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## HERTFORDSHIRE AND MIDDLESEX BRANCH NEWSLETTER

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### **Mamma Mia island – Another Greek Island Adventure**

**by David Chandler**

Last year I wrote about my exploits on the Greek island of Corfu avoiding the dreadful English summer weather; this year I returned to the Greek islands and had an even stranger adventure than my day-trip from Corfu to Albania.

In April took my partner Kathryn to see the musical Mamma Mia on the London stage for her birthday treat, an event which she thoroughly enjoyed. Kathryn commented that the set reminded her of a Greek Island she had been visiting regularly on summer holidays with her children and former husband.

Kathryn pestered me to take her to her dream island but I was a little

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reluctant because I had reservations about her re-visiting her past; however, she wore me down and I agreed to a single visit. Once I'd said yes it was all booked before I could change my mind and we were all set to go in late July; all I had to do was get my travel insurance and obtain some Euros.

A couple of months later the film Mamma Mia was released and, having seen the stage show, we had to go and see the film. You cannot imagine my surprise when, during the film screening, Kathryn loudly squeaked "that's my Greek island!" Our friends Ian & Denise who were watching with us were similarly taken aback having once been to Mamma Mia island with Kathryn and her family many moons before.

Three weeks later and full of excited anticipation we set off from Gatwick. After a three hour flight we landed at a small Greek island airport where the runway was very short and, being built on the only flat piece of land on a small peninsular, the sea lapped threateningly at each end. Motorbike riders parked by the end of the runway watching aeroplanes land in a ghoulish form of "will he stop in time" way. After custom's clearance in this airport, that was so tiny that it can only handle two planes on the ground at one time, we were bussed to the harbour where we had to await a ferry crossing to Mamma Mia island.

Mamma Mia island is far too hilly for its own airport so the intrepid traveller has to endure a Greek ferry ride. Often, the sea blows up rough in this part of the Aegean sea and today was no exception. Eventually, after a journey of nearly twenty hours from leaving the house, I was there, on Mamma Mia island.

The next day dawned and exploring the largest town we found the film's site office which was now a tavern. The owner gave us lots of leads to follow to go to restaurants and bars used by the film stars!

The next day having hired a car we began to tour the island for the film set locations. I was permitted some time to watch butterflies when not climbing up a sea stack 200 metres high with a tiny church perched on top or fighting my way through light woodland to a very secluded beach with deep anchorage.

While I was touring around the island I found time to look at the island's butterflies. I found Meadow Brown, Rock Grayling, Marbled Skipper, Bath White, Eastern Wood White, Brimstone, Cleopatra, Long-tailed Blue, Lungs Short-tailed Blue, Brown Argus, Common

Blue, Small Copper, Purple Edged Copper, Red and Southern White Admiral and the regular & Scarce Swallowtails but the highlight of my week was when I found three Two-tailed Pashas between Panormous and Agnondas, one actually settled on my arm during a walk through the woods to one of the locations near Agnondas where the Mamma Mia film was shot and [presumably] wanted to take salts from my skin.



Two-Tailed Pasha  
Photo © David Chandler

The island was very dry and dusty with few nectar flowers; however, after a mid-week overnight thunderstorm, the countryside refreshed itself and plants began to come into bloom and more butterflies emerged.. I found around twenty butterfly species during the week many of which were not mentioned as residents in the local walkers guide book [S\*\*\*\*\* walks with Heather Parsons] with all the typical Mediterranean island suspects that have been recorded from the island.

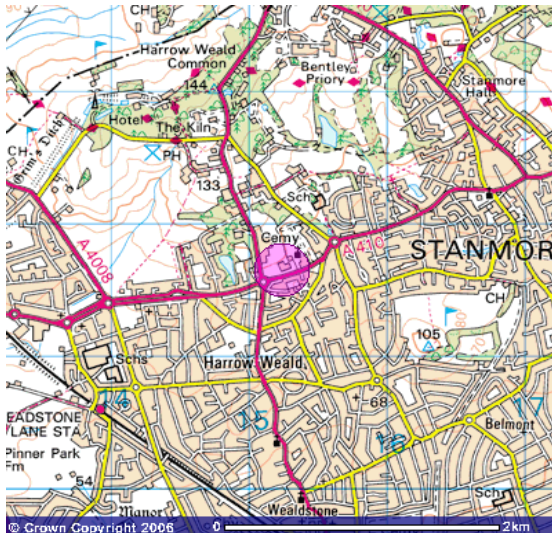
And finally, in case you haven't guessed the name of the Mamma Mia island from all these clues by now its called **Skopelos**. For those of a ghoulish nature the scary airport landing strip is on the island of Skiathos. I'm pleased I've seen Skopelos island this year because next year I suspect it may be inundated with film tourists even if it is one of the most difficult places to get to in the Mediterranean.

### Annual General Meeting –Saturday 24th January 2009

Important date for your diary: The Branch Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 24th January 2009, at Blackwell Hall, Uxbridge Road, Harrow Weald, Middlesex.

Blackwell Hall is on the north side of A410 Uxbridge Road between the Leef Robinson pub and All Saints Church and between the roads Brookshill (A409) and Clamp Hill. The carpark is at the back of the hall which is a new red-brick building and directly on the main road. Uxbridge Road is not far from Junction 4 of the M1. The nearest stations are Hatch End on the Silverlink Line or Stanmore on the Jubilee line. The H12 bus passes by the Hall and can be caught at either Hatch End or Stanmore Stations

Full details of the programme will be in the next newsletter and on the website. We will be holding another meeting for members in Hertfordshire but no date has been fixed. We look forward to seeing you – non-members are always welcome.



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## My Second Two Minutes of Fame, by Liz Goodyear

Although on this occasion it was actually more than two minutes!

In February this year, I joined members of the Norfolk Branch in Norwich attending a media training day organised by BC Trustee Hugo Brooke. We spent a few hours, learning how to handle various media situations including a live television interview. Little did I know that less than 2 months later, I would be putting into practice what I learnt that day!

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> March, was a fairly ordinary day, although it was the Herts Moth Group winter meeting and I had offered to take Andrew Wood over to Bishops Stortford. I also possessed a mobile phone (now replaced) that only wanted to work when it felt like it and not when I needed it! I was also unaware that BC had just issued a press release regarding the decline of the Small Tortoiseshell and that they had launched a research project with Oxford University's Department of Zoology to determine the extent that a parasitoid fly *Sturmia bella* might be to blame. The story had however, landed on the desk of the editor of the Sunday BBC1 Breakfast Time News program and they wanted someone to be interviewed live the following morning and for some reason they decided to contact me!

The only problem was that I had already left home, when the call came through, but my husband, realising that this was important, left a message at Andrew's house for me to phone home, which I did. Apparently the BBC wanted someone to be interviewed he said, was I interested? Quickly Andrew and I went online to see what the story was about and I rang back the BBC and I said 'YES', but we agreed to talk more after the Herts Moth Group meeting when it would be confirmed whether they would be running the story!

The first thing we had learnt on the media training day was to get advice and do some research before conducting any interview or even saying you would do the interview. So the first thing I did was to leave a message for Lester Cowling at Head Office to contact me and discuss the story, and what they wanted me to say. I was also given advice by Colin Plant - it was very important to make it clear to the editor how you were titled, that I must say I'm Liz Goodyear from Butterfly Conservation! In the meantime, Andrew Wood was able to produce evidence from the branch data base to confirm to what extent the butterfly had declined in our branch area. So at 7pm the BBC

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confirmed they would be running the story and that a car would be sent to collect me and take me to the BBC Television Centre in Wood Green where I would be interviewed live at 6.40am. It should be noted that this was the morning the clocks changed so it was going to be 5.40am and the car was collecting me at some horribly early time! Despite this both my daughter and husband wanted to come along. At 10pm I received a second call to say that they wanted to interview me again on News 24 just before 9am.

The car duly arrived and I was taken into London on a cold and dark March morning, party goers were still going home and the BBC was very quiet. I was met at reception and taken up to the floor where the program was being recorded. I could see the two presenters sitting at their desks and just one floor manager at a computer screen and that was it, no cameras, nothing! A few other people were waiting to be interviewed; Terminal 5 was in the news and a lady who liked vegetables and wanted children to think they were fun was also waiting to go on! When I got home and saw her interview, I remembered Colin's advice about making sure you told them how you wanted to be introduced – she hadn't!

A short while before I was interviewed, the two presenters Charlie Stayt and a female colleague came out to talk to me and I was able to get some important points across which I hoped they would ask me about in the interview and then it was time to go on. The BBC had found some very nice footage of a Small Tortoiseshell and this would be shown whilst I was talking. I kept remembering Hugo's advice



*Small Tortoiseshell*  
Photo © Ian Small

from February - look the interviewers straight in the eye, do not be distracted so I sat there and just hoped I wouldn't be asked any difficult questions and following Lester's instructions to keep to the story in question. It was also very important to emphasise that the declines were being noted the most in the South East of England and I was able to use our branch data to reiterate this. I know that I deliberately spoke quite slowly, which isn't

normal for me, but I was determined not to get tongue tied or say 'um' or 'aar' or 'you know'!

The first interview was over, and we left the studio floor and had some breakfast in the canteen and then it was time to go on again. By this time, news was being covered by News 24 and only Charlie was left to interview me. I was taken into the recording studio, some minutes before the interview, so sat and watched the sports reports (I now know how the Madison cycle race works!). It seemed to go on forever, and I began to feel quite nervous waiting. Charlie started to ask me some questions - he had assured me the questions would be the same as in the previous interview, but they weren't and the interview was longer!

Then it really was all over! We were taken downstairs to where a driver was waiting and we were taken home. Lester phoned me to congratulate me and the whole morning seemed quite a blur, had I really been on TV? I had only enough time to tell a few people about it the night before, and since most people were still asleep not many people saw it. We were able to record at home the first interview and Lester recorded the second so I have been able to see my 'performance.' I received a couple of emails from other branches although I really was surprised that people were up that early. It was several weeks later that I went into our local bakers and the lady behind the counter who I have known for years said "it was you on TV wasn't it?" She was so chuffed to think she had seen someone she knew, and when she told her daughter, her daughter wouldn't believe her!

If you want to know more about the joint project with Oxford University, visit their website at: <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~scat3369/>



### **Butterfly World Update, by Ian Small**

Further to the article in our March newsletter announcing the launch of the Butterfly World project in St. Albans, some of you may have seen the announcements in mid-June of the start of work.

In keeping with the conservation agenda for the entire development, the first task for the project team is to construct the eco-friendly, wildlife-attracting access road; Miriam Lane. The lane will be flanked on each side by 600 meters of hedgerow providing a continuous corridor for wildlife habitat. Miriam Lane is designed to create as natural a habitat as possible, ensuring Britain's wildlife can thrive.

Miriam Lane will be lined with 6900 hedge scrubs and over 230 trees (including Dutch Elm resistant Elms, Silver Birch, Common Ash, Pedunculate Oak and Rowan); a vast improvement on the current brownfield site. Construction of the access road is expected to be complete during Autumn 2008. Everything about this lane is planned to be as environmentally friendly as possible. Even maintenance will be carefully managed to encourage bio-diversity, meaning no mowing of the edges is permitted.

The lane is named after the late Dame Miriam Rothschild, a great inspiration to Butterfly World and the project's Scientific Advisor until she died in 2005. Dame Miriam – who's maiden name was 'Lane' – was an entomologist, gardener, conservationist and a campaigner against the widespread use of insecticides.

Following completion of the access road, work is expected to start on the gardens and the foundations for the butterfly 'biome'. If works proceed according to schedule, then the gardens will open to the public during 2009, with construction work on the biome planned to commence during the second half of that year.

### **Amazing Butterflies - Natural History Museum, South Kensington, 5 April - 17 August 2008, by Malcolm Hull**

I've always thought of the Natural History Museum as the place to go and see dead butterflies & moths. They have 28 million of them in stock, making the UK's largest collection. But this summer something changed. An exhibition of live tropical butterflies, brought in from around the world was set up in a temperature-controlled greenhouse in the museum's garden.



I visited late one afternoon in July. Tickets were pretty reasonable - £5 per adult and £3.50 for children. The exhibition had been put together with children in mind and entry was via a giant caterpillar, followed by a seemingly endless maze. At each turn we were presented with butterfly information, much of it relating to native species, so there was a strong educational theme.

After quite a few wrong turnings I eventually got into the tropical greenhouse. Biosecurity seemed good, with double doors in and out. The exit doors had warning signs to check there were no butterflies perched on your clothes before you left. I'd be surprised if there had been many escapes to create new species records for the vice-county of Middx!

Inside there was quite a high density of butterflies flying and perching on a mass of tropical vegetation. There were plenty of nectar sources, with Lantana particularly prominent, as well as several piles of rotting fruit. The butterflies all appeared healthy - I saw no dead specimens or any beating their wings against the glass trying to escape. The display area was about 80 feet long, providing enough room for a short flight.

I was told there were 40 different species on display at various times. I counted just under 30 on the wing while I was there. The Banded Peacock, a Swallowtail type butterfly from SE Asia with bright green patches on its wings was my particular favourite. The Glasswing from Central America was also amazing - small & delicate with black veins running through transparent wings edged in brown with a white sash. I spent a good 40 minutes wandering round photographing different species on my mobile phone and inspecting the neat rows of chrysalises glued up in rows in the hatching area. A couple of species had actually managed to breed & produce a new generation of adults within the greenhouse.

There were several aspects of the exhibition I found unsatisfactory. There was little information about the different species with no ID board in the exhibition and only ten of the species shown on the website. At the time of my visit there were only two staff in the exhibition and neither could name more than six species. Also there was no clear information available about the source of the stock.

The exhibition is now closed. Although I liked it overall, I think there

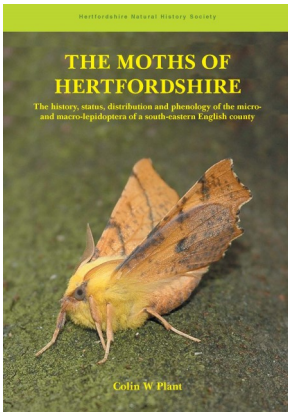
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are several aspects NHM could work on if they arrange another similar exhibition in future. For more details see - [www.nhm.ac.uk/amazing-butterflies](http://www.nhm.ac.uk/amazing-butterflies).

### 2007 Annual Report

The 2007 Annual Report was posted out at the end of June and all members should have received one. Unfortunately a few copies contained 4 blank pages due to a printing error. If you have a copy that is missing these pages please contact Andrew Wood (details on the back cover) for a replacement copy.



### The Moths of Hertfordshire

**Author: Colin Plant. £45**

**ISBN 978-0-9521685-7-7**

544 pages, Hardback, A4 size, 295 x 210mm, spine 36mm, weight 2480g

The Hertfordshire Natural History Society published this long awaited book at the beginning of July. It gives an up to date picture of the distribution of all the moth species recorded in the county and includes historical records as well as the many records made during 10 years of recording across up to the end of 2006. Every species whether a micro or

macro moth is included together with a distribution map, a flight period chart where there are sufficient records and some brief text about the moth in relation to the county. The book is also illustrated throughout in colour using photographs contributed by many of the recorders around Hertfordshire. There are also some interesting general chapters on subjects such as landscape, moth recording, prominent Hertfordshire moth recorders and the important entomological work undertaken at Rothamsted Research Institute. Having been involved in coordinating

some of the illustrations for this book and seeing its gestation over many years I know how much work Colin Plant has put into making this an outstanding county moth atlas that will be used as a standard work for many years to come.

Andrew Wood

## Dragonflies and Damselflies of Hertfordshire

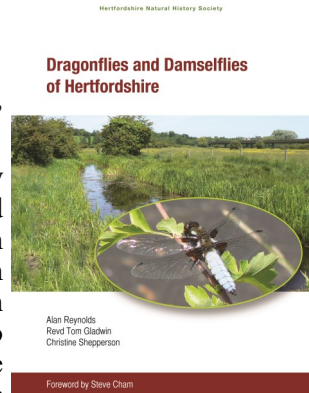
**Authors: Alan Reynolds, Revd Tom Gladwin and Christine Shepperson £9.50**

**ISBN 978-0-9521685-6-0,**

Paperback, B5 size, 144 pages, colour photos, maps and flight charts.

The book covers all 19 species of Dragonfly that live in the county. Each is described and illustrated with a colour photo, distribution map and the time of year when it can be seen in Hertfordshire. The information is based on a survey over six years by volunteers who visited almost every pond and stream in the county looking for dragonflies. The 'Top Ten' sites to visit in Hertfordshire, where 16 or more breeding species can be seen, are described in detail with maps and colour photos. So for the first time you will have accurate up to date information on where and when you are likely to see a particular species. Also included are details of all rare migrants dragonflies found in Hertfordshire since 1975, with colour photos and a history of all species recorded in the county from 1835-2006.

**Both of these books are available from Linda Smith (quoted prices include p&p), HNHS, 24 Mandeville Rise, Welwyn Garden City, AL8 7JU, Email: [herts.naturalhistorysociety@ntlworld.com](mailto:herts.naturalhistorysociety@ntlworld.com)**



## **LETTERS**

### **From Richard Bigg:**

With reference to the article by Kim Fleming in the spring Newsletter and her stated distrust of the labelling of butterflies on the internet. I have found that the same species occurring in different Asian countries often has different local names in those countries. I guess it's not mislabelling necessarily, just depends where the description originates. The scientific identity does not differ of course.

I have found the following site quite good for identification. It lists the butterflies found in Singapore (with Singapore local names) but many are also found elsewhere in Asia.

[www.geocities.com/RainForest/Vines/2382/contents05.htm](http://www.geocities.com/RainForest/Vines/2382/contents05.htm)

### **Heavy Weather, by Ashley Cox**

“It’s a bit black over Will’s mother’s”, I haven’t heard that old saying for a few years.

My dear old mum used to say that, I can hear her now, “come on boy it’s time for school” she would say as she dutifully woke me up every morning. She would then un-draw the curtains and proceed to give me a weather report which, nine times out of ten would have been “it’s a bit black over Will’s mother’s”.

I can remember her lamenting about how the weather had gone mad, no longer could you rely on the seasons like you could when she was a girl; sound familiar? Of course, she had her own theories as to what was going on with the weather, she was convinced that the Russians were to blame! “Sending all them there rockets into space...” just had to have an adverse effect upon the atmosphere. I doubt she was alone in thinking that either for it was the cold war that made all the headlines in those days just like climate change does nowadays so I suppose the cold war was, in many ways, her generation’s global warming; A perceived threat resulting pretty much in a state of fear which nurtures a fair bit of irrational thought, now that does sound familiar.

A perfect example of this was presented by the recent furore which resulted from a couple of early sightings of Bumble Bees flying in a

nice drop of February sunshine and the early appearance of some Daffodils and Almond blossom and shooting buds of Hawthorn. “Global Warming!!” Screamed the papers, “we’re doomed”. As did the T.V, the radio and , of course, the government. It seems that every gust of a March wind and every April shower are spun into prophecies of impending disaster, it’s quite unbelievable really.

“Mild spell continuing, saw a Queen Wasp today, woken from her hibernation by the warm sun” entry from my wildlife diary 1st February.....1982. No doubt we can all find entries like this in our old diaries when climate change wasn’t an issue. In fact if I remember correctly the fear around that time was that we were heading toward another Ice age .The weather in general and the vagaries of the British climate in particular have been a favourite topic of discussion for generations, from one extreme to another it amazes on a daily basis, so it’s hard to believe that the leaves changing colour in October should actually make headlines on the teatime news but that is what is happening these days, what is going on ?

We are told that climate change is the greatest environmental challenge facing the world today and are presented with graphic warnings of what to expect if we do not change our ways, well, I can’t really argue with that, I am no scientist, actually I’ll rephrase that, I am as much a scientist as Al Gore is.

Scientists disagreeing, claims and counter claims, everyone getting the hump with the Chinese and actually expecting them to concede that their emissions are a major contributor to global warming when they have just experienced their coldest winter since the Chinese year of the Mammoth! It’s endless. Emissions which some say come nowhere close to the amount emitted from one decent volcanic eruption ala Krakatoa, Emissions this, emissions that, no doubt you, like me, have sighed and rolled your eyes at the news bulletins that begin with the government’s new expensive measures to reduce carbon emissions in and around London and end with the governments plans to extend Heathrow airport. No doubt you like me have slumped back in your chair in a manner which betrays your total exasperation at having just seen the plight of countless poor Orangutans in a sanctuary, made homeless as another Sumatran rainforest is clear felled to make way for Palm Oil plantations. Palm Oil which, we are told by the reporter, is needed for the production of Bio fuel. It gives a whole new meaning to going green doesn’t it.

The reduction of carbon emissions makes total sense, just as it did years ago when we called it air pollution. We really don't want to be releasing poison into the air nor do we want to be pumping it into our rivers and oceans either, it's obvious. Although just how people have been convinced that they are in more danger from the second hand smoke from a nearby cigarette than they are from a small family car pumping out enough carbon monoxide to kill a flock of Canaries is quite beyond me. Recycling makes total sense, just as it did during World War II why did we ever stop? Although it does occur to me that, in a global sense, my dutiful trudge out into the garden on a rainy night in my slippers to put my plastic bottles in the appropriate bin whilst all around the world they are tearing down the Rainforests is a bit like putting an elastoplast on your finger whilst having your lungs ripped out! I'm happy to do my bit though and yes I concede that the climate is changing, it's always changing, always has been, in fact usually from bad to worse, indeed this country's weather has always been cr...ubbish, certainly in the half century that I've been around. This may have been the worst August since 1917 but I can remember gazing out the window on my school holidays wishing the rain would stop so I could go out on my bike, many a time. But I'm not at all qualified to question the cult-like religious status of global warming there are far more knowledgeable and eloquent people than I to argue for and against that one.

Whatever your views, whether you consider global warming the truth (inconvenient or otherwise) whether you suspect it is just a cynical government ploy to scare us into acceptance of whatever tax or levy they wish to impose upon us in its name or if you just reckon it's a load of alarmist nonsense, I think there is one thing on which we can probably all agree, that it is a tremendous headline behind which to hide all manner of other bad news. An example of this presented itself to me a while ago and brings me (at last) to my point.

I was watching a current affairs programme on T.V. slowly becoming stupefied into a torpor by global warming, wetting, blowing or whatever the catastrophe of that particular week was, when I was shaken to my senses by the merest passing mention that the EU set aside requirement had been reduced to Zero per cent. Basically that it had been suspended, apparently, due to poor harvests, rising prices and soaring demand from emerging economies such as China, climate change in action? well maybe, maybe not. You may be thinking that

you haven't heard too much about this; you haven't. I guess Micro-climate change doesn't have the same ring to it. There have of course been protests and warnings from environmental and conservation bodies but hardly anything in the public domain.

Set-aside land has been hugely important for wildlife over the last 20 years, particularly for farmland birds, and there can be little doubt that set-aside land has also facilitated the spread of species of butterfly such as the Marbled white, Ringlet and particularly on my own patch , the Brown Argus.

900,000 odd acres is a lot to lose but no headlines in the papers , no bongs on the News at ten. This rather poses the question just how do we expect to save the planet when we can't even look after the meadow down the lane ?. Perhaps I'm getting cynical in my old age but isn't it time for a reality check ? as they say. Everyone has bought into the global village, both Joe Average and V.I.P. Politician seem far more interested in foreign policy and global issues than what's going on in their own back yard. Marbled Whites and Skylarks, of course, are hardly as iconic as the Polar Bear (perhaps if we doctored a couple of snapshots in photoshop ??), but at this rate we'll be left with loads of Polar Bears and little else, now I am being cynical.

We would all love to save the Panda, the Whales and the Rainforests, but maybe we shouldn't set our sights so high. My son was fortunate enough to take part in a conservation project in the Indonesian rainforest whilst studying for his Zoology degree but that is an opportunity that most of us will never have. Not to worry though, I for example, have long since come to terms with the fact that despite my affection for Elephants, by the time I get home from work, pay the rent, have my tea and do the washing up there's not really much I can do about ivory poaching! that's just the way things are. But there is plenty that I can do for the Skylark and the wildlife around me here at home. I can give someone an ear bashing about a threat to a local habitat, monitor local populations and subscribe to BC, the RSPB the Woodland Trust, that is still saving the planet as far as I'm concerned, although maybe not on the scale of the grand ambitions of the fashionable modern eco warrior. My old Mum also used to say " look after the pennies and the pounds will look after themselves" I'm pretty sure the same applies to Insects and Ice Caps, but, everybody still wants to save the world and feed the poor, the reality is though, that while the world's economy is driven by oil and the aspirations of the



powerful are driven by greed we can only do what we can do, so I would be more than happy just to leave a legacy of Skylark song and brightly coloured butterfly wings.

They reckon that up to 17 million tonnes of grain will be produced from former set aside land; now that has got to be worth a lot of money with the price of grain as it is at the moment, I suspect that it would easily be enough to help furnish a few second homes in London for hard up M.Ps, but it's not going to feed the world and let them know it's Christmas time is it. What it will do though is potentially put the conservation of many species back 20 years.

I read sometime ago that a doubling of CO<sub>2</sub> from pre-industrial levels of 280 parts per million could happen by the year 2050 which would be expected to add 1 °C to average global temperatures - ish. Plough up a field and the impact is immediate. The Rooks and Sea Gulls will love you for it, but for an entire local ecosystem and countless millions of creatures the world actually would end there. We really should be striving to strike a compromise and we should do it now, fight for a strip of a few metres of land to be left around the perimeters of each threatened field at least and stop wasting our breath on the deaf ears of super powers because it seems to me that the black sky currently over will's mum's isn't necessarily being coloured by the toxic clouds of poisonous emissions from industrial China, nor indeed the sensational storm clouds of global warming or even the dark spectre of climate change. It is the gloomy prospect of another period of intensive agriculture.

## Field Trip Reports

### Moth Evening – Stanmore Country Park 3th May 2008, by John Hollingdale

The moth evenings at Stanmore Country Park are aimed at the local residents to introduce them into the many species of moth that inhabit this part of London. This date was picked as it had little moonlight and a reasonable starting and finishing time. However most of the seven people gathered round the suspended light bulb were the usual mixture of regulars and nearby nature conservation wardens.

Moths came slowly to the light and the two wardens went off to inspect the nearby ponds for newts. We have been encouraged by Harrow's BAP officer to look for Great Crested Newts as there are no records of this amphibian in the Borough (there still aren't). Those who stayed witnessed the first record of the Nut-tree Tussock for the park. Other more colourful moths seen were Waved Umber, Lunar Marbled Brown and Red-green Carpet.



*Nut-tree Tussock*  
Photo © David Painter

However we had a few that we couldn't identify and they were sent to Colin Plant. The main surprise was that the 'pyralid' turned out to be the Least Black Arches (another new record for the Park) and the pugs were Brindled Pugs. Other pugs seen that evening were Double-striped Pug and Oak-tree Pug.

Although the quantity of moths was low it was a very successful evening.

### Ruislip Part Wood, 22nd June, by David Chandler

I went to Ruislip Park Wood on Sunday June 22nd to take my first H&M Branch BC field trip of the year. It was a splendid sunny day with blue skies and puffy white clouds providing occasional shade but it was quite windy and that might have been a problem had this event not been a wood walk. The event was well publicised locally and members and friends joined me on the day with numbers boosted to 14 by Ray Uffen who brought along attendees from the morning's LNHS walk. Assisted by Steve Pash of the Ruislip

NHS, we set off for on our walk in the wood at 2.03pm.

Shortly after entering the wood at the first intersecting ride near a large oak tree we met up with Dr Ched George and some friends from the Ruislip NHS.

Dr George explained to our party what conservation work was being undertaken in the wood and how this coppicing regime was helping its woodland butterflies. We set off again and further down the ride, in sheltered spots, the butterflies began to appear. We saw Speckled Woods, Meadow Browns and a Red Admiral. A little further along this main east-west ride three White Admirals, my target species for the walk, then appeared and one posed nicely for the photographers. Someone said they thought they had seen a Ringlet and I saw a Small White in the distance. Sightings of "whites" were very few & far between on the day reflecting a scarcity trend I've observed more widely in the countryside this year.

Making our way down towards the far end of the wood we were very fortunate and Ched found a Heath Fritillary roosting at ground level. Taking care not to tread on the butterfly's Cow Wheat foodplant the party took turns to look at "the woodman's friend" also giving a great photo opportunity for those who brought their cameras.

I kept a record of the species we saw and from my records on what was a tricky viewing day because of the wind, I estimate we saw about twenty butterflies, with the total number species sightings made on the field trip at seven.

Sightings: Small White 1, Speckled Wood 4, Meadow Brown 5, Ringlet 1, White Admiral 5, Red Admiral 1 & Heath Fritillary 3.

### **Ladywalk Wood - Maple Cross, June 29th 2008, by Ann Piper**

This was to be my first field trip as a leader and I was quite apprehensive beforehand. What would the weather be like? Would anyone turn up? Would there be any butterflies?

As it turned out I needn't have worried!

About a dozen people assembled at Woodoaks Farm for the start of the walk. Our target species was the White Letter Hairstreak. But just as the walk was getting underway down came the rain. We sheltered in a convenient barn and I was able to produce my trump card. The

night before I had attended a moth trapping session at the same venue organised by Colin Plant. I had kept at least half a dozen specimens



*Poplar Hawk Moth*  
Photo © Ann Piper

just in case...! A fellow 'moth-er' Richard Ellis had brought some from his own trap so we had plenty of things of interest to show the group. Among them - the poplar hawk moth, elephant hawk moth, buff arches and lobster moth attracted some oohs and aaahs!

Several photographers in the group took the opportunity to snap some close ups. Once the weather cleared and the walk began we were able to release them back into the wild.

The weather proved a mix of sunshine and cloud with quite a humid atmosphere which brought out the butterflies despite a gusty wind on occasions. We made our way along the route with a hedgerow of mainly bramble and nettle bordering the woodland on one side and a good area of grassland and wild flowers to the south which the farmer has deliberately kept in its natural state.

All eyes were craned upwards to see if the White Letters were flying.

Andrew Middleton soon spotted them spiralling up in pairs from the oak, elm and ash tree tops. There were at least half a dozen and probably more. Patience was required to spot them as they darted up into the sky and then disappeared! He set up his 'scope so that eventually we were all able to see one little butterfly clearly as it perched on an oak leaf. Great relief - we had seen our target butterfly! Many thanks to Andrew for his expert input.

As the walk progressed we saw many meadow browns and ringlets - the sudden bursts of sunshine bringing them out of hiding. I was delighted to see so many marbled whites too which posed obligingly for a photo shoot. The unimproved grassland seemed to be their favourite haunt. Other butterflies were not so abundant. There were just a few large skippers, one comma, a couple of red admirals and at the end of the walk one large white. Among a few day flying moths we saw the shaded broad bar and narrow-bordered 5-spot burnet. Swallows and a skylark flew overhead and we were chased by a black-tailed skimmer and emperor dragonfly.



*Marbled White*  
Photo © Ann Piper

Returning to the farm we all judged the walk to have been a success. For several people the highlight had been the white letter hairstreaks but for me it was those beautiful marbled whites.

### **Sharpenhoe Clappers, 29th June, by David Chandler**

The field trip to Sharpenhoe Clappers on Sunday 29th June 2008 was a tremendous success. The sun shone, with a few puffy white clouds and the temperature rose steadily to 21 degrees C. Sixteen people attended, including three new faces who had heard of the field trip on the national website. So it shows it pays to advertise.

The downland on Sharpenhoe supports 27 indigenous species and of these we saw one third by number on this day alone. Further, in total, I estimate that we saw around 125 individual butterflies in just 2 and a half hours, which, although well short of the summer peak for the site I measured when I used to walk a transect there, was still a good number when you consider butterflies are low in numbers generally this year and it was quite a windy day and butterflies tend not to like a strong breeze.

Of the 125 butterflies we saw there were some interesting finds for their scarcity and interest: First brood Common Blues (2) just hanging on and looking quite tatty; one was a female with more blue on her wings which Ian Small though may be due to a wet spring, whereas I had heard it was an indicator of warmer climate, an almost juxtaposed view.

We sighted the scarce Dark Green Fritillary (20+) in roughly the same places as the "blues" with a mating pair giving excellent photographic opportunities to the photographers as the couple coupled in the grass. No other vanessids put in an appearance although after the walk Ian said he saw a Comma not too far from the car park. Speckled Woods (3) lurked in the dappled shade along with the Ringlets (25+). Small Heath (2) were found around in the rough setaside, hedgerow and path edges. Meadow Browns (30+), Marbled Whites (35+) were seen but

no Gatekeepers were evident yet on the site. Large Skippers (4) and Small Skippers (2) were also seen. The whites, as is the case this season were very few and far between and none were seen on the official part of the walk.

On returning to the hay-meadow next to the car-park at half-past twelve we found there was not enough time to further explore the Moleskin area, where some quality chalk downland habitat exists. The party went on their various ways and most said they were pleased at seeing a mating pair of Dark Green Fritillaries and appreciated sharing my local knowledge of Sharpshoe's butterflies.

After the walk was officially over Peter Glenister, Ian Kimsey and I went into Moleskin for a stroll and found a very old female Brimstone nectaring on flowers to bring my personal sighting total for the day up to 10 species and a total of 11 different species seen on the site on the day - if Ian Small's late sighting of a Comma is also counted!

### **Broxbourne Woods, 6th July, by Liz Goodyear & Andrew Middleton**

Unfortunately, the forecast for Sunday 6th July, could only be described as bad, it was going to rain, not light rain but HEAVY RAIN so we were quite surprised that some people actually turned up! I arrived at 9.30 and it was still quite bright so I quickly took those that arrived early down the ride from the west car park towards the main viewing area. We were watching on borrowed time!

As we walked past one of the many bramble banks I commented that only yesterday a Silver-washed Fritillary had been seen and that everyone should keep a look out, and double check every Comma. Almost as I spoke a Silver-washed swooped down from the canopy and started to nectar on the bramble flowers in front of us allowing everyone to get a photo! White Admirals also made an appearance.

However, the sun didn't last long and the promised cloud and rain took over. There were just a few moments when the sky brightened up, we were lucky that it wasn't cold. It was in one of these minutes of brightness that a large male Purple Emperor decided to fly around the willow bushes and suddenly it decided to perch just above us on a willow leaf. Everyone present was able to see it clearly through binoculars and here it stayed for the rest of the morning, hanging on to the leaf, when the wind got up and the rain came down! By 1 o'clock

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we decided that it was time to go home, there was going to be no let up in the rain and amazingly we had all seen a Purple Emperor!

In addition to butterflies we were also treated to a moth moment! I was standing there minding my own business when I suddenly felt something land on my arm. I commented on this but couldn't see anything but since I was standing under a pine tree assumed it must have been a fir cone. A few minutes later someone noticed that there was a large 'bug' climbing up my leg. The 'bug' turned out to be a freshly emerged pine hawk-moth! The moth was



*Silver-washed Fritillary*  
Photo © Bob Clift

carefully removed from my leg and placed on the trunk of the pine tree where it spent the morning, expanding and giving everyone a chance to take a photo of a freshly emerged and pristine pine hawk-moth.

Despite the appalling weather, the field trip was extremely successful and confirms our belief that just because it's raining you shouldn't stay at home! Thanks to Bob Clift for the photos.



*Pine Hawk-moth*  
Photo © Bob Clift



## **Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park LNR, Mile End, London, 29th July, by David Chandler**

It was a warm sunny day in London, with a slight risk of a shower, as I awaited BC members outside the Mile End underground station at 1.45pm. for the urban field trip to the Tower Hamlets Cemetery local nature reserve in east London. Unfortunately I had also chosen this meeting point along with thousands of young concert-goers because “Grove Amarda” and “Lovebox “ were playing a “gig” at Victoria Park nearby and so it was quite difficult to make myself seen to the BC members arriving.

Fortunately naturalists don’t look too much like concert-goers so eventually I was able to pick my party out from the throng. We proceeded down to the road to the LNR site where Terry Lyle was awaiting us at the gates. There is a visitor centre near to the entrance gate where Terry had kindly provided some light refreshments. Seventeen BC members & their friends had gathered for the walk.

Shortly after 2pm, led by Terry and his friend Peter and with me acting as expert consultant, we set off. We found Small Skippers, Gatekeepers & Meadow Browns almost immediately. We walked towards the centre of the park and found a Comma. We found Speckled Wood along the wooded paths and a little further on, at a clearing, we found Green-veined White, Essex Skippers and Holly Blues. We made our way down to the southern end of the park, finding Brimstones on the way, to a clearer area where the local naturalists are encouraging a grassland environment by active management. In this area Small Heath have been recorded, but despite us searching quite hard none could be found on the day.

The cemetery is managed in a manner that is sympathetic to wildlife. The nature trail is clearly marked and easy to follow. The trail is wooded for most of the circuit but there are clearings from time to time that the sun warms up and sunny glades and rides that the butterflies like to patrol.

We continued around the trail and, noting the poor year and city location, commented that a very satisfying amount of butterflies were flying. Accordingly, we were rewarded with thirteen butterfly species (out of a total of twenty or so that have been seen at the site on Terry’s transect).

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It was a pity that the site's Common Blues were unseen, being between their two annual generations but the site's Holly Blues were a particular joy to me dancing in the dappled sun amongst the ivy on the old gravestones. Just before we arrived back at the visitor centre Terry spotted a tatty Red Admiral which brought our total species sightings for the day up to a bakers dozen. We had been out on the walk for two and a half hours and it is pleasing to note that several people came up to me and said that they had seen species that they either did not know the names of or were shown butterflies completely new to them.

The 13 butterfly species seen on the day were:

Browns: Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper.

Blues: Holly Blue.

Whites: Small White, Large White, Green-Veined White, Brimstone.

Aristocrats: Red Admiral, Comma.

Skippers: Large Skipper, Small Skipper, Essex Skipper.

Temperature = 21deg. Sunshine Average = 70%

### **A Tale of Two Fritillaries, by Malcolm Hull**

Great news from the three branch field trips I led this summer. The weather was good enough (though not great). Seventy five people attended, showing how popular these events have become. And we saw two species which are so rare locally that they had been considered extinct in Herts & Middx.

At **Aldbury Nowers**, the benefits of the habitat improvement works carried out last year are already starting to be seen. The condition of the grassland in the main southern enclosures has improved significantly as a result of scrub removal and the introduction of sheep grazing. The turf height is shorter, with more fine and less coarse grasses and the numbers of wild flowers have increased. In contrast, vegetation seemed considerably higher in the grassy part of the northern section, which is not sheep grazed. There has been some scrub removal last winter, but the erection of fences has probably limited the grazing by deer and rabbits.

In the Spring trip we successfully identified three of the target species - Dingy Skipper, Green Hairstreak and Brown Argus. Numbers were low, but this was probably due to the weather. Although we did not see Grizzled Skipper that day, it has been recorded on the transect walk at the site this year.

On the summer trip, we searched unsuccessfully for Silver-spotted Skipper. The short grass and extensive swathes of Wild Basil make the southern enclosure appear as a promising habitat. However this butterfly has not been resident at Aldbury for many years. Conditions now seem promising if it does continue its slow expansion north eastwards along the Chilterns Ridge. Four Skippers were seen, three Essex & one Small.

We were also unsuccessful with the Chalk-hill Blue, which is disappointing as we have seen it in low numbers at Aldbury in recent years. I subsequently learnt that there had been a sighting there that morning! This butterfly is probably not resident on the site, though it is on other sites in Bucks close-by. It could benefit from the reintroduction of grazing, but the apparent lack of the caterpillar foodplant, Horse-shoe Vetch, on the site prevents breeding.

The highlight of the trips to Aldbury were two Dark Green Fritillaries, one male, one female, both seen in August in the southernmost enclosure. They were not together, but less than 50 yards apart. This species has not been noted on any previous field trips, although this is the fifth year in a row there has been at least one record from this site. The sightings were in the same area where Andrew Palmer reported "egg-laying behaviour" last year.

At **Bricket Wood Common**, management works have been undertaken to create small scallops along the side of the ride, removing groups of up to 20 trees to allow more variation in the habitat. Vegetation was removed from a section of the ride as part as part of a rotational cutting scheme, designed to prevent reforestation and maintain diversity of vegetation height. Selective weedkillers were applied to the bracken and scrub in the large clearing in a continued attempt to encourage heathland regeneration. Efforts to introduce extensive grazing to part of the common continue.

On the July field trip we were successful in identifying both target species. The numbers of White Admiral were significantly up on last year, with no less than 10 individuals seen, mostly along the main

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ride. The highlight for me was the four Silver-washed Fritillaries, also in the ride. Three were seen closely enough to be identified as males and the fourth did not settle. This is the fifth year in a row that the species has been recorded in the same spot.

I first started searching for butterflies in Herts and Middx in 1995. It took me nine years until I saw my first Silver-washed Fritillary in the area and twelve years to see a Dark Green Fritillary. Both were rightly considered extinct as breeding species in the two counties. It's great news that they are both now back and particularly pleasing that they have chosen sites where there has been considerably work on habitat



*Silver-washed Fritillary*  
Photo © Malcolm Hull

management.. Although numbers remain small, the regular appearance on the same sites for five years in a row suggests that successful breeding is likely to be taking place.

Detailed list of the butterflies and moths seen on the three trips:

Aldbury Nowers, near Tring - Sunday 18 May. Despite cool and cloudy weather 19 people showed up. In the sunny spells a good range of species were seen, though none in high numbers. These included Dingy Skipper (4), Orange Tip, Brimstone, Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Holly Blue, Common Blue (1), Brown Argus (2), Green Hairstreak (2), Speckled Wood, Small Heath (7)

Moth sightings, expertly identified by Diane Andrews included, Common Carpet, Green Carpet, Cinnabar, *Pyrausta nigrata* and Mother Shipton. Common Blue Damselflies were also in evidence.

A passing rambler informed us he had seen a Small Tortoiseshell just outside the reserve on the Ridgeway path.

Bricket Wood Common, St Albans - Sunday 13 July. On a fairly sunny morning we saw four Silver-washed Fritillaries (3 males, one not sexed), ten White Admiral, three Red Admiral, three Purple Hairstreak as well as numerous Ringlets, Gatekeepers, Meadow Browns, Marbled Whites, Speckled Woods, Small, Large & Green-veined Whites, Large

and Small Skippers.

Aldbury Nowers - Sunday 17 August - 22 people joined the branch field trip on a mostly cloudy afternoon. Essex Skipper (3) Small Skipper (1) Common Blues (about 30), Brown Argus (4), Dark Green Fritillaries (2), Brimstone(10), Small Copper (3), Large, Small and Green-veined Whites, Small Heath, Gatekeeper & Meadow Brown (hundreds - the most numerous species). Moths included Common Carpet, 6 spot Burnett, Cinnabar caterpillars, Grass Veneer, Silver Y Shaded Broadbar and Straw Dot. Many thanks to Ann Piper for her help in identifying the moths.

Many thanks to Liz Goodyear, St Stephens Parish Council and the Countryside Management Service for their help in publicising the walks

### **Report on a Moth-Trapping Evening at Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park on 20 August 2008, by Debbie Pledge**

Why am I waiting in the visitor centre at Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park one August evening? My interest in birds gradually turned into an interest in butterflies. I joined Butterfly Conservation, started reading articles from other beginners, and from there I was on a downward spiral to the mysterious world of moths. My high hopes were dampened as the skies opened at 7.45pm and it did not look like being a quick shower.

Due to the rain the moth trap (Robinson type with a mercury vapour bulb) had to be set up near the wide open back door. We took our seats around a large table, and while waiting for darkness to descend looked at some moths trapped the evening before. These were yellow underwings, but whether they were large or lesser no-one could agree. I learnt to look for whether the forewing is closed left over right, or vice versa, and that some species never vary how they close their wings while others do.

There were a variety of field guides for us to compare and contrast. Many people had brought their own copy of Waring and Townsend<sup>1</sup> which I had purchased a few weeks before, having been inspired in particular by Diane Andrews' article in a previous branch newsletter to learn more about moths.

Before long, the first species were coming to the trap. Once caught in a specimen jar they were brought to the table. Cue much fumbling

through Waring and Townsend, and an appreciation of the advantage of showing the moth in its normal resting state. Those with more experience than me were able to judge the moth family and go straight to the relevant pages. I was happy at this stage to flick through the illustrations until someone ventured their first guess, then use a magnifying lens and small torch to say whether I agreed. After a while I became more confident at saying, yes I agree, or no, the markings are not quite as on the page. Many moths belong to large families, and it took some time before we could positively identify a Square-spot Rustic and a Vine's Rustic. Throughout the evening, we used the field guides' species accounts to look at flight season, status and distribution, helping us to discount some of the tentative identifications.

We were concentrating on the macro moths, but did take some micros out of the trap if they were pretty enough to want to pass around. One of these micros was a Mother of Pearl. It looked big enough to be a macro, helping me learn that size alone is not a reliable method of distinguishing between species.

Other moths came to the table in their specimen jars (helped by a break in the weather and a chance to put the trap outside for a while). On first glance, some were very distinctive and we thought we would have little trouble identifying them. We were wrong! A confident guess at *Lychnis* was challenged and turned into a *Campion*. Much page-flicking was necessary before we agreed that another was a *Setaceous Hebrew Character*.

Some moths were less distinctive, and I let others cogitate over the *Cloaked Minor* and the *Silky Wainscot*. One very beautiful moth was quickly identified: a *Yellow Shell*, showing some intermediate markings between *bilineata* and *atlantica*.

Moth names are one of the most appealing features of this pastime. The next moth was proving tricky. Was it *The Confused*? *The Uncertain*? No, but I was. We passed over a few options, until inspiration struck and I called out *Straw Underwing*. The others checked and after some debate everyone agreed. I was glowing with a quiet pride at identifying my first moth with other people.

My fears about the weather proved misguided. The event was welcoming to newcomers, with much sharing of books, torches, lenses and ideas, and an atmosphere of excitement when an identification was agreed on.

At 11.00pm (three hours flew by) we decided to pack up and go home. On summarising the evening we discovered that there was very little overlap with the species found at another event in the park just three weeks previously.

In conclusion, moths are often just as beautiful as butterflies, and moth identification is highly addictive. I am looking for other events to go to, and even considering buying my own trap.

<sup>1</sup>Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland. Waring,P. and Townsend,M. Gillingham: British Wildlife Publishing. 2003 ISBN: 0953139921

### **Purple Emperors at Fermyn Wood, by Nigel Agar**

Butterfly watching is something of an opportunist sport. Birds and Mammals may be big tough vertebrates like us and if you miss them today, you may see them tomorrow. Not so butterflies. Lets face it, it has been an indifferent year. One exception has been the Purple Emperor. Not only has it been regularly seen at Broxbourne Wood but a pilgrimage to Fermyn Wood near Corby in Northants paid off handsomely. Saturday 6th of July started rather cloudy and grey. Two branches of Butterfly Conservation had picked that day for a field trip. The Beds, Cambs and Northants group and the Lincolnshire group both arrived at the entrance to the woods opposite the gliding school on the Oundle Road at 9.30. Apart from a fleeting sighting of a White Admiral, nothing much was to be seen until about mid-day when the cloud started breaking up. By that time, most of us had moved off across a short stretch of open fields to another and larger area of woodland to the south called Lady Wood. As sunlight increased, the Purple Emperors started to appear – not just in the tree tops but in White Admiral fashion gliding along the rides. They were brand new, purple-sheened specimens that had just emerged. More to the point, they showed an unerring instinct for finding desiccated dog turds along the path and settled down to feed, totally oblivious to an attentive and worshipping circle of midland lepidopterists with digital cameras.

After getting a few pictures, I left the group and walked on further into the wood and came across another Purple Emperor at ground level and got some more good pictures.

It is a sign of the times that, going back along a different pathway that brought me to the edge of the woods, I was positively mobbed by a couple of Red Kites, a species unheard of in the English midlands until



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re-introduced, and, further along a field path, I come across what was, until yesterday (Aug 26) at Wicken Fen, the only Small Tortoiseshell of the year. This was once the commonest by far of the Nymphalids. These used to be as common in gardens as Small Whites. Even non-butterfly people knew them simply as 'coloureds' as opposed to 'whites'. Now, thanks to a global -warming parasite they are a rarity. Even the sturdy nettle patch along the River Hiz at my allotment site in Hitchin produced no Small Tortoiseshells this season.



*Purple Emperor*  
*Photo © Nigel Agar*

### **Balls Wood Appeal, by Andrew Wood**

Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust has launched an appeal to buy Balls Wood. It is owned by the Forestry Commission and part of it is managed by the trust. The Trust has been given first refusal to buy it and is appealing to the public for £150,000 out of an estimated cost of £700,000.

Balls Wood is important for many reasons: It is a superb butterfly site, a stronghold of the White Admiral and both Purple Emperor and Silver-washed Fritillary have been seen there in recent years. It has some of the strongest populations of Ringlet and Speckled Wood in our area

It is readily accessible being only about 2 miles south of Ware and Hertford and 2 miles North West of Hoddesdon. and is served by public transport to the nearby village of Hertford Heath. It forms part of a wider landscape of important woodland and heath land that includes Broxbourne Woods and Hertford Heath. Together they make a significant green area in a densely populated part of south east Hertfordshire.

It is also a site for many plant, moth and bird species of note. It is an attractive place to go for a walk (though you may need Wellingtons after wet weather) and enjoy. If its future is not secured for the trust there is a risk that it may be sold off to private owners whose priority may well not be wildlife or public access (there are no rights of way through the wood) or it may get broken up into smaller parcels of land under different owners.

Please try to make a donation towards keeping Balls Wood a nature reserve and open for all to enjoy.

Contact:

HMWT. Grebe House, St Michael's Street, St Albans Herts  
AL3 4SN

**On the Hop..., by Brian Jessop**

I have been growing ‘wild hop’ by and above my front windows now for the third year running. On returning from one of my butterfly walks, I noticed a tatty old Comma showing interest in the hop. I looked for eggs, but as you might expect, none found. A couple of weeks or so later, I noticed a Comma caterpillar. On further inspection, I found another two. I thought “Wow”, this is something! Okay, it’s nothing rare, but to me it’s just wonderful.

I also have Large- and Small-White caterpillars too, but no nasturtiums left !! My front garden is a small wild-life garden and for the last two years I have had Common Blue laying eggs on birdsfoot trefoil and black medick. I have only seen one male Common Blue this season. I have lots of devil’s-bit scabious, so there are lots of bees. I also have plenty of grasshoppers and lots of little moths that love marjoram (I don’t know their name).

Other butterflies seen in the front garden are Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Red Admiral, Large-, Small- and Green-veined Whites, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Common Blue and Comma. I nearly forgot to mention the ant hills that are developing! I do get some strange looks from passers-by who do not know me and my hobbies !

Do you have a friend or relation who might be interested in butterflies



**Christmas is Coming...!, by Malcolm Hull**

or moths? Butterflies need all the help and support they can get so why not try and encourage others to take an interest with a birthday or Christmas gift?

Our range of new items this year will appeal to both novice & enthusiasts alike

- Note Cards - approx card size 15x10 cm plus envelope - 2 cards for £1 - Attractive colour photo montages of butterflies on plants, designed by branch member Charles Smith using his own photos (see examples below).

Choose from different designs - Brimstone, Comma, Common Blue, Dark Green Fritillary, Heath Fritillary, Holly Blue, Marbled White, Painted Lady, Peacock, Red Admiral, Silver-washed



Two of Charles Smith's Note Cards

Fritillary, Small Copper, Small Tortoiseshell, Speckled Wood, Swallowtail, White Admiral.

- Philip's Guide to Butterflies of Britain and Ireland by Jeremy Thomas - £9.99. A new edition of this classic guide. I first developed an interest in butterflies when my wife bought me an earlier edition
- FSC Guide to the Hawkmoths of the UK - £3.00 Superb colour guide includes both moths & caterpillars
- FSC Guide to Ladybirds of the UK - £3.00 includes four forms of the new Harlequin Ladybirds
- FSC Guide to Dragonflies & Damselflies of the UK - £3.50
- Dragonflies and Damselflies of Hertfordshire by Alan Reynolds, Tom Gladwin and Christine Shepperson - £9.50 (see separate review)
- The Moths of Hertfordshire by Colin Plant - £45 (order direct from Herts NHS & mention HMBC)
- Bugbox - £2.00 - 4x magnification, suitable for identifying caterpillars, moths, ladybirds and a host of other insects. Great for kids
- Bugbox Triple Viewer - £3.50 - as above but with extra features giving views from above, below & sideways for ease of identification.

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- Scrunch bug - £2.00 - Wind up caterpillar. Appeals mainly to the under 12's

A full list of all sales items including guide books to butterflies in Herts and Middlesex and the other popular FSC charts are listed on the sales section of our branch website at <http://www.hertsmiddx-butterflies.org.uk/> If you've not looked before, ust visit the site and select "sales goods" from the menu on the left hand side of the home page. If you do not have internet access contact me, Malcolm Hull (details on the back cover) and I will post you a printed version of the site.

For all mail orders, please add 10% to the price and send a cheque (made payable to Herts and Middlesex Butterfly Conservation) with your order to Malcolm Hull. Alternatively if you prefer to purchase from our stall, all these goods (including the moth book and much more) will be available at our AGM & indoor meeting

Remember... by buying from Butterfly Conservation, you are helping to protect butterflies, as all proceeds go to support the work of the branch.





## 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.** Contact Jez Perkins on 07967 832627 for details of planned work parties

**Therfield Heath, TL 335400** First Sunday of each month from 10.00 a.m. - 1 p.m. Contact Paul Palmer, Clerk to the Conservators, on (01462) 675232

**Ashwell Quarry Nature Reserve TL 252396** for the entrance off Hinxworth Road. Work parties on the third Sunday of each month starting at 10am. Contact Chris James on (01462) 742684

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

**Fryent Country Park** - details from Barn Hill Conservation Group on 020 8206 0492, [www.bhcg.ik.com](http://www.bhcg.ik.com)

**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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