

No 87

Spring 2015

ON THE WING

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Butterfly
Conservation

The newsletter of
Bedfordshire & Northamptonshire Butterfly Conservation

2015 Northants Field Trips

Tuesday evening, 5th May Twywell Hills and Dales. Roosting butterflies and caterpillar crawl. Searching for roosting Grizzled and Dingy Skippers in the early evening and then looking for caterpillars of grassland species as it gets dark. Torch and good footwear will be needed. Meet in the main car park at 6.30pm. Grid Ref. SP938772 Leaders Andy Wylde and Doug Goddard.

Sunday 17th May Fermyn Woods Country Park. Looking for Spring butterflies. Meet at the Skylark Cafe in the park. Grid Ref. SP952848 10.30am Car park fee. Leader Doug Goddard.

Tuesday 16th June Joint meeting with the Desborough Wildlife Group at Salcey Forest looking for Wood Whites and general wildlife. Meet at the 'horsebox' car park on Midshires Way, Grid ref. SP 801509 at 11 a.m. Leader Doug Goddard.

Sunday 21st June Glaphthorn Cow Pastures Searching for Black Hairstreaks. Park in the lane opposite the wood entrance. Grid Ref. TL006903. 10.30am Leader Doug Goddard.

Saturday July 11th A further visit to Salcey Forest searching for Purple Emperor, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary, Purple Hairstreak - Meet at the 'horsebox' car park on Midshires Way, Grid ref. SP 801509 at 10.30 a.m. Leader Doug Goddard.

2015 Bedfordshire Field Trips

Sunday 10th May Sharpenhoe Clappers to look for Spring Butterflies especially Orange Tip, Green Hairstreak & Dingy Skippers. Meet in the NT car park at 10.30am Grid Ref: TL064296 Leader David Chandler.

Sunday 17th May Whipsnade Downs to look for Duke of Burgundy, Green Hairstreak, Grizzled & Dingy Skippers. Time 11.00am Car park Grid Ref: SP999184 Leader Greg Herbert.

Saturday 8th August I'm taking a BC Cambs and Essex branch Field Trip to Canvey Wick LNR, Canvey Island to look for Clouded Yellows. Beds & Northants members welcome. More details from David Chandler or on our website.



Many years ago while making the annual pilgrimage to Glapthorn Cow Pastures I bumped into a chap and we struck up a conversation. He told me that every year he tries to see 50 species of butterfly in Britain but he fails in his quest more often than he succeeds despite using his holiday allocation to take most of the summer months off. Listening to him reminiscing about his good and bad years sowed the seed in my mind to attempt this challenge myself at some point in the future. The thought laid dormant and was almost forgotten until the fantastic year we had in 2013 reignited it. During our chats down the pub after great days out chasing butterflies I'd tell my friends (Jon and Kirsty Philpot) about the guy I'd met at Glapthorn and the mad challenge he'd set himself

every year. "So what about 2014? Shall we go for it?" was being asked. Due to the inconsistencies of the British weather we decided to leave it to see just how well the 2014 butterfly season was panning out before committing.

The butterfly season started for us on the 16th of March as we were taking photos of the Adders at Ketton Quarry, the beautiful spring sun had woken up the Brimstones and Commas and it was great to see them nectaring on pussy willows.

During April we saw our first of the other spring specialities with Orange Tips at Wootton Brook and Salcey Forest and Dingy and Grizzled Skippers at Twywell Hills and Dales.

On May the 3rd I went to Gloucestershire with a friend, John Friendship-Taylor, we saw Green Hairstreak and Duke of Burgundy. The following day I went with Jon and Kirsty to Totternhoe Old Quarry for more of the same.

The yearlist was already shooting up and so despite things being against us like the unpredictability of the British butterfly season and the fact that all three of us work full time (we had to rely on sun on our days off) we decided to go for the 50!

On the 17th of May me, Jon and Kirsty headed off to Gloucestershire for quite possibly one of the best days butterflying I've ever had. It started with Pearl-bordered Fritillaries in Hailey Wood near Cirencester and then as a bit of a gamble to Strawberry Banks to see

if the Marsh Fritillaries had emerged. They hadn't been reported yet but as the weather was glorious we thought we'd have a look. The sight we beheld when we arrived is one I'll never forget as by an amazing piece of luck we had arrived on the morning of their emergence! Marsh Fritillaries seemed to everywhere and we were even treated to views of them crawling out of the grass before drying out their wings in the sun. Eagle eyed Kirsty also spotted our first Small Blues of the year too. After this we tore ourselves away and headed to Rodborough Common for more Small Blues and the beautiful Adonis Blue which we easily spotted even from the top of the steep bank.



The following weekend saw the emergence of the Wood Whites here in Northants and they put on a real show at Sywell Wood but the weather took a turn for the worse on the bank holiday Monday the 27th. Luckily the weather forecast was predicting a small patch of nice weather in east Norfolk so after a quick phone call to change plans we found ourselves heading to Strumpshaw Fen where we found the Swallowtails showing very well in the Doctor's Garden. We left here to go to Holt Country Park to see the Broad Bordered Bee Hawkmoths too. The following Monday (2nd of June) I jumped on a plane to Glasgow where I met a very good friend who lives there called Matt Whitelocke. Jon and Kirsty who had caught the overnight train, also joined us. We went straight to Glasdrum Woods and despite the rain we saw our first Chequered Skipper. We returned the following day and although there were still showers the weather was much better and we saw plenty of Chequered Skippers and Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries (I even managed to get a pic of the two together which is probably my shot of the year!). A White Spotted Sable Moth also caused a distraction. We spent a few days up there and had a great time seeing Marsh Fritillary in Shian Wood, Golden Ringed Dragonfly, White Faced Darter, Pine



Chequered Skipper and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary

Martins and a drake King Eider. I flew home on the 6th and on the 8th I was back at Sywell Wood helping another mate of mine who'd travelled from Cheshire to see the Wood Whites

and we then went to my local patch at Grange Park in Northampton. We found a staggering 68 Bee Orchids there and while admiring these a local chap called Ian Pretty arrived and spotted a Clouded Yellow flying towards the bank! On the 11th of June Marbled Whites emerged at Grange Park.

On the 12th I managed to get out of work early to head to Glaphorn to see the Black Hairstreaks and what a show they put on. I had a nice chat with Andy Wyldes who was there too.

The 14th of June saw me, Jon and Kirsty heading down to the Little Haven reserve in Essex but as we got there the heavens opened and it poured down with rain. Our hearts sank as we walked into the reserve and into the cleared area by the wires. I couldn't believe my eyes though when sitting motionless on a wet leaf was our target butterfly the Heath Fritillary! The only butterflies we saw all day was this and a Ringlet so this definitely goes down as our luckiest sighting of the year.



Heath Fritillary in the rain!

On the 19th of June I had a midweek day off work so me, Jon and Kirsty headed down to Silchester Common in Hampshire and after a lot of searching finally found the colony of Silver Studded Blues and then on the 22nd we went back to Gloucestershire for Large Blue at Daneway Banks.



Large Blue at Daneway Banks

On the 2nd of July we embarked on the second “pilgrimage” in Northants and that is of course to Fermyn Woods and then to Bedford Purlieus where we saw Purple Emperor, White Admiral, White Letter Hairstreak, Purple Hairstreak and Silver Washed Fritillary.

I had to work the following weekend but I had the Monday off (the 7th July) so headed to Robert’s Field in Lincolnshire to find Dark Green Fritillary and on the way back to Bedford Purlieus to see an immaculate White Letter Hairstreak that even posed on my hand.



White-letter Hairstreak at Bedford Purlieus

The 17th of July I went to a site near Thorpe Malsor after a tip off from Stuart Mundy and managed to get some nice pics of Purple Hairstreak which seem to like coming down low here. This was nice as despite always seeing lots on the trees I’d never managed a pic until now. Luckily for us my local site at Grange Park came up with the goods again with a Painted Lady that arrived on the 20th of July and a Clouded Yellow the following day which after a few phone calls was not only enjoyed by me, Jon and Kirsty but Doug Goddard and Stuart Mundy too.

The following weekend on the 26th me, Jon, Kirsty and another friend called Sam Candy headed out to Aston Rowant to see the Chalkhill Blues and Silver Spotted Skippers and then we headed to RSPB Otmoor in the hope of seeing a Brown Hairstreak. Amazingly Sam picked one out incredibly fast despite us being told by others who had been there for hours that they weren’t out yet and it drew quite

an audience while it twirled around posing for shots. I have to admit that Sam seems to bring in a lot of luck when it comes to spotting Brown Hairstreaks as he did exactly the same last year too so I hope he’s free in 2015!

The following day I had to work in the afternoon so I hadn’t planned anything but after opening the curtains to see glorious sunshine I rang Jon and Kirsty and mentioned a local trip we could do which got me back home in time for work. We headed into Cambridgeshire and to the car park of the King’s Dyke Nature Reserve for a very special little butterfly and it didn’t take us long to find it. Wall Browns were flying around the fence line at the entrance to the reserve and after taking a few pics we headed to nearby Rings End to see them there too. Why are Wall Browns so special? They were special because they were our 50th butterfly for Britain in the 2014 season!!

We had also planned to visit Cumbria but the weekend got rained off so we finally capped the list off at 51 after heading to Norfolk to see Grayling in Holt Country Park on the 16th of August.

It had certainly been an adventure to say the least and there was a real sense of relief when we achieved our goal. For a few months butterflies were all I thought about and when I wasn’t chasing them I was researching where to see them. It simply could’ve have been achieved by us if it wasn’t for the UK Butterfly forum, various websites and the help of people I have met or talked to online along the way. It seems to be a great testament to butterfly enthusiasts in that they all seem to like sharing knowledge. During a rainy day I worked how far we’d travelled in our quest and not including return visits to sites the total is 2808 miles! Pangs of guilt about the carbon footprint of this means it’s not something I’ll be doing every year but I’m very glad we did it and at least we car shared. I’m sure we’ll still be reminiscing about our trips during this year’s butterfly season for many years to come!

All photos - David James

We would like to issue a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined our Branch since the publication of the last newsletter

| | | | |
|---|------------------|--|------------------|
| Mrs Shelley Abbott | Oakley, Beds | • Andrea & Neil Kirby | Daventry |
| Mrs Nicola Armstrong | Leighton Buzzard | • Mrs Alison Lowe | Sulby |
| Paul Aristides | Northampton | • Miss Louise Lucas | Northampton |
| Mrs Laura Ashton | Wellingborough | • Lawrence & Clare Mackley & family | Pipewell |
| Mrs Sarah Atherton | Weedon | • Mrs Fiona McDougal | Studham |
| Christopher & Susan Ball | Wellingborough | • Mr & Mrs A. Milne & family | Westoning |
| Ms Orsi Barko | Woodford Halse | • Ms Jane Morriss & Julian Frost | Bedford |
| Alexandra & Mike Barnes & family | Brackley | • Mr & Mrs Palmer | Luton |
| Miss Sarah Bradley & Robert Bowden | Luton | • Andrew Parrott | West Haddon |
| Ms Joanna Coker | Lower Stondon | • Mrs Anne Peilow | Wollaston |
| Peter Cox-smith | Leighton Buzzard | • Derek Pittman | Pavenham |
| Nicholas Davis & Miss Anita Boos | Wing | • Mrs Stephanie Plaster | Wing |
| Colin and Eileen Crouch | Rushden | • Mrs Wendy Presland | Biggleswade |
| Chris Dequincey | Bedford | • Ms Liz Ramsay | Geddington |
| Daniel Doyle | Kettering | • Ms Corrine Richards | Arlesey |
| Philippa & Michael Drew & family | Leighton Buzzard | • Miss Dominique Rhoades | Dunstable |
| Miss Jean Dunn | Boughton | • Ms Susan Robson | Wellingborough |
| Ms Emma Eliasson | Bulwick | • Ms Jan Rose | Weldon |
| Miss Sarah Faulkner | Northampton | • Miss Rebecca & Mrs Sally Ruffhead & family | Marston Mortaine |
| Mrs Andrea Ferdinando | Milton Keynes | • Graham & Ruth Sherman & family | Bletchley |
| Miss Isla Finney | Arlesey | • Mrs Rosalind Silk | Sudborough |
| Ms Margaret Forward | Northampton | • Mrs Jasmine Simeone | Rushden |
| Mrs Rosalie George | Roxton | • Miss Emma Sinclair | Tilsworth |
| Amanda & Trevor Gibson | Leighton Buzzard | • Mrs Jacqueline Sonsino | Radwell |
| Julian Glandfield | Kettering | • Richard & Debbie Spencer | Sandy |
| Steve & Susan Gordon | Bedford | • Mrs Julie Tapscott | Hardingstone |
| Miss Emily Hakasson & Adam Goldstein | Clophill | • Roy Tyler | Leighton Buzzard |
| Ms Sara Hubbs & Ms J. Allison | Leighton Buzzard | • Neil & Anne Ward | Northampton |
| Rachael & Paul Indge | Bedford | • Jamie Wildman | Kettering |
| Dr Maja Jankowska & Anthony Keir & family | Bedford | • Margaret & Michael Wride | Desborough |
| Miss Kelly Jones | Amphill | • Harvey Mcguire-Yates & Miss Verity Yates | |
| Jan & David Kilby | Kempston | • Leighton Buzzard | |

We look forward to meeting you at some of our future events.



Day-flying moth and caterpillar recording

Zoë Randle & Richard Fox

Butterfly Conservation would love butterfly recorders to record day-flying moths and moth caterpillars when they are out and about. In 2018, in collaboration with MothsIreland, we will be publishing a Macro-moth Atlas for Britain and Ireland. The majority of moth recorders use light-traps and, as a result, the many species of day-flying moths may be relatively under-recorded compared to nocturnal ones.

Butterfly recorders can make a huge contribution to the forthcoming atlas by submitting records of day-flying moths such as Speckled Yellow (figure 1) and indeed distinctive caterpillars (e.g. Cinnabar) that they encounter while out looking at butterflies.

The National Moth Recording Scheme run by Butterfly Conservation will provide the UK moth data for the forthcoming atlas. The scheme already holds over 17.3 million moth records and geographical coverage of the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man at 10km resolution is very good (97% have at least one moth species recorded). There are only 113 10km squares for which we do not have any records from the year 2000 onwards (see figure 2). However, in addition to these, there are 613 10km squares which we consider to be under-recorded - they possess 50 or fewer records of 25 or fewer species. You could really help by targeting these unrecorded or under-recorded squares for moth sightings during your butterfly recording. To find out what 10km squares, or tetrads, are under-recorded in your area or if you wish to venture further a-field, please contact the relevant

County Moth Recorder, a list can be found the Moths Count website (www.mothscount.org).

Many butterfly recorders already record the moths they see along their transects. In 2013, the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (BMS) team extracted moth records entered into Transect Walker software. The data extraction exercise revealed data for 109,485 individuals of 123 moth species, with 13,622 records from 403 sites. The five most frequently recorded species (in descending rank order) were Silver Y, Six-spot Burnet, Cinnabar, Burnet Companion and Speckled Yellow. These records will be re-patriated to County Moth Recorders in due course.

Participants in the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey are also encouraged to record day-flying moths in their squares. In 2014 a record of Blood-vein in Gloucestershire was only the second for SP10 and the first since 1974.

In the run up to the forthcoming Macro-moth Atlas for Britain and Ireland all butterfly recorders can help boost coverage by recording moths, whether on butterfly/WCBS transects, during 'casual' butterfly recording or by specifically targeting areas that are under-recorded for moths. Your help will be very gratefully received. Records are best submitted to your local County Moth recorder on an annual basis by the end of the year to enable incorporation into local datasets and ultimately the National Moth Recording Scheme.



Figure 1: NMRS Provisional distribution map of Speckled Yellow at 10km resolution. Open circles pre 2000 records and solid dots 2000 onwards records



Speckled Yellow

Photo: Pam Parsons

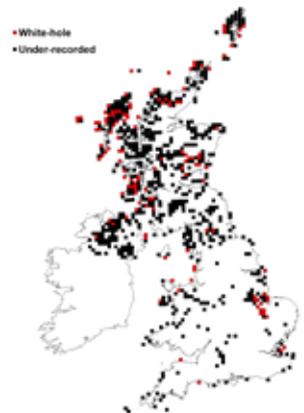


Figure 2: Map of National Moth Recording Scheme 'white-holes' and under-recorded 10km squares from 2000 onwards.

Advertised in the early autumn list of events at National Trust properties was a talk on 'The Butterfly Man' at Calke Abbey in Derbyshire, given by his current counterpart, Matthew Oates. Matthew had alluded to the collection of butterflies at Calke on the Purple Emperor website and I was interested in learning more. My wife and brother-in-law, Andy Wyldes and I booked tickets and attended the talk on 27th September.

The subject of the presentation was the eccentric Sir Vauncey Harpur-Crewe (1846-1924), 10th Baronet, who had two seats, Calke Abbey and Warslow-Longor in Staffordshire. Although thoughtful and generous to his tenants and employees, he was very aloof towards his own family, often communicating with them by letter delivered by his footman. He forbade his daughters from marrying and they incurred his great displeasure when they did. One of them, Aimyne, was banished from Calke Abbey for smoking a cigarette, a ban imposed on the whole household for fear of fire. She never returned to Calke during her lifetime.

Freeing himself of any social responsibilities, Sir Vauncey concentrated on amassing a huge collection of stuffed birds, birds' eggs and Lepidoptera. Many of the birds he shot himself but he also acquired rare and aberrant specimens from dealers and taxidermists. Some of the collection was eventually sold to meet heavy death duties, but much remained at Calke and was discovered sixty years later when the National Trust took over the property. It is on display around the house, largely untouched.

Sir Vauncey's collection of butterflies and moths was second only in size to that of Lord Rothschild at Tring. His wife was unaware of his obsessions. She complained about his management of the fires, which he irrationally insisted must burn throughout the day and night to maintain a constant

temperature for his collections. If any fire became too hot or was allowed to go out, he demanded dismissal of the servant responsible. Since he hardly knew any of the servants, this was not carried out and some survived several sackings. Sir Vauncey and



Top: Matthew Oates shows visitors one of the boxes

Below: Silver-washed *Fritillaria* aberrations from the collection



his wife began to lead separate lives, though she still bore him four daughters.

The greater part of the Lepidoptera collections was auctioned in Stevens' Auction Rooms on his death in 1924. The Calke collection has remained in the house and Matthew Oates has been assigned the task of cataloguing it. Kept in around a hundred drawers, sadly many of the specimens have fallen



Top: The Painted Lady aberration from 1851

Middle: The Holly Blue bilateral gynandromorph

Bottom: Silver-washed Fritillary bilateral gynandromorph

Gynandromorph means that the butterfly contains both male and female characteristics. The term gynandromorph is from the Greek "gynē" female and "andro" male. Photos Doug Goddard

foul of museum beetles and been reduced to dust. After the talk, Matthew was at hand in one of the rooms with some of the more interesting ones which have survived and we were able to view and photograph them.

We were able to peruse drawers full of Silver-washed Fritillaries, including various aberrations and numerous *valezina* females, all procured on collecting trips to the New Forest where Sir Vauncey would commandeer an inclosure for himself and assign his gamekeepers to man the gates to keep other collectors out. Featured among his captures is a bilateral gynandromorph specimen of the Silver-washed taken in 1893.

Sir Vauncey used others to collect on his behalf and there is a most striking aberration of a Painted Lady, taken by Mr George Ingall on 8th September 1851. This is figured on page 64 of Newman's *Butterflies*. He also bought prize specimens from auctions and a bilateral gynandromorph Holly Blue is documented to have come from the Macmurdo collection.

Though abhorrent to the eyes of modern conservation-minded butterfly enthusiasts, the collection, its parlous state notwithstanding, does give some insight into how common some species once were and how much more frequently aberrant forms were encountered in the past. Matthew pointed out that Sir Vauncey as a collector was a man of his time and we should not condemn him for this. The latter part of his talk featured his ongoing studies of the Purple Emperor and its life cycle, the former approach now supplanted by an eccentricity and obsession of a different kind.

It is planned to use one of the rooms at Calke in the future to provide a permanent feature on Sir Vauncey the eccentric collector and put some of his butterfly collection on display, though much work needs to be done to ensure its survival and counteract further deterioration, no easy task. When this is finally achieved, it will certainly be worth a visit from anyone interested in butterflies and moths.



Volunteers remove Hawthorn scrub in section 10 of the transect. Inset picture shows section 10 in the summer Photo David James

During 2014, the transect count was completed on 25 of the 26 weeks of the recording period. Grateful thanks are due to Andy Wyldes, who again carried out the surveys, some also completed by me. Despite no count being completed for week 19 in early August, when we were both on holiday, the overall number of butterflies rose by 58% from the previous summer (4562 from 2894) and was over 50% higher than the previous best in 2009, the year we started the transect counts. The early spring was followed by a good summer which meant most species emerged earlier than usual. Increased totals applied to all ten of the transect sections.

Spectacular increases were seen in the species of long grassland, i.e. Small and Essex Skipper. Speckled Wood, Marbled White, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown and to a lesser extent Ringlet. Vegetation growth was particularly rapid this year and these were able to complete their early life cycle more quickly and emerge in greater numbers. There was a mass emergence of Gatekeepers in week 16, with

an impressive 363 counted. 211 Small Skippers were also present in the same week, by far the best number in the six years of the transect. In contrast, Small Heath numbers were well down, this species preferring sparser growth.



Aberrant Gatekeeper (*excessa*) found in amongst the mass emergence on week 16 (15th-21st July)

The White butterflies were few everywhere in 2014 after their impressive showing the previous year and this was reflected in the numbers at Twywell. Orange-tip and Brimstone benefited from the good early spring and eggs of the latter were easy to find on the buckthorn bush in section 2. Especially encouraging was the rise in fortunes of Small Tortoiseshells and Peacocks. Numerous larvae were to be found in the nettles around the car park and the adult butterflies were to be seen nectaring on the rich array of flowers in section 10.



Small Tortoiseshell caterpillars in the car park at Twywell

Clouded Yellows visited again in August but of the other migrants, Painted Lady failed to appear for the second year in succession and there were four Red Admirals counted after their absence in 2013. A new species was recorded in section 1 of the transect in week 13, a male Silver-washed Fritillary.

Grizzled Skipper showed a pleasing increase this year, but the three species which use bird's-foot-trefoil as a larval foodplant (Dingy Skipper, Common Blue, Green Hairstreak) all decreased, a probable legacy of the introduction of spring and summer grazing to the area last year. Brown Argus numbers increased, boosted by a good second brood, but Small Coppers were harder to find. There has been a suspension of

any grazing on the site at present, owing to continual disturbance and injuries to the animals caused by dogs. Absence of winter grazing after a summer of vigorous growth will have a negative impact on the butterflies and it is essential that the situation is resolved for the good of the reserve as a whole.

Many thanks are due to a growing band of Butterfly Conservation volunteers who have attended our winter work parties. We have already cleared the large hawthorn bushes from section 10 this autumn which should promote the growth of the array of nectar plants onto both sides of the gully in this area. Further scrub clearance is scheduled for January.

Butterfly Species Trends Twywell Transect Review 2013

| | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Small Skipper | +485% |
| Essex Skipper | +225% |
| Large Skipper | +200% |
| Dingy Skipper | -24% |
| Grizzled Skipper | +130% |
| Clouded Yellow | -17% |
| Brimstone | +33% |
| Large White | -92% |
| Small White | -96% |
| Green-veined White | -33% |
| Orange-tip | +325% |
| Green Hairstreak | -12% |
| Small Copper | -31% |
| Brown Argus | +40% |
| Common Blue | -25% |
| Holly Blue | ----- |
| Red Admiral | ----- |
| Painted Lady | ----- |
| Small Tortoiseshell | +148% |
| Peacock | +22% |
| Comma | +50% |
| Speckled Wood | +171% |
| Marbled White | +268% |
| Gatekeeper | +315% |
| Meadow Brown | +68% |
| Ringlet | +18% |
| Small Heath | -61% |

----- denotes species not recorded in one or both years
UK BAP species in red



Wood Whites imbibe minerals from damp earth

The Wood White (*Leptidea sinapis*) is a well-established species in Northamptonshire, but was suffering an almost terminal decline in the county in the early years of the new millennium. It is at the northern end of its range here and until recently was regarded as single-brooded. It rarely emerged before the end of May and continued on the wing until well into July. There is no mention of a second brood in the marvellous hot summer of 1976 in a contemporary survey and confirmed sightings subsequent to this yielded very small numbers – 2 in 1989, 1 in 1990, 3 in 1992 and 5 in 2003. In order for the species to have a second brood here, emergence has to be early and warm conditions have to prevail in order for the butterfly to complete its life cycle quickly enough. In 2010, the Wood White emerged on 13th May but warmer than normal conditions from the end of May to the end of July produced a second brood of 30 butterflies

in five locations, based on maximum numbers seen at each site, between 22nd July and 3rd August. A year later, an exceptionally warm spring brought the Wood White out in April for the first time in Northants and numbers built quickly. At least 38 second brood butterflies were recorded between 22nd July and 19th August.



Second brood female laying egg on a small meadow vetchling plant



Despite appalling weather in 2012, numbers held up surprisingly well. In the winter of that year, a three-year restoration project began to open up the rides in woods where important colonies survive. This contributed to an upsurge in the butterfly's fortunes in 2013 with increased sightings but only in a single brood as, owing to a late spring, the first sighting was not until 25th May. This year, it appeared from 3rd May and in greater profusion than at any time since the early 1990s. In early June in newly created rides and ditches in Sywell Wood, 109 were recorded, with 48 in Bucknell Wood, 41 in Hazelborough south and 31 in Ravenstone Road Copse, a fine return from the intervention sites. A century was also notched up twice from Salcey Forest where less management has taken place.

As the warm summer continued, a second brood was clearly on the cards. The first brood has a very protracted flight period and lasted until 12th July. After a short break, the first of the summer brood appeared in Bucknell Wood. The diminutive males with their darker, less extensive black spots on the apex of the wing, on close inspection contrast with those of the spring brood. A visit to Sywell Wood on

25th July confirmed that this would be a record year for the second brood with 21 seen and courtship and egg-laying observed. The flight period is much shorter and this brood was recorded only until 9th August. It reached record proportions, comprising at least 44 butterflies, in 8 different locations.

The largest numbers of second brood specimens were in the sites where the first brood had been most numerous, 7 being seen in Hazelborough south and 6 in Ravenstone Road Copse. In these, rides have been cleared which provide more open conditions for egg-laying, allowing faster development and better survival of the early stages. In Salcey, where the rides are more enclosed, the habitat is probably at its optimum in terms of shade and second brood butterflies were fewer. In Sywell Wood, a female was seen laying on a small meadow vetchling plant next to a group of logs from last winter's ride clearance on 29th July. The more open situations should help butterflies to emerge earlier in the spring, a key factor in creating a second brood which in turn boosts numbers for the following year. It is too early to say whether the Wood White will become double-brooded permanently in Northamptonshire, but climate change and creation of new habitat, changing the character of the woods, would appear to make this more likely.



Pair of Wood White at Sywell Wood during the 2014 second brood displaying courtship behaviour.

• AGM & Member's Day •

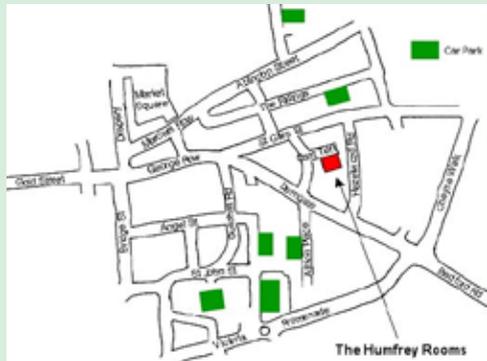
The branch AGM, Photographic Competition & Member's Day this year will be held on **Saturday 25th April** in the centre of Northampton at the Humfrey Rooms, home of the Northamptonshire Natural History Society.

The venue address is 10, Castilian Terrace, Northampton NN1 1LD

The Speaker this year will be the Chief Executive of Butterfly Conservation, **Martin Warren**. His talk will be entitled "Butterfly Breakthroughs: Milestones in conserving butterflies and moths".

The AGM will start at 2.00pm followed by our guest speaker and the photographic competition, aiming to finish by 5.00pm. Refreshments will be available.

The nearest car park is Albion Place behind the Derngate theatre but this is quite small. Best bets are the St John's multi-storey (just off the roundabout on Victoria Promenade opposite Morrisons) or the Grovesnor Centre multi-storey, which are both about ten minutes' walk away. All car parks are now free on a Saturday.



Entries for the photographic competition (prints only) may be submitted in advance to any committee member (see back page) or brought on the day. Entry is open to all branch members.

There will be four categories:

- **The Chairman's Shield** The Best British Butterfly in the wild.
- **The Don Askew Memorial Shield** This includes Branch Activities, Field Trips, Winter Work parties, Sales Events, Members etc.
- **The Butterfly Conservation Shield** The Best Picture of a Butterfly or Moth in its early stages (egg, caterpillar, pupa etc)
- **Best British Moth Shield** Best Picture of a British Moth.

Rules for the photographic competition

- No more than 6 entries per category per entrant.
- All pictures to have been taken in the last year.
- An entry fee of £0.50p will be charged per picture entered and no larger than A4 in size.
- Every entry must show name/initials of entrant on the reverse.
- Digital images must not be enhanced by computer manipulation.
- Committee accepts no liability for loss or damage to entries.
- Winning entries are to be available for publication on the branch website and in the Branch Newsletter.

Bedfordshire

February 22nd Chalk Grassland Habitat Management Sharpenhoe Clappers Meet in NT Car Park TL064296
Contact Dave Chandler 01923 253793 10.30am

8th March Duke of Burgundy Habitat Management Whipsnade Meet in NT Car Park Bison Hill TL000185
Contact Greg Herbert 01582 663784 10.30am

Northants

15th February Sywell Wood Scrub clearance for the Wood White Project 10am -4pm Meet in lay-by on the A43
SP823702 Contact Doug Goddard 01604 408670

22nd March (new date - changed from 15th) Fermyn Woods Country Park Scrub clearance in the main park
10am - 4pm Park behind the Skylark Cafe SP952848 Contact Doug Goddard 01604 408670

Please ring before 9 a.m. on the day if weather conditions are looking unsuitable. If unable to attend all day, your participation for a morning or even a couple of hours would be welcome. Where car parking charges normally apply, free parking will be arranged with the wardens.

Branch Committee

Any new member wishing to stand for any position should contact the Chairman by phone or Email no later than the 1st April 2015.

If you feel you would like to help you can contact **Stuart Pittman**. He will give you an insight into the involvement required. Stuart's name, address, phone number and email address appear on the back cover of this newsletter. **Please consider standing - these roles are very important to the running of the branch.**

Any current Committee member not wishing to stand in 2015-2016 should also contact the Chairman asap.

B&N Branch Committee

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| Chairman | Stuart Pittman 2 Jill Grey Place Hitchin Herts SG4 9YH | 01462 337322 jossie14@aol.com |
| Branch Secretary & Branch Organiser | Martin Izzard 310C Newton Road Rushden Northants NN10 0SY | 01933 355688 izzard.martin@yahoo.co.uk |
| Branch Liaison | David Chandler 110 Norbury Avenue Watford Herts WD24 4PD | 01923 253793 david@mvirtual.net |
| Northants Butterfly Recorder | Douglas Goddard 34 Ashley Way Westone Northampton NN3 3DZ | 01604 408670 goddarddouglas@hotmail.com |
| Bedfordshire Butterfly Recorders | Keith Balmer 6 Salcome Close Bedford Beds MK40 3BA | 01234 304741 |
| | Peter Glenister 2 Sutton Gardens Luton Beds LU3 3AF | 01582 524994 peglenister@gmail.com |
| Treasurer | David Sowerby 5 Robbs Lane Lowick Northants NN14 3BE | 01832 734688 sowerby824@btinternet.com |
| Branch Newsletter | Andy Wyldes 54 Polwell Lane Barton Seagrave Kettering Northants NN15 6UB | 01536 724100 andy.wyldes@tiscali.co.uk |
| Website | Judith Barnard 149 Weggs Farm Road Northampton NN5 6HF | 01604 757537 webmaster@bedsnorthants-butterflies.org.uk |
| Northants Sales | John Elliott 34 Chequers Lane Grendon Northants NN7 1JP | 01933 663924 |
| Beds Sales | Angela Peacock 70 Bedford Road Barton-le-Clay Beds MK45 4PP | 01582 890089 angie.peacock@virginmedia.com |
| Moth Officer | Andy Banthorpe 32 Long Close Lower Stondon Beds SG16 6JS | 01462 850753 macromoths@bnhs.org.uk |
| Membership co-ordinator | Ian Kimsey Redspring, Moor End Road Radwell Beds MK43 7HY | 01234 781763 |
| Wider Countryside Co-ordinator | Clare Topping | ctopping@ratfox.net |