

### Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July

We were a group of six, a few more people than last year, along with four dogs which did their best to rouse the game by diving into the bush. Although the sun did not really come out, we managed to spot eleven species, only one down on last year's tally. As in the previous year we saw Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Speckled Wood, Marbled White and Large and Small White. While overall numbers were lower and we didn't spot any Comma or Small Skipper, these were replaced by a few colourful Red Admirals, Green-veined White, Peacock and several Painted Ladies - it's amazing to think that these pretties arrive here after flying all the way from Southern Spain / North Africa, only some making the return journey in the autumn.



I wondered why our fluttery friends are more apparent on sunnier days and found out that they need the sun's warmth to keep them active, so at times when the sun isn't shining, they close their wings and rest. When the sun comes out, their bodies warm up and they fly off looking for nectar again.

Top Field and its environs was abundant with wild flowers - swathes of purple willow herb, yellow golden rod and flowering marjoram, offset by majestic teasel and thistles, while auditory delights were provided by a background of humming (or buzzing) bees and the occasional woodpecker. Connie was on hand to offer flower guidance and pointed out the difference between hypericum and ragwort (well, they looked the same to me, but it's the centre of the flower that blows the guise) and identify that the white specimen we saw was hedge, not heath, bedstraw. Along the way we spotted a mysterious hidden concrete structure, but don't tell Bruce or we'll all be restoring it. In the end, the event was rained off. *Weather: overcast, windy, later wet, 17°C.*

### Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July

A week later we repeated the same exercise but in sunnier conditions, and what a difference that made. This time the tally was up to **seventeen** species, as we were able to add Holly Blue, Common Blue, Brown Argus, Small Skipper, Comma – very distinctive with their fluted wings – and Brimstone. Unfortunately, Marbled White was elusive this time. The Brown Argus is a new find for us; it can easily be mistaken for the female Common Blue except for the one missing black spot on the underside of the forewing. Apart from the Small and Large Whites, elegant Painted Ladies (we counted over 40) and richly-decorated Peacocks (20) were in abundance, mostly around the buddleias. There's a glut of painted ladies this year, something I heard on the radio. Finally, not content with butterfly spotting, we also saw a fabulous Southern Hawker dragonfly. *Weather: sunny intervals, 21°C.*

**Kings Worthy, Top Field**  
**Butterfly Field Study**  
**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> & Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> July 2009**



**Worthys  
 Conservation  
 Volunteers**

*Postscript*

I caught an item on BBC Woman's Hour during the week about Eleanor Glanville, who during the 17<sup>th</sup> century became the first English female lepidopterist. At the time, butterfly hunting was seen as a purely masculine pursuit, something no woman in her right mind would ever consider; it could even lead to accusations of practising witchcraft! However, she became an admired expert and even had a butterfly named after her – the Glanville Fritillary. Eleanor's life and 'dangerous obsession' is the subject of a book by Fiona Mountain.


*Gail Alexander*

Survey Summary

A total of seventeen species were recorded over the two weeks (five more than last year, mostly a reflection of our keener skills!): Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Speckled Wood, Marbled White, Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Red Admiral, Peacock, Painted Lady, Brimstone, Holly Blue, Common Blue, Brown Argus, Small Skipper and Comma. The open field area is steadily being consumed by Golden Rod, which might explain why so fewer butterflies, especially Marbled White, were spotted in this sector.

Other species seen in the area this year are: Orange Tip & Small Tortoiseshell, and in a field next to the old railway line: Large Skipper, Small Heath, Small Copper & the distinctive Clouded Yellow, giving a grand total of **twenty three** species.

Full Results

Top Field, Kings Worthy Butterfly Field Study Saturday 25th July 2009		 Worthys Conservation Volunteers			
Butterfly Species	North Sector (Hookpit Farm Lane) - Undulating Ground, Tall Trees, Scrub & Grass	West Sector (Mainline Track) - Small Trees & Meadow Margin	South Sector (Disused Railway) - Footpath through Trees & Scrub	Middle Sector (1/8th Centre Field) - Open Wildflower/Grass Meadow	East Sector (Ilex Lane) - Tall Grasses & Herbaceous Plants
Peacock	6	3	1	2	8
Red Admiral	2				
Painted Lady	13	7	5	6	11
Comma		1	3		
Brimstone	2	1	2	1	4
Large White	10	9	5	5	12
Small White	7	6	8	4	2
Green-veined White	2	2	5		2
Marbled White (18th)	4				
Gatekeeper	8		2	4	
Meadow Brown	3	3		5	8
Ringlet	4				
Speckled Wood	1		5		2
Holly Blue			1		
Common Blue	1				2
Brown Argus					2
Small Skipper					2

