# Autumn 2024 Number 78 SURREY Skipper

Members' afternoon Oct 26

Butterfly Conservation Surrey & SW London Saving butterflies, moths & our environment

#### **Branch Committee**

Honorary President	Ken Willmott		
Chair	Simon Saville, first elected	07572 612722	
Vice-Chair, Transects/WCBS	Bill Downey 2015	07917 243984	
Field Trips	Mike Weller 1997	01306 882097,	07918 171179
Moth Officer	Paul Wheeler 2006		01276 856183
Skipper Editor	Francis Kelly 2012		07952 285661
Website	Francis Kelly (& Ken Owen)		
Social Media	Francis Kelly (& Mick Rock)		
Committee members	Simon Riley 2022		07990 527716
	Richard Stephens 2021		07815 444166
	Gareth Tilley 2023		07388 205023

**Conservation & Recording sub-committee** 

Bill Downey (Chair), Phil Darley, Ken Elsom, Gail Jeffcoate, Simon Riley, Simon Saville

Branch Database Manager	Ken Elsom
Conservation Manger SE England 2023	Steven Lofting
Surrey & Sussex Landscape Officer 2023	Richard Austin
County Recorder Butterflies Surrey Branch; Moths Graham Collins	

#### Media

Website	butterfly-conservation.org/surrey	Email surreybranch@gmail.com
X-Twitter	@BC_Surrey, @surreymoths	Recording <i>irecord.org.uk</i>
Facebook	Branch page	Butterfly Conservation in Surrey
	Groups	Surrey Butterflies (Mick Rock), Surrey Moths
		Small Blues in Surrey, Wealden Wood Whites

Surrey	Skipper		thank you to all contributors
	copy deadline	published o	nline
Spring	end Feb	March	includes new season's field trips
Autumn	end Sep	October	previews Members' Afternoon
The full Surrey Skipper is published online only A Small Skipper is posted to the few			

The full Surrey Skipper is published online only. A Small Skipper is posted to the few members who have reported difficulties accessing the online version.

#### Front-page picture

Black-veined White female on Dog-rose, Hutchinson's Bank, May 2024,

Kirsty Gibbs, see page 15

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#### Chair

MOST of us will be glad to see the back of this summer: cold, wet, overcast and not redeemed by a warmer August. It has been an awful year for butterflies – I have not even seen a Painted Lady, and barely any Small Coppers or Small Tortoiseshells.

The results of the Big Butterfly Count bear this out and are truly shocking: average of only seven butterflies per count – the lowest ever – and

9,000 counts reported not one butterfly.

Numbers were down by more than a third. Scientists at BC are alarmed and have declared a nationwide "Butterfly Emergency", calling for the Government to act now for nature by declaring a Nature Emergency and banning butterfly-killing neonicotinoid pesticides, with no exceptions, before it is too late.

On a happier note, I hope that many of you will join us at our Members' Afternoon on Sat 26 Oct It is free and all are invited. Our main speaker is Pete Eeles, author, founder of *ukbutterflies.co.uk*, and Hants Branch Chair. He will talk about Butterfly Rarities and will sign copies of his books. His *Life Cycles of British & Irish Butterflies* was truly groundbreaking and is a must-have.



#### **Simon Saville**

In the winter we will be running our fifth season of Zoom talks. Thanks are due to Richard Stephens, who has pulled this programme together. The talks are free and will be available on YouTube afterwards.

Our flagship London project, Big City Butterflies, ends in 2025. Project officers Steve Bolton, Ele Johnstone, and this year's recruit Emma

Bickford, have done a brilliant job. There have been innumerable workshops, events, butterfly ID walks and talks, and habitat improvement sessions.

In our area of London we now have excellent contacts with land managers, friends' groups and volunteers, so we are hoping that we can continue to build on the foundations that the team have created. There is an end-of project Conference on October 19 in London for partners and volunteers, where we are hoping to see up to 100 guests.

On the matter of Branch finances, we have been running a surplus for many years. Mindful that "money in the bank doesn't save wildlife", we have returned the bulk of our funds (£17,000), to Head Office,

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#### CHAIR from previous page

retaining enough for our ongoing activities. This money will be spent on locally relevant activities and in support of staff that work in our area.

All the things that the Branch does only happen because of the tireless efforts of our volunteers. I want to mention Mike Weller for once again arranging a great series of Field Trips (despite the weather) and to thank all those who led walks.

Thanks also to Bill Downey, who carries a heavy workload as transect coordinator and organiser of our work parties. These make a tangible difference at Oaken Wood and other important sites. Our transect recorders mean that Surrey & SW London has some of the best data about the abundance and distribution of any part of the country.

This information is vital as we call on Government to declare a Nature Emergency: it provides the stark evidence that action is needed, and now. Thanks to you all.

■ We thank Harry Clarke, who served as County Butterfly Recorder from 2013. Surrey Branch will set up a Recording Group, led by Simon Riley, rather than appoint one individual.

# THE main work of the Conservation Group is done in autumn and winter – recording

**Conservation Group** 

is our main activity in spring and summer. The Group is currently planning the

2024/25 season, and the intention is to run a full programme of weekly events.

We will be working the first Thursday of each month at Oaken Wood – now classified as a Partnership Site. Richard Austin is currently in discussion with Forestry England regarding work in other areas of the Chiddingfold complex.

Two work parties were held over the

summer at Oaken Wood to bruise the bracken and initial results look promising. Our work there last spring, raking off the bracken thatch to allow more herb to come through, has been successful. The Betony ride looked spectacular in August.

Other work parties are on Fridays and we are always looking for new volunteers to bolster our ranks.

■ To receive information on forthcoming events, please email *billdowney@sky.com* or subscribe to the mailing list at: *http://eepurl.com/ds7MaP* 

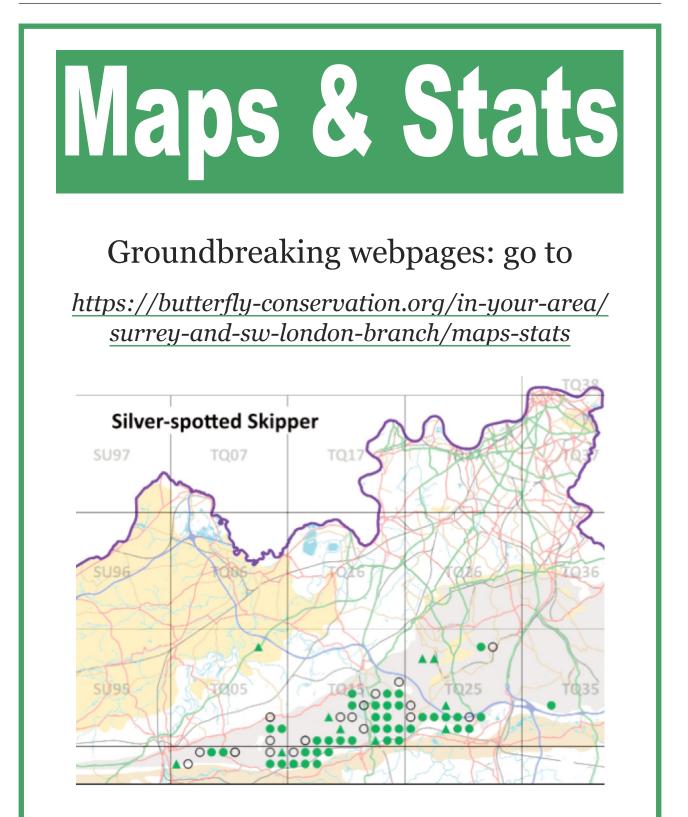
Accounts 2024-07-31					
Opening balance	Credit	Debit			
2024-04	£12,572				
Subscriptions	£8,982				
Field equipment		-£28			
Branch newsletters		-£85			
Stock for resale		-£177			
Insurance		-£9			
Fund transfers to HO		-£17,000			
Totals	£21,554	-£17,299			
Closing balance	£4.255				

■ I completed my third Bike for Butterflies in July: 700 miles from north Wales to Wrexham, Whitchurch, Manchester, Formby, Preston, Morecambe, Bridlington, Hull, Lincoln and down to Kettering. I visited some wonderful sites (including four BC reserves) and managed to see 26 species of butterfly. The weather was against me throughout – only 3 days above 20C in three weeks!

I will be reporting on this at Members' Afternoon. So far we have raised about  $\pounds$ 3,700 for BC, and the JustGiving site (link below) is still accepting donations.

Please give generously as every little helps. Thank you!

LINK https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/bikeforbutterflies2024



With thanks to Branch database manager Ken Elsom

Transect data updated monthly Annual update: March of following year

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# **Members' Afternoon** East Horsley Village Hall

Sat 26 October, 13.00 – 17.00

13.00	Doors open			
13.30	Chair's welcome & Committee Elections <b>Re-election</b> Bill Downey, Richard Stephens			
		Pete Eeles (right) Francis Kelly		
14.40	Light refreshments			
15.30 15.50	•	Francis Kelly 2024Simon Saville		
16.20	Results	Photo Show & Quiz		

**16.35** Q&A ......**17.00** Doors Close

#### **MEMBERS' PHOTO SHOW**

#### Please submit up to THREE photos for our Photo Show

- Adult butterflies only, taken in Surrey this year
- Please email photos (full resolution), with your name, species, site & any notes, by October 20, to: *surreybranch@gmail.com* Please *attach* photos inserting may lose resolution
- Best photos will be selected for the Show
- Attendees will be invited to vote for the winner
- Winning photo will be featured in the Surrey Skipper
- Entrants need not be present

#### QUIZ

**Richard Thomas**, winner last year, is setting the questions. Please collect a quiz sheet on arrival; tackle the questions during the afternoon.

#### VENUE

*Village Hall*, Kingston Avenue, East Horsley KT24 6QT **w3w** years.skills.works Six minutes walk SW of Horsley Train Station. *LINK: directions map* 

Buddy service: such events can be daunting for a newcomer.
 Email your details and a buddy will meet you outside and accompany you inside.

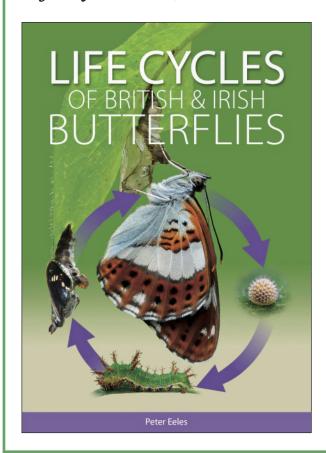
Surrey Skipper

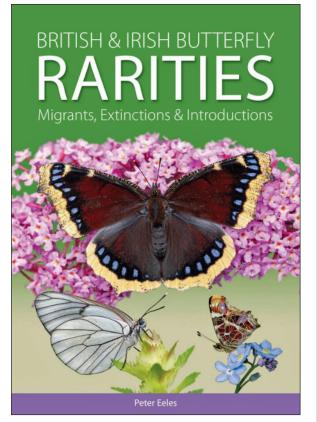




Organiser's decisions are final

**Pete Eeles** will be signing copies of his books at Members' Afternoon on October 26: *Life Cycles* £30, *Rarities* £25. Both £50







LAST YEAR 57 varieties and a half!

THIS YEAR My other half?

Members' Afternoon OCTOBER 26

#### **Steven Lofting**

SINCE taking up my role a year ago, I have been familiarising myself with the full extent of our SE region.

In May, Pearl-bordered Fritillary numbers in Sussex were low apart from one site which provides habitat at scale. This species, wintering as a part-grown larva, has a negative relationship with climate change and

conservation effort is focused down to site level, creating early successional spaces rich with violets.

Another delight of May is the Duke of Burgundy, no longer occurring naturally in Surrey. Conservation work has helped this species to expand to new sites, forming landscape networks in Kent, Sussex, Hants & Bucks. A range of species also benefit from Duke of Burgundy habitat management.

In June I joined Bill Downey to monitor the Wood White in Chiddingfold Forest. We saw reasonable numbers plus a supporting cast of Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth and Drab Looper and host of other butterflies.

Over three days in June I led a team of BC staff and volunteers to record Heath Fritillaries in each woodland that makes up Kent's Blean Woods landscape.



Timed counts were conducted and management recommendations compiled for land managers. BC has been recording Heath Fritillaries in the Blean since 1982 and we can measure long-term trends on a site and landscape basis.

We recorded the Whitespotted Sable moth, which Rebecca Levey (SE Ecologist)

is currently working on. It has been recorded in Surrey and is a priority species in Chiddingfold, where Richard Austin has mapped Goldenrod, the LHP.

It is an enormous undertaking to record, inform others and manage for these species across SE England. Volunteers play a key role and I am grateful to you all. I look forward to updating you on our progress.



White-spotted Sable, Blean, Jun 2024. SL

#### Sightings page

Records sent to our website's Sightings page, or posted on social media, do not automatically enter our database.

To address this, we are adjusting our procedure for the 2025 Sightings page.

We request that ALL records are first added to *irecord.org.uk* – quality photos welcome, especially if they would aid verification.

#### Ken Owen & Francis Kelly

Please then inform *surreybranch@gmail.com* if the record is possibly a first for the season or notable in some other way.

This procedure will make Ken Elsom's Maps & Stats service as comprehensive as possible. Thank you.

■ Surrey Butterflies Facebook group, managed by Mick Rock, is the best platform for displaying photos.

#### Surrey & Sussex Landscape Officer

#### **Richard Austin**

SINCE starting my role in October last year, I have been looking forward to seeing how the Western Low Weald landscape changes throughout the seasons and in particular, to observing the Wood White for the first time.

In April this year we met with Forestry England and Natural England at Oaken Wood to discuss management of the reserve and the wider Chiddingfold Forest.

We were able to demonstrate that our conservation work had improved the habitat through expanding rides, clearing verges and scrub-bashing.

The majority of our conservation tasks are delivered in the winter, but this summer we visited several times to undertake bracken bruising (striking lower half of main stem).

Bracken has become dominant in open areas and bruising stunts its growth. This provides light and space for key foodplants.

Progress was made in mapping Chiddingfold Forest for larval foodplants.

Wood White:

Meadow Vetchling, Common & Greater Bird's-foot trefoil, Tufted & Bitter Vetch **Drap Looper**: Wood Spurge **White-spotted Sable**: Goldenrod **Case-bearer moths**: Broom & Betony

Thank you to Ken & Gillian Elsom, Simon Riley & Jo Hurren, who helped to record

these plants. I have now mapped their presence and abundance, which will be the backbone of our evidence to present to Forestry England for their future plans.

I was excited to see Wood Whites feeding along the verges in Oaken Wood and benefitting from our conservation work. I thank all our volunteers – your efforts have made a real difference. Work along the Betony ride has been particularly successful – the Betony was spectacular this summer.

■ We will be running volunteer days at Oaken Wood on the first Thursday of the month: Nov 7, Dec 5, Jan 9, Feb 6, Mar 6. If you would like to help, please contact me or Bill Downey. I look forward to seeing you. *raustin@butterfly-conservation.org* 

#### **Purple Hairstreak**

BC launched a new methodology for Purple Hairstreak transects in 2023 based on counts at specific points along a 1km walk in the early evening. Arboreal species are not well served by standard transects.

PURPLE HAIRSTREAK TRANSECTS				
Phillipa Hall.				
.Bill Downey				
ennie Hedge				
Kate Lake, Ruth Bradshaw Sandy Pepperell				
Richmond Park Sarah Elliott, Teresa Grafton				

Some routes, like my own, are returning small counts but there were high numbers at others, particularly Richmond Park.

**Bill Downey** 

There is the prospect of a route next year at Barnes Common.

omson
Reeves
ngham
oucher

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#### Transects

THIS has been a poor butterfly year: a cold wet spring and adverse conditions throughout the main emergence in June.

As of September there have been returns from 152 transects – I expect a few more to be added – and 160K butterflies recorded. 155 transects were walked in 2023.

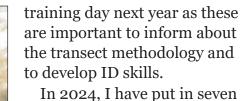
Surrey branch has expanded its network in recent years and

now has the third largest number in the country. I have decided that 150 transect routes, to be sustainable, needs to be an upper limit. I will only seek new transects on significant sites or where a motivated walker is ready to go.

I did not hold a training day for new recorders in 2024 although I conducted several on-site trainings. I plan to hold a managed by the Trust since 1986. It is Oak woodland with relic acid grassland and heathland clearings.

■ Ceasar's Camp (no Roman connection), at Upper Hale near Farnham, is an important heathland site owned by the MOD and managed by Hants/IoW WT. It boasts an iron age hill with magnificent views to the north towards Farnborough airport. The transect is walked on the

NEW WALKERS	Horsell Common Grasslands		
Bramley Bank Tom Oliver, Lucas Griffiths	Simon Lumsden, Andy Brook		
Ceasar's CampSally Rowson	Moons LaneFinella Grey		
Centre for Wildlife GardeningDiana Wallace	Puttenham Common		
Denbies Hillside, Lower Fields & Nose	Dave Thomson, David Knapp		
Cathy Mead	Riddlesdown		
Eashing FieldsElizabeth Wild	Tom Oliver, Lucas Griffiths		
	RBG, KewRuth Brookes		
CHANGES	SU9647 Compton (WCBS)		
Blatchford Down	Deborah Simmons replaces Nick Boucher		
David Lonsdale replaces Cathy Mead	South Norwood CP (last walked 2019)		
Farnham Park	Howard Dingley, Sue & Sundeep Takwani,		
Jane Pugh now sharing with Julie Russ	lan Glover, Marian Bushell, Chris Peskett		
Hampton Down & Seale Meadow	Wingate HillDebbie Bennett		
Nick Boucher replaces Andrea Pinnington	sharing with Danielle Wagner		
Mare Hill Common			
Bob Delamere replaces Dave Thomson			
RETIREMENTS	Swan Barn FarmDee Durham		
Chiddingfold Forest WestJames Field	ValewoodBob & Kate Daniels		
Earlswood CommonHilary Reive	Wimbledon Common SWAndrew Harding		
Polesden LaceyBob Yeo			



In 2024, I have put in seven new routes and London Wildlife Trust has created more on three of their reserves:

■ Bramley Bank (LWT), in the Addington Hills, has been managed by the Trust since

#### **Bill Downey**

Surrey portion of the site although two sections do cross the border into Hampshire. This is an excellent site for Silver-studded Blue and Grayling.

■ Centre for Wildlife Gardening (LWT) in East Dulwich was created in the 1980s from an old council depot. This short route encompasses a wildflower meadow, chalk bank, herb garden and permaculture beds.

■ Denbies Hillside, Lower Fields and the Nose, managed by the National Trust, adds to our transects here without having to negotiate the scarp slope. The lower fields along the railway line have most of the species one can see on the hills above – particularly on hot days when they descend to find shade. The Nose compartment has plenty of Horseshoe Vetch at its base and is a breeding area for Adonis Blue.

■ Eashing Fields is a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), created to reduce pressure on nearby Special Protection Areas (SPAs). It is owned by the Land Trust and managed by the Surrey WT. These are former agricultural fields, gradually being returned to woodland, hedgerow, scrub and meadow.

■ Horsell Common Grasslands is the western compartment of the Horsell Common SSSI. The branch held a surveying day here in 2023, finding Grayling and Silver-studded Blue in greater numbers than anticipated.

■ Moons Lane, Dormansland is a privately owned 5-acre field of grassland whose owner is managing the area for nature. The site is in the SE corner of Surrey and our first transect in the High Weald. ■ Puttenham Common is part of the Puttenham and Crooksbury Common SSSI and is owned and managed by the Hampton Estate. There is currently an extensive Nature Restoration Programme to open up the woodland areas of the site which had become dominant and restore open areas of lowland heath, acid grassland and wetlands. A key element of this is the re-introduction of grazing. The new transect will be an important measure of the success of the project. Puttenham has Silver-studded Blue, a small colony of Grayling, White Admiral, and the most Small Coppers I have ever seen in Surrey.

■ Riddlesdown (LWT) is a sliver of land owned by the Trust between the railway line and the much larger area of the Riddlesdown SSSI, owned by the City of London Corporation. It is a pocket of chalk grassland and scrub surrounded by woodland. The new route complements long-standing routes on Riddlesdown Common and Riddlesdown Quarry.

■ Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew: I was keen to set up a transect here, partly to complement our transect at RHS Wisley. The route encompasses wilder and nonpublic areas as well as historical buildings like Queen Charlotte's Cottage.

I thank all walkers for your efforts and records, and hope you find butterfly recording a worthwhile activity in itself. If you are interested in walking a transect or WCBS square, please contact *billdowney@sky.com* 

I HAVE been unable to organise any targeted surveys this year, *writes Bill Downey*. Targeted surveying is done because transects cover a small percentage of butterfly habitat and it is important to know about rare species elsewhere. This is particularly true on large heathland sites, many owned by MOD with limited access.

Individual surveys this year recorded Silver-studded Blue for the first time in some years at Lightwater Country Park, Smart's Heath and in the Devil's Punch Bowl. Graylings have also been recorded at Hindhead golf course and both species at Old Dean Common near Camberley. I hope to return to organising some group surveys in 2025.

#### **Big City Butterflies**

#### Steve Bolton Habitat Management, Recording & Monitoring

WE have continued working with partners in the project boroughs of Southwark, Lambeth and Wandsworth, including both habitat and recording, and wherever possible linking up those activities to deliver long-term objectives and benefits.

It has been particularly pleasing to continue supporting Wild Clapham with their efforts to create more meadow and scrub habitat on Clapham Common.

They have funded most of the capital works to scrape back topsoil for subsoil seeding and we have supplied the seed mix with an additional 2,800m<sup>2</sup> created this spring. The cornfield annuals (photo on next page) act as a nursery crop for slower growing perennials to develop.

We have been doing transect training on Clapham Common to support the establishment of a new transect. It has not been a great year for recruiting new volunteers, with low butterfly numbers and unpredictable weather, but we hope to get more interest next year.

It has been great to continue working with Southwark community gardens on a number of sites, supporting planting and recording, with eight butterfly species



Roots & Shoots community garden, Lambeth Andrew Crowley

#### London Project 2021-2025

recorded including Ringlet and Marbled White. These sites are valuable to help connect larger greenspaces by providing much needed habitat pathways.

At Rouel community garden they have new allotments with wildflower borders and native hedgerows, orchard and meadow areas. We supplied a variety of plants to complement the allotment site including herbs Marjoram, Thyme & Mint, and foodplants Cuckoo Flower & Ivy.

We are currently planning some final activities to celebrate project achievements and maximise the project's legacy including two films and a conference. I have also produced an urban habitat management guide which provides updated management methods, an easy reference illustration and urban case studies. The guide will be shared more widely in due course.

Finally, along with other stakeholders we are working with the Greater London Authority to develop the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for London.

The LNRS is a new system of spatial biodiversity strategies in England. The aim is for London's ecological network to be bigger, better and more joined up by working together to restore, create, and connect habitat. So far, we have helped identify actions and measures for priority

> habitats such as species-rich grassland. We will be attending a workshop to allocate priority species to habitat-based groups, prioritise them based on need, and identify conservation measures.

#### Emma Bickford Engagement

I was delighted to join Butterfly Conservation in June as the new Big City Butterflies Engagement Officer. It is wonderful to be a part of the team and to oversee our successful engagement initiatives for the project's final year. Our engagement targets are set to be completed, and indeed surpassed, by the close of Q3. A total of 18 school workshops, 14 community events and six highfootfall events have been delivered so far this year, with more on the horizon.

Our partnership with The Grounding Project concluded this year, a horticultural therapy programme at Roots & Shoots award-winning community garden in Lambeth.

Over a series of eight workshops, participants learned about butterflies and moths, and created beautiful copper butterflies to become part of a community art installation. The project united asylum seekers and refugees from diverse countries to celebrate themes of transformation, journeys and hope.

We marked the Big Butterfly Count with events at the Garden Museum in Lambeth, at Eastbrookend Country Park's annual Bee & Butterfly Bonanza, and at University Hospital Lewisham in partnership with RHS.

We were delighted to be invited to speak at the Natural History Museum's London Nature Day and to attend One Borough Festival in Dagenham with our highly popular butterfly mask-making for families.

Our fruitful partnership with Sustainably Muslim continued this year, with a Paint, Pot & Plant workshop in Poplar and a butterfly walk at Walthamstow Wetlands. The group loved spotting Red Admirals, Common Blues and an array of whites.

With more events coming up over the autumn, we are also focusing on how we support the Big City Butterflies community to continue championing butterflies and



Before & after: new meadow at Battersea Rise, Clapham Common. **Gareth James** 

moths once the project concludes.

We are planning exciting legacy projects to carry forward all the amazing work that has been done to support Lepidoptera in London, and look forward to sharing more details soon!

■ We are excited to announce the Big City Butterflies Conference, Oct 19, Lauderdale House, Waterlow Park, Highgate. Talks and workshops include: Secret Lives of Butterflies, Dr Richard Fox, Getting to Grips with Grubs caterpillar ID workshop, Dr Phil Sterling. See link for tickets.

#### Field Trips 2024

MANY thanks again to the 13 leaders of the 45 field trips (FTs) of 2024. If you can lead one or more of our regular FTs next year, or can suggest and lead a new one, please contact me (07918 171179) before January.

In addition, two beautiful gardens were opened for BC's benefit in June & July. We thank owners Gay Hoare, Daphne Foulsham and their helpers for their considerable efforts to ensure success.

The prolonged wet winter and spring was the probable cause of a lot of butterflies being in short supply.

The Browns mostly held their own (except Speckled Wood) and dominated the numbers from July onwards as the weather improved. 68% of FTs experienced good or reasonable weather this year compared to over 80% in 2023.

Similarly, the number of attendees was less than for last year, influenced no doubt by pessimistic weather forecasts. A few FTs had to be postponed or cancelled so please remember to check the Surrey website before setting off.

Like 2023, it was a poor year for migrant Painted Lady & Clouded Yellow.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- **Apr 30** Ham (postponed from Apr 24), 8 species: reasonable, if belated, start to the season.
- May 1 Hutchinson's/Chapel Banks, 9 species: 1 Grizzled Skipper, 4 Dukes.

May 8 Sheepleas, best weather for this FT for years, 13 species: 25 Brimstone, 2 Small Tortoiseshell, 2 Grizzled.

May 19/Jun 23 Norbury Park, 14 species but numbers well down.

Jun 4 Banstead Common, a new FT, 10 species: many acres of Kidney Vetch yielded only 13 Small Blue.

**Jun 11/13** Horton CP & Nonsuch Park: several Black Hairstreak – one well photographed by patient members.

#### **Mike Weller**

Jun 19 Newlands Corner, 8 species: 1 Adonis Blue (rare for site), but too early for Dark Green Fritillary.

Jun 27 Epsom Common, 12 species: small numbers except Browns. First for me this year White Admiral (3) & Silver-washed Fritillary (1).

- **Jun 29** Bookham Common, 15 species in small numbers: 3 Purple Emperor up high, only 1 Purple Hairstreak, 11 each White Admiral & Silver-washed Fritillary (14% of max number of SWF ever seen at Bookham).
- Jul 11 Headley Heath, 16 species.

**Jul 14** Vale End, 12 species: Dark Green Fritillary but no Chalkhills.

**Jul 18** Box Hill Dukes & Brockham Quarry, 15 species compared to 20+ normally: notable absences inc. Silver-spotted Skipper, Dark Green Fritillary & Chalkhill Blue.

Jul 27 Great car/train journey west,
23 species – our usual winner again:
7 DGF, 4 SWF, 25 Chalkhill Blue,
1 late White Admiral.

Jul 30 River Mole & Box Hill Lower Viewpoint, 20 species (runner-up):
6 Dark Green Fritillary, only 1 Brown Argus & Small Copper! Zero Silver-spotted Skipper.

Aug 7 & 13 Bookham Common: zero Brown Hairstreak in contrast with 2023's bonanza; 1 Painted Lady at last!

Aug 12 Denbies Hillside (repeated from bad weather FT on Aug 6), 13 species in small numbers except 30+ Chalkhill Blue. Fleeting glances of 3 Silver-spotted Skipper at last but zero Adonis Blue.

Aug 18 Merrow & Pewley Downs, 13 species: 2 Adonis Blue. FK later saw 1 fem BH.

**Aug 29** Cranleigh, 9 species: one very photographed fem BH & one egg.

#### **Black-veined Whites**

Black-veined Whites emerged for the second consecutive year at Hutchinson's Bank, including at least four females. They were on the wing from May 20-30 before dispersing.

In March, site expert Martin Wills found two larval webs in Hawthorn (age unclear). Many remarkable photos were achieved this year, at least one (bottom right) with a helping hand! Whatever the source of these butterflies, an official reintroduction in the south-east is being planned (see download).

#### DOWNLOAD BVW Reintroduction 2024

LINK Ben Greenaway insight: UK Butterflies Diaries LINK BVW for sale on Worldwide Butterflies (Dorset)!



BVWs & Glanville Fritillary at Hutchinson's Bank, 2024-05: Kirsty Gibbs (top) & Tim Bates

#### **Emperor a-head**

Just as I bumped into Tim Bates (see page 24) at Tugley Wood, Chiddingfold, on July 11, a male Purple Emperor swooped down onto my head. It liked something

about my cap and stayed put for more photos after I placed the cap onto the handlebar of my bike.

Photos: Tim Bates









### Walking a transect

A TRANSECT is a fixed-route, weekly walk, typically 1–3km, lasting 30–90 mins.

Volunteers record butterflies in a 5m band in suitable weather in the 26 weeks Apr–Sep, 10.45–15.45. Data is managed by the *UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme* 

If you would like to walk a transect or help with an existing one (many are shared), please contact Bill Downey.

You may also wish to consider: *Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey*  Surrey transect data is available to download in Excel format from our website's *Recording page* 

- Sort by species to see their sites & flight periods.
- Sort by sites to see their species.
- Transect walkers: sort by walker to see your own records at a glance.
- Interactive map of all Transect & WCBS sites, with details of their species etc: ukbms.org/sites
- ALSO: Surrey's <u>Maps & Stats webpages</u>

**Francis Kelly** 

#### Purple Emperor ab. *lugenda*



Trevor Rapley, who pitches up from East Sussex to the Chiddingfold hotspots every Emperor season, hit the jackpot on June 26.

The underside of ab. *lugenda* had been photographed the day before by David Stevenson.

Trevor reported in his UK Butterflies Diary: I arrived at the Triangle to be greeted by a very



large Emperor swooping around and landing among some weeds.

I noted on the camera that the first shot was taken at 08.43. After many shots the ab. took off at high speed, but over the next two hours he returned to the ground a further four times to the delight of later visitors.



## Butterflies of Surrey Revisited



Ken Willmott Malcolm Bridge, Harry E. Clarke, Francis Kelly and members of Butterfly Conservation Surrey branch

£16 (+ p & p) from surreywildlifetrust.org/shop

#### Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey

			•		
Monad	Location	Walker	Monad	Location	Walker
SU8736	Hindhead	Lesley Benson	TQ1662	Chessington	Pamela Harwood
SU8737	Beacon Hill		TQ2042	Newdigate	Jo Hurren
SU8748	Badshot Lea Paul & G	illian Bamford	TQ2059	Epsom	Janet Cheney
SU8960	Camberley		TQ2355	Tadworth	Nicola Sainsbury
SU9038	Thursley	Harry Clarke	TQ2562	Belmont	Morag Loader
SU9047	Seale	Nick Boucher	TQ2654	Mugswell	Janet Cheney
SU9133	Haslemere		TQ2657	Banstead Woods	Alison Gilry
SU9150	Ash Green	Steve Marshall	TQ2759	Woodmansterne	Morag Loader
SU9351	Normandy	Steve Marshall	TQ2868	Mitcham	
SU9364	Windlesham Nick Boucher, Deborah Simmons		TQ3045	Salfords	Sara Edwards
SU9647	Compton		TQ3069	Norbury	
SU9760	Chobham: <i>not viable</i>		TQ3079	Westminster	Danielle Wagner
SU9863	Chobham Common	Paul Wheeler	TQ3269	Upper Norwood	Mike Pearce
SU9951	Guildford		TQ3279	Borough	Janet Cheney
TQ0071	Runnymede (not viable)		TQ3354	South Caterham	
TQ0543	Winterfold	Mark Goodwill	TQ3377	Southwark	
TQ0944	Peaslake	Keith Lelliott	TQ3378	Bermondsey	
TQ0960	Cobham: suspended - road works		TQ3559	Hamsey Green	David Gough
TQ1144	Holmbury St Mary	Bill Downey	TQ3566	Shirley	
TQ1247	Wotton	Graham Revill	TQ4352	Limpsfield Chart Jin	n & Ruth Yeeles
TQ1354	Great Bookham	Harry Clarke			

■ WCBS monitors butterfly abundance in randomly-allocated monads away from hot-spots. Surrey Branch has 41.

The survey requires one 2km walk in each of the four months, May-August.

It is ideal for recorders unable to commit to a weekly transect.

If you would like to volunteer for a vacant monad, please contact <u>*Bill Downey*</u>

■ You may also be interested in: *www.gardenbutterflysurvey.org* 

More details for both are on Ken Elsom's webpages: https://butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/surrey-and-sw-london-branch/maps-stats

#### Dates

Oct 26	Surre	y Men	nbers	' Afte	ernoon	
0 1 0 1	-			1.1		

- Oct 31 Transect records online please Nov 2 Brit Ent & NH Soc
- Annual Exhibition, Holburn
- Nov 3 Hampshire AGM, Littleton
- Nov 9 BC National AGM: Bristol Face-to-face & Zoom
- **Nov 12** Surrey Zoom talk
- Nov 30 Sussex AGM, Burgess Hill

Jan-Dec	Butterfly House open all year
	Horniman Gardens SE23
Feb 22	Surrey Recorders meeting:
	East Horsley
Mar 23	UK Butterfly Recorders meeting,
	Zoom
Apr 1	Transect season starts
Jul 18 – A	ug 10
	Big Butterfly Count
Jul 19-27	National Moth Week
Sep 29	Transect season ends
-	

**Bill Downey** 



iRecord is our recommended recording platform, via *iRecord.org.uk* or *iRecord Butterflies* app.
Thank you to the 800+ recorders who have submitted 16k+ Surrey butterfly records in 2024.
They incude data from: *butterflyrecording.org* (BC's own recording portal) *gardenbutterflysurvey.org; iNaturalist/Seek*UKBMS transect data is separately on iRecord. *Bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org* is separate
■ More details, including how to create filters,

are on our website's Recording page.

<i>iRecorders</i> 32 116 159 230	<i>iRecords</i> 344 1,004 3,182		
116 159	1,004 3,182		
	3,182		
230	-		
	4,247		
333	7,214		
322	6,434		
443	6,534		
580	10,977		
709	10,843		
829	*16,542		
900+	19,676		
800+	16,000+		
*Garden Butterfly Survey 1st inclusion: 2,434			
	322 443 580 709 829 900+ 800+ en Butterfly S		

LINK *iRecord* 

- LINK iRecord Butterflies app
- LINK Surrey Recording

Notable records verified by Surrey Branch					
Date	Species	Site	Grid ref	Recorder	
Mar 9 - Apr 13	Large Tortoiseshell	Hutchinson's Bank	TQ384613 etc	Martin Wills, Kevin Turner Liz North <i>et al.</i>	
Mar 16	Large Tortoiseshell	Sidney Wood	TQ02553470	Cheryl Turkington	
Mar 17	Large Tortoiseshell	Frimley	SU89085814	Paul Collett	
May 16	Dingy Skipper	Bookham Common	TQ12585599	Colin Kemp	
May 20-29	Black-veined White	Hutchinson's Bank	TQ384614	Martin Wills	
Jun 16	Glanville Fritillary	Tice's Meadow	SU873486	Paul Bamford	
Jul 30	Dark Green Fritillary	Hog's Back	SU90954818	Nick Boucher	
Sep 3	Long-tailed Blue 2	Richmond Park	TQ194712	Steve Read	
Black Hairstreak, Epsom Common & surrounds: thriving Glanville Fritillary, Hutchinson's Bank: thriving Duke of Burgundy, Chapel Bank; Marsh Fritillary, Hutchinson's Bank: surviving					
	Total butter	fly species verified in	Surrey (VC17)	2024: <b>48</b>	

Conservation projects			
Big City Butterflies (London)			
BC officers	Start	Duration	Main funding
<b>Conservation</b> Steve Bolton <b>Engagement</b> Ele Johnstone to 2024-04 Emma Bickford 2024-06	2021-05	4 years	National Lottery Heritage Fund <b>£440,000</b>

#### **UV** Photoluminescence

Searching for early stages with a UV torch, either 365 or 385-95nm, can be an efficient method of locating some species. The table shows the results of Gareth's Tilley's research up to 2024.

	Wavelength nanometers		Larva	Pupa
Adonis	365		Х	
Blue	385-95		Х	
Black	365	Х	Υ	Х
Hairstreak	385-95	Х	Υ	Х
Brimstone	365	Х	Х	Х
Driffstorie	385-95	Х	Υ	Υ
Brown	365	Х	Х	
Argus	385-95	Х	Х	
Brown	365	Х	Υ	Х
Hairstreak	385-95	Х	Υ	Х
Chalkhill	365	Х	Х	Х
Blue	385-95	Х	Х	Х
Clouded	365		Х	Х
Yellow	385-95		Х	Х
Comma	365		Х	Х
Comma	385-95		Х	Х
Green	365	Х	Υ	Х
Hairstreak	385-95	Х	Υ	Х
Glanville	365		Х	Х
Fritillary	385-95		Х	Х

#### **Gareth Tilley**

e.g. Brimstone: larva and pupa glow under 385-95 torchlight but not 365.

Ovum does not glow under either.

■ More details: Skipper 76, page 13 Branch website: UV surveying

	Wavelength nanometers		Larva	Pupa
Holly	365	х	Υ	Х
Blue	385-95	х	Υ	Х
Large	365		Υ	Х
Copper	385-95		Υ	Х
Marsh	365		Х	Υ
Fritillary	385-95		Х	Υ
Orange-tip	365	Х	Х	Х
Orange-tip	385-95	Х	Х	Х
Peacock	365		Х	Υ
Feacock	385-95		Х	Y
Purple	365	Х	Y	Х
Hairstreak	385-95	Х	Х	Х
Small	365	Х	Х	
Blue	385-95	Х	Х	
Small	365	Х	Y	Х
Copper	385-95	Х	Х	Х
Small	365		Х	Х
Tort'shell	385-95		Х	Х
W-letter	365	Х	Υ	Х
Hairstreak	385-95	Х	Y	Х

#### **Banking on Hutch**

Hutchinson's Bank attracts butterfliers from far and wide, especially in the early part of the season. One example is Suzanne Nelson, who reports:

"Michael Morley and I drove from Retford, Nottinghamshire, taking 3hrs 10 mins. What a beautiful nature reserve! "Glanville Fritillary was a lifer and I now have only two to go: Mountain Ringlet and Lulworth Skipper.

"On the way home we called in at RSPB Rainham Marshes. I was driving for seven hours, approximately 400 miles, but well worth the effort!"

**Email alert** If you did not receive an email alert to this edition of the Skipper (we have some emails that bounce), please inform *surreybranch@gmail.com* 

#### Weather Watch

	Terr	np C	Sunshine		Rainfall	
2023	Mean	Anom	Hours	Anom	тт	Anom
Jan	5.2	+0.3	72	<mark>121%</mark>	99	118%
Feb	6.1	+1.1	85	106%	8	12%
Mar	7.3	+0.3	61	49%	129	247%
Apr	8.9	-0.4	159	90%	76	143%
Мау	12.7	+0.4	230	<mark>110%</mark>	38	73%
Jun	17.6	+2.4	279	134%	33	60%
Jul	16.8	-0.5	170	78%	91	169%
Aug	16.9	-0.3	184	91%	70	110%
Sep	17.7	+3.0	175	<mark>113%</mark>	64	105%
Oct	13.2	+1.8	117	<mark>104%</mark>	161	179%
Nov	7.9	+0.2	83	<mark>118%</mark>	130	139%
Dec	7.6	+2.3	21	39%	117	131%
Year	11.5	+0.9	1,635	98%	1,016	126%

#### Yellow warm/sunny

**Red** year's warmest/sunniest

Blue wet

Black year's wettest

■ Anomaly column is comparison with 30-year data 1991–2020.

#### Social Media

OUR social media accounts are listed on page 2. Facebook is ideal for photos, X-Twitter for news.

To see X-Twitter mentions of *@BC\_Surrey*, we recommend *alerts.talkwalker.com* 

LINK Surrey Branch social media

#### Zoom talks

WE are planning a fifth season of monthly Zoom talks this winter, 2nd Tuesdays, 19.00, organised by Richard Stephens.

Wild Spaces, a cornerstone of BC's 2021-26 Strategy, has its own website. Go to *www.wild-spaces.co.uk* to register your own Wild Space and to see others near you. BC's target is 100,000 Wild Spaces by 2026. The site has an id feature and plenty of other resources.

### Francis Kelly

Surrey Skipper

2024	Temp C		Sunshine		Rainfall	
2024	Mean	Anom	Hours	Anom	тт	Anom
Jan	4.7	-0.2	80	134%	79	94%
Feb	8.1	+3.1	49	62%	148	242%
Mar	8.4	+1.4	101	81%	101	194%
Apr	10.0	+0.7	139	79%	77	145%
May	13.7	+1.4	191	91%	69	132%
Jun	14.7	-0.5	237	<mark>114%</mark>	18	34%
Jul	16.9	-0.4	192	88%	72	133%
Aug	17.9	+0.7	209	<mark>104%</mark>	41	65%

#### SUMMARY 2024

Feb-May, Jul: mild, dull, wet

	Best	Worst
<b>Warm</b> 5	Feb	Jun
<b>Sunny</b> 3	Jan	Feb
<b>Dry</b> 3	Jun	Feb

■ Data is for Met Office region *England SE & Central South*: Surrey, London, Berks, Hants, Kent, Sussex, Wilts

X-Twitter		Facebook		
@вс_9	Surrey	Butterfly Conservation in Surrey Branch page	Surrey Butterflies Mick Rock's group	
Fol	lowers	Followers	Members	
2022-09	1,422	2,818	374	
2023-09	1,450	2,903	503	
<b>2024-09</b> 1,460		3,396	578	
Click Mentions to see visitor posts to Branch page. Surrey Butterflies has the most activity.				

**Nov 14** Butterfly Conservation in Corfu .....**Dr Dan Danahar** Further details will be on our website.



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#### **Big Butterfly Count 2024**

THE lowest average in BBC history of only seven butterflies was recorded across 143,241 fifteen-minute counts, down by almost 50% on last year's average of 12.

Dr Richard Fox, Head of Science at Butterfly Conservation, said: "The previous lowest average number of butterflies per Count was nine in 2022. The results are in line with wider evidence that the summer of 2024 has been very poor for butterflies."

Butterfly Conservation is writing an open letter to Steve Reed, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, calling for the Government to act now for nature by declaring a "Nature

#### LINKS Big Butterfly Count

■ Sign BC's letter up to Oct 13 at: *https://butterfly-conservation.org/emergency* 

#### **Black Hairstreak**

HOW have Surrey's Black Hairstreaks done this year? I am not sure – yet.

In 2023, in later May and early June we had a positive heat wave: temperatures exceeded 30C, with little rain. Black Hairstreaks were relatively easy to spot around Epsom on open sites with Blackthorn scrub.

My annual surveying of Black Hairstreaks is done in two stages: nocturnal surveys for caterpillars using a UV torch; then adult surveys at the same sites around three weeks later.

This year's maximum caterpillar count on a single survey was higher by 20% than 2023 numbers, most likely due to the

wonderful weather of the previous summer.

In contrast, summer 2024 was poor. The Black Hairstreak flight period saw endless days of cloud, and temperatures closer to 20C. The butterflies were harder to find, and equivalent surveys showed a drop by 50% on the maximum count against the previous year.

So how did the Black Hairstreaks in Epsom fare in 2024? The surveys indicate brilliantly for caterpillars and poorly for butterflies. We will know more after the caterpillar surveys next spring. Only then will we find out how much this year's poor weather has impacted on the butterfly's ability to breed successfully.

#### Jul 12 – Aug 4

		Dullernies
Re	corders	& Moths
2024	85,000	935,000
2023	95,000	1,500,000
2022	99,900.	809,100
2021	107,100	1,267,000
2020	111,600	1,413,300
2019	113,500	1,595,500
2018	100,200.	964,000
2017	60,400.	550,000
2016	36,000.	390,000
2015	52,000.	600,000
2014	44,000.	560,000
2013	46,000.	830,000
2012	27,000.	223,000
2011	34,300.	322,300
2010	10,200.	210,000

"Many European countries have already banned these chemicals. It is time for the UK to follow suit."

Rutterflies

Gatekeeper ......190,413

2 Meadow Brown .... 177,844

3 Large White ...... 138,424

4 Small White ......112,814

5 Peacock......50,847 6 Red Admiral.....47,109

Ringlet ......44,278

Speckled Wood ......30,112

9 Comma ......24,498

10 Gr-veined White ....18,951

Emergency" and banning

neonicotinoid pesticides.

used on farmland, these

the wild plants growing at

butterflies and moths

contaminated plants.

2025: Jul 18 – Aug 10

Dr Fox explains: "When

chemicals make their way into

field edges, resulting in adult

drinking contaminated nectar

and caterpillars feeding on

UK top, 2024

1

7

8

**Gareth Tilley** 

#### **UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme 2023**

LAST year (2023) was the best ever for both Brimstone and Red Admiral in England in the 48 years of transect recording.

It was a top-10 year for six other species, but the worst ever for Small Tortoiseshell.

Ten-year trend was negative for only 14 of Surrey's 41 regular species. The positives included over 100% for Red Admiral, Holly Blue & Silver-studded Blue. In the UK overall, 2023 ranked 23rd in the 48-year series. Four species had their best ever year: Chequered Skipper, Brimstone, Red Admiral & Large Blue. Two species recorded their worst year: Small Pearl-Bordered Fritillary & Small Tortoiseshell (-82% since 1976).

Bucking the UK trend, Small Tortoiseshell in Northern Ireland registered its 2nd best year on record.

LINK UK Butterfly Monitoring scheme

2023 rank	10-year		10-year
	trend		trend
1 Brimstone	+16%	25 Essex Skipper	-19%
Red Admiral	+114%	26 Clouded Yellow	-57%
2 Brown Argus	+44%	Large White	+24%
3 Comma	+20%	Painted Lady	+47%
Holly Blue	+162%	29 Small Heath	+61%
Marbled White	+2%	30 Silver-spotted Skipper	-27%
6 Meadow Brown	+19%	White Admiral	+6%
9 Gatekeeper	+40%	31 Adonis Blue	-3%
11 Silver-washed Fritillary	-9%	Small Skipper	-29%
12 Purple Emperor	+28%	34 Large Skipper	-36%
13 Silver-studded Blue	+111%	35 Ringlet	-43%
15 Brown Hairstreak	+26%	White-letter Hairstreak	+38%
Purple Hairstreak	+81%	36 Common Blue	-27%
Wood White	+43%	37 Chalkhill Blue	+44%
16 Small Blue	+93%	38 Dingy Skipper	+3%
Speckled Wood	-9%	42 Grayling	+30%
17 Orange-tip	+5%	Green Hairstreak	-4%
18 Peacock	-9%	Green-veined White	-32%
19 Small White	+54%	46 Grizzled Skipper	+9%
20 Dark Green Fritillary	+68%	48 Small Tortoiseshell	-69%
22 Small Copper	+42%		-

2023's abundance ranking for each Surrey species in the 48 years of transects 1976-2023

**How to read the table**: Surrey's 41 regular species; data is from all transects in England, 1976-2023. **Brimstone**: 2023 was best of the 48 transect years; **Small Tortoiseshell**: 2023 was 48th (worst)

 REMEMBERING Butterfly Conservation in your will is one of the most effective ways to help ensure butterflies and moths thrive in years to come. Legacies represent over a third of our voluntary income and make a crucial contribution to our work.
 Please contact Dorset head office: 01929 40020

p ensure butterflies and moths ties represent over a third of our crucial contribution to our work. office: 01929 40020 info@butterfly-conservation.org

#### New book

TIM BATES, Kent-based but a regular visitor to Hutchinson's Bank and other Surrey sites, has published *A Diary of British Butterflies*.

It is a mighty tome of 645 pages, 200,00+ words and nearly 800 photos, charts and maps.

Butterflies are presented in the order in which they were first photographed during the year, many in Surrey.

The book is dedicated to Tim's son Josh, who died in a road accident in 2019 aged 30.

**C**ost £49.95 plus £10 p & p

Contact

tim4gepromotions@gmail.com

■ Below: Tim with Purple Emperor, Tugley Wood, July 12, 2024. **FK** 

