Butterfly Conservation Upper Thames Branch

Butterfly Sightings Archive - January to December 2008

Wednesday 31st December 2008

This news just in from Peter Holland: "I thought I would send you a photo of a **Red Admiral** that very obligingly visited my garden in *Wallingford (Oxon) on Christmas Day,* resting on the trunk of an apple tree for several hours, occasionally sunning itself. My last butterfly sighting of 2008!"

Jan Haseler reported seeing a Peacock at Linear Park, Calcot (Berks) on 17th December. [A Red Admiral was seen in Bletchley, Bucks on 17th, reported to the UK-Leps yahoogroup.]

Tuesday 25th November 2008

Nick Bowles sent the following on 21st November: "A presumably confused **Peacock** sat on the glazing bar and then tried to fly *in* through an open window at work (in *Aylesbury*) on *19th November.* It soon turned back and acted, as I would if I could, by heading smartly away from work!"

Dave Ferguson reported as follows on 20th November: "I attach a photo (see below) of a **Red Admiral** which was sunning itself on a mahonia in our garden in *Beaconsfield* on 19th November."

This news came from Jan Haseler on 18th November: "There was a **Red Admiral** on ivy blossom at *Shinfield Park, Berks* on *18th November.*"

Dave Maunder has had a couple of recent butterfly sightings in Aylesbury: "A **Red Admiral** on 14th November and a **Peacock** on the 15th, both seen near Fairford Leys on two lovely mild, sunny days. Peacocks do seem to be enticed out later in the year by this unseasonal weather!"

Dave Wilton reported the following: "We had a female **Brimstone** active in the garden at *Westcott* on *14th November*, the first butterfly I've seen anywhere since our last sighting here of a **Red Admiral** on *24th October.*"

David Redhead was in Peasmore Piece, Oxon, on 14th November: "As I was getting out of the car in Copse Lane there was a **Red Admiral** flying about - sun still shining and 12C."

Thursday 23rd October 2008

Becky Woodell sent the following on 22nd October: "Not much about here (*in Oakley, Bucks*). Yesterday, *21st*, one **Large White** settled briefly in the hedgerow about 11.45am. Today *22nd* one **Red Admiral** on an apple in my small orchard. This time of year the herbaceous border is not in sun for very long. The best ivy is not easily observable so I may just not be seeing the butterflies."

On 22nd October Grahame Hawker reported seeing a couple of **Red Admirals**, 3 or 4 **Large Whites** and a **Small Copper** on the Reserve in *Earley, Berks*.

Tony Croft sent this email yesterday, 22nd October: "There was a **Red Admiral** flying around my garden (*Long Crendon, Bucks*) at 08:15 this morning with the temperature only 4.2C and some frost still on the ground but in brilliant sunshine! Later in the morning it was joined by another Red Admiral, two **Small Tortoiseshells** and a **Comma** nectaring variously on michaelmas daisies and ivy flowers. This afternoon the tramway meadow at *Rushbeds Wood* hosted only one butterfly that I could see but this was a **Small Copper.** On arriving home the other butterflies had been joined by a **Large White.**"

David Redhead reported the following: "The **Commas** seem to have returned to my garden in *Littlemore, Oxon.* On *16th October* there were 2 nectaring on the ivy bossom and 2 nectaring on the Michaelmas Daisies. A tatty **Speckled Wood** also briefly basked in the sunshine on the garden shed roof. Earlier in the day I also saw a Comma at *Otmoor*. Yesterday, *22nd October*, I noticed a frost (min overnight temp 1.3C) on my early morning dog walk but saw no butterflies until the afternoon when my neighbour's ivy bank sported 5 **Commas** and 3 **Red Admirals** As you can see from the photos below, although not pristine, they are still in good condition."

The following was received from Martin Kennard, via Jim Asher, on 20th October: "This is a slightly odd record for you, but interesting none-the-less. On *25th August* my sister bought a Cape Floral Bouquet from *Cherwell Valley Services, Oxon.* However, about 7 days later it started producing strange sounds from within one of the Proteus flowers it contained. Upon inspecting further, a green caterpillar was found feeding within a young flower head. This was retained and the resulting pupa given to me for my opinion. It resembled one of the Lycaenidae but nothing I could identify. It was kept at room temperature and the resulting butterfly hatched out about two weeks ago (see photos below). After searching through several websites and books I have identified it as an **Orange-banded Protea** (or Protea Scarlet) '*Capys alphaeus*' which is endemic to *South Africa!* I assume the flowers collected for export must have contained an egg or very young caterpillar that survived the 6,000 mile journey to the UK."

Helen Hyre reported the following unusual butterfly behaviour on 22nd October: "On 2nd October at 1pm I noticed a Large White which looked as if it was mating on our grass garden path and went to look. As I came closer, it seemed as if it had got caught in a spider's web, but closer still I saw a stripey insect on the ground below, possibly a hoverfly. A minute later they had both flown off, so maybe they had been having a dispute!"

Richard Soulsby did an out-of-season circuit of the first half of the Howbery Park transect (near Wallingford) on 16th October: "I found 7 **Red Admirals**, 2 **Speckled Woods** and 1 **Small White.** Some of the Red Admirals looked fresh, while others were more faded. I'm also still getting occasional **Commas** in my garden, but not in the numbers seen by others, plus the odd **Brimstone.**"

Wednesday 15th October 2008

Maureen Cross sent this report today, 15th: "I have just read Martin Harvey's report on a late sighting of a Meadow Brown on the 11th October *(see below),* co-incidentally I had just recorded seeing 2 **Meadow Browns** on *Lardon Chase* on *12th October.* As the first UTB Meadow Brown this year was seen on Lardon on 31st May can the hill now boast the first and last Meadow Brown sighting of 2008? Or does someone know otherwise?"

Wendy Wilson says there was a fresh-looking Red Admiral on the wing at the apple farm in *Iver Heath, Bucks,* on *12th October.* "It was nectaring on ivy blossom. The farmer's wife saw a male **Brimstone** flying there the day before."

Jim Asher sent this news on 13th October: "We came across this **Red Admiral** (see below) late yesterday afternoon *(12th)* near *Cothill, Oxon* - appearing very fresh. It dropped a little myconium when I had it on my finger briefly, indicating further that it was freshly emerged. Apart from a Large White, a Small White and a female Southern Hawker dragonfly, not much on the wing."

Dennis Dell sent the following on 12th October: "Since I have nothing left in my *Fairford Leys, Aylesbury* garden, I walked around my neighbourhood looking for nectar sources and found a late flowering Buddleia which attracted a **Small Tortoiseshell** and a **Red Admiral** and a large flowering Ivy on a wall, which attracted a Red Admiral (see photo) and a **Comma**, so now I'm looking for a garden centre that sells flowering ivy!"

In Oving, Bucks at the weekend (11th & 12th) Jack Peeters had the following: "Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Brimstone, Large White, Peacock, Small White and Comma. I always keep records of late sightings. It somehow makes the winter seem shorter. Noteable previous late sightings here: 15.10.02 - Painted Lady, 18.10.03 - Common Blue, Small Copper, 29.10.06 - Clouded Yellow, 02.12.06 - Red Admiral, 31.10.07 - Comma."

David Redhead sent the following report yesterday: "Even with the recent "summer" weather the butterflies in our garden (*Littlemore, Oxon*) have noticeably declined from the peak of 13 previously reported on the 3rd October. On the 8th October we were down to 8 with 5 **Commas** on the ivy and 2 **Red Admirals** and a **Large White** on the Michaelmas Daisies. On the 10th we were down to 6 with the ivy deserted but 3 Commas, 2 Red Admirals and a Large White still on the Michaelmas Daisies. On *Sunday 12th* it was just a single Comma on the Michaelmas Daisies. The same day a visit to the south-east of *Shotover* produced a surprise **Small Tortoiseshell** in a setaside field and elsewhere 3 Red Admirals, 2 Commas and a Large White."

Mary Payne from Stoke Mandeville in Bucks sent the following sightings: "Friday 10th & Saturday 11th: A blue seen - I assume either Common or Holly, but I didn't get a close look. Sunday 12th: Speckled Wood and Large White. We also glimpsed what we thought was a Small Tortoiseshell whizzing over the fence."

Saturday 11th October 2008

Martin Harvey sent this report today, 11th October: "A **Meadow Brown** was sunbathing in my garden (*Great Kimble, Bucks*) this afternoon - the first time I've ever seen one in October (my previous latest was last year, when I saw one on 30th September)."

On 8th October Dave Maunder took a walk down the lane at Eythrope, Bucks: "I saw a total of 10 **Comma**, 5 **Red Admiral**, 1 **Large White** and 20+ **Hornets** all feeding on Ivy bloom. The following morning (9th) I went to *Hartwell cemetery (Bucks)* and found a total of 15 Commas and 5 Red Admirals on the ivy there - and another 3 Hornets! So it looks like Commas have done well locally, but fairly low numbers of Red Admirals this year. In my *Aylesbury* garden this week I've seen 3 **Small Tortoiseshells** on my Asters, plus 1 Comma, 2 Large Whites and 2 **Small Whites.**"

Friday 10th October 2008

Mick & Wendy Campbell visited Waterperry Wood today, 10th October: "We weren't expecting to see any butterflies as it was late afternoon and quite windy, but on the more sheltered outer edge of the wood we saw 4 **Commas** sunbathing on bramble plus a couple of **Speckled Woods."**

Dennis Dell sent this email on 9th October: "October 6th and 8th - I had decided that I could close the book on garden sightings for this year, since I have (virtually) no nectar source left. On Monday, and especially on Wednesday, I was pleasantly surprised. I recorded 10 degrees C in my *Aylesbury* garden on Monday, with very short sunny spells. A **Red Admiral** arrived and stayed for about 2 hours, stationary on a bush, catching what little sunshine was available. Yesterday, the weather was superb and to my delight we had a **Holly Blue**, (male) **Brimstone, Large White** and **Small White.** The Large White found the only flower spike left on the Beijing buddleia and monopolised it. I'm intrigued by the Holly Blue sighting: I saw them quite frequently in May, one during the third week in July and then this specimen yesterday. So what is going on here: three generations?"

Jan Haseler reported as follows on 8th October: "I strayed into neighbour Grahame Hawker's 10K square at lunch time today (8th) and was rewarded with 1 Small Heath, 3 Commas, 1 Red Admiral, 1 Peacock, 1 Large White, 1 Small White and 1 Brimstone at Burghfield, Berks."

David Redhead sent the following reports on 6th October: "To my delight the Commas in my *Littlemore*, Oxford garden have set an all time record (for the last twenty plus years) with 10 being recorded at the same time on the morning of *Friday 3rd October*. Eight were nectaring on the ivy blossom and two on the Michaelmas Daisies. The ivy blossom was also adorned by two nectaring **Red Admirals** and a **Small White** was flying about. A dog walk led to a Speckled Wood basking on dead leaves, a Comma basking on a flowerless feral buddleia and a Red Admiral nectaring on some wild Michaelmas Daisies. 16 butterflies in an hour from 4 species is guite a good haul for early October. All the vanessids seen were in very good condition. On the 11th September I reported that I had found a Comma pupa (see below). I actually took it into "custody" but had rather given up on it ever hatching by the 29th September. On Friday I checked it again and was suprised to see that a perfect adult had now emerged - it was carefully transferred to a Michaelmas Daisy flower in the sun when it opened its wings, then shut them again before taking flight and disappearing over the garden hedge. So I wonder if the continuing good condition of the vanessids is due to a prolonged emergence. For the first 4 mornings of October the Red Admirals and Commas became active in the sunshine when the ambient temperature rose to just 10/11C - sadly these last two days, owing to the complete absence of sunshine, have been butterfly free - hopefully tomorrow will be better.

Brown Hairstreak update: Sightings of **Brown Hairstreak** this year are 19% up on last with the last reported sighting on the 27th September by Tony Croft, when he saw a female patrolling his garden hedge in Easington. With some reasonable weather forecast in the coming days hopefully we will get our usual October sighting(s) to finish the season off. Our latest sighting in recent years has been 9th October but West Midlands Branch have managed one as late as the 14th in their one remaining population to the east of Leominster. A recent note by Andy Middleton in the Entomologists Record shows, from observations made by a group of Hertfordshire and Middlesex Branch members, that Brown Hairstreaks can be active at temperatures as low as 11C in the sunshine. In overcast conditions it needs to be a bit warmer and we have seen late females active in overcast conditions at 15/16C. Besides the number of adult sightings made, another sign that our population has had a good season are the results of early egg searching. I have done short timed counts at four core sites and found a total of 44 eggs in an hour of searching - this would be an extremely high find rate when the leaves have fallen off let alone with them still on."

Saturday 4th October 2008

John Ward-Smith reported the following sighting: "There was a single Small Copper on heather today, *Friday 3 October*, at *Englemere*, between Ascot and Bracknell, Berkshire."

Tony Croft sent the following yesterday: "On a walk through *Rushbeds Wood and Lapland Farm* on *Thursday 2nd October*, as well as numerous **Speckled Wood** and **Comma** we were delighted to see a very good looking **Small Copper** visiting the few flowers in Lapland Farm meadow. In the tramway meadow we had two possible Brown Hairstreak sightings but unfortunately they were flying too high for a positive i.d. A further **Brown Hairstreak egg** was revealed in our garden (*Long Crendon, Bucks*) only a couple of centimetres from the September 25 layings so probably part of the same batch. This makes the total now ten."

Wednesday 1st October 2008

Derek Brown sent the following in response to David Redhead's query about aberrant Commas (see 27/09): "Funnily enough I also had one of the *delta-album* variety of Commas this Saturday 27th September in our garden at Beenham (see 1st picture). Although I don't check every Comma that comes my way the only other one that I remember seeing, and got a photo of, was in 2005 at Waterperry Wood (see 2nd picture)."

Chris Brown sent the following report today of his latest surveys of Crowsley Park

Wood, Berks: "No Silver-washed Fritillary seen this September so the season closes. Other butterflies still around at this site during favourable conditions and nectar sources available for all. I seem to have missed the Small Tortoiseshell invasion as nothing turned up at home and the beautiful weather week of 20th to 27th Sept I was on holiday in the lake district and so might have missed any about. I did not see many butterflies up there either, just a few whites and a probable Comma, but I cannot complain at having such a good week walking about in such lovely scenery.

01/09/08: 1 Green-veined White, 1 Holly Blue, 3 Speckled Wood, 1 Meadow Brown. 03/09/08: 2 Small White, 1 Green-veined White, 1 Red Admiral, 3 Comma, 8 Speckled Wood, 6 Meadow Brown.

10/09/08: 1 Brimstone (1M), 3 Small White, 3 Green-veined White, 1 Red Admiral, 8 Comma, 7 Speckled Wood, 6 Meadow Brown. Commas were very fresh. 18/09/08: 6 Comma, 2 Speckled Wood.

29/09/08: 2 Small White, 1 Comma, 1 Speckled Wood."

At 11.20 this morning, 1st October, under grey skies and spitting rain David Redhead trudged off on a dog walk: "By the time I went back indoors an hour later my butterfly count was 15 with 9 Comma, 3 Red Admiral, 2 Large White and 1 Small White. Five minutes after I started the sun broke through and after another 5 minutes it was glorious sunshine, if a little breezy. A feral buddleia on my route has decided to produce a crop of late flowers and these were adorned by two Commas and a Red Admiral. Two more Commas were seen basking, one on a nettle leaf and the other on the ground. Back in the garden (Littlemore, Oxon) there was a Comma on the Michaelmas Daisies along with the all three whites. But the pick of the bunch was the Ivy blossom with four Commas and two Red Admirals. I continue to be astounded by the good condition of the vanessids I am seeing."

Andy Bolton from Hants Branch sent the following on 30th September: "I have a few minor sightings for you from the corner of West Berkshire at Lakeside Garden Centre, Brimpton Common, nr. Tadley (SU572628):

21/09/08 - One each of **Peacock, Large White, Small White** and a **Common Blue** female. 28/09/08 - One each of **Red Admiral, Comma, Speckled Wood, Large & Small White.**"

Wendy & David Redhead went to Englefield House Gardens (just south of Pangbourne, Berks) on 29th September in the hope of finding some Small

Tortoiseshells: "We went on the presumption there could be a concentration of nectar plants there. There were - verbena bonariensis, michaelmas daisies (light and dark purple varieties but no pink) and sedum (Autumn Joy hybrid rather than ice plant). Our butterfly count was 14 **Commas**, 3 **Speckled Wood**, 2 **Red Admiral**, 2 **Large White** and 1 **Small White**. 6 of the Commas were on the bonariensis and the others were mainly on the michaelmas daisies although the neighbouring sedum and a squat plant with dark purple flowers (which Wendy thought was another verbena) also got some attention. One of the Red Admirals was basking in a tree and the other was on the sedum. The nasturtiums had a few fully grown Large White larvae on them. A visit to the garden centre there enabled us to buy two ice plants at a very reasonable price so hopefully we will have even more Small Tortoiseshells in our garden next year."

Sunday 28th September 2008

Tony Croft sent the following update yesterday, 27th: "I found another **Brown Hairstreak egg** in the garden (*Long Crendon*) on *Thursday 25th September* very close to the first find of August 26th. It is quite well hidden and best seen with the use of a step ladder, so that's one I probably missed first time round. I had two sightings of a **Brown Hairstreak adult** this afternoon patrolling the garden hedge and have just found three further eggs comprising another doubler and a singleton a couple of centimetres away. This makes the total in the garden nine so far."

27/9 - David Redhead writes: "Like others, I have been very pleased and excited by the numbers of vanessids I have seen throughout September. I also find the continuing freshness of their appearance a delight and a surprise. For the last week or so there have regularly been up to 8 or 9 Commas in our garden (Littlemore, Oxon), now more or less equally divided between the Michaelmas Daisies and Ivy Blossom as their source of nectar. I photographed the Michaelmas Daisies to show somebody else the variety that we are finding especially attractive to butterflies. A second photo (see below) included a close up of the undersides of one of the nectaring Commas. When I sent out this photo it was pointed out to me that the comma mark was not a comma. Some research showed it to be a recognised aberrant, Polygonia c-album ab.delta-album. There is also another aberrant, o-album, where the comma is a circle rather than a delta shape. I was wondering about the rarity of these aberrants - has anybody else come across one? On Friday (26th September) I walked the last week of the Shabbington Wood transect which set a record for this week since 2002, when I first started doing it. The total butterfly count was 51 made up as follows : **Comma** 24, Brimstone 10, Speckled Wood 8, Small Tortoiseshell 5, Large White 2, Red Admiral 1, Green-veined White 1. All of the Commas, Brimstones and Small Tortoiseshells were nectaring on the ride-side Devil's-bit Scabious. Another interesting sighting was a Herald moth sitting on some ride-side blackthorn."

Richard Soulsby says his final Swyncombe transect on 26th September sprang a pleasant surprise: "A Small Blue! It was in good condition, but only settled briefly a couple of times before being blown along on the breeze, so I wasn't able to grab a photo. However, I was able to get a brief but clear view of both upper and undersides, so I am reasonably sure it wasn't a small Common Blue. This beats the previous last Small Blue at Swyncombe on 22nd September in 2005 and 23rd September in 2006, but is extra curious because the 2nd brood was very weak this year, whereas it was strong in 2005 and 2006."

Wednesday 24th September 2008

Dave Ferguson visited Lodge Hill on 21st September: "Butterflies seen were: 1 Small Tortoiseshell nectaring on Prickly Sow-thistle, 4 Small Heaths, 1 Speckled Wood, 5 Large Whites and 1 Small White."

Saturday 20th September 2008

Michael Pitt-Payne sent the following today, 20th September: "The past few sunny days have attracted the butterflies to our Sedum flowers. We have had 8 **Small Tortoiseshells** and 3 **Commas** all together at the same time in addition to **Red Admirals** and Whites. Here are a couple of pictures showing them at their best!"

Becky Woodell says she returned on 15th from a week on Guernsey, Sark and Herm where she saw not a single Small Tortoiseshell: "But the next day (16th), I found 2 Small Tortoiseshell in the garden at about 0930, and they just kept coming! By midday there were 12 Small Tortoiseshell, 5 Red Admiral, 2 Painted Lady, 3 Large White and 2 Small White. Nearly all the Vanessids were on the same pale pink plant which I believe is Sedum spectabile. In the attached photo there are 9 Small Tortoiseshells and 3 Red Admirals on the one plant. The darker Sedum behind had only scattered singles. There is a blue aster to the left which I think is Aster George 6th which attracted a few. A tall, bright pink michaelmas daisy was preferred by the Painted Ladies and the whites. A few Small Tortoiseshells visited it."

Dennis Dell sent this update on 15th September: "Many of us are reporting seeing more Small Tortoiseshells in our gardens, as the autumn emergence gets under way. My Beijing buddleia is past its first flush, but there are plenty of smaller second flush blooms to keep the Vanessids and Whites content. If it is a fine day, they start feeding from about 9.30 onwards, and don't disappear until about 7 pm. The only thing I have to report which is perhaps additional is that a fresh **Painted Lady** (I'm assuming it is the same specimen) has appeared during the last three days. What has been very gratifying is that, having complained about the apparent demise of sedum as a popular nectar source, **Small Tortoiseshells** started to use it from yesterday, and today (see photo) two **Commas**, a Small Tortoiseshell, **Brimstone** and **Red Admiral** appeared together."

Dave Maunder sent the following on 15th September: "In response to your comments on the decline in **Small Tortoiseshell** numbers, I went to *Waterperry gardens in Oxon*, yesterday (14th) where I saw 45+, mainly nectaring on Asters and Sedums - a wonderful sight on a beautiful September afternoon! I notched up a total of 11 species here, the full list being:- **Red Admirals** (16); **Peacocks** (4); Small Tortoiseshells (45+); **Commas** (9); **Brimstone** (1); **Large Whites** (15+); **Small Whites** (25+); **Green-veined Whites** (2); **Speckled Wood** (1); **Small Copper** (1), and **Common Blue** (1). Also seen here were **Silver y** (4), and **Juniper Carpet** (1) moths. Back in *Aylesbury*, though, Small Tortoiseshells seem to be in fairly low numbers as elsewhere - I only get about 3 coming into my garden now, and they prefer my Buddleias, although they will nectar on Verbena, Michaelmas daisies and Sedum."

On 12th September Dave Ferguson visited Prestwood Picnic Site, Bucks: "During an unsuccessful search for a Wryneck, I saw 2 rather worn Brown Argus. In our garden in *Beaconsfield* on 14th September there were 2 Red Admirals and a Small Tortoiseshell. The Tortoiseshell is the first in the garden for some years."

Dave Wilton went out in search of the Small Tortoiseshell on 13th September: "In the vicinity of Finemere Wood, Bucks, I managed to track down 18 Small Tortoiseshells, most of them on ragwort in the adjacent meadows. A buddleia bush in *Merton*, Oxon produced six and a nearby patch of michaelmas daisies had one more, proving that Oxfordshire has not quite yet lost the species totally! On Sunday 14th September) the remnants of our garden buddleia at Westcott produced Brimstone (2), Large White (2), Small White (2), Peacock (1) and Small Tortoiseshell (4) and our resident Speckled Wood was active nearby. Whilst sitting on the patio at lunchtime, as usual I kept a hopeful eye on the tops of the two young ash trees at the bottom of our garden and my hopes were raised when something small flew over the top of them and descended into a flower bed. Unfortunately this turned out not to be a Brown Hairstreak but a female **Common Blue!** Still, she was the first of the year here and takes my garden species total to 18 for 2008. In the afternoon I visited the disused railway cutting west of the *disused airfield at Westcott* where there is masses of devil's-bit scabious in flower. There I found Brimstone (1), Large White (5), Small White (11), Green-veined White (1), Small Copper (3), Brown Argus (4), Common Blue (8), Painted Lady (1), Small Tortoiseshell (18), Comma (7), Speckled Wood (7), Meadow Brown (2), Small Heath (1) and moths Green Carpet (1), Lesser Treble-bar (2) and Silver Y (8). One Comma and all of the Speckled Woods were on bramble patches but without exception the remainder of the butterflies were nectaring on the devil's-bit. Despite much searching, including shaking some young ash trees, I failed to locate an adult Brown Hairstreak in the cutting. However I did manage to find one Brown Hairstreak egg. 47 Small Tortoiseshells over two days is a far better total for the species than I've achieved for some years so this final brood for 2008 seems to be showing something of a turn-around in the butterfly's fortunes. Let's hope that this is not just a temporary blip in the downward spiral. I have 15 viable Small Tortoiseshell pupae at home which should produce more adults over the next two or three days so the emergence has probably not yet reached its peak. Finally, I had a Red Admiral in the garden moth trap overnight on 13th/14th, to give me 16 species for the day. I didn't see a Red Admiral in the garden on either 13th or 14th, which makes me wonder if they migrate at night?!"

Tony Croft reported the following: "We had half a dozen **Small Tortoiseshells** in the garden this afternoon (13th September) as well as numerous Whites two **Red Admirals** and a **Comma.** The Small Tortoiseshells seem to be equally well disposed to the buddleia, sedum spectabile and michaelmas daisies while the Whites showed a definite preference for the buddleia."

Thursday 11th September 2008

Dennis Dell had the following in his Aylesbury, Bucks garden today, 11th: "I had **Red Admiral, Small White** and **Small Tortoiseshell** nectaring in the garden. They preferred the Beijing buddleia and completely ignored the ice plant and the devil's bit. It's interesting to build a picture of nectaring preferences for the whites and vanessids in late summer/early autumn and I wonder what other people have experienced?"

[In answer to Dennis's question, we had 6 Small Tortoiseshells, 1 Red Admiral and various Whites on our garden (Bucks) buddleia today. The Tortoiseshells were also nectaring on the Bowles' Mauve and very occasionally landed on the Verbena Bonariensis and Michaelmas Daisies but quickly went back to the buddleia. A Comma also made a brief appearance. We're particularly keen to hear about your Small Tortoiseshell sightings as this once common species is in decline. Wendy.]

Mike Wilkins reported the following today, 11th September: "In my garden *(Abingdon, Oxon)* this afternoon, along with a **Red Admiral** and 3 **Small Whites** there were two **Small Tortoiseshells.** They were variously nectaring on buddleia, Bowles' mauve and red valerian. The whites preferred the lavender."

David Redhead reported his sightings for today: "You could say we had 150+ butterflies in our garden (*Littlemore, Oxon*) this afternoon (*11th September*) but the majority were in the larval state - **Large Whites!** At least 120 on brussel sprouts and 25 on nasturtiums. The sprout ones were all fully grown and one was crawling up the house (12m away) to pupate. The nasturtium ones were noticeably more variable in size. After being shown these (Wendy was quite laid back about them) I took the dog for a walk just as the sun decided to appear for a more protracted time. Up top there was a **Red Admiral** on a feral buddleia followed by a pile of 3 Red Admiral wings on the ground - I presume as a result of a dragonfly attack. Further on a **Speckled Wood** was in flight and a pristine **Comma** was basking on some long grass followed by two more nectaring on blackberries. Then I noticed a **Comma pupa** hanging off a nettle plant - so I think we have had a local emergence of Commas today. Back in the vegetable garden two more pristine Comma nectaring and a Large White, the other had 5 nectaring Red Admirals. Also 3 **Small Whites** flying about. *Not a single Small Tortoiseshell!"*

On 10th September Dave Wilton carried out two woodland transects in Bucks: "The first was at Whitecross Green and the second was at Finemere. Not expecting very much at all, I wasn't disappointed although there was a surprise or two in store! Whitecross Green *Wood* produced Large White (3), Small White (5), Green-veined White (6), Brown Hairstreak (1), Common Blue (3), Peacock (2), Comma (3), Speckled Wood (35), **Meadow Brown** (1) and **Silver Y** (7). The rather ragged female Brown Hairstreak (see photo) was on blackthorn along the main ride and goes to show that adult sightings can still be had despite the recent poor weather. Other noteworthy things at Whitecross were the very large number of dragonflies and damselflies present throughout the wood and the constant traffic into and out of the large hornet's nest in the car park. Fewer butterfly species - but more butterflies in total - were to be found at *Finemere Wood* where I saw Large White (1), Small White (2), Green-veined White (2), Comma (1), Speckled Wood (97) and Silver Y (1). I've never experienced a "cloud" of Speckled Woods coming at me from a bramble patch before! After mediocre showings from earlier Speckled Wood broods, the final one this year seems to be breaking records. Back home at *Westcott* our garden managed to outdo Finemere for the number of butterfly species present. We had **Brimstone** (1), Large White (1), Small White (5), Small Tortoiseshell (4), Red Admiral (1) and Speckled Wood (1)."

Richard Soulsby took advantage of the rare sunshine to go to Aston Rowant (Beacon Hill) yesterday morning, 10th September: "On entering the reserve, the first butterfly I saw was a **Silver-spotted Skipper** nectaring on the marjoram patch to the left of the path. I eventually took the total to 9 SSS during a 90-minute walk to the far end and back. All the ones I got a good look at were female, and mainly in pretty good condition. One female looked as though she could have emerged that day, which would be very late by SSS standards. Can we beat last year's record of SSS still around at Aston Rowant on 22nd September? Other butterflies seen, mainly in sheltered areas avoiding the strong wind blowing up the hill, included **Speckled Wood** (3), **Common Blue** (M & F, 10), **Brown Argus** (M & F, 9), **Meadow Brown** (13), **Brimstone** (1), **Small Heath** (3), **Red Admiral** (1) and **Small White** (2). One each of Meadow Brown and Speckled Wood, in addition to the SSS, had the rich "damp" look of recently emerged butterflies. In the afternoon, the *Howbery Park* (*Oxon*) transect added **Large White** to my tally, making a respectable total of 10 species for the day."

Tony Croft, Long Crendon in Bucks, sent the following on 10th September: "After just about giving up hope I found three more **Brown Hairstreak eggs** this afternoon (10th) including this doubler. They were most likely laid today on the basis that I last checked on Monday and yesterday was pretty much a washout. The third egg is on the same twig about 15cm away. They are on the section of blackthorn planted in my garden in December 2006 which produced ten eggs last year all of which either disappeared or did not hatch."

News received from Adam Bassett, Marlow Bottom in Bucks, on 5th September: "I finally managed to attract a **Silver-washed Fritillary** to the front garden buddleia bush on *August 29th.* Unfortunately, I was at work, so I had to be satisfied with a text from my wife!"

Wednesday 3rd September 2008

Dave Wilton sent the following today, 3rd September: "I can't match Chearsley numbers but I've had one, occasionally two, adult **Small Tortoiseshells** on the remnants of my garden buddleia at *Westcott* for the past two weeks, which is about normal for here. However, I've been unable to find any caterpillars locally over the past month due mainly to the unsuitability of the usual nettle patches. In most cases the nettles had been cut for silage at the wrong time but in at least one other case they've been eaten by cattle because the field has been over-grazed. **Red Admirals** are still visiting the garden regularly but **Peacocks** dwindled from a high of 21 on 15th August down to 2 on 30th August (my last sighting here), presumably as they went into hibernation. There has been no sign of Painted Lady in the garden this year and the chances of one appearing now must be very remote."

Dave Ferguson sent this news on 1st September: "I don't recall seeing a **Speckled Wood** on a flower before so I thought you might be interested in this photo. It was taken at *Otmoor (Oxon)* on *29th August.* The flower is Common Fleabane."

Welcome to the website new contributor Mark Ward who sent the following report on 1st September: "Thanks to the updates and information on this website, I visited Whitecross Green Wood on Saturday 30 August hoping to see Brown Hairstreak for the first time - and was delighted to succeed! I enjoyed nice views of a good-conditioned female Brown Hairstreak basking on a blackthorn along the main ride (the one leading off from the car park) with a second female posing for photographs perching on a variety of low vegetation close by on the main ride later in the day. I also saw a third female flying around an oak down another ride (accessed by turning left off the main ride and then right). In addition to this, I had brief views of two probable males flying between oaks and ashes. I bumped into someone else who had witnessed a female with a damaged wing egg laying on blackthorn at the far end of the main ride (an individual I didn't see) and a male in flight there - and another female egg-laying halfway along the main ride (so quite possibly one of the females I saw)."

Alun & Chrissie sent this report on 1st September: "We started out mid morning, at Decoy Heath (SP613663) hoping to find Grayling and a variety of dragonflies. In mid June, when we visited, previously, the shallow ponds were the scene of territorial disputes and frantic egg laying by several species of dragonfly. Things were much quieter on Saturday (30th August) although there was still a handful of species to see including emperor, golden ringed, brown hawker, emerald, ruddy and common darter and southern hawker. We didn't find Grayling but we did observe a number of Common Blue females laying eggs. The transect count included a solitary Small Skipper, similarly Small Heath, 11 Common Blue, 2 Brown Argus, a Holly Blue (female), 26 Meadow Brown, a couple of faded Gatekeepers and 9 Speckled Wood. We also saw and photographed a beautifully marked (dark) adder. After spending a while longer there we moved on to Aston Rowant (SU731968) where we spent a short hour, watching red kites in a field that was being ploughed and making a rapid sortie onto the hillside above the M40 where the main interest was provided by 6 Silverspotted Skippers, 1 Small Skipper, 2 Small Copper, 6 Brown Argus, 12 Common Blue (majority females) and a dozen or so Meadow Browns."

Chris Brown sent his latest survey report of the Silver-washed Fritillary at Crowsley Park Wood, Berks: "August has been somewhat wet and with a lot of cloudy days though warm. **Silver-washed Fritillary** numbers are not as good this year it would seem but at least there are some about, although only 1 female seen the whole month. I have attached my photo for the tattiest specimen for this year. This was taken 6th August and it was still flying about vigorously. Other species seen in August were: Brimstone, Large White, Greenveined White, Peacock, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Small White, Comma, Speckled Wood and Red Admiral."

Saturday 30th August 2008

Nick Bowles sent the following: "On Saturday 30th I found Chalkhill Blues at both my regular transect sites, Aston Clinton Ragpits and Coombe Hill, but no sign of Silver-spotted Skipper (or any species of skipper). David Dennis was also at Coombe Hill, so the search was potentially more thorough than if I had been alone. We did NOT visit the top of the slopes however - where they have been reported in the past. There was a single female **Silver-washed Fritillary** at Coombe Hill along with a very pleasing array of more usual stuff. Numbers of **Brown Argus** were probably greater than at any time this year and **Speckled Wood** in every likely spot. Also an abberrant **Gatekeeper**, with two black spots below the twin pupilled ocelli of the forewing (on both surfaces) and 3 extra large silver/white spots on the hindwing margin."

Mick & Wendy Campbell recorded 9 species of butterfly in their Bucks garden on Saturday 30th August: "It was hot and sunny all day and an early visitor to the buddleia was a slightly faded **Painted Lady** - our first of the year! It was joined by **Large White** (5), **Small White** (2), **Green-veined White** (1), **Brimstone** (1, f.), **Red Admiral** (3), **Peacock** (1) and, best of all, **Small Tortoiseshell** (6 - all fresh). Finally, a single **Brown Argus** turned up to nectar on the marjoram."

Ched George went to Yoesdon Bank this afternoon, 30th August: "It produced 63 **Meadow Brown,** 2 male **Brimstone,** 1 **Red Admiral,** 18 male and 2 female **Common Blue,** 2 **Small White,** 3 male and 3 female **Chalkhill Blue,** 2 **Brown Argus** and 1 **Large White.** The blooms of Devil's-bit Scabious in the woodland clearing supplied nectar to 5 male Brimstone, 11 Meadow Brown, 5 male Common Blue (not on Scabious flowers) 3 **Comma,** 4 Small White, 1 **Small Copper** and 1 **Small Tortoiseshell.** Alas, no sign of Adonis Blue or Silver-spotted Skippers."

Dennis Dell sent the following on 29th August: "It was dull but warm [23 degrees] in my Aylesbury garden today, 29th. On the Beijing Buddleia were: **Small White** and **Large White** [several], **Red Admiral** [several], **Peacock** [2], **Small Tortoiseshell** and **Painted Lady**.

Sezar Hikmet visited Aston Rowant on Friday 29th August: "I saw Meadow Browns 20+, Common Blue 6, Small Copper 1, Silver-spotted Skipper 2, Brown Argus 8 to 10. Then at Bald Hill: lots of Meadow Browns, Gatekeeper, Silver-spotted Skipper 12 to 15, Small Skipper 5, Common Blue 6, Brimstone 1."

Tuesday 26th August 2008

Tony Croft sent this news from Long Crendon, Bucks today, 26th August: "The garden was visited on *Saturday 23rd* by a **Brown Hairstreak** patrolling the hedge containing blackthorn and today I found two eggs in the garden. One is in that same hedge which accounted for nine eggs last year but the other is on a small blackthorn bush which was planted last December. Two other adults were sighted on Sunday. One was just to the west of Long Crendon village and the other along the road between Easington and Long Crendon."

Welcome to the website new contributor Dave Miller who sent the following report yesterday: "I took my three-year-old butterfly hunting on Saturday 23rd August. We started off late morning at Bernwood Forest and spent most of the time wandering up and down the grassy ride from the right of the main one that ends up by the meadow. Mostly bright sunshine, for a nice change! We saw **Red Admirals** (2), **Brimstones** (m x 2), **Peacocks** (5+), **Green-veined Whites** (2), **Speckled Woods** (3), **Gatekeepers** (5, including one very tiny one), **Common Blues** (f x 1; m x 2) and three **Silver-washed Fritillaries** (f x 1; m x 2). One of the males was the very tatty one someone else saw the following day, I think (*see photo*). On our way home, we stopped off at *Aston Rowant* (north side) and set off across the side of the hill. Mostly cloudy by now, but we disturbed dozens of **Silver-spotted Skippers** and a fair number of **Common Blues**. Only one (m) **Chalkhill Blue** made an appearance. The highlight for my little boy Elliot was to find, all by himself, a fresh new Skipper in the grass. He persuaded it to sit firstly on his finger and then on his nose. This is the second time this year he has discovered a butterfly this way, the other being a Dark Green Fritillary at Box Hill in June, which also sat on his finger."

Dennis Dell took this photograph in his Aylesbury garden on Monday 25th but says this very tatty **Peacock** could still fly quite nicely.

Sunday 24th August 2008

Clive Burrows and Linda Fitch made a round trip today, 24th August, taking in Whitecross Green Wood, Watlington Hill and Lardon Chase: "A single female Brown Hairstreak was observed feeding on bramble at Whitecross Green Wood. Watlington Hill produced a good number of Silver-spotted Skippers, including many fresh. At Lardon Chase 9 Adonis Blues were seen, 8 males, 1 female along with 6 Chalkhill Blues and 7 Common Blues."

This report just received from Mike Wilkins: "A bit late to report but I did the M40 Compensation area transect on *15th August* but saw no Brown Hairstreak, not even though I spent some time afterwards staring at the hedges and blackthorn clumps near the entrance. The transect produced 56 butterflies of 13 species. I also found a **Silver-washed Fritillary** on hemp agrimony on my way back from the transect walk. Also, on today's field trip *(24th August)* led by Paul Bowyer we spent a considerable time in *Bernwood Meadows* without a sighting of either Brown Hairstreak, an egg or Purple Hairstreak. We did, however, find 14 other species today, including an extremely worn **Silver-washed Fritillary** down the first ride to the right."

Jon Mercer (Wilts branch) sent this report today, Sunday 24th: "I can't match Dave Wilton's counts, but on a 25-minute walk on *Linkey Down, Aston Rowant*, this afternoon -10+ Silver-spotted Skipper, 1 Essex Skipper, 2 Brown Argus, 15 Common Blue, many Meadow Brown."

Dennis Dell visited Buttler's Hangings today, 24th August: "Buttler's Hangings is a small BBOWT reserve (10 acres) on a steep west facing downland slope, west of Wycombe, Bucks. 70 minutes in less than ideal weather (hardly any sun, 19 degrees, breezy) did not promise much, but it could have been worse: **Silver-spotted Skipper** [11, all fresh], **Brown Argus** [7], **Meadow Brown** [17], **Common Blue** [15], **Chalkhill Blue** [2 very worn females], **Small White** [1]."

Mike Collard report seeing in excess of 30 **Small Coppers** and a few possible Chalkhill Blues at *Lodge Hill, Bucks,* after the rain this morning, *24th.*

News just received from Dorothy Vincent of 2 **Small Tortoiseshells** nectaring on a buddleia bush at the *Waterperry garden centre* in Oxon on *Saturday 23rd August*.

Charles and Pat Baker sent the following on 23rd August: "We saw a worn female **Silver-washed Fritillary** nectaring on Hemp Agrimony today (23rd August) in the woods east of *Whiteleaf* at SP827043."

On 22nd August Becky Woodell did the M40 Compensation area transect: "I found 2 **Brown Hairstreaks,** both female. The first flew up from the grass to settle on more grass and the second was on blackthorn. After the transect I walked toward the old *Shabbington Wood* entrance and along the way saw a worn, rather faded **Silver-washed Fritillary** female. There were a lot of **Speckled Woods** about in Shabbington Wood. I did not count them, but would put them in the 'D' category (30-99)."

Friday 22nd August 2008

Dave Wilton's visit to the north side of Aston Rowant NNR over lunchtime today, 22nd August, produced the following totals during a 90-minute search of Beacon Hill's southwest-facing slope: Small Skipper (1), Silver-spotted Skipper (112), Brimstone (3), Large White (1), Small White (1), Brown Argus (26), Chalkhill Blue (4), Common Blue (9), Peacock (1), Gatekeeper (3), Meadow Brown (not counted, there must have been in excess of 200) and Small Heath (2). Many of the Silver-spotted Skippers looked very fresh and I found one mated pair as well as witnessing several courtship attempts."

Mick & Wendy Campbell went for a 7 mile walk from Oddington in Oxfordshire,

looking for Brown Hairstreaks today, 22nd August: "It's right on the edge of the known range for Brown Hairstreaks in this area so we weren't sure if we would find any. Our circular walk took us across a lot of farmland and we recorded 12 species of butterfly: **Common Blue** (2), **Speckled Wood** (5), **Green-veined White** (4), **Meadow Brown** (5), **Peacock** (5), **Large White** (4), **Red Admiral** (3), **Brimstone** (2), **Holly Blue** (1), **Gatekeeper** (4), **Small Copper** (1) and **Small White** (2), but no Small Tortoiseshell. Finally, in a sunny field-edge ash tree, our thirteenth species of the day and our target, was a female **Brown Hairstreak** flying and then basking with wings open."

Wednesday 20th August 2008

Nick Bowles and Frank Banyard were at the Holtspur Bottom reserve today, 20th August: "We were there to do some conservation work, weeding the scrape and beginning the propogation of more Horseshoe Vetch, but it allowed me an excuse for a walk around. I only found 2 Dark Mullein plants, but one of them had 16 **larvae of the Striped Lychnis moth.** The site looks really good with masses of flower and many tens of **Meadow Brown** and good numbers of **Common Blue** disturbed as we pulled ragwort, despite the poor weather during our work party."

David Redhead's latest update on the Brown Hairstreak season follows: "At close of play on Sunday 17th August the adult Brown Hairstreak sightings count was 151 - this compares to final counts of 133 in 2007 and 160 in 2006. So it is something of an understatement to say that the Brown Hairstreak is having a good year! Whitecross Green Wood, as usual, has produced the most sightings with 63 but as you can see from the current distribution map (see above) sightings have not been limited to the known hotspots and we already have five adult sightings right on the edge of the known range. The first egg laying behaviour was noted at Whitecross Green Wood and Bernwood Meadows on the 10th August and I have just learnt that other observers in *Bernwood Meadows* on the 10th August definitely witnessed an egg being laid. Since this date it is noticeable that the proportion of females being reported has significantly increased. So I think we can now say that we are well and truly into the egg laying phase and most of the future records will be of females on or over blackthorn. However, past years have shown that ash and oak trees continue to be used throughout the flight period and males should be detectable, with increasing difficulty, into the first week of September. Besides looking for females on blackthorn please spare a thought for the males and the ash and oak trees - nectaring seems to be on the wane partly due to the now sparsity of bramble flowers but still worth looking at any wild angelica you come across. Also burdock, which was added to our list of known nectar plants by Michael

Bell on a family/birding/butterflying visit all the way from Scotland. Below is one of Sandra Stanbridge's superb photos she took in Bernwood Meadows on the 10th August."

The following report from lan Hardy came via Dave Chandler: "Just to let you know my wife saw a **Dark Green Fritillary** just across the road from *lvinghoe Beacon* top car park at 11:45 on *Sunday 17th August* on knapweed/bramble – sunny intervals and breezy. She took a photograph on her mobile, good enough for me to confirm."

Don & Sandra Otter went to Whitecross Green Wood on Friday 15th August: "We were looking for **Brown Hairstreaks** and had good views of two females and one male. One of the females was egg laying on short Blackthorn stems at a crossroads in the wood."

Sunday 17th August 2008

This report on the Lardon Chase Field Meeting which took place on 16th August came from Maureen Cross, Adonis Blue Species Champion: "It wasn't quite the bright sunny day one hopes for on an August field trip but nevertheless just warm enough even without the sun to coax out 13 different species of butterfly and five day-flying moths. The stars of the show were of course the Blues and the Adonis shone the brightest. For many it was their first sighting this year of a Painted Lady. To start there were 15 people, including a group from Kintbury Wildlife group and later we were joined on the hill by yet another group from Milton Keynes. Butterflies seen were: Common Blue; Chalkhill Blue; Adonis Blue; Small White; Large White; Meadow Brown; Gatekeeper; Small Heath; Small Copper; Peacock; Brown Argus; Essex Skipper and Painted Lady. Moths were: Treble-bar; Lesser Treble-bar; Yellow Shell; Six-spot Burnet and a Pyrausta species.

Friday 15th August 2008

During a one and a half hour walk around Whitecross Green Wood today, Friday 15th, Clive Burrows and Linda Fitch saw 6 Brown Hairstreaks, 3 worn males and 3 females. A single fresh Brown Argus was noted amongst the other butterflies.

David Redhead saw his first vannessid at 08.30am on 14th August: "A pristine **Red Admiral** on our garden buddleia (*Littlemore, Oxon*). Dog walking 20 minutes later produced another pristine Red Admiral on a feral buddleia along with a **Comma** and a **Speckled Wood.** In *Oxford* a pair of **Holly Blues** and a **Large White** were flying along King Richard the Lionheart's hedge at the western end of Beaumont Street. Back home at 1pm the garden buddleia in the sunshine was entertaining 5 **Peacock** (a very poor count). Then *Swyncombe Down* in conditions that barely qualified for the transect was vannessid-less but did produce 144 butterflies from 11 species - **Silver-spotted Skipper** (17), Large White (8), **Small White** (3), **Green-veined White** (2), **Small Copper** (1), **Brown Argus** (5), **Common Blue** (3), **Chalkhill Blue** (6), **Gatekeeper** (2), **Meadow Brown** (92) and **Small Heath** (5). Sun returned on my way home so I diverted to the eastern meadows at *Shotover* where between 4 and 5.15pm I managed 63 butterflies - Common Blue (44), Small Copper (11), Meadow Brown (4), Small White (1), Brown Argus (1), Peacock (1), and Speckled Wood (1). Only 4 of the 44 Common Blue were female. So 16 species for the day and about 210 butterflies."

On 14th August Tony Croft spotted this female **Brown Hairstreak** on the other side of the lane from his house near *Long Crendon*. "I was scanning a nearby ash tree and saw what looked like a Brown Hairstreak flying in the canopy. It disappeared from view but a few minutes later I saw this one nectaring on the bramble which abuts the same ash tree."

Dave Wilton checked out a couple of local sites for Brown Hairstreak on 14th August: "The roadside edge of *Howe Wood near Dorton, Bucks* produced one male **Brown Hairstreak** sunbathing towards the top of an ash but that was to be my only sighting. A nearby private copse *not far from Chinkwell Wood* produced **Brimstone** (1), **Large White** (2), **Small Copper** (1), **Red Admiral** (3), **Peacock** (9, all on teasels), **Speckled Wood** (2), **Meadow Brown** (9) and **Gatekeeper** (8), but there was no sign of Brown Hairstreak despite the fact that good numbers of eggs are usually found there. In my garden at **Westcott**, **Bucks** the buddleias had Brimstone (1), Large White (4), **Small White** (1), **Green-veined White** (1), Red Admiral (7), Peacock (12), **Comma** (2), Meadow Brown (2) and Gatekeeper (1) by 9am this morning. By late this afternoon the number of Peacocks had increased to well in excess of 20, which is the largest number of any one species I've ever had in the garden. It is good to see that the Peacock is doing well here, if not everywhere."

Richard Soulsby reported the following on 14th August: "My second **Painted Lady** of the year was seen nectaring on buddleia in my garden in *Benson, Oxon,* for most of today – a welcome sight. It was joined on the buddleias by **Comma, Peacock, Red Admiral, Large White, Small White, Green-veined White** and **Brimstone.** Also seen in the garden were **Common Blue** (female), **Meadow Brown** and **Holly Blue.** 11 species seems a worthwhile distraction while mowing the lawn!"

"Wendy Wilson sent the following on 14th August: "I saw in your 2006/7 Silver-washed Fritillary report that there were no sightings for my square, the Bucks bits of TQ08 and TQ09. I am very pleased to have seen two for the first time recently: 1 male Silver-washed Fritillary at *Philipshill Wood* in Bucks on 23rd July. Flying strongly along a wide ride under the electricity wires and settling a few times on bramble (see photo). Woodland Trust volunteers have a work-party there every Wednesday morning and are very keen to encourage butterflies which is good. The second sighting was another male Silver-washed Fritillary at Langley Park in Bucks on 28th July. Flying strongly along a narrow ride, it settled once on bramble where I got a good sighting through binoculars."

Dave Maunder sent this news on 14th August: "Following Tom Stevenson's Painted Lady report, I also was giving up on them this year, then on the *11th* I found two **Painted Ladies** here in *Aylesbury* - one on my garden buddleias and the other at Fairford Leys - both of which cheered me up during a rather dismal week for lepidoptera!"

Judy Webb and Anthony Roberts visited Milham Ford Nature Park, Oxon, on 12th August: In sunny conditions, temperature 20C and moderate westerly wind, they found a female Brown Hairstreak. It was settling on Oak and at one point appeared to try and lay an egg on a neighbouring Prunus species. David Redhead comments that this is only the third adult Brown Hairstreak sighting within the boundaries of the City of Oxford.

David Redhead reports that this year's Brown Hairstreak Field meeting, held on Sunday 10th August at Whitecross Green Wood, was extremely successful in spite of

the wind: "It all started with a female **Brown Hairstreak** posing on brambles in the car park for the early-comers at 9:20am some 10 minutes before the official start time. Minutes later she was replaced by a **Silver-washed Fritillary**, one of two we were to see. Some four hours later the remnants of the thirteen members who started out returned to the car park, weary but happy, with a total count of 15 Brown Hairstreaks. Six of those seen were females and nine were males and all, bar two in ash trees, were at low level keeping the photographers very busy. Wild angelica proved slightly more popular than the bramble flowers to the eight nectarers and one female exhibited egg-laying behaviour for several minutes without actually laying an egg. The site seems to go from strength to strength as regards its Brown Hairstreak population. This is because the rotational coppicing of the blackthorn provides a continual abundance of the fresh, young and vigorous growth the Brown Hairstreaks like to lay on. The good number of ash and oak trees are essential by providing the adults with one of their favourite foodstuffs, honeydew, as well as providing places for them to meet and mate plus overnight lodgings. A glade away from the ride system, created last autumn by removal of some of the Scots Pines, is already proving its worth. It has resulted in the exposure of an ash and oak tree. On Sunday the ash had a male Brown Hairstreak basking on it and as we stood admiring it our feet were surrounded by regenerating blackthorn which I suspect we will find liberally anointed with eggs this winter. Fifteen other species of butterfly were recorded : **Small Skipper, Large Skipper, Brimstone, Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Purple Hairstreak, Common Blue, Red Admiral, Peacock, Comma, Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown** and **Ringlet.**"

Tuesday 12th August 2008

Alun & Chrissie visited Grangelands (SP 828048) on Sunday 10th August: "Light showers and a gusty wind weren't enough to put off walkers or butterfly enthusiasts along the Ridgeway and at Grangelands reserve. We were pleased to meet Mike & Brenda Mobbs and thanks to Mike who led the way down to the best spot on the reserve in that weather, to see butterflies and especially Blues. Common Blues were around in good numbers, considering how difficult the weather was. (In fact Chrissie was about to take a picture of a Small Blue that we found when a gust just blew it away and that was the last we saw of it!) There were some nice Crickets about including the biggest **Roesel's Cricket** that I have seen, this year. Ignoring butterflies that blew past so quickly that you could only guess at the type, the count was: Common Blue 30 (12 female), Chalkhill Blue 12 (2 female), Small Blue 1 (female), Brown Argus 3, Gatekeeper 21 (probably as many again unconfirmed), Meadow Brown 30+, Small Heath 4, Green-veined White 1, Large White 11, Small White (tatty) 2, Brimstone 3, Small Skipper 5 and Peacock 3. We thought we had more Brown Argus but a couple turned out to be smaller Common Blue females. The variances in the Common Blues gave us at least four different looking specimens. Whoever said that working with just 60 odd species was easy?"

Tom Stevenson sent the following report today: "At long last my first sighting of a **Painted Lady** for 2008 on 10th August in a *Benson (Oxon)* garden. I was beginning to give up hope!"

Sunday 10th August 2008

Maureen Cross sent the following today, Sunday 10th: "I saw my first second-brood male Adonis Blue on Lardon Chase today, together with Chalkhill Blues and Common Blues, so if you would like to see these butterflies for yourself come along to the Field Meeting next Saturday 16th August at 10.30."

Tim & Colleen Watts had the following in their garden in Whitchurch today, 10th August: "A Painted Lady, 6 Peacock and 1 Small Tortoiseshell on the buddleia bush in our garden today. We're also still getting daily visits from Green-veined Whites."

Richard Soulsby did his Silver-spotted Skipper-specific transect at Swyncombe Downs on 6th August: "I've done this transect every year through the flight season since 2003. The total of 72 **Silver-spotted Skippers** in 1123m (55 minutes) was the largest total to date, and also the earliest peak if this is the peak already. Previous peaks were 2003: 64 on 11th Aug, 2004: 40 on 8th, 2005: 34 on 16th, 2006: 63 on 8th, 2007: 66 on 11th, and now 2008: 72 on 6th. Of course, this may turn out to not yet be the peak – it will be interesting to see what the next count yields. Perhaps 2008 is not an entirely awful year after all, at least for a few species. So it looks as though now is the best time to look for Silver-spotted Skipper if you're going to (weather permitting!). As always, I'll be keen to hear what you find by email/website, and also please send formal records to Jim Asher." Richard Soulsby Silver-spotted Skipper Species Champion for UTB.

Wednesday 6th August 2008

Tony Croft and Becky Woodell were in Whitecross Green Wood today, 6th August: "We came upon this **Brown Hairstreak** which had some rather unusual wing damage. It was crawling around the angelica feeding and so we got a good view of the other wing which was perfectly normal in appearance."

David Redhead sent the following report on 5th August: "Monday 4th August started well with some welcome early morning sunshine resulting in an active **Comma** and **Large** Skipper in on our garden (Littlemore, Oxon) by 08.30 hours - the former on the buddleia and the latter on one of our "conservation" patches. It got even better when Martin Townsend emailed to say he agreed with my identification of a Fen Wainscot caught in my Saturday night moth trap - both an all-time first for our garden and the UTB list (see Moth Sightings page). The clouds then rolled in but fate was still with me as the weather actually improved as I arrived at Bernwood Forest to do week 18 of the Shabbington Wood transect - as transect weeks start on Tuesdays in 2008 it was a case of now or never! Butterfly numbers were better than I expected with 146 counted in total, which is only just below average for week 18. I was surprised to find **Ringlet** still "top dog" with 41 counted. **Speckled Woods** and Gatekeepers were about in reasonable numbers, Green-veined White was more abundant than Small White & Large White and it was nice to see a couple of Marbled Whites still about. No Small Tortoiseshell was no surprise but no Peacock was, and no Brown Hairstreak nectaring on the ubiquitous wild angelica was a disappointment. Whilst I ate a late lunch I re-walked the last section of the transect to find a male **Brown Hairstreak** had now deigned to nectar on a ride edge wild angelica and a **Peacock** did make an eventual appearance. Met a Mike Bell, all the way from Scotland, in the car park who had just seen a Brown Hairstreak at Otmoor nectaring on Burdock, which is an addition to our known nectar plant list for this species. I then moved on to Asham Meads to find another male Brown Hairstreak nectaring on the brambles to be found in the reserve northern boundary hedgerow. But my real delight here was the very generous un-mown margin left by BBOWT in Upper Marsh meadow. A walk along it produced 19 Common Blue, 3 Brown Argus and 2 Small Copper - for both the Common Blue and Small Copper this is a record number this year for me in the three counties at one site! There were also numerous **Meadow Browns** and good numbers of the smaller Skippers, with both **Small Skipper** and Essex Skipper being positively identified. Back home a dog walk produced my 18th species of the day with a Red Admiral nectaring on a feral buddleia."

Dave Ferguson paid a brief visit on 4th August to Wendover Woods: "The buddleias at the base of *Boddington Hill, Wendover Woods* produced 3 male **Silver-washed Fritillaries**, 2 **Peacocks** and a **Red Admiral.** I agree with the observation of Tim Watts regarding Greenveined Whites. They seem to be unusually numerous this year."

Richard Soulsby reports on the Field Meeting for Silver-spotted Skippers on 3rd August: "Despite weather that was officially defined as Poor, the field trip for Silver-spotted Skippers on 3rd August was surprisingly successful. Five members attended for the morning visit to *Linky Down* (central part of Aston Rowant NNR), in intermittent drizzle. At least 12 of the target species were seen and the cool weather kept them docile to aid photography (see photo of butterfly photography in the rain). A similar number of the secondary target, Chalkhill Blue, were also seen, both male and female, as well as two Dark Green Fritillaries, Green-veined White, Gatekeepers, Meadow Browns, Marbled Whites, Small and Essex Skippers, Small Heaths, Common Blues (only two) and Peacock. Three people stayed on to brave the equally poor weather in the afternoon, joined by two new arrivals, to try our luck at Shirburn Hill. Although only six species (and no Chalkhills or Dark Green Fritillaries) were seen in the afternoon, with none different to the morning, the number of Silver-spotted Skippers was even higher than at Linky Down with 20+ seen. A large proportion of them were roosting on the heads of Ragwort flowers (see photo), which seemed unusual behaviour when they could have sought shelter in the lower vegetation. The difference in colouring of the two seen in the photo was striking. Additional finds for the day

included **caterpillars** thought to be of **Angleshades**, **Cinnabar** and **Fox Moths**, and adult moths **Dusky Sallow**, **6-spot Burnet**, one probable **Narrow-bordered 5-spot Burnet**, **Silver-Y** and **Common Carpet**."

Alun & Chrissie visited Whitecross Green Wood on 3rd August: "Conditions were less than perfect at Whitecross Green Wood on Sunday, firstly with cloud and light showers and then with an increasingly strong wind blowing in. Had the day been a warm, still one, we think we would have had a high count given what we did see (and what was reported to us by others out on the site) even in such unsettled weather. First sighting of the day was from the car park where we got a clear view of a female **Brown Hairstreak** opening and closing her wings about twenty feet up. In all, we had three confirmed sightings and at least two probables during our walk. We also confirmed two **Purple Hairstreak** despite the wind blowing them about as soon as they took off from the upper levels of various oaks. We had been told five had been counted an hour or two earlier and we caught several more brief glimpses in addition to the two definites. Other folks reported a Purple Emperor around the top of an oak at the top of the first ride and an end of season White Admiral near the crossroads although we failed to see either. Meadow Brown was by far the most frequent butterfly with over 100, Green-veined White were also abundant. The other species present that we saw were Small/Essex Skipper, Gatekeeper, Marbled White, Large White and **Peacock.** Several dragonfly species were abroad and some hornets were busy in the car park area."

Sunday 3rd August 2008

Tim Watts sent the following on 2nd August: "On *1/8/08* we had our first **Painted Lady** of the year on buddleia in our *Whitchurch (Bucks)* garden, also more **Green-veined Whites** than usual. On *2/8/08* I saw 3 **Painted Ladies** together on a stone path beside the transmitter at the summit of *Quainton Hill (Bucks)*. Over the last 3 years this exact spot often produces them, I assume they are migrating at high level and this suitable basking spot, at the top of the hill attracts them. In late summer Red Admirals, sometimes in fair numbers, can be seen bombing over the top of the hill, all following a North to South route. Also seen today were **Marbled Whites, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Red Admiral, Small Skipper, Peacock and Small Tortoisehell.**"

Dave Maunder sent this update on 2nd August: "Some more sightings from the last week or so are:- at Ashridge (Herts/Bucks border) monument on 27th July - Purple Emperor (1, female); Red Admiral (1); Small Tortoiseshells (2); Purple Hairstreak (2); Small Copper (1) Brimstone (1); Large Whites (10); Small Whites (8); Green-veined Whites (3); Meadow Browns (15); Hedge Browns (10); Ringlets (10); Marbled Whites (2). Also in *Aylesbury* recently - Peacocks (6); Small Tortoiseshell (16); Commas (13), so both the last two species have fared better than I thought!"

Richard Soulsby was very pleased to see his first Painted Lady of the year on 1st August on a buddleia at Howbery Park near Wallingford, Oxon.

On 1st August Alun & Chrissie sent a couple of sighting reports from earlier last month:

13-07-07 Aston Ragpits (SP888109) An early evening (18:00) visit yielded over 30 Marbled Whites, which always seem to stay on the wing later than many of the other butterflies here. Ringlet numbers had dropped at just 13 with just 1 Meadow Brown and 1 Large White putting in appearances. We found 8 Small or Essex Skippers settling down in some of the long stuff at the top of the hill near the second paddock entrance. A lone Emperor Dragonfly was patrolling too as we hurried off again after this brief check.

29-07-07 Aston Ragpits Back again for a late afternoon check. There wasn't much sun and we were unsure whether much would be flying as the day threatened to come to a premature

close. As it turned out, the **Marbled Whites** kept up the numbers with over 30 flying or just beginning to settle. We counted over 20 **Gatekeepers** and over 50 **Small/Essex Skippers**, mostly in the same spots as previous visit and mostly settling. In the second paddock, we spotted over 20 **Meadow Brown** and a couple of **Ringlets** as well as two **Peacocks** and a **Large White.** Just as we were going to give up on any blues, we spotted a distant **Chalkhill** and, closing, confirmed two males both trying to settle for the evening."

Welcome to the website new contributor Jeff Edington who sent the following on 1st August: "Wendy Wilson suggested that I send you the attached pictures of an Essex Skipper seen at *Holtspur Bottom* on 30 July at about 11am."

Ched George was 'tetrad bashing' in the Ibstone area on Wednesday 30th July: "It produced 1 weathered **Small Tortoiseshell** patrolling a hot chalk slope below a hedgeline. Interceptions may have included a second Small Tortoiseshell. However, it always returned to the same approximate area and usually rested vertically with head downwards on a fence post. It closed its wings immediately to presumably avoid overheating."

David Newland from Cambridge and author of 'Discover Butterflies in Britain' (www.wildguides.co.uk) visited Whitecross Green Wood on Tuesday 29th July in search of a Brown Hairstreak. He surprised himself, and David Redhead (UTB Brown Hairstreak Champion), by finding a female basking on a bramble leaf. The surprise was double as she was the rare aberrant form *uncilinea* with broken stripes. David adds that by the end of July six local sightings have been made. In addition to David Newland's early female, five males have been seen. Four were nectaring on either brambles or umbellifers. The fifth was at the top of an ash tree but the first real 'rumpus' at the top of an ash or oak tree is still awaited.

Chris Brown reports that his sightings of the Silver-washed Fritillary at Crowsley Park Wood are a bit hit or miss for July: 04/07/08 - 3 Comma, 1 Marbled White, 20 Meadow Brown and 45 Ringlet. I confess I gave up counting the Ringlet. The whole central ride through the trees was moving with them. Fortunately the Silver-washed Fritillary were about today although I only had the chance to identify 1 Male for certain. The other 2 just would not settle anywhere. The commas were all just basking. 10/07/08 - 1 Red Admiral, 5 Comma, 1 Speckled Wood, 18 Meadow Brown and 55 Ringlet. My only sighting of a Silver-washed Fritillary was unidentified gender as it came out of the tree canopy and traversed the whole central ride track, up and back, briefly circling me at high speed then returning back in to the trees. 15/07/08 - A single Male Silver-washed Fritillary seen feeding on bramble, between patrolling about. Also 1 Red Admiral, 1 Peacock, 5 Comma, 14 Meadow Brown and 37 Ringlet. My Ringlet count was absolute so I assume their time has peaked. 22/07/08 - The Silver-washed Fritillary were very active today and rarely settling to feed. Even then only for a few seconds every 5 minutes or so. Still no females for certain. I also noticed one of the males ascend to the top of the tree canopy. Here it was challenged by another smaller orange butterfly which I hoped was a female. Alas no. Once I had my binoculars well focussed it was seen as a Comma. Also Brimstone, Small White, Peacock, Comma, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown and Ringlet. 30/07/08 - The first definite Female Silver-washed Fritillary for me this year. Also 8 Brimstone (5M & 3F), 1 Large White, 1 Small White, 1 Red Admiral, 4 Peacock, 2 Comma, 8 Gatekeeper and 14 Meadow Brown.

In addition to this site I visited *Moor Copse* (SU 633738) on 26/07/08 and was fortunate to see 2 Silver-washed Fritillary.

This report for Hazlemere, Bucks, came from David Gantzel on 29th July: "Sunday July 27th : **Holly Blue** and **Comma** (both singles) were the only butterflies of note in my garden this month. Very poor. In the afternoon I walked round one of the Widmer Fields (part of Grange Farm) which has recently been upgraded to Green belt. Virtually unused for forty

years it is mainly grassland bordered by trees and brambles. **Gatekeeper** was the most common, together with **Large White** and **Small White** and **Small Skipper**. Smaller numbers of **Meadow Brown** and only 8 **Marbled White** was disappointing. Six **Peacock** and 4 **Green-veined White**. Two **Ringlet** and 2 **Speckled Wood**, one **Small Copper** and no **Common Blue** - I think I've seen more in the Outer Hebrides this year than locally!!"

Malcolm Brownsword sent a report on 28th July of his recent sightings:

"Saturday 26th July, West Berks reserve : 15 Chalkhill Blues, newly hatched (all male), 12 Small Skippers (incl. 2 mating), 1 Large Skipper, 20+ Meadow Browns, 15+ Marbled Whites, 3 Gatekeepers.

Sunday 27th July, Dancersend : 3 Silver-washed Fritillaries, Marbled White, Small Skipper, Meadow Brown, Peacock, Red Admiral, Gatekeeper.

Monday 28th July, Homefield Wood (not a transect) : 10 Silver-washed Fritillaries, including 1 valezina form - see photograph below, 1 possible Dark Green Fritillary (high flying), 20+ Peacocks, 1 Small Skipper, 1 Holly Blue, 5 Marbled Whites, 10+ Meadow Browns, 5 Gatekeepers. This trip was mainly to try to get some photographs of Silverwashed Fritillaries. I had already seen 9, none of which settled, when in the relatively shady edge of the meadow, I saw my first ever valezina form. It posed on about 6 different flowers over a period of 10 minutes! I also managed to get 2 short video clips (copies available if anyone would like one). I still don't have any pictures of the normal form!"

Tuesday 29th July 2008

David Redhead reports on the "26 Species in a Day" Field Trip which took place on 27th July: "This 'Save our Butterflies Week' event was a repeat of last year's on the 28th July in more ways than one! About two dozen participants turned up at Greenham Common (GC) where we managed 18 species including several Grayling - this was not as good as last year when we managed 20 species here. Roger Dobbs then successfully led us to Silver-washed Fritillary, Purple Hairstreak and Speckled Wood in BBOWT's Baynes and Bowdown Woods (BBW). The number of participants had shrunk slightly by the time we arrived at Lardon Chase (LC) still needing another 5 species. Holly Blue was immediately added to our list in the car park and the Chalkhill Blue was easily found. The Small Blue was a bit more of a challenge but eventually a couple were spotted. Then we stalled, frustrated by the lack of Large Skipper and Small Tortoiseshell, just like last year, in fact we ended up with exactly the same 24 species as last year in spite of eventually extending our search on to the neighbouring Lough Down. Our 24 species were - Small Skipper (GC, LC), Essex Skipper (GC, LC), Brimstone (GC, LC), Large White (GC, BBW, LC), Small White (GC, LC), Green-veined White (GC, BBW, LC), Purple Hairstreak (BBW), Small Copper (GC), Small Blue (LC), Brown Argus (GC, LC), Common Blue (GC, LC), Chalkhill Blue (LC), Holly Blue (LC), Red Admiral (GC), Peacock (GC), Comma (GC, BBW, LC), Silverwashed Fritillary (BBW), Speckled Wood (BBW), Marbled White (GC, LC), Grayling (GC), Gatekeeper (GC, BBW, LC), Meadow Brown (GC, BBW, LC), Small Heath (GC) and **Ringlet** (GC, BBW, LC). Overall butterfly numbers were down on last year and we were lucky to even achieve 24 species as we had to rely on single sightings of Red Admiral, Small Copper and Holly Blue, when several of each were seen last year - another indication of the general sparsity of our butterflies this year. We did have two highlights - at Greenham Common, Dave Wilton discovered a rare moth which turned out to be only the second record for Berkshire (Dave's report will appear soon on the "Moth sightings" page) and at Lardon Chase, Grahame Hawker spotted a female Essex Skipper laying her eggs in the sheath of a grass stem. After she had moved on the sheath was carefully unfurled when 8 eggs were discovered. This was a first for the quarter of the party who witnessed it - unfortunately we were very widespread at the time searching in vain for a Large Skipper and Small Tortoiseshell. Next year's event will be entitled "Can we do better than 24 species" - I sincerely hope so!"

Richard Soulsby, hoping to build on his 23 species in the previous two days, visited Finemere Wood on Friday afternoon, 25th July: "I arrived at 2:15 in heavy overcast conditions. However, soon the sun shone through and I quickly saw a White Admiral and a Silver-washed Fritillary at the first cross-roads. Further up the main ride I came across one of the rogue Marbled Fritillaries flitting around. At one point, a Silver-washed Frit was chasing a Marbled Frit, and the differences in size and flight pattern were very obvious. However, the highlight of the afternoon was the sight of three Purple Emperors all at the same time on the same oak tree, two females and a male – unfortunately all too distant for decent photos. I watched two of them through binoculars for about 15 minutes. Those were the only PEs seen, together with 4 SWF, 3 Marbled Frits and the one White Admiral (seen at the same place on the way back). In addition I saw all the usual woodland species (the tree with the 3 PEs also had about half-a-dozen **Purple Hairstreaks** flitting around it), including several Peacocks. As a bonus, I saw a Small Tortoiseshell on the farm track from the road on both my way to and from the wood. So adding onto my previous 23 species that makes 26 species in two days, or 27 species in three days – as long as the Marbled Frits count as a bona fide species! Not too bad, maybe the butterfly year is improving at last."

Saturday 26th July 2008

Derek & Cathy Brown managed to get out today, 26th: "We did some 2Km square recording getting new records for 5 different squares. We'll do 2 more tomorrow and I've also recruited Pete Eeles as his garden lies in one of the squares with no records. Also the **Graylings** are out at *Greenham* and we found some further east in a square where apparently they hadn't been recorded before."

David & Wendy Redhead did the M40 Compensation Area Transect today, 26th July: "The fifth butterfly recorded on the transect was a male **Brown Hairstreak** nectaring on the brambles and then a second male Brown Hairstreak was recorded nectaring on Wild Angelica. These are typical first sightings of just emerged males building up their strength before they move into the ash/oak canopy. We spent a bit of time examining the ash/oak canopy but the only activity we picked up was a couple of **Purple Hairstreaks**. So please start visiting known sites and examine bramble flowers and wild angelica but also give the tree canopy some attention. Tree canopy activity expected to increase as the week progresses with some spectacular shows of activity by next weekend as the first females emerge and move into the tree canopy to excite the males by emitting their pheromones. Any reports of sightings very welcome - please include description of activity being engaged in, trees or nectar plants involved and sex where determined. Other species seen were: White Admiral by Oakley Wood car park, Large Skipper, Small Skipper, Essex Skipper, Brimstone, Small White, Green-veined White, Common Blue, Brown Argus, Purple Hairstreak, Peacock, Marbled White, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper and Ringlet; in the forest by the Compensation Area - Silver-washed Fritillary, Comma and Large White. Moths identified were Six-spot Burnet, Shaded Broad-bar and Mother of Pearl. Species count : butterflies = 20, moths = 3. The 25 "Smessex" Skippers were netted and 18 (72%) turned out to be Small and 7 (28%) Essex." David Redhead (UTB Brown Hairstreak Champion).

Ched George sent the following on 25th July: "Silver-washed Fritillary (1 male and 1 female, possibly valezina, but not a good enough sighting; I thought they were confined to the deep south) seen in *Radnage (Oxon)* today nectaring on wild clematis. Almost no sun, but warm enough for flying."

Nick Bowles saw a Silver-washed Fritillary at *Dancers End* Friday morning, *25th.* "It was on the track through the northern woodland section, which has been opened out a great deal in the last twelve months."

Mike Collard sent this report on 25th July: "A Clouded Yellow went through our garden in *Prestwood, Bucks,* at "Hobby" speed; we are on a chalk slope although it seems not quite the right habitat as I do not think we have their three food plants in our garden. But I'm told they can get anywhere."

Richard Soulsby's Swyncombe transect on Thursday morning 24th July yielded a pleasant surprise: "There were 6 Silver-spotted Skippers, so either they have emerged in force today, or they have been out for a few days without me realising. Also seen on the transect were Green-veined White, Meadow Brown, Small Heath, Brimstone, Gatekeeper, Large White, Red Admiral, Small White, Dark-green Fritillary (3), Marbled White (70), Small Skipper, Essex Skipper, Ringlet (14 species). One Dark Green Fritillary, which appeared to be a female hunting for violets, crossed my path six times on two different sections of the transect, but I'm fairly sure it was the same one each time so I've only counted it once. Inspired by seeing the Silver-spotted Skippers, I felt duty-bound to do my special SSS-transect at Swyncombe straight after the main one, which provided 12 SSS (male and female), 2 Small Coppers (not seen on main transect), one more DGF, and another pleasant surprise, 2 male Chalkhill Blues. By way of contrast I went to Bernwood in the afternoon, but didn't arrive until 4pm, too late to see any Purple Emperors or White Admirals, and just missed a Silver-washed Fritillary seen by someone else. However, I did see Purple Hairstreaks (7+), Comma, Large Skipper and Speckled Wood to add to my daily total, as well as Ringlet, Large White, Gatekeeper, Small White, Meadow Brown, Marbled White and Small Skipper (11 species). Add to that a **Peacock** in my garden, gives a total of 21 species for the day. Yesterday I saw Holly Blues and a Small Tortoiseshell, giving 23 species in 30 hours – still a few short of 26 in a day. But the message to all fans of the Silver-spotted Skipper is - start spotting! Please let me know what you find by email/website - also, of course, remember to send formal records to Jim Asher." Richard Soulsby, UTB Silver-spotted Skipper Champion.

Dave Ferguson visited Homefield Wood on 24th July: "I read your recent report (22nd July - see below) with great interest, never having seen a valezina, so I went to Homefield Wood this morning (24th). I didn't get the valezina but I did see 18 species. They were: Silver-washed Fritillary (8m, 3f including 2 mated pairs), White-letter Hairstreak (1 rather worn on ragwort), Peacock (2), Comma (4), Red Admiral (1), Brimstone (4), Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Common Blue (2), Holly Blue (1), Small Copper (1), Ringlet, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Marbled White, Large Skipper, Small Skipper.

Welcome to the website new contributor Hazel Arthur who sent the following report on 24th July: "Yesterday (23rd), I was walking in the fields that go from *Downley, High Wycombe*, parallel to the train tracks along to West Wycombe. I saw a number of **Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns** and **Gatekeeper** butterflies in the long grass/hedgerows by the edge of the field. There's a lot of butterflies about down there, really pretty. A couple of pictures below of the few I managed to capture on camera before they flew away!"

Wednesday 23rd July 2008

Jan Haseler sent this news on 22nd July: "I saw 2 female Silver-washed Fritillaries today. They were nectaring on thistles in a field next to *Fleet Copse at Finchampstead, Berks.* I think Fleet Copse is ancient woodland, but there are no rights of way through it and there are a lot of Keep Out signs round the edge, so I have never been into the woodland."

Tony Croft sent the following reports: Last *Tuesday 15th July* I had five sightings of **Silver-washed Fritillary** on my transect at *Rushbeds Wood*. Then on yesterday's transect there, (22nd), I recorded 237 Meadow Brown; 137 Ringlet; 44 Gatekeeper; 31 Marbled White; 10 Small Skipper; 5 Large Skipper; 10 Large White; 7 Small White; 1 Greenveined White; 4 Speckled Wood; 3 Silver-washed Fritillary; 2 White Admiral; 1 Small

Copper and 1 **Peacock.** At *Whitecross Green Wood* today I saw **White Admiral, Purple Hairstreak, Brimstone, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Large Skipper** and **Small Skipper.** Also, in my garden in Long Crendon yesterday I'm almost certain that there was a Brown Hairstreak on the wing. Unfortunately it didn't land so that remains unconfirmed."

Mick & Wendy Campbell surveyed Homefield Wood on 22nd July: "Silver-washed Fritillary was out in good numbers and the colony appears to be thriving. There were two females and a male just inside the entrance to the wood and we counted another 10 down the sunniest section of the main ride, mostly males heading downwind in the direction of the entrance and one courting couple which flew past us just above the track. Another two females were found in the shadier section of the main ride, one perched on ferns and another in a tree. We then headed uphill and along the footpath running along the ridge we had our most exciting find of a pristine *Valezina* form of the female Silver-washed Fritillary (which flew up into the trees before I could get an in-focus photo of it!) and shortly after that a mating pair. Totals were 14 male, 8 female and 2 unconfirmed gender. Other species seen were: Ringlet, Comma, Meadow Brown, Red Admiral, Small White, Green-veined White, Large Skipper, Speckled Wood, Marbled White, Gatekeeper and in the meadow Small Skipper and a solitary Common Blue."

David Redhead sent the following report on 21st July: "An early morning dog walk today (21st) put Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Ringlet, Small Skipper and Marbled White on my list for the day and a **Holly Blue** was seen flying in the garden. Mid morning I inspected our garden (Littlemore, Oxon) buddleias and the total haul was 4 Red Admiral, 4 Meadow Brown, 3 Comma, 1 Large White, 1 Peacock, 1 Green-veined White and 1 Small Tortoiseshell. Whilst I might get excited now about a count like this on our buddleias I know they would make poor comparison with the records in my notebooks of 10 to 20 years ago. I then popped round to the Westwood Country Hotel (permission required) which is located at the northern end of Bagley Woods, it is also at the high point of the woods. I spent some time in the grounds, walked out into the garden and there was a Silver-washed Fritillary on their rather unusual very dark flowered buddleia. I had about six separate sightings in their grounds but could only say with absolute certainty that there were three different individuals including at least one male and one female. I also spent some time looking up into the trees surrounding the grounds and was eventually rewarded with a **Purple Emperor** flying from one tree to another - although it was very high up and I was unable to locate it when it landed there was a touch of purple about it in flight so I am pretty certain it was a male. Mid afternoon Wendy & I went to Watlington Hill - I'm afraid here it was more a case of what we did not see - NO CHALKHILL BLUES, NO SKIPPERS, NO MARBLED WHITE, NO

BROWN ARGUS. Just 65 Meadow Brown, 25 Large White, 12 **Small White,** 7 **Small Heath,** 6 Gatekeeper, 3 **Brimstone,** 3 Ringlet, 1 **Common Blue,** 1 Comma, 1 Green-veined White, 1 **Speckled Wood** and 1 Purple Emperor.

So, in spite of Watlington Hill, I still managed 19 species in the day which is a record for me in 2008. It makes 26 species on Sunday rather challenging though!"

Sunday 27th July is our <u>"26 Butterfly species in a day?"</u> event. Please come along if you can, or maybe try for 26 species on your own if you're unable to join the UTB event.

On 21st July Rob Hill went up to Little Linford Wood: !I was very pleased to see 4 White Admirals, my first ever at this site. Other butterflies were: Comma (6), Small White (12), Gatekeeper (4), Large Skipper (1), Small Skipper (2), Small Tortoiseshell, plus Large White, Meadow Brown and Ringlet (although numbers of the latter seemed well down since my last visit)."

Dave Wilton carried out a survey of Arncott Wood, Oxon (MoD, no public access) over lunchtime today, 21st July: "It produced 12 butterfly species: Large Skipper, Large White, Green-veined White, Purple Hairstreak, Holly Blue, Purple Emperor, Comma, Marbled White, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper and Ringlet. Additional species seen afterwards during a transect at *Finemere Wood, Bucks* included Small Skipper, Essex Skipper, Small White, White Admiral and Marbled Fritillary, while the adjacent Finemere Meadows added Brimstone and Small Heath. It may not seem all that exciting really, but in a year when I've struggled to see any butterflies at all in my garden at *Westcott, Bucks* it came as a very pleasant surprise to return home to find five different species active there late this afternoon. Red Admiral and Small Tortoiseshell were using the first of the buddleia blooms, a Large Skipper visited my patch of bird's-foot trefoil, while Large White and Meadow Brown passed through several times. With 20 resident species and one "exotic interloper" recorded during the day, maybe there's hope for this year yet!"

Tuesday 22nd July 2008

Becky Woodell reported a third Small Tortoiseshell in her garden in *Oakley, Bucks,* on 21st July and a second Silver-washed Fritillary in *Oakley Wood*.

Richard Soulsby had a brief but very welcome visitation by a Small Tortoiseshell to his garden in *Benson (Oxon)* yesterday afternoon, 21st.

Ched George went for a stroll on Yoesden Bank on 21st July: "It produced 127+ Meadow Brown, 60+ Marbled White, 27+ Gatekeeper, 2 Ringlet, 2 Large White, 1 Small White, 1 Comma, 3 Small Skipper plus 41 Small/Essex, 1 Large Skipper, 1 male Brimstone, 1 Small Copper, 2 male Chalkhill Blues, 1 Dark Green Fritillary, 72 Six-spot Burnets, and 1 Yellow Shell."

John Ward-Smith sent this news on 21st July: "Today, 21st July, whilst out dragonfly recording in *Swinley Forest,* south of Bracknell, I saw two **Grayling,** near the Upper Star Post."

Dave Ferguson saw a **Small Tortoiseshell** on *19th July* in *Lady Grove* (near St Leonards, Bucks). "Also, on *20th July* in *Strawberry Wood, Black Park* I saw 2 **White Admirals."**

Dennis Dell reported the following on 19th July: "To give my neck a rest from two weeks of peering up to the tree tops looking for the Purple Emperor, I went around the extensive rough grassy and scrub areas of *Aylesbury Park Golf Course*. In spite of the strong breeze, good numbers were seen, particularly the Satyrids. **Small White** [10], **Gatekeeper** [29], **Small Tortoiseshell** [6], **Meadow Brown** [111], **Small Skipper** [26], **Marbled White** [36], **Large White** [3], **Comma** [3], **Ringlet** [18], **Essex Skipper** [2], **Peacock** [4], **Large Skipper** [1]. It is possible that the ratio of Essex to Small Skipper was higher, but I could not get a good look at the antennae in most cases. Vast amounts of Knapweed and Thistle provide good nectar sources here."

Sezar Hikmet revisited Aston Rowant Bald Hill on 19th July: "I saw 10-12 fresh Dark Green Fritillaries. Very windy conditions made photography difficult."

Friday 18th July 2008

Sezar Hikmet visited Aston Rowant (Bald Hill) today, 18th July: "I saw Dark Green Fritillary (1) and a large number of Marbled Whites and Meadow Browns, also Small Skipper (1). Aston Rowant at north side of M40, still had very few butterflies."

Wendy Wilson sent the following report on 17th July: "Below are two photos taken on *Wednesday 16th July,* of a **Peacock** emerging from its pupa and opening its wings for the first time. Between taking the two photos the camera's "battery empty" sign came up. It is possible, but a bit tricky, to change the battery with a butterfly sitting on one's finger! On

Tuesday 15th July, I went to *Black Park* near Iver and was delighted to see my first 2 White Admirals of the year, on a ride to the north of the park. I also saw 1 Small White, 4 Large White, 4 Comma, 1 Red Admiral, 15 Meadow Brown, 18 Gatekeeper, 2 Speckled Wood, 3 Ringlet, 3 Small Skipper, 5 Large Skipper. I was not lucky enough to get a definite sighting of a Purple Emperor, but a ranger I spoke to said there have been several sightings at both ends of the park and that he even had one in his garden behind the office. If anyone is visiting Black Park with children or grandchildren during July and August, follow the sign for "Visitor Information" near the cafe. You will find an interactive butterfly display about butterflies in the park set up by Education Officer (Sue Fleet) and yours truly. The exhibit includes photos, quizzes, puzzles, information, etc. UTB gets a plug of course!"

Malcolm Brownsword saw the following on his transect at Homefield Wood on 16th July: "2 Small Skippers, 1 Large Skipper, 6 Large Whites, 1 Red Admiral, 5 Commas (see below), 7 Silver-washed Fritillaries (plus 3 not on transect), 3 Marbled Whites, 3 Gatekeepers, 24 Meadow Browns and 35 Ringlets. Surprisingly, there were no Dark Green Fritillaries."

Tuesday 15th July 2008

Dave Ferguson sent the following on 14th July: "Finemere this afternoon: **Purple Emperor** flying around a sallow 100m from the entrance. **Marbled Fritillary** on bramble leaf 200m from entrance. 2 White Admirals one of which landed on my sleeve! There seemed to be hundreds of **Ringlets.**"

Jack Peeters (Aylesbury) reported the following on 14th July: "Two Small Tortoiseshells have graced my garden-centre bought "butterfly scabious" on most days in the last week. I was sceptical when I bought it but it's really living up to it's name!"

David Redhead's early morning dog walk on 14th July produced 3 butterfly species by 8am: "They were all in Rivermead Nature Park, Oxford with four Ringlets flying over an area of grassland, a Comma sunning itself on the brambles and a Speckled Wood flying in the ash trees. A little later the grassland and scrub above my house in Littlemore produced 41 Ringlets, 8 Marbled Whites, 8 Gatekeepers, 8 Meadow Browns, 5 Small Skippers and 1 Large White. Back home by 08:45am to find a Red Admiral, Large White and Meadow Brown all taking an interest in the garden buddleia. So 9 species and 80 butterflies all before breakfast! Also, yesterday morning (13th) whilst in Oxford, I saw two Holly Blues and during my Bernwood transect in the afternoon I found this mating pair of Large Skippers."

Rob Hill sent this report yesterday: "Here are some more butterfly updates from North Bucks. On *July 13th* I went to *College Wood, Nash,* where I was rather disappointed by butterfly numbers. There were Large White (11), Meadow Brown (10), Ringlet (22), **Speckled Wood** (11), Large Skipper (1), Comma (1) and a Hummingbird Hawk-moth. Later that afternoon a brief visit to *Little Linford Wood* was a little more productive. There were **Small Tortoiseshell** (5), Ringlet (59), Meadow Brown (12), Large White (8), Speckled Wood (6) and **Gatekeeper** (1). There was also a Fritillary species which I saw just once, very briefly, and I'm afraid must remain unidentified."

Welcome to the website new contributors David and Pippa Lloyd who reported the following on 13th July: "There was a **Red Admiral** this afternoon (13th July) at about 1500 on the track leading round Black Swan Lake at Dinton Pastures, Hurst (Berks) adjacent to brambles in flower."

On 13th July Dennis Dell had a Small Tortoiseshell on the buddleia in his garden in *Aylesbury* - the second in his garden for the 2nd generation Small Tortoiseshells.

Becky Woodell did her Oakley Wood transect on 13th July: "I was 'buzzed' by the biggest, brightest orange **Silver-washed Fritillary** I have ever seen. It nearly struck my arm as it went past, settled on the grass for about half a second and flew on."

Sunday 13th July 2008

Mike Wilkins sent this report for his garden in Abingdon, Oxon: "I am pleased to report that the **Small Tortoiseshell** has survived in south Oxfordshire. Two spent today *(13th)* nectaring on marjoram in my garden. They were the first to be recorded in it this year. One buddleia has now come into flower but has so far been ignored by all the few butterflies **(Gatekeeper, Green-veined Whites** and **Small Whites).**"

Dave Ferguson went to Waterperry Wood this morning, 13th July: "3 or, possibly, 5 male **Silver-washed Fritillaries,** 3 **White Admirals,** 2 **Purple Hairstreaks.** No Purple Emperors in spite of scouring the tree-tops."

Jim Asher sent the following news today, 13th July: "I saw three **Small Tortoiseshells** in one place today near *Abingdon Mill* (why does that seem more exciting than the 33 Silver-washed Fritillaries I saw at Pamber Forest in Hants in the morning?), thus adding markedly to the recent Oxon score."

Maureen Cross visited Lardon Chase today, Sunday 13th July: "I saw about 20+ Chalkhill Blues, one very fresh Small Blue and a fresh Small Copper so both were probably second brood. Other butterflies seen were Meadow Browns, Gatekeepers, Ringlets, Marbled Whites, Small Whites and Large Whites."

Dave Wilton sent this update to his sightings report of 5th July: "Thanks to the endeavours of Jim Asher, who managed to get a picture of the undersides of one of the 'Finemere Fritillaries' yesterday (12th), it turns out that the two "Dark Green Fritillaries" which have graced the main ride at Finemere Wood for the past ten days are actually **Marbled Fritillaries.** This species is widespread in central and southern Europe but is not found in the UK. The upper surfaces do look very similar to the Dark Green Fritillary but the undersides are completely different. For the second year running it would seem that some misguided individual has been secretly releasing exotic butterflies at Finemere."

Dave Maunder sent the following on 12th July: "A few more butterflies seen this week in Aylesbury were:- White-letter Hairstreak (1), near Coldharbour way; Small Tortoiseshell (2); Comma (3); Marbled Whites (9); Meadow Browns (15+); Ringlets (100+); Hedge Browns (6); Large Skippers (2); Small Skippers (20+); Essex Skippers (10); Large Whites (3); Small Whites (4); Green-veined Whites (3). These were all seen on the 10th, most in the usual field near my home."

Becky Woodell and Tony Croft were doing some clearing in Whitecross Green Wood on 11th July in preparation for the ride mowing on Monday: "At about 4pm we were rained off by substantial rain and some thunder. Just as the first few drops fell a **Purple Emperor** flew out of the trees on one side of the central clearing, flew across it and the adjacent clearing near the bench and disappeared from view." Then today, 12th July, Becky had a fresh **Small Tortoiseshell** nectaring on her garden buddleia in Oakley, Bucks.

On 11th July David & Wendy Redhead chanced going to Bernwood to do the Shabbington Wood transect: "Wendy had the sense to carry her waterproof, I did not. We started at Oakley Wood car park and by the time we reached Hell Coppice old car park our butterfly count was Ringlet 208, Marbled White 14, Meadow Brown 12, Large Skipper 11, Small Skipper 6, Gatekeeper 5, Comma 3, Speckled Wood 2, Large White 1, Silverwashed Fritillary 1 (male), Purple Emperor 1 (male). The Ringlet record for this transect is 311 (in 2006) and as we were then only halfway if the heavens had not opened we would probably have broken this record!"

Dave Ferguson's morning visit to Wendover Woods on July 10th produced the following: "A male **Silver-washed Fritillary**, 3 **Red Admirals, Marbled Whites, Ringlets** and **Meadow Browns.** The buddleia bush was in flower but there was nothing on it - it was overcast at the time. I am told a Purple Emperor was seen nearby a few days ago. There is a clump of pale flowered buddleias near the Boddington Hill entrance at SP880075 which are just coming into flower and should be worth a look. 2 of the Red Admirals were on it."

Wednesday 9th July 2008

Stuart Hodges carried out his transect of a private wood in Bucks on 8th July: "I saw 5 Silver-washed Fritillary at various locations in the wood. They all appeared to be male and I did get good views of both upper and under sides. Also I spent 30 minutes looking for Purple Emperor and from underneath a large oak I saw six brief sessions of flight - two individuals chasing high up, on the sheltered side of the tree. I also had a closer view of a third one flying in another section of the wood. Also one White Admiral."

9th July - STOP PRESS! "A disgruntled and growing queue of customers was to be seen at the *Littlemore Mental Hospital shop* on *Tuesday 8th July* as the shop assistant neglected her duties and pursued a suspected Small Tortoiseshell around the grounds. I am delighted to be able to report that, when cornered, it did indeed turn out to be a pristine **Small Tortoiseshell** and normal service was resumed shortly afterwards. A very important observation being, as far as I am aware, only the fifth report in Oxfordshire of the current brood. What makes it even more important is that it was less than a mile away from our garden *(in Littlemore)* where the last record dates back to 2006." David Redhead.

David Chandler, BC Herts & Middlesex Branch sent the following on 8th July: "I don't know if reporting a Small Tortoiseshell sighting is significant these days, the species being far more scarce than I can remember for many a year. Anyway, for the record, I saw a **Small Tortoiseshell** butterfly on *Saturday July 5th* at Campbell Park in Central Milton Keynes (Bucks)."

Eleanor Slade (Oxford University WildCRU) has just reported that the HSBC Bank volunteers working on the Earthwatch project in *Wytham Woods nr Oxford (permit required)* recorded a **Dark Green Fritillary** on *Friday 4th July.* Below is the excellent photograph taken by Paul Crone of Worthing, one of the HSBC volunteers. This is the second woodland site this season where a Dark Green Fritillary has rather unusually been seen (see the recent reports below for Finemere Wood by Dave Ferguson and Dave Wilton). Perhaps also a caution to other observers that one cannot automatically assume that a large fritillary flying in woodland is a Silver-washed Fritillary.

8th July - David Redhead says he managed to do some catching up last week with sightings of 6 species recently reported to the UTB website: "Monday 30th June - visited Brasenose Woods nr Oxford and saw three White Admirals in a recently coppiced area and just when I was about to give up two Purple Hairstreaks spiralled up from an oak tree. Thursday 3rd July - the last section of the Swyncombe Down transect produced three pristine Dark Green Fritillaries. Friday 4th July - the M40 Compensation Area transect produced my first Gatekeepers of the year and afterwards, in the eastern extremities of Berwnood Forest I came across three pristine Silver-washed Fritillaries. Finally, on Saturday 5th, I was fortunate enough to join Dennis Dell's UTB Field Meeting which added the Purple Emperor to my 2008 list. Two of the sightings were the best and longest I have ever had in the UK of a Purple Emperor in flight (see below for further details of the meeting). The most common butterfly during the week was the Ringlet and I have to agree with Tony Speight (see June 16th below) that its numbers are once again up this year. 159 at Swyncombe Down was an all time record for this transect walked since 2002. Yesterday (Monday 7th) the 65 counted on the grassland/scrub area above my house was also an all time record in 20 years of recording there. I am not sure this continuing increase in Ringlet numbers is something to be all that pleased about. I think it may well reflect the increased coarser vegetation growth, caused by nitrogen deposition and warmer and damper summers, providing the damp and shaded micro-habitat they like. I have heard that the Ringlet to Meadow Brown ratio can be used as a management tool for woodland nature reserves - when it gets too high you know you need to be doing some ride edge clearance and getting more light back in."

Welcome to the website new contributor Rob Hill who sent the following report on 7th July: "I was told about the UTB website by a birder friend of mine, Tim Watts, but this is the first time I've sent in my field sightings, so I'll introduce myself (briefly, I promise!). I live in Milton Keynes, and although I'm a very keen birder, I'm interested in pretty much all kinds of wildlife. I've got a half-decent basic knowledge of butterflies, but I'm certainly no expert. I'm learning all the time though! On *Friday 4th July*, I walked around *Leckhampstead Woods*, which is in the very north of Buckinghamshire, but still in the UTB recording area, as I understand it. It's a predominantly broad-leaved woodland, with several small conifer plantations, and large areas of mixed scrub. I managed to see the following species: Meadow Brown (5), Comma (1), Ringlet (40), Small Skipper (3), Red Admiral (1), Speckled Wood (4), Gatekeeper (1) and Marbled White (1). I do a lot of local birding in the north Bucks area, so I can e-mail sightings from various sites in the north."

Dennis Dell sent this addition to his report for his 4th July visit to Finemere Wood: "The following observations were made in Finemere Meadows, up the western edge of Finemere Wood, and from the top of Finemere Wood across and into the entrance of Greatsea Wood. In other words, the sightings were mainly in open grassland areas. Marbled White [16], Meadow Brown [76], Ringlet [70], Large Skipper [8], Small Tortoiseshell [6], Large White [2], Small White [4], White Admiral [2], Speckled Wood [2]. As many

Meadow Browns as Ringlets were seen here. I believe we agree that Ringlets, on the whole, prefer slightly damp grassy areas which may also be somewhat shaded, particularly, grassy areas within woods. Finemere Meadows is a very large open area, mainly dry. Noteworthy were the six Small Tortoiseshells, which would seem to be a lot these days!"

On Thursday 3rd July Alun & Chrissie visited Aston Clinton Ragpits (SP888109):

"Fortunately, the site was largely sheltered from the wind and the showers on Thursday. When the sun was shining and the heart of the site was warm, numerous crickets and grasshoppers were singing, voles went about their business and at last, a good number of bees, flies and wasps were evident. Along with all of these, we counted over 40 **Ringlets**, a dozen or so **Meadow Browns** (before we stopped counting either). 17 **Marbled Whites**, 6 **Large Skipper** and 4 **Speckled Wood** were also identified. There were several more skippers that were either small or large (or even Essex) but flew past too quickly."

Sunday 6th July 2008

Purple Emperor field meeting 5th and 6th July - report by Dennis Dell: "The weather forecast probably put off many would-be participants, since there were only 4 of us on the Saturday. In the event, the weather was not bad: sunny, about 19 degrees, but rather breezy. Very quickly, at 10.20, we made a sighting of **Purple Emperor** in the Oakley Wood car park, but we had to wait a long time for the next success. This came while we were walking along the ride leading from Piccadilly through Yorks Wood to Hell Coppice: at 12.20 we were treated to an elegant flight display in and around small Oaks at the edge of the ride for about 5 minutes, followed by another sighting at a different spot along this ride, 30 minutes later. This is obviously a good ride, because last year there were seven sightings along here.

David Redhead took a different route back to the Oakley Wood car park and, when we met him there at about 1.45, he had seen three between 13.18 and 13.25. So, a total of 6 sightings was considered respectable. Other species seen: **Red Admiral, Meadow Brown, Large** and **Small Skipper, Ringlet, White Admiral, Small** and **Large White, Marbled White, Purple Hairstreak, Speckled Wood, Silver-washed Fritillary, Comma** and **Gatekeeper.** Sunday was a complete washout!"

Adam Bassett had a Purple Hairstreak in his garden in Marlow Bottom on July 4th. "It flew up from the lawn area and spent about 40 minutes sunning itself on a maple tree before flying off. This is the second garden record in 5 years, but there are no doubt more about as there are several oak trees in the vicinity."

Jim Asher had a rare treat on 5th July while doing the transect at Aston Upthorpe: "A Small Tortoiseshell looking fairly fresh, but in no mood to hang around. Apart from better numbers of Ringlet, Meadow Brown and Marbled White, I did see my first Gatekeepers of the year."

David Dennis sent the following report today, 6th July: "I saw two **Purple Emperors** at *Finemere* on *1st July.* Remarkably this one (male - see photo below) was hanging onto grass stems, six inches off the ground in the middle of the path (just emerged??). I nearly trod on it!! It let me clear the grass around it for a photo and even walked onto my finger and started to drink sweat. I re-arranged it onto a thistle flower where it posed for over 30 minutes showing upper and undersides while I wasted much of a 2 gig memory card!! Had to tell someone - it was the most breathtaking experience!"

Dave Maunder reported these butterfly sightings in a field very near to his home in Aylesbury on Friday 4th July: "Marbled Whites (12+); Meadow Browns (40+); Ringlets (200+); Hedge Browns (2 - my first of year); Small Tortoiseshell (1); Comma (1); Essex Skippers (4 - also my first of year); Large Skippers (5); Small Skippers (20+); Large Whites (2) and Small Whites (5). All these were found in a field left fallow and full of long grass and flowers for a few years, so it just shows how our commoner species can survive on the edge of town if left undisturbed for a while!"

Following the intriguing sightings of 4th July by Dave Ferguson and Dennis Dell, Dave Wilton spent a couple of hours in Finemere Wood, Bucks on Saturday morning, 5th July: "The two male Dark Green Fritillaries (later identified by Jim Asher as Marbled Fritillaries - see report above by Dave Wilton dated 13th July) were still patrolling the main ride, chasing anything of a similar colour to themselves (Commas and Skippers!). They weren't inclined to land for long and even when they did they kept moving, so the photo below was the best I could manage in the time available. I found a female at the turning circle in Finemere at the end of July last year so these may be her off-spring. Other species recorded today were Large Skipper (21), Small Skipper (3), Large White (3), Small White (1), Green-veined White (1), Purple Hairstreak (1), White Admiral (4), Small Tortoiseshell (2), Comma (3), Marbled White (5), Speckled Wood (16), Meadow Brown (63), Ringlet (138) and Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet moth (7, one in the process of becoming a spider's meal - see below). Unfortunately there was no sign of Purple Emperor along the main ride or amongst the sallows in the lower parts of the wood. Either the Meadow Brown is having a poor year here or the Ringlet an excellent year - the totals for these two species at this time in July would normally be reversed."

Lloyd Garvey sent this news on 5th July: "I saw my first **Purple Hairstreak** of the year yesterday (*4th July*) at *Bowdown Woods, Berks*, (the bomb site) and my first **Gatekeeper** at *Inkpen Common* (BBOWT site in Berks) today, *5/07/08.*"

This report came from Dave Ferguson today, 4th July: "Today at Finemere Wood I saw a Purple Emperor flying round near the top of a sallow on the west side of the main ride. Also seen were: White Admiral (3), Small Tortoiseshell (2), Comma (3), Gatekeeper (1), Ringlets, Meadow Browns, Marbled Whites, Green-veined White (1), Small White (2), Large White (3), Large Skippers, Small Skippers. Then, having met the Emperor of Emperors, Dennis Dell, we saw 2 Dark Green Fritillaries, (later identified by Jim Asher as Marbled Fritillaries - see report above by Dave Wilton dated 13th July) a first for the site for both of us."

Robin Carr sent the following report today, 4th July: "Just to let you know I saw 2 **Silver-washed Fritillaries** in my transect at *Dancersend* last Tuesday *1st July.* I also saw 2 in *Wendover Woods* today *(4th July)* not far from the usual buddleia spot."

Dennis Dell spent some time watching for Purple Emperor in Finemere today, 4th July: "At the north-western edge ash canopy territory in *Finemere* today, 13 separate flights of **Purple Emperor,** each not longer than 5 seconds: total time on the wing 41 seconds during 40 minutes of observing, i.e. I saw *Iris* for 1.7% of the time I was watching."

Further to Grahame Hawker's update (see 2nd July below), on 4th July Dave Wilton visited Broadmoor Bottom, Berks: "I managed to see four Silver-studded Blues, comprising three males and a single female who was intent upon egg-laying. Other species active at the site comprised Small Skipper, Large White, Red Admiral, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown and Ringlet."

Mick & Wendy Campbell visited Penley Wood in the Chilterns today, 4th July: "Our target species were Silver-washed Fritillary and Purple Emperor, having found both in this wood in previous years. We usually only see one **Silver-washed Fritillary** patrolling the main ride and today was no exception. The patches of bramble are some distance apart making it very difficult to find one settled. Our search for Purple Emperor was more speculative today as we normally see them in this wood middle/late July around the Sallows, so they've probably all been females. Today we were trying to find male territories but the wood has very few public footpaths and most of the high points where the male Purple Emperors might congregate are inaccessible. So none seen today and we will have to revisit in a week or two. Other species seen were **Red Admiral, Speckled Wood, Comma, Purple Hairstreak, Ringlet, Meadow Brown, Large Skipper, Gatekeeper** and **Small Tortoiseshell.**"

Welcome to the website new contributor Tony Palmer, who sent this fascinating report on 1st July: "30th June 2008 - I think I have seen the first flights of the Purple Emperor this year from my garden in Burghfield Common (Reading, Berks). They are flying in groups above the canopy of a large oak tree close to my garden. As I cannot get a real close up look at them I am basing my assumption on the size of them and their peculiar pattern of flight. These butterflies have inhabited this particular tree for the last five years which was when I first saw them."

Thursday 3rd July 2008

Dave Ferguson saw his first Gatekeeper of the year yesterday (2nd July) by the Grand Union Canal at *Broughton, Bucks.*

Robin Dryden sent the following on 3rd July: "I managed a brief stop at the southern section of *Aston Rowant NNR* on my way back from Birmingham yesterday evening, *2nd July.* I was successful in finding one of my target **Dark Green Fritillary,** although views were distant as it landed the other side of the fence and had gone by the time I walked round. Other species seen were **Large Skipper** – 1, **Small Skipper** – 2, **Small Heath** – 1 **Ringlet** –

1 and Marbled White and Meadow Brown in large numbers (30+ and 50+)."

Sezar Hikmet visited Aston Rowant (Bald Hill) on Wednesday morning, 2nd July: "Lots of Marbled White, Meadow Brown also a few Small Heath."

Grahame Hawker sent this update on 2nd July: "I saw about 30 Silver-studded Blue at Silchester Common in Hampshire on 19th June and two males on the BBOWT part of Broadmoor Bottom the same day. These two are the only Upper Thames examples that I have heard about. None sighted at Decoy Heath or Wildmoor."

Malcolm Brownsword visited a BBOWT site in west Berkshire and also did his transect at Hartslock recently: "At the site in west Berkshire on 28th June (20C Windy): 1 Large Skipper, 24 Marbled White, 3 Common Blue, 4 Ringlet, 1 Small Heath, 2 Meadow Brown. Only Satyridae at Hartslock on 1st July in 25C temperatures: 54 Marbled White, 11 Meadow Brown, 27 Ringlet, 2 Small Heath. At the Hartslock Extension: 24 Marbled White, 8 Meadow Brown, 16 Ringlet, 3 Small Heath, 1 Small Skipper."

Dennis Dell visited Waterperry Wood on July 1st: "Like Wendy and Mick Campbell on June 30th, I saw three male and one female **Purple Emperors** all along the main north-south ride. The males were exhibiting typical low level skimming behaviour, occasionally landing on the ride briefly. They were well spread out along a 400 m section of this ride. The female landed briefly in a large Sallow, and then disappeared into the Oaks."

Chris Bottrell, a very active volunteer at Whitecross Green Wood, Oxon, found their first Small Tortoiseshell of the season on 29th June.

Tuesday 1st July 2008

This came from Dave Wilton today, 1st July: "Now that the Black Hairstreak season has almost ended it was time for me to start catching up with other species today. A trip to *lvinghoe, Bucks* this morning produced eleven Dark Green Fritillaries, the majority being seen along the lower western slopes of Steps Hill. Other species present included Large Skipper, Small Skipper, Brimstone, Common Blue, Brown Argus, Marbled White, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown, Ringlet and Small Heath, although apart from the Meadow Brown and Ringlet they were all in far lower numbers than one would expect for early July. This afternoon a quick sortie to the usual Purple Emperor viewing spot on the public footpath along the south-east face of *Little Wood, Oxon* found two males in residence on the large ash, although none was seen at the other spot in nearby Piddington Wood. The two woods also produced Large White, Green-veined White and White Admiral to give me 15 species for the day."

Martin Raper sent this update today: "We found 3 male **Silver-washed Fritillaries** in *Moor Copse* today, *1st July* - nectaring on bramble."

Mick Jones sent this report on 30th June: "I was surveying at *Dancersend* for Duke of Burgundy larval damage on *Saturday 28th* (7 clumps of primroses covering all three areas where they were seen this year). I also saw lots of **Ringlets**, modest numbers of **Meadow Browns, Speckled Woods** and **Marbled Whites**, a few **Large Skippers** and **Brimstones**, a **Red Admiral** and one **Dark Green Fritillary** - the first for the reserve this year."

Mick & Wendy Campbell have been searching for Purple Emperors for the past few days: "On 29th June we went to *Piddington Wood* where we found a **Black Hairstreak** (rather worn) and then moved on to check the large oak and ash trees on the footpath running along the top edge of *Little Wood* where we were very pleased to spot our first **Purple Emperor** of the season flying and perching in the ash. The next day (*30th*) we spent

the afternoon in *Waterperry Wood* where 4 Purple Emperors (3m and 1f) were active along the main ride. One male came down low to the track enabling us to see the purple sheen. Finally, today (1st July) we went to *Bernwood* where we saw 2 Purple Emperors near Piccadilly Circus. Plenty of other summer butterflies were along this main ride, including White Admiral, Ringlet, Marbled White, Meadow Brown, Large & Small Skippers, Small Tortoiseshell (only one), Common Blue (2, one very worn), Speckled Wood, Red Admiral, Comma, Small White and our first Silver-washed Fritillary of the year. Our last visit was to *Moorend Common, Bucks* where we observed one male Purple Emperor flying at the top of an oak tree, a territory used in previous years at this site."

Tom Stevenson reported his first **Gatekeeper** of the year. "I saw 2 during my farmland bird survey at *Preston Crowmarsh, Benson* on *28th June.*"

Martin Albertini sent this news on 30th June: "Dark Green Fritillary, about a dozen, recorded at *Bacombe Hill* SP8507 & SP8607 on *24th June*. Also Marbled White (approx 6), Common Blue (approx 4), Meadow Brown (many), Ringlet (many), Speckled Wood (few), Large Skipper (approx 6), Gatekeeper (1), Small Heath (approx 4)."

Jim Asher spent 70 minutes at Hitchcopse Pit (Oxon) and adjacent areas on the afternoon of 29th June. He recorded 71 Marbled White, 36 Ringlet, 32 Meadow Brown, 6 Large Skipper, 11 Small Skipper, 21 Small Heath, 1 Small Copper and 2 Speckled Wood, but saw no Vanessids!

Friday 27th June 2008

Dave Ferguson sent this update today: "I saw my first **White Admiral** of the year in *Strawberry Wood, Black Park* this afternoon (27th June)."

Chris Brown sent this report on 26th June: "With perfect weather for the past fortnight I was expecting to see Silver-washed Fritillary sooner at *Crowsley Park Wood, Berks,* but it would seem that the bramble and thistles are only just flowering at this site. With temperatures reaching 24°C in the sun I thought today was going to be a blank again until I caught sight of an orange flash 30 feet up in the trees. It did patrol down to the ground level at intervals but was only resting high in the canopy and so binoculars were the only way to identify it was a male **Silver-washed Fritillary**. Also 2 **Comma**, 2 **Speckled Wood**, 27 **Meadow Brown** and 4 **Ringlet.**"

[The Silver-washed Fritillary Report for 2006-7 is now posted in the Species Champion section click here to read the report 1

click here to read the report.]

Maureen cross sent the following news on 26th June: "While out walking near *Sulhamstead, SW of Reading,* on *Tuesday 24th June* I nearly trod on a very fresh **Purple Hairstreak** in the grass under an oak tree. My first of the season."

On 26th June David Redhead reported seeing a pristine **Comma** in his garden in *Littlemore, Oxon.* "I then did my M40 transect in the afternoon for 50 **Meadow Brown,** 45 **Marbled White,** 21 **Ringlet,** 10 **Large Skipper,** 1 **Speckled Wood** and 1 **Large White.** I also found 2 **Bläck Hairstreaks** on privet flowers, but no luck with White-letter Hairstreaks. The only moth I saw was a **Cinnabar** and not a single Narrow-bordered 5-Spot Burnet - a total lack of hatched cocoons as well, but I did find one unhatched with a **Six-spot Burnet caterpillar** nearby. Looking at some summary historic data the Narrow-bordered 5-Spot numbers seem to cycle and some years in the past it has not been recorded at all. Back at home in the grassland I found my my first **Small Skipper** of the year amongst the Marbled Whites, Ringlets and Meadow Browns. I think 9 butterfly species in a day may be a record for me this June!"

Dave Wilton visited several sites on 26th June: "At Piddington Wood I found a single **Black Hairstreak** on blackthorn above the footpath. In a private wood nearby one White **Admiral** and a couple of **Marbled Whites** on the outside were the only things of interest. The final site was *Lapland Farm*. My main reason for going was to try and find Burnets and **Foresters** (successful on both counts but very few seen). My **Meadow Brown** tally reached 281 before I gave up counting, while Marbled Whites reached 39. Others were **Common Blue** (1, second brood?), **Speckled Wood** (1), **Ringlet** (1) and **Small Heath** (1). No Skippers seen."

Wednesday 25th June 2008

Dave Wilton spent two and a half hours in Finemere Wood on Wednesday afternoon, 25th June: "I was greeted by a single Black Hairstreak on arrival and saw another four further inside the wood, one of which posed for the attached long-range photo (see below). It was in remarkably good condition considering the perils it has had to endure. The other picture is of a "friend" I've been seeing along the main ride at Finemere for simply ages now. Could this be the UK's oldest Peacock?! It must be almost a year old! Large Skippers, Speckled Woods, Meadow Browns and Ringlets were found in reasonable numbers and I saw two White Admirals. A Comma was using the new bench at the turning circle as a perch and a fresh Holly Blue also put in an appearance."

Latest news from Tony Speight: "I thought that you would like to know that on my transect walk at Sands Bank LNR (High Wycombe) on 24th June there were 129 Marbled White, 30 Meadow Brown a Brimstone and 62 Ringlets - this is well over double normal numbers of Ringlets! Is anyone else getting such high numbers? Also seen on the site were 2 Common Blues, 2 Large Skippers and 3 Speckled Wood (and quite a few Common Lizards)."

Gerry Kendall sent this news on 23rd June: "Today Penny and I went to *Finemere Wood.* We had three certain sightings of **Black Hairstreak** (at least two individuals) with half a dozen more "very probables" in flight. In the wood itself, we had our first **Small Skipper**, **Marbled White** and **Ringlet** of the year. Still, ten species in late June isn't tremendously good."

Alun & Chrissie sent the following report on 23rd June: "One rather late report from last weekend and one from this:

Saturday 14th June - Decoy Heath, nr Aldermarston (SU613663). We only had an hour or so to spare while our youngest was touring the local university on an open day but in that time we did manage 7 Common Blue (2 females in the blue variant patterns) and 1 unidentified blue, suspected Silver-studded but couldn't close fast enough to identify it. Also 2 Meadow Brown, 3 Small Heath and the usual Burnett Companion, spotted burnetts and Yellow Shell moths. The highlight was undoubtably the shallow pond where we counted numerous species of damsel and dragonfly and watched a female emperor dragonfly and a female skimmer laying eggs. Definite ids on emperor, black darter, four spot chaser, common hawker and black tailed skimmer. Also blue tailed and small red damsel flies identified. We were also able to get very close to a male roe deer in the very long grass between the car park and the heathland area.

Sunday 22nd June - Aston Ragpits (SP888109). Hoping to catch up with some of the earlier Marbled Whites (our records show mid July as peak at this site) we moved in around noon and stayed for about two hours. The wind was still blustery but the site has the advantage of being very sheltered. No Marbled Whites to report but we did find a single bee orchid amongst the many twayblade, fragrant, common spotted and pyramid orchids. Other than **Ringlets,** butterflies were scarce. Ringlets 13, **Large Skipper** 3, **Speckled Wood** 3, **Brimstone** 3, **Meadow Brown** 1. Male broad-bodied chaser seen but vanished off quite quickly.

Jan Haseler reported seeing a White Admiral at *The Coombes, Arborfield (Berks)* on Sunday afternoon, *22nd June.*

Jim Asher sent this update on 22nd June: "Denise and I went out this afternoon despite the gales (well, force 6 at least) to *Bladon Heath (Oxon)*. There was little in flight until we were half way up the meadow, where we were seeing **Ringlets**, lots of **Large Skippers** and a few **Meadow Browns**. A Large Skipper flying around bramble flowers disturbed a **Black Hairstreak** which landed briefly on another flower, where we could see it properly - rather worn, I'm afraid."

Dennis Dell reported the following on 21st June: "Brimstone [male] and Small Tortoiseshell in my garden (*Aylesbury*) on 20th June. First I've seen of the new generations."

Friday 20th June 2008

David & Wendy Redhead were walking their dog in the grassland and scrub above their house in Littlemore, Oxon, at 8.15am this morning, 20th June: "Our combined count was 1 Meadow Brown, 2 Ringlet and 3 Marbled White plus several Narrowbordered Five Spot Burnet moths and one grass snake. The orchids are currently putting on a good show - a count by Wendy and myself the other day totalled 68 with 33 Bee, 27 Common-spotted and 8 Pyramidal."

Becky Woodell sent this sightings report for 17th June: "Bernwood Forest, Oakley Wood, mostly sunny, 20C, 1145 start: Not many butterflies but my first **Ringlet**, just one and not on the transect, and one **Cinnabar**, very fresh. Otherwise **Large White** 1; **Large Skipper** 3, **Meadow Brown** 3 and 17 **Speckled Woods.** On to *Whitecross Green Wood* where the sun became much more elusive. 19C 1330 start. **Common Blue** 1, **Meadow Brown** 12, **Large Skipper** 2, **Speckled Wood** 8 plus a number of sightings of **Black Hairstreak**.

On 18th June Malcolm Brownsword sent these recent sightings:

16th June in West Hagbourne: Scarlet Tiger Moth.

17th June (am) - BBOWT transect at Homefield Wood: 2 Dingy Skippers, 2 Common Blues, 5 Speckled Woods and 19 Meadow Browns.

17th June (pm) - BBOWT transect at Hartslock: 1 Large Skipper, 12 Marbled Whites - my first of the year, 1 Meadow Brown, 1 Ringlet - my first of the year and 3 Small Heaths. BBOWT transect for Hartslock extension: 1 Common Blue, 1 Marbled White, 3 Meadow Browns and 2 Small Heaths.

Dave Wilton paid another visit to the disused railway line west of Westcott Airfield, Bucks on Tuesday, 17th June: "It produced some nice surprises, the first was a pristine **Marbled White,** the second was my first **White-letter Hairstreak** of the year and the third was the discovery of a hitherto unknown small **Black Hairstreak** colony on the edge of Hill Furlong Wood. This means that all five hairstreaks can be found in the area. Other butterflies seen during today's visit comprised **Dingy Skipper** (2, both on their last legs), **Large Skipper** (17), **Common Blue** (6, a poor showing from what should be a strong colony), **Speckled Wood** (8), **Meadow Brown** (67) and **Small Heath** (10)."

David Redhead sent this report on 16th June: "This afternoon I was intent on Black Hairstreak when we entered the small meadow at *Slade Camp* but Wendy had a more open mind and spotted a pristine **Ringlet** down in the grass. I presume it had just emerged and pumped its wings and had still to take its first flight. We finally managed 8 **Bläck Hairstreaks,** all in the core area, plus a suspect in the peripheral areas. Total butterfly count at end of day 50, a record for June (except for one day in Pembrokeshire), from 6 species but just over half were **Speckled Woods** with Black Hairstreak in second place." *Tim Watts sent this news on 14th June:* "I saw 2-3 **Black Hairstreak** today at 11a.m on blackthorn and flying around a small oak on the *Calvert BBOWT* reserve in Bucks (*permit required*)."

Monday 16th June 2008

Tony Speight sent this update today, 16th June: "I thought that you might like to know that **Ringlets** are now on the wing. I saw 4 on *Sands Bank (High Wycombe)* this morning as well as 2 **Large Skipper,** 5 **Common Blue** (numbers have been quite disappointing so far this year), about 10 **Marbled White** (I hope they pick up, there are usually hundreds within days of seeing the first one) and about 20 **Meadow Brown**, which once again is quite low for the site but hopefully the weather will improve and with it the butterflies. Below is a photo of one of the Ringlets I saw. It was being a right pain and really didn't want its picture taken but I managed to get this photo in the end."

Jon Mercer sent this news on 15th June: "I found one Black Hairstreak in an hour's walk at Asham Meads yesterday (14th) late morning in sunshine, also 4 Large Skipper, 4 Common Blue and a Brown Argus."

Helen Hyre saw 20 Speckled Wood at Ascott House, Wing on 10th June.

David Redhead had another successful search for Bläck Hairstreaks on Tuesday 10th June: "Slade Camp (next to Brasenose Woods) produced four sightings - all rather unusually in oak trees and three away from the colony core area where the most extensive blackthorn scrub is to to be found. Also some last knockings of other species - a faded **Comma**, a tatty **Peacock** and a pair of both faded and tatty **Holly Blues** showing signs of wanting to mate - if you blow the photo below up you can just make them out huddled together on top of a leaf. The singleton fresh **Large Skipper** and **Meadow Brown** seen eluded my camera along with the Bläck Hairstreaks. Surely the barrel is about to be replenished but it does feel a bit 2007ish here today. With 9 days still to go to the official start of summer we can but hope!"

Cliff Robinson sent the following report on 12th June: "Yesterday, 11th June, a **Clouded Yellow** flittered across my back garden (*Gerrards Cross, Bucks*), and having spoken to Wendy Wilson, she thought that the sighting might be of interest! I have seen and photographed many Clouded Yellows abroad and occasionally in the UK, and many years ago saw one or two at Chalfont Park, but this was the first (and probably only!) time I've seen one in the garden - possibly because my lawn hasn't been cut for three weeks!"

Dennis Dell went to Finemere Wood on 11th June: "It was 19 degrees and 100% sunshine in the open, stiff breeze, but calm inside the wood. I saw 3 **Bläck Hairstreaks**, but could not linger at the hotspots because I was carrying out transects in the meadow [BBOWT] and in the wood [BC]. I saw my first **Meadow Browns** [6]. Others seen: **Large Skipper** [3], **Green-veined White** [2], **Red Admiral** [3], **Peacock** [1], **Speckled Wood** [16], **Common Blue** [2] and **Small Heath** [1]."

Wednesday afternoon, 11th June - Tony Croft saw four Black Hairstreak at Whitecross Green Wood.

On Monday 9th June Shelagh Harlow saw a Red Admiral from the window of her office in Cowley, Oxon.

Wednesday 11th June 2008

Rien De Keyser has been to Grangelands a few more times recently: "Even on very sunny days (I got sunburned!), it looks like a deathly place, where hardly any butterflies are

flying around. On the *4th June*, I only saw 6 Small Heaths, 1 Grizzled Skipper, 1f Brimstone, 2 Brown Argus and 6m2f Common Blue. *7th June* I found 6m4f Common Blue, 1 Brown Argus, 1m1f Brimstone, 9 Small Heaths and one freshly eclosed Comma. This afternoon (*10/06*), I saw my first 1 Red Admiral (except for one winter individual), 1 Speckled Wood, 1 Brown Argus, 1 Green Hairstreak, 2 Brimstones, 10 Small Heaths and 9m2f Common Blue. Common Blue used to occur in hundreds on this site, but seems to be suffering from an enormous decline. Is this a general trend? Hope not!"

Adrian Cadman reported as follows today: "I spent a couple of hours at both Finemere Wood and Lapland Farm drove on Sunday June 8th but didn't bump into any Bläck Hairstreaks at either site. On my way home from Aylesbury this afternoon, June 10th, I nipped down to Finemere Wood and had 2 definite sightings of **Black Hairstreak** at 16:55 and 17:15. Both insects settled briefly on blackthorn giving good and excellent views respectively, in hot and sunny conditions."

Tony Croft carried out his transect at Rushbeds Wood today, 10th June: "I saw one **Black Hairstreak.** It was on blackthorn in the tramway meadow."

Stuart Hodges, Black Hairstreak Champion, reported the following on 9th June: "After checking 9 sites over the last 8 days the Black Hairstreak has been seen today, 9th June, 1 at a site in Bucks, seen by Dave Wilton and 1 at Slade Camp, (Brasenose wood) seen by David Redhead, so the flight period is under way."

Martin Kincaid visited Blue Lagoon Local Nature Reserve in Bletchley (Bucks) on Monday morning, 9th June: "I was hoping to find a late Green Hairstreak. No luck on that front but I did manage to see one Small Heath. This species appears to be hanging on here - and to think I used to take them for granted. Also seen: Common Blue - 15 (4M,11F) Small Blue - 7 (including 2 mating pairs), Speckled Wood - 4, Red Admiral - 1, Large Skipper -1, Small White - 1, Large White - 1. Also Burnet Companion and Mother Shipton moths."

Malcolm Brownsword went to Aston Clinton Rag Pits yesterday morning (Monday 9th June): "I saw 1 **Dingy Skipper,** 6 **Brimstones** 4 **Common Blues.** Considering the temp was about 23C (11.30 - 13.00 hrs), with 90% sun, I guess this was rather disappointing!"

Alun & Chrissie sent the following on 9th June: "On Sunday 8th June, one of the warmest summer days yet, we joined the group at Holtspur Bottom having wandered Holtspur Bank for about an hour previously. Speckled Wood (approx 15) and Common Blue (approx 25) were most evident. We saw our first Brown Argus of 2008 and first Meadow Brown. Burnet Companion and Yellow Shell were the commonest moths of note. The highlight of the day, for us, was the chance to see a Small Elephant Hawk-moth trapped by Paul on the previous evening. Thanks to them all for their pleasant company and especially to Paul for letting us get the photos before release. We also paid a visit to Aston Clinton Ragpits where there were orchids out but not in the numbers or variety that we hoped. Butterflies were hard to come by with just a couple of male Common Blue, a single Dingy Skipper, single Brown Argus and a handful of Brimstones."

Maureen Cross sent this report on 8th June: "I took a walk today through an estate near *Streatley, Oxon.* No Adonis Blue seen until I got back to *Lardon Chase.* What I did see on the estate was my first Marbled White of the year and two Brown Argus one of which laid an egg on a rock rose. I also saw a large group of hares in one of the fields."

On the 8th June Thomas Merckx saw his first Meadow Brown and Small Tortoiseshell of the year near Cornwell (Chipping Norton, Oxon).

Malcolm Brownsword visited two sites on 7th June:

"Hartslock (BBOWT transect, including extension): **Dingy Skipper** 5, **Common Blue** 11, **Small Heath** 5, **Large Skipper** 2, **Meadow Brown** 1. Notable was the fact that almost 60% of these were in the recent extension to the reserve.

Aston Upthorpe Downs: Dingy Skipper 1, Small Blue 3, Common Blue 20, Brimstone 1, Small Heath 2, Cinnabar Moth 6".

Friday 6th June 2008

On 5th June Malcolm Brownsword saw the following at a site in west Berks (20C, cloudy): Brown Argus 2 (M+F), Dingy Skipper 3, Small Heath 6, Forester Moth 10 and Fox Moth 1.

Sezar Hikmet went to Aston Rowant on 5th June and 6th June: On the 5th he found 5 Brown Argus and on 6th June they were still there, this time with a worn male Common Blue.

Dave Wilton's visit to the Greatmoor area of Bucks this afternoon produced the following: "108 Common Blues, the first decent total I've had for a butterfly species anywhere so far this year. Other butterflies found were Grizzled Skipper (6), Dingy Skipper (13), Large Skipper (1), Green-veined White (2), Green Hairstreak (2), Small Copper (1), Brown Argus (2), Speckled Wood (5) & Small Heath (9). On the debit side, this was my fourth recent visit to the area, the final stronghold of Wall Brown in our three counties. None of the visits produced any sign at all of the species."

Mick & Wendy Campbell found a few things flying at BBOWT's Calvert Jubilee site (permit only) on 2nd June, despite the overcast conditions: "Common Blue (3m, 1f), singletons of Small White, Grizzled Skipper, Small Heath and Silver-ground Carpet moth, 4-Spotted Chasers (3 - 2 were immature females) and many Blue-tailed Damselflies. Then on 4th June at BBOWT's Asham Meads reserve, after heavy rain the day before, we found that moth species outnumbered butterfly species by 2:1. Butterflies seen were Common Blue (9m, 1f), Peacock (3), Large White (2) and Speckled Wood (1). Moths included Silver-Y (1), Yellow Shell (2), Grass Rivulet (1), Forester (1), Small Yellow Underwing (2), Straw Dot (1), Plum Tortrix (1) and a Yellow-tail caterpillar."

Tuesday 3rd June 2008

Maureen Cross, Adonis Blue Species Champion, led the Lardon Chase Field Meeting on 31st May: "The weather was kind and the flowers beautiful for 15 participants on Lardon Chase last Saturday. 9 butterfly species were seen including the target species of Adonis Blue and Small Blue but the star of the show was a solitary Meadow Brown - was it a first of the year? Butterflies seen: Holly Blue 1, Common Blue 22, Adonis Blue 12, Small Blue 5, Grizzled Skipper 2, Large White 1, Small White 1, Brimstone 1, Meadow Brown 1. Moths seen: Heart & Dart 1, Burnet Companion 4, Yellow Shell 5, Common Carpet 1, Mother Shipton 2, and two grass moths Thisanotia chrysonuchella 16, Crambus lathoniellus 1. Plant of interest : Early Gentian (Gentianella Anglica)."

Alun & Chrissie sent the following report today: "Saturday 31st May was one of those days when it often looks cloudy but ground temperatures are really warm. On Yoesdon Bank it was enough to bring out some butterflies including 2 male Adonis Blue (picture below). Also counted in a walk from Radnage Church and back were 1 Small White, 3 Large White, 7 Small Heath, 6 Dingy Skippers, 5 Common Blue, 2 Speckled Wood. Once again, Burnet Companion was the commonest moth noted with Yellow Shell also putting in a few appearances. Everywhere we stopped, there were garden chafers in huge numbers, particularly at Aston Ragpits where we estimated several thousand were swarming, flying or beetling about (the noise of their whirring flight was noticeable at all times while walking, there). Sadly, the Ragpits yielded just 2 **Brimstone**, 3 Large White, 3 Dingy Skipper, 1 Small White and what appeared to be a rather deteriorated Grizzled Skipper which flew off before we could get a good identification. That would have been a Ragpits first for the species since we have been visiting it."

Sunday 1st June 2008

Jim Asher did the Aston Upthorpe transect on 31st May: "The temperature was about 18C, but little sun and few butterflies in flight. I did see a couple of **Dingy Skippers**, including one that decided to roost in a hawthorn about 5 feet up - see photo below - not its usual behaviour. Also a couple of **Grizzled Skippers**, several fresh **Common Blue** males, and a few **Small Heaths.**"

Sunday 1st June 2008

Jim Asher did the Aston Upthorpe transect on 31st May: "The temperature was about 18C, but little sun and few butterflies in flight. I did see a couple of **Dingy Skippers**, including one that decided to roost in a hawthorn about 5 feet up - see photo below - not its usual behaviour. Also a couple of **Grizzled Skippers**, several fresh **Common Blue** males, and a few **Small Heaths.**"

Thursday 29th May 2008

Martin Kincaid and Paul Moon visited Stonepit Field (SP 846 423) in Milton Keynes, Bucks at lunch time (12.40-1.40) today, 29th May: "We went to look for the recently established colony of Small Blues. In beautiful sunshine, we were able to find 12-14 freshly emerged Small Blues, of which three were clearly female. I get the feeling that Small Blue is going to have a good year from what I've seen elsewhere this week (in Bedfordshire - sorry!). We also saw four male Common Blues and singletons of Small White, Orange Tip and Small Copper plus dozens of Burnet Companions. Incidentally, back on 6th May I recorded Grizzled Skipper at this site for the first time and it's certainly one of the best butterfly spots in Milton Keynes these days."

Dave Wilton checked the waste ground to the north of the Calvert Green housing estate in mid-Bucks this afternoon, 29th May: "It produced Dingy Skipper (11), Green Hairstreak (3), Common Blue (13) & Small Heath (2). Day-flying moths included Pyrausta purpuralis (3), Common Heath (2) & Burnet Companion (5)."

Jenni Hignett, BBOWT, sent this first sighting report on 27th May: "My first **Painted Lady** of the year seen on *9th May* at *Aston Rowant, Oxon.* Plus some of the usual suspects: **Comma** (1), **Peacock** (2) and **Green-veined White** (2)."

On Saturday 24th May at Dancersend, in very windy conditions and with only brief sunny periods, Mick Jones saw his first Large Skipper of the year, a male. "There were still 3 male Dukes of Burgundy - one in each of the usual lekking areas, but looking rather tatty now. Also recorded Dingy Skipper, Holly Blue, Common Blue, Brimstone and Large White. Over the last fortnight I have been able to record 4-7 Dukes on every visit in suitable conditions, always using the same three areas. The peak count was 9 on 11th May. We will soon be focusing our survey on looking for eggs and larval damage.

Gerry Kendall and Mike Wilkins led the Field Meeting to Aston Upthorpe Downs on 24th May: "Over twenty people with a good range of experience and ages took part in the recent walk at Aston Upthorpe Down. The day was a bit on the windy side, but not too bad given the recent weather. The party saw thirteen species of butterfly including both the early skippers and Green Hairstreak. This is a couple fewer than the corresponding field trip last year, but must be counted as a success given the conditions. Duke of Burgundy, always a long shot, was not seen and nor was Adonis Blue though we must hope that the latter will appear again this year. There was also a good smattering of moths including **Cinnabar**, **Treble Bar, Angle Shades**, and a **Common Carpet**. One of the Cinnabars came to a sticky end at the hands (or jaws) of a spider as the photograph below shows. The butterfly list for the day was **Dingy Skipper**, **Grizzled Skipper**, **Brimstone**, **Large White**, **Small White**, **Green-veined White**, **Green Hairstreak**, **Small Copper**, **Brown Argus**, **Common Blue**, **Holly Blue**, **Peacock** and **Small Heath.**"

On Friday 23rd May Tony Croft, Dave Wilton and Becky Woodell went to look at the Wood White colony near Salden Wood, Bucks: "In rather mediocre weather only six of the target species of Wood White were seen, spread over a distance of about a kilometre. Rather bizarrely, three of them were males perched together on the same grass stem! Can anyone think of a good reason for this odd behaviour? Other species seen in the area included Dingy Skipper, Brimstone, Large White, Green-veined White, Orange-tip, Brown Argus, Common Blue & Peacock."

Monday 26th May 2008

Rien De Keyser visited Grangelands, Bucks, several times during the last few days resulting in the following observations: Thu 22/05: 1 Holly Blue, 2m Common Blue, 1 Dingy Skipper, 1m1f Brimstone, 3 Small Heath. Fri 23/05: 2 Dingy Skipper, 1f Holly Blue, 2m1f Brimstone, 2f Common Blue, 1 Small White, 1 Green Hairstreak. Sat 24/05: 1 Green Hairstreak, 2m1f Brimstone, 1 Small White, 2m1f Common Blue, 2 Small Heath, 1m Holly Blue.

Dave Ferguson reports on his walk in the area of Black Park, Bucks, on 24th May: "My walk around the heathland this morning, 24th, produced c20 **Speckled Yellows** and c10 **Common Heaths.** On the rides to the east of the heathland were 5+ **Downy Emeralds** with 2 more north of the heathland. Singles of **Broad-bodied Chaser** and **4-spotted Chaser** on the heathland pond. Also **Large Red Damselflies** and **Azure Damselflies.** Oh ... and 3 **Speckled Woods.**"

David Redhead sent this brief update on Saturday, 24th May: "Just now (at 5pm) I saw my first **Common Blue** on the grassland between my house *(Littlemore, Oxon)* and the ring road."

Friday 23rd May 2008

Jan Haseler sent this news today, 23rd May: "I saw 5 Brown Argus and 5 Common Blue at Green Park, Reading today. In 2006, I saw 10 Common Blues for every Brown Argus at this brownfield site. In 2007, it was 4 Common Blues for every Brown Argus. Now they are present in equal numbers."

Helen Hyre sent the following report today, 23rd May: "We haven't seen many butterflies. However, the details below may be of interest.

Wendover Arms near Drayton Beauchamp, Bucks, Weds 21 May between 13.40 and 14.10. There was a gusty cold wind and a few sunny spells - not good butterfly weather. However, I saw 4 **Small White,** 2 **Small Tortoiseshell,** 2 **Peacock.** Also 12 **Common Blue** (I think they were all male). They were mostly in the chalky area near the A41 bypass, some on birdsfoot trefoil. Blue colours were stunning.

Ascott House, Wing, Bucks, Thursday 22 May at approx 16.30. Cool with a few sunny spells. On a grass head my husband spotted our first **Small Copper.** Both right wings were damaged." *Mike Wilkins did his Lardon Chase transect on Thursday morning 22nd May:* "Lots of Common Blues, but apart from Brimstone the rest were off transect: Dingy Skipper, Small Blue and a fresh male Adonis Blue. Also Common Carpet, several Yellow Shells and a Common Swift."

Dave Wilton did a tour around some of the Dingy Skipper colonies in the Bucks Chilterns on Wednesday 21st May: "It produced sightings at Buttler's Hangings (5), Grangelands (3), Aston Clinton Ragpits (2) and Ivinghoe (11). Not great numbers, but then there weren't large quantities of any species to be seen, despite there being a reasonable amount of sunshine. Other butterflies recorded during the day comprised Grizzled Skipper, Brimstone, Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Orange-tip, Green Hairstreak, Brown Argus, Common Blue, Duke of Burgundy, Peacock & Small Heath. Eleven species of day-flying moth were also seen and their overall numbers were almost equivalent to those of the butterflies!"

Mick & Wendy Campbell and Hazel Hall visited Yoesden Bank on Wednesday 21st May: "It was quite warm and sunny but butterfly numbers weren't high, with Dingy Skipper (11) being the most abundant of the 12 species seen. We had to sit and wait for Green Hairstreak (2) to appear in the top corner of the bank where we usually see them and our only Small Blue of the day was hiding by a hawthorn bush in the opposite corner. Other species seen were Small Heath (8), Orange-tip (8), Peacock (3), Holly Blue (1), Brimstone (3), Large White (2), Green-veined White (1), Common Blue (3) and Grizzled Skipper (3). Probable Small Whites weren't stopping to be counted and no sign of Adonis Blue. Moths included Mother Shipton (1, fresh), Burnet Companion (5), Treble-bar (1) and a number of unconfirmed Carpets and Pyraustas. Also our first Broad-bodied Chasers of the season."

Tuesday 20th May 2008

David Redhead sent this news on 20th May: "After a few dismal days it was nice to see the sun shining this morning and my early morning dog walk produced two Speckled Woods and two **Common Carpets** by 8:40am, all flying without any encouragement from the dog or me. The first Speckled Wood was at the very start at 7:40am investigating the blossom on the horse chestnut tree at the bottom of the garden - it was still doing the same an hour later. Later in the morning Wendy and I went to Chilswell Valley, an outcrop of calcareous grassland immediately to the west of Oxford. We saw 12 Common Blues, all male bar one, and our first Brown Argus of the year. No other butterflies but 4 species of moth - six **Common Heath** and singletons of **Mother Shipton**, Common Carpet & Lesser Treble-bar. Back home in the garden there was a Large White, Green-veined White, Holly Blue, Comma and 3 Orange-tips - one a female showing an interest in our Sweet Rocket which has already had three eggs laid on it. Our broad beans were playing host to a Lesser Yellow Underwing caterpillar and a Pyrausta Aurata. In the afternoon I went square-bashing in and around Oxford for just a Holly Blue & Large White but did find some Orange-tip eggs at several locations including Wolfson College Gardens where two patches of Garlic Mustard, carrying 7 eggs and one small caterpillar, had pleasingly been allowed to survive. I have now found Orange-tip eggs in 23/25 of the tetrads in my 10K square - it has actually proved more difficult than I thought it would. I think it suffers a similar fate to the Brown Hairstreak - one of my finds today was a couple of eggs and a 3mm caterpillar on a small road verge clump of garlic mustard - as I left I met a tractor mowing the verge and heading straight for them!" [Moth photos will appear on the Moth Sightings page.]

Liz Goodyear and Andrew Middleton visited the Pitstone area on the Herts/Bucks border on 19th May and sent this interesting report: "A nice early start to get roosting butterflies - only 4 degrees C temperature reading in the car - had the frost warning light up. At 6.45am Andrew saw 2 Grizzled Skippers roosting. In total in 2 hours in Hertfordshire we saw 25 Dingy Skippers initially roosting (teasel x 2, st johns wort x 9, willow herb x 1, thistle x 2 and possibly a michelmas daisy x 1. Then the sun came out and warmed up the Dingys and the remaining 12 or so were mostly basking but two were seen clashing. Also seen were 17 Common Blue, 1 Brown Argus and 6 Small Heath plus Burnet Companion moths. *Into the Bucks part of the site* and we found 3 **Dingy Skippers** and 1 **Common Blue** and 2 **Small Heath** plus a **Cinnabar moth.** No more Grizzleds and the weather was pretty unpleasant by now, the sun went in, the clouds came over and it was really cold. Across the road we had a bit of sun for a while and found 4 Common Blue, 8 Dingy Skippers, 4 Small Heath, 1 **Burnet Companion** and 2 **Small Blue**, one was roosting and the other nectaring on birds foot trefoil."

Alun & Chrissie March were out early at Aston Clinton Ragpits and Dancersend by mid morning on Sunday 18th May: "Dancersend - 3 Duke of Burgundy, 2 Dingy Skipper, 1 Grizzled Skipper, 1 Orange-tip, 2 Common Blue (1 new female), 4 Brimstone, 6 Large White, 3 Holly Blue (2 female). Most sightings taken around the four meadow quarters adjacent to one of the main entrance points to the reserve. Also, several Burnet Companion moths around. Aston Clinton Ragpits - 2 Common Blue, 2 Large White, 1 Dingy Skipper, 1 Brimstone."

17th May - Tony Croft sent this update on the progress of the wild Brown Hairstreak caterpillars found on his garden blackthorn hedge in Long Crendon, Bucks: "The photo below was taken on 16th May. It's about 1 cm long. I'm seeing three Brown Hairstreak caterpillars almost daily but the fourth one hasn't been seen since May 5th. It was, however, quite deep in the bush on which it hatched and this has grown rapidly, so it may still be in there somewhere."

Friday 16th May 2008

Malcolm Brownsword went to two sites on 14th May: "Homefield Wood 14 May (transect): 1 Grizzled Skipper, 1 Large White, 1 Green-veined White, 2 Orange Tips, 3 Common Blues, 1 Peacock. Hartslock also 14 May (not transect): Over 20 Dingy Skippers, 4 Grizzled Skippers, 10 Small Heath, 8 Common Blues, 1 Holly Blue. Please note that BBOWT are now leasing the field at the top of the valley. I have only done one transect here so far (it is referred to as 'Hartslock extension') and this yielded zero butterflies!"

Ched George sent the following news on 15th May: "1 Brown Argus at Coombe Hill, Wendover, yesterday (14th)."

David Chandler, Chairman of BC Herts & Middlesex Branch, sent this report for Wednesday 14th May: "At Ivinghoe Beacon this morning I found 5 Duke of Burgundies, 3 Dingy Skippers and 1 Grizzled Skipper. I met some BC members from UTB who had been on the site longer and they said that they had seen 20 Dukes. The usual other suspects seen were at Ivinghoe: Brimstone & Small Heath."

Tony Croft & Peter Bugg visited Watlington Hill on the afternoon of 14th May: "When the sun finally came out we saw 4 Brown Argus and a Small Copper."

Richard Soulsby's Swyncombe transect on Wednesday morning, 14th May, had more of interest than previous weeks: "Brown Argus (5 + 3 off-transect), Small Blue (2), Small Heath (15), Green Hairstreak (7), Dingy Skipper (3 + 1 off-transect), Small Copper (2 + 1 off-transect), as well as assorted Speckled Wood, Large White, Small White, Greenveined White, Orange-Tip, Brimstone, Holly Blue and Small Tortoiseshell. Moths: Common Carpet (10), Green Carpet (3), Pyrausta nigrata." John Parsons, Newbury, sent the photo below: "It's the larva of the Purple Hairstreak, found on oak leaf in *Bowdown Woods on 14/05/2008* - an hour's search didn't produce any more."

Francis Gomme reports that it was very quiet at Bernwood Meadows on 12th May: "However, I did see 1 Common Blue plus Orange-tips, Green-veined Whites, Small Whites and Peacocks."

Richard Soulsby spent a productive hour at the Warburg BBOWT Reserve in Oxon on Monday afternoon, 12th May: "It provided my first sightings this year of **Small Heath** (5), **Grizzled Skipper** (7+), **Dingy Skipper** (6+), and a single male **Common Blue,** as well as lots of **Brimstones** and unidentified Whites. Moths included **Burnet Companion**, **Brimstone moth** and Pyralid spp. In my garden (in *Benson*) while mowing the lawn a few days ago, I watched a female **Orange Tip** laying eggs on Lady's Smock – I'll avoid mowing that part of the lawn and follow their progress."

Monday 12th May 2008

John Hemmings sent this report of his weekend's sightings on 12th May: "Saturday 10th: Grangelands – Green Hairstreak (2), Holly Blue (3), 1 ovipositing on Dogwood, Small Heath (2), Brimstones, Orange Tips, Green-veined Whites. Sunday 11th am: Hartslock – Grizzled Skipper (3+), Dingy Skipper (10+), Green Hairstreak (1), Speckled Wood (1), Peacock (3), Small Heath (3), Brimstones, Orange Tips, Green-veined Whites. Sunday 11th pm: Lardon Chase – Small Blue (2) – photo below, Dingy Skipper (2), Brimstones, Orange Tips, Green-veined Whites.

Wendy & David Redhead visited BBOWT's Hartslock Reserve on the afternoon of Sunday 11th May: "We had hardly got through the gate before we saw our first Dingy Skipper of the year. The reserve was awash with them and our count by the time we left was at least 40 which we think is the most we have ever seen in one location. Small Heaths (14) were also about throughout the reserve and the far slope even produced 5 Common Blues both these species were also firsts for us in 2008. Also seen 4 Orange-tip, 3 Holly Blue (which we are seeing everywhere) and 2 Brimstone. There were some day-flying moths about with a pristine Mother Shipton and a little flurry of about four Pyrausta nigrata."

Jim Asher went to Seven Barrows on 11th May: "Little flying other than some Dingy Skippers (about 10 - photo of a mating pair below), two Green Hairstreak (photo below of one ovipositing on rock rose) and one Duke of Burgundy, plus a few Common Blues. I had Grizzled Skipper last weekend at Aston Upthorpe, but saw none today at 7B."

Dave Wilton managed to get out for a couple of hours on 11th May to his local disused railway cutting (Westcott, Bucks): "Dingy Skipper (23) and Grizzled Skipper (26) were out in good numbers, I'm relieved to say, and I watched a female Dingy Skipper lay an egg on bird's-foot trefoil. One very lonely male Common Blue and four Small Heaths were the only other items of interest. No sign of Green Hairstreak but it seems to be a very small colony here and I don't normally see the one or two that get recorded until the hawthorn blossom is over and they come down to ground level. Several hornets seen on the move, the first I've noticed this year."

Nick Bowles sent the following report on 11th May: Saturday 10th May - I saw a single **Grizzled Skipper** in the *Calvert drain* area in a brief visit. *NO* Wall Brown. No key species in the *Grendon area* but I did see **Comma** laying on Elm. I didn't check to see if an egg was actually laid but she was testing the leaves very purposefully and bending her abdomen around. *On Sunday 11th,* at *Dancersend* 2 **Duke of Burgundy** on anthill at 10am. No other key species despite a walk around the site. At *Coombe Hill,* **Grizzled Skipper** 4 and **Green**

Hairstreak 1, plus Small Copper 2. Aston Clinton Ragpits Dingy Skipper 2. Near Pitstone Church Small Blue 3, Dingy Skipper 6, Small Heath 2 and Common Blue."

Francis Gomme called into Dancersend on the afternoon of Saturday 10th May: "Between 15.00-16.00 hours it was overcast and humid but I did see 3 **Dukes of Burgundy**, plus **Small Whites** and **Large whites**, **Brimstones** and 2 **Green-veined Whites.**"

Lloyd Garvey was at 7 Barrows (BBOWT reserve) on 10th May: "I saw a few singles of **Dingy Skipper, Holly Blue, Small Copper, Small Heath** plus 3 **Brimstone** and a **Common Carpet.**"

Dennis Dell sent this photo on 10th May: "It shows the typical 'prayer mode' of a **Purple Emperor larva** in May."

Thursday 8th May 2008

At Hartslock this morning, 8th May, Francis Gomme recorded: "12+ Dingy Skipper, 4 Grizzled Skipper, 5 Green Hairstreaks, 3 Small Tortoiseshells patrolling upper slope, 5 Small Heaths, 2 Holly Blues, Brimstones, Peacocks, Orange Tips, Large Whites and 2 Green-veined Whites."

Welcome to the website new contributor Nikola Middlemast: "A colleague of mine recommended I send you some photos I took of a breeding pair of **Green-veined White** butterflies. The photos were taken at *Coley Park in Reading* on the *8th May* 2008 12:00ish."

This report from Tom Stevenson arrived this morning, 8th May: "Another new one for the year - and I still haven't seen Comma! This is one of my favourites - a **Small Copper** down my *Benson (Oxon)* allotment this morning."

Dennis Dell and Dave Wilton visited lvinghoe Beacon, Steps Hill and Pitstone Hill, Bucks on 7th May: "Three very fresh-looking **Dukes of Burgundy** were found at *lvinghoe*, but the "butterfly of the day" was definitely the **Green Hairstreak** with 41 recorded across the area (34 of them in one small area on the edge of *Pitstone Hill!*). Other butterfly species seen during the day comprised **Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper** (including a mating pair), **Brimstone, Small White, Orange-tip, Holly Blue, Peacock, Speckled Wood & Small Heath.** Day-flying moths included **Adela reaumurella, Burnet Companion & Small Purplebarred.**"

Tom Stevenson found an hour on 7th May to have a look at Swyncombe: "No Skippers which is what I was hoping for but 3 **Green Hairstreaks** and a **Small Heath.** A single **Peacock** and **Holly Blue** and about 5 **Brimstone** (only one female). I have known it better but it was quite windy up there. I attach a couple of photos - although the Green Hairstreak is not good it is in flight!"

Mick & Wendy Campbell went to Aston Upthorpe on Wednesday 7th May: "No Duke of Burgundy seen unfortunately, but good numbers of **Green Hairstreak** (11). There were surprisingly few Skippers on site - despite the warm and sunny weather - just a single pristine **Dingy Skipper** and 3 **Grizzled Skippers**, one of which was ovipositing (photo of the egg below). Other species seen were: **Orange-tip** (6), **Brimstone** (9), **Peacock** (5), **Greenveined White** (3), **Small Tortoiseshell** (1) and **Holly Blue** (3)."

Malcolm Brownsword saw the following at Hartslock on 6 May: "4 Brimstone, 2 Orange Tip, 1 Holly Blue, 2 Small Heath. I was told there were Green Hairstreaks around, but I did not find any."

7th May - Nigel Partridge reports that he went for a late afternoon walk around Park Wood and surrounding area on Monday 5th May: "16 Peacocks, 9 Brimstones, 1 Comma, 1 Small Tortoiseshell and a few Whites I didn't get a chance to ID."

Robin Carr went to Dancersend on 6th May and saw one Duke of Burgundy.

Dave Wilton went to the disused railway cutting near Salden Wood, south-west of Milton Keynes, on Tuesday 6th May: "Four Wood Whites were active in the sunshine, while other species seen included Dingy Skipper, Brimstone, Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Orange-tip, Peacock, Comma and Speckled Wood. Day-flying moths comprised Grapholita jungiella, Common Heath and Cinnabar."

Tony Speight sent this update on 6th May: "Having had the first sightings only last week it was great to have 19 **Dingy Skipper** as well as a **Large White, Holly Blue** and **Peacock** on my transect at *Sands Bank.* Also seen were **Brimstone** and **Speckled Wood** but not on transect. I also went to another wood in High Wycombe today (6th May), Castlefield Wood and saw 4 Large White, 5 **Orange Tip,** 16 Speckled Wood, 2 Peacock and a Holly Blue."

Alun & Chrissie went to Dancersend on Monday 5th May: "The butterfly count was 15 Brimstone, 9 Green-veined White, 4 Small White, 9 Peacock, 1 Red Admiral, 3 Speckled Wood, 11 Orange Tip and 1 Small Copper (on the extension meadow) - a pristine specimen."

Richard Soulsby sent the following report for 5th & 6th May: "At last some decent weather, so on the 5th May I explored "empty" tetrad SU5898 (near Stadhampton, Oxon) for the 10k square SU59. This yielded seven species: Peacock (7), Brimstone (2), Large White (2) and one each of Small White, Orange Tip, Small Tortoiseshell and Speckled Wood. This morning (6th) my garden in Benson was buzzing with Holly Blues and at lunchtime I did the Swyncombe transect yielding: Orange Tip (3), Holly Blue (1), Speckled Wood (1), Green-Veined(?) White (1), Brimstone (4 + lots off-transect), Peacock (3) and Green Hairstreak (1)."

Wednesday 7th May 2008

Mick Jones is carrying out a detailed survey of Duke of Burgundy at Dancersend this year:

"Sunday 4 May - Saw the first **Duke of Burgundy** (a male) of the year in mown paths on Anthill. Also saw **Peacocks, Brimstones, Orange Tip** and **Green-veined White.** *Monday 5 May* - Couldn't visit until 4:00 - no sightings of Dukes, but did add **Speckled Wood** and **Green Hairstreak** (2) to our list.

Dave Wilton paid another visit to the disused railway west of Westcott, Bucks on Monday afternoon, 5th May: "This visit met with some success in that I found, at last, a single Dingy Skipper although there was still no sign of Grizzled Skipper. More of a surprise was a pair of Small Heaths (the photo below was the best I could manage), while other active species there included Brimstone, Large White, Green-veined White, Orange-tip, Holly Blue, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell. Moths included Esperia sulphurella, Pyrausta purpuralis, Common Carpet and Common Heath (six seen, evenly split between males and females). Even our garden saw some variety amongst the butterflies today, with Brimstone, Large White, Orange-tip and a pair of Holly Blues making appearances. The Large White, which has been something of a rarety around here so far this year, paused briefly for the camera."

David Fuller reported the following butterflies on 5th May: "Odney Island Cookham 03/05/08 male **Common Blue** (first of the year for me), male **Brimstone.** My garden in

Maidenhead 04/05/08 Peacock, male Orange Tip, Small White and female Holly Blue and on *05/05/08* Holly Blue female, Green-veined White (first of the year for me), Peacock, male Orange-tip and Small White."

David Gantzel reported the following on 5th May: "Holly Blue at Hazlemere and at Little Kingshill Arboretum on Saturday May 3rd; Peacock at Hazlemere Sunday May 4th. All singles."

David Redhead sent these butterfly sightings on 5th May: "On Saturday 3rd May I did the M40 transect but all I saw in Bernwood Forest and on the M40 transect was 4 **Orangetip**, 3 **Brimstone**, 2 **Peacock**, 1 **Speckled Wood** and 1 **Green-veined White**. Once again there was more variety in our garden (*Littlemore*, *Oxon*) with 2 **Comma**, 2 **Holly Blue**, 2 Orange-tip, 2 Peacock and singletons of Brimstone, Green-veined White, **Large White** and Speckled Wood. On Sunday 4th May we had a **Brimstone egg-laying** on the buckthorn in our garden and the **Orange-tip egg** count on the garlic mustard in our garden has risen to 26. Although the first Orange-tip eggs were laid on the 23rd April none has yet hatched."

Saturday 3rd May 2008

Ched George had the following sightings today near Lodge Hill, Bucks: Duke of Burgundy 1, Green Hairstreak 1, Dingy Skipper 1, Grizzled Skipper 1.

Nick Bowles went along the Chiltern ridge today, 3rd May: "I discovered Grizzled Skipper (at least two) at *Coombe Hill* near Wendover, but failed to find Green Hairstreak, Dingy or Duke. Amazed to see both Coltsfoot and Horseshoe vetch in flower about 30m apart at *Aston Clinton Ragpits.* Plenty of Brimstones (8) and Peacock (7) about with fewer, but still several, Orange-tips (4) and a solitary Speckled Wood and Green-veined White."

Tony Croft saw his first Green Hairstreak of the season at Wytham Woods (Oxon) this afternoon, 3rd May.

Derek Brown reported the following today, 3rd May: "I saw a couple of Grizzled Skippers at Decoy Heath (Berks) this afternoon, 3rd (picture not great unfortunately)."

Tony Speight sent the following report on 3rd May: "After about half an hour of walking on *Sands Bank, High Wycombe* and seeing only one butterfly on what was quite a dull morning (Saturday 3rd May), I was pleased to see my first **Dingy Skipper** of the year and within the next fifteen minutes my total butterfly count had improved to **Peacocks** (2), **Brimstones** (6) and **Dingy Skippers** (2)."

Tony Croft sent this update on 1st May: "Of the original 19 Brown Hairstreak eggs laid in my Bucks garden last summer just 10 survived the winter. Of those, 6 have hatched and this **Brown Hairstreak caterpillar** is believed to be from the first hatching which took place on April 17th and is 2-3mm long. By our adopted convention when monitoring caterpillars we give them names from A to Z so this is Agnetha."

On 30th April Dave Maunder reported some butterflies seen since the 14th around Aylesbury: "Peacocks (25); Small Tortoiseshells (6); Comma (1); Brimstones (male - 5, female - 2); Orange-tips (3); Large Whites (2 - 1 on 22nd, 1 on 27th); Small Whites (8), Green-veined Whites (6); Holly Blue (1, on 26th) and my first Speckled Wood of the year at Coombe Hill on 27th April."

Tuesday 29th April 2008

Judith Barnard, BC Beds & Northants Branch, saw a number of butterflies in Willen,

North Bucks, yesterday, 28th April: "I saw 2 **Peacocks,** 1 **Small Tortoiseshell** and two **Speckled Woods** (flying around each other)."

Nigel Partridge sent this news on Sunday 27th April: "Some butterflies have started to appear thanks to the sun this weekend. Saw our first **Holly Blue** yesterday *(26-4-08, picture attached)*, whilst today, *27th,* **Orange-tip** and **Large White** were firsts for the year."

John Ward-Smith sent the following report on Sunday 27th April: "In and around Bracknell over the past few days I have seen plenty of Peacocks and Brimstones. But also there have been singletons of Orange-tip at Moss End, Warfield on 23rd April, Speckled Wood at Wishmoor Bog on 25th April, and Holly Blue in my Bracknell garden on 26th April."

David & Wendy Redhead saw the following on Saturday 26th April: "There was a Large White in our garden in Littlemore, Oxon, on Saturday before I went to do the Aston Upthorpe Transect which only produced Brimstones and Peacocks plus one Small Tortoiseshell and one Comma plus two Green-veined White off transect - no Green Hairstreak, Grizzled Skipper or Dingy Skipper. On Sunday 27th in our garden, Wendy recorded: Brimstone, Orange-tip (male & female), Holly Blue, Green-veined White, Large White, Peacock and Speckled Wood. We then went to Slade Camp to check the Brown Hairstreak eggs and in the allotments (where three of the eggs have been laid) we saw 3 Brimstone, 2 Small Tortoiseshell and 2 Orange-tip to bring Wendy's species total to an impressive 8 for the day."

On Saturday 26th April, Rien de Keyser saw his first Brimstone butterfly of the year at Christ Church College in Oxford.

Saturday 26th April 2008

This news just received from Nick Bowles: "A real breath of spring at home here in Tring today. In *Wendover Woods* a large forest area about 2 crow-flying miles west of Tring (but in *Bucks* not Herts.) today, *26th April:* **Brimstone**, un-id'd **Small** or **Green-veined White**, **Orange-tip, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Speckled Wood.** I also visited Bucks sites which have colonies of Grizzled & Dingy Skippers, Green Hairstreak, and Small Copper, but no sign of any. Simply more of the same species as above. No sign of Holly Blue anywhere. **Slow worm** and **Grass snake, Buzzard, Red Kite** and my first singing **Whitethroats** of the season added to the fun. No species of particular interest yet, but at least Orange-tip and Speckled wood now under my belt for the year."

Tony Speight, Parks Ranger for Wycombe District Council, sent the first UTB Green Hairstreak record of the year on Friday 25th April: "I was pleasantly surprised to get my first Green Hairstreak sighting of the year today (25/4/08) while on Sands Bank in High Wycombe. So far this year I had only managed to see 2 other species on the site namely Peacock and Brimstone, both of which were also seen today."

On 25th April Derek Brown sent the photo below of a male Orange-tip, seen in his garden in Beenham, Berks, on 18th April.

On 25th April Becky Woodell reported on her butterfly season to date: "My garden in *Oakley, Bucks,* has so far this year produced 1 **Brimstone,** 1 **Comma** and 2 **Peacocks.** My *Whitecross Green Wood* transect on *23rd April* had 10 **Brimstones,** 22 **Peacocks,** 1 **Comma,** 2 **Orange Tips,** 1? **Green-veined White** (time 1 hr). *Oakley Wood* on *22nd* - 9 **Brimstones,** 5 **Peacocks,** 2 **Commas** (1 hr)."

On Tuesday afternoon, 22nd April, David Redhead walked the Swyncombe Down transect: "Just two Brimstones and three Peacocks in 70 minutes. Before leaving home, in

10 minutes I managed 4 **Green-veined Whites** (my first of the year and from their behaviour I suspect it was three males after a female), a male **Orange-Tip**, a female **Brimstone**, a **Comma** and a **Peacock** and on my return in 5 minutes there were two Commas and a female Brimstone - I think on a timed count basis that makes the butterfly population in my garden nearly 50 times that at Swyncombe Down with over twice the variety! In the afternoon I walked the *Shabbington Wood* transect for 1 **Brimstone** and 6 **Peacocks.**"

Dennis Dell reported as follows on 22nd April: "At last, 18 degrees and 100% sunshine! I expect those of us who weren't having to work, rushed out to enjoy the welcome sunshine and warmth which has eluded us so far. During my *Finemere Meadows* transect I saw the 'usual suspects', mostly **Peacocks** [13] which, as other members have reported, does indeed seem to be abundant this spring. I also agree with the dearth of Red Admirals: I also did not see any."

Dave Wilton sent this news on 22nd April: "Finally, a warm and sunny Spring day! A transect at *Waterperry Wood, Oxon* produced **Brimstone** (5), **Green-veined White** (2), **Peacock** (9), **Comma** (3), **Speckled Wood** (1), while road-side sightings in Bucks on the way there and back comprised Brimstone (6) and **Orange-tip** (2). The *disused railway west of Westcott Airfield* brought more of the same, with Brimstone (2), Green-veined White (1), Orange-tip (1), Peacock (16) and Comma (2), but unfortunately there was no sign yet of Grizzled or Dingy Skipper. Back home at *Westcott, Bucks* I saw Brimstone (1), Peacock (3) and **Small Tortoiseshell** (1) to finish the day with 55 butterflies of seven species."

On Tuesday 22nd April Malcolm Brownsword sent these reports: "I saw the following this morning in my garden at *West Hagbourne, Oxon,* 2 miles south of Didcot: 1 **Holly Blue,** 1 **Brimstone** (male). This afternoon at *Homefield Wood* (18C, almost 100% sun), I saw 5 **Brimstone,** 11 **Peacock** (including 2 nectaring on primroses on the grassland area) and 1 **Comma.** I'm doing transects for BBOWT at Homefield Wood and Hartslock again and will be making extra visits to both reserves, so will send further records."

Friday 18th April 2008

Dave Ferguson sent this news on 16th April: "At last - a non-hibernating butterfly. A **Holly Blue** flew around the garden (*Beaconsfield*) yesterday (15th)."

Tuesday 15th April 2008

David Redhead said that with the colder weather butterflies were very few and far between today, 15th: "Just singletons of Brimstone, Small White and Peacock in our garden (*Littlemore, Oxon*) today. On Saturday afternoon 12th April, the Shabbington Wood transect produced just 4 butterflies - two Commas and two Peacocks."

Wendy Wilson sent this interesting update today, 15th: "On June 9th last year I sent you photos of an **Orange-tip** caterpillar in my *Gerrards Cross (Bucks)* garden which pupated in my insect cage. The pupa remained there in a north-facing shed all winter and, apart from a fine spray of water occasionally, I left it alone. Two weeks ago the tip went black and I was afraid it had gone mouldy. However, I am delighted to report that a perfect imago emerged safely this morning and crawled up on to my finger and rested briefly. Then came the magical moment when the wings opened to reveal brilliant splashes of orange. After basking on the lawn he spent the next 40 minutes nectaring on forget-me-nots in my garden (ignoring primroses, tulips and grape hyacinths which were also on the menu), before flying off towards Austenwood Common 50 metres away, where there's plenty of garlic mustard in bud. Incidentally, does anyone out there know why one orange wing-tip always looks yellow in digital photos? I have the same problem with Red Admirals. Talking of which, I agree with Dave Wilton that Red Admirals are in short supply this year. I have yet to see one, whereas

there are Peacocks everywhere, I saw five today on the common and in my garden."

Dave Wilton was in Finemere Wood today, 15th April and recorded the following: "In case no-one else has reported one yet, I saw my first **Green-veined White** in Finemere Wood this afternoon along with **Brimstone** (5), **Peacock** (12) and **Comma** (7).

Mick & Wendy Campbell had very similar results to Dave's Finemere Wood visit (see above): "We walked from Holton to *Waterperry Wood* today, *15th April.* In the middle of the wood where it was about 12-13C and sheltered from the cool breeze we recorded **Brimstone** (5 - all males, one nectaring on primroses), **Peacock** (12) and **Comma** (10 - one nectaring on Sallow blossom). There were also several **Orange/Light Orange Underwing moths** flying in the sun and **tadpoles** in one of the more permanent-looking woodland pools."

David Fuller reports an Orange-tip in his *Maidenhead (Berks)* garden on Monday morning *14th April,* one day earlier than 2007, also a **Peacock.**

Sunday 13th April 2008

13/04/08 - Butterflies seen in Aylesbury over the last few weeks by Dave Maunder *included:* **Peacocks** (5), **Small Tortoisehells** (12), **Brimstones** (6) and **Small whites** (2, 1 on 9th, 1 on 13th).

Wednesday 9th April 2008

Latest news from Wendy Wilson today, 9th April: "The temperature on my car thermometer registered 6.5C when I arrived at Langley Park this morning, Wednesday 9 April, but the sun was shining and the old brick wall in the arboretum there provides a nice sheltered habitat (it must have been 15C warmer there) so it was worth having a look around. I was delighted to see my first **Speckled Wood** of the season, impersonating one of the dead leaves it was resting on (photo attached). I also saw 5 **Peacocks**, two in Langley Park and three at Chalfont Heights."

John Hemmings reported the following on 8th April: "4 Peacocks, 2 male Brimstones and a pair of Commas (in courtship) on a pleasant spring day at *Gomm Valley on 3rd April*. Hope they are all still OK since we have gone back to winter!"

David Gantzel sent these sightings on 8th April: "Friday April 4th two **Peacocks** at Terriers, High Wycombe and two Peacocks and one **Small Tortoiseshell** at Hazlemere, Bucks."

Anne Booth says they had their first Speckled Wood in the garden (Earley, Reading) on 5th April.

Graham Elcombe sent this news on 5th April: "On *1st April,* at BBOWT's *Warburg Reserve (near Henley),* two **Commas** on the same bush, one very dark and fresh looking, the other a lot paler (hopefully a male and female). Also, one male **Brimstone.**"

Dave Wilton sent this report on 5th April: "A walk around various sites local to me in *Westcott, Bucks* yesterday *(4th April)* produced more than 20 butterflies but they were all still from the hibernating species: **Brimstone, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell** and **Comma.** Photographs of three of them appear below. After last year's bumper crop, Red Admirals seem to be noticeable by their absence this spring."

David & Wendy Redhead have made the following sightings in the first four days of

April:

"Tuesday 1st April

Bicester Fields : Peacock 1, Small Tortoiseshell 1. *Garden (Littlemore, Oxon) :* Brimstone 2, Small White 2, Peacock 1. Scrub near house : Comma 2, Peacock 2. Day total : 5 species, 11 butterflies.

Thursday 3rd April

Garden : our first **Orange-tip** of the year (a male), Brimstone 2, Peacock 2, Small White 1, Comma 1. Day total : 5 species, 7 butterflies.

Friday 4th April

Bernwood Forest : Brimstone 11 (including our first female of the year), Comma 11, Peacock 9. Garden : our first **Holly Blue** of the year, Peacock 3, Brimstone 1, Small White 1, Comma 1. Grassland by house : Peacock 1. Day total : 5 species, 39 butterflies.

The current centre of attention in our garden is a large laurel bush in flower and the Holly Blue was flying about in it this afternoon (4th) rather than the nearby holly tree. The Holly Blue was challenged as sighting of the day by a male **Bullfinch** in the apple tree between the laurel bush and holly tree where it was feasting on the buds and also by five amazingly fresh looking Commas flying about in close proximity in a ride in Bernwood Forest. The attached photo shows an amazingly fresh looking Peacock considering it is nine months old! Sadly from the weather forecast it sounds as though spring is going into temporary abeyance."

Wendy Wilson was in the Chess Valley on 4th April: "I was crossing a footbridge from Herts to Bucks near Sarratt Bottom when a male Orange-tip flew towards me crossing the river in the opposite direction. Luckily I first spotted it while it was still in Bucks! Also in the vicinity were two Peacocks and a Brimstone."

Derek Brown sent this news on 4th April: "We've finally managed a few butterflies in the garden in *Beenham (Berks)* over the last week or two, including **Brimstone, Comma** and **Peacock** and today (4th) Cathy saw a **Speckled Wood** this afternoon."

At 2pm on Friday 4th April Martin Raper recorded 3 male Orange-tip butterflies in Moor Copse Nature Reserve, Berks.

Tony Croft sent this report on 4th April: "I've just carried out my first transect of the season at *Rushbeds Wood* in today's lovely sunshine and recorded 10 **Peacock**; 7 **Brimstone** and 1 male **Orange-tip.** On *March 31st* Josie saw a **Brimstone Moth** at *Chinnor.*

On Friday 4th April, Pete Eeles saw 2 **Orange-tip** (1 male, 1 female), 1 **Brimstone** (male), 1 **Peacock** and 1 **Holly Blue** (male) in his garden in *Thatcham, Berks.*

On 2nd April David Fuller reported the following: "In my garden in *Maidenhead, Berks,* on *Saturday 29th March* I saw **Brimstone** 2 males, **Peacock** 2, **Comma** and **Small Tortoiseshell."**

Danny Howard was in Abingdon town centre on 1st April and saw his first Peacock of the year fluttering around in the warm sunshine.

Ben Carpenter sent the following report: "I noticed on the butterfly sightings page that **Speckled Wood** hasn't been seen this year yet. I saw one at *Marsh Baldon* (nr Nuneham Courtenay which is 5 miles south of Oxford) on the *30/03/2008.*"

Monday 31st March 2008

This sighting was received from Jim Asher today, 31st March: "I had a very reliable

sighting reported today by *Michael and Jenny Kelsey from Marcham, Oxon,* of a male **Orange-tip,** amongst other species, at *Dry Sandford Pit (Oxon) yesterday 30th March!*"

David & Wendy Redhead sent this news from Littlemore, Oxon, yesterday 30th March: "In our garden at about 1.30pm there were 3 **Brimstones,** 2 **Peacocks** and a **Comma** plus a definite sign that spring has sprung, 2 **Small White!** Wendy & I then popped over to *Chilswell Valley* where we managed 3 Peacocks, 2 Brimstone plus a Comma and a **Small Tortoiseshell** - making a total of 15 butterflies and 5 species for the day."

Jim Asher had his first butterfly sightings of 2008 yesterday, 30th March, in Oxfordshire: "One Comma and 5 Brimstones around Cothill area, and two Brimstones and a Peacock in Marcham. I also found a Purple Hairstreak egg on a small oak near Hitchcopse Pit."

Saturday 29th March 2008

On Thursday afternoon, 27th March, Wendy & David Redhead saw a Comma sunning itself on the gravel paths in their vegetable garden in *Littlemore, Oxon*.

Maureen Cross sent this transect report on 27th March: "The sun shone so today I did my first transect on *Lardon Chase (Berks),* butterflies none, bumblebees 5 or could they have been butterflies in fur coats? Who would blame them?"

Dave Wilton sent the following on Thursday 27th March: "Until today I'd given up hope of seeing any butterflies at all this month. However, as the temperature achieved a sweltering 12C in this afternoon's sunshine I decided to spend a couple of hours in *Finemere Wood* and managed double figures! **Brimstone** (3), **Peacock** (1) and **Comma** (6)."

26th March - this late news received from Dave Ferguson: "I saw a **Small Tortoiseshell** near *Aston Abbots (Bucks)* on *Feb 28th.* Also recently a Peacock but unfortunately I didn't note the details. I am going to have to fit butterflying around surveying for the Bird Atlas for the next four years. This could be interesting - atlasing takes you to places you don't normally go to."

[There are still a few grids left that need surveying for the next Butterfly Atlas - if you enjoy getting out in the sunny countryside, even if it's just for an hour or so in your spare time, then <u>perhaps you can help?</u> Wendy]

Wednesday 20th March 2008

Ched George sent the following report on 17th March: "Sue recorded a male **Brimstone** in our *Radnage* garden on *Saturday, March 15th.* I see there are several reports for 14th and 15th on the website already."

Sunday 16th March 2008

Mike Wilkins had a Brimstone in his garden (Abingdon, Oxon) yesterday, 15th March.

Mick Campbell saw a Brimstone and Peacock near the river in Thame on 15th March.

David Fuller reports seeing a male **Brimstone** in his *Maidenhead* (Berks) garden on 14/03/08.

Pete Eeles sent this news yesterday, 15th March: "At last - my first butterfly of the season! A female **Brimstone** flying around my garden (in Berkshire) at midday, getting some nectar before the heavens opened."

Judith Barnard of the Beds & Northants branch of Butterfly Conservation saw two separate Brimstone butterflies in Willen Park and Bolbeck Park, Milton Keynes on Friday lunchtime (14th March).

Monday 10th March 2008

On Saturday 1st March Wendy Redhead saw a **Red Admiral** sunning itself on a gravel path in her garden in *Littlemore, Oxford.*

Dave Wilton sent the following report on 27th February: "I thought the sheltered rides at *Rushbeds Wood, Bucks* might produce a Brimstone or two in today's good weather but instead I found this **Comma** soaking up the sun. Perhaps last night's earthquake disturbed its slumber!"

Saturday 23rd February 2008

Mary Payne sent the following report on 18th February: "I saw a Small Tortoiseshell yesterday afternoon (*Sunday 17th Feb*) in some scrubland by the *Watermead lake, Aylesbury.*"

Saturday 16th February 2008

On 13th February Maureen Cross sent the following sightings: "On Friday 18th January I saw a **Peacock** flying outside my kitchen window. Looking at the sightings page I think it was possibly the first of the year and can only assume it ventured out on a day when, although it was cloudy, the temperature was unusually high for January. Yesterday, 12th Feb, I encountered 2 **Red Admirals** in Streatley which was much more understandable as it was a nice warm sunny day."

11th February: David & Wendy Redhead saw their first butterfly of 2008 on Saturday 9th February: "There was a male **Brimstone** flying around for about 10 minutes in our garden in Littlemore (Oxon) about midday today."

Don Otter reports seeing a **Red Admiral** flying at Steps Hill (Bucks) on Monday 11th February.

On Monday February 11th David Gantzel saw a male **Brimstone** in his garden in Hazlemere (Bucks).

10th February - Tim & Colleen Watts report seeing the following butterflies: "A **Brimstone** at Whitchurch on 9/2/08 and a **Peacock** at Waddesdon Manor on 9/2/08."

Thanks to Dave Wilton for the following report: "On Saturday 9th February species champion Stuart Hodges led a group of eight intrepid (some might say foolhardy) UTB members in a search for **Black Hairstreak eggs** at Finemere Wood. The final egg tally was two, accounting for 12 man-hours of searching time and proving yet again just how difficult it is to find this stage of the butterfly's life cycle. The first egg was discovered within 60 seconds of the start and if we'd given up at that point it would have improved the statistics no end!"

This news came from Bill Parry on 10th February: "I saw a **Comma** in my garden in Feilden Grove, Oxford, on Wednesday (6th Feb.) and two male **Brimstones** this afternoon (10th)."

Richard Soulsby saw his first butterfly of the year on 10th February: "It was a Small Tortoiseshell flying in a Benson (Oxon) garden."

Rien De Keyser sent this news on 10th February: "I saw a **Red Admiral** flying around on Headington Road, between Morrell Avenue and Marston Road (between Oxford and Headington) on 30/01/08. My only butterfly this year so far..."

On 9th February Dave Maunder sent the following report: "Over the last two lovely spring-like days I've managed to see in Aylesbury **Peacocks** (2), **Brimstone** (1), male, (in St Mary's churchyard), and a **Comma** - all seen today (9th), except one **Peacock** seen yesterday by my wife in our garden. Not a bad start to the butterfly year!"

Dick and Val bodily saw a **Brimstone** on Saturday 9th February in their garden at Shenley Lodge, Milton Keynes.

Friday 8th February 2008

David Gantzel saw an active Red Admiral at Hedsor garden centre in Bucks today, 8th February.

Nigel Partridge sent the following report at 2.30pm today, 8th February: "About an hour ago I saw my first butterfly of the year. A **Peacock** basking in the sun on one of the walls here at Loosley Row, Bucks."

On 8th February Mick Campbell saw his first butterfly of the season: a Red Admiral flying around a churchyard near Long Crendon, Bucks.

On Friday 8th February Martin & Dee Raper report seeing a male **Brimstone** flying along the edge of River Field in Moor Copse at noon. It was very sunny and 10C.

This news came from Dave Wilton today, 8th February: "A **Brimstone** carried out a flypast through our garden at Westcott (Bucks) this morning which gets me off the mark for this year."

Wendy Wilson saw the first **Peacock** of the season on Wednesday 6th February. It was flying and basking near Latimer House in the Chess Valley, Bucks.

Sunday 3rd February 2008

Graham Elcombe sent the following on 29th January: "This afternoon, 29th Jan, at *Savill Garden* (part of Windsor Great Park), I saw a **Red Admiral.** It was in very good condition and quite active. I think it had been nectaring on a winter-flowering clematis growing on a Southfacing wall."

Martin Townsend saw a Small Tortoiseshell flying and basking outside his house in *Oxford* at 11.55am on *29th January.*

On 26th January several UTB committee members attended a guided tour of Finemere Wood in Bucks, during which Wildlife Trust, Forestry Commission and Natural England staff explained some of the work that is being planned for the wood over the next two or three years. Initially two large compartments of Norway Spruce and Corsican Pine will be cleared-felled and allowed to regenerate naturally. The work, which is expected to start at the end of the coming summer, will make a significant inroad into getting rid of most of the conifers that were planted in the 1970s and speed up the process of returning the SSSI to oak woodland. In contrast to previous felling carried out by BBOWT, this time most of the timber will be removed and sold to help fund the operation, so there will be some disruption while the work is carried out. In particular, the main track will need to be strengthened to provide access for heavy vehicles and machinery. Visitors may well experience some inconvenience during the month or so that it will take to fell and clear each of the compartments but the eventual benefits for butterflies and for other wildlife will be immense. Although on a smaller scale, similar work to remove conifers will be carried out at *Whitecross Green Wood* over the same period. *Dave Wilton.*

On 27th January Chris lles reports seeing an unidentified dark butterfly: "Presumably Peacock or Red Admiral, seen in central *Abingdon* today, flying away from a winter-flowering shrub which had attracted a number of honey-bees."

Work Party Report - Aston Upthorpe Downs, Sunday 27th January: For the second time this winter an Upper Thames Branch work party tackled the encroaching growth on section 6 of the butterfly transect at Aston Upthorpe Downs. With eight members present we even managed to start widening the section in places. As a result of our efforts here, during this and previous winters, much of this area is now a carpet of wild strawberry plants. So it was especially pleasing to read Mike Wilkins' recent transect report which showed that during the summer of 2007 the Grizzled Skipper count, at 87, was the second highest ever recorded in the 16 years the transect has been walked. *David Redhead.*

On the morning of 26th January 2008 Robin Dryden led a walk around Langley Park, Bucks: "We were delighted to see a Red Admiral butterfly flying across the 'vista' grassland, heading towards some flowering gorse."

Wednesday 9th January 2008

David Redhead sent the following Brown Hairstreak update for 1st January 2008: "The first **Upper Thames Branch Brown Hairstreak egg count** of the year at the *RSPB Otmoor Reserve* on *New Years Day* managed to set a new record for the hedge alongside the access track in the car park field with **123 eggs** as against 74 in 2007, 120 in 2006 and 74 in 2005. The westward hedge, which was cut back last winter, is regrowing but not yet to the extent to have restored the amount of shelter it previously afforded. So the new record is pleasing especially as we can no longer comprehensively search the backside of the hedge as for much of its length it has now grown up to the barbed wire fence. So a case could be made for the comparable figure this year to be about a third higher.

All our egg counts to date this winter have shown either comparable or increased figures to last winter indicating the poor 2007 summer had no deleterious effect on the Brown Hairstreak. From reports received from the West Midlands Branch this seems to be the case as well in Worcestershire but Richard Smith tells me that four egg transects in West Wales show a consistent and extremely significant fall in numbers of 78%.

On the range front Dave Wilton has been going great guns and egg finds have now been made in 153 km squares. This includes 12 extensions of range and several of these are from areas which have been searched in previous winters without success. So further evidence of a gradual expansion in range.