

Butterfly  
Conservation

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## HERTFORDSHIRE AND MIDDLESEX BRANCH NEWSLETTER

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### **The Walford Collection - an Historical Legacy**

**by David Chandler**

I have a story to tell of Mrs. Walford's 1940's butterfly collection.

I received a lovely handwritten letter from a lady called Helen Walford who lives in a Cambridgeshire village near Royston.

Helen, a long-time member of the society, revealed that when she was a girl during the World War Two years, she lived in a large house with stables near Tring where her father was a local GP. Helen said that in those wartime summers she was encouraged into entomology by the scientists at the Tring Natural History museum and so became a

butterfly collector. The scientist helped her to preserve her captures in a correct way without using poisons. In the 1940's butterfly collecting was a more acceptable practice than it is today.

Helen collected in the Tring district but added that one of her favourite haunts was Aldbury Nowers near the railway station, a site next to a place where her mother purchased hen's eggs from a rural smallholding. Helen wrote that she stopped collecting butterflies in 1943 when "packed-off" to boarding school. Aldbury Nowers was and remains to this day one of the best chalk downland sites for butterflies in Hertfordshire.

In her letter Helen said she wanted to begin to put her affairs into order and that in the evening of her life, "she felt she should make some responsible arrangements for her specimens"; she added that "she didn't know where or who to turn to otherwise risk her family may possibly bin them". She closed with "have you any ideas or interest?"

As Helen had written to me specifically as the Branch Chairman, I replied on behalf of the Branch and made an appointment to visit her. Helen's writing was neat but spidery and so the signature was indistinct; this caused some mild amusement when I first telephoned her in that I mistakenly thought that she was a he and that her name was Hugh! Having resolved this initial misunderstanding we conversed.

So on a very bright and sunny Saturday in April I made my way out to see the Walfords. I found a bright and happy couple living in an idyllic rural village setting. I was made most welcome and we talked on many topics for over an hour. I brought my SLR camera along and took some photographs of her specimens. There were three cabinets in the Walford collection - one of butterflies and two of moths, but one of the moth cabinets was not in as good condition as the other two, having been stored in the attic rather than in the house.

Having gathered the evidence I then shared this with the Committee, counselled their opinions and sought guidance on the Branch's policy on acquiring collections, particularly this one. The collection is possibly an important one which links 1940s records at one of the county's best butterfly sites with what we are observing today and so may provide the society with some historical species comparison data.

The committee will opine on the collection to see if it is worthy of being transferred into either the collection at NHS Tring or just of local interest for the Society & the Herts. Biological county records.





Two major reports\* this year have confirmed that Britain's butterflies are in serious decline. Seven out of 10 Butterfly species in the UK are in decline.

Intensive farming, modern forestry practices and urban development have all contributed to the destruction of habitat and to dwindling butterfly populations.

Butterfly Conservation is seeking to raise awareness of this crisis with a week of activities up and down the country during *Save Our Butterflies Week 2006*, which runs from 22 - 30 July.

Each Branch is organising events to help raise awareness in their own area and we in **Hertfordshire & Middlesex** are planning to be at the **Notcutts Garden Centre on Hatfield Road, Smallford, near St Albans on SATURDAY 29TH and SUNDAY 30TH JULY**. Our display material will be there from Monday 24th July and on the 29th and 30th the Sales Stand will be there, although we will not be selling plants.

**Notcutts** are very keen to help and enthusiastic and we are planning a weekend of activities to get everyone involved and hopefully reach a new audience of keen gardeners that we can encourage to *Garden for Butterflies*. We will be giving short presentations on *Gardening for Butterflies* during the weekend in their upstairs Conference Room.

We are also planning lots of activities for children with badge making (thanks to the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust for loaning their

machine), a colouring competition and bug hunts - activities that we hope will encourage more children to get interested in butterflies and wildlife.

Notcutts is situated on the A1057, Hatfield Road between Hatfield and St. Albans. It has a large car park, restaurant and a huge range of plants, gifts and gardening equipment on display. Notcutts sells a wide range of wildlife products and this particular store also has a pet centre which will prove very popular with children. Opening hours are Monday – Saturdays 9 to 6 and Sundays 10.30 to 4.30.

**Save Our Butterflies Week 2006 will be launched nationally by TV presenter Chris Packham.** Details of events being organised across the country can be found on the national website [www.butterfly-conservation.org.uk](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org.uk). Head Office is planning a huge publicity campaign and many of the national newspapers will be covering events and stories as the week unfolds.

**See also the advert from Surrey & SW London Branch (p12), regarding the launch event of Save our Butterflies Week, at Juniper Hall.**

The actual timetable of our events is not finalised but full details can be obtained from the branch website [www.hertsmiddx-butterflies.org.uk](http://www.hertsmiddx-butterflies.org.uk) or contacting Liz Goodyear or Malcolm Hull (details on the back of newsletter). We anticipate that both days will be very busy and **we will appreciate all offers of help on either day**, even if just for a few hours. Please come along and support **SAVE OUR BUTTERFLIES WEEK 2006**

\*The two BC reports can be purchased online They are:

1. The State of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland. 120 pages, full colour, softback. £14.50 inc p+p from [www.naturebureau.co.uk/shop/](http://www.naturebureau.co.uk/shop/)
2. The State of Britain's Larger Moths. 36 pages, full colour. £6.50 inc. p+p, available from BC Head Office, or online at [www.butterfly-conservation.org.uk](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org.uk)

### Nick Sampford 1961-2006

On the 24th April 2006, I was told the very sad news that Nick Sampford had died that morning. Nick was a larger than life character and he will be greatly missed by everyone that knew him. Our sympathies go to Angela and his family. Nick had rung me on Friday before his death with the news that he had seen an Orange Tip but I was out and he left a message with my daughter. "Tell Liz" was his very typical message! He later emailed me to confirm that he had seen two that day, little did I realise that this would be his last posting.

I took over the website in 2001 just as Nick got the butterfly and photo bug and he set himself the challenge of seeing and taking photos of every British butterfly species in one year. As the year progressed the website was filled with the wonders of his superb photos and news.

He loved the Purple Emperor and spent hours waiting patiently at Broxbourne Woods for one to come down on the ground - his patience was rewarded on 9th July 2003 with his classic shot which is on the front cover of the 2003 Annual Report. All his photos and news will be greatly missed although his spelling and punctuation gave me a few head aches at times! His funeral was held at Thundridge Church, nr Ware on Thursday 4th May and the church was absolutely packed. His family decided that there should be only family flowers and that donations be given to the RSPB or Butterfly Conservation, which was a lovely gesture. They are also hoping to have a bench placed in Broxbourne Wood NR, at his favourite Purple Emperor viewing spot!



## **The Hazards of Being a Duke (of Burgundy), by Dave Chandler.**

As most of you are aware, apart from my role as H&M Branch chairman, I am also the Branch's fritillary species co-ordinator. As there are not too many real fritillary sightings in Hertfordshire & Middlesex each year, I have taken the liberty of including the Duke of Burgundy butterfly in my portfolio because of its fritillary-like appearance and because it used to be known as The Duke of Burgundy Fritillary not all that long ago, I'm happy to monitor its status as a honourable fritillary.

Last year I promised everyone in one of my magazine articles that I would re-visit the subject of Dukes of Burgundy butterflies of Hertfordshire and those Dukes also found in the nearby colonies of the Chilterns Hills in our neighbouring counties of Beds & Bucks.

Officially the Duke of Burgundy doesn't occur in Hertfordshire any more as the last one was seen at The H&MWT's Aldbury Nowers site in the late 1990's. However, there has been a release of some Duke of Burgundy butterflies in some A41 compensation land near Hemel Hempstead.

So, after a simply awful May when it was difficult to remember more than three lovely sunny days (and all of these were midweek when I was at work), eventually the weather improved and on June 3<sup>rd</sup> I went for a walk around the Hertfordshire Duke of Burgundy butterfly release site. It was a place that I had not had a chance to visit before. The site is devoid of perching trees favoured by Duke males in its Beds & Bucks locations, but the grass was kept medium to short and the meadow was full of wild flowers including lots of primrose, ox-eye daisies and cow-wheat. In very hot sunshine I saw two Common Blues, a Holly Blue, two Small White, a Brimstone and what looked very much like a Duke of Burgundy, but I only got a brief look as it flipped over a hedge after being disturbed. As it was late in the Duke's flight season this fresh-looking specimen was a bit of a puzzle to me and it gave me doubts about what I had really seen.

However that same weekend I read a report on the Upper Thames branch's website where Dennis Dell said "I went to Ivinghoe Beacon this afternoon, June 2<sup>nd</sup>. On the last really fine day (May 11<sup>th</sup>) before today, I saw six Duke of Burgundies here. Because of the atrocious weather during the last fortnight in May, I thought that we would not



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see the Duke again: mistaken! Robin Carr saw nine here this morning, and I saw four this afternoon. To my surprise, at least one of them was quite fresh indicating that they are still emerging, which implies a flight period of almost one month. This may be prolonged because of the bad weather. Eggs were found by Tom Dunbar, Nick Bowles and colleagues from the Herts/Middlesex branch here a few days ago.

In Bedfordshire the first Duke of Burgundy was reported on 5th May, and despite the inclement weather through most of May the Dukes appeared to be doing alright on its two Chilterns sites.



The Beds Hunts Cambs (& Peterborough) Wildlife Trust completed a mark-release-recapture of the species in one of the two Bedfordshire sites with local BC members asked to report any marked specimens seen to, with date, markings and a precise location. This was an

effort to try and establish how mobile the species is with a view to re-colonising its old Chilterns locations.

Having seen the interesting snippet from the UTB website about Dukes and, taking this extended flight period theory on board, I'm more confident that I may well have seen a Duke in Herts.

I looked at the Duke of Burgundy's Hemel Hempstead site because the release experiment had awoken special interest to one or two of our branch conservation committee members and we wanted to observe if the experiment to release Duke's in a brand new site would be a success or not. If the butterfly is resilient and is doing well in its few remaining local sites, despite the weather this year, and the mark and recapture scheme provides valuable data, this must all bode quite well for the prospects, one day, of the species making it back to Aldbury Nowers under its own steam – with perhaps a little bit of help by us conservationists providing the right habitat.



## ***Butterfly and Moth Books & Gifts by Post***

A wide selection of butterfly books, gifts and free butterfly information leaflets are available by post. A full list is kept on the Sales Goods section of our website at

<http://www.hertsmiddx-butterflies.org.uk/>

Orders can be made by post, e-mail or phone to Malcolm Hull (contact details on back cover). In addition to the above, a selection of butterfly attracting plants will also be available from our sales stall at the following events. An updated list of events will be kept on the website

- **Sunday 2 July – Rye Meads**, RSPB Reserve, Rye Road, Stansted Abbots, Herts. 11 am – 3 pm
- **Saturday 8 July – Tea at the Tower**, Chapel Lane, Long Marston near Tring – 2.30-5pm
- **Saturday 8 July – Woodcroft Open Space**, Winchmore Hill 12-4.30 pm
- **Sunday 16 July – St Albans Festival of Life**, Market Place, St Peters Street, St Albans – 12 noon – 4 pm. Admission Free
- **Saturday 29 – Sunday 30 July – Butterfly Week** – Notcutts Garden Centre, Hatfield Rd, Smallford, St Albans

To promote the first ever national Butterfly Week, we will be holding a special event at Notcutts Garden Centre where there is a newly created bug garden. Our display material will be up from Monday 24 and we will be running a stall over the weekend (see article on p4).

- **Sunday 3 September – Epping Forest Festival**, Chingford Plain 11am – 4 pm

## Field Trip Reports

### **Stanmore Country Park – April 23rd, by John Hollingdale**

If the weather in previous years looked a bit iffeey, this time it was decidedly wet. Eleven hardy souls with rain-coats and umbrellas joined me on my Spring walk. As most of them belonged to the Harrow Natural History Society, we had a range of expertise.

So Siskins and Redpolls were pointed out. We heard Willow Warblers and Lesser Whitethroats, moss was identified and Wood Anemone, emerging Bluebells and a cluster of Sulphur Tuft fungi were admired. Stigmella aurella leaf mines and Chrysoperla carnea (a lacewing) were seen and the complexities of these formerly single but now multiple species were explained and discussed. The only thing missing was any sighting of a butterfly. Perhaps next year the sun will shine.

### **Aldbury Nowers - 14 May 2006 Field Trip Report, by Malcolm Hull**

As I left home, drizzle was falling from a leaden sky and the thermometer read 11 degrees. Heading north on the A4, Aldbury Downs could be seen (just) buried in grey cloud. Not a particular promising start, but no worse than last year when we saw a fine range of butterflies. Was I worried? - Yes I was!

It all started when Liz Goodyear and I attended a publicity workshop run by staff from Butterfly Conservation Head Office. Enthused by the event, Liz sent out a press release about the walk to all local papers and arranged for me to give a live interview on BBC Three Counties Radio. Keen to make the most of this opportunity, I talked for about 10 minutes on the plight of butterflies locally and the work we do as a Branch. On the strength of last years trip, I assured the audience that there would be butterflies to see even if the weather was poor.

As it turned out we saw record numbers - of people on the walk, with about 20 in attendance, up from 6 last year. In the end we saw a few butterflies as well. A male Orange Tip was spotted at the assembly point. Moving across the field to the reserve we paused for an introduction to the site and an explanation of current thinking about its management from Michael Pearson, the Reserve Warden for Herts & Middx Wildlife Trust.

In the main compartment we saw a Brimstone, Mother Shipton, Silver Y Moth (2), Common Carpet and Small Heath. Small Copper was suspected, but not confirmed. After half an hour we moved off along



Mother Shipton  
Photo © Brian Heppenstall

the Ridgeway through Turlhanger Wood, stopping at the clearing just before Pitstone Hill. Here we saw Small Heath, *Pyrausta nigrata*, Cinnabar Moth and Grizzled Skipper. Conditions remained poor and we headed back along the Ridgeway having seen only four confirmed species of butterfly in nearly 2 hours. Interestingly, a further Grizzled Skipper was seen in a small clearing along the Ridgeway, shortly before we arrived back in the first compartment - this species has not been recorded in this location for several

years. By the Reserve entrance we met Martin Hicks, attending to his flock of sheep, who are playing an important part in the management of the reserve, keeping the rampant vegetation under control. At this point the walk finished, but a few of us wandered back through the first compartment and saw another Small Heath, Green-veined White, Mother Shipton, Cinnabar Moth and a faded Painted Lady.

Mike Rubin of UK Leps joined us for the afternoon and his photos are on the web - see sightings page/2006/14 May.

<http://www.piccies.flybywire.org.uk/ButterfliesMoths/>

Although we failed to see target species such as Dingy Skipper, Brown Argus and Green Hairstreak, they (and Grizzled Skipper) have all been reported in good numbers at the site this year. I'm left wondering if there is an inverse correlation between the number of butterfly spotters attending a walk and the number of butterflies seen - maybe a good subject for a PhD thesis?

## **Surrey Garden Butterfly Show**

**Saturday 22nd & Sunday 23rd July  
11am - 5.30pm**

Juniper Hall Field Centre, Headley Lane, Mickleham,  
Dorking, Surrey. RH5 6DA Map Ref: TQ172527

Magnificent butterfly garden, make your garden attractive to butterflies, free guided walks on Box Hill NT, indoor and outdoor attractions.

Science displays, children's activities, displays, books & prints, plant sales and advice, refreshments accompanied by relaxing live music.

Entry: Adults £3.00, Children under 14\* £1.00,  
Concessions £2.00

\* children must be accompanied by an adult.

Launch of  
"Save Our Butterflies Week"

## Solar Eclipse in Turkey, by David Chandler

I did three dangerous things on Wednesday March 29<sup>th</sup> this year: I flew on an aeroplane, I looked at the sun with the naked eye and I got within (the NHS advised) 9 meter limit of a live free-range Turkish chicken.

But I survived all three hazards and I'm safe, back in ole Blighty. I arrived back home at Stansted Airport on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> at about midnight and got to my bed at 2am; getting up again at 6am having to go to work!

That all said, the total solar eclipse in southern Turkey was probably the most spectacular natural event I have ever witnessed - at totality (under a completely clear sky), it got cold and dark then the solar corona & diamond rings were wonderful sights and the strange 360 degree sunset was amazing. After the second diamond ring the frogs in a nearby irrigation channel, who had dozed off when it got dark, all woke up and began croaking wildly at the false dawn.

Thomas Cook's agents arranged the event extremely well in a 5\*star hotel on the Mediterranean coast and the BBC's Sky at Night programme people [programme shown on Sunday April 2nd] who were there with us, along with many assorted beardy geeks from the Open University, Imperial College, Harvard, Oxford & Cambridge Universities all were extremely well informed and friendly when asked "silly" questions.

The expert folk from the BBC also gave us a presentation the night before of what to do and look out for... For example it was good to know how to find Mercury in the celestial plane. Few people see this planet in real life - except when there is an eclipse. We also saw strange crescent-shaped shadows from leaves and light defraction waves.

At the hotel there was a little too much testosterone around with beardy geeks and boffins by the score. On eclipse day itself, when these scientists began vying to set up their telescopes in the most optimum position one of the lady scientists I befriended explained that she thought this was all very funny because these normally meek scientist were all competing to show "who had the biggest telescope"!

This was far too much macho-stuff to bear with over four hours still to go to the big event so there was ample time to go chasing after the

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flora & fauna with Butterfly Conservation member friend Greg Herbert.

Away from the busy and dusty coast road we found a wonderful unspoilt countryside full of vegetables and exotic fruits like mangos and oranges. We discovered strange small wagtails, frogs and a tortoise, and ten species of butterfly. The European Swallowtail was probably the best but the Scarce Copper was a close second - which I felt was an excellent species score for a three hour window in a hectic 48 hour mini break at holiday resort in March in this part of Asia Minor.

Butterflies seen *[or at least what I thought I'd seen as I've no reference book for Asia]*.

Large White, Small White (lookie-likey), Bath White, Brimstone, Clouded Yellow, European Swallowtail (lookie-likey), Common Blue, Silver Studded Blue (lookie-likey), Sooty Copper (lookie-likey), & Scarce [&/or Large] Copper (lookie-likey).



Scarce Copper (Dave Chandler)

## **Launch of the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, by Ben Darvill**

It may surprise some people to know that in Britain & Ireland we have twenty five different kinds of Bumblebee. However, this may not be the case for much longer. So far three of our native species have become extinct, fifteen have undergone major range contractions and several more face extinction in the near future unless action is taken. Currently five bumblebee species are designated UK Biological Action Plan (UKBAP) species, in recognition of their decline, with three more species scheduled for inclusion.

Bumblebees are fascinating and beautiful insects that deserve conserving in their own right. However, there are far more pressing ecological and economic reasons to halt their declines. Bumblebees are major pollinators of a majority of our flora. If bumblebees continue to disappear our native plants will set less seed, potentially resulting in gradual but sweeping changes to the countryside. Clovers, vetches, and many rare plants may disappear.

Indeed, there is evidence that this process is already underway. These changes will have catastrophic knock-on effects for other wildlife dependent on these plants, such as birds, and small mammals. As such, it is often argued that bumblebees are keystone species, and that they are a conservation priority.

Bumblebees are also of commercial importance, being vital to the agricultural industry. Many arable and horticultural crops depend on bumblebees for pollination to varying degrees. Broad, field and runner beans and raspberries are heavily dependent on bumblebees; without them there would be little or no crop to harvest. There is already evidence that in some regions where fields are large and there are few hedgerows (in which bumblebee queens forage in spring and build their nests), crop yields are depressed due to a shortage of bumblebees.

It is therefore essential that we take measures to conserve our remaining bumblebee populations, and if possible restore them to something like their past abundance. This cannot be achieved with existing nature reserves. Bumblebee nests are large, containing up to 400 sterile workers, each of which travels more than 1 km from the colony in search of suitable flowers. Each nest needs many hectares of suitable flower-rich habitat, meaning that to support a healthy



population that is viable in the long term, large areas of land must be managed sympathetically. UK nature reserves are simply too small. The only way to provide sufficient areas of habitat for bumblebees is if the wider, farmed countryside, and the vast areas covered by suburban gardens, are managed in a suitable way. To do this we need to educate people, and encourage activities such as the planting of wildflowers and traditional cottage-garden flowers in gardens; the replanting of hedgerows; and the recreation of hay meadow and chalk grassland habitats.

Now is a good time to get involved in Bumblebee conservation as a new group has just been formed - the Bumblebee Conservation Trust (BBCT), an organisation devoted to preventing further declines in our bumblebees. The BBCT is open to all, has a regular newsletter, and organises various activities such as bumblebee walks and identification workshops. A major aim of the Trust is to promote wildlife gardening, particularly the growing of wildflowers to provide nectar and pollen for bees and other wildlife. Anyone interested in joining should visit the trust website at

<http://www.bumblebeeconservationtrust.co.uk>.

### **In Search of the Chequered Skipper, by Ian Small**

As most of you will know, the only way to see a Chequered Skipper in the UK is to travel to Scotland in late May or early June, as this species has been extinct in England since the 1970's. As I had never taken the time to explore and discover the west coast of my native Scotland, my wife and I decided that this would be the year to combine the two.

The omens were not good as we drove north - almost constant rain until we reached the border when, magically, the skies cleared, and we were treated to a glorious drive up through the Borders in the early evening light. After an overnight stop with family in Glasgow we headed north up the side of Loch Lomond. Never have I before witnessed the intensity and number of the bluebells - whole hillsides were blue under the trees. By the time we reached the end of the loch, we had seen the end of the good weather, and it was pouring again!

Undaunted, we pushed on, arriving at our first target destination - the national nature reserve at Glasdrum Wood, by the side of Loch Creran, where we arrived early afternoon. Just inside the wood, there is an area where scrub has been cleared beneath a line of power

cables, and this is renowned as the best place to spot the Chequered Skipper - or so we had been told. Unfortunately, although the sun had come out at that point, there were no butterflies to be seen, except the occasional 'white'.

We pushed on, just enjoying the amazing flora and fauna this wood has to offer - there are mosses, lichens and ferns everywhere, many growing out of very old oak trees, and a good variety of beetles and other insects. It was too cold for butterflies except when the sun came out, and it was in one of those brief sunny intervals that we saw our first (and last, as it turned out !) Chequered Skipper. It flew past me and landed on a bush to bask in the sunshine, just long enough to have one look and take one (slightly blurred) photo. But what a magnificent butterfly it is.

Despite spending a further very enjoyable three hours there, and going back again for a couple of hours the following day, this was to be our only sighting. I think the main reason for this was the fact that the temperatures were so low (only about 12 C), except when the sun came out. Unfortunately, even with an hour or so of sunshine the next day, we did not see another.

That first afternoon, we also managed to see a solitary Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and an Orange Tip, while the following morning we added Small Copper and Speckled Wood to our list.

We also visited a second national nature reserve the following day - at Ariundle oakwood, where in 2005 the Chequered Skipper had been seen in very large numbers. However we were not so lucky, although this is a magical place to visit, being the nearest I have ever come across to the sort of wood envisioned by Tolkien for the elves in Lord of the Rings.



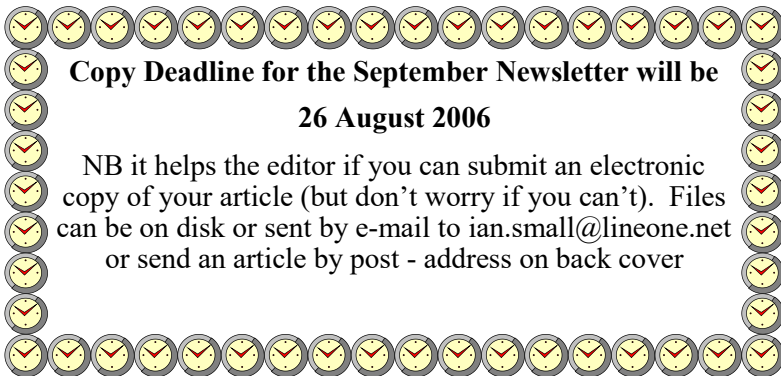
Chequered Skipper  
Photo © Ian Small

The only 'extra' butterfly seen here was a Green Hairstreak, which took us quite by surprise as, through ignorance, we had not realised it was common over much of Scotland, where it uses the gorse as a

larval foodplant. While walking along the banks of a stream at the edge of the wood, we came across several Green Tiger Beetles, which are a particular favourite of mine, and were serenaded by an Whinchat as we walked.

If any of you ever get the chance to visit either of these two sites, then I would strongly recommend both, as there is much to enjoy, even if you do not manage to see the Chequered Skippers.

The rest of our trips took us further north, and we rarely saw anything other than singleton white butterflies. One unexpected sighting (at the visitor centre to Ben Eighe national nature reserve, near Kinlochewe, was a small group of bats (apparently Pipistrelles) flying in bright sunshine in mid-afternoon (3 pm), catching flies around the Scots Pines. It just goes to show, you never know what you are going to see. That's what keeps us out there, looking.....





## 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.

**Duchies Piece (Aldbury Nowers) SP 952131.** Third Sunday of each month. Meet 10.00 a.m. in the lay-by, near Tring station. For details ring Alan Strawn (new reserve warden) on (01442) 232946

**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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