

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 1 - Orley Common Butterfly Walk – by Pete Hurst

Getting there: Orley Common is at Ipplepen near Newton Abbot. It is usually accessed from the A381 Newton Abbot to Totnes road. In Ipplepen village take the road signed to Torbryan and Broadhempston which will take you past the Parish Church as you exit the village. Leaving the last houses behind, the small car park is found after about another 500 metres on the right just as you drive under tree cover (SX827666), nearest postcode TQ12 5UT.

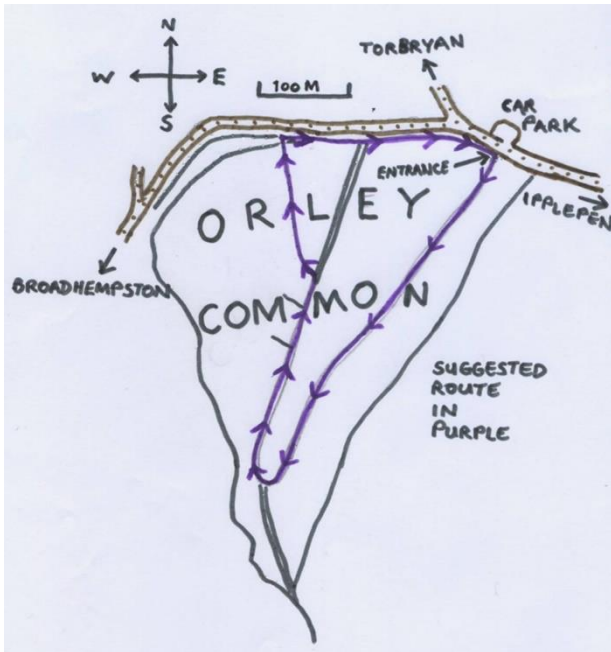
Key species: Marbled White (late June – July); Brown Argus (*can be hard to find some seasons but occasionally occurs in good numbers in August*), Wall, Small Copper, Common Blue, Silver-washed Fritillary all best seen in August. Wall, if seen, occurs in small numbers in spring and summer.

Other species: Large Skipper (June/July), Ringlet (late June – July); Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, and Small Skipper all usually peak during July and August. Purple Hairstreak can be seen in July and August atop a small number of mature oaks that are present. Brown Hairstreak is also present but very rarely seen with August as best month. (Photos of some of these butterflies can be found on the final page of this walk leaflet)

Other information: Orley Common has no owner but is managed as a nature reserve by Teignbridge Council. Being a limestone outcrop it has a diverse flora and is generally good for invertebrates. Hornet Robber Fly and Great Green Bush Cricket have been seen there, and moths seen in the daytime include Six-spot Burnet, *Pyrausta aurata* ("Small Purple and Gold" or "Mint Moth"), Treble-bar, Shaded Broad-bar, Green Carpet and Jersey Tiger. The reserve is herb-rich and includes Marjoram, Common Knapweed, Wild Basil, Betony, Eyebright, Lady's-mantle, Common Gromwell (a very local plant), Burnet Saxifrage and St. John's Worts.

July and August stand out as the best butterfly months, but the reserve is still worth a visit in May/June not least to see early orchids including Early Purple, Common Spotted and Greater Butterfly. Common Twayblade and the local Dropwort are also to be found then.

Suggested walk: The special part of the Common is across the road from the car park, and it is no great distance to walk to the main plateau area (less than ½ kilometre). Find the entrance immediately across the



road from the car park where you will see a noticeboard with information on. Take the left of 2 uphill tracks in front of you which has exposed limestone rock on the ground. Here you go under the trees but will quickly emerge, as you ascend, into the plateau area. From this elevation you get good views NW to Dartmoor.

The main pathway on the plateau is an elongated “u” and smaller paths lead off to the left and right all of which are worthy of exploring. Most of the grassland species of butterfly haunt this area. Beware of anthills in the long grass and also be aware of Adders, though these are rarely seen. The treeline has Blackthorn bushes which are worth checking for the presence of any egg-laying female Brown Hairstreaks in their season.

Proceeding on the main plateau path, you will soon go around the bottom of the “u” and find yourself walking

parallel but in the opposite direction. It is further along this shadier path that you may find Common Gromwell growing.

Soon a series of 3 paths going off left and at a right angle will be encountered. Take the third one which has a Spindle tree on the corner and emerge into a large glade. More herb-rich grassland greets you as you descend the slope. Common Blue, Brown Argus and Small Copper can be found here (as well as on the plateau) and there are one or two Buddleia bushes lower down whose flowers are always worth checking for butterflies and moths. Also, further down this slope is a good place to look for orchids, Common Twayblade and Dropwort in springtime.

Getting to the bottom of the slope, there are 2 tracks roughly parallel to the main road going left and right. The lowest of these paths is immediately adjacent to the road and the higher path merges into the lower one if you turn right. There are more meadows of interest on the left and the right and these are the best places to see Silver-washed Fritillary at Orley, often in association with Comma butterflies. To return to the car park you will need to bear right at the base of the hillside and going in an easterly direction. A short but steep uphill section will be encountered before you soon re-emerge into the entrance of the reserve.

Tip: Should you find the car park full, there is space to park 2-3 cars slightly further along the road at the right turn for Torbryan. Also, on-road parking can usually be found at the edge of the village with quite a pleasant 5-10 minutes off-road walk into the reserve.



Butterflies of Orley Common (photos by David Turrell)



Brown Argus



Brown Hairstreak



Common Blue



Marbled White



Small Copper



Silver-washed Fritillary



Wall