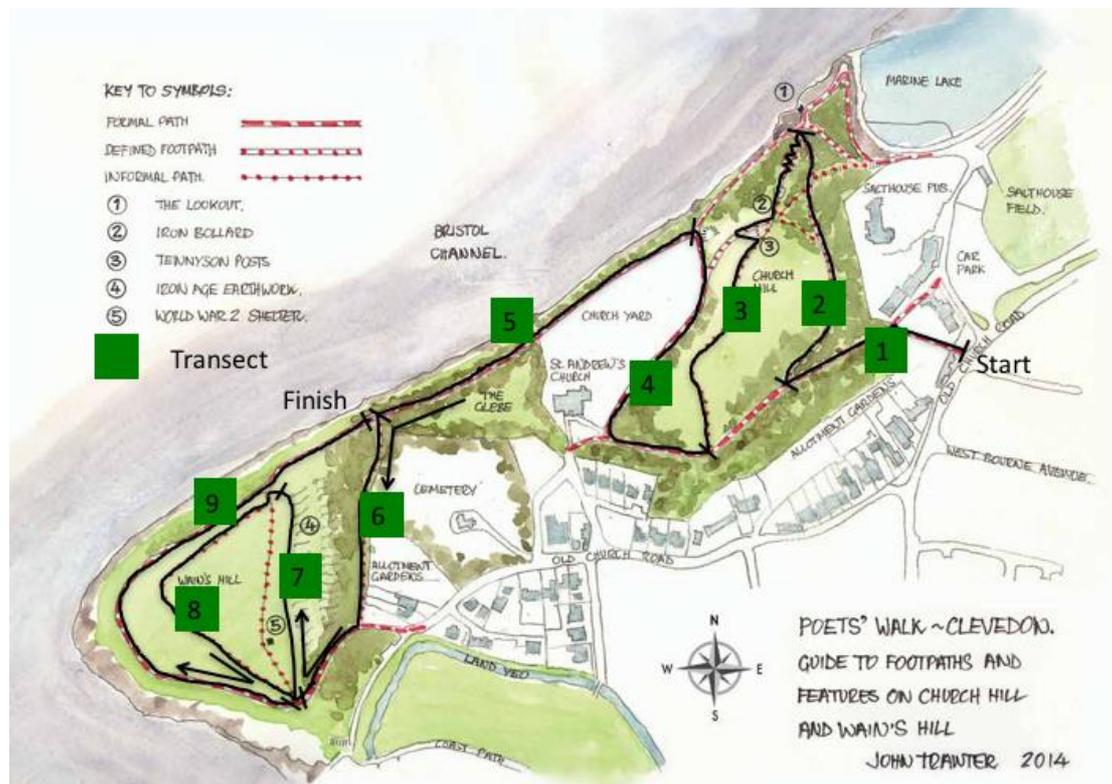


Church Hill and Wain's Hill Butterfly Transect 2017

1. Introduction

Many thanks to all who contributed again this year and helped to create a 100% record for the transect on Poets' Walk. Angela Slotte, Simon Osborn, Carol Wood, Sue Batchelor, Catherine Bennett and occasionally myself have had a wonderful year in terms of butterfly numbers and although the weather has been mixed in early autumn the counts held up right until the end of the period. Every week from April until September we have contributed to one of the biggest pieces of citizen science in the world, for which you need to grab what may be the one fleeting spell of reasonable weather in the week. You may also like to know that there are over 70 such transects in our county organised by Liz Marsden and when it is over, Dave Ayling analyses around 100,000 individual records to produce an annual transect report. Well done everyone.

Church Hill and Wain's Hill Transect Sections



2. Headline Data

Annual Comparison

This year we recorded a total of 1323 butterflies as compared with 639 last year, with the highlight being the Clouded Yellow spotted by Sue Batchelor in Week 19. There were also two Silver Washed Fritillary seen during the year but it was mostly the usual suspects. However, it was pleasing to see the Small Copper, Comma, Red Admiral and Common Blue all make good showings this year.

If we look at the weekly results in Chart 1, which looks at the totals across the 26 weeks, it is clear what a very good year it has been. This may be due to many things but weather must be a primary consideration. I would like to say however that increasing expertise amongst the team, not only in recognition skills but also in better understanding of where the butterfly habitats are located, must play a part. Finally, perhaps our management of the Poets' Walk site over the recent years is helping to encourage greater numbers. Well done everyone.

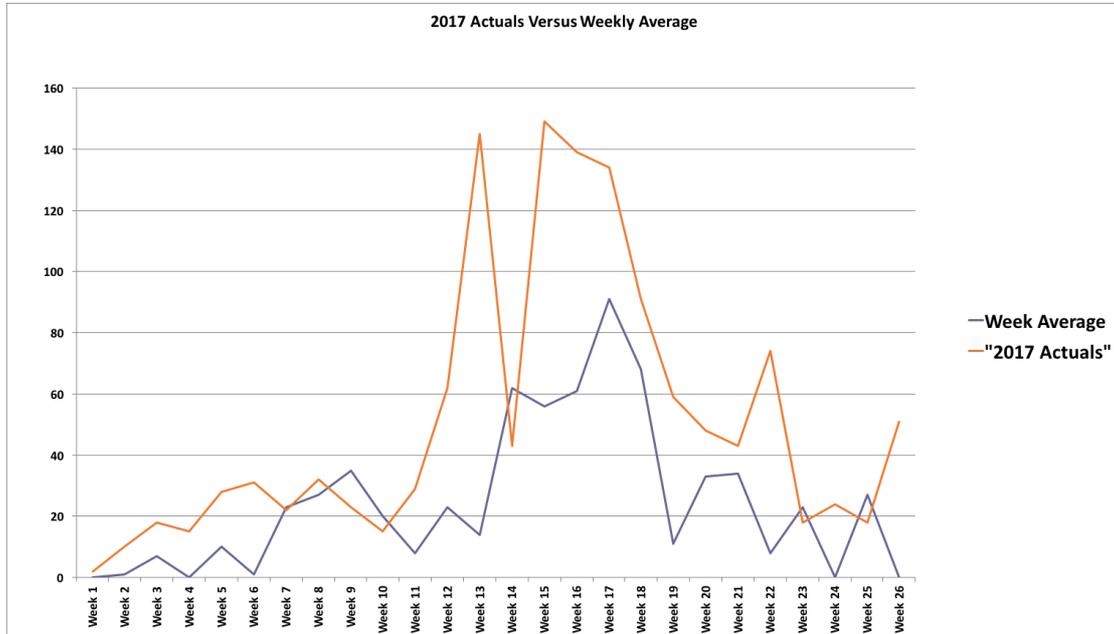


Chart 1 – 2017 Weekly Actuals

Number of Species and Totals

A total of 21 species were recorded this year, compared with 22 last year but as you will see in the charts there were some new species as well as some others that did not appear.

Table 1 – Species and Totals

Butterfly Species	No.	Family
Meadow Brown	427	Brown
Large White	240	White/Yellow
Small White	192	White/Yellow
Speckled Wood	120	Brown
Gatekeeper	71	Brown
Red Admiral	57	Emperor/Vanessid/Fritillary
Common Blue	48	Hairstreak/Copper/Blue
Marbled White	41	Brown
Small Copper	28	Hairstreak/Copper/Blue
Orange Tip	23	White/Yellow
Comma	18	Emperor/Vanessid/Fritillary
Peacock	10	Emperor/Vanessid/Fritillary
Small Skipper	10	Skipper
Holly Blue	9	Hairstreak/Copper/Blue

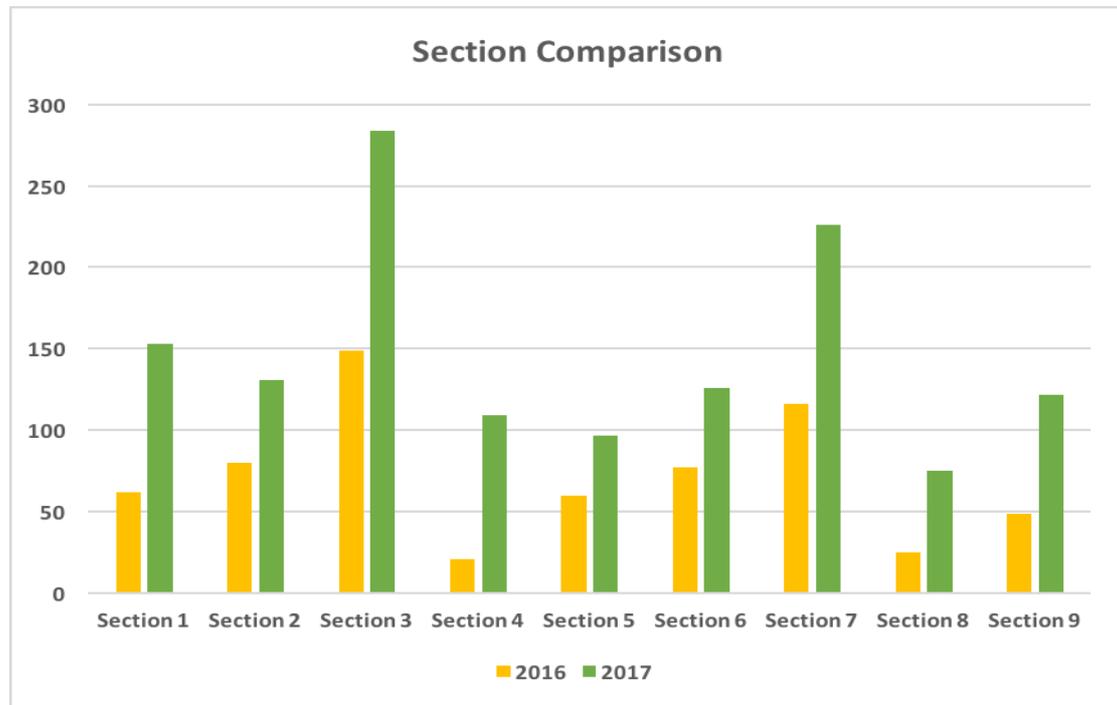
Ringlet	9	Brown
Brimstone	8	White/Yellow
Painted Lady	5	Emperor/Vanessid/Fritillary
Green Veined White	2	White/Yellow
Small Tortoiseshell	2	Emperor/Vanessid/Fritillary
Silver Washed Fritillary	2	Emperor/Vanessid/Fritillary
Clouded Yellow	1	White/Yellow

New species seen this year are the Small Skipper, Silver Washed Fritillary and of course the Clouded Yellow. Species seen last year but not seen this are the Small Heath, Wall Brown, Essex Skipper and Dingy Skipper.

Section Totals

The transect is nine sections long, with a mixture of allotment gardens, woodland and coastal pathways and open grassland. The following chart shows a comparison between numbers in 2016 and 2017. As you can see, there was an improvement across the whole of the transect, most impressive however were sections three and seven with the Meadow Brown particularly abundant.

Chart 2 – Section Totals



Overwintering

Listed below is a reminder of how each of our British species over winter. Don't be surprised if you see or disturb a Brimstone, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell or Comma.

Table 2

Species	Broods	Overwinter
Large Skipper	1	Caterpillar
Small Skipper	1	Caterpillar
Dingy Skipper	2	Caterpillar
Grizzled Skipper	1	Pupa
Clouded Yellow	1	Caterpillar
Brimstone	2	Adult
Large White	2	Pupa
Small White	2	Pupa
Green-veined White	2	Pupa
Orange Tip	1	Pupa
Green Hairstreak	1	Pupa
Small Copper	2	Caterpillar
Brown Argus	2	Caterpillar
Common Blue	2	Caterpillar
Holly Blue	2	Pupa
Red Admiral	2	Adult
Painted Lady	2	Migrant
Small Tortoiseshell	3	Adult
Peacock	2	Adult
Comma	3	Adult
Small P B Fritillary	1	Caterpillar
Dark Green Fritillary	1	Caterpillar
Silver Washed Fritillary	1	Caterpillar
Speckled Wood	2	Caterpillar or Pupa
Marbled White	1	Caterpillar
Grayling	1	Caterpillar
Gatekeeper	1	Caterpillar
Wall	2	Caterpillar
Meadow Brown	1	Caterpillar
Small Heath	2	Caterpillar
Ringlet	1	Caterpillar

3. Migrant and Endangered Species

It has been a reasonable year for migrant butterflies. Painted Ladies have been reported right across our area. Red Admirals have been widespread and Clouded Yellows have been seen on most field trips by Butterfly Conservation members. No real exotics have been seen in our area but remarkably a Monarch Butterfly was seen on a Buddleia in West Camel on July 2nd. Although this is more likely to have been a release than a migrant.

Nationally, in terms of threatened species, the Small Blue has made a recovery in the West Midlands after work by contractors and volunteers increasing from just three sites in 2009 to 19 this year. The Wood White is one of the fastest declining butterflies and is to be found on just 50 sites nationally, with 21 of these in the West Midlands. The UK's most threatened butterfly, the High Brown Fritillary, is managing to buck the trend in the Heddon Valley in North Devon due to concerted habitat management by the Two Moors Threatened Butterfly Project. And some good news in our area: the Large Blue has reached its highest numbers in 80 years and has been restored to over 50 sites in South West England. The only public site available to see this butterfly is Collard Hill near Glastonbury and is regularly monitored and supported by the National Trust. Late June and July is the time to be there.

4. Summary

Again, thank you to everyone that contributed this year. I am tempted to think that all of the hard work done by Angela and the teams across Poets' Walk has helped in some way to increasing the numbers of butterflies this year. Only time will tell. As for next year, there has been a suggestion to include "The Glebe" on the transect. I have no objection to recording the data for butterflies seen in the Glebe, but they cannot be included in the report to UKBMS if we want to maintain our current route. We would have to submit a revised transect with the additional section included on it. Can I suggest that if walkers wish to include the Glebe, please do so and I will record the data in our local report only.

Bill Thompson, October 2017