunately!) and recorded Small Heath (2), Common Blue (4), Brown Argus (1), Speckled Wood (4). Burnet Companion moths (2) and a Silver-ground Carpet were also recorded.

David Redhead then continued on to look for Wood Whites at Whitecross Green Wood: I found 4 **Wood Whites** but only covered a fraction of their territory. Managed to get a picture of a pair just beginning their courtship - the female (*on the left in the photo below*) was already roosting and the male flew in and joined her while I was watching. Also saw a pristine **Large Skipper** (*photo below*) and a Large White, which was another species for the day. A very enjoyable day except for the lack of sun, which came out in Oxford just after my arrival home at 6pm!

Friday 4th June 2004

This afternoon, 4th June, at Yoesden Bank David Ferguson had the remarkable sighting of 3+ m **Adonis Blues**. Other butterflies seen were: 62+ Common Blues; 3 Small Blues; 1 Green Hairstreak; 2 Peacocks; 1 Small White; 3 Dingy Skippers; 6 Mother Shiptons. A picture of one of the Adonis Blues to follow.

Tom Dunbar and Mick Campbell were targeting, in particular, Small Blue today and visited a number of sites:

At Prestwood Picnic Site they saw: 6 Brimstone, 1 GV White, 7 Common Blue, 1 Small Copper, 1 Green Hairstreak.

At Cadsden Woods they checked out a known site for the Duke of Burgundy but to no avail. However they were delighted to locate 1 Grizzled Skipper and 1 ripe strawberry which was very tasty.

Across the road at Grangelands they were both very excited to find **3 Small Blue** accompanied by 2 Dingy Skipper, **1 Large Skipper**, 2 Brimstone, 1 Small White, 1 Orange Tip, **108 Common Blue**, 3 Brown Argus, 9 Small Heath.

At the nearby Rifle Range, under deteriorating weather conditions, they tracked down 1 Dingy Skipper, 1 Brimstone, 7 Common Blue, **1 Small Blue**, 2 Small Heath.

Rather late in the afternoon, they reached Holtspur Reserve Flower Meadow at 6.15. They did manage to locate 8 Common Blue. Then to their delight a **Small Blue** showed itself at 6.55 pm and sunned itself in the warm evening sunshine. Moths seen included a number of Burnet Companion and a Mother Shipton. This brought an amazingly successful day to a close with a total of 165 sightings, including 3 new Small Blue sites. Tomorrow the target will include Adonis Blue in the South Bucks area.

On Hedgerley Hill yesterday, 3rd June, David Ferguson recorded: 1 **Painted Lady**, 1 Brown Argus, 2 Common Blues.

This site was created from the spoil produced by the widening of the M40. It is now an excellent wildflower site (Ragged Robins and Oxeye Daisies and Bird's-foot Trefoil in flower now).

Thursday 3rd June 2004

At the Blue Lagoon on Sunday 30 May Kerry Taylor reports these sightings: Grizzled Skipper – 2 mating; Dingy Skipper – 2; **Small Blue** – approx 10; Also Green-veined White, Common Blue, Brimstone and Burnet Companion.

Adonis Blue was the target yesterday, 2nd, for Tom Dunbar and Mick Campbell on their visit to Hartslock. After a period searching for the foodplant they located several patches followed by the sighting of 3 pristine male **Adonis Blues**. They continued on to *Lardon Chase* where they met up with Maureen Cross, Adonis Blue Species Champion. They didn't locate any Adonis, but did find 3 **Small Blue**, **Red Admiral**, a number of Dingy Skippers, Common Blues and Brown Argus.

Tuesday 1st June 2004

David Fuller saw these butterflies at Watlington today: Common Blue 26, Brown Argus 13, Small Copper 2, Dingy Skipper 3, Small Heath 5, Brimstone. Also a **Red Admiral** in his Maidenhead garden yesterday.

Jack Peeters, UTB Species Champion for the Wall Brown recorded one yesterday at Quainton Hills, typically on bare ground (on the edge of a badger sett).

[Please keep an eye out for this elusive butterfly and send in any sightings.]

Monday 31st May 2004

Phil Coles visited Aston Rowant NNR (South) today between 09:15 - 11:30 and recorded:

Common Blue (18); Dingy Skipper (3); Orange-tip (1); Small Heath (3); Speckled Wood (1)

Derek and Cathy Brown went to Lardon Chase this morning and report as follows: we saw large numbers (>50) of Common blues and a few other species, (SC, SW, B, GVW, DS). We then nipped to **Aston Upthorpe** and managed a single **Small Blue**. We also saw a single very faded **Duke** there. I also finally managed to see 3 **Red admirals** at last and also a Brown Argus that unfortunately Cathy missed. Therefore I can add CB, SB, RA, and BA; while Cathy adds CB and SB.

All in all we managed 15 species today between the three sites - SH, P, OT, DS at Aston and several **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries** (see *photo*) and a Speckled Wood at Pamber Forest make up the numbers. Shame the SPBFs are in Hampshire!!

Sunday 30th May 2004

Dave Wilton, Tom & Rosaline Dunbar went to Finemere this morning, 30th May, and recorded 13 species in moderate weather conditions:

Grizzled Skipper 2, Brimstone 3, Green Veined White 4. Orange Tip 3, Common Blue 1, Holly Blue 1, Brown Argus 5, Small Copper 2, Comma 1, Small Tortoiseshell 1, **Wall Brown** 1, Speckled Wood 1, Small Heath 1.

Tom and Rosaline then went on to Greatmoor and saw:

Grizzled Skipper 23, Dingy Skipper 27, Large Skipper 1, Small White 2, Green Veined White 2, Orange Tip 1, Common Blue 29, Small Copper 3, Green Hairstreak 5, Small Heath 25, giving a total of 149 butterflies, 17 species for the day.

Dave Wilton decided, as the weather had stayed unexpectedly nice, that he would make a quick sortie in the afternoon to the disused railway line that runs along the western side of Westcott airfield. He was very pleasantly surprised at the number of Common Blues there (stopped counting at 50). Dingy Skipper (20), Grizzled Skipper (6), Small Heath (7), Speckled Wood (3) and Cinnabar Moth (5) were also present.

The UTB field trip to Ivinghoe Beacon yesterday, 29th May, saw a turnout of 8 people, led by Tom Dunbar.

The morning bouts of sunshine gave splendid views of the target species the **Duke of Burgundy**. As the day progressed the sun broke through more regularly to give a pleasantly warm afternoon. Visits to the Duke 'hotspots' built a successful total of 19 Dukes which was considered a great success. **Species seen were:** Brimstone 1, Dingy Skipper 7, G.V. White 1, Duke of Burgundy 19, Green Hairstreak 3, Common Blue 3, Brown Argus 2, Speckled Wood 1, Small Heath 11. UTB has no records of Grizzled Skipper at this site since 1999. There was discussion about a coarse grass that was thought to be associated with the Duke of Burgundy. This was later identified as *Brachypodium Sylvaticum* or Slender false broom.

Moths seen included: *Pyrausta Nigrata*, Mother Shipton, Common Carpet, Burnet Companion, Cinnabar, Green Carpet, Clouded Silver and (by a process of elimination) a **Wood Tiger**, spotted by Tony and Sarah Johnson.

Saturday 29th May 2004

Welcome to Phil Coles who sent in his first report to the website today:

Early evening Friday 28th (17:00 to 18:30) in less than ideal conditions produced the following: **Rushbeds Wood** - Speckled Wood (2). **Lapland Farm** - Small Heath (5+), **Common Blue (64)** all but a few roosting.

Friday 28th May 2004

Keith Mitchell spent a couple of absorbing hours this afternoon, 28th May, at the Blue Lagoon Reserve in Bletchley. The following were seen: Small Blue (2); Common Blue males (3); Grizzled Skipper mating (2); Dingy Skipper (6); Large White (1); Burnet Companion (15+).

Dave Wilton visited Finemere Wood Reserve, Bucks, on Fri 28th May: “Another pleasant couple of hours spent here in the sunshine this morning produced **10 butterfly species**: Grizzled Skipper (6), Brimstone (1), Large White (1), Small White (2), GV White (10+), Orange-tip (4), Small Copper (3), Speckled Wood (2), Small Heath (2, my first sighting) and Common Blue (3). This brings the number of butterfly species that I've recorded here during the second half of May to 14, the others being Comma (which I was surprised not to see today), Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and Holly Blue. A lone **Mother Shipton** was also noted this morning, as were several **Lackey caterpillars** which were sunning themselves beside the track leading up to the reserve”.

Mick & Wendy Campbell visited Pulpit Hill today, 28th, where they recorded 9 butterfly species, including 55+ Common Blues and 9 Dingy Skippers. 2 Burnet Companions were also seen. They then decided to visit the **Bradenham Wood area** to check for the possibility of Duke of Burgundy which used to populate this site. None was seen and as it was quite cloudy only small numbers of butterflies were flying. However, they were extremely pleased to find **2 Small Blues** despite there being no obvious patches of the usual foodplant of Kidney Vetch, 1 Grizzled Skipper, 5 Dingy Skipper, Small Copper, Common Blue, Orange Tip, 3 Holly Blue, Peacock and a Speckled Wood.

Sixteen people joined the Aston Rowant Field Trip meeting on 25th May. The weather was moderate with sunny periods but a chilly northeast wind:

The following **12 species of butterfly** were seen: Dingy Skipper; Grizzled Skipper; Brimstone; Green-veined White; Orange-tip; Green Hairstreak; Small Copper; Brown Argus; Common Blue; Holly Blue; Speckled Wood; Small Heath

and these moths: Adela reaumurella; Aethes tesserana; Pyrausta purpuralis; Pyrausta nigrata; Silver-ground Carpet; Common Carpet; Green Carpet; Mother Shipton; Burnet Companion. [Click here for Mike's full Field Trip report.](#)

Thursday 27th May 2004

Wendy & Mick Campbell walked through Lodge Hill today and were stunned by the sea of Rock Rose in flower. Expecting to see a few Brown Argus, they then counted 25 (and no doubt missed many more). They were all in pristine condition. They also saw 2 Grizzled Skipper, 4 Common Blue, 13 Small Copper, 4 Small Heath, 6 Brimstone, 1 Peacock, a rather worn Holly Blue, a single Dingy Skipper and Green-veined White. Daytime moths seen were Cinnabar (17), Pyrausta Nigrata, Lesser Treble-bar and Burnet Companion.

Later on at **Yoesden Bank** there were far fewer butterflies on the wing, with zero Brown Argus, only 2 Common Blue, a single Grizzled Skipper and a couple of Speckled Woods.

A number of butterfly and daytime moth records received from David Redhead today:

Wednesday 26th - A fresh looking Small Tortoiseshell seen in our garden. **Then an afternoon visit to Sydlings Copse** gave a tatty Small Tortoiseshell plus a few each of Common Blue, Orange Tip and Small White, a pristine Large White, a Small Copper & a Holly Blue. On the daytime moth side numerous **Grass Rivulets** and a singleton Latticed Heath, Burnet Companion and Lesser Treble-bar were seen flying. The grassland area was awash with Yellow Rattle (foodplant of the Grass Rivulet) and the Large White appeared to be nectaring on it. After leaving Sydlings Copse I went to **Whitcross Green Wood** to check on Brown Hairstreak caterpillars (four found, largest 10mm) and saw a Mother Shipton moth.

Thursday 27th - A cry of Small Copper has just rung out from the garden - our first for a few years (more evidence of the "comeback" of this beautiful beast) but by the time I got outside it had gone, a Green-veined White, Comma & Small Tortoiseshell had to act as compensation.

Wednesday 26th May 2004

There was a good turn-out at the Field Trip to the Aston Rowant Nature Reserve yesterday, led by Mike Wilkins. Despite somewhat overcast conditions a high number of butterfly and moth species was seen. Full report from Mike to follow soon.

During David Redhead's walk through Bernwood Forest yesterday, which included a detour into the meadows, he had quite a varied haul - 2 Grizzled Skippers Several Common Blues, Small Coppers & Speckled Woods 2 Orange Tips plus eggs. Also a number of moths and moth larvae (*see moth sightings page*).

David Redhead has just returned from a couple of days in Pembrokeshire and sent in this report: Saw Wall Browns nearly everywhere - inland at Llawhaden Castle (just off the A40, 5ml E of Haverfordwest - this was a very pleasing sighting as I saw a pair here over 10 years ago) and near Esgryn Wood a few miles inland from Fishguard. But the greatest numbers were to be seen on or near the coast path where we saw well into three figures. On the coastal path we also had an early Large Skipper (21/5), Common Blue (numerous down near St Anne's Head) and Small Copper & Green-veined White (widespread but both nowhere as numerous as Wall Browns). Flowers fantastic but in spite of Kidney Vetch everywhere did not see one Small Blue (presumably too early, although already out here). A pair of Green Hairstreaks at the edge of Esgryn Wood completed my 22 species for 2004 although not all were in UTB of course. Blackthorn on coast path covered in nests of Lackey moth caterpillars, also found a couple of Oak Eggar caterpillars but no Brown Hairstreaks.

Tuesday 25th May 2004

Francis Gomme recorded the following butterfly species over the weekend: Small Copper, Small Heath, Small Blue and Brown Argus at Grangelands on Saturday and Wood White at Whitecross Green, Sunday.

Cathy and Derek Brown saw 2 new species for the year today, 23rd May: two Small Heaths at Greenham Common and 10 Wood Whites at Whitecross Green Wood this afternoon. I finally managed to get some half decent pictures of the latter.

Tom Dunbar and AJP Wingrove visited a site near **Saunderton** today Sunday 23rd May. Sightings were: 6 Dingy Skipper, 3 Grizzled Skipper, 2 Brimstone, 5 Duke of Burgundy, 5 Green Hairstreak, 1 Common Blue, 1 Holly Blue, 1 Small Copper, 1 Peacock, 1 Comma. They moved on to **Lodge Hill** to check for Dukes. They saw: 12 Grizzled Skipper, 7 Dingy Skipper, 5 Brimstone, 1 Orange Tip, 3 Brown Argus, 4 Holly Blue, 7 Small Copper, 3 Small Heath. Then on to **Hewins Wood** in search of Wall Brown. They found: 8 Grizzled Skipper, 5 Dingy Skipper, 4 Small Copper, 5 Common Blue, 2 Peacock, 1 Speckled Wood, 4 Small Heath.

Better numbers of Grizzled Skippers today but they seem to be suffering a decline in numbers at some sites. Conversely Dingies appear to be having a splendid year. Small Coppers are now emerging in numbers at many sites. Will they do as well as last year's fantastic showing? No Wall Brown at Hewins but one was seen there on Saturday.

Saturday 22nd May 2004

A first report to the website today from Dave Wilton who visited Finemere Wood Reserve, Bucks today: Active despite the chilly breeze this afternoon (22nd May) were Small Tortoiseshell (1), Comma (1), Peacock (1), Small White (1), GV White (several), Orange-tip (several), Brimstone (2), Speckled Wood (3) and my first sighting there of a Small Copper (1).

Tom Dunbar accompanied by AJP Wingrove started the day with a visit to **Church End Chalkpit** near College Lake. Sightings there were: 28 Dingy Skipper, 18 Small Blue, 3 Common Blue, 1 Brown Argus, 7 Small Heath. They then moved on to **Salden Disused Railway Line** SW of Milton Keynes where they spotted: 1 Grizzled Skipper, 3 Dingy Skipper, a very early **Large Skipper**, 4 Wood White, 1 Small White, 3 Common Blue, 1 Holly Blue, 1 Small Copper.

Their next port of call was **Wicken and Leckhamstead Woods** on the Bucks / Northants border. Butterflies seen there were: 3 Orange Tip, 18 Wood White, 1 Large White, 1 Small White, 2 GV White, 2 Small Copper, 2 Small Tortoiseshell.

[A remarkable 101 butterflies, 15 species in less than perfect weather conditions.]

Jan Haseler finally caught up with a slightly tatty **Duke of Burgundy** at Aston Upthorpe today.

I finally got out into the country today, up to **Grangelands Reserve** near Cadsden, and saw:- **Common blues (35+ males, 2 females)**, 1 Holly blue, 1 Small copper, 1 Green hairstreak, 10 Small heaths, 1 Grizzled skipper, 18 Dingy skippers, 2 Brimstones, and 2 Green-veined whites. Taken me up the butterfly league a bit! *Dave Maunder*.

Wall Brown was the target species today at Hewins Wood Drain for Wendy & Mick Campbell. Unfortunately it was quite cloudy and cool, down to 14° during the morning and chances of seeing the Wall Brown looked remote. After 12.00 noon however, the clouds started to part and the sun broke through warming up the clay banks. **They finally sighted a single Wall Brown**, which landed just long enough to be identified and flew off at speed. Other butterflies seen on the day were 8 Grizzled Skipper, 20+ Dingy Skippers, Small Tortoiseshell, 5 Small Heath, a very worn Speckled Wood, 3 Common Blue, 2 Small Coppers, Green Hairstreak and 2 Orange Tip (male and female).

Thursday 20th May 2004

Field Trip to Greenham Common today, joint with Hampshire & Isle of Wight Branch. Very well attended. Report to follow from FT leader Frank Banyard.

Wednesday 19th May 2004

David Redhead went to Aston Upthorpe and Lardon Chase today: Managed 11 species at Aston Upthorpe including four Duke of Burgundy's and a Brown Argus. Far less species at Lardon Chase, only three, but about the same number of butterflies with over **40 Common Blues** being seen. Also a couple of **Small Blues**. Interestingly there were no Common Blues to be seen at Aston Upthorpe. The four species named were all firsts for me this year. Day flying macro-moths included Burnet Companion, Latticed Heath, Mother Shipton and Cinnabar.

Jan Haseler saw Common and Small Blues at Lardon Chase this afternoon (and met David Redhead!).

Paul Bowyer and Mick Campbell visited four sites today, starting at 2.00 p.m. at Whitecross Green where they recorded 3 **Wood Whites**. They then went on to Bernwood Meadow: **Common Blue**, Peacocks and several Small Coppers seen. The third site was Watlington Hill where a lot of scrub clearance has been done. 5 Common Blues, 1 **Brown Argus**, Holly Blue and a Small Copper. Finally onto Swyncombe where they found a single **Small Blue** and several Sm.Tortoiseshells flying around nettles.

Peter Hall was at Grangelands today and reports seeing: Orange Tip, Brimstone, Large White, Common Blue, Green Hairstreak, Grizzled Skipper (1), Small Heath.

At Grangelands all day yesterday (not specifically looking at butterflies), Martin Albertini recorded the following 12 species of butterfly:

Grizzled Skipper – only 1 (early in day); Dingy Skipper – lots; Brimstone - lots; Green-veined White – few; Orange-tip – lots; Small Heath – moderate numbers; **Green Hairstreak – about a dozen**; Small Copper - 1; **Holly Blue – around 20**; Common Blue – few; Speckled Wood – 1; Peacock – 2

Dave Hutchinson reports seeing one **Grizzled Skipper** at **College Lake** on Sunday 16th May.

Tuesday 18th May 2004

David Redhead went to **Whitecross Green Wood** today and was delighted to see the first **Wood White** in the UTB area for this year. He also reports a Grizzled Skipper.

Tom Dunbar visited **Prestwood Picnic area** today and managed his first sighting of the elusive **Small White!** The SW was accompanied by 2 Dingy Skippers, 4 Orange Tips, 5 Brimstones, 1 Common Blue, 1 Green Hairstreak. At **Cadsden Woods** the lack of Duke of Burgundy was noted. Finally on to **Grangelands** where reasonable numbers of Dingy Skippers and Brimstones were still flying up to 6 pm. No sign of Small Blue nor Brown Argus but they can await another day.

Paul Bowyer and Mick Campbell visited **Sands Bank** today and spotted their first **Common Blues** of the season.

Richard Soulsby visited the **Benson/Ewelme** area today and achieved the first UTB sighting of a **Brown Argus** along with 13 other species, including **Small Blue**.

14 butterfly species were seen on the well attended Field Trip to Aston Upthorpe on Saturday 15th May, led by Mike Wilkins, as follows: Brimstone, Green Hairstreak, Holly Blue, Orange Tip, Dingy Skipper, Green-veined White, Grizzled Skipper, Small Tortoiseshell, Large White, Small Copper, Small Heath, Peacock, Comma and the target species **Duke of Burgundy**. [Click here for Mike's full Field Trip report.](#)

Tony Croft went to **Wytham Wood** yesterday, **17th**, in search of **Green Hairstreak**. "I'm trying to visit sites away from the Chiltern edge when I can. I was rewarded with five sightings in two locations."

Monday 17th May 2004

Tom Dunbar visited **Grangelands** after work on Monday. Between 4.45 and 6pm he saw **10 Dingy Skippers**, 2 Orange Tips, 10 Brimstones, 2 Holly Blues, **1 Common Blue** (my first for the season), 1 Peacock, **5 Small Heaths** (my first for the season).

A new species for the season reported by Dave Fuller who visited Homefield today:

Brimstone 6; **Dingy Skipper** 3; **Grizzled Skipper** 2 first this year at this site; **Common Blue 2 males** the first sighting and please add to my total on the First to 22 League; Peacock 1; Burnet Companion 3.

News from David Redhead today: "Conscious that we were plummeting to the bottom of the 22 Species League Table, Wendy & I went to **Seven Barrows** this afternoon. We counted **15 Dingy Skippers**, **6 Small Heath** (both new for us this season but they have probably had little impact on our lowly placing) but sadly no Marsh Fritillary or Grizzled Skipper. Also surprisingly (in view of Nick Bowles' sightings yesterday) no Small Blues. Brimstones, Small Tortoiseshells, Small Whites, a Cinnabar and a Burnet Companion also seen.

Later along the **Ridgeway by Waylands Smithy** we saw several Orange Tips and Small Whites and a male Brimstone spiralling around a female, gradually they rose together into the air so high that they

eventually disappeared from view. On the way back waiting for the traffic lights in the centre of Wantage a **Holly Blue** was seen.

*Thanks to Trevor Chapman from **BC Herts & Middlesex Branch** for the following report:*

"I went over to **Ivinghoe Beacon** on **Sunday 16/5/04** to photograph Dukes. I saw **10 Duke of Burgundy**, 2 Dingy Skippers, 1 Green Hairstreak, 5 Brimstones, 2 Orange tips, 1 Small Tort, 1 Mother Shipton, 2 Burnet Companion, Cinnabar and a Tree Pipit."

Sunday 16th May 2004

*Paul Bowyer and Wendy & Mick Campbell went to **Cadmore End** today* to check on a new site they found last year for Grizzled Skipper. They were delighted to see that it was on the wing today – 3 seen altogether, quite early on in the day at about 11.00 a.m.

They then went on to an area in **Penley Wood** where they had previously found wild strawberry plants on a south-facing chalk slope, in the hope of finding another new colony of Grizzled Skippers. After about 10 minutes of searching they were rewarded with a single **Grizzled Skipper** and plan to revisit in a week or two to see how many are in the colony.

7 other species were seen during the morning, including **3 Holly Blue**.

*Nick Bowles had an unexpected **5 Small Blue** today near **Pitstone*** but has yet to see Common Blue or Brown Argus anywhere. Also **28 Dukes** (5 at Dancers End - where I searched hard and 23 at Ivinghoe Beacon - where I didn't). Also very good numbers of Pyraustra spp at Ivinghoe; 3 species I think aurata, nigrata and purpuralis. Perhaps commonest species of the day went to Cinnabar at Pitstone. Masses of the beauties. Several sites today had **Dingy** but not Dancers End and no Grizzled anywhere. **Holly Blue** at every site and same too for **Green Veined White**, Orange Tip and Brimstone. No Large White yet this year and only one Small White today.

Tom Dunbar went on a quest for Dukes today. Here are the results of his search (in and just outside of UTB area):

- In 3 hours at **Ivinghoe** I saw: 5 Dingy Skippers, 4 Orange Tips, 20 Brimstones, 1 GV White, 50+ unidentified whites, **31 Duke of Burgundy** (6 in first 5 minutes!), 8 Green Hairstreaks.
- In 2 hours at **Totternhoe Knolls** - 6 Dingy Skippers, 4 Brimstone, 3 Orange Tips, **zero Dukes** despite 4 reported by others.
- Late in the day at **Whipsnade Downs** - 8 Brimstones, 2 Green Hairstreaks, **2 Duke of Burgundy**, 2 Peacocks. Tom had a reliable report of 20+ Dukes being seen on site earlier today.

*This afternoon David Redhead called in at **Westwell Gorse***, BBOWT's most westerly reserve, where the butterflies were disappointing with only Brimstones, Orange Tips and a Peacock flying, but there were several Burnet Companions and Latticed Heath and a **Common Heath**.

*Keith Mitchell left **Stevenage** at lunch time in unbroken sunshine.* He arrived at Blue Lagoon in Bletchley in thick cloud. Managed to track down a single Dingy Skipper (photo provided) in brief brighter interlude. Other butterflies included:

6 Orange Tip; 3 Brimstone; 1 large White; 2 Small White; 1 Speckled Wood; 1 Holly Blue. Grizzled Skipper and Dingy Skipper were both seen Sunday morning at Blue Lagoon (per Kerry Taylor).

Jan Haseler went to Chimney Meadows yesterday, which was interesting, but a bit short of butterflies. "We saw a **Dingy Skipper** at **Seven Barrows** on the way back."

Saturday 15th May 2004

Thanks to Mike Wilkins for an excellent and well attended Field Trip to Aston Upthorpe today where the target species of Duke of Burgundy was seen. Full report to follow from Mike shortly.

At Otmoor today, David Redhead counted 16 Small Coppers and his first Large White of the year. He also saw his first Small Tortoiseshell (extremely tatty) for some time, 3 male Orange Tips, several Brimstones, Green-veined Whites and a couple of Peacocks. On returning home his wife, Wendy, told him there had been 3/4 **Holly Blues** in the garden plus 4 Brimstones and 6 other species.

[Editor note: There have been a lot of Holly Blue sightings so far this year, after a poor year in 2003.]

At Hewins Wood today Tom Dunbar says he saw surprisingly few butterflies. The total was Grizzled Skipper 4, Dingy Skipper 1, Brimstone 2, Orange Tip 6, Small Tortoiseshell 2, Peacock 2; no sightings of target species: Wall Brown, Small Heath, Small Copper, Common Blue.

He then visited a number of other sites accompanied by Dennis Dell:

Small Dean Lane NW: Grizzled Skipper 1, Dingy Skipper 3, Brimstone 1, Peacock 1.

Small Dean Lane South: Dingy Skipper 1, Brimstone 2, Peacock 1; no Duke.

At Saunderton: Grizzled Skipper 2, Dingy Skipper 11, Brimstone 3, Large White 1, Orange Tip 1, Holly Blue 1, Small Copper 1 (new species for this year), **Duke of Burgundy 8**, Small Tortoiseshell 1

Butlers Hanging: Dingy Skipper 9, Orange Tip 1, Brimstone 1, Small Tortoiseshell 2, Peacock 1.

[A total of 70 butterflies, 10 species]

David Fuller has sent in his new species sightings from the last two days- Dingy Skipper **Watlington Hill** on 10/5/04, Green Hairstreak **Watlington Hill** 10/5/04, Grizzled Skipper, **Duke of Burgundy** and Small Copper today at Aston Upthorpe.

Friday 14th May 2004

During a visit to three sites today – Hewins Wood Drain, Ragpits and Rusbeds Meadow - Mick Campbell recorded a total of 10 species, including 2 new ones for the year:

Orange Tip (10), Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock (4), Speckled Wood (2), Green Hairstreak (4), Dingy Skipper (3), **Small Copper** (6 – very fresh), Large White, **Small Heath**, Holly Blue (2). Also a number of day-flying moths (see moth sightings page).

Thursday 13th May 2004

*Today at Shinfield Cemetery, Spencers Wood, SU719668, ie one of Jim Asher's empty tetrads, Jan Haseler recorded **Small Copper*** (her first this year), 4 Holly Blues and some uncooperative Whites.

Jan asks: "What is the Upper Thames definition of a churchyard? This cemetery is a botanical gem - early purple orchid, ladies smock, many more flowers, bushes, hedges, a few nettles. It was given to the village in the 1920's, and is effectively an unimproved flower-rich meadow. It is managed by Wokingham DC, so there are no churches involved."

[Editorial note: **The Living Churchyard and Cemetery Project** is a national project which aims to increase the awareness and interest in churchyards and cemeteries as places where wildlife can thrive. The Diocese of Oxford covers Berks, Bucks and Oxfordshire and it is a joint project co-ordinated by a committee of representatives from BBOWT, Butterfly Conservation, The Botanical Society of the British Isles, the Diocese of Oxford and independent ecologists. So a cemetery (i.e. a burial place with no Church) can be surveyed independently.]

Derek Brown reports: “Just to let you know that Cathy managed to see a **Large White** in the centre of Reading today within the grounds of where she works at Coley Park. This takes her onto 14 in the “First to 22” league. I popped to Maidenhead Thicket for 15 mins during lunch hour but only managed ~ **6 Brimstones and a single Holly Blue**. This leaves me on 12 as I still haven't seen a LW or RA.

Ten species were recorded by Mick Campbell during a sunny spell this afternoon between 2.00-4.00 p.m. in the Bradenham area: 4 **Dingy Skippers**, 2 **Grizzled Skippers** (his first sighting of the year), 2 **Holly Blue**, 3 **Peacock**, 2 **Small Torts**, 4 **Orange Tips**, 1 **Speckled Wood**, 1 **Large White**, 5 **Brimstone** and a **Comma**.

Tom Dunbar visited Grangelands after work today - 5 to 5.45 pm. Butterflies were in short supply but he did manage to see 2 **Dingy Skippers** (new species for him this season); 1 **Grizzled Skipper**; 1 **Brimstone**; 4 **Peacocks** and 1 **Red Kite**. He didn't have time to check out the Duke site nearby.

From RSPB Otmoor Nature Reserve Nick Droy reports seeing the first 3 **Small Coppers** on the reserve yesterday and first **common blue damselflies**.

Wednesday 12th May 2004

On a generally cloudy day, Mick Campbell decided to pay a short visit to Prestwood Picnic Area today and was impressed with the amount of scrub clearance that had been carried out. He waited for quite a while for the sun to come out in the hope of seeing **Small Coppers**, but wasn't rewarded for his patience, although he did manage to see **3 female and 2 male Orange Tips**.

Tuesday 11th May 2004

David Redhead saw 2 pristine **Small Copper** at **Otmoor** today plus a **Green-veined White**. They were in a the field just to the north of the MoD land where I saw 100+ second/third brood **Small Coppers** at the end of last summer.

Also, David reports that his Shabbington wood Transect yesterday (10/05) did not produce anything exciting - 7 **Green-veined White**, 5 **Speckled wood**, 4 **Small White**, 2 **Brimstone**, 1 **Orange Tip** = 5 species, 19 butterflies. This was actually marginally better than the same week last year when 4 species and 17 butterflies were recorded.

However, I did find a **Brown Hairstreak** caterpillar on the blackthorn at the top of the field bordering Hell coppice where we found eggs on the UTB field trip last August. Also inspecting a row of 20 **Lady's Smock** (**Cuckoo Flower**) plants I found 11 had a single white (showing they had been laid in the last day or so) **Orange Tip egg** on. Also heard a **Grasshopper Warbler** - never heard one in **Bernwood Forest** before - is this as a result of the clearance work there?

Monday 10th May Paul Bowyer visited Farnham Royal churchyard after work at about 5.15 p.m. The temperature was still warm enough for me to see an **Orange Tip**, a **Green Veined White**, a **Speckled Wood** and a **Holly Blue**.

Monday 10th May 2004

Tony Croft took advantage of this afternoon's sunshine and warmth to go Green Hairstreak hunting. He spent a long time at **Watlington Hill** with no success. He then called in at **Aston Rowant** and was rewarded with a single sighting flitting between bramble and elder on the hill side. He also saw a pristine **Small Copper** basking in the sun. There were several moths flying around but the only identifiable one was the tiny *Pyrausta purpuralis*.

News from Tom Dunbar today, as follows: I visited the Duke site at Saunderton after work today between 5 and 6 pm. It is the best potential site for Dukes I have ever visited. The cowslips are stupendous with an excellent mixture of shade and open areas. Despite the excitement no Dukes, even though there was a report of some last Friday. However picked up other species namely **Grizzled Skipper x2, Brimstone x6, Holly Blue x2.**

Some butterflies seen in gardens today – David Redhead had flying visits from OT, GvW, SmW, HB & P this morning and **Mick Campbell** saw in his garden Holly Blue, Peacock, Small Torts, Green-veined White and Orange Tips (M & F) – females showing interest in the Lady's Smock.

Sunday 9th May 2004

Wendy and Mick Campbell were walking through Homefield Wood today and decided to wait in the meadow area hoping to see a Grizzled Skipper during one of the short sunny spells. None were seen but they were rewarded instead with a pristine **Dingy Skipper** nectaring on a dandelion, the first for the year. There were a few other butterflies on the wing: Large White, Green-Veined White, Orange Tip, Peacock and later on at **Hatchet Wood**, 2 Speckled Woods.

Tom Dunbar went to Hewins Wood today with high hopes of getting some first sightings for the year of Small White, Wall Brown, Dingy or possibly a Common Blue. He failed miserably but did get: **Grizzled Skipper** 1; Orange Tip 3; **OT eggs** 3; **Green Hairstreak** 1; Small Tortoiseshell 1; Peacock 1. The adjacent woods brought another 4 **OT eggs** which made a total of 7 for the day.

Tom also reported on yesterday's field trip to Grangelands which went ahead in spite of the overcast skies and frequent rain. He says: "We set off in the drizzle and covered the whole site. The highlight was 60-70+ Roman Snails which took the place of Common Blues!"

Butterflies seen in Aylesbury last week by Dave Maunder were as follows:-

Sm. Tortoiseshells (3), Large white (1), Small whites (6), Green-veined white (1), Orange tips (1 female, 2 males), Speckled woods (2), and a Holly blue - all at our allotment at Ardenham lane on the 2nd. Also on the 7th in St. Mary's churchyard in Aylesbury I saw a Holly blue, a Speckled wood, and a Small white.

Saturday 8th May 2004

Wendy & David Redhead report a lone **Large White** in their garden yesterday.

Wednesday 5th May 2004

Welcome to new visitor to the website, Jane Cockman, who is a churchyard surveyor for St Andrew's Clewer, Windsor. Jane keeps an eye on things in the churchyard, and snapped this Holly blue on Sunday (2nd May):

Monday 3rd May 2004

Tom Dunbar, Wendy and Mick Campbell maximised their opportunities this afternoon. They visited Dancers End Pumping Station in search of Brown Hairstreak eggs, following a report of an adult being seen there two years ago. Despite a good habitat being found no eggs were located. However never being ones 'to look a gift horse in the mouth' they braved the weather to check out Dancers End Nature Reserve. They saw one butterfly (at 4.50 p.m.) - a **Duke of Burgundy**.

Yesterday, 2nd May, Jan Haseler saw a Green Hairstreak and Grizzled Skipper at Whitchurch-on-Thames,

David Fuller reports Holly Blue, Orange Tip, Small White and Peacock all visiting his garden regularly.

Sunday 2nd May 2004

Derek Brown had a Small White in his garden at Beenham today and his wife saw a Red Admiral. He also saw a Green Hairstreak and several Green-veined whites at Decoy Heath; and a Grizzled Skipper at Aston Upthorpe - still no Dukes!!

Well done to Tom Dunbar who took advantage of the sunny afternoon today and covered four sites:

Dancersend Brimstone 8; Orange Tip 1; Green Veined White 1; Small Tortoiseshell 2; Peacock 4; Comma 1; No Duke of Burgundy

Ragpits - Brimstone 3; Holly Blue 2; Green Hairstreak 1; Peacock 2

Coombe Hill Bottom - Grizzled Skipper 2; Brimstone 4; Orange Tip 1; Green Hairstreak 1

Grangelands - Too late for any butterflies.

Wendy & Mick Campbell walked a circular route from Hartslock today taking in the Thames Tow Path from Goring to Whitchurch on Thames. They were pleasantly surprised to see a large number of Holly Blues and Green Hairstreaks on the wing, along with 9 other species of butterfly and several day flying moths. They also paid a late visit to Aston Upthorpe in search of the Duke of Burgundy and Grizzled Skipper but failed on both counts.

Butterflies seen last Sunday (25th) in Aylesbury on Dave Maunder's allotment were:-

Peacock (1), Comma (1), Sm. Tortoiseshell (27 - 22 were near Fairford Leys); Holly Blue (3), Speckled Wood (3), Brimstone (3), Orange Tip (1 male, 1 female), Gr. Veined White (1), Small White (8), Large White (1). I didn't see anything else all week, due to the adverse weather conditions.

Friday 30th April 2004

Thursday 29th April David Redhead writes - What an awful day. In desperation I decided to search the garlic mustard plants dotted over our garden (by kind permission of the head gardener) for Orange Tip eggs. To my surprise on the first plant examined I found a forlorn female **Orange Tip** roosting on one of the flower heads. I wonder if any other adult butterfly sightings will be reported for today.

My total egg count was 5. I found my first Orange Tip eggs of the year on 20th April. Both were light orange and on Garlic Mustard - one on rough ground near where I live and a stone's throw from the River Thames, the other was in our garden. The garden one had extremely unusually been laid on the underside of a leaf. Normally they are laid on the stem just below the flower. Orange Tip eggs are readily visible to the naked eye and can be found on Garlic Mustard (Jack-by-the-Hedge), Lady's Smock (Cuckoo Flower) and less commonly on Honesty, Hedge Mustard & Sweet Rocket. When first laid the eggs are white but turn orange after a day or so. (Note white eggs on the leaves of these plants will usually belong to the Green-veined White.) The caterpillars hatch out during May and can be found feeding on the seed pods through into June.

Keith Mitchell reports seeing his first garden **Orange Tip** of the year on 24th (see photo – click picture for larger image).

Here are some of Dave Maunder's sightings from around Aylesbury recently:-

Peacocks (2), **Sm. Tortoiseshells (75+) on 23rd (45+ were near fairford leys)**, Speckled Woods (3), **Holly Blues (6)**, Brimstones (6), Orange Tip (1), Gr.-Veined Whites (2), Small Whites (10), Large Whites (2) - nice to see more Holly Blues this spring in town after last year's low numbers!

Tuesday 27th April 2004

On 25/04/04 Tim and Colleen Watts were pleased to have their first sighting of a **Holly Blue** for 3 years in their garden at Whitchurch and one Orange Tip. Also on the same day at the Calvert BBOWT reserve they recorded

Brimstone, Comma, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Orange Tip and Speckled Wood.

Monday 26th April 2004

At Grangelands 26 April (all day) Martin Albertini reports seeing several **Green Hairstreaks**, one **Grizzled Skipper** (at about 4pm), lots of Brimstones, a few Orange Tips and G-v Whites, one or two Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Comma.

Tom Dunbar saw 1 **Painted Lady**, 1 Large White, and 2 Speckled Woods in Hazlemere, Bucks, today.

Sunday 25th April 2004

Derek Brown - Nothing of real note to mention but I seem to be seeing more **Holly Blues** in the garden (Beenham Nr. Aldermaston Berks) this weekend than I can ever remember. I must have had at least 15-20 sightings - perhaps double figure individuals! Normally I see at most 4 or 5 a year with most in the second brood. Is it just me or is everyone seeing these in large numbers. I also visited **Aston Upton Down** on Sat 24th am. The hillside is bright yellow with the Cowslips but I didn't see a single Duke.

Tom Dunbar went to Wotton Underwood, this morning, and saw 1 Brimstone; 1 GV White; 4 Orange Tips; and 4 Speckled Woods. Unfortunately no Grizzled Skippers. In the afternoon he visited **Dancers End** and saw 8 Brimstone; 3 Small tortoiseshell; 1 Red Admiral; 11 Peacock; 1 Comma. Unfortunately no Duke of Burgundy yet!

The following news received from Richard Soulsby: On my Swyncombe transect yesterday I saw: **Small Copper**, **Green Hairstreak**, Orange Tip plus the hibernators (Brimstone, Peacock, Small Tort, Comma). But no Grizzled Skips, despite looking hard. Then in my garden added 4 Holly Blues and Small White. Nice to see the **Small Copper**, which posed for photos.

Saturday 24th April 2004

Nick Bowles recorded the first **Grizzled Skipper** of the year during his transect at Coombe Hill today, along with 2 **Green Hairstreaks**.

I saw a **Green Hairstreak** at The Holies, Streatley today, perched at the top of exactly the same bush as the one I saw there last spring. **Jan Haseler**

Tom Dunbar spent 2 hours at Bernwood Forest today. He saw 7 species including **24 Speckled Woods**, 1 GV White, 12 Orange Tips, 3 Brimstone, 1 Comma, 1 Small Tortoiseshell and 11 Peacock. It will be interesting to monitor, in the coming years, the impact of the major conifer clearance on butterfly populations.

Paul Bowyer and Wendy & Mick Campbell set out today in search of Grizzled Skippers (although they didn't find any!). They decided to try Greenham Common again as it's more southerly. On the way down they took in Hartslock and on the return journey Moor Copse. They recorded 9 butterfly species:

Hartslock – Brimstone (12), Holly Blue (2), Small Tortoiseshell (2), Peacock (2), Green Hairstreak (3 on Wayfaring tree) and one Orange Tip.

Greenham Common - Small Tortoiseshells, Peacocks and Orange Tips.

Moor Copse - Brimstone, Holly Blue (2), Peacock, Orange Tip (9), Speckled Wood (4), **Green-veined White** (2) and Comma (2). This is a very pretty wood and well worth a visit. Temperature of 24 degrees recorded in the middle of the wood. The bluebells were spectacular and in full flower!

Thursday 22nd April 2004

Dennis Dell visited Dancers End today. The weather wasn't brilliant, but some sunshine - no Dukes seen, 4 Peacocks, 1 Speckled Wood, 1 male and 1 female Brimstone.

22nd April - After a few cool, wet days, some sun at last – one male **Orange Tip** in the garden. **Mick Campbell, Holmer Green.**

Nick Bowles reported a surprisingly early **Green Hairstreak** on his transect in Wendover, Bucks, last **Friday, 16th April**.

Monday 19th April 2004

On a very warm evening after work at around 5 o'clock on 16th April, I stopped in Lent Rise near Burnham to talk to a friend. I saw 1 Holly Blue and a Peacock there. Later encouraged by this I called in at the Warren local nature reserve in Wooburn Green where I saw 10 Small Tortoiseshells, 2 Commas, 2 Peacocks and 1 more Holly Blue.
Paul Bowyer.

Sunday 18th April 2004

In a bid for an early sighting of Grizzled Skippers this year (and making the best of the sun), Wendy and Mick Campbell paid a visit to Greenham Common yesterday. None were seen although a search for the larval foodplant was highly successful in numerous areas of the site. The temperature was a very cool 15-17 degrees, except in the NE corner where it was more sheltered from the strong wind and registered 20°. Butterflies which were on the wing included Small Tortoiseshell (10), Peacock (6) and one Comma.

They also called in to Aston Upthorpe on the home journey but when they arrived at 5.00 p.m. there was a very strong cold wind blowing across the downs and no butterflies were seen.

Tom Dunbar got out briefly to Dancersend on 16th April and saw: Brimstone x8; Small Tort x3; Peacock x11; Comma x1; and..... **Red Admiral** x1

On 9th April, Keith Mitchell recorded the following butterflies in his garden in Stoke Goldington: Small Tortoiseshell, Brimstone and Peacock in garden.

Wednesday 14th April 2004

My first Orange Tip of the year 14th April - a male about 3pm at Otmoor Rifle Range. On return home Wendy told me there had been a couple in our garden. Full count at Otmoor in addition to OT - several Small Torts, Peacocks and Brimstones plus a Comma & Small White. **David Redhead**

A few Easter sightings from Dave Maunder - on Monday 12th I saw my 1st Orange tip, a male in Whitchurch; also on a drive to Adstock I saw 4 Brimstones, and in Adstock I saw 1 more Brimstone, 1 Comma and a Sm. Tortoiseshell. Today (14th) I saw 13 Sm. tortoiseshells in the Fairford Leys area of Aylesbury on nettle beds.

Mick Campbell and Tom Dunbar spent the afternoon today looking unsuccessfully for Grizzled Skippers. However, at Wotton disused railway they saw Brimstone 2, Orange Tip 1, Peacock 3, Comma 2, Small Tortoiseshell 6. They also had an encounter with a large Grass snake! Then at Hewin's Wood drain: Brimstone 2, Small Tortoiseshell 2, Peacock 4, Speckled Wood 2, Comma 1.

In a half hour visit to Dancersend Tuesday 13th April, Tom Dunbar saw 1 Orange Tip, 4 Brimstones, 6 Small Torts, 1 Comma and 8 Peacocks. No Dukes or Grizzled Skippers. The Tortoiseshells were very busy around a clump of nettles but no sign of laying. Any such sights from elsewhere?

News from Paul Bowyer on Monday 12th April Longstreet near Hanslope Bucks:

During a fine and warm period at midday I saw a male and female Brimstone, 2 Peacocks and 3 Small Tortoiseshells. They were all in a garden nectaring on dandelion and dead nettle flowers.

I was visiting relatives on **12th April** and saw 1st Small White at my daughter's and then Green Veined White, outside the UTB area at my inlaws'. All along with 14 Brimstones and 4 Small Tortoiseshells and 2 Peacocks; I still

haven't seen a single Comma though I must have seen about 50 Brimstones & Small Torts, 10 Peacocks, 2 Small White and 1 GVWhite so far this year. **Nick Bowles**.

These are David Redhead's garden sightings for 12th April - 1 **Holly Blue** flying in top of large laurel bush next to holly tree, 2 Small Whites, several Brimstones & Small Tortoiseshells, 1 Peacock & 1 Comma = 6 species. Plus 1 Small Tortoiseshell at WGW but it had clouded over by then.

Plenty of over-wintering hibernators flying today, **12th April**, plus a few Orange tips and **Speckled Wood** at Moor Copse, Berks. **Terry Hotten**

Monday 12th April 2004

While doing my transect at Swyncombe Downs this afternoon, the first butterfly I saw was a female **Orange Tip** exploring honesty flowers. Also saw Brimstones, Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshells. On Friday 9/4/04 a **Small White** at Dorchester-on-Thames, plus usual Brimstones and Small Torts. **Richard Soulsby**

During their walk from Swyncombe to the Warburg reserve, **Mick and Wendy Campbell** saw Brimstones, Peacocks, Small Tortoiseshells and a Comma. They missed seeing Richard and the Orange Tip!

Sunday 11th April 2004

Tom and Rosaleen Dunbar visited Hewins Wood area and saw 2 Brimstones, 5 Small Tortoiseshells and 1 Peacock. They also recorded 8 Red Kites (+ 3 other 'possibles' circling at a great height) in the vicinity of the Calvert Landfill Site. Could they be resident? No Grizzled Skippers yet!

Saturday 10th April 2004

News just received from Derek Brown that he sighted a Small Copper yesterday at Decoy Heath Nr Aldermaston in Berkshire. This is thought to be the earliest sighting of a Small Copper in the UTB area in the last 20 years (subject to confirmation by our Records Officer). He also saw 6 Small Tortoiseshells.

Also on Friday 9th in his garden in Beenham Derek saw 3 Small Torts, 2 male Brimstones and a **Holly Blue**.

Homefield Wood was visited yesterday by four UTB members looking for the Orange Underwing moth. A probable sighting was made but couldn't be confirmed. However, they did see a number of butterflies which made the trip worthwhile:

6 male Brimstones, 4 Peacocks, 2 Commas and a Small Tortoiseshell. There was an impressive bank of Primroses in full flower and they also saw several **Bee Flies**.

Thursday 8th April 2004

David Fuller reports the following butterfly sightings during March:

1 Comma, 1 Peacock and 3 male Brimstones in Cookham, Berks, a male Brimstone in Bourne End and another in Maidenhead all on 16/03/04. 1 Comma seen on 23/03/04 in Cookham. On 30/03/04 he recorded 1 Comma in his garden in Maidenhead, 2 male & 1 female Brimstone in Maidenhead, 1 male Brimstone in Cookham and 3 male Brimstones and 4 Peacocks in Marlow. Finally, 1 Peacock on 31/03/04 in his garden.

Monday 5th April 2004

Only 2 butterflies seen during a walk from Cadmore End yesterday. **Mick & Wendy Campbell** managed to spot a single **Peacock** and a **Small Tortoiseshell** between rain showers.

Keith Mitchell saw a **Small Tortoiseshell** in his Stoke Goldington garden on 2nd April. He also reports 2 **Small Tortoiseshells** and 1 **Peacock** whilst watching a Cetti's Warbler at Caldecotte Lake in Milton Keynes also on 2nd April.

Mick Campbell saw a **Comma** in his Holmer Green garden today, 2nd April.

Thursday 1st April 2004

The last two days' warm spring weather certainly brought out butterflies in good numbers! Species I saw around Aylesbury on 30th and 31st were:- **Peacocks** (2), **Commas** (2), **Sm. Tortoiseshells (60+)** - very good numbers around this spring; also **Brimstones** (11), **Large White** (1), and **Small Whites** (2). The Tortoiseshells were pairing on nettle beds on Tuesday afternoon - nice to see. **Dave Maunder**

Wednesday 31st March 2004

The following sightings received from Paul Bowyer today:

Farnham Royal churchyard: 7 Small Tortoiseshells

East Burnham Common: 2 Brimstones and 2 Small Tortoiseshells

Cocksherd Wood, Britwell, Slough: 2 Commas, 8 Small Tortoiseshells and 1 Brimstone

31.3.03 **Harris Garden, University of Reading – Jan Haseler** reports 2 **Small Whites**, 7 Small Tortoiseshells, Brimstone, Comma, Peacock.

Tony Croft and his wife were in Whitecross Green Wood today in the warm sunshine and saw lots of male **Brimstone** butterflies as well as **Peacocks**, **Small Tortoiseshells** and a couple of **Commas**. All in all a lovely day.

Tom Dunbar saw 5 **Brimstones** and 2 **Peacocks** in Home Wood, Hazlemere today.

Mick Campbell saw 2 **Small Tortoiseshells** and a **Peacock** in his Holmer Green garden today.

Tuesday 30th March 2004

Don Potts rang from a car park in Marlow, Bucks, today to say he had just seen 2 **Red Admirals**.

Paul Bowyer was in Windsor Meadow Estate, Cippenham in Slough today and saw 7 **Small Tortoiseshells**.

Mick Campbell was walking through Penn Wood today and saw 4 **Small Tortoiseshells**, 6 **Peacocks**, 6 **Commas** and 3 male **Brimstones**. He also recorded a Comma at Mop End.

Sunday 21st March 2004

News just received from Dave Maunder: Saw my 1st **Small Tortoiseshells** (2) in Aylesbury vale park on a warm morning on Wednesday 17th, also another one today.

Tuesday 16th March 2004

I was delighted to hear of the following sightings today, which seem to suggest Spring has arrived. Apologies if you would prefer not to have your sightings posted – please let me know and I will remove them immediately. Wendy Campbell.

Lunchtime stroll produced 4 **brimstones** and 4 **peacocks**. Spring at last. **Paul Huckle**

At last my first butterfly, a **Small Tortoiseshell** in the garden this morning, on lungwort. Now 17.4°C at 14:00 and three indulging in much chasing. I guess from size and behaviour they are 1f & 2m. **Mike Wilkins**.

No Tortoiseshells here today, but one **Brimstone** in garden and one at H. Bottom. It's great to have spring at last. **Frank Banyard**

Saw my first **Tortoiseshell** in the garden (Aylesbury) on March 1st. [Dennis Dell](#)

Nothing at Otmoor Rifle Range today but it was pretty breezy today. Wendy saw a **Brimstone** on her way into Oxford today. [David Redhead](#).

Here in rural Oxon, 5 **small tortoiseshells**, a **peacock** and a **comma** all spotted on a small area of wasteland. All were very worn, but are the first butterflies I've seen this year! [Chris Pickford](#)

At Cookham today **Brimstone** male 3, **Small Tortoiseshell** 2, **Comma** 1, **Peacock** 1. Bourne End **Brimstone** male 1, **Small Tortoiseshell** 1. My garden **Brimstone** male 1, **Small Tortoiseshell** 2. [David Fuller](#).

Yes, what a wonderful day. I had **Brimstone** and **Sm. Tort**, latter released from an outbuilding window. [Margaret Price](#)

One **Brimstone** in Sutton Courtenay (early afternoon) and one Small Tortoiseshell in Marcham (morning). My car thermometer was reading 18C. [Jim Asher](#)

Saw a **brimstone** and a **small tortoiseshell** in Berkshire (nr Reading) yesterday (16/3). [Maurice Budden](#)

Saw my first FLYING **small tort** of the year yesterday!! [David Dennis](#)

Brimstone [Grahame](#)

I was at Dancers End on Tuesday and saw: **5+ male brimstone** and a probable female, **1 Peacock**, **1 Small Tortoiseshell**. [John Stevens](#)

I saw 14 **Small Torts** here in Tring about 4.15p.m. Largest number of butterflies seen on day (so far reported to me) 37 (of which 32 Brimstone) in Pamber forest Hants. [Nick Bowles](#)

[Jan Haseler sent in the following message today:](#) I have just seen my first 2004 butterfly - a **Comma** at Shinfield Park, Reading.

[The following news received from Richard Soulsby today:](#) I made my first butterfly foray of the season this warm, sunny lunchtime - on my standard circuit of the grounds at work (Howbery Park, near Wallingford) I saw **4 male Brimstones** and **4 Small Torts**. So that's got things off to a good start.

[Mick Campbell](#) reports a **male Brimstone** in his garden in Holmer Green today.

14th March 2004

[My first butterfly sighting of this year](#) was a **Peacock**, which flew past my house in Aylesbury yesterday, 13th March. Look forward to more spring sightings soon. [Dave Maunder](#).

13th February 2004

[News just received from Mark Calway](#) today that he sighted his first butterfly this year, a **Small Tortoiseshell**, on **6th January** 2004 in Shinfield, Berkshire.

10th February 2004

[Maureen Cross was delighted to see her first butterfly of the year in Streatley on the 4th February](#), it was a very bright male **Brimstone**.

21st January 2004

[First report for the year was received from Tom Dunbar today](#), who spotted a **Small Tortoiseshell** in Hazlemere, Bucks, struggling to remain active in what must have been about 7 degrees! He took it inside to try to feed it, unsuccessfully, but managed to warm it up enough to enable it to fly off over the rooftops.