

**Butterfly
Conservation**

HERTFORDSHIRE AND MIDDLESEX BRANCH NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 48

DECEMBER 2006

Autumn Days in October.....

by David Chandler

It is October and the season of Autumn is upon us. I am reminded by the nights drawing in that the butterfly flight season is almost over, but we still have echoes of Summer on those warmer days when we see Speckled Woods, Small Coppers, Brimstones, Red Admirals and Commas nectaring on late flowering plants like Michaelmas Daisy and Ivy.

Shortly the last few Small Coppers and Speckled Woods will be gone until their next generations emerge in the spring, but Brimstones, Red Admirals, Commas and their aristocratic relatives Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshells will have gone into hibernation.

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I was reminded of this at a recent Saracens rugby union match in Watford where I came across a Peacock in the space under the stands apparently looking for a place to hibernate but was distracted, moth like, by the bright lights that had been turned on for match-day.

I wondered, as it was one of those warmer autumn days, if it had just arrived or if it had been disturbed. Either way I was concerned for the fate of this butterfly because the regular disturbance it will have to endure in The Sir Stanley Rous Stand over winter is probably an indicator that this was not a good place for it to choose to hibernate.

The aristocrats have evolved to over-winter in places like holes in old trees but they also like sheds and garages where it remains cold and dry. I have found them in churches but these places, like the football stand, can be prone to temperature changes that wake them up too early when little or no nectar sources are available for them to refuel themselves.

Brimstones, in my opinion, have a better strategy and prefer hedges and trees to hibernate and have a natural anti-freeze in their bodies to protect themselves from the frost and snow.

If you are of the mind you can go out looking for hibernating Brimstones in winter. Normally these butterflies are difficult to find because of their distinctive leaf-like shape but all you need to find them is an ultra-violet light source and if you shine this into a Buckthorn (their preferred tree of choice), at twilight, the Brimstones will glow so distinctively that you can locate them with ease. Of course this is quite a strange activity to be doing outside so, if you are seen, people may think you are a bit odd.

Hibernation as an adult is a just one way the butterfly spends the winter; other species spend the winter as eggs, caterpillar or a chrysalis. Some butterfly caterpillars in the Arctic tundra regions actually hibernate twice because the short summers do not allow them to complete their life-cycles in one season; whereas in the more southerly latitudes warmer days permit one, two or even more broods during the flight season.

In the USA, I read, some people put out wooden boxes in winter for their hibernating adult butterflies. I have heard of bird and bat boxes before but never a butterfly box! I mused what it must be like to fall asleep in a cosy room and, missing winter, wake up in warmer days ready for some action. It all seemed quite attractive on the face of it

until I realised that I would miss Christmas & the New Year festivities plus the Branch AGM!

LIZ GOODYEAR RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

Elizabeth Goodyear, who will be very well known to you all as our Branch Secretary, received the honour of one of the "Outstanding Volunteer of the Year" awards at the Butterfly Conservation National Annual General Meeting in Bristol on November 25th. The Chairman, Dudley Cheesman, in presenting the award, quoted from Dave Chandler's nomination letter:

“Elizabeth Goodyear is an extraordinary person in Butterfly Conservation circles, who not only acts as Secretary, Webmaster and Branch Organiser for Herts.& Middlesex branch, but also gives talks, attends BC sales events and works with the local councils and various government agencies to protect butterflies & promote conservation. Additionally, Liz has been active in helping organise both the H&M branch’s AGM and, more impressively, the National AGM in 2004.

Elizabeth, who is active at a national level by contributing at Branches Liaison Meetings, works tirelessly at a local branch level in holding down her two very demanding branch committee roles, yet still somehow finds time each summer for the dedicated and exceptional scientific work she has undertaken with Andrew Middleton in the study of the Purple Emperors of Hertfordshire. The vision & insight shown in this outstanding work alone, as a non-scientifically trained, self-taught expert, deserves national recognition at the very highest level.”

This is a very fitting acknowledgement of the work that Liz has carried out for us over the past ten years, during much of which she has been a full time wife and mother who also runs her own catering business.

A photograph of Liz receiving her award is shown on the next page.



Liz Goodyear receiving her award from BC Chief Executive, Martin Warren

Transect Walker Required for Bunkers Park, Hemel Hempstead, by Michael Pearson

As I am expecting to move from Hertfordshire to Somerset over the next few months, I am looking for (a) volunteer(s) willing to take over my Bunkers Park transect from April 2007.

Bunkers Park, a public park on the SE fringe of Hemel Hempstead, was created in 1996 from former arable farmland. I have walked a transect over the site since 1998, as part of the wildlife management agreement between the landowner, Dacorum BC, and Herts & Middx. Wildlife Trust.

The transect route, comprising nine sections, is about two miles long, through, predominantly, created grassland habitats; it takes me about 1.25 hrs/week to walk. Recording and reporting is carried out using Butterfly Conservation's "Transect Walker" computer programme. 25 butterfly species have so far been recorded on the transect.

The main target species at the moment is common blue. In 2004 part of Bunkers Park was the subject of a Butterfly Conservation "Habitat

Condition Survey” in respect of common blue. This has been followed up in 2006 by a study into the effects of an unplanned change in the grassland mowing date on the 2nd generation of common blue. This latter study has now been published as a case study on the website www.conservazionevidence.com/ViewEntry.asp?ID=532 and is reproduced immediately below.

These 2006 results have been used to inform a revised planned mowing regime to be followed in 2007. It is most important that any changes in the management of the site are fully monitored next year, and hopefully thereafter. Anyone who feels he/she might be interested in continuing this stimulating and valuable project can contact me, Michael Pearson, either direct on 01582 840772, or through John Murray (see back of newsletter for details); I will only be too pleased to talk to you.

Management of an Artificially-Created Wildflower Meadow for Common Blue Butterflies at Bunkers Park, by Michael Pearson

Background: Bunkers Park is thought to have been under cultivation since Roman times up until the 1990s. In 1996, Dacorum Borough Council (Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire) in partnership with the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, commenced conversion of 47.4 ha of the farmland into a new area of local open space. The land was ploughed and seeded with grasses and wild flowers and this area now contains wildflower meadows, young woodlands and leisure areas. Transect monitoring, undertaken by Butterfly Conservation, has been carried out on the site annually since 1998. Bunkers Park is now developing into an important butterfly habitat in Hertfordshire, with twenty five species recorded at the last count.

Action: Management: Since the herb-rich meadows of Bunkers Park in Hertfordshire (southeast England) were established in 1996, the annual management in most years has been a late hay-cut in mid-July. This timing was agreed originally to allow herbs in the sward to set seed and for first generation butterflies, particularly Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus*, to breed. In 2004, for instance, Bottom Field (a 5.7 ha meadow within Bunkers Park) was cut during the week after 22 July.

In 2006, at the farmer's request, and after consultation with the Local Authority landowner, Dacorum Borough Council, and Herts and

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Middlesex Wildlife Trust, a haylage cut (producing livestock fodder part way between silage and hay) was allowed in mid-June. Mowing was seen to be in progress during a visit on 11 June, some five weeks earlier than previously.

At the time, concern was expressed at the possible effects this early cut might have on common blue numbers later in the year. In 2006, 1st generation common blue numbers were beginning to build-up after a particularly slow start to the season. A cold, wet period at the end of May resulted in the first common blue sighting being not until 2 June, 10-12 days later than might have been expected. Also, birdsfoot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, the main Common Blue larval foodplant, was just coming into flower.

In order that some areas were left unaffected by this early cut, by agreement, the cut on Bottom Field was not total. Two broad strips were left uncut through the middle of the field (approx. 10 m x 150 m) with a narrow uncut strip around the field margins.

Butterfly Transects: In order to assess common blue numbers on an annual basis (and to try and determine what impact the earlier cut in 2006 might have on butterfly numbers), butterfly transect monitoring was carried out by Butterfly Conservation between April and September.

Habitat Condition Survey: In August 2004, a Butterfly Conservation 'Habitat Condition Survey' in respect of common blue, was carried out over Bottom Field. The survey covered the whole field, with sample points spaced about 20 m apart. At each sample point, grass height was measured using a drop-disc, and the presence/absence of flowering birdsfoot trefoil noted. A visit to reassess habitat condition was subsequently made on 15 August 2006, exactly two years after the 2004 survey.

Consequences: Common Blue Transect Results: In 2006, the final 'Index of Abundance' for Common Blue on Bunkers Park was 334, an increase of 12.5% over 2005 (Index = 297); and +200% over 2004 (Index = 108). If the first generation of the common blue is assumed to be those butterflies recorded during April – June; and the second generation during July – September; in 2006, 87% of all sightings were of 2nd generation butterflies, with the peak flight period occurring between the third week of July and the third week of August.

The average of percentages of the final index, attributed to the two generations, for the previous seven years, 1999-2005, are: 1st gen. = 41%; 2nd gen. = 59%. Of the eight years that Bunkers Park has been monitored, 2004 is the only year that 1st generation Common Blues (53%) outnumbered the 2nd generation (47%).

Habitat Condition Survey: Bottom Field was planted in 1996 with a seed-mix containing 5% birdsfoot trefoil. In August 2004, just one month after the meadow had been mown, 55 of the 60 sample points showed early signs of birdsfoot trefoil coming into flower. The average grass height measurement was 6.2 cm. No common blues were seen on Bottom Field during the day of the survey.

The visit on 15 August 2006 (two years after the Habitat Condition Survey) presented a very different picture. Over two months had passed since the haylage cut in June, and the birdsfoot trefoil was in full bloom over the whole field, both on the cut areas and on the uncut strips. Grass-height measurements were not taken, but it is estimated that on the mown areas grass height was in the 10-15 cm range; on the uncut strips >20cm. Common Blues were seen in good numbers flying over the whole of Bottom Field; with, perhaps, a greater concentration of butterflies on the taller, denser herbage of the uncut strips.

Clover & Clouded Yellows: A further, unforeseen, but positive effect of the early cut in 2006 has been to encourage migrant Clouded Yellow *Coleas croceus* butterflies to the area. Along with the birdsfoot trefoil, red (fodder) clover *Trifolium pratense* was a constituent of the original planted seed mix. The early cut had allowed the clover to develop to flowering size at just the time migrant Clouded Yellows were moving through. The only previous record for Clouded Yellows on Bottom Field is two in 2003. In 2006 small numbers (max. 8) were to be seen in flight on every visit made between 24 July and 10 September.

Conclusions: Despite initial concern, the June 2006 cut did not result in any demonstrable drop in Common Blue numbers recorded for Bottom Field. After one of the worst starts to any season for the common blues on Bunkers Park, the strong recovery of this species in the second half of the season resulted in the year as a whole, finishing better than in 2005, and within normal limits of variability.

The exceptionally hot, dry July in 2006, certainly, have had

considerable effect on the success of the 2nd generation of common blues anyway; it is, therefore, not wished to draw any firm conclusion as to the possible outcome, had the cutting regime not been changed.

The farmer has indicated that he will be looking to take a haylage crop off Bunkers Park in June 2007, and again in subsequent years. In the light of the favourable outcome of the changes reported in this case study, it has now been agreed that a haylage cut in June 2007 will be allowed; and that on Bottom Field, a 10 m wide strip around the field margins, and 2 x 10 m strips across the centre of the meadow, will be left uncut. The effects of these changes will be monitored and reviewed at the end of the season.

SPRING MEETING - SATURDAY 24 MARCH 2007

This year we have decided to hold a joint Spring Meeting with the Herts Moth Group on Saturday 24th March 2007. Over the years we have found the spring diary getting increasingly full, with nearly all of the Hertfordshire natural history groups arranging their meetings at the same time. In addition to this there are several national and regional meetings, which leaves us with very few free weekends to chose from so we felt it appropriate to hold a joint meeting. Colin Plant of the Herts Moth Group has arranged for a speaker from Head Officer to tell us all about the new National Macro Moth Recording Scheme. This will be of interest to both Moth Group Members and members of our Branch.

The meeting will be held at:

Havers Community Centre, Waytemore Road,
BISHOPS STORTFORD, CM23 3GR (TL485204 Map 167)
2-pm to 5.30 pm.
Assemble from 1.30 pm. Full disabled access.
Local on-street car parking (free)

Our Branch Sales Stand will also be present and although Colin does ask for donations the Branch will be making a contribution to the costs so this is not a requirement. In previous years Colin has used any 'surplus' contributions to help fund his many moth events that he organises during the year. We look forward to seeing everyone.

Colin has written the following message:

“As always, we do not wish to spend all day sitting in uncomfortable hard chairs listening to speakers droning on and on. There will be a short, informal talk of relevance to our interest, followed by questions, but the bulk of the afternoon will be informal. Anglian Lepidopterists Supplies will again be in attendance (it is suggested that people wishing to purchase bulky or heavy items such as Robinson Traps, generators or large rolls of plastozote should order in advance for possible delivery at the meeting, but please note that all business transactions are strictly between yourself and ALS). The telephone number for ALS is: 01263-862068.

I am now able to confirm that Richard Fox, at Butterfly Conservation HQ in Dorset, has agreed to send us a speaker to talk about the newly launched National Macro Moth Recording Scheme. We do not yet know who the speaker will be as the person who would normally have come is on holiday at that date!

This is likely to be the first significant talk concerning the new scheme to an active moth group. Since the scheme is only just starting up at the end of 2006, the talk will not only allow BC an opportunity to tell us how things will be, but should also allow those active moth-ers whose records will be input to the scheme the opportunity to make helpful comments at this very early stage. Consequently, the meeting should appeal to a wider audience than just those of us concerned with Herts and Middlesex. I do hope that our friends from Suffolk, Essex, Hunts, Cambs, Beds and Bucks, as well as other south-eastern areas such as Kent and Surrey, will feel able to join us on 24th March.

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Friends and relatives welcomed; children must be on a lead please. Guide dogs welcomed. As usual, the event is free of all charges, but there will be the customary voluntary and completely anonymous whip-around to cover our costs (including the tea and biscuits). The more people that come, the lower the suggested donation will be.

Please also remember that we actively encourage members and non-members to bring exhibits of specimens, photos, livestock or whatever. If you need wall space for poster/photo displays it would help if you could tell me in advance.” Colin Plant (01279 507697)

DIRECTIONS (prepared by Colin Plant for the 2006 Herts Group Meeting)

A

From the west: From the A10 eastwards on the A120. When you reach the ring road (the first roundabout after leaving the A10) turn right (to avoid the town centre) and follow the ring anti-clockwise over 6 roundabouts until you reach the end at roundabout 7. Turn left here towards Bishops Stortford then follow directions given below at C.

B

From the south: From Harlow northwards on the A1184. After Sawbridgeworth (double roundabout) the next roundabout is the ring road. Go straight on then follow directions below at C.

C

At the third set of lights (second set is a pedestrian crossing) turn left into Thorley Hill then follow the directions below at E.

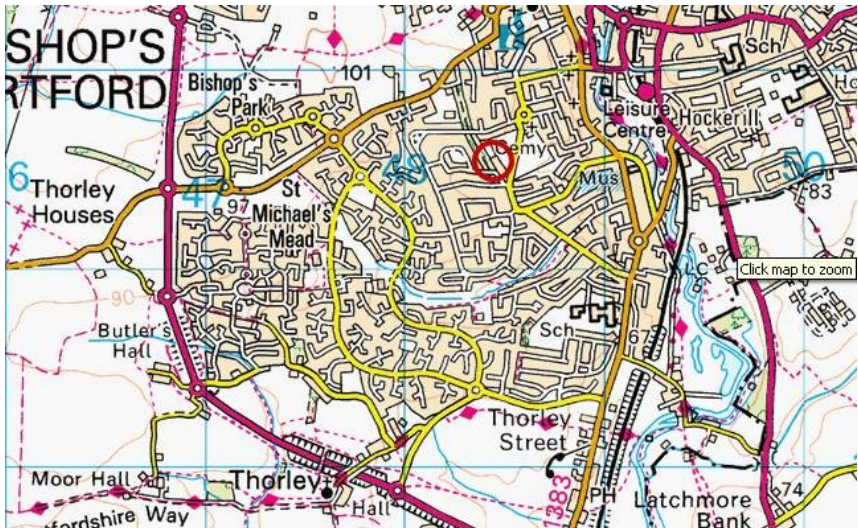
D

From the M11 motorway Exit at junction 8 (Bishops Stortford and Birchanger Services). Up the slip road to the lights. Take the second left (first is the services) then at the next roundabout turn left towards the town centre. Follow this road all the way to town over a small roundabout, over pedestrian lights, over a mini-roundabout, over more pedestrian lights at Hockerill College (on your right) until you reach the “real” lights at the crossroads with the 1060. Turn left here. Go over the pedestrian lights and at the mini-roundabout turn right over the railway bridge. Follow the road to the end then bear left (petrol station on your right). At the traffic lights turn right and follow directions below at E.

E

Go up the hill, down the dip, up again and at the end bear left (shops on left) then turn right more or less immediately. After 50 yards turn left into Benhooks Avenue then immediately right, then immediately right again into the Centre. Car parking is free “on street” in the adjacent residential area.

The nearest railway station is Bishops Stortford on the main Liverpool Street to Cambridge line.



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READERS LETTERS

A Beginner's Tale, by Jon Sharpe

It was a warm afternoon in late Spring and I had been doing some jobs in my suburban back garden. In my opinion I deserved a well-earned break. I sat down on a seat on the patio, under the shade of the overhanging branches of a small tree, with an ice-cold Bacardi-and-Coke. While I contemplated what other jobs I could possibly motivate myself to do that afternoon I was joined by a black and white butterfly. It sat on the lip of my glass and, so it appeared to me, seemed to be enjoying a few sips of the drink. It stayed for a minute or two and then fluttered away over the garden wall. I did not know what sort of butterfly it was, but I did know I had never seen one like it before. I resolved, there and then, to note down the different species of butterfly that visited my garden over the rest of the summer.

I should at this point perhaps confess that, prior to this most enchanting encounter, I had no particular interest in butterflies. Like many people I could admire and appreciate their beauty – I could, even since childhood, recognise a few species of butterfly (well, four anyway; the Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Painted Lady and Peacock). Things had never progressed any further than that in the 40-something years since then. This may have been due to someone (my father or perhaps one of my school teachers) once telling me: “There are two white ones, a large one and a small one, and a large small one can be larger than a small large one but you needn't worry about it unless you grow cabbages.” I have never liked cabbage.

Why should I now want to start noting the butterflies which I saw in the garden? To be honest I do not know and I cannot explain it other than to suggest that it was, perhaps, that I was simply curious to know who, in future, my “garden visitors” were. For me this self-imposed task was likely to be a bit of a challenge. Apart from the aforementioned few exceptions I did not know what species of butterfly even existed, let alone what they looked like. I managed to obtain an identification chart; the “Guide to British Butterflies” issued by the Field Studies Council. What an eye-opener – there were about 60 different species of butterfly and not the dozen that I had supposed there might be! To quell the rising panic I reasoned that I was probably not going to see all of them in my garden in the middle of suburban Hertfordshire! After inspection of the little distribution maps in my newly acquired copy of Richard Lewington's “Pocket

Guide to the Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland”, I reckoned that on the grounds of geography alone I could not possibly see more than 30 species. Perhaps things would not be too bad on the butterfly identification front after all.

There is nothing special about my back garden. It is perfectly ordinary; 9m wide by 11m deep, has a small patio area next to the house, a bit of lawn and (what I like to call) flowerbeds around the boundary walls and between the patio and lawn area. The flowerbeds are not exactly overflowing with flowers - and I had heard that butterflies like flowers! I have planted mainly evergreen shrubs, small conifer trees and ornamental grasses, with ivies to climb up the garden brick walls; things that do not require a lot of maintenance. A number of them do flower (albeit apparently somewhat insignificantly) at some point during the year. My wife comments, usually every year, that there are very few “proper flowers”. I speculated that it must now be down to about 10 species of butterfly that I might see. My house and garden are part of a modern housing estate, located on the very north-eastern edge of a suburban housing area of Welwyn Garden City. There is grassland, woodland, farmland and open countryside, all starting within about 200m, to the north, east and south. Possibly then I might see more species of butterfly in (or at least “passing through”) my garden than I would had I been living in the middle of a suburban “sprawl”. All things considered, I thought that 15 different species of butterfly would be “good-going”. The scientific basis for this estimate might well be somewhat dubious but it was a nice, round number.

Now, after my first six months of butterfly-watching, I can report my garden has been visited by; Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Small Copper, Common Blue, Holly Blue, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Painted Lady, Peacock, Comma, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Speckled Wood and Small Heath – a total of 15 species. Some of these (Painted Lady, Gatekeeper, Small Heath and Speckled Wood) I saw (one each of) only once during the entire six months. For the others I usually saw only single individuals of each species at any one time. To see two or even three of the same species simultaneously (invariably those confusing “Cabbage Whites”) was very rare and generated not a little excitement! On average I would see two or three different species during one of my “watching periods”. I have to confess that I did not keep “proper” records, with numbers, dates and times and such like, until September. This was when I became a

member of Butterfly Conservation and first appreciated that somebody other than me had even the slightest interest in hearing about the butterflies that I had seen in my garden.

I have enjoyed my first tentative, if sometimes faltering steps in (garden) butterfly- watching. More than that, it has been fun. I feel I have learned a lot, not least in that I can now recognise 15 species of butterfly (but cannot yet tell a butterfly from a moth - but that is another tale!). I have come to appreciate that my back garden is special, not least because it is my very own “local patch”, literally just one step outside my back door.

I have learned that, like me, some butterflies like Bacardi-and-Coke.

Where have the Small Tortoiseshells Gone? By Oliver Halford

Maybe I've just been unlucky, or perhaps there's a well known reason for it that I've missed! I'm referring to the total lack (to my eyes) of a sighting of the Small Tortoiseshell butterfly this year.



I'm sure they have been around and I've missed them but in a year when so many good things have been seen (and particularly Clouded Yellows, Painted Ladies and Red Admirals) it seems odd that the one-time most commonly seen late summer garden butterfly should have disappeared, if I'm not imagining it. After all the weather seems to have been pretty reasonable and there has certainly been no shortage of the foodplant!

I would love to know if anyone has an explanation why the insect has been so scarce, or whether I'm just mistaken.

Butterfly Behaviour Observation, by John Sharpe

I thought you might be interested to hear of an unusual behaviour I (think I) have noticed. I am new to (garden) butterfly-watching, having started only about six months ago, so maybe it isn't as unusual as my very limited knowledge and experience of butterflies leads me to think, but I thought I would send this to you anyway for what it's worth!

I am also a (garden) bird-watcher, having started this about 18 months ago. I have been putting food out for the birds which has led to a number of bird-strikes i.e. birds flying into the glass of the windows

and patio doors that face the garden. In order to try to minimise this I purchased some "Bird Alert" stickers (from Jacobi Jayne & Company) to put on the windows and doors to warn the birds that they should fly in some other direction. These particular stickers are, apparently, a relatively new type and consist of transparent (to human eyes) "leaf-shaped" designs but which reflect the UV component of sunlight. Birds (according to the leaflet) see an intense blue-violet shape which (supposedly) lets them know there is something solid in their path which they should not try to fly through. The leaf, I guess, is not meant to be any particular leaf but a "generalised" leaf: It reminds me of a maple leaf and is about 8cm across. I seem to recall reading somewhere that butterflies can also "see" in the UV part of the spectrum.

In the short time I have been watching the butterflies that visit my garden I have noticed that Red Admirals seem "interested" in these leaf-shaped stickers and about one-third to one-half of the individuals which have come into my garden try to land on them. The Red Admirals "slide" down the glass panes (presumably because they cannot get a grip on glass!) and then come back up for another attempt. They do however soon tire of this and move off. At first I thought I was imagining this but I have now seen this often enough to convince myself! Even more strange is the fact that, so far at least, it is only Red Admirals that have exhibited this behaviour - none of the other butterfly species that I have seen in my garden this summer (see letter on page 12) have shown these "leaves" the slightest bit of interest at all.

There is also a "butterfly" design of these window stickers (which I also brought at the same time but have not used yet) - it might be interesting, for next spring/summer, to see whether these elicit some response from real butterflies! (I have the nagging suspicion that, rather than "scare" the birds away, they too might be "interested" in these "butterflies".)

Butterflies in Brent, by Kim Williams (Barn Hill Conservation Group)

During the 2005/6 tree planting season we in Brent purchased hundreds of Alder Buckthorn trees. These were distributed throughout the borough, and we planted some in our community garden in the hope of encouraging the Brimstone butterfly. We were rewarded by seeing a Brimstone home in on one and lay eggs. So,

hopefully, in 2007, we will see more Brimstone in Brent.

Butterfly Sales - New Seeds in Stock, by Malcolm Hull

Our new range of seeds for growing butterfly attracting plants is now available. Butterflies can be quite choosy about the plants they visit and many hard to find in shops or garden catalogues. All are freshly packed and some are only available in small quantities. Our current stock is listed below and an updated list is kept on the sales section of our website at <http://www.hertsmiddx-butterflies.org.uk/> We suggest a donation of approximately 50p per pack of seeds.

Other new sales goods added recently include:

Day Flying Moths - laminated guide from the Field Studies Council. Featuring four pages of full colour illustrations of over 100 moths which fly or are easily disturbed in the day. This is a companion to FSC's best selling butterfly and butterfly caterpillar guides, which are also still available. Superb illustrations by Richard Lewington include everything from the Jersey Tiger to the Grass-veneer. This publication will be of great help to any butterfly spotter wanting to get started on moths. - Price £3.00

The Butterflies of Cambridgeshire - a comprehensive guide to butterflies of one of our neighbouring counties, showing the locations of all species including rarities which still survive there including Grizzled & Dingy Skipper, Green & Black Hairstreaks, Small Blue and Wall. The book is an A5 sized paperback comprising 122 pages, with lots of colour photos, distribution maps and analysis of population trends. The authors Robin Field, Val Perrin, Louise Bacon & Nick Greatorex-Davies are all members of the local Butterfly Conservation Branch - Price £8.00

Discover Butterflies in Britain by D. E. Newland - A 224 page hardback guide to where to see butterflies, with descriptions, maps and photographs of Britain's top 66 butterfly sites. It includes detailed descriptions and photos of all 58 British species with at least one hotspot for each. Broxbourne Woods is the only featured site in our branch area, but there are many in neighbouring counties including Denbies Hillside & Oaken Wood, Surrey, Sharpenhoe Clappers & Bison Hill in Beds and Devil's Dyke and Monks Wood in Cambridgeshire - Price £17.50.

A complete list of all our current sales goods is kept on our website or

available from Malcolm Hull. All orders should be addressed to Malcolm Hull (for contact details see back cover) adding 10% for postage & packing.

Seeds available for 2007:

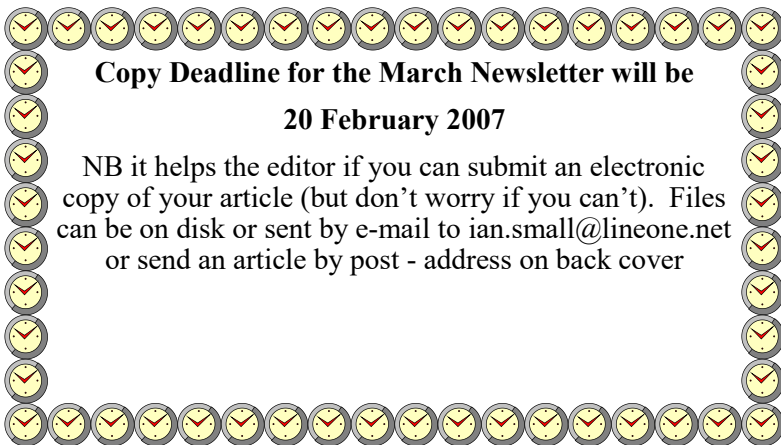
Anise Hyssop	Lavender – Dwarf Munstead Blue
Antirrhinum (White)	Lavender – Hidcote
Aquilegia	Love in a Mist
Asclepias Incarnata	Lychnis Coronaria
Aubretia	Lychnis Viscaria
Betony	Mirabilis (Marvel of Peru)
Coneflower (Purple - Echinacea)	Nicandra
Corncockle	Nicotina Mutabilis
Cosmos Daisy	Nicotina Sylvestris
Cupids Dart	Oriental Hellebore (Mixed)
Dahlia (Single, Mixed)	Purple Toadflax
Dahlia (Bishop of Llandaff)	Red Campion
Devil's Bit Scabious	Red Valerian - Pink
Evening Primrose – Biennial	Scabious – Burgundy
Fleabane	Scabious – Spanish
Forget-me-not	Scabiosa Drakenburgensis
French Marigold	Sweet Pea – Perennial
Garlic Mustard	Sweet Rocket
Globe Thistle	Sweet William
Helichrysum	Teasel
Hemp Agrimony	Verbena Bonariensis
Honesty	Wallflower - Annual
Honesty – White	
Ipomea – Two-tone Blue	
Knautia – Burgundy	
Knautia – Mixed	

Millhoppers - A Rare Treat

For those who may have missed it, this was the title of an excellent short article, written by BC's Senior Conservation Officer, John Davis, in the Autumn edition of Butterfly (the magazine of the national Society). Millhoppers is, of course, our Branch reserve. John commented "This special 1.2 hectare reserve is a prime example of the sort of refuge our countryside needs. These residual grasslands are of great importance for the biodiversity they support. Such places are a template of the habitats we need to re-create and can be an important source of seeds and species."

John also reports that the results of the management of Millhoppers are very encouraging, with key plant species such as Birdsfoot Trefoil, Ladies Bedstraw, Knapweed and Devil's-bit Scabious becoming more abundant.

However, please also see John Noakes' reserve manager's report in the enclosed Annual Review, where he reports that it is no longer possible to arrange for cattle to be brought on site for grazing purposes. Accordingly, a greater amount of the management of this precious reserve must be done by hand. If you would like to help maintain this jewel of our countryside, then please see John's contact details on the opposite page.



Copy Deadline for the March Newsletter will be
20 February 2007

NB it helps the editor if you can submit an electronic copy of your article (but don't worry if you can't). Files can be on disk or sent by e-mail to ian.small@lineone.net or send an article by post - address on back cover



Conservation Dates

Conservation work is one of the most important activities of the Society, as loss or neglect of suitable habitats is one of the major reasons for the decline in many of our butterflies as well as other wildlife.

Below are a series of dates across Herts. and Middlesex where you can help with essential management that aims to maintain the correct conditions on these sites for the wildlife that inhabits them. Several of the dates are run by the HMWT on their nature reserves.

Millhopper's Pasture SP 900149. John Noakes is compiling a list of people to call on when help is needed. If you would like to be included, please let him know, on (01296) 660072.

Therfield Heath, TL 335400 First Sunday of each month from 10.00 a.m. - 1 p.m. Details from Vincent Thomson (01763) 341443.

Hertford Heath TL 354111. For details ring Anthony Oliver on (01992) 583404.

Fryent Country Park - details from Leslie Williams at the Brent Ecology Unit on (0181) 206 0492

Patmore Heath TL 443257. Meet at 10.00 a.m. on the last Sunday of each month. Further details from Gavin Vicary (01279) 771933

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