Autumn 2023

Number 76

SURREY *Skipper*

Members' afternoon Oct 28

Butterfly Conservation
Surrey & SW London

Saving butterflies, moths & our environment

Branch Committee

Chair	Simon Saville (first elected 2016)	07572 612722
Vice-Chair, Transects/WCBS	Bill Downey (2015)	0208 9495498, 07917 243984
Field Trips	Mike Weller (1997)	01306 882097, 07918 171179
Membership	Ken Owen (2015)	01737 760811, 07715 350368
Moth Officer	Paul Wheeler (2006)	01276 856183
Skipper Editor	Francis Kelly (2012)	01483 278432, 07952 285661
Social Media	Francis Kelly (& Mick Rock)	
Website	Francis Kelly & Ken Owen	
Committee members	Simon Riley (2022)	07990 527716
	Richard Stephens (2021)	01342 892022, 07815 444166

ALSO

Honorary President Ken Willmott (2022)

National Council Chair Karen Goldie-Morrison (Branch member)

Conservation & Recording sub-committee
Bill Downey (Chair), Phil Darley, Ken Elsom, Gail Jeffcoate, Simon Riley, Simon Saville

Media

Website *butterfly-conservation.org/surrey* **Email** *surreybranch@gmail.com*

X-Twitter @BC_Surrey, @surreymoths **Recording** *irecord.org.uk*

Facebook **Branch page** ..... *Butterfly Conservation in Surrey*

Groups ..... Surrey Butterflies (Mick Rock), Surrey Moths
Small Blues in Surrey, Wealden Wood Whites

Surrey Skipper

thank you to all contributors

	copy deadline	*published online*	
Spring	**end Feb**	mid-March	*includes new season's field trips*
Autumn	**end Sep**	mid-October	*previews Members' Afternoon*

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

Front-page picture

Black-veined White on Hawthorn, Hutchinson's Bank, June 2, 2023. **Francis Kelly**

Full story, page 7

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Chair — Simon Saville

IT has been an odd season weather-wise: 2023 will go down as the eighth-warmest UK summer on record due to a record-breaking June. July and August were wet and unsettled. As I write, the warm September is coming to an end and we are welcoming rain again.

Provisional data, from the Big Butterfly Count and elsewhere, suggests that butterflies have fared better than we feared after last-year's heatwave and drought. It will be interesting to understand why this is different from the years that followed the droughts in 1976 and 1995.

As the nights draw in, we look forward to our Members' Afternoon on October 28. This promises to be an enjoyable day: it is free and all are welcome.

We will welcome Gareth Tilley to the Committee. He found the Black Hairstreaks on Epsom Common in 2020 and has embarked on a Master's Degree to study their ecology. His fascinating article about UV surveying for larvae is on page 13. He will expand on this at Members' Afternoon.

Clive Huggins is standing down from the Committee after 10 years' service, though he will stay connected to the Branch. On behalf of the Committee and all the Branch I thank Clive for his support.

Steven Lofting, former Senior Conservation Officer for Bromley, has replaced Paul Tinsley-Marshall as SE Region Conservation Manager. We also welcome Richard Austin to the new role of Surrey & Sussex Landscapes Officer. He will focus on Chiddingfold Forest (including Oaken Wood), and the Low Weald (including Park Corner Heath & Rowland Wood).

BC's five-year licence from Forestry England to manage Oaken Wood expired in January. The BC team, supported by Bill Downey and other volunteers, are renegotiating the licence and Management Plan. We hope Richard Austin will provide impetus to this, as work parties are on hold and much needs to be done.

Black-veined Whites at Hutchinson's Bank in May/June made national news. While there is clear evidence that some heat-loving butterflies and moths are spreading northwards as our climate warms, my guess is that this was a release, probably of larvae. Full story: page 7.

● *continued next page*

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Our series of Zoom talks, which have proved popular in the last three winters, will be on 2nd Tuesdays, 7pm, starting Nov 14. We are finalising the programme, which will be on our website.

Ken Elsom's Maps & Stats service goes from strength to strength, and is being well received. We thank him for this achievement, which makes latest data available to volunteers and land managers.

My second "Bike for Butterflies" in May-June, 700 miles in NW Scotland, took in the fabulous islands of Mull, Coll and Tiree, and raised around £5,000 for BC.

Targets were Chequered Skipper, Marsh Fritillary and the rare Tiree Twist and Belted Beauty moths. Find out how I got on in my Members' Day talk, which will then be made more widely available via our website.

Accounts 2023-08-31	*Debit*	*Credit*
Balance 2023-03-31		£12,794
Subscriptions		£8,964
Donations		£502
Sales		£224
Consv volunteers expenses	£200	
Training: conservation volunteers First Aid 4 x £200; Scythe £200	£1,000	
Field equipment: tree poppers	£500	
Branch newsletters	£250	
Committee expenses	£100	
Members' Days: hall, AV, catering, expenses	£680	
Insurance: £1,410 cover	£10	
Zoom licence	£150	
CONTRIBUTIONS		
Big City Butterflies May 1	£2,000	
Saving the Wood White Jun 19	£5,000	
Other local projects: tbc	£8,000	
Totals	£17,890	£22,484
Balance		£4,594

Saving the Wood White

"Saving the Wood White", our project centred on Chiddingfold Forest, began in 2019 led by Fiona Haynes. Paul Cawsey took over from 2021 into 2023.
The final report is now available – Scroll down to PROJECTS IN OUR AREA
https://butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/surrey-and-sw-london-branch/recording-conservation

Members' Afternoon

East Horsley Village Hall

Sat 28 October, 13.00 – 17.00

13.00 Doors open
13.30 Chair's welcome & Committee Elections
New Gareth Tilley
Re-election Francis Kelly, Paul Wheeler

13.45 **Shedding Light on Black Hairstreaks** .....Gareth Tilley
14.15 **Photo Show** .....Francis Kelly
14.25 **57 and a half varieties!** .....Francis Kelly

14.45 *Light refreshments*

15.45 **Charity Bike Ride 2023** .....Simon Saville
16.15 Results: Photo Show & Quiz
16.30 Q&A, **17.00** Doors Close

PHOTO SHOW

Please submit up to THREE photos for our Photo Show

- Adult butterflies only, taken in Surrey this year
- Please email photos (full resolution), with your name, species, site & any notes, **by October 22**, to: *surreybranch@gmail.com*
  Please ***attach*** photos – pasting into the email may lose resolution
- Best photos will be selected for the Show
- Attendees will be invited to vote for the winner
- Winning photo will be featured in the Surrey Skipper
- Entrants need not be present
- Organiser's decisions are final

QUIZ

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

VENUE

Village Hall, Kingston Avenue, East Horsley KT24 6QT
Six minutes walk SW of Horsley Station

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

Camberwell Beauty

James Herd

THE butterfly of a lifetime was in my garden on Wisley Common's Hut Hill on March 27.

When I saw a dark butterfly on the railway sleeper that forms the edge of a flower bed, my first thought was Red Admiral. Then I noticed a cream border around the wings!

There was a feeling of disbelief as I realised it was a Camberwell Beauty and grabbed my phone to take some photos! I had never seen one before, but had come across images over my years in conservation.

I suspect it arrived last autumn and overwintered in my lean-to alongside garden machinery and firewood. Peacocks hibernate there too, and now this Beauty was enjoying one of the first warm days of spring.

Camberwell Beauty, Wisley Common, March 27.
Adam Bolton (SWT)

Two colleagues came over but the butterfly had flown off. After five minutes of searching, we spotted it flying high in the canopy among Silver Birch and Scots Pine. Eventually it settled back in the garden and we were able to enjoy it basking in the spring sun for another 10 minutes.

We put out the word and at any one time over the next week a dozen or more twitchers were around my garden fence. The following days were cold and wet but from the 5th day the weather warmed up and there were a few sightings up to April 4.

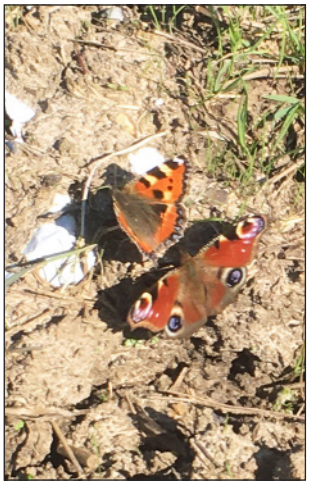
■ Hut Hill is a high point, attractive to butterflies that employ a hill-topping strategy to meet others.

■ James Herd is Surrey Wildlife Trust's Director of Reserves Management.

Courting disasters

■ Small Tortoiseshell tries his luck with a Peacock, Wildwood Golf Course, May 3. **FK**

■ The reverse occurs at Reigate, April 4.
Jo Hurren



Black-veined White

Francis Kelly

BLACK-VEINED WHITES at Hutchinson's Bank made national headlines after Frank Gardner, the BBC's security correspondent, visited on June 3 and wrote a story on the BBC news website.

This was followed up on June 5 by TV and newspapers and was even on the front page of the Times.

The first report was by Ben Heath on May 28; last record was June 7 as the butterflies dispersed.

Local expert Martin Wills said: "Possibly 12+ appeared to be emerging from a particular Hawthorn clump, so either eggs were laid naturally last year by a gravid immigrant or a mystery releaser went to great lengths to place early stages (probably larvae) in the bush(es).

"There are always plenty of female Brimstones on the wing - a BVW flying among them last year would easily pass unnoticed."

BVW populations in Britain were always volatile and the species become extinct in the 1920s. The odds still favour an unauthorised release, but Mathew Frith, Director of Policy and Research at London Wildlife Trust, who manage the site, said: "The hot dry summer of 2022 (with warm fronts coming northwards from Europe), coupled with the explosion of Hawthorn this year, might allow a natural, if somewhat slim, explanation."

The species is common in Europe. A record from Dover on May 19 suggests immigration is possible but releases are becoming commonplace. Professional birder Lee Evans (LGRE) reported:

Black-veined White on Hawthorn, Hutchinson's Bank, Jun 2. **FK**

"A large number of Black-veined Whites, as well as Mazarine Blues and Monarchs, were released May 9-26 along the coastal footpath between Dunster beach and Blue Anchor Bay in Somerset."

Around 10 were at Incombe Hole and Steps Hill in Buckinghamshire.

The sources of HB's Duke of Burgundy and Glanville Fritillary are well known - neither was responsible for these BVWs. HB's Marsh Fritillaries are remnants from mystery dumpings around the south during the lockdown spring of 2020.

■ Butterfly Conservation Head Office, presuming these BVWs not to have arrived naturally, published the following statement on June 5: "These sightings are the result of an unofficial release and it is unlikely the butterfly will survive in the wild to breed. Butterfly Conservation is supportive of re-introductions when they are based on sound research. Undocumented releases confuse existing conservation effort."

Rogue releases

Marcus Rhodes

Marcus Rhodes is an ecologist, studying for a PhD at Exeter University

ROGUE butterfly releases are in the news again. I thought it might be useful to explain some of the science behind why this route to re-establishing species is so problematic.

Reintroductions play an important role in nature recovery but rogue releases can be damaging to biodiversity.

When talking about biodiversity, we often use "species" as a convenient, discreet unit of diversity. In reality, biodiversity exists on a continuum from individual genes to entire ecosystems. There is a lot of biodiversity that exists below the level of species.

Some of this within-species diversity may be categorised into "subspecies" or "ecotypes", particularly if there are distinctive differences in appearance between populations. However, diversity within species can be cryptic, with few visual cues to indicate that two populations are genetically distinct from one another.

In Britain, the Marsh Fritillary forms two genetic clusters, possibly representing separate colonisation events after the last glaciation. Populations in southern England and Wales are genetically distinct from those in Scotland and northern England.

Four subspecies of Silver-studded Blue are formally recognised, along with a number of other morphologically and genetically distinct populations that are not currently named as subspecies.

Diversity within species represents unique evolutionary heritage worthy of conserving. Many populations have been isolated for 1,000s of years, have evolved local adaptations and may possess genetic diversity endemic to that population.

When carrying out reintroductions, it is important to understand the genetic structure of populations, otherwise we can cause unintended damage. Introducing non-native variants risks homogenising populations, eroding local distinctiveness and driving biodiversity loss at the genetic level. It can also harm the viability of locally adapted populations through the introduction of maladaptive genes (outbreeding depression).

Different local adaptions can evolve between populations that are just tens of kilometres apart. Glanville Fritillary on the

A Hawthorn clump at Hutchinson's Bank, suspected to be the source of the Black-veined Whites, is examined by butterfly expert Paul Atkin (aka Bugboy). **FK**

Åland Islands (Finland), for example, shows regional adaptation to different food plants across the archipelago. In Britain, different populations of Silver-studded Blue have evolved specialist mutualistic relationships with different species of ants.

In extreme cases, genetic differences may even represent cryptic species hiding in plain sight: the Cryptic Wood White in Ireland was only recognised as a separate species through genetic sequencing in 2011.

With any translocation, we need to be sure about the genetics of what is being released and how it fits into the existing genetic structure. All translocations induce evolutionary changes - migration is an evolutionary process, after all. Due to the founder effect, reintroduced populations can often genetically diverge from their source population.

Well-managed reintroduction projects try to limit this loss of genetic diversity during translocation. Rogue releases, however, are often very poorly executed in this regard: the introduced Marsh Fritillary population in Lincolnshire has low genetic diversity.

The other big problem is that rogue releases often use captive-bred livestock. Captive breeding can play an important role in reintroductions. For species (or genetically distinct populations) facing global extinction, captive breeding offers a vital last chance. Similarly, where donor populations are small and unable to withstand the removal of many individuals, captive breeding can increase the number of individuals for translocation.

But evolution can occur rapidly in captive populations. As soon as a population is taken into captivity, the process of domestication is effectively underway, with each generation diverging further away from the wild-type.

This is primarily due to small population sizes in captivity resulting in strong genetic drift (random changes in the frequency of genetic variants). Captivity can also alter the selection pressures that a population is subject to.

Selection on traits such as predator avoidance may be relaxed in captivity, while traits such as reduced dispersal ability may be selected for. A butterfly that spends less time battering itself against the walls of the cage is likely to leave behind more offspring. Long-term captive breeding of the Large White butterfly has produced heavier butterflies with smaller wings. Captivity has unintentionally favoured investment in high egg production at the expense of dispersal ability.

Badly managed captive breeding can produce individuals that are poorly adapted to life in the wild and which could compromise the survival of wild populations were they to hybridise with them. You risk ending up with a domesticated cultivar rather than the wild-type.

It is important, therefore, that the number of generations in captivity are kept to an absolute minimum. In their guidelines for reintroductions Butterfly Conservation recommend that no more than two generations should be bred in captivity prior to release.

Wild Spaces

Wild Spaces, a cornerstone of Butterfly Conservation's 2021-26 Strategy, has a new website.

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

Brown Hairstreak bonanza

Marian Thomas &
Stephen Reisbach

"THIS is a very shy species and is rarely seen in the adult stage."

So wrote A D A Russwurm in *Aberrations of British Butterflies* (1978).

He might have been surprised by the number of Brown Hairstreaks to be seen in our area in 2023.

A cold and late spring gave concern as to how the larval stages of the BH would fare once they had hatched in April. It was therefore surprising that the first sighting (male, West Molesey garden) came on the very early date of Jul 7.

The rather inclement weather in much of July meant that this looked like something of an outlier, but in the last week of the month the flight period was well underway with a surge of records, especially from Bookham Common, the SW London/ Elmbridge area and the North Downs.

At Bookham Common, numbers coming to ground level early in the flight period were notably high, with double figures seen routinely over a period of some three weeks during end July to early August. These were mostly males, but also some females, nectaring on their favoured Creeping Thistle. Some 10 BHs on Creeping Thistle were also observed on the Wildwood Golf Course field trip on Aug 9.

BHs are thought to come down from the trees in numbers to seek nectar from flowers when aphid secretions on tree leaves, which provide their usual food source, are in short supply. So the July rains washing these secretions off the leaves may well have played a part in the spectacle.

Interestingly, reports from Hampshire in the 1990s of BHs nectaring in numbers mention the favoured nectar plant as Hemp Agrimony, which tends to have its flowering peak slightly later than Creeping Thistle.

But were the promising early numbers simply down to nectaring behaviour or would the butterfly show a strong presence as the season progressed? Signs were encouraging at the beginning of August, when we made what was expected to be a brief trip to Churchfields Recreation Ground in Chessington.

We spent over an hour observing first at least one male, in the company of a gaggle of Purple Hairstreaks in a semi-mature oak, followed by a female passing some leisure time up in a Sallow. We noted that the male was feeding from the leaf surface, so there must have been some sustenance left there. The site is one where the Blackthorn is not extensive and we had previously found only eggs, so recording adults there was notable.

The following weeks were remarkable both for the ease with which the butterfly was to be found at a wide range of sites and for the numbers, with several being seen at some places where even a single adult sighting would normally be something of an event.

We concentrated on sites in outer SW London/ Surrey within the M25. Tolworth Court Farm Fields, as usual, proved rewarding, with 12 females recorded during a non-exhaustive circuit on Sep 4; three visits to different areas of Horton CP yielded a total of 15, including 7 in a single field on Aug 25.

A gratifyingly good showing was at Morden Park, a site where, despite substantial stands of blackthorn and wild plum, we had previously found only sparse scatterings of eggs, and no adults. A circuit here on Sep 8 produced 6 females, together with several eggs.

Perhaps most surprising was a brief visit on Aug 27, in unpromising weather, to a small open space along the Bonesgate stream in Chessington. There are a few smallish Blackthorn stands here, and as the

BH female, Manor Park, New Malden, Aug 7. It has orange dusting on the hindwings, which I have occasionally noted on BHs in our area. **MT**

BH males on Creeping Thistle, Wildwood Golf Course, Alfold, Aug 10, **FK**

site forms part of a corridor along the stream, potentially linking the Horton CP & Castle Hill complex with Tolworth Court Farm Fields, it had occurred to us that it might be visited by one or two wandering female hairstreaks.

Although a walk in one direction drew a blank, on the return a sunny interval tempted a BH down to bask on bramble. That was pleasing, but quite amazing was the appearance of a further four females over a distance of less than 150 metres from the first – checking photos for varying patterns of wing damage confirmed that we had indeed seen five different butterflies in this small area.

In all, from the start of August until mid-September we logged some 88 records of Brown Hairstreak adults, nearly all females, at 23 sites. Eggs were found on casual inspections at a further 9 locations. All these records were in a 14 sq. km box bounded by gridlines TQ11-24 and TQ59-72. (A trip to see Long-tailed Blue at Whitehawk Hill in Brighton incidentally produced a further record, of a wandering female – apparently the species is not often seen at that site.)

It is interesting to speculate on the reasons for the apparent abundance of the butterfly this season. Research by Jeremy Thomas (1974) suggests that mortality at the pupal stage is particularly high: in a study over four seasons of a population at Cranleigh, an average of 63% of pupae failed to make it through to the adult stage.

The same study indicated an average 94% mortality rate in total for all pre-adult stages, so an increase in the proportion of pupae surviving to emerge as adults might have a significant effect on the number of butterflies seen. For example, if on average some 16 eggs out of 100 survive until the pupal stage, a decrease in the pupal mortality rate to around 40% would result in around 10 individuals emerging as adults rather than the average 6.

One possibility might be that unusually warm weather in June and the start of July accelerated the development of BHs in the later-larval and pupal stages, thus reducing the period during which they were particularly vulnerable to predation by small mammals. This is conjectural and other explanations or combinations of factors can readily be suggested.

Big City Butterflies London project 2021–2024

Steve Bolton *Habitat Management, Recording & Monitoring*

WE have now created 45 new recording schemes since the project started, monitoring both butterflies and moths.

The data will help us to better understand how different species are faring in the capital and to target conservation action by BC and site managers. In SW London these include a transect at Battersea Park, iRecord surveys at Roots and Shoots, and moth recording at Streatham and Wandsworth Commons.

Over the summer I have delivered numerous events focused on identification and recording. We have promoted Big Butterfly Count, iRecord butterfly surveys and moth identification.

We supported Friends of Brockwell Park with moth recording as part of their bioblitz survey. New volunteers joined the session and we recorded 17 butterfly species and 59 moths, including the Gypsy Moth with its huge antennae (picture, bottom right)

We have promoted the Wild Spaces campaign, adding sites to the interactive map. We worked with local groups such as Southwark Community Gardens, who can share resources with multiple groups.

With them we delivered a training workshop at Rockingham estate, where established community gardens already provide pollinator plants such as Verbena, Lavender and Nasturtium. We will support plans for more wildflower areas and supply caterpillar foodplants.

Ele Johnstone *Engagement*

WE have exceeded our targets for engagement, delivering 21 school workshops, 29 community events and 7 high footfall events.

This year has provided lots of opportunities to link the three strands of the project (engagement, recording & monitoring, and habitat management) with activities like community planting workshops. Engagement highlights include creating partnerships with grassroots organisations and building our team of volunteers.

Our Summer Social in August at the Soanes Centre, Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, welcomed 60+ people to celebrate the project, take part in fun activities, eat pizza and socialise with others in our BCB Community. By providing opportunities to connect, we hope to build a legacy and encourage our partners to maintain the momentum.

A highlight this summer was working with Providence House Youth Club in Battersea, Wandsworth, where we provided funding and staff support for a community arts project.

Through the project, led by E33 Dance Company, a group of young people have learnt more about the life cycle and have explored this topic more deeply through BCB workshops, dance and movement workshops, costume making and other art forms. The brilliant final dance was also performed at the Royal Academy of Dance during Wandsworth Fringe.

We introduced butterflies and moths to 2,000 children during their Farm 2 City week and delivered a community planting session for the children to create urban Wild Spaces.

UV surveying

Gareth Tilley

BLACK HAIRSTREAK surveys in 2022 on Epsom Common, where I discovered a colony in 2020, showed for the first time that their larvae luminesce under UV light.

This year I was able to prove in a darkened room that photoluminescence increases during larval development and that different species luminesce differently under 365nm or 395nm UV wavelengths.

Nocturnal surveying for larvae with an ultra-violet torch complements diurnal searches for adults.

Black Hairstreaks are unsuited to transect recording. Adults typically feed high up on honeydew, are sedentary for long periods, and have a short flight period. Their eggs on Blackthorn are more difficult to find than those of the Brown Hairstreak.

First instar (L1) Black Hairstreak larvae feed on flowering buds. L2 change colour to match blackthorn leaves, and this continues through L3-4. Their pupae mimic bird-droppings but predation is thought to be as high as 80% at this stage.

In 2021, daytime searches in Feb (ova), late May (larvae), and early June (pupae) found only a single L4 larva.

In 2022, nocturnal searches for larvae were undertaken at five sites from Apr 24 to May 13 to coincide with larval stages L3-4.

Observations increased as the larvae grew and became easier to detect:
May 6: two sites, 13 larvae
May 9: three further sites, 46 larvae

Records declined as the larvae pupated or were predated, and by May 13 only one was found across the five sites.

UV luminescence *nm=nanometers*

Larva	*365nm*	*395nm*
Black Hs	good	OK
Brown Hs	good	good
Purple Hs	good	x
Small Copper	good	x
Large Copper	good	OK
Adonis Blue	x	x

Black Hairstreak larva under UV torch

From May 28, six surveys for adult butterflies were undertaken at each site. Numbers peaked on June 10, declining to just two on June 21.

Different survey techniques can be expected to yield different results. Site C was surveyed six times and a single adult was seen on only two occasions, whereas the maximum number of larvae was 22.

Wearing UV-protective glasses, surveyors primarily used a 365nm torch. Torches that emit at 395nm are more commonly available, therefore, a standard 100 LED UV torch was used to test photoluminescence at this wavelength.

CONCLUSIONS

- L2-4 larvae luminesce strongly and are readily detectable at up to c.3m with 365nm (UV) & 395nm (UV-visible) torches.
- BH ova/pupae do not luminesce.
- Larvae of different species luminesce more strongly at different wavelengths.

I acknowledge the help of Nicola Campana-Etheridge, Sarah Clift, Stewart Cocker, Bill Downey, Alison Gilry, Pamela Harwood, Peter Howarth, Steve Nevard, Robb Reeves, Simon Saville, Peter Vigar & Bob Yeo

- Gareth Tilley is studying for a Master's Degree at Sussex University. This article is a summary of his two illustrated papers on Researchgate: click links below.

1 *UV surveying*

2 *Instars & UV wavelengths*

Conservation Group — Bill Downey

THE MAIN work of the Conservation Group is done in autumn/winter – in spring/summer we concentrate on monitoring and recording.

We are currently planning the programme for 2023/24 but our monthly workparties at the Oaken Wood reserve have had to be cancelled for the time being: we await agreement of the management plan and licence renewal from Forestry England.

Again, there have been problems caused by the churn of staff in conservation organisations. However, Natasha Doane, former Voluntary Warden at Oaken Wood, is now National Trust Ranger for the North Downs west of Dorking and based at Landbarn Farm, Denbies Hillside. And a new Ranger manages Reigate to Oxted.

■ Our workparties take place on Fridays and we are always looking for new volunteers.

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

Surveys — Bill Downey

IT is important to know the whereabouts of our rare species that are not monitored by transects. This is particularly true on large heathland sites, which have Silver-studded Blue and Grayling. Many are owned by the MoD, with limited access.

I organised two surveying days this year:

Churt Common / The Flashes
We did not find SSB, but this has sparked off a conversation with Waverley as to the reasons and how this may be changed.

Horsell Common Preservation Society: Grasslands site & main common. I had thought this was a marginal site for SSB but we found the species – and early Graylings too – in more areas and in greater numbers than expected. This was reassuring and we hope to have a new transect there next year.

Although it takes a lot of work to set up, this is an extremely worthwhile activity and I want to survey more sites in 2024.

Maps & Stats — Ken Elsom

THE MANY enhancements to our Maps & Stats service since its March launch include:

■ Regular updates for 2023 transects.

■ Reorganisation of the Transects tab to show results for 2018-23.

■ New summary tables/graphics for Transect/Species & Transect/Totals.

■ Garden Butterfly Survey

■ Link to *BSBI Plant Atlas 2020* for larval host plants. This new resource, more relevant than the original *Kew Plants of the World Online*, has just become available.

Full analysis for 2023 will be available after the various data sources such as iRecord & iNaturalist are aggregated and verified, which should be in February 2024. Transect results will be updated approximately monthly once the season is underway.

The same methodology has been used for Hampshire & IoW Branch, but the results have not yet been made public.

There is now a lot of information on these webpages; do explore and provide feedback.

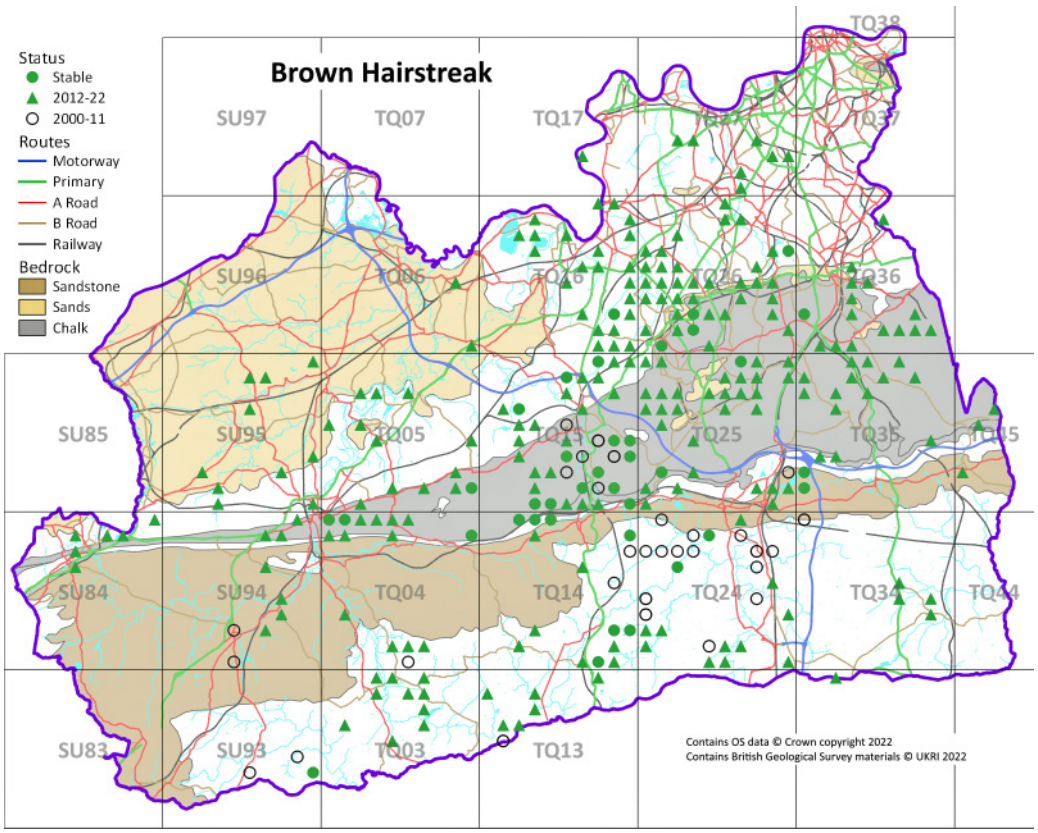
LINK *https://butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/surrey-and-sw-london-branch/maps-stats*

UPDATED

Maps & Stats

Groundbreaking webpages: go to

https://butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/surrey-and-sw-london-branch/maps-stats



With thanks to Branch database manager **Ken Elsom**

Transects

Bill Downey

THIS year has seen a return (after the pandemic) to very good coverage of our network of monitored sites.

By September there have been returns from 146 transects – I expect a few more to be added – and 230k butterflies recorded.

The branch has expanded its transect network in recent years to the point where we have the third largest number in the country. However, as more transects are added, the more onerous the coordination. Each year there is an inevitable churn of recorders and the task of plugging the gaps.

For this reason, I have decided that 150 transect routes needs to be an upper limit. I will only seek new transects on significant sites or where there is a motivated walker, ready to go.

I will still hold my day's training for new recorders: probably two sessions in 2024 after those held this year at the Waverley offices at Farncombe and with the National Trust at Runnymede. I think these are important to inform about the transect methodology and to develop ID skills.

2023 NINE NEW ROUTES

■ Battersea Park features areas managed for pollinators by LB Wandsworth. It also has mature elms with White-letter Hairstreaks, although these are not necessarily picked up on transect walks.

■ Tanyard Meadows is an area of former farmland owned by Reigate and Banstead Council and managed by the Horley Conservation Group together with Gatwick Greenspace. It is a patchwork of meadows, woodlands and wet grassland bordered on the north by the Burstow Stream. It adds to our monitoring in the Weald where I have wanted to add more routes.

■ Lammas Lands is a Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) managed by Waverley BC. It comprises a series of wet meadows bordering the River Wey and providing flood relief for the Godalming area. It is named after the ancient practice of taking a hay cut on or by Lammas Day (Aug 1). The route crosses the floodplain meadows with one section along the towpath.

■ Blackheath, an isolated SSSI heathland site managed by Waverley BC, had Silver-studded Blues until at least 2008. At some point the heathland became overgrown, although it is in good condition now, and I was asked by Waverley to put in a transect to determine if the species is still present.

■ Banstead Heath is one of four sites managed by the Banstead Commons Conservators. The Conservators recognise that this site is under-recorded and requested a transect. The route is on the south side of this large area and passes through areas of lowland heath (Grizzled Skipper colony) and woodland rides.

■ Runfold Ridge is a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) and one of a number of similar sites created to reduce pressure on nearby Special Protection Areas (SPAs). It is managed by the Land Trust in partnership with the Blackwater Valley Countryside Partnership and sits on the northern slope of the Hog's Back.

Formerly arable farmland, it has the potential to return to quality grassland via the cutting and removal of grass to reduce nutrient levels. The Conservation Group has put in scrapes and Kidney Vetch has grown well – giving hope that this could become an important Small Blue site.

■ Newdigate Brickworks is an SNCI and has been a nature reserve since the brickworks closed in 1974. A brownfield site managed by the Surrey Wildlife Trust, it contains a rich mosaic of habitats: woodland, hedgerows, scrub, grassland, ponds and lakes. There are extensive blackthorn stands with Brown Hairstreaks and the grasslands adjacent to the lake has a colony of Grizzled Skippers.

■ Hampton Down is an area of chalk grassland on the south side of the Hog's Back, now being more favourably managed for biodiversity by the Hampton estate. The Conservation Group has been de-scrubbing grassland areas and this winter is planning to put in scrapes for Kidney Vetch. It is hoped that in time this will become a site for the Small Blue – part of our plan to spread the species along the Hog's Back from Guildford to Farnham.

■ Seale Meadow is a small area of chalk grassland on the Hog's Back and adjacent to Hampton Down. It lies between the A31 and the old Seale Chalk Pit – which has no public access - and is managed by the Surrey Wildlife Trust.

My thanks to the following, who are stepping down:

Reigate Heath: Graham Saxby
Blatchford Down: Cathy Mead (moving to new route in 2024)
Dulwich & Belair Parks: Dave Clark
Gatwick: Rachel Bicker, the Greenspace Ranger, is going freelance. It is hoped the two Gatwick routes will still be walked. The NE route has had to be rejigged due to the development of a new aircraft hangar.

NEW WALKERS

Battersea Park .....Jean Orr
Tanyard Meadows .....Malcolm Cline, Victoria Chester
Lammas Lands .....Anne & David Jones .....Ruth Carpenter Jones & David Carpenter
Blackheath.....Bob Delamare
Banstead Heath ....Lucy Shea, Irene Golding
Runfold Ridge ..Paul Bamford, Don Lemmon
Newdigate Brickworks ..Stephen Woodcock
Hampton Downs.....Andrea Pinnington
Seale Meadow.....Andrea Pinnington
West Norwood Cemetery Helen MacKenzie
Mitcham Common B .....Richard Thomas
Wingate Hill .....Danielle Wagner
Brockwell Park .....Sheila Northover, Tina Wakefield
Clandon Wood .....John Mairs
Holmwood Common .....Malcolm Clayton, Sara Edwards
RSPB Tankersford & RSPB Farnham Heath .....Mike Coker, Mark Crisp
Featherbed Lane .....Martin Wills

Purple Hairstreak — Bill Downey

A NEW methodology for Purple Hairstreak transects was set up this year based on recording points along a 1km route walked in the early evening.

We have started with eight routes and may add more next year.

Bealeswood Common .....Phillipa Hall
Berrylands Nature Reserve.....Bill Downey
One Tree Hill .....Hannah Fox, Pennie Hedge Kate Lake, Ruth Bradshaw, Sandy Pepperell
Richmond Park ..Sarah Elliott, Teresa Grafton
Rodborough Common .....Janet, Dave & Andy Thomson
Tolworth Court Farm.....Robb Reeves
Wandsworth Common .....Ian Cunningham
Weybourne Nature Reserve ....Nick Boucher

■ I thank all transect and WCBS walkers for their efforts and records. If you would like to get involved, please contact *billdowney@sky.com*

Field Trips 2023

Mike Weller

MANY thanks to the 13 leaders of the 43 field trips of 2023. Further volunteer leaders will be needed next year, so please offer to lead a trip, preferably before January 2024.

Over 80% FTs enjoyed good weather and a lot of members expressed appreciation of the walks and the friendships they bring.

The season had a late and slow start from April to June with fewer butterflies reflecting the poor spring and perhaps the freezing December 2022. The weather improved during June and July with some hot spells and a bit of a drought.

The summer broods of most butterflies – and our trippers – responded well. We had memorable trips in July and August but it was a poor year for migrants, Painted Lady and Clouded Yellow. There were wonderful numbers of Holly Blues throughout.

May 17 Sidney/Oaken Wood: worryingly zero Wood White in Sidney and only 5 in/around Oaken Wood. Met couple who had just seen the Silver-washed Fritillary previously reported nearby.

May 20/Jun 25 Norbury Park: my first Painted Lady & a total of 23 species for the two trips. Concern for Grizzled & Dingy Skippers & Small Tortoiseshell but good numbers of Marbled White, Dark Green Fritillary, White Admiral, Ringlet, Comma & Large Skipper.

May 14/28 Denbies Hillside: 12 species dominated by large numbers of Common Blue, Small Heath, Brown Argus, Brimstone & Holly Blue. Concern about the low number (4) of Adonis Blue seen on Surrey's major site on which 4 similarly bright blue Blues in good condition were seen but without chequered edges. One tatty Small Tortoiseshell.

Jun 6 Horton Country Park &

Jun 8 Nonsuch Park: both too early to see Black Hairstreak. Brown Hairstreak larva spotted by me & much photographed!

Jun 7 Merrow & Pewley Downs: 15 species - dominated by Common Blue, Small Heath & Small Blue (9). One lonely Adonis.

Jun 18 Box Hill: 13 species - abundant Marbled White, Small Heath, 6 Dark Green Fritillary, 6 Small Blue; 2 Grizzled Skipper at last.

Jun 22 Whitmoor Common: 11 species - no Silver-washed Fritillary but 7 White Admiral in the wood. 8 Large Skipper seen & 50+ Silver-studded Blue colonising newly coppiced areas. Added interest in Dragonflies, Dartford Warbler, Stonechat & Linnet.

Jul 1 Epsom Common: 19 species including a late Black Hairstreak far from the known area for the colony.

Jul 2 Bookham Common: 12 species only including 12 Silver-washed Fritillary, 7 Comma, 9 White Admiral & 2 tree-topping Purple Emperor.

Jul 3 Knepp: number of butterflies & diversity (13 species) not brilliant. 7 Purple Emperor but none on the ground again. Storks spectacular!

Jul 6 Ashtead Common: with excellent numbers of butterflies & 21 species this was the best FT I have led here. 20+ Purple Hairstreak, many at low level (but too active for photos) led the other butterflies in double figures – Marbled White, Brimstone, Comma, Small Skipper, Gatekeeper, Silver-washed Fritillary & White Admiral. As a late climax, some of us were sure we spotted a Black Hairstreak flitting around the top of a Blackthorn shrub in a location where it was later confirmed to have a colony.

Jul 8 Walton Downs: sunny afternoon after driving rain put off all but 3 members: 20 species but large area of

racecourse mowed, destroying main breeding site of Dark Green Fritillary and a colony of Round-headed Rampion plants.

Jul 12 Holmwood: rain cleared to sunny periods from start and a good 19 species inc. 6 White Admiral.

Jul 15 Headley Heath: only 5 members braved the violent wind storm but so did 16 species inc. 23 Red Admiral, 9 Silver-washed Fritillary & 5 Comma!

Jul 20 Train strike east! a modified walk taking in most of the best of the former route was enjoyed with excellent numbers of most of the 24 species seen. No Silver-spotted Skippers.

Jul 22 Vale End: walk curtailed when driving rain set in at lunchtime but Daphne Foulsham's hospitality and lovely garden entertained us for a 2 hour lunch chat on return.

Jul 29 Train Journey West by car shuttle again: 27 species – yet again the winner and ending with a beautiful fresh Brown Hairstreak. A wonderful day.

Aug 1 River Mole & lower Box Hill: an extra trip with 19 species seen and for me my only Clouded Yellow of the year (for about 5 seconds!)

Aug 6 Box Hill & the Dukes: 20 species but only 1 Adonis blue.

Aug 10 Bookham Common: 20+ members enjoyed the hot weather and 17 species inc. an unprecedented 12 Brown Hairstreak, male & female. We used to think we were lucky to see one.

Aug 20 Merrow & Pewley Downs: only 14 species after the hot spell inc. 4 Brown Hairstreak, some with upper side viewed, and the record 10 Adonis Blue seen in the Paddock will stay long in the memory.

iRecord is our recommended recording platform, via *iRecord.org.uk* or *iRecord Butterflies* app.

Thank you to the 900+ recorders who had submitted 18k+ Surrey butterfly records up to Oct 3.

This incudes data from:

butterflyrecording.org (BC's own recording portal)

gardenbutterflysurvey.org; iNaturalist/Seek

UKBMS transect data is also on iRecord

Bigbutterflycount.butterfly-conservation.org is separate

- More details, including how to create filters, are on our website's Recording page.

	iRecorders	*iRecords*
2013	32	344
2014	116	1,004
2015	159	3,182
2016	230	4,247
2017	333	7,214
2018	322	6,434
2019	443	6,534
2020	580	10,977
2021	709	10,843
2022	829	*16,542
Oct 3	900+	18,473

*Garden Butterfly Survey 1st inclusion: 2,434

LINK *iRecord*

LINK *iRecord Butterflies app*

LINK *Surrey Recording*

Weather Watch

SUMMARY 2023

Warm Jan-Mar, May-Jun, Sep
Sunny Jan-Feb, May-Jun, Sep
Wet Jan, Mar, Apr, Jul-Sep

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

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

2022	Temp C		Sunshine		Rainfall	
	Mean	*Anom*	*Hours*	*Anom*	*mm*	*Anom*
Jan	4.8	**-0.1**	73	**122%**	25	**30%**
Feb	7.1	**+2.1**	94	**117%**	62	**101%**
Mar	8.1	**+1.1**	160	**129%**	42	**80%**
Apr	9.4	**+0.1**	185	**105%**	18	**34%**
May	13.3	**+1.0**	188	**89%**	50	**95%**
Jun	15.5	**+0.3**	242	**116%**	33	**62%**
Jul	19.0	**+1.7**	256	**117%**	5	**9%**
Aug	19.5	**+2.3**	249	**124%**	31	**49%**
Sep	14.9	**+0.2**	133	**86%**	86	**140%**
Oct	13.5	**+2.1**	136	**120%**	92	**102%**
Nov	9.8	**+2.1**	72	**102%**	171	**182%**
Dec	4.1	**-1.2**	56	**104%**	105	**118%**
Year	11.6	**+1.0**	1,843	**110%**	719	**89%**

2023	Temp C		Sunshine		Rainfall	
	Mean	*Anom*	*Hours*	*Anom*	*mm*	*Anom*
Jan	5.2	**+0.3**	72	**121%**	99	**118%**
Feb	6.1	**+1.1**	85	**106%**	8	**12%**
Mar	7.3	**+0.3**	61	**49%**	129	**247%**
Apr	8.9	**-0.4**	159	**90%**	76	**143%**
May	12.7	**+0.4**	230	**110%**	38	**73%**
Jun	17.6	**+2.4**	279	**134%**	33	**60%**
Jul	16.8	**-0.5**	170	**78%**	91	**169%**
Aug	16.9	**-0.3**	184	**91%**	70	**110%**
Sep	17.7	**+3.0**	175	**113%**	64	**105%**

Yellow warm/sunny
Red year's warmest/sunniest
Blue wet
Black year's wettest

Intrigued? All will be revealed:
Members' Afternoon, Oct 28

Big Butterfly Count 2023

RED Admiral topped 2023's Big Butterfly Count for the first time, with 248k sightings – almost one in six – from 136,719 counts.

Dr Zoe Randle, BC's Senior Surveys Officer, said: "Last year's drought was not as bad for butterflies as we had feared. The mixed weather this year has helped as there has been an abundance of green food plants for caterpillars, and plenty of nectar-rich flowers for adult butterflies."

Dr Richard Fox, Head of Science, said: "One of the biggest threats butterflies in the UK face is habitat loss. While the weather certainly has an impact on numbers from year to year, butterflies, moths and many other species can generally cope with variable weather. What they can't cope with is habitat destruction."

■ 2024 Count: Jul 12 to Aug 4

UK top, 2023

1	Red Admiral	248,077
2	Gatekeeper	222,896
3	Large White	216,666
4	Small White	202,029
5	Meadow Brown	162,396
6	Peacock	149,179
7	Comma	49,173

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

LINK *Big Butterfly Count*

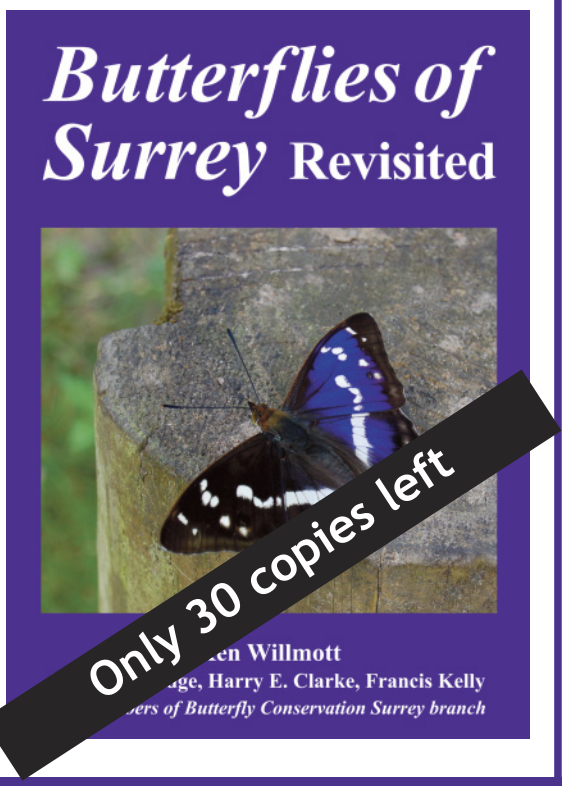
Zoom talks

WE are planning a fourth season of monthly Zoom talks this winter, 2nd Tuesdays, 19.00, organised by Richard Stephens. They will last up to one hour, including Q&A. 1st talk: Nov 14. Full details will be on our website.

Sell-out fast approaching

An essential reference for anyone with any interest in Surrey's wildlife. And at only £16 it is an absolute bargain.

Steve Chastell, Chair
Surrey Bird Club



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

BC Membership — Household totals 2023-07

West Midlands	1,697		**Cheshire & Wirral**	763
Yorkshire	1,656		**South Wales**	763
Hampshire & IOW	1,629		**Gloucestershire**	724
Upper Thames	1,495		**Wiltshire**	659
Cambs & Essex	1,421		**Beds & Northants**	627
Sussex	1,420		**Suffolk**	608
Surrey	**1,419**		**Glasgow & SW Scotland**	587
Somerset & Bristol	1,278		**Cornwall**	562
East Midlands	1,253		**Warwickshire**	559
Kent	1,241		**North East England**	523
Herts & Middlesex	1,066		**European Butterfly Group**	511
Devon	1,053		**Lincolnshire**	449
Dorset	988		**Cumbria**	394
Lancashire	945		**North Wales**	324
Norfolk	922		**Highlands**	309
East Scotland	916		**Northern Ireland**	250

National Households 31,342; Individuals 42,859 ■ *Some are members of >1 branch*

Walking a transect

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

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

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

You may also wish to consider: *Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey*.

Surrey transect data is available to download in Excel format from our website's *Recording page*

- Sort by species to see their sites & flight periods.
- Sort by sites to see their species.
- Transect walkers: sort by walker to see your own records at a glance.
- Interactive map of all Transect & WCBS sites, with details of their species etc: *ukbms.org/sites*

Notable records *verified by Surrey Branch*

Date	*Species*	*Site*	*Recorder*
Mar 27 - Apr 4	**Camberwell Beauty**	Wisley Common	James Herd
May 5	**Large Tortoiseshell**	Hutchinson's Bank	Martin Wills
May 13	**Silver-Washed Frit** fem	Tugley Wood - *remarkably early*	Bob Eade
May 28 - Jun 7	**Black-veined White**	Hutchinson's Bank	Ben Heath
Sep 2	**Long-tailed Blue**	Beddington	Roger Lewis

Black Hairstreak, Epsom Common & surrounds: thriving
Glanville Fritillary, Hutchinson's Bank: thriving
Duke of Burgundy, Chapel Bank, & **Marsh Fritillary**, Hutchinson's Bank: surviving

Home-grown Hairstreak

John Boorman

May 31: I found a tiny caterpillar on my living room window in suburban West Sutton. I suspect it was dropped by a Blue Tit, whose nest box was just above. I posted images on Twitter: artist Richard Lewington thought it might be a Brown Hairstreak and suggested I rear it. So I took leaves from the Blackthorn tree at the end of my garden and the larva grew rapidly.

Jun 17/18: larva pupated. I was advised to dampen the pupa with a wet brush every three days, and eventually it became quite dark.

Jly 6: male Brown Hairstreak emerged after 18 days. I released it the same afternoon at Nonsuch Park into a stand of Blackthorn adjacent to Ash and Oak trees. My Brown Hairstreak disappeared into the foliage, where hopefully it will survive and breed.

Jly 6: newly emerged Brown Hairstreak

■ This emergence was one day earlier than 2023's first record elsewhere in Surrey.

May 31: 1st instar

Jun 2: 2nd instar

Jun 7: 3rd instar

Jun 14: 4th (final) instar

Jun 17: pupating

Jun 18: pupa

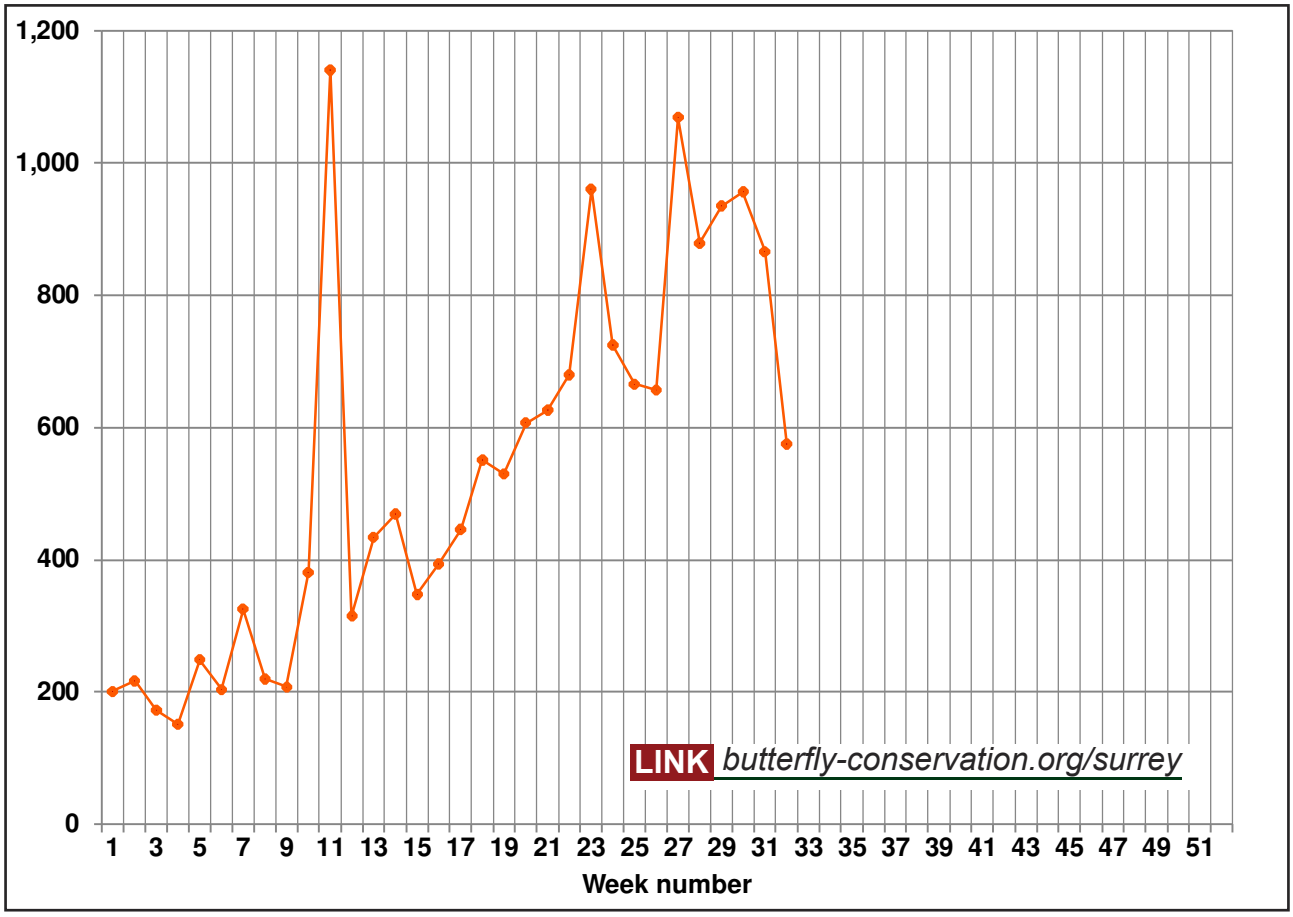
Jly 3: nearly ready

Branch website

Francis Kelly

VISITS to our Branch website this year produced the usual spikes for new Skipper (week beginning Mar 14), and the Purple Emperor season and Big Butterfly Count launch (July 3). An additional spike for Jun 5 coincided with the Black-veined White sightings.

■ Total unique weekly visits to each of our website's 20+ pages



DATES

Underscore = hyperlink

Oct 28 Surrey Members' Afternoon

Oct 31 Transect records online please

Nov 4 BC National AGM: Zoom

Nov 5 Hampshire AGM: Littleton

Nov 14 Surrey Zoom talk

Nov 27 Free Zoom Talk: Richard Fox
State of the UK's Butterflies: Are conservation efforts working?

2024

Jan-Dec Butterfly House
Horniman Gardens SE23
Open All year

Jan 27 Moth Recorders: Zoom

Mar 23 UK Butterfly Recorders meeting, Zoom

Apr 1 Transect season starts

May Nunhead Cemetery Open Day

Jun 1-9 Festival of Nature

Jun 8-9 Lambeth Country Show, Brockwell Park

Jun 24-30 Insect Week
organised by RES every 2 yrs

Jul 20-28 National Moth Week

Jul 12 – Aug 4
Big Butterfly Count

Sep 29 Transect season ends

Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey — Bill Downey

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conservation projects

Big City Butterflies (London)

BC officer	*Start*	*Duration*	*Main funding*
Steve Bolton Conservation **Ele Johnstone** Engagement	2021-05	4 years to 2024	National Lottery Heritage Fund **£440,000**

Saving the Wood White in the South East COMPLETE

Surrey/Sussex borders, including **Oaken Wood**, our Branch reserve

Paul Cawsey Project Officer *Fiona Haynes to 2021-05*	2019-10	3 years: extended to 2023-05	National Lottery Heritage Fund **£93,000**

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. All are welcome, from beginner to expert.

● If you could lead a walk, to a new or existing site, please contact *Mike Weller*

UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme 2022

DARK GREEN FRITILLARY had its 2nd best year in 2022 after its best ever year in 2021. But overall, 2022 was an average year for butterflies.

Dr Richard Fox, Butterfly Conservation's Head of Science, said: "It was a year of two halves with butterflies seen early and in about average numbers (compared to the last 10 years) from April – July but then in greatly reduced abundance after the summer heatwave and drought.

"In general, warm, sunny weather is good for butterflies but drought is a major problem as plants wither and die, meaning female butterflies may struggle to find anywhere to lay their eggs, or there is not enough food for the caterpillars.

"The knock-on effect is fewer butterflies in the following generation. We saw an indication of this in the 2022 data for some of those species with a generation that flies in late summer and autumn, and we can expect to see a decline in numbers of other species in 2023 too."

LINK *UK Butterfly Monitoring scheme*

2022's abundance ranking for each Surrey species in the 47 years of transects 1976-2022

2022 rank		*10-year trend*	*2022 rank*		*10-year trend*
2	Dark Green Fritillary	+74%	**25**	Brown Argus	-2%
	Purple Emperor	+9%	**26**	Adonis Blue	-29%
7	Dingy Skipper	+21%	**28**	Purple Hairstreak	+47%
	Chalk Hill Blue	+5%		Small White	+1%
8	Silver-studded Blue	+117%		Essex Skipper	-20%
	Small Blue	+107%	**30**	White-letter Hairstreak	+78%
	Orange-tip	+34%		Gatekeeper	+14%
9	Silver-washed Fritillary	-9%		White Admiral	-10%
	Ringlet	-28%	**31**	Common Blue	-27%
10	Clouded Yellow	-59%	**34**	Meadow Brown	+4%
12	Marbled White	+9%	**35**	Small Heath	+42%
	Brimstone	0	**36**	Large White	-19%
14	Holly Blue	+119%	**37**	Small Skipper	-37%
	Comma	-10%		Grayling	+8%
16	Silver-spotted Skipper	-10%	**39**	Grizzled Skipper	+23%
	Speckled Wood	-13%		Peacock	-38%
17	Painted Lady	+152%	**40**	Green-veined White	-37%
20	Wood White	+82%	**41**	Large Skipper	-29%
22	Green Hairstreak	+46%	**43**	Small Tortoiseshell	-61%
23	Red Admiral	+109%	**45**	Small Copper	+13%
	Brown Hairstreak	+32%			

How to read the table: Surrey's 41 regular species; data is from all transects in England, 1976-2022.
Dark Green Fritillary: 2022 was 2nd-best of the 47 transect years; **Small Copper** 45th (3rd-worst)

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

● Please contact Dorset head office: 01929 40020
info@butterfly-conservation.org

SPECIAL PRE-PUBLICATION OFFER

The Bees of Sussex by James Power

To be published February 2024

Order your copy NOW & save £7.50 on published price! Offer ends 31 December 2023

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Have you ever wondered how many species of bee we have in Sussex? And did you know that Sussex is one of the richest, most diverse counties in Britain for bees? Now, at last, our solitary bees and bumblebees are getting the column inches – and the spotlight – they deserve.

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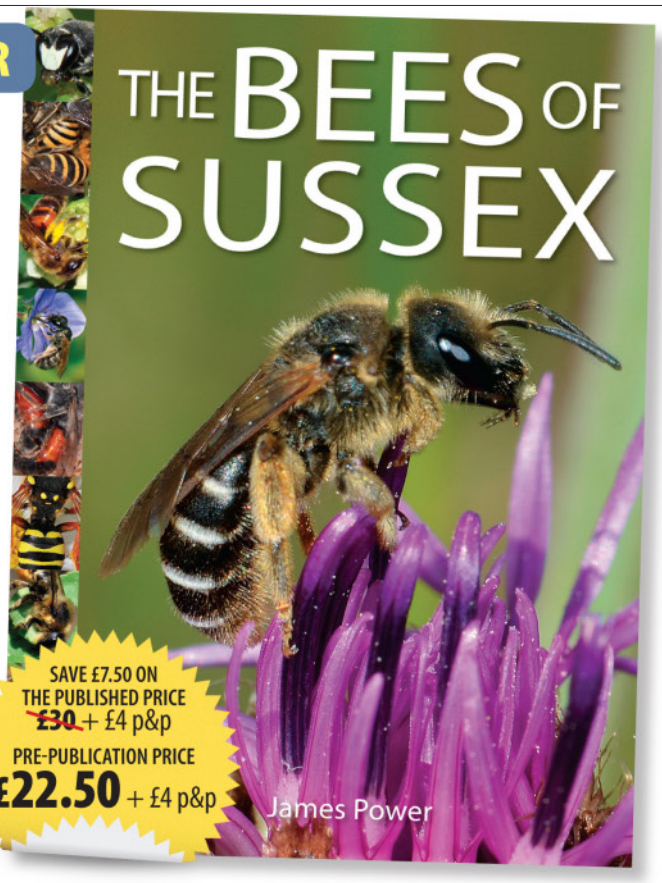

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Lawrie & Bridget de Whalley

MARIAN THOMAS remembers Lawrie & Bridget de Whalley, who will have been known to some of our more long-standing members.
Lawrie died in July, following his wife's passing last October.

Butterflies have lost true friends in Lawrie and Bridget. My husband Stephen and I thought of them as we walked the nature reserves around Kingston in search of late summer species.

This was especially so at a particular field on the Hogsmill Nature Trail, as it was there in 2021 that Bridget and Lawrie observed what we believe to have been the first Purple Emperor recorded in that area. Even in recent years, it was good to see from the online records that they were still able to enjoy and help butterflies.

Bridget (right) & Lawrie (3rd right) butterflying in the Alps. **MT**

As well as their long association with Surrey and Dorset branches, Bridget and Lawrie had a keen interest in the butterflies of Europe and travelled widely to survey for some of the more threatened species.

In 2010 we had the pleasure of their company on a trip with BC's European Butterflies Group to the Alps of central Switzerland.

It was good to spend extended time with such a friendly and engaging couple with an evident shared devotion to butterflies.

Oaken Wood

OAKEN WOOD, founded by Forestry ranger Peter Beale in 1993, and our Branch reserve since 1995, is 12ha (30 acres) of wood/grassland in the south-west of Surrey, 2.6km south of Dunsfold. It is part of Forestry England's 324ha Chiddingfold Forest.

A 3ha extension west to Lagfold track was added in 2015. Our licence is due for renewal in 2023.

Access: SU993338, via track (usually no vehicular access) that runs west from Plaistow Rd at SU994338; GU8 4PG. Parking for only a few cars.

Western (Botany Bay) entrance to Chiddingfold Forest is off High Street Green at SU978348; GU8 4YA. Parking here is slightly easier; beware roadside ditches! Oaken Wood is 2.5km to the east.

● Winter work parties are on hold until the licence is renewed.

LINK *Oaken Wood*

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

GILL HANSON, who died of motor neurone disease on Sep 3, is pictured (centre) on the branch field trip to Knepp in 2019. Gill was a familiar face at national and local meetings dating back to the London Branch era (<1995), and walked WCBS squares at Compton and Peaslake. Husband David, to her left, held various BC posts since the 1970s, notably Surrey Skipper editor 1997-2004 and National Treasurer 1998-2018.
L-R: Laila & Richard Tillett, Richard Stephens, Mick White, Louise Bright, Francis Kelly, Joan Lowe, David Gough, Stephan Morris (obscured), David & Gill Hanson, Robert Edmondson, Nick Forward, Richard Herbert, Les Mitchell, Janet Cheney, Mike Weller, Steve Lowe, Mike Rigby, Peter Camber. **Photo NIGEL JACKMAN**

Social Media

OUR social media accounts are listed on page 2. Facebook is ideal for photos, X-Twitter for news.
To see X-Twitter mentions of *@BC_Surrey,* we recommend *alerts.talkwalker.com*

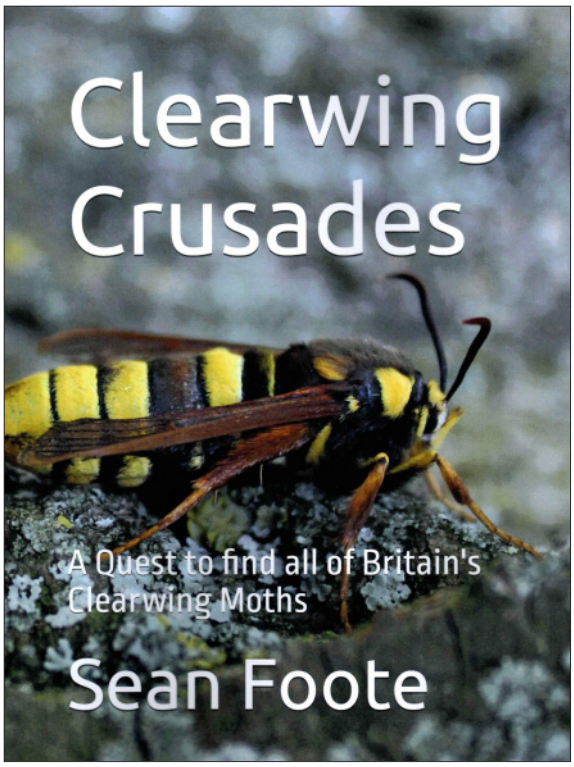
LINK *Surrey Branch social media*

X-Twitter		Facebook	
@BC_Surrey		**Butterfly Conservation in Surrey** *Branch page*	**Surrey Butterflies** *Mick Rock's group*
Followers		Followers	Members
2022-09	1,422	2,818	374
2023-03	1,426	2,842	384
2023-09	1,450	2,903	503
Click Mentions to see visitor posts to Branch page. Surrey Butterflies has the most activity.			

Back-page picture

Steve Simnett

Brimstone female (paler) flies ever higher to avoid the male's unwanted attentions.

Sean Foote, a former Surrey Branch member now based in Salisbury, sets out to photograph Britain's 15 resident Clearwing Moths in one year.

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