## 2023 Ovington/Ovingham butterfly record

A warm spring with few frosts seemed to help butterflies, even though the summer was wetter than usual.

## Green Ovingham Butterfly record 2018 for the Ovingham/Ovington area

Note: there are more than 50 butterfly species in Britain but many of these are not seen in northeast England. Observation of butterflies continues to delight the eyes. On 23 September David observed on his Buddleia 4 Red Admirals, 2 Commas, 2 Painted ladies and 1 Small white at the same time.

The annual Big Butterfly count gives a national picture of comparative numbers from year to year. During 2018, the average number of individuals seen per 15 minute count was only just above the 2017 count which was the lowest recorded since the project began in 2010 in spite of the warm sunny spells during the summer. In 2013 when the count started over twice as many butterflies were seen per count compared with 2018. The local pattern of behaviour based on our observations in Ovingham and Ovington matches the national picture and the number of our 4 observers who saw each species is listed in the table. The Small White was seen in large numbers but the Large White showed a serious decline. As in 2017 Small Tortoiseshells and Peacocks were scarce. The Red Admiral again had a successful year and seen in Ovingham till 9 October. The Speckled Wood was again common throughout the season and seems to have increased here from year to year. With the warm dry weather from May through July we could have expected a record number of sightings but as in the national picture this was not to be. However it brought Skippers from the Spechells over the Tyne to our gardens. Perhaps the continued low numbers follow on from low overwintering larval stages from 2017. The pattern of decline continues to be a cause for concern.

## David Archer - Ovingham

| Species  |       | Comments<br>(2018)  | Seen<br>in<br>2012 | Seen<br>in<br>2013 | Seen<br>in<br>2014 | Seen<br>in<br>2015 | Seen<br>in<br>2016 | Seen<br>in<br>2017 | Seen<br>in<br>2018 | Seen in 2023 plus<br>comments                 |
|--|-------|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---|
| Large white<br>Larger than small white and<br>more conspicuous black tip<br>May-Sep  |       | Much fewer in<br>numbers than<br>in previous<br>years   | x                  | x                  | x                  | x                  | x                  | x                  | 3                  | X   |
| Small white<br>Smaller and commoner than<br>large white<br>Apr-May and Jul-Aug       |       | Very common   | x                  | x                  | x                  | x                  | x                  | x                  | 4                  | x   |
| Green veined white<br>Veins on upper wings dark,<br>greyish green on under wings     |       | Difficult to<br>distinguish<br>from Small<br>white  |                    | x                  | x                  | x                  | x                  | x                  | 3                  | x   |
| Orange tip<br>No orange tip in female<br>Marbled hind under wing<br>Spring butterfly |       | An early<br>emerger but<br>this year later<br>than last –<br>first seen on<br>30 April        | x                  | x                  | x                  | x                  | x                  | x                  | 4                  | x   |
| Brimstone<br>Unusual wing shape and<br>colour unmistakeable<br>Spring Feb onward     |       | Rare and seen<br>only by Sandra<br>in her garden  |                    |                    |                    |                    | x                  | x                  | 1                  | x   |
| Dingy skipper<br>Moth like with buzzing flight.<br>Spechells<br>May-Jun              |       | Normally only<br>in the<br>Spechells but<br>this year seen<br>in the garden                   |                    | x                  |                    |                    |                    |                    | 2                  | X Seen in Ovingham<br>Orchard and<br>Ovington |
| Common blue<br>Male upper blue wings<br>Female brown<br>Apr-Sep                      | - Ale | They made a<br>brief<br>appearance<br>but in good<br>number on<br>the Spechells<br>on 11 June |                    | ?                  | x                  | x                  | x                  | ?                  | 1                  | X Now regularly seen in Ovington              |

|   |     | 1  |   | - |   | - | - | 1 | 1 |                                    |
|---|-----|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|------------------------------------|
| Small copper<br>Variable orange and brown on<br>upper wings<br>May-Sep  |     | Uncommon<br>and in small<br>numbers  | x | x | x | x |   | ? | 2 | X                                  |
| Ringlet<br>Smoky brown wings<br>Usually 4 eyespots on hind<br>wings Jun-Jul   |     | Well down<br>from previous<br>years but seen<br>by David in<br>reasonable<br>numbers in<br>late June | x | x | x | x | x | x | 1 | X                                  |
| Meadow brown<br>Common. Upper wings brown.<br>Male has orange patch on<br>forewing with eyespot                                   |     |  | x | x | x | x | x | x | 4 | X                                  |
| Gatekeeper<br>Hedgerow butterfly<br>Jul- Aug  |     | Common<br>nationally but<br>rarely seen<br>here  |   | ? |   | x |   |   |   | X                                  |
| Wall<br>Conspicuous eyespots on<br>wings<br>Apr-May and Jul-Sep   |     | Seen only by<br>Richard in<br>Ovington   |   |   |   | x |   |   | 1 | X                                  |
| Speckled wood<br>Woodland butterfly distinct<br>markings<br>Apr-Jun and Jul-Sep   |     | The<br>commonest<br>butterfly thro'<br>the season<br>from May to<br>Sept                             | x | x | x | x | x | x | 4 | x                                  |
| Peacock<br>Common and unmistakeable<br>Mainly Jul-Sep   |     | Few seen this<br>year  | x | x | x | x | x | x | 4 | X Large numbers<br>seen everywhere |
| Small tortoiseshell<br>Common garden visitor. Blue<br>beading at rear of wing<br>Mar-Oct  |     | Few seen this<br>year  | x | x | x | x | x | x | 4 | X Large numbers seen everywhere    |
| Painted lady<br>Summer migrant in flowering<br>meadows  |     | Uncommon<br>late arriver –<br>first seen 7<br>Aug  | x | x | x | x | x |   | 2 | Not seen                           |
| Red Admiral<br>Summer migrant often<br>common<br>Jul-Aug  |     | First on 8 Jul<br>but common<br>through to 9<br>Oct  | x | x | x | x | x | x | 4 | X                                  |
| Comma<br>Distinctive ragged edged<br>wings Underwing with white<br>comma mark. Mar-Sep  | *** | Seen in Jun,<br>Jul and Sep in<br>David's garden   | x | x | x | x | x | x | 1 | X                                  |
| Small Skipper   |     | Normally only<br>on the<br>Spechells but<br>seen in 2<br>gardens in July                             |   | x | x | x | x | x | 2 | X                                  |
| Marbled white<br>Only patchy black and white<br>butterfly<br>Rare in northern England   |     |  |   | x |   |   |   | x |   | Not seen                           |
| Purple hairstreak<br>Seen on oak trees in Horsley<br>wood Purple sheen on upper<br>wings Under wings grey with<br>hairstreak line |     |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   | Not seen                           |

| Small heath | Norm   | ally seen |  |  |   | ? |
|-------------|--------|-----------|--|--|---|---|
|             | on Sp  | echells   |  |  |   |   |
|             | but se | en in     |  |  | 1 |   |
|             | the ga | irden on  |  |  | - |   |
|             | 16 Jul |           |  |  |   |   |