

Churchyard butterflies

As explained on our webpage about butterflies a section of a regular Butterfly Conservation Transect follows a route through the churchyard, and 15 out of 57 species of British butterfly species have been seen in the churchyard. This route starts on Church Lane and goes up the steps before turning right at the porch and going up around the footpath to the War Memorial. It exits the churchyard at the gate that leads onto the footpath that goes up the Knoll. This means that most of the churchyard is excluded from the formal transect, and that new species could be seen in other parts of the churchyard. There are a further 10 species that are seen on the full transect.

However, many butterflies exist in colonies that cover a restricted area, and this makes it unlikely that most of the other 10 species will be found in the churchyard. If you see a species that is **not** on the churchyard list we would like to know. A photographic record would be extremely helpful.

Whites - The first white butterfly will appear in late March to early April will be a **Brimstone**. The male is an unmistakable lemon yellow and is a powerful flyer. Females are white and may be confused with a **Large white** which usually emerges from its chrysalis in early May. By that point three other whites will have emerged **Small white** and **Green-veined white**. These are about the same size and are difficult to distinguish unless you see them resting with their wings closed. The green-veined white has definite greenish yellow markings on the veins of its wings. **Orange tips** are smaller than both of the last species and the male is easy to spot with orange tips to its upper wings. Females are more difficult to distinguish but have a patterned underwing that is quite distinctive.

Blues and coppers - Holly blues are seen regularly in the spring and late summer. They are small butterflies that may not oblige you by alighting so that you can see the distinctive blue spots on a whitish background. They should not be confused with common blues that have a greyish underwing with spots and a definite orange border. These do breed close by and ought to be seen in the larger west section of the churchyard. **Small coppers** are not commonly seen but may be seen in significant numbers in a good year on the asters at the bottom of the south slope.

Brown butterflies - Meadow browns are regular visitors throughout their flight period that stretches from June to August. They are best seen visiting the buddleia bush by the church steps. **Gatekeepers** are infrequent visitors to the churchyard but may be distinguished from meadow browns by the double spot in their eye on the forewing.

Vanessids - Peacock, Small tortoiseshell and **Comma** can all be seen as butterflies when they emerge in April but experience has shown that the Comma is not usually seen in the churchyard until its summer brood appears in July. **Red admiral** and **Painted Lady** are migrant species and appear in the churchyard from June onwards. All of these species are best seen when alighting on the buddleia as it flowers in July.

A limited number of the author's images are included in this document. We would recommend that visitors look at a good butterfly manual or visit Butterfly Conservation - [Identify a butterfly | Butterfly Conservation \(butterfly-conservation.org\)](http://butterfly-conservation.org) for further aids to identification.

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Speckled woods may be seen from April through to September and tend to fly by the path up to the Knoll at the back of the churchyard.



Green veined white



Holly blue



Small copper



Meadow brown



Gatekeeper



Peacock



Small tortoiseshell



Comma



Red admiral



Painted lady



Speckled wood

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