

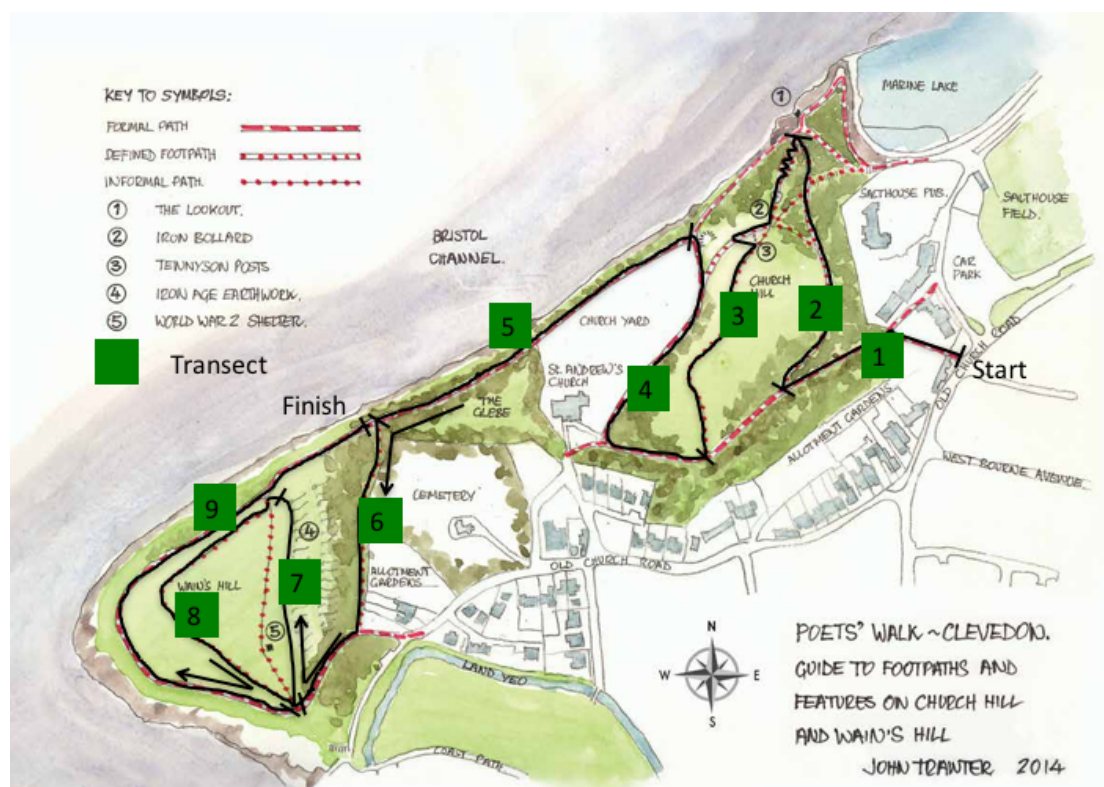
# Church Hill and Wains Hill Butterfly Transect 2018

## 1. Introduction

So, we have completed our third year of monitoring on Church Hill and Wains Hill and now have some interesting comparisons to make about the butterfly population locally. You will see from the charts that we have some winners and some losers but maybe we should view our data in light of the national situation. Nationally, 2016 was the fourth worst year on record and although there was a modest recovery in 2017 it was still the seventh worst in the 42 years of monitoring through the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme. Butterflies have now experienced five below average years in succession and seven of the ten worst years have occurred this century. The good news is that we have seen an increase this year in our numbers locally, let's hope it continues.

Many thanks again to all who contributed again this year and helped to create a 100% record for the transect on Poets' Walk. Angela Slotte, Sue Batchelor, Catherine Bennett and occasionally myself have seen a good year in terms of butterfly numbers and above average for our transect in weeks 11 through 16. Well done again everyone.

## Church Hill and Wains Hill Transect Sections



## 2. Headline Data

### Annual Comparison

This year we recorded a total of 1754 butterflies as compared to 1323 last year but unfortunately there were no unusual species seen this time. As you will see from the chart below there has been a steady increase in numbers over the three years of our study

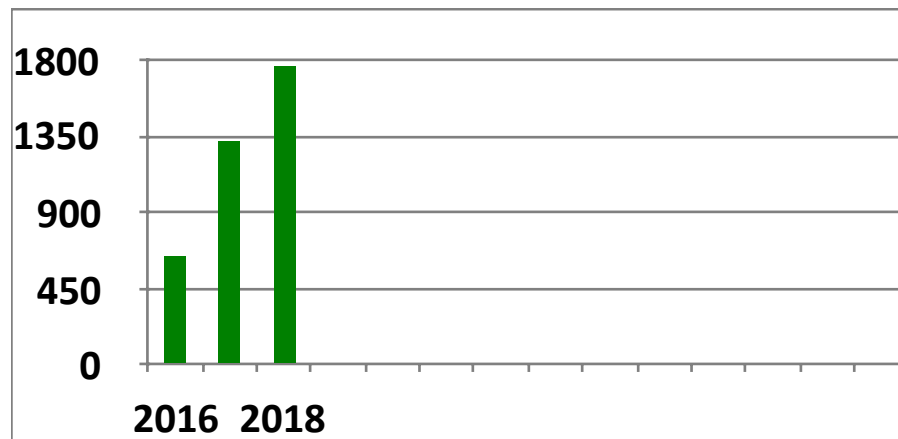


Chart 1 Annual Comparison

If we look at the weekly results in Chart 2, which looks at the totals across the 26 weeks, it is clear what a very good year it has been with most weeks showing an improvement on the average.

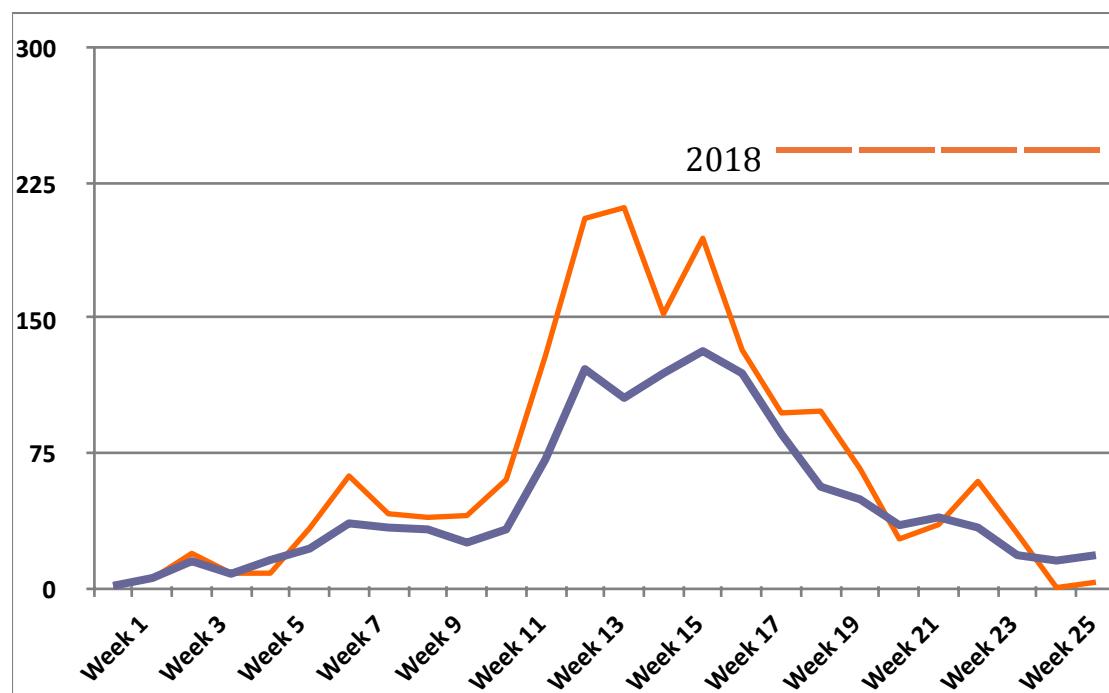


Chart 2 – 2018 Weekly Actuals v Average

## Number of Species and Totals

A total of 18 species were recorded this year, compared to 21 last year but as you will see in the charts there was a collapse in numbers for quite a few species. Even where there appears to be an increase, the numbers involved are small in many cases. The percentage view can distort your view of what is happening. What is clear is that we are strong in whites and browns with many other species unable to get a foothold.

Species	2016	2017	2018	% Change from 2017
GV White	11	2	14	600.0
Small White	153	192	546	184.4
Small Tort	8	2	5	150.0
Meadow Brown	129	427	643	50.6
Speckled Wood	39	120	141	17.5
Orange Tip	8	23	27	17.4
Common Blue	12	48	54	12.5
Silver Washed Fritillary	0	2	2	0.0
Large White	115	240	231	-3.8
Gatekeeper	52	71	47	-33.8
Comma	2	18	6	-66.7
Holly Blue	11	9	3	-66.7
Small Copper	2	28	9	-67.9
Small Skipper	0	10	3	-70.0
Brimstone	6	8	2	-75.0
Red Admiral	15	57	14	-75.4
Peacock	3	10	2	-80.0
Marbled White	30	41	5	-87.8
Painted Lady	10	5	0	0.0
Ringlet	19	9	0	0.0
Small Heath	5	0	0	0.0
Wall	4	0	0	0.0
Essex Skipper	3	0	0	0.0
Dingy Skipper	2	0	0	0.0
Clouded Yellow	0	1	0	0.0
Grizzled Skipper	0	0	0	0.0
Large Skipper	0	0	0	0.0
Green Hairstreak	0	0	0	0.0
Small Blue	0	0	0	0.0
Brown Argus	0	0	0	0.0
Small Pearl Bordered	0	0	0	0.0
Dark Green Fritillary	0	0	0	0.0
Grayling	0	0	0	0.0

## 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 from 2016 to 2018. As you can see, there was an improvement across the whole of the transect, most impressive however were sections three and nine with the Meadow Brown particularly abundant.

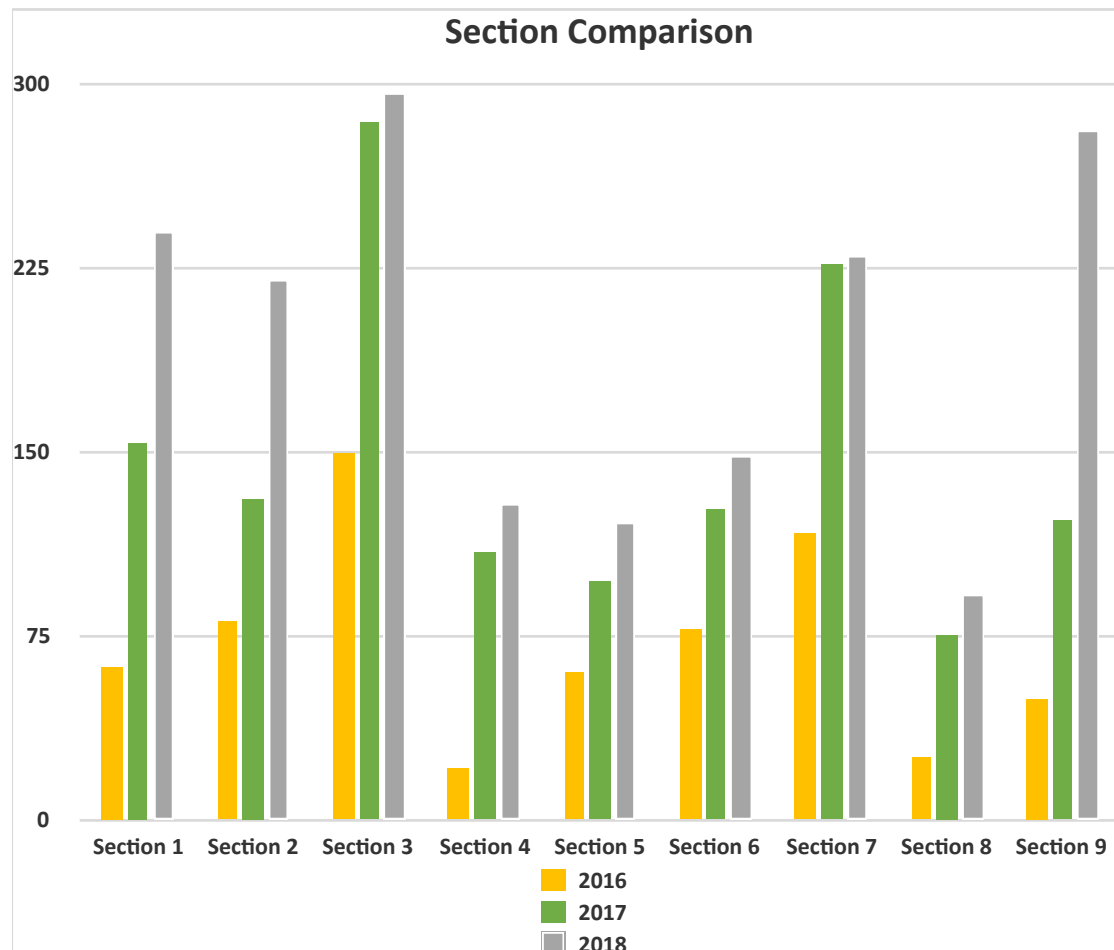


Chart 2 – Section Total

## 3. Endangered Species

Nationally, Butterfly Conservation have continued to strengthen their strategic and practical approach to the recovery of threatened butterflies and moths over the past 12 months.

## Key Achievements

The Conservation Strategy and Plan to reverse the decline of threatened species has been published.

Several large scale conservation projects launched in England including the All Moors Butterflies projects in the South West; Back from the Brink in the Avon Gorge (Silk Wave Moth) and the North Downs project in Surrey (Small Blue).

Lanarkshire's Large Heaths and Mosses project in Scotland will conserve the Large Heath and other species.

Six MP's in England, three Assembly Members in Wales and 11 MSP's in Scotland have been persuaded to support and champion a variety of butterflies and moths.

## 4. On a personal Note

My grandson was given a Butterfly Garden Set for his birthday in March. It provided the means to "grow your own butterflies" for the garden, in his case they were Painted Ladies. I am not sure about the ethics of this because as far as I am aware, releasing species into new habitat is frowned upon. However, we have seen Painted Lady on our transect so I couldn't see any harm.

I thought I might share some photos of the caterpillars, Chrysalis and final release of the butterflies.







## **5. Summary**

A big thank you to everyone that contributed this year. I realise that it can be very difficult to fit in a transect. Not because it takes up very much time but because of timing it in between the weather and all our busy schedules.

The disappointment for me this year has been the decline in numbers of the more, dare I say it, interesting species. I am sure we all felt there was a plague of Meadow Brown this year, especially on Section nine. If you look at the section chart you will see the difference in numbers there. A total of 173 Meadow Brown compared to 45 last year. Answers on a post card please if you know why. All sections of the transect matched or bettered the previous year with Sections one, two and nine showing really healthy although I think they were mostly Whites and Browns.

Anyhow, thank you again for all of your support this year and let us see what next year brings.

Bill Thompson