

# Greenfields Nature Reserve - 2009 Butterfly Survey

By Lorcan Adrain

## Introduction:

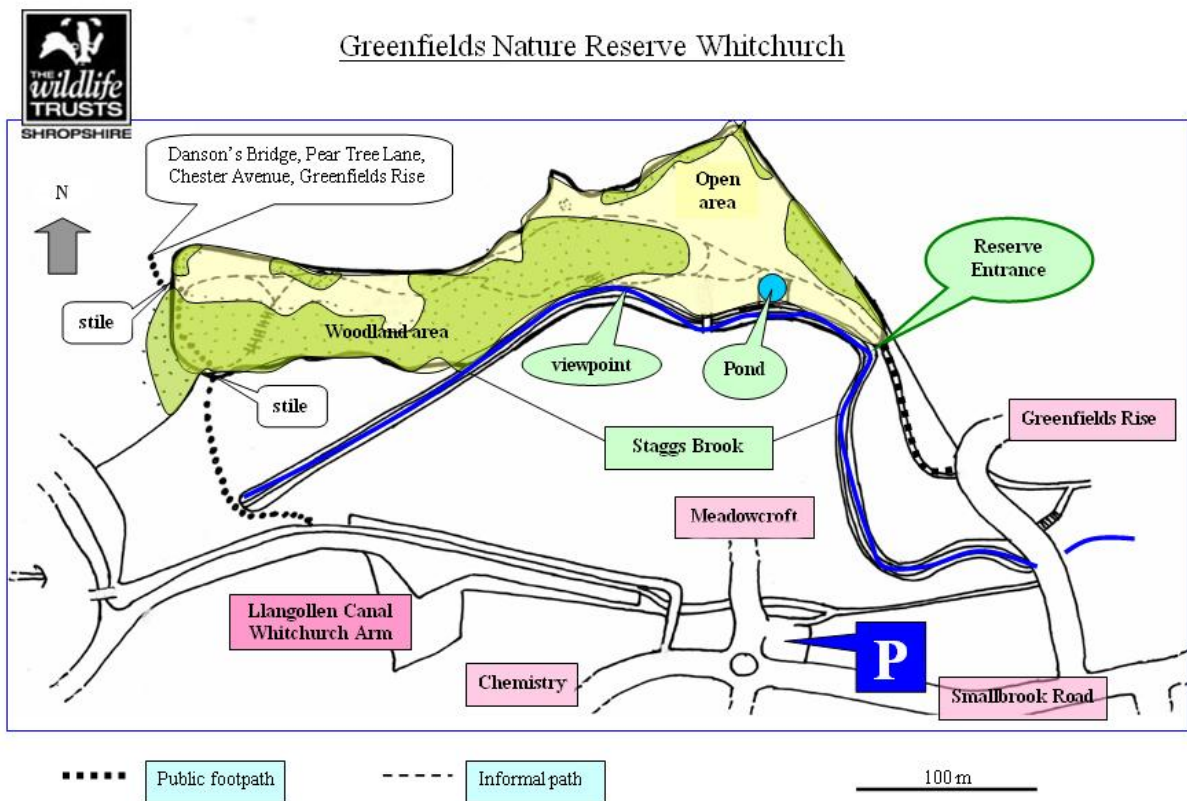
The Whitchurch branch of the Shropshire Wildlife Trust held a butterfly survey at Greenfields Nature Reserve on Friday 12th June 1.30pm. This was led by Rhona Davies, Reserves Officer with SWT.

Seven members took part in this and it was suggested that we should try and do this on a regular basis to monitor the butterflies on Greenfields Nature Reserve in Whitchurch, Shropshire.

A "figure of eight" path was taken around Greenfields Nature Reserve starting from the entrance gate in open meadow land, moving up the hill into the woodland area before the open area on top of the hill, then moving down through the woodland and some clearings and following Staggs Brook to end near to the pond in the open area. The time taken to complete the course, was about two hours.

From a distance of approximately two and a half metres from either side of the path and also in height, we recorded any butterfly that we could positively identify also making sure we did not count any butterfly that we already had counted. If in any doubt, we ignored the count.

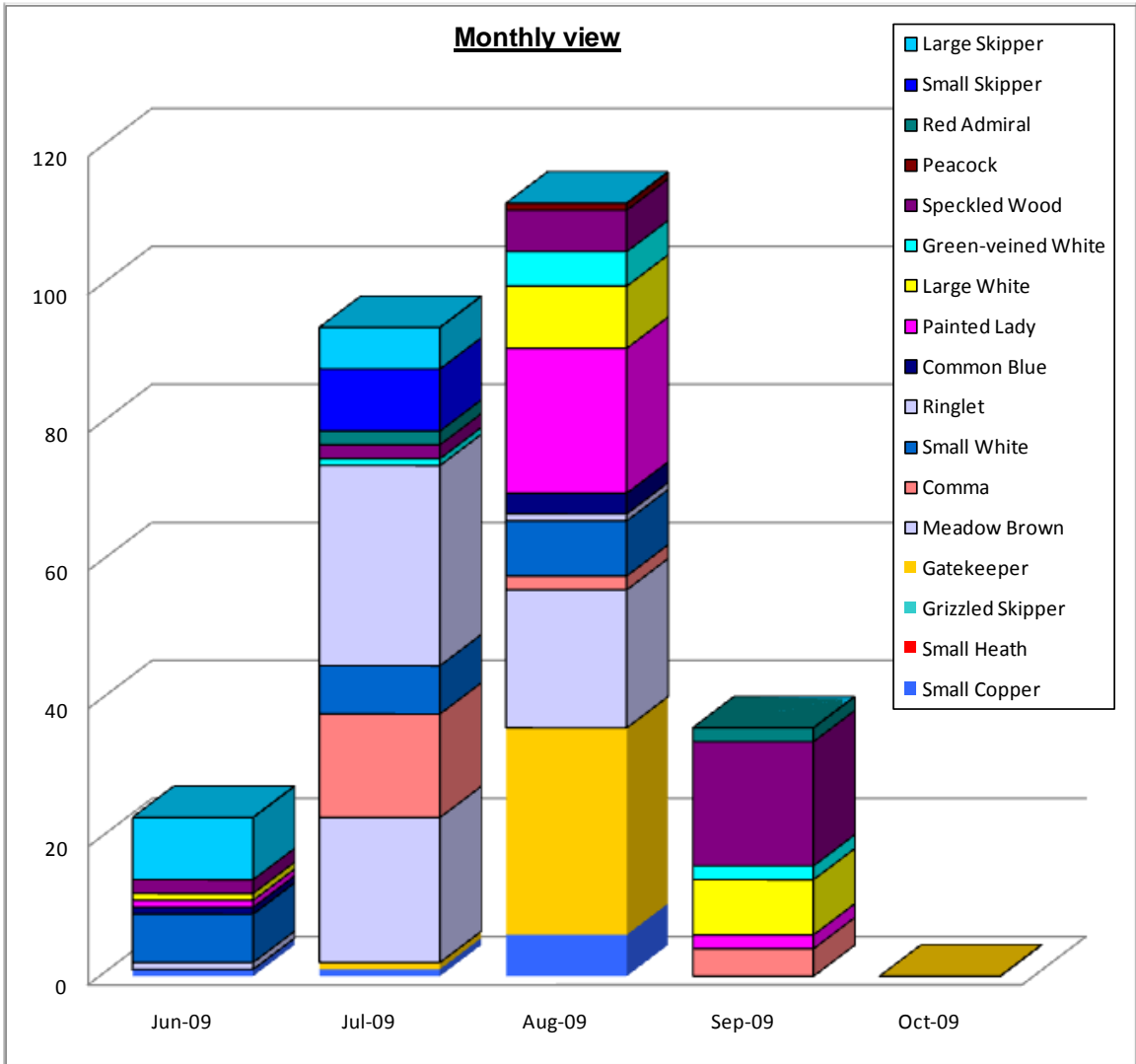
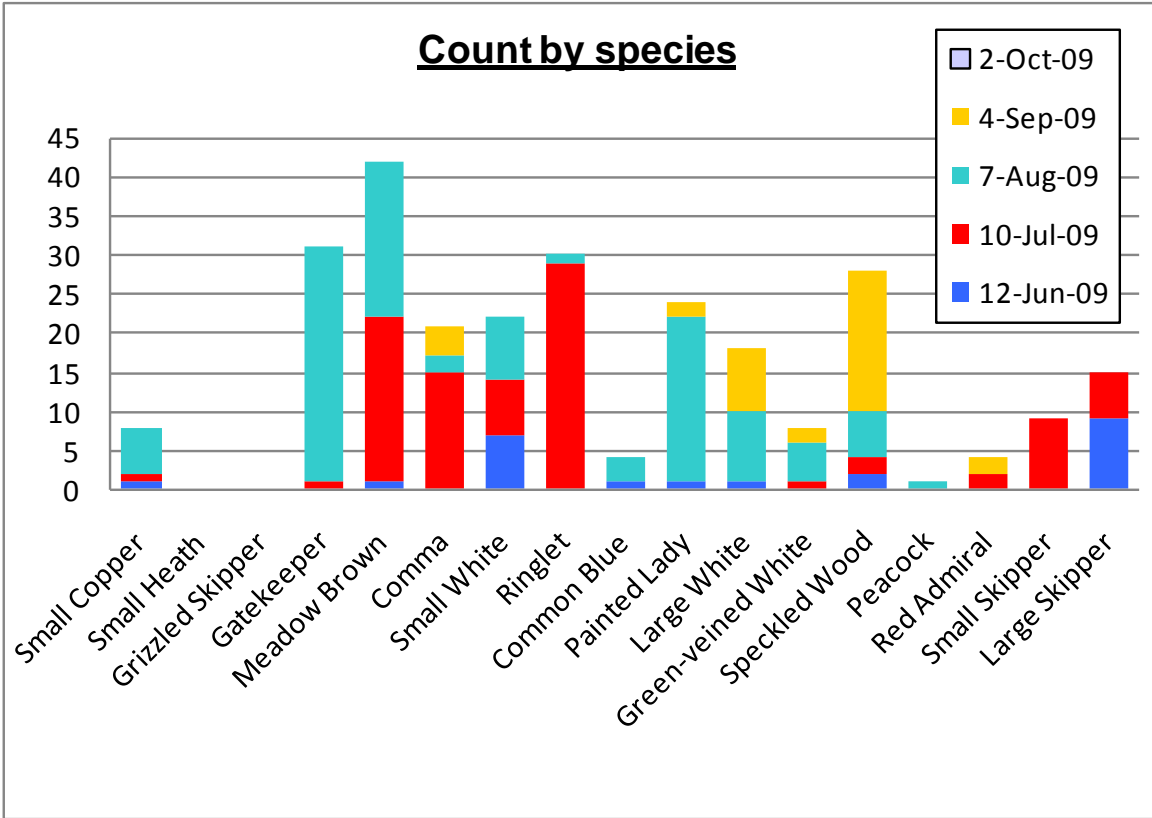
We have three target species of butterfly that we looked for, the Grizzled Skipper, Small Copper and the Small Heath.



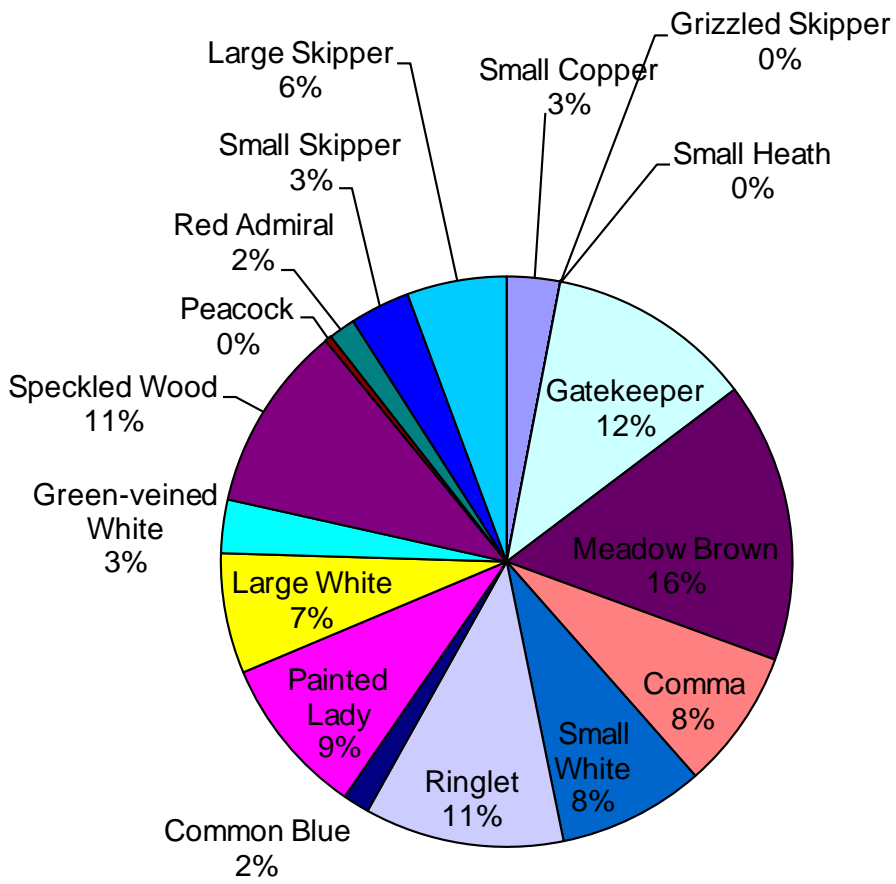
## Results:

Date	12-Jun-09	10-Jul-09	7-Aug-09	4-Sep-09	2-Oct-09
Start time	1.30pm	1.30pm	1.30pm	1.30pm	1.30pm
Conditions	Dry,sunny periods	Dry,sunny periods	Dry,sunny periods	Dry,blustery, sunny periods	Fine, dry and clouds
Sunshine	0.5	N/A	0.8	0.6	0
Temperature oC	16	19	20	14.5	14
Wind (0-6)	1	N/A	1	3	1
wind direction	W	N/A	NW	NW	NW
Small Copper	1	1	6	0	0
Small Heath	0	0	0	0	0
Grizzled Skipper	0	0	0	0	0
Gatekeeper	0	1	30	0	0
Meadow Brown	1	21	20	0	0
Comma	0	15	2	4	0
Small White	7	7	8	0	0
Ringlet	0	29	1	0	0
Common Blue	1	0	3	0	0
Painted Lady	1	0	21	2	0
Large White	1	0	9	8	0
Green-veined White	0	1	5	2	0
Speckled Wood	2	2	6	18	0
Peacock	0	0	1	0	0
Red Admiral	0	2	0	2	0
Small Skipper	0	9	0	0	0
Large Skipper	9	6	0	0	0
<b>Total Butterflies</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>
Burnet Moth	0	18	0	0	0
Magpie Moth	0	2	0	0	0
Other Species	0	0	1	0	0
Green Carpet Moth	1	0	0	0	0
Silver Y Moth	1	0	0	4	0
<b>Total Moths</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>





**Total Butterflies**



**Typical Butterfly flying times.**

	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov
Grizzled Skipper									
Small Skipper									
Large Skipper									
Large White									
Small White									
Green-veined White									
Small Copper									
Large Copper									
Common Blue									
Red Admiral									
Painted Lady									
Peacock									
Comma									
Speckled Wood									
Gatekeeper									
Meadow Brown									
Ringlet									
Small Heath									
Large Heath									
Pyrgus malvae									
Thymelicus sylvestris									
Ochlodes sylvanus									
Pieris brassicae									
Pieris rapae									
Pieris napi									
Lycaena phlaeas									
Lycaena dispar									
Polyommatus icarus									
Vanessa atalanta									
Vanessa cardui									
Inachis io									
Polygonia c-album									
Pararge aegeria									
Pyronia tithonus									
Maniola jurtina									
Aphantopus hyperantus									
Coenonympha pamphilus									
Coenonympha tullia									

## **Conclusion:**

Ideally the survey should run between April and October, we started a bit late and missed the opportunity of spotting one of the target species, the Grizzled Skipper.

For the five surveys we did, we had a total of 29 observers with 12 individuals taking part. The weather conditions had been remarkably very similar for all the surveys with only the temperature changing.

As the surveys progressed everyone's ability to identify the different species greatly improved.

June was our first introduction to butterfly surveying led by Rhona, on how to record and identify butterflies. We spotted one Small Copper along with 23 other butterflies and 2 moths. The most abundant species was the Large Skipper followed by Small White.

July saw us do our first survey without the guidance of Rhona. We spotted a Small Copper and it was Ringlets followed by Meadow Browns that we saw the most of. Burnet Moths were out this month, as we started to climb the path. A total of 94 butterflies and 20 moths.

August was the warmest month and saw the largest record of species with 112 butterflies, and this time it was Gatekeepers followed by Painted Ladies and very close behind them were Meadow Browns. 6 Small Coppers spotted, our best record for one of the target species.

September saw a drop in temperature and this resulted in a lower count. No target species, but Speckled Woods were about that day.

The October survey returned a count of no species, although an unidentified butterfly was seen high up in the tree line. The temperature this day had just dropped below the recommended temperature, although two days earlier we spotted a few Speckled Woods and Painted Ladies in similar weather conditions.

All the Commas that were recorded were spotted at the start of the reserve on the right.

The Skippers were found in the high open area at the top right corner of the reserve.

It is possible that the site may have Dingy Skipper, as they like the same habitat as Common Blue and Burnet Moth

During this period some Dexter cattle were on loan and happily roamed the reserve.

For the first year's attempt at doing a survey, it has been an interesting learning curve.

Many thanks to the following for taking part in the 2009 butterfly survey:

Rhona, Malcolm, Anne, Philip, Jenny, Peter, Don, Lorcan, Ken, Sue. Albert and Carole

**Photos taken during the survey**



Small Skipper



Large Skipper



Speckled Wood



Red Admiral



Painted Lady



Gatekeeper



Comma



Speckled Wood



Small Copper



Small Copper



Red Admiral



Small White



Large Skipper



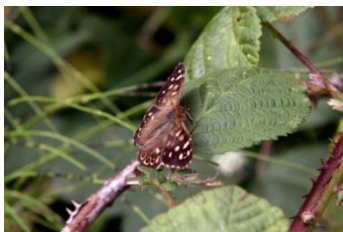
Burnet Moth



Ringlet



Silver Y Moth



Speckled Wood



Small Copper



Green-veined White



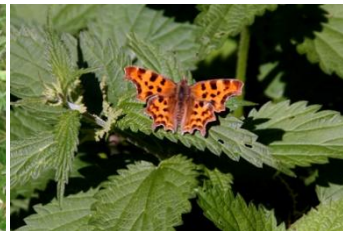
Large Skipper



Comma



Small Copper



Comma



Painted Lady



Red Admiral



Micro Moth



Speckled Wood



Large Skipper



Unknown Moth



Painted Lady



Gatekeeper



Green-veined White



Comma



Speckled Wood



Burnet Moth



Ringlet



Red Admiral



Gatekeeper



Small Skipper



Gatekeeper



Small Skipper



Small Skipper



Unknown Moth



Silver Y Moth



Common Blue



Speckled Wood



Small Skipper



Speckled Wood



Gatekeeper



Meadow Brown



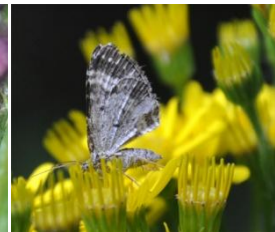
Burnet Moth



Small Copper



Burnet Moth



Unknown Moth



Painted Lady



Small Skipper



Green-veined White



Green-veined White