

# SURREY *Skipper*



HOWARD WHITING with his beloved car at his beloved Oaken Wood. MB

## Save Our Butterflies Week, May 18-26

SAVE Our Butterflies Week is a Butterfly Conservation promotion to encourage members and the public to visit BC reserves and other butterfly-rich sites. Incentives include:

### ■ Photography competition with three prize categories:

- Best UK butterfly image (under-16s)
- Best UK butterfly image
- Best UK butterfly image taken on a smartphone

Pictures must be taken during SOBW on a BC reserve or during a SOBW event.

■ **Half-price membership** for non-members who attend a SOBW event or take part in the photo competition.

SOBW coincides with these Surrey branch field trips:

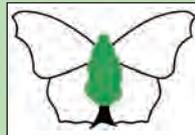
*Sunday, May 19, 11am: Denbies Hillside*

*Sunday, May 26, 11am: Merrow/Pewley Down*

These dates will be branded on: [www.surreybutflies.org](http://www.surreybutflies.org)  
[hwww.bbc.co.uk/thingstodo](http://hwww.bbc.co.uk/thingstodo)

[butterfly-conservation.org](http://butterfly-conservation.org) SOBW page, which will include:

- Updated, redesigned, downloadable ID guide to rarer species.
- How to take part in the photo competition using Flickr.
- List of events.



**This year's  
Big Butterfly  
Count:  
Sat, July 20 to  
Sun, August 11**



Howard  
Whiting  
tribute  
pages 4-6

★ *INSIDE: field-trips pullout* ★



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www.surreybutterflies.org

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## Skipper dates

The spring edition includes the new season's field trips.  
The autumn edition previews the annual Members' Day.

2014	Copy deadline	Published
Spring	March 2	April
Autumn	September 8	October

■ ARTICLES and photographs for your Surrey Skipper are very much welcomed.

Please contact the editor if you are able to contribute.



## AGM &amp; Members' Day

**Saturday, November 9:** Friends Life Sports & Social Club, Pixham Lane, Dorking, RH4 1QA. More details in autumn Skipper.

**OTHER BC BRANCHES** (Surrey members welcome)

**Upper Thames:** Sat, Oct 26, 10.30-5.00; doors open 9.45.

Benson Parish Hall, Sunnyside, Benson, Wallingford, OX10 6LZ

**Hampshire:** Sat, Oct 26, 1.30-6.00; doors open 1.00. Littleton Millennium Memorial Hall, The Hall Way, Littleton, Winchester SO33 6QL (SU455324).

Speakers include BC Chief Executive Dr. Martin Warren, and Professor Philip Howse, who has written extensively on butterfly wing patterns and visual illusions.

**Sussex:** clashes with Surrey date.

## Front page photo

**Brown Hairstreak** by Peter Kirby, winner of Members' Day photo competition. Taken at Steyning Rifle Range, West Sussex, Sep, 2012, using Canon 550D with 100mm macro lens.

## Chairman

David Gardner

WELCOME to the spring Skipper. I wish to thank Francis Kelly for taking over the editorship and I hope you enjoy his efforts. Thanks also to Peter Camber (see page 34), who replaces David Gradidge as Treasurer after 20 years. We are delighted that David continues as Membership Secretary.

With great sadness I report the death in January of former branch chairman Howard Whiting. Malcolm Bridge remembers a much-loved colleague on the next three pages.

As many committee members are also key players in our new *Butterflies of Surrey* book (see page 7), for this year we will produce only two Skippers. We will continue this pattern if it proves successful. We were also looking to save money by inviting members to opt out of receiving the printed version and accessing an online version. However this seems to have VAT implications and we await head office advice.

Skipper costs are one-third production, two-thirds postage. Butterfly Conservation nationally are testing, via Upper Thames branch, the idea of central printing and franking for branch newsletters. This could also produce significant savings.

We are looking to raise the profile of our website, [www.surreybutterflies.org](http://www.surreybutterflies.org). Online records for the last two years have reached four figures and it was only last year's poor weather that halted the upward trend. Let's hope we can reach a record total this year. Latest moth events and any updates to field trips will be posted there.

This year we have 37 field-trips, organised by Mike Weller and presented as a four-page pullout that we hope you will find convenient. Two will feature in BC's *Save Our Butterflies Week* (see back page). Please retain the pullout for the whole season, because the next Skipper will be published in October. Paul Wheeler's Moth events are on page 32.

I apologise for not offering events of my own this year but I hope to investigate new sites next year, perhaps of the "go find" variety, rather than "we know what's there, let's go see them". Any small grass areas on the Downs are well worth investigating. A university study in East Kent found 22 sites for Silver-spotted Skipper that regular recorders were unaware of.

Ken Willmott, branch Conservation Adviser, is in negotiations with Surrey Wildlife Trust about a special field at Sheepleas, West Horsley. See his report on page 13.

Do readers know of any good orchards? My question relates to moths and I have found no proper examples of this key habitat in my Surrey searches. I know there is RHS Wisley Garden, but I am looking for old trees with grass underneath. Reports of unusual moths in such locations would be appreciated.

Anyone interested in reporting garden moths is welcome to join the fun. A good start is to check out the Garden Moth Scheme website ([gms.staffs-ecology.org.uk](http://gms.staffs-ecology.org.uk)). It may be too late to register for this year, but you could prepare for March next year.

Many thanks to all those who have contributed to this newsletter. Any article, no matter how brief, and photos, are all appreciated, Go on, take the plunge.



**HOWARD WHITING**

July 10, 1931 – January 21, 2013

*FORMER branch chairman Howard Whiting died in January after a sudden stroke. He was 81. All who knew him will receive this news with great sadness. He inspired great affection and respect within the butterfly world and beyond, and, with wife Liz, made a huge contribution to the success of our local branch.*

*On Friday, February 8, many branch members helped fill the chapel at the Surrey and Sussex Crematorium to pay their last respects to a truly lovely man.*

*MALCOLM BRIDGE, helped greatly by Liz, offers a short account of Howard's life.*

**H**OWARD was born and spent his early childhood in Eastbourne. An only child, Howard would enjoy long summer days exploring rich chalk grassland habitats where butterflies flew in great profusion. Thus, influenced only by what he discovered for himself, he fell under that magic spell known to all lovers of butterflies, the enchantment of a lifetime.

As war loomed in 1939, residents of coastal towns in the south-east were encouraged to move to greater safety and aunt Alice in Brockham offered the Whitings a home. Nine-year-old Howard found a similar landscape rich with downland species but had to settle for the River Mole close by rather than the English Channel.

At 11 he left the village school for Dorking Grammar (now Ashcombe School). Howard enjoyed swimming, often close to home in the Mole, and was dubbed "Cod" by his school chums.

He left school at 17 and joined the laboratory staff at a mineral extraction company at Redhill. Howard was to stay with this company, which extracted fullers earth, for the whole of his working life with one irksome interruption almost at the outset when National Service called.

He completed his two years in the RAF, working at aircraft maintenance, and learned skills which would serve him well when he became a motorist who knew and loved his cars, from his first Morris 8 (Sabrina) onwards. At this time the Whitings had to leave Brockham and found a new home in a cottage adjacent to the well-loved tea-rooms at Farthing Downs, Coulsdon. The cottage belonged to the



*Howard strides out on a branch field trip. MB*

**BACK-PAGE picture: Howard enjoying a break at Oaken Wood**

Davies family, who also owned the tea-rooms, and their daughter Elizabeth (Liz) was a similar age to Howard.

Howard and Liz struck up a friendship and would walk through Happy Valley for an evening's drink at "The Fox" at Coulsdon. As the friendship deepened a couple of motor-bike holidays were enjoyed. Both loved the great outdoors, and Howard shared his knowledge of butterflies. Slowly they realised their friendship needed a more formal foundation.

Howard and Liz married on a cold, snow-covered February day at St Catherine's, Merstham, and enjoyed a freezing honeymoon in Brighton. After little more than a year Richard was born and 15 months later a second son, Lin. Their first home was in South Nutfield, a rented upstairs flat in a large house, and some 30 months later they moved to their own home, a new property in Merstham. The two boys spent their childhood in Merstham before Howard and Liz sold up and moved to the present family home in Redhill.

As well as their love of the natural world, Liz and Howard shared a passion for tennis and were stalwarts at their local club. When Surrey Branch started up in 1995 Howard found time to serve for four years as Chairman (1996-2000) and for six more years as field-trips organiser to 2006.

Liz was one of that small band of wives who have done us proud at Juniper Hall Festivals and indoor meetings etc with her own particular speciality (I write from first-hand knowledge), the best-ever marmalade.

In addition to Liz and their sons, Howard leaves granddaughters Rachel and Kirsty. I am sure you will join me in sending to Howard's family our deepest sympathy in their, and our, great loss.

## Farewell to a branch mainstay

*MALCOLM BRIDGE's eulogy at Howard Whiting's funeral: Crawley, February 8, 2013.*

**I** SHARED with Howard a love of butterflies, moths – even, in Howard's words, Little Brown Jobs – and the natural world, including, of course, migrating toads.

I met Howard for the first time as recently as October 1997 at Woodhatch, just south of Reigate. I have therefore only known him for 15 years, far fewer than most of today's gathering. At that time Howard was Chairman of the Surrey Branch of Butterfly Conservation and he embodied all the essential qualities to lead

and enthuse the branch – he had just the right amount of gravitas without sacrificing approachability, an attention to detail and a great willingness to muck in and support the branch and his colleagues in every way possible.

Despite the many duties and responsibilities which leading the branch entailed, Howard continued to organise a rich and varied programme of field trips, several of them two-day affairs with overnight stays in Somerset or The Malverns in quest of the Large Blue butterfly or High Brown Fritillaries.

Many of Howard's exploits were shared

■ *continued next page*

■ **HOWARD WHITING**  
from previous page

by a wider audience via the pieces he contributed to our branch magazine. Of one overnight stay in the Malverns, with the group scattered across a range of accommodation, Howard wrote: "Most of us met again after a day in the field for a spot of nectaring in a local hostelry."

He was blessed with the ability to find the right phrase to embellish and vitalise his writing. A further illustration of this gift, with the deft touch of his dry sense of humour, came in an unusual piece about an exotic little moth whose caterpillars feed on algae growing on the matted fur of a Three-toed Sloth. He concluded this intriguing article by opining that the species, moth not sloth: "Should be quite a challenge to those interested in captive breeding."

In the same newsletter Howard hinted that he would relinquish the task of organising field trips at the end of 1997. Almost ten years later he finally stood down from the job – loyalty and a great desire to do his share being, as always, his bottom line.

My favourite Howard piece, composed back in 1996, was a clear and detailed description of how to make a Butterfly Conservation car badge out of an AA member's version. Howard wrote: "Purchase an AA car badge – £2.99 or £2.84 to AA members – purchase a Butterfly Conservation car window sticker – price 35p ..." He then described the modus operandi, advising the use of a

silicone frame sealant if it's handy, and concluded with the cheery exhortation – happy motoring.

This Howardism just touches on his love of his car, and Friday morning was faithfully observed, week in, week out, as wash and clean the car before the big shop. Howard's ability to do things properly, expressed in ways as simple as car cleaning or as substantial as walking three butterfly transects each week – April to September – provide an insight into a reliable and consistent nature – totally dependable, totally loyal.

For many years until very recently, Howard was a mainstay of a small band of volunteers who worked throughout the winter managing a 20-acre woodland reserve blessed with rare butterflies, nightingales and so forth, a good distance from Cronks Hill.

At Oaken Wood, wielding a powerful brushcutter, often in adverse weather, Howard enjoyed the physical challenge of hard, outdoor activity. Once, in November 2000, he put in eight consecutive days of such work. I managed only two and was very tired.

It was during these Oaken Wood days over the past decade that I got to know Howard best. A delightful companion, a lovely man and a person who, without seeking it or being conscious of it, attracted the affection, admiration and respect of all who knew him.

Thank you Liz for allowing me to share these thoughts.

Thanks Howard, for being my friend.

**Oaken Wood support**

MEMBERS are warmly invited to join the regular work parties at our Oaken Wood reserve (SU 99288 33802) near Chiddingfold; access via west turning off Plaistow Road; nearby postcode: GU8 4PG  
**Please contact Malcolm Bridge (details inside-back page)**

**Atlas update**

Francis Kelly

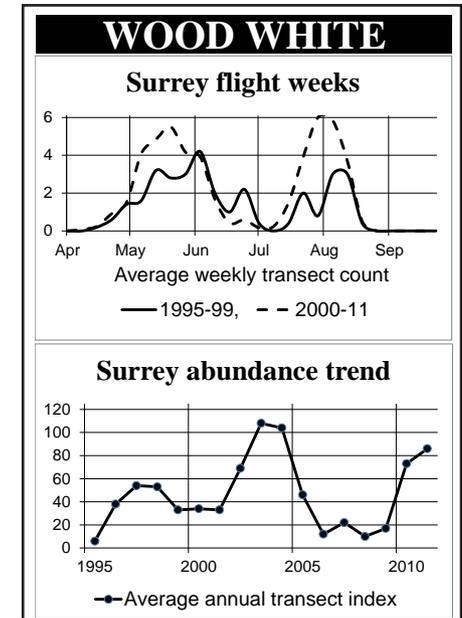
THE *New Butterflies of Surrey* book, being produced by our branch for Surrey Wildlife Trust's Atlas series, is well on course for publication later this year. Graham Collins wrote the first *Butterflies of Surrey* in 1995 and it has long sold out. Much has changed since then, in terms of the butterflies themselves and the data and technology we now have available.

The new book will be the 14th in SWT's Atlas series, and the first to be full colour. Francis Kelly is editor, assisted by Malcolm Bridge, Ken Willmott and Geoff Eaton. The bulk of the species accounts are being written by Ken, Malcolm and Harry Clarke. Other species writers are Gay Carr, Ian Cunningham, Geoff Eaton, Alan Hunt and Howard Street.

Other contributors are Barry Hilling (picture editor), Peter Curnock, David Gradidge, Helen Tickner (graphics) and Mike Weller. Not forgetting all those who have walked transects, supplied general records, and provided photographs.

Each species will feature a distribution map, a table from its most interesting transect, and fascinating charts, produced by Harry Clarke (see Wood White example) from transect data, showing Surrey's flight weeks and abundance trends. Plus feature articles, statistics and colour photos.

Details are yet to be finalised, but the book is expected to be between 200-300 pages and sure to be a value-for-money price. We plan to launch in time for the Amateur Entomologists' Society Annual Exhibition and Trade Fair at Kempton Park Racecourse, Sunbury-on-Thames, on Saturday, October 12. In good time for Christmas! Wish us luck.



*In the book, the lines will be colour and include 2012 data.*

**Surrey Wildlife Atlas Series**

Surrey Wildlife Trust

- 1 1995 **Butterflies** .....Graham A. Collins .....87 pages SOLD OUT
- 3 1997 **Larger Moths**.....Graham A. Collins .....333 pages £18
- 13 2012 **Smaller Moths** .....Bob M. Palmer, Jim Porter & Graham A. Collins .....543 pages £28
- 14 2013 **Butterflies NEW Oct**.....Ken Willmott, Malcolm Bridge, Francis Kelly and BC Surrey branch members.

News

Conserving the Small Blue on Guildford Downs

Sarah Meredith

IN December 2012 Butterfly Conservation applied to the Cemex Community Fund for £15,000 to cover a two-year Small Blue conservation project around Guildford. In January we were granted £8,000; Butterfly Conservation are looking at ways of funding the shortfall.

Funding will pay for: part-time conservation officer, working with volunteers and the general public; practical conservation work; habitat and butterfly surveys.

This project is being led by Butterfly Conservation in partnership with Surrey Wildlife Trust, The Albury Estate, Surrey County Council and Guildford Borough Council. It will run from May 2013 to May 2015.

**BACKGROUND:** In Surrey and SW London the Small Blue is restricted to the chalk of the North Downs. Described as common in Surrey at the start of the 20th century, the species now occupies fewer than 15 sites in the administrative county of Surrey, from Guildford in the west (Pewley Down) to Epsom and Banstead in the east. There are a handful of other sites in the London Boroughs of Sutton and Croydon, some of which are the focus of a SITA-funded Small Blue project delivered by the Downlands Project.

**PROJECT AIMS:** To halt the decline of the Small Blue and develop an identifiable landscape of calcareous grassland sites around Guildford. This project will also benefit other species that thrive in a mosaic of short and tall calcareous vegetation. By habitat creation on current and former sites, we hope to build existing populations and improve site connectivity.

The long-term vision is to secure existing habitat networks by improving site management, and to provide new habitat for expansion.



Sarah Meredith, admiring a Large Blue in the Cotswolds, will now help the Small Blue.

<b>The sites</b>	<i>Manager</i>
TQ 00810 48955 <b>Pewley Down</b> (Small Blue present)..Guildford Borough Council	
SU 98193 48940 <b>The Mount</b> .....Guildford Borough Council	
TQ 04319 49135 <b>Newlands Corner</b> .....Surrey Wildlife Trust	

About Sarah Meredith

I LIVE near Godalming but grew up among the South Downs. Butterfly ecology is my passion and I have worked on various butterfly research projects since 2009. In 2008 I returned to Reading University to undertake a MSc in Wildlife Management and Conservation. For my thesis I studied the ecology of the Small Heath in an upland situation working with Butterfly Conservation and local landowners in County Durham.

I then worked on the Glanville Fritillary for Zoological Society of London, and in 2010 was Large Blue volunteer warden on Collard Hill in Somerset for the National Trust.

This experience resulted in my being employed by Oxford University, Centre of Ecology and Hydrology, and Butterfly Conservation to carry out detailed surveys on Large Blue populations over the past two years. I have also helped with the reintroduction of Large Blues to the Cotswolds in 2010 and 2012, along with restoring potential Large Blues sites. Many of the sites I work on in Somerset and the Cotswolds have Small Blue present. This has given me a good background into understanding its needs and the management required.

**THE WORK:** Scrub removal using professional contractors and volunteers, creating areas of bare ground to encourage grassland species. The creation of earth scrapes and banks will produce a mosaic of sparsely-vegetated patches containing Kidney Vetch, providing the breeding, nectaring and basking areas that many butterflies and moths require. Scrapes can be particularly useful where large-scale or more complex habitat creation methods are inappropriate, and they assist other insects such as beetles, solitary bees and wasps.

We cannot rely on plants' natural ability to persist from year to year or to colonise new sites, so Kidney Vetch from local sources will be used to seed the scrapes. We hope for higher germination rates by sowing in spring rather than autumn.

**VOLUNTEER GROUPS:** We will work with all partner organisations to carry out volunteer days on all three sites; volunteers will be trained in scrub clearance, seeding, habitat and butterfly surveys.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT:** Gail Jeffcoate has been vital in the bid process, with her immense knowledge of Small Blue sites in Surrey and historical records.

**IF you are interested in volunteering, or have any questions regarding the project, please contact SARAH MEREDITH [saramere2@aol.com](mailto:saramere2@aol.com)**

## News

**Betony Case-bearer***Tony Davis, BC Moth Conservation Officer*

**B**UTTERFLY Conservation has obtained funding from Biffa Award and the Patsy Wood Trust to undertake a two-year project on the Betony Case-bearer at Oaken Wood to ensure the long-term survival of the moth.

The Betony Case-bearer, *Coleophora wockeella*, is one of Britain's rarest moths. It is now known only from the Butterfly Conservation reserve at Oaken Wood, with small numbers elsewhere within the Tugley Wood complex.

The adult moth is rather small and non-descript but the caterpillar has an intriguing lifestyle. It makes a case out of fragments of Betony leaves and lives within that case throughout its larval stage, just like a caddis fly larva does. It attaches the case to a Betony leaf, cuts a small hole in the surface of the leaf and then reaches inside, eating the nice, green contents without having to process the leaf's tough outer skin. When it has eaten as far as it can reach, while still keeping its tail in the case for safety, it moves house, transporting its case, sometimes to another leaf or even another plant, where it repeats the process.

Any species that is confined to a single site is at risk of extinction, no matter how well managed that site is. Chance events such as an accidental fire could easily eliminate this species from the British countryside.

We aim to strengthen the population of the moth at Oaken Wood and to carry out experimental work on the grassy area in the south-west corner of the reserve to determine the best management techniques for encouraging Betony to colonise. This will include scraping away the current rank grass sward which will probably look a bit severe at first but will undoubtedly re-vegetate quickly.

With the support of the Forestry Commission, we will also be creating small scallops and glades alongside the forestry tracks in adjacent woodland, to encourage the Betony Case-bearer to spread out from Oaken Wood. These glades will undoubtedly benefit species such as Wood White as well.

In the longer term we hope to identify at least one more site within the Weald of Sussex or Surrey where the Betony Case-bearer can be introduced. If you know of any woods which already have really substantial populations of Betony, please let me know.

If you would like to know more about the moth or the project to save it, I will be leading a guided walk in the area later this year. To be kept informed, please email:

[tdavis@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:tdavis@butterfly-conservation.org)

**ALSO SEE:** [www.patsywoodtrust.com](http://www.patsywoodtrust.com); [www.biffa-award.org](http://www.biffa-award.org)



*Betony Case-bearer case and feeding signs on a Betony leaf.* **Dave Green**

## Notes from Oaken Wood

Malcolm Bridge

**T**HESE notes on our winter work at Oaken Wood were penned in early March, with at least one more work session to be planned. There have been changes in personnel over the last couple of years with three of our erstwhile stalwarts no longer in action.

The saddest loss, as you will have read elsewhere in this newsletter, is that of Howard Whiting. He was one of the 3Ws trained to use two-stroke brushcutters in 1996, way back in the early years of our reserve.

A second W, Peter Webster, was trained with Howard. He has been sidelined on doctor's orders but remains active and in great heart.

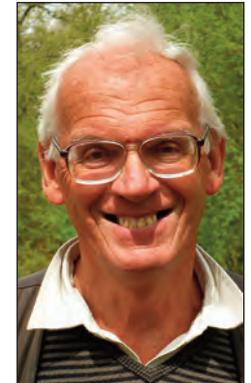
The third W, Mike Weller, is still in action as he has been for 20 years or so at Oaken Wood.

The third missing stalwart this winter was John Buckley. John lives at Cranleigh, quite close to the reserve, and has walked the butterfly transect at Oaken Wood for the last nine seasons (I'm reluctant to say "summers"). He has been out of action this winter but, after minor surgery, hopes to be back in vigorous action in the months ahead. He will be preparing for his tenth year of transect walking as this Skipper reaches you.

Happily these losses have been offset by new, or fairly recent, additions to the gang. John Rees, even more local to Oaken Wood than John Buckley, has brought great energy and drive to managing the demanding 22 acres. He has brought also a range of equipment and machinery which have enabled work parties to "raise their game", especially in the area of bracken management within, and adjacent to, the reserve. The large bracken block, once described as a malign terracotta army, is altered beyond recognition. A decade of unmanaged bracken, which threatens the western flank of our reserve, has been pulverized by John's tractor-drawn flail. There are now large tracts of grass areas with signs of Betony and Violet emerging.

Philip Underwood, from nearby Hambledon, has become a valuable member of the team and has undertaken to control the birch regrowth which threatens to recolonise the east half of the meadow area. This area has been planted with 200 Hazel whips in recent years in an attempt to increase the area of Hazel coppice within the reserve. It is a measure of the difficulty of planting into the area's cold and sticky Wealden clay that these whips, now in residence for some five years, have shown no perceptible growth above ground, but a few leaves each summer confirm that they survive rather than thrive.

Michael Friend, from further afield, has become a welcome addition over recent months. The regular work party is completed by our branch chair, David Gardner, trained in the use of power tools and adept with a bracken scythe. And finally, the author of these notes, who has co-ordinated the work at Oaken Wood since Stephen Jeffcoate stood down towards the end of 2003.



■ *continued next page*

## ■ OAKEN WOOD

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Following record-breaking (in England) rainfall in 2012, the lush regrowth of everything, except the Hazel whips, has kept the several work parties more than busy. Paths and tracks have been re-cut and cleared and, once again, the reserve looks an open and welcoming prospect. It looked distinctly dark and overgrown by late August of last year.

There was no plan to tackle any large scale clearance this winter following two heavy winters of clearing 20 years of regrowth in the NW corner between the large pond and the meadow. Some modest felling and brushcutting has created several scallops, which should provide small and sunny butterfly glades in the months ahead.

Tony Davis reports (page 10) that Butterfly Conservation have secured funding to promote some management and research to support the crucial population of the Betony Case-bearer, the tiny moth which currently is only

known in the UK in the Oaken Wood area. This work would shed valuable light on the requirements of this rare species and, perhaps, lead to attempts to extend its range throughout more of the Chiddingfold complex and into neighbouring Sussex, which lies less than a mile to the south of Oaken Wood.

Having been “responsible” for the well-being of this vulnerable micro-moth for the last decade, I am relieved that expert guidance will soon be become available. There should emerge a scientific rationale to replace the seemingly sound guesswork of recent winter management.

My previous Notes outlined a case for extending the reserve by another 10 acres or so. The new five-year management agreement between Butterfly Conservation and Forestry Commission is under discussion and, by the next Skipper, I should be able to report the outcome of these discussions. And I hope to give you an idea of how well 2013’s butterflies have emerged from the wretched weather of 2012.

## Membership

David Gradidge

A warm welcome to the following new members. February grand total: 879.

<b>Ms D L Alexander</b> Bookham	<b>Ms K &amp; Mrs E Gargani</b> .....Brockham	<b>Ms J &amp; Mr C Marot</b> .....East Molesey
<b>Mr P Alfrey</b> .....Mitcham	<b>Ms K Gilbert</b> .....Guildford	<b>Mr D Moore</b> .....Redhill
<b>Mr G Armfield</b> .....SW19	<b>Ms A Gilry</b> .....Epsom	<b>Mr R Morin</b> .....Croydon
<b>Mrs A Topalovic Arthan</b> & <b>Mr C Arthan</b> .....Sutton	<b>Mr &amp; Mrs A Grimshaw</b> .....Woking	<b>Mr P Osborne</b> & <b>Ms L Hewison</b> .....SW12
<b>Mr R Benyon</b> .....SW1	<b>Mr R I J Hardy</b> .....Esher	<b>Mr A Parker</b> .....Epsom
<b>Mr T Biddulph</b> .....Bristol	<b>Ms S Harris</b> .....Cobham	<b>Mr B Skinner</b> .....Croydon
<b>Mr D Convery</b> .....Croydon	<b>Dr C Harrison</b> .....SW19	<b>Ms T Smith</b> .....SE16
<b>Ms F Di Majo Burrows</b> .....Sutton	<b>Ms S Holland</b> .....W3	<b>Mr A Taylor</b> .....Teddington
<b>Mr &amp; Mrs A J Dorman</b> & family .....Dorking	<b>Ms R &amp; Mr S Hughes</b> & family .....Godalming	<b>Ms A Thomas</b> .....SE16
<b>Mrs J Elliott</b> .....Cobham	<b>Mr N McMillan</b> .....Aylesbury	<b>Mr A Wilson</b> & <b>Ms B Collecott</b> ..Guildford
<b>Mrs A Gardener</b> ..Haslemere	<b>Ms J McNickle</b> .....Esher	

## Conservation Adviser

Ken Willmott

**A**N EXCITING opportunity has arisen for the branch to obtain a second reserve at **Sheepleas** in conjunction with Surrey Wildlife Trust and Surrey County Council.

If we can conclude negotiations to our satisfaction, and are supported by National BC, the site could be managed on a similar basis to Oaken Wood, which we have on an annual lease from the Forestry Commission.

Sheepleas meadow, entrance point TQ 08765 52494, at 115 x 160 metres is nearly two hectares (4.5 acres). Approach from the car park behind St Mary’s Church south of the A246 Epsom Road between East and West Horsley; walk up the track and turn right to cross the 10ft wide concrete slab that prevents vehicular access.

The meadow complies with the current landscape-scale conservation priorities of BC, as it is part of a much larger conservation estate, successfully managed by the Surrey Wildlife Trust. My visits in 2012 were very rewarding. Probably a third is covered in stinging nettles. In July, when the sun appeared, 15 to 20 Red Admirals in view at any one time were depositing eggs. An amazing spectacle, with no males present! Finding scores of larvae later was easy.

Small Tortoiseshell transect counts on April 6 and June 30 produced 21 and 17 respectively. Previous years with better summer weather have produced higher counts. Nine larval nests were counted on July 21. These are good counts for this species in the South-East, where in recent years there has been a dramatic and well-publicised decline, which should give the species a priority status.

My fears that the Peacock may also follow Small Tortoiseshell’s decline were heightened recently on a visit to a site in north London, near Hampstead Heath. 2012 transect results pinned to a notice board announced that for the first time the Peacock count was zero. A worrying sign, but one which may be linked to the poor summer weather of 2012.

The Sheepleas meadow was one of the few places I found Peacock larvae. To round off the “aristocrats” (colourful butterflies of the Nymphalidae family), a Comma, form *hutchinsoni*, was observed busily laying on the nettles too, and in the spring three of the four corners of the meadow acted as Comma territories.

■ continued next page



## Branch field trips

DO come along to a branch field trip. There is no better way to improve your butterfly knowledge, see new places, and make new friends. There are midweek and weekend dates and all are welcome, from beginner to expert.

■ **KEN WILLMOTT**

*from previous page*

The four colourful, once common, butterflies that thrive there are also great ambassadors, visiting a wide variety of gardens for the general public to appreciate. I also located two Brown Hairstreak eggs on a fine hedgerow that borders the north side. Buckthorn grows in the same hedgerow, and I have seen a Brimstone depositing eggs in April.

Shepleas meadow could be used for research, which is much needed with the recent worrying declines of our nettle-feeders. We need our proposal to be successful to give us a more accessible reserve for our membership. Watch this space! All support is welcome!

**OAKEN WOOD:** our reserve had a disappointing year, mainly due to the poor weather. Silver-washed Fritillaries were particularly low in number, as were White Admirals, but July offered few opportunities to observe. We need more “observers” on our reserve, not just recording numbers, but watching exactly where butterflies are breeding. If we know this, at the end of a season we can plan winter work accordingly, without disturbing important egg-laying areas with classic Purple Emperor fallows, Blackthorn used by the Brown Hairstreak and Buckthorn stands required by Brimstones.

Do sit down for a leisurely lunch on the reserve from July 10 to the end of the month, preferably with a good view of one of the many fallows. You may see a female Purple Emperor egg-laying, as I did in 2011 – unfortunately 15 metres outside the reserve boundary! However egg-laying can be observed on the reserve as it harbours attractive fallows. Let us know the exact tree!

Watch out for egg-laying Silver-washed Fritillaries. They deposit eggs on moss-covered Oak trunks in the vicinity of violets. Return the following May to find the gaudy larva. The more eggs deposited on the trunk, the more chance of finding several larvae, either basking in the dappled sunlight or voraciously feeding upon the violet leaves.

Surrey’s rarest butterfly, the Wood White, continues to breed on the reserve and I have mapped egg sites. I would be interested in the details if anyone sees Wood White egg-laying. I can provide a map if required. A walk around Oaken Wood in the autumn was useful, but showed the need for a lot of conservation work to maintain the Wood White as a breeding species. Shade is the problem and several potential breeding sites with good growths of the larval foodplant, Birds-foot Trefoil, are losing their sunny aspect required by females searching for egg sites.

**DENBIES HILLSIDE:** another species of concern for 2013 is the Adonis Blue. Last May it seemed to be emerging well, until the weather deteriorated. The second brood in August/September was virtually non-existent, as indeed it was in August 2011. It did recover then, as I hope it will this May, but the exceptionally wet summer of 2012 exacerbated the situation by making the sward too tall and lush, something the Adonis Blue larvae dislike because of the lower temperatures this brings to its prostrate larval foodplant, Horseshoe Vetch.

Chalkhill Blue survives in lower sward temperatures and had a memorable emergence in 2012! Late May is a good time to look for the larval stages in 2013 as they should be plentiful.



*Shepleas meadow in February, south-facing Brown Hairstreak hedge on right.* **FK**

**BOOKHAM COMMON:** another Surrey hotspot, is undergoing a period of change and needs careful monitoring, particularly for star species, Purple Emperor, White Admiral and Silver-washed Fritillary. They are denizens of a dappled shade environment but Bookham Common is in the process of being opened up with a view to creating areas of pasture woodland.

100+ veteran Oaks are earmarked for work that involves clearing smaller, surrounding trees and scrub to let in more sunlight and allow younger Oaks to prosper. These changes need to be monitored for their potential impact. One presumes the past wet winter months proved unfavourable for too much of this work to happen in winter 2012-2013 (?). All reports to my email address please.

**BOX HILL:** after the Olympic cycle race it will be interesting to see how three of the Lepidoptera specialities survive this coming summer. The Silver-spotted Skipper has inhabited the Zig-Zag slopes for many years, even surviving a large fire which blackened a considerable part of the habitat. Small Blue survives in low numbers and it is

more about monitoring the amount of Kidney Vetch larval foodplant on the slopes than the actual adults. The rare Straw Belle moth is also found on the same slopes and must be investigated. Hopefully a trio of survivors.

**PURPLE HAIRSTREAK:** Matthew Oates, my fellow Purple Emperor enthusiast, conducts a regular egg count of the Purple Hairstreak on Oaks with low enough branches. In my younger days I used to do this after work, checking Purple Hairstreak, Brown Hairstreak and the now probably extinct Surrey Black Hairstreak.

The latter was a successful introduction in 1962, which lasted for over 30 years. It failed because the erudite Lepidopterist who made the introduction and chose the ideal habitat made the fateful and common mistake of choosing a release site that did not belong to a conservation organisation which had control of land use and could manage it effectively. It was therefore eventually destroyed by the landowner, whose only interest was financial.

Matthew’s 2012 Purple Hairstreak egg count was zero, after some three hours of searching. The July weather, of

■ *continued next page*

■ **KEN WILLMOTT**

from previous page

course, was a major factor, but his past counts have always reached double figures, with 79 in winter 2009-2010. As far as Surrey is concerned I was encouraged by numbers on Bookham Common while looking amongst the Oaks for Purple Emperors.

I would probably have seen more Purple Hairstreaks had I visited during their peak flight period of 5-7pm. They used to be common in Chiddingfold Forest, but in recent years populations among the remnant Oaks of the Conifer plantations have declined. This species is well worth monitoring for both adults and eggs if one can find an appropriate stand of Oaks with low, accessible branches.

**ASH DIEBACK:** We must also take into account the possible effects on the 2013 butterfly season of the Ash dieback, *Chalara fraxinea*. Spring and summer is the critical period for the spread of the disease and, depending on the magnitude of the disease, monitoring various habitats may become an issue, if organisations such as the Forestry Commission restrict movement around their properties.

**REINTRODUCTIONS:** In 2012 our Branch donated £1,000 towards the "Dukes on the Brink" project led by SE Regional Officer Dan Hoare. Despite the Duke of Burgundy no longer

occurring in Surrey this is money well spent as colonies in Sussex and Hampshire are close enough to Surrey to be reached by car in under one hour. Butterflies do not have borders!

The Project has been successful in enhancing and increasing the range of this species. I have been looking at former Surrey Duke of Burgundy sites, once with Dan Hoare, but to date none seems to be in appropriate condition for a re-introduction programme. Any such attempt at the moment would be a waste of time and result in the loss of poor Duke of Burgundy adults. However I have ideas regarding future habitat management for the Duke of Burgundy.

The Branch also financially supported the SE England Woodlands Project, another successful venture by BC National. This did wonders for Pearl-bordered Fritillaries. Once again these well managed Pearl-bordered Fritillary habitats are easily reached, just over the borders, but sadly no longer in Surrey. It is futile to re-introduce them into Surrey habitats that are obviously now unsuitable, otherwise they would not have disappeared.

**BUTTERFLIES** face many challenges in 2013 and beyond. However with the continued enthusiastic involvement of Surrey/SW London branch members and committee, working as a team, we can look ahead with optimism.

# Field trips 2013

## Four-page pullout



Mike Weller  
field trips organiser

**UNLESS** stated otherwise, walks start **11am** and last until mid-afternoon. Lunch, drinks, walking boots, sunscreen, hat and close-focusing binoculars are advised. ALL are welcome, from newcomer to regular, and novice to expert. There is no need to contact the leader in advance. National Trust members can avoid car park charges by displaying their membership sticker.

■ See [www.surreybutterflies.org](http://www.surreybutterflies.org) for late changes and Great Journey train times.

■ Field trips are open to members and their guests.

### APRIL

- 23 Tue **Ham Riverlands** TQ 170731: *early flyers, e.g. Brimstone, Peacock*. Meet car park by Thames at north end of Ham Street, Petersham TW10 7RS **MORNING ONLY. Malcolm Bridge** 020 8289 3839, m07806 253331
- 25 Thu **Merrow/Pewley Downs, Guildford** TQ 022500: *spring Skippers, Green Hairstreak*. Meet car park on right at top of Grove Road, off A246 Epsom Road GU1 2QP **Francis Kelly** 01483 835598
- 28 Sun **Denbies Hillside** TQ 141503: *spring Skippers, Green Hairstreak*. STEEP! Meet Ranmore NT car park east. RH5 6SR **Phil Boys** 01306 885793

### MAY

- 1 Wed **Hutchinson's Bank** TQ 377620: *downland species incl. day-flying moths*. Meet Farleigh Dean Crescent, off Featherbed Lane. CR0 9AD **Malcolm Bridge** 020 8289 3839, m07806 253331
- 5 Sun **Sheepleas, West Horsley** TQ 088526: *spring Skippers*. Meet car park behind St. Mary's Church, south side of A246 between East & West Horsley. KT24 6AN **Francis Kelly** 01483 835598
- 12 Sun **Oaken Wood** SU 993338, your branch reserve, then Triangle Meadow: *Wood White & early flyers*. Meet entrance to Oaken Wood via west turning off Plaistow Rd; GU8 4PG **Malcolm Bridge** 020 8289 3839, m07806 253331
- 19 Sun **Denbies Hillside** TQ 141503: *Adonis Blue, Five-spot Burnet ssp. palustrella*. STEEP! Meet Ranmore NT car park east. RH5 6SR **Phil Boys** 01306 885793
- 26 Sun **Merrow/Pewley Downs, Guildford** TQ 022500: *Small Blue, spring Skippers, Green Hairstreak*. Meet car park on right at top of Grove Road, off A246 Epsom Road GU1 2QP **Francis Kelly** 01483 835598

### Social media

Keep up-to-date with Twitter & Facebook

@NTMatthewOates: NT conservationist

@liamcreedon: BC Head of Press

@martinswarren: BC CEO

@savebutterflies: BC official



[www.facebook.com/savebutterflies](http://www.facebook.com/savebutterflies)

30 Thu **Norbury Park** TQ 147544: *downland butterflies*. Meet cul-de-sac end of Downs Way, Fetcham, south of A246 Leatherhead to Guildford road. Park sensibly in residential road. KT23 4BP **Mike Weller** 01306 882097

## JUNE

8 Sat **Howell Hill** TQ 237623: *Small Blue, wild orchids*. **MORNING ONLY**. Meet **10.30am** outside church at roundabout junction of A232 and Northey Avenue, East Ewell. Park considerately in nearby residential roads. A232 is busy. SM2 7HR **Peter Wakeham** 0208 642 3002

11 Tue **Fairmile Common** TQ 117617: *Silver-studded Blue*. **MORNING ONLY**. Meet **10.30am** car park off road to Cobham International School off A307, 200m SW of A3 flyover. KT11 1BL **Mike Weller** 01306 882097

13 Thu **Dawney Hill & Brookwood Cemetery** SU 946561: *Silver-studded Blue*. Meet Pirbright village green, Avenue de Cagney. GU24 0JE **Francis Kelly** 01483 835598

16 Sun **Banstead Downs** TQ 258609: *Small Blue*. Meet signboard near closed car park in Sutton Lane; park carefully in narrow residential roads, eg Grange Meadows or Grange Gardens. SM7 3RE **David Gradidge** 01737 353981

18 Tue **Hutchinson's Bank** TQ 377620: *Small Blue*. Meet Farleigh Dean Crescent, off Featherbed Lane. CR0 9AD **Malcolm Bridge** 020 8289 3839, m07806 253331

20 Thu **Brentmoor Heath** SU 931612: *Silver-studded Blue, Dartford Warbler*. Meet Greyspot Range Gate; turn right at end of Brentmoor Road, West End. GU24 9NF **Steve Proud (SWT)** 07891 640140 & **Mike Weller** 01306 882097

23 Sun **Box Hill** TQ 179513: *Dark Green Fritillary, orchids*. Beware cyclists! Meet NT car park opposite shop. KT20 7LB **Mike Weller** 01306 882097

26 Wed **Whitmoor Common** SU 988542: *Silver-washed Fritillary, White Admiral, Silver-studded Blue*. Meet car park at Jolly Farmer pub (intended for Common & pub); from A320 north of Guildford, take Burdeshott Road NW for 1km. GU3 3RN **Francis Kelly** 01483 835598

29 Sat **Norbury Park** TQ 158525: *down & woodland butterflies*. Meet Crabtree Lane car park, 0.5km NW of Box Hill & Westhumble station. RH5 6BQ **Mike Weller** 01306 882097

30 Sun **Mitcham Common** TQ 291678: *White-letter Hairstreak*. Meet Mill House car park, Windmill Rd, Mitcham Common. CR4 1HT **Malcolm Bridge** 020 8289 3839, m07806 253331

## JULY

2 Tue **Ashtead Common** TQ 178589: *Purple Emperor, White Admiral*. Meet Ashtead Common estate office; go over level crossing at Ashtead railway station, then left 200m along Woodfield Rd. Park sensibly before level crossing or at far end of Woodfield Rd; do not obstruct driveways. Bring binoculars. KT21 2DZ **Mike Weller** 01306 882097

4 Thu **Bookham Common** TQ 130557: *Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary*. Meet NT Tunnel car park off Church Road, where it bends sharply 200m east of Bookham railway station. Bring binoculars. KT23 3LT **Mike Weller** 01306 882097

7 Sun **Botany Bay** SU978 348 & **Oaken Wood** SU 993338: *woodland butterflies*. **TWO** Chiddingfold field trips that can be taken separately or together. Beware roadside ditches when parking! Meet **9.30** Botany Bay entrance for 3km return walk to Triangle Meadow to find Purple Emperor on the ground. GU8 4YA Meet **1.30** Oaken Wood (see May 12 details). **Mike Weller** 01306 882097

9 Tue **Sheepleas, West Horsley** TQ 088526: *Purple Emperor, Marbled White*. Meet car park behind St. Mary's Church, south side of A246 between East & West Horsley. KT24 6AN **Francis Kelly** 01483 835598

14 Sun **Holmwood Common** TQ 182463 & **Inholms Clay Pit** TQ 175474: *White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary*. Meet NT car park on brow of hill on west side of Dorking to Newdigate road. RH5 4DT. Then afternoon visit to English Nature meadow reserve nearer Dorking. Access from Holmbury Drive. RH5 4TU **Mike Weller** 01306 882097

16 Tue **Broadstreet Common** SU 968509: *summer Skippers, Marbled White, Purple Hairstreak, White Admiral*. Meet Hartshill, Park Barn, Guildford. From A25 at Guildford Wooden Bridge roundabout, follow A323 Aldershot Rd; after 800m at 1st roundabout, keep straight on; after 2km at 2nd roundabout turn left into Broad Street (heading towards Wood Street village); after 250m, 2nd-left – Broadacres; 1st right – Wood Rise; keep right at roundabout into Barnwood Rd; turn right at T-junction into Cabell Rd; 1st right into Hartshill (residential street, park carefully). If approaching Guildford from NE on A3, take A320 exit then join A25. GU2 8LW **Francis Kelly** 01483 835598

18 Thu **Great Train Journey East** TQ 171502: 20+ *species, incl Chalkhill Blue & Silver-spotted Skipper*. VERY STEEP IN PARTS! Depart Dorking **DEEPDENE 9.14**, arr Betchworth 9.19 (you could join here). 7km return via Betchworth & Brockham chalk pits, Box Hill Dukes, Lower Viewpoint & Stepping Stones car park. **Updated train times will be on [www.surreybutterflies.org](http://www.surreybutterflies.org)** See footnote re parking. **Mike Weller** 01306 882097

20 Sat **Walton Downs & Juniper Hill, Epsom** TQ 222578: *Chalkhill Blue*. Meet **2pm** large car park inside racecourse at SE corner. Cross the course east of grandstand at junction of Tattenham Corner Rd & Old London Rd then follow the track round. KT18 5PU **Mike Weller** 01306 882097

21 Sun **Chobham Common** SU 965649: *Grayling*. **MORNING ONLY**. Meet **10.30** Roundabout car park, junction B383 & B386. GU24 8TL **Alan Hunt** 01483 476901

24 Wed **Wimbledon Common** TQ 229724: *Purple Hairstreak & grassland species*. Meet Windmill Road car park. Bus stops nearby on Wimbledon Park Side. Toilets at cafe. SW19 5NR **Gay Carr** 020 8788 8272

- 30 Tue **Reigate & Colley Hills** TQ 263522: *Silver-spotted Skipper, Chalkhill Blue*. Meet Reigate Hill NT car park (free), SE of M25 junct 8; turn off A217 towards Gatton; signposted. RH2 9RP **Mike Weller** 01306 882097

## AUGUST

- 3 Sat **“Vale End”, Tillingbourne valley & St Martha’s Hill** TQ 044479: *Chalkhill Blue*. Joint with Upper Thames branch. We are again invited to John & Daphne Foulsham’s home at Albury. **Meet 10.30** Vale End on A248, 0.5 km west of Albury, 7km east of Guildford. Vale End is on north side of Chilworth Rd but park in field opposite on south side. After coffee & biscuits and exploring the garden, we wander along the Tillingbourne valley and then steeply up onto the North Downs. Take picnic lunch. Return downhill for afternoon tea & cakes. End 4pm. GU5 9BE **Mike Weller** 01306 882097
- 6 Tue **Merrow/Pewley Downs, Guildford** TQ 022500: *Chalkhill Blue, plus other Blues & Browns*. Meet car park on right at top of Grove Road, off A246 Epsom Road GU1 2QP **Francis Kelly** 01483 835598
- 9 Fri **Dawney Hill & Brookwood Cemetery, Pirbright** SU 946561: *Grayling*. Meet village green car park, Avenue de Cagney. GU24 0JE Joint with Guildford Natural History Society. **Francis Kelly** 01483 835598
- 10 Sat **Great Train Journey West** TQ 171502: 25+ *species*. STEEP! Depart Dorking DEEPDENE 9.45, arr Gomshall 9.55 (you could join here). 10 km return walk over some of the finest butterfly country on the Downs. *Updated train times will be on www.surreybutterflies.org*  
*See footnote re parking.* **Malcolm Bridge** 020 8289 3839, m07806 253331
- 11 Sun **Denbies Hillside** TQ 141503: STEEP!  
*Adonis & Chalkhill Blue, Silver-spotted Skipper*. Meet Ranmore NT car park east. RH5 6SR **Phil Boys** 01306 885793
- 18 Sun **Box Hill** TQ 179513: *Adonis (hopefully), Chalkhill & Common Blues, Silver-spotted Skipper*; STEEP walk to Lower Viewpoint & Dukes area. Meet NT car park opposite shop. Beware cyclists! KT20 7LB **Phil Boys** 01306 885793
- 21 Wed **Bookham Common** TQ 130557: *Brown Hairstreak*. **MORNING ONLY**. **Meet 10.30** NT Tunnel car park off Church road, where it bends sharply 200m east of Bookham railway station. KT23 3LT **Mike Weller** 01306 882097

### Parking in Dorking for the Great Train Journeys

**Stepping Stones NT car park** TQ 171512. FREE. Recommended for **EAST** journey, which ends here. Take A24 southbound carriageway; c. 700m south of Burford Bridge Hotel & roundabout, turn left (ie. east) into car park driveway. Walk south along A24 to Deepdene station, c. 1km, 10 mins. RH5 6AE

**Ashcombe Road** TQ 161500 FREE. Recommended for **WEST** journey, which returns along here. Deepdene 15 mins; east along Ashcombe Road, then right at A24. RH4 1HP

**Dorking Main Station** TQ 170504: cost c. £5.50; not many spaces during week. RH4 1TZ. Walk 250m south to Deepdene Station

**Dorking Halls**. TQ 161497. Pre-pay c. £4 according to time. Walk 200m east along Reigate Rd to roundabout, then 400m north to Deepdene. RH4 1SG

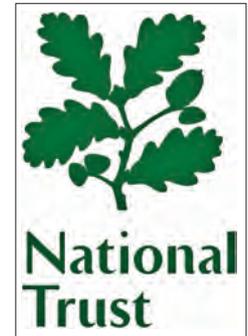
## Transects

Gail Jeffcoate

SOME of the best butterfly sites on the North Downs are on National Trust land. At White Downs, Denbies Hillside and Box Hill, eight butterfly transects are walked by National Trust and Butterfly Conservation volunteers. Could you assist at some of these, especially where NT volunteers need help to develop their identification skills?

Knowledge of butterfly transect methods is not necessary (though it would help), nor is regular weekly commitment. We need a couple of people with good identification skill and the ability to spot inconspicuous butterflies such as the Skippers, Brown Argus and Green Hairstreak.

■ If you can help on NT sites, or to find out more, please contact **Gail Jeffcoate**: [g.jeffcoate@btopenworld.com](mailto:g.jeffcoate@btopenworld.com)



DATA from all UK transects is on [www.ukbms.org](http://www.ukbms.org), website of the Butterfly Monitoring Scheme. Click **Home**, **Species Lists**, then select a species; click **show all** to see full range of information; scroll down to Coverage and select a year to see **all transects for selected species**.

ALSO

Click on **Home**, **Site Locations**,

then drill down into the map to see **all species for selected transect**.

NB some Surrey vice-county transects are in the Greater London section.

■ To start a new Surrey transect, or help with an existing one, please contact branch co-ordinator **Richard Donovan**: [richard.donovan@reichhold.com](mailto:richard.donovan@reichhold.com)



### Helping future generations

HAVE you considered leaving a gift to Butterfly Conservation in your will? An increasing number of members and friends are choosing to support Butterfly Conservation in this tax-efficient way. All gifts, however small, are welcome and make a crucial and lasting contribution to the conservation of butterflies and moths. Accounting for over one third of voluntary income, legacy gifts make a real difference to the work we can undertake.

So as well as leaving gifts to loved ones in your will, please consider Butterfly Conservation, to help ensure butterflies and moths thrive in the years to come. For more information about sharing your love of butterflies and moths with future generations please contact:

**Helen Corrigan**, Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5QP; 01273 453313; [hcorrigan@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:hcorrigan@butterfly-conservation.org)

## Recorder's Report

Malcolm Bridge

SO now it's official – 2012 was the wettest year in England since modern records began in 1910. Difficult to remember that winter 2011/12 was remarkably dry as was early spring. Difficult to remember that these drought months saw a wide scale hose-pipe ban introduced on April 5.

Just as the appointment of a Minister for Drought in that long, hot dry summer of 1976 heralded the start of prolonged and heavy rain, so too did the hose pipe ban. In fact the last week of March and the first few days of April yielded the best weather of spring and summer and produced a bumper crop of early emergers.

The four widespread Whites were seen throughout the first half of April and the **Orange-tip** coped best with the deteriorating weather. Orange-tips were seen in reasonable numbers for the best part of nine weeks. An early **Wood White** (April 10) in Chiddingfold was the first seen anywhere but this species waited until May before getting into its stride and appeared in average numbers. But the July/August brood was poor.

**Holly Blues** emerged early and were about in average numbers for several weeks with, again, a poorer second brood. Of the May butterflies, **Green Hairstreak** seemed unperturbed by the continuing poor weather but the **Common Blue** was anything but and both broods were greatly reduced if seen at all.

All this led to the June drop passing without comment other than the late emergence of **Small Blues**, which ticked over in small numbers until early July. By mid-July the worst of the weather

was over and the Browns took full advantage. This group, **Marbled White**, **Meadow Brown**, **Gatekeeper** and **Ringlet**, were four of the five success stories of 2012 and possibly saved the year from being the worst in the 37 years of BMS transect data – watch this space.

Other species of high summer, **Silver-washed Fritillary**, **Dark Green Fritillary** and **White Admiral**, were seen in reduced numbers but Purple Emperor seemed to hold its own without prospering. On the heathlands, Silver-studded Blue fared much worse than the Grayling.

The nymphalids suffered as a group and this was compounded by a year of poor migration so that few new recruits showed. The number of **Clouded Yellows** was possibly a 10-year low.

The improvement in the weather from later July onwards came too late to make a real difference and the double-brooded species produced disappointing second broods. Summer had one pleasant surprise up its sleeve and that concerned the fifth “winner” of 2012, the **Chalkhill Blue**. In early August the absence of Adonis Blue was offset by an extraordinary emergence of Chalkhills on Denbies Hillside. Surrey's excitement was shared over the borders in Sussex and Hampshire, where estimates of several thousands were reported from the stronger colonies.

Interestingly the Big Butterfly Count promoted by BC and funded by Marks and Spencer confirmed many of these initial gloomy impressions. Running for three weeks from the second half of July into early August (3 weeks) this exercise in citizen science attracted nationally a



Marbled White: Big Butterfly Count winner

FK

quarter of a million records. It is noteworthy that few participants were BC members, which reflects well the widespread interest in and affection for butterflies among the general public.

Of the 21 species surveyed, including two day-flying moths, 15 were down, often greatly down, on the similar 2011 survey. The four Browns noted above

were the main exception, all posting better or much better counts than in 2011.

Outstanding of these was the Marbled White – up by 550% over 2011 – and this was brought home to me on a personal level. While working on an old pony-grazed field attached to my allotment at Shirley Oaks, S. Croydon, I saw my first Marbled White in a decade of working and butterfly-watching at this attractive site.

I know that if I go south and over Shirley Hills to Hutchinson's Bank I will find lots of Marbled Whites just three miles distant on the chalk. But on the London Clay of Shirley Oaks? She was enjoying the Knapweed planted there for the other Browns, which are regulars, and being a she adds real interest to 2013's possibilities.

My thanks to all who sent me butterfly records from 2012 and by whatever means. By the time you read these words Ben Kirby, our webmaster, will have activated our on-line recording facility at [www.surreybutterflies.org](http://www.surreybutterflies.org).

If you have not used this before, please give it a go although I remain grateful for records by email or paper.

### How to submit records

*How to submit records to the branch recorder, in order of preference:*

■ **Website:** [www.surreybutterflies.org](http://www.surreybutterflies.org) (ongoing through the season).

■ **Spreadsheet:** BC's Levana software has five fields in this sequence: grid ref, site/location, date, species name (vernacular), number seen.

■ **Email:** [malcolm.bridge@ntlworld.com](mailto:malcolm.bridge@ntlworld.com)

■ **Paper:** records still gratefully received.

4-figure grid references (1k2) ok; 6-figures (100m<sup>2</sup>) useful for unusual records. TQ grid refs are east of Guildford/Woking, SU west.

## Surrey Sites

### Tolworth Court Farm Fields

Lawrie de Whalley

JUST south of Tolworth near Kingston upon Thames are unimproved fields and hedges farmed from Domesday times until 1989. Covering an area 1km by 500 metres (50ha), with the River Hogsmill and Bonesgate stream near its borders, this Local Nature Reserve is well worth a visit.

In the past two years Bridget and I have seen 20 species of butterfly here and several day-flying moths. To enjoy butterflies by the hundred go in July, when Gatekeepers, Ringlets and Meadow Browns will be nectaring on Knapweed, Bramble and Thistle.

In 2012 we were pleasantly surprised to see four Marbled Whites, new to the site for us. In late June and July on the northern part of the fields we found tens of golden Small Skippers and a few Essex Skippers. Along the ancient mixed hedgerows Large Skippers are thinly spaced but usually fly to inspect visitors before returning to their nectar flowers. All the species mentioned are tall grass feeders doing well under the occasional mowing regime controlled by Kingston Council.

Through the middle of the site is a green lane going NE/SW with lines of trees, shrubs and perennial plants each side, well worth a walk. Holly Blues on Ivy flowers are residents. On the field sides of the lane we have found Common Blues and Small Coppers in small numbers, sometimes near a horse-grazed patch with short sward. Look out for Burnet Companion, Common Carpet and other day-flying moths.

In May the riverside paths usually have Orange Tips, Speckled Woods, Green-veined Whites and Brimstones flying nearby. There are foot and cycle bridges over the water.

Tolworth Fields links up with several kilometres of open land beside the river with a few butterflies, but most of the grass is close cut, which reduces the habitat for grass feeders.

Looking back at the Surrey Branch records our Marbled Whites and one Brown Argus were not the first at Tolworth but after a nine-year gap the sightings are encouraging! Please send your records to the Branch Recorder so we can all share them. They also help to ensure that correct management continues.

How to get there: from Tolworth Station (zone 5) exit go under the railway bridge, keep on the same side of the A240 road, cross over Jubilee Way



(traffic lights). After another 200 metres there is a footpath sign turning right between high banks onto the fields.

Car parking is possible in Worcester Park Road near the A240 junction traffic lights. Cross the A240, turn right, cross over the Hogsmill River and walk by the road about 300 metres to a footpath sign and go left in between the banks to the fields. Grid Ref to entrance TQ 202 653.

■ *Do you have a hidden gem of a site in Surrey to share with Skipper readers? Please contact the editor.*

### Warren Farm and the Small Blue Jovita Kaunang

WARREN FARM is a 53-acre site (TQ232629) on the Chalk and forms a southern extension to Nonsuch Park in the borough of Epsom and Ewell. As its name suggests, it was a farm until as recently as 1985. Subsequent proposals for the land included a golf course but, after a public inquiry, in 1994 it was handed to a conservation organisation – The Woodland Trust – as mitigation for a new housing development at the western end.

The Woodland Trust as new owners of what is, in effect, a chalk grassland site then embarked on a programme of tree planting, which fortunately was kept to the boundary. Further management involved an annual cut, but sadly the invasive alien Canadian Goldenrod took a grip. In the open areas it was knocked back by the cut, but where it grows among the new trees it forms a monoculture of established plants that have never been cut.

From 2009 to early 2010, the Woodland Trust staged a public consultation, presenting proposals to significantly increase woodland cover. This would involve a deep-ploughing technique called “soil inversion” followed by the introduction of trees. This was the main objective, along with other mitigatory plans such as their creation of a “Forest of Flowers”, whereby they would sow wildflower seed along with tree seed.

The Trust argued this would help eradicate Canadian Goldenrod whilst bringing the site up to their constitutional standards, that is an increased proportion of trees to open areas. Strong objections were made from members of the Nonsuch Watch group, which included myself, and other organisations such as Butterfly Conservation, resulting in the Woodland Trust shelving their plans. These



Mating Small Blues at Warren Farm JK

objections had cited the further unnecessary loss of open area and serious ecological impact, which the Woodland Trust considered short-termism.

In 2010, Roger Hawkins met the site manager and explained his success in eradicating Goldenrod at Park Downs. This resulted in a new volunteer programme to hand-pull the Goldenrod at Warren Farm and work began on June 30, 2010. These volunteer days mixed with species recording have resulted in an obvious recovery of the site and an impressive number of records.

The Small Blues are concentrated in Sleepy Field, in the north-east corner of the site, making it an easy area to cover, particularly as it is now almost clear of Goldenrod. This is the main area for Kidney Vetch, which would have been lost in any soil inversion. On July 21, 2010 I found the first Small Blue, its freshness suggesting a second brood. BC species champion Gail Jeffcoate visited on August 11 and confirmed we had a breeding population and we saw Small Blues when I led the London Natural History Society on June 10, 2012.

■ *If you are interested in helping the Small Blue at Warren Farm, by either setting up a transect, general recording and/or pulling Goldenrod, please contact Graham Collins, Surrey Macromoth Recorder: 020 8688 4539; [stigmella.aurella@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:stigmella.aurella@tiscali.co.uk). Parking is available nearby in Seymour Ave in the west or Bramley Road in the south.*

**MORE DETAILS:** [www.kingston.gov.uk/tcff\\_management\\_plan.doc](http://www.kingston.gov.uk/tcff_management_plan.doc)

## Field-trip reports

**Merrow & Pewley Downs, Guildford, May 27, 2012**

*Francis Kelly*

*The talent scout who famously rejected the Beatles found a worthy successor in the previous editor of this newsletter. Your new editor modestly thinks this report deserves a delayed release as a taster for the new season.*

NOT even **The Fool on the Hill** could spoil our trip to the downs at Merrow and Pewley above Guildford. The Fool is a local unfortunate who has taken up residence in a sheltered corner of Pewley Hill right next to a prime butterfly spot.

We began our **Magical Mystery Tour** at Merrow Down in 26 degrees. I warned the 20-strong party that my recce **Yesterday** in similar heat had produced precisely nothing. But **I Should Have Known Better**. After hardly **Anytime At All** David Walton, one of seven field-trip newcomers, had spotted our first Small Blue. In fact about six of Britain's smallest butterfly, freshly emerged, were taking advantage of the shade offered by the few trees.

Nothing else showed on **The Long and Winding Road** to the top of Merrow Down, but on the north-facing dip slope of Pewley Down we were welcomed by Brimstones, Orange-tips, Common and Holly Blues and Brown Argus.

At the top of Pewley Down, Small Heaths were **Here, There and Everywhere**. Many more Small Blues were enjoying the sun, and the south-facing escarpment completed a full house of spring specialities with Grizzled and Dingy Skippers, Green Hairstreak and Small Copper.

Up to 50 Man Orchids clustered around a Juniper bush thrilled the botanists among us, despite a heckling from the hillside dweller as we disturbed his **Golden Slumbers**. Speckled Wood completed the count as we forced ourselves to **Get Back** to the cars.

So that was **A Day in the Life** of a field trip. **With a Little Help from My Friends** we found all the target species, because **All You Need is Love** and a little **Good Day Sunshine**.

■ Total count: Butterflies 12, Beetles 13 (if you can recognise them).



**Bookham Common, January 1**

*Liz Weller*

*Great start to 2013, by a butterfly novice*

**A**N ESTABLISHED date in our butterfly diary is surprisingly January 1, and after the last gloomy days of 2012 we awoke to a cloudless sky and the promise of a good day for our Brown Hairstreak Egg Hunt, an unofficial but "competitive" field trip organised by Mike Weller.

Six of us turned up for this ideal opportunity to blow away our Christmas cobwebs and enjoy some much-needed fresh air. Determined not to be put off by having to wade in our wellies through water-logged ground, we selected the more appealing



*Liz Weller and Malcolm Bridge searching for Brown Hairstreak eggs at Bookham Common on January 1*

**HT**

an hour later, I was rewarded with the sight of a possibility, though I was dubious initially because the egg was not very white, but through the lens it was evident that it was slightly dirty on one side (I actually felt that such an indistinct specimen was worth two eggs, but this was disallowed!).

Under magnification, the egg (pictured) is a beautiful honeycomb structure and a brilliant example of nature at its best. It's amazing how much satisfaction can be gained from the wonder of seeing such a fantastic example of perfect symmetry in microscopic size. The morning's effort produced a total of 20 eggs, half of which were spotted by Mike.



One of our number, who shall remain anonymous, scored a 'duck' but was still allowed to join us for lunch at Ye Olde Windsor Castle (not the royal one!). Over a relaxed meal, discussion ranged between butterfly experiences in 2012 and interesting prognoses for the future, interlaced with a good deal of hilarity. We had confirmed that the butterfly is still hanging on to the territory it moved into about seven years ago.

### Independent butterfly websites

[www.ukbutterflies.co.uk](http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk)

[www.britishbutterflies.co.uk](http://www.britishbutterflies.co.uk)

[www.purple-emperor.co.uk](http://www.purple-emperor.co.uk)

[www.thepurpleempire.com](http://www.thepurpleempire.com)

[www.apaturairis.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.apaturairis.blogspot.co.uk)

[www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/butterfly](http://www.enchantedlearning.com/subjects/butterfly)

[www.learnaboutbutterflies.com](http://www.learnaboutbutterflies.com)

[www.butterfly-guide.co.uk](http://www.butterfly-guide.co.uk)

[www.discoverbutterflies.com](http://www.discoverbutterflies.com)

[www.ukleps.org](http://www.ukleps.org)

[www.spock-butterflies.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.spock-butterflies.blogspot.co.uk)

## Weather Watch

David Gradidge

**W**HAT an awful year. Well that is what the press said about the weather, but is it borne out by the facts?

In many ways it was true and the only saving grace was that we got off lightly in the South-East compared with places west and north. The far north-west of Scotland was the place to escape. Blame the jet stream. For lengthy periods, often a month at a time, it got stuck in a rut and passed to the South of the UK and this caused many of the problems.

In the UK, four of the wettest years in the past 100 have occurred since 2000 (and two of the driest). In England as a whole, 2012 was the wettest year by 36mm. However in our part of the world it was only the 4th wettest, a fraction above 2002 with 2000 still by far the wettest on record. The summers of 2012 and 2007 were the wettest in recent times (no comfort that 1917 was worse).

We were all lulled into a false hope with a wonderful March and hosepipe bans, then April brought us back to earth with a bump. June was the wettest on record with July not far behind. August perked up but it was a bit late by then, after which it all went down hill again right to the end of the year.

Sunshine for the year was just a shade below average. Well, so much for averages. June was the 4th dullest on record at 144 hours or 70% of average, and almost half that of 2006 and 2010. For the statistician, March had 30 more hours than June and almost as much as July. No month recorded over 200 hours, a very rare event. But it was an average year!

2012 also came out average for temperatures, so you know where this is going. Average is now measured against the period 1981 to 2010. It was solely due to a very mild January and an exceptional March. Yes, June was cool but only by 0.7c. Compare that with June 1977 which was a massive 2c colder than 2012. It should be pointed out that up to end of February 2013, 8 of the last 11 months have been colder than average.

It wasn't all bad for butterflies, with early emergers such as Orange-tip doing well and how about Chalkhill Blues in August. Pity about the bit in the middle. As for 2013, well who knows, and will there be any wasps?



### Mothing websites

[www.surreymoths.org](http://www.surreymoths.org)

[www.ukmoths.org.uk](http://www.ukmoths.org.uk)

[www.mothscount.org](http://www.mothscount.org)

[pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/Surrey-moths](http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/Surrey-moths)

[gms.staffs-ecology.org.uk](http://gms.staffs-ecology.org.uk) (Garden Moth Scheme)

[surreymothing.blogspot.co.uk](http://surreymothing.blogspot.co.uk)

[www.mothnight.info](http://www.mothnight.info)

## Members' Day Quiz

**A**HIGHLIGHT of the annual Members' Day in November is Malcolm Bridge's Aidiosyncratic quiz, a miscellany of lepidopteral delights. For those who did not attend, here is a chance to see what you have been missing. The next quiz will be set by the winner of the last two, Graham Revill. Answers are below - just don't expect us to explain them all.

- 1 Nasser Hussein was one of many.
  - 2 A rather rarer comma.
  - 3 Sorrel preferred.
  - 4 At the end of a Dutchman's cue?
  - 5 The Ivy Blue?
  - 6 AKA Sofia.
  - 7 Once the Dullidge (Dulwich) Fritillary.
  - 8 Brown for all seasons.
  - 9 Fishy butterfly?
  - 10 Sometimes Hedge Brown.
  - 11 Danny's name for immature Geometer.
  - 12 Translate JT, CST, GT, RT, ST & WT
  - 13 Putney has one, Hampstead the other.
  - 14 Five of them in UK – all coloured.
  - 15 Topical insult "Pleb" but not to this butterfly.
  - 16 Pine, Lime, Ash, Privet and Poplar – the odd one?
  - 17 Which month has the most Monarch sightings in Surrey?
  - 18 And which month has the most Large Tortoiseshell sightings in Surrey?
- ### MOTH ANAGRAMS
- 19 Red gin – great!
  - 20 No bap – come, turn in.
  - 21 Like wham!
  - 22 More Rep
  - 23 Doll day
  - 24 Chimp – we're seen



See question one.

### AND SOME BUTTERFLIES (not all British)

- 25 Stags crouch
  - 26 Grocers bellowed duely
  - 27 Stammer? Nil, not in a gull
  - 28 Narrow barn
  - 29 No feast on ships
  - 30 Beach kill – Hull
- ### CRYPTICS
- 31 Half of it's green
  - 32 Company master from centre of Ham
  - 33 Point for everyone
  - 34 Starts and ends as a child's horse
  - 35 Phone and allow
  - 36 The beginning and end embrace half the boys and girls in blue and a novice

## Quiz answers

- 1 Essex Skipper, 2 Silver-spotted Skipper, 3 Small Copper, 4 Orange-tip, 5 Holly Blue, 6 Queen of Spain Fritillary (wife of King Juan Carlos), 7 Glanville Fritillary, 8 Speckled Wood, 9 Grayling, 10 Gatekeeper, 11 Inchworm, 12 Jersey, Cream-spot, Garden, Ruby, Scarlet & Wood Tigers, 13 Small Heath & Large Heath, 14 Hairstreaks, 15 Silver-studded Blue, 16 Ash (not a Hawkmoth), 17 October, 18 April, 19 Garden Tiger, 20 Burnet Companion, 21 Lime Hawk, 22 Emperor, 23 Old Lady, 24 Chimney Sweeper, 25 Scotch Argus, 26 Berger's Clouded Yellow, 27 Small Mountain Ringlet, 28 Arran Brown, 29 Spanish Festoon, 30 Chalkhill Blue, 31 Holly Blue, 32 CO.M.MA, 33 W-all, 34 GG: Grayling, 35 Ring-let, 36 A-pol(ice)-L-O.

## Importance of gardens

As a member of Butterfly Conservation for many years, I wonder if we are now paying insufficient attention to the potential of our own gardens for the conservation of butterflies and moths.

Until recently two excellent leaflets were available free to members and non-members: "Garden Moths, Some Common Species", and "Gardening for Butterflies and Moths".

They gave the necessary information for butterfly-friendly gardening. To summarise:

■ **INCLUDE** native wild plants that are sources of nectar or that provide food for caterpillars, including nettles if possible.

■ **ALLOW** a patch to grow wild if you have a large enough garden, with some tolerance of "weeds".

■ **AVOID** turning your garden into a butterfly desert, with concrete, gravel, decking, large non-native plants (eg eucalyptus), and expanses of manicured (sterile!) lawn. And avoid poisons like insecticides and weedkillers.

All this may appear obvious but as BC members we should be more vigorous in discussing gardening with other members and the general public. This important topic deserves regular coverage in the Skipper through readers' letters etc.

Robert Edmondson, Dorking

## In praise of Papilios

PAPILIO close-focusing binoculars by Pentax are becoming increasingly popular at BC field meetings.

Before purchasing ours, for close-up studies we relied on a 7x21 extra short-focus monocular, which was excellent but struggled to find quickly and focus on the subject matter.

Since obtaining these Papilio binoculars we have enjoyed excellent close-ups of many butterfly species, other insects and flora. The 0.5 metre close-focus allows you to see the scale-patterning on wings, body hairs and the beautiful varied structures of antennae. I no longer have to get on my knees to differentiate between Essex and Small Skipper, or to identify Brown Argus.

They are also lightweight at 290gms, with a choice of 6.5 or 8.5 magnifications. With any product there are disadvantages. The plastic lens caps can come away, although ours are still attached to the binoculars. They are also limited when it comes to finding a bird on the horizon – but that isn't their purpose. Finally, they aren't waterproof, but how many of us look for butterflies in the rain?

Ours, with a soft lightweight case, cost just over a hundred pounds some years ago. They are still available at around that price via internet discounts.

Richard Stewart, Ipswich



## Moths

Paul Wheeler

*Moth Officer Paul Wheeler reflects on 2012 and looks ahead to 2013.*

I CAN imagine one of those spin-doctors proclaiming progress for the environment on reading in *The State of Britain's Larger Moths* (2013) that things are getting worse at a slower rate. It's worrying that things are getting worse at all and Chris Packham's concern on seeing the report was that if abundance losses signal loss in biodiversity, the situation could become catastrophic.

Yet some moth species are becoming more common. Footman moths in particular appear to have thrived, and our own moth evenings regularly record **Orange** and **Buff Footman** moths, which were restricted and local only ten years ago.

**Hoary Footman** has spread across the county, yet 50 years ago it was restricted to a few coastal locations such as Dungeness. At our Surrey events we see a few **Kent Black Arches** and **Kent Knot Horn**.

There are even new species to Britain: 27 (including micros) since 2000. Though many are adventives (non-native), the biology can still be fascinating. What has driven the **Horse Chestnut Leaf-miner** to become so common across Europe that it could be regarded a pest species, yet only 20 years ago it was an obscure specialist local to the Lake Ohrid region in Eastern Europe?

We catch a good representation of species at our trapping evenings. All habitats are covered over the year: downland, heathland and wetland among others. Come along and you will see some super specialists as well as marvellous lookers.

**Privet Hawk-moth**, our biggest native moth, was a favourite at our Juniper Hall Butterfly and Garden show, where two were caught in the grounds.

Handling such large insects tested the nerve of some children at the show, the moth being as big as their hand, although, being nocturnal, the moths were reassuringly dopey. If you want children to handle a hawk-moth at home, remember the moths have little hooks on their legs and can cling tight, so take care when you dislodge them (the moths, that is).

We also had a **Silvery Arches**, caught by the Pirbright ranges fence. Since 2000 there have been few records of this heathland specialist, whose larva feeds on birch. Also the remarkable **Sundew Plume** moth, whose caterpillars eat Cat Sundew, itself an insectivorous plant. I hope you are getting the feel of our moth events, and a sense of what biodiversity actually looks like!

Sometimes we discover a new species for Surrey, or one not recorded for ages. Now that we have the latest in the Surrey Wildlife Atlas series, *The Smaller Moths of Surrey* (2012), with many records from Butterfly Conservation events, it is satisfying to add to it or find a species declared "probably extinct".

We saw two of the latter. Gay Carr always brings interesting moths to the Juniper Hall show and this year there was one she couldn't identify. It was duly misidentified on the day but kept and set as it looked a bit different. Under a dissecting microscope it seemed to be *Caryocolum* sp. Excitingly all the key features, including pink eyelashes (the entire moth is only 6 mm long), fitted *Caryocolum proximum*.

■ *continued page 33*

## Moth events 2013

Paul Wheeler

## JUNE

- 15 Sat **Wisley Pond Farm** TQ 0745 5910: good, regenerating dry and wet heath and woodland; wet, rough grazing nearby. Moth trapping for BioBlitz. **BOOKING ESSENTIAL.** Details from May on: [www.surreywildlifetrust.org](http://www.surreywildlifetrust.org) & [www.surreybutflies.org](http://www.surreybutflies.org)  
**Katy Gower** 01483 795471; [katy.gower@surreywt.org.uk](mailto:katy.gower@surreywt.org.uk)
- 28 Fri **Leith Hill, Rhododendron Wood** TQ 1320 4280: high heathland/regenerating land and garden. Moth trapping for BioBlitz. Moths will be shown the following day. Joint event between National Trust and Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre. **BOOKING ESSENTIAL.** Details and booking phone number will be on [www.surreybutflies.org](http://www.surreybutflies.org)

## JULY

- 9 Tue **Shabden Park Farm**, High Road, Chipstead CR5 3SF. TQ 2752 5617: **Meet 21.00 hrs** (I plan to arrive earlier to go “dusking”). Hedges, lanes and clearings among wildlife-friendly farmland. **EXCLUSIVE:** this will not be advertised on the website; we want to keep it to members and a few friends who help out.

## JULY/AUGUST

**mid-July to early August, Pewley Down:** a favourite downland site: target species: Grass Emerald, Lace Border and Kent Knot Horn; we often find new Surrey records here. Joint with Guildford Borough Council. **BOOKING ESSENTIAL.** Details and booking phone number will be on [www.surreybutflies.org](http://www.surreybutflies.org) Guildford Borough Council will also have offline information.

**mid-July to early August, Stoke Meadows:** wetland, lake and tree lines with moths such as Webb’s Wainscot: Joint with Guildford Borough Council. **BOOKING ESSENTIAL.** Details and booking phone number will be on [www.surreybutflies.org](http://www.surreybutflies.org) Guildford Borough Council will also have offline information.

## SEPTEMBER

- 1st half of month, Shalford Meadows (probable):** water meadows and woodland. Expect some good Wainscot moths, and maybe a Barn Owl at dusk. Joint with Guildford Borough Council. **BOOKING ESSENTIAL.** Details and booking phone number will be on [www.surreybutflies.org](http://www.surreybutflies.org) Guildford Borough Council will also have offline information.
- 27 Fri **Shabden Park Farm (as above).** **Meet 19.00 hrs** (I plan to arrive earlier to set up). Moths will be shown on Sat 28th before a farm walk at 2pm.



Paul Wheeler shows a Privet Hawk-moth slide at November’s AGM in Dorking. **FK**

■ **MOTHS:** from page 31

The new county atlas considers this species to be extinct, with the last record from Richmond in 2011. Richmond Park should be a good site for this moth, though we never saw it there despite trapping at the start of July for **Double Line** moths, which are common in the park but extremely rare and local elsewhere in the South-East.

I did a genitalia determination, which confirmed its identity. The record of July 4 is late in what is now regarded as the flight period, but older records were later in July, and 2013 wasn’t an early year. All this effort is needed to establish a record of such a rare moth (*C. proximum* is on the Red Data Book list) and to be able to inform plans for conservation management.

A second species thought to be extinct in Surrey but found in 2012 was ***Elachista bedellella***, on Pewley Down. Its caterpillars mine Meadow Oat-grass, common enough on chalk, but this species hadn’t been seen since 1967.

It really did take dissection to identify this one and it’s not surprising if it has been overlooked. However, I’d like to organise a search for mines of this and the many related species in grasses. Any experts on these plants out there? We always get good things at Pewley Down, and quite often add to the county list. Why not come along this year.

**MOTH EVENTS 2013:  
details facing page**

*Events are informal and involve mercury-vapour lamp trapping. Many have yet to be finalised and more will be arranged at short notice, even 6-10 hours. To join the open circulation list, contact [Paul.Wheeler@ahvla.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Paul.Wheeler@ahvla.gsi.gov.uk). Numbers are limited so **BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL.** Feel free to bring your own trap. Leith Hill is the focus for 2013: we will compile a moth list for the Dukes Warren area on the dip side near Coldharbour – an area of diverse heath and woodland, and high enough to have some specialist species.*

## First Person

*A NEW regular series featuring a branch personality begins with Treasurer, PETER CAMBER.*

**I** WAS born in Redhill and have lived nearly all of my life in Surrey, enjoying its delightful heaths and chalk downlands from an early age. After spending most of my first 21 years in Dorking and Leatherhead I got married and, apart from a two-year spell on Exmoor, have lived in and around Epsom.

My wife and I have two sons and five grandchildren, from one to eight years old, who all live locally and are a great source of enjoyment.

After starting my career as a computer programmer in the Swinging Sixties, I worked most of the next 45 years with software companies. For more than half of that time I was involved in developing, marketing and supporting investment accounting and management software for financial institutions, which provided my first introduction to the delights of double-entry book-keeping.

I since have held a number of operations management positions, which have included responsibility for both the accounting and IT functions. So, although I have never been an accountant or a hands-on book-keeper, over the years I have acquired a basic understanding of those functions through a process of osmosis.

I have always had a keen interest in natural history and joined Butterfly Conservation in order to learn more about lepidoptera. I was invited to New Members Day in July 2011 and was impressed with the knowledge, enthusiasm and friendliness of the branch committee members who led the day's activities. When subsequently asked whether I would consider being nominated as a replacement for a retiring committee member, I was pleased to accept and found myself being voted onto the branch committee at the 2011 AGM.

At that same meeting, our long-serving Treasurer, David Gradidge, indicated his wish to stand down from that role as soon as a replacement could be found. Last summer I offered to take on that responsibility and this was formalised at our branch committee meeting in January.

The role of Treasurer is to ensure the Branch keeps track of its financial situation and is able to meet the costs incurred by its activities. In addition to handling receipts, making supplier payments and keeping the books, the Treasurer must also liaise regularly with the finance team at BC's Head Office, providing quarterly reports, annual accounts and VAT returns. Most of our Branch income is derived from membership subscriptions and fund-raising events, so any suggestions for new sources of income will always be welcomed.

Having just retired at the end of February, I am looking forward to spending more time walking, mountain biking and (of course) looking for butterflies. After enjoying some of our Branch butterfly trips last summer, I aim to attend as many as possible this year and would encourage you to give these interesting walks a try too.

