

BC Devon Roger Bristow Memorial Butterfly Walks

Welcome to BC Devon Branch's Roger Bristow Memorial Butterfly Walks. These walks cover places in our county which are good places to see particular butterflies at different times of the Spring and Summer. Our aim is to add more walks to the BC Devon In Your Area web site - so do return and check for new listings. If you have any further butterfly walk suggestions we would love to hear from you. Please email the branch on contact@devon-butterflies.org.uk.

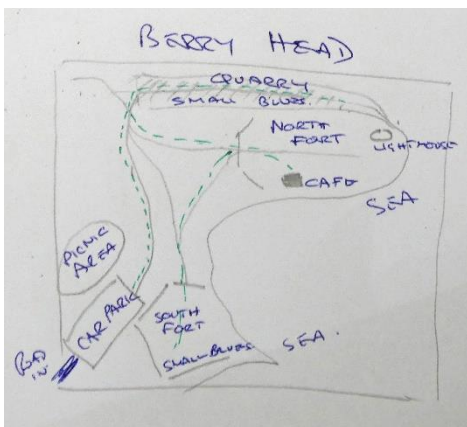
These Devon Butterfly Walks are in remembrance of a much respected and highly regarded member of Butterfly Conservation, Roger Bristow, who passed away in September 2020. Roger was one of the founding members of the Devon Branch of Butterfly Conservation and he played a huge role in improving the knowledge of Devon's butterflies.

Roger served on the branch committee for many years and took on many roles from Chairman, Newsletter Editor and, most significantly, as the Devon County Recorder for 35 years. He was always very generous with his time giving talks and attending public events to raise awareness and share his knowledge of butterflies.

Walk 3 – Berry Head National Nature Reserve Butterfly Walk – by Amanda Hunter

Getting there: Berry Head National Nature Reserve on Gillard Road, Brixham, is well signposted as you drive into Brixham. Keep going up to the end of Gillard Road past the holiday camp on the single track road and you will come to a large car park (pay when you leave). Post code for Sat Nav is TQ5 9AP. The number 12 bus runs through Torbay to central Brixham and you can walk up to Berry Head from the town centre in about 30 mins - although it is quite a steep walk.

Key species: Small Blue (best seen late Apr, May, early June but does have a 2nd brood in July), Marbled White (late June – July), Wall, Small Copper, Common Blue, Painted Lady, Clouded Yellow (mainly late summer but can arrive earlier), Hummingbird Hawk Moth (again mainly July/August).



Other species: Large Skipper (June/July), Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, and Small Skipper all usually peak during July and August. Brown Hairstreak (late summer) is also present but very rarely seen. (Photos of some of these butterflies can be found on the final page of this walk leaflet).

Other information: Berry Head National Nature Reserve is owned and managed by Torbay Coast & Countryside Trust. They have an excellent leaflet with a map and information about its history, wildlife and accessibility at [tcct-berry-head-leaflet \(countryside-trust.org.uk\)](http://tcct-berry-head-leaflet.countryside-trust.org.uk) & we recommend you download and read this before and during your

visit. The headland was quarried for its limestone over many years it supports a wide range of flora and invertebrates. The cliffs are a famous breeding area for Guillemots and other seabirds and in the surrounding seas you can catch glimpses of dolphins and seals. A special point of interest are the migrant birds & insects that can be seen there at various times of the year.

Suggested walk: Most butterfly visitors will want to see a Small Blue butterfly and the ideal spot for these is either side of the road down to the quarry and on and around the grassy areas directly at the base of the quarry road. But they can also be seen in and around the Southern Fort, especially in the gun emplacements. Look out for Kidney Vetch, the butterfly's larval food plant (see photo below). Male Small Blues will often be seen guarding territory by sitting on a well angled blade of grass whilst the females are

more often laying on the Kidney Vetch. Both sexes like a sunny spot, with a bit of shelter from the wind, and they typically fly short distances low to the ground. Marbled Whites and Clouded Yellows can also be seen in these grassy areas but Clouded Yellows in particular can be seen flying strongly around the flower rich areas on the exposed cliffs. A favourite spot for them is the south facing slopes of the Southern Fort area. Wall butterflies also enjoy the rocky outcrop areas.

To cover all the best butterfly spots we suggest you walk north on the main track from the car park bearing slightly west until you reach the road down to the quarry which runs due east. Take time going down this road enjoying the views and the flora and look out for Small Blue and other butterflies in the roadside banks all the way down. Half way down on the seaward side is a large buddlea bush which in late summer is a magnet for Red Admiral, Peacocks, Commas, Painted Ladies, Clouded Yellows & Hummingbird Hawkmoths. At the base of the quarry road you can find many butterflies (depending on the time of year Small Blues, Marbled Whites, Common Blue, Small Copper, Meadow Brown) in the grasses as well as seeing birds nesting in the quarry cliffs above (in spring). You can walk right to the end of the track and find yourself well below the lighthouse and looking out to sea (next stop France!). If you don't mind a scramble there is an accessible lower section of quarry but the main quarry floor is gated and no access is allowed both for safety reasons and also to protect the colony of Greater Horseshoe Bats that live in cave recesses in the limestone. The sloped path down to these gates is also a good area for Small Blue and Hummingbird Hawkmoths.

Once you have finished your quarry visit head back up the quarry road, turn east at the top toward the Northern Fort gateway entrance. Lots of history in this fort plus the lighthouse and also an excellent café and access to the bird hide, the best place to view the guillemot cliffs.

Finally head back towards the car park and visit the Southern Fort which is directly east of the car park. Look in the old gun emplacements on the western side of the fort for Small Blue and other grassland butterflies. Some years these emplacements are full of Kidney Vetch and all years in spring/summer there is a blaze of colourful wildflowers including ox-eye daisy & vipers bugloss. When you reach the look out post at the southern coastal edge of the fort look down the slope (carefully) for Clouded Yellows and up against the fortress walls you can often see Hummingbird Hawkmoths. It is also a good place to view Wall butterflies who like to sit on open patches of limestone. This walk is 2-3 km in total.



Small Blue on Kidney Vetch



Clouded Yellow

Small Blue (male) – photos A Hunter



Wall Brown

Photos A Hunter



Marbled White (male)

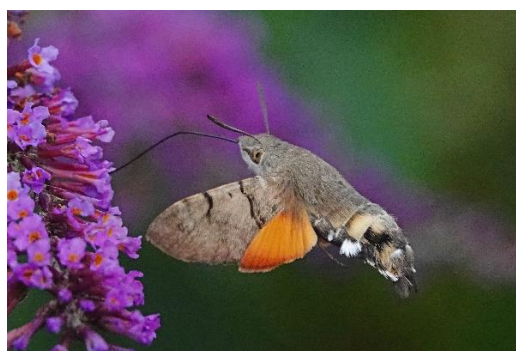


Marbled White (female)

Photos A Hunter



Hummingbird Hawkmoth



Hummingbird Hawkmoth

Photos D Turrell