



## **Small Blue Action Group Newsletter**

The Small Blue Project was launched in March 2009. Already, it has had several successes with habitats being restored and the Small Blue and other key butterflies and moths returning to sites that had lost them. The Small Blue Action Group will hold its next meeting at the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust headquarters at Brandon Marsh on Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> October. This newsletter details what has happened generally or what is planned site by site.

### **Bishops Bowl Sports Area**

This area contains one of the 3 original Small Blue colonies. In addition it has colonies of Dingy Skipper and Grizzled Skipper.

Update: The new, very supportive, owners have applied for HLS. The Small Blue Action Team removed a small area of scrub in 2010. New butterfly banks created by the owner have been seeded with Kidney Vetch, Common Bird's-foot-trefoil and Black Knapweed in spring 2011. A timed count has been established on this site. The Chalk Carpet (2 individuals) were recorded for the first time in 2011. This is now the 4<sup>th</sup> Chalk Carpet colony in Warwickshire and the West Midlands Region.

### **Bishops Bowl Fishing Area**

This area used to hold a Small Blue colony.

Update: The site has new supportive owner (see above). Some scrub has been cleared by the owner. A cleared bank was planted with Kidney Vetch by the Small Blue Action Team spring 2011. Other bare areas have been seeded with Kidney Vetch and Common Bird's-foot-trefoil. In 2011 following an egg search eggs were found confirming re-colonization. This is Warwickshire's and the West Midlands Region 7<sup>th</sup> Small Blue colony.

### **Bishops Bowl Private Field**

Update: Following Kidney Vetch planting in spring 2010 the field was colonized by the Small Blue. The owner has now sold the property. A Timed Count has been established at this site. Further liaison is planned with the new owner.

### **Bishops Hill Main Area**

This area contains one of the original 3 Small Blue colonies. The site also has colonies of Chalk Carpet moth, Dingy Skipper, Green Hairstreak and Grizzled Skipper.

Update: The area is still monitored by a species transect. A timed count has been established to carry out same day population comparisons. Kidney Vetch appears to be spreading.

### **Bishops Hill Yellow Land**

The Yellow Land is owned by Bishops Itchington Parish Council. This area holds part of the Bishops Hill Small Blue colony. The Small Blue colonized after a small amount of scrub was cleared in 2009.

Update: The land now has an ideal structure, 80% of scrub was removed in 2010. An active 'Friends of' group has been established and will implement the management plan. The area of suitable habitat has been extended. The area is an extension of the Bishops Hill site. The new habitat has been colonized by the Small Blue. The area

is still monitored by a species transect. A timed count has been established to carry out same day population comparisons. The Friends of the Yellow Land group remain active and have collected Kidney Vetch seed in 2011 for seeding and growing on.

#### **Cawston Disused Railway**

This is an extension of the Draycote to Offchurch Railway.

Update: A very active 'Friends of' group has been established for this area. This group has cleared substantial areas of scrub in 2010. A transect will hopefully be established in 2012 following recent training. Further scrub will be removed this winter in 2011/12. A small area was planted with Creeping Cinqufoil in 2011.

#### **Cawston Compensation Western Relief Road area**

This area is establishing well. The Butterfly Conservation designed butterfly bank has established very well there is now suitable habitat for the Dingy and Grizzled Skippers.

#### **Draycote Country Park**

This is a Warwickshire County Council site.

Update: Several meetings have taken place re the creation of butterfly habitat. Major work commenced in September 2011 to redesign car parking large areas of butterfly habitat will be created as compensation.

#### **Draycote to Offchurch Railway Draycote**

This is a Sustrans managed site.

Update: A large area was been cleared of scrub by contractors 2011 in Collaboration with SUSTRANS. This was planted and seeded by the Small Blue Action Group in 2011. A wider countryside type monitoring system has been established on the site. Kidney Vetch, Common Birdsfoot Trefoil and various wild Strawberry species are now well established. Due to proximity of colonies the Grizzled Skipper is the most likely species to colonise in 2012.

#### **Draycote to Offchurch Railway Long Itchington**

This is a Sustrans managed site.

Update: A large area has been cleared of scrub by contractors in 2011 in collaboration with SUSTRANS. The area has been planted and seeded by the Small Blue Action Group. A large area of Kidney Vetch has become established. An egg search 2011 proved negative. Following seeding and planting by the Small Blue Action Team this is also a prime site for colonization by the Small Blue Dingy and Grizzled Skippers in 2012 or soon after.

#### **Draycote to Offchurch Railway Marton**

This is a railway paths site.

Update: The Small Blue Action Group in collaboration with SUSTRANS cleared a large area of scrub 2010. A local farmer flailed the track area. The Grizzled Skipper recolonised the area in 2010. A local resident has agreed to regularly surveying the area. The Grizzled Skipper was again seen in 2011. Further work is planned for this winter by the probation service and Small Blue Action Team in 2012.

#### **Draycote Water**

This Severn Trent Water site contains a colony of Grizzled Skipper.

Update: Several meetings have taken place re the creation of butterfly habitat. Work commenced in September. A transect has been established this year.

### **Fenny Compton**

This is a British Waterways site.

Update: Kidney Vetch and Birdsfoot Trefoil has become established on the site. The Dingy Skipper was recorded from the site the first since 1990's. The Grizzled Skipper increased in abundance.

### **Gaydon Landfill (Kingston Grange Farm)**

Update: The site is still in HLS. Two areas were surveyed in 2010 and considered suitable for a Small Blue introduction. A new meadow area is being created. A transect has been established in 2011.

### **Harbury Spoilbank North**

Harbury North is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The site contains populations of Dingy Skipper, Green Hairstreak and Grizzled Skipper. Historically the site also had a population of the Small Blue. A transect continues to monitor the site.

Update: In spring 2011 contractors have removed a further 0.5 ha of dense scrub. Ridges have been raked and seeded with Kidney Vetch and Common Bird's-foot-trefoil by the Small Blue Action Team. Contractors removed further scrub in late 2011. Further work is planned by volunteers this winter.

### **Harbury Spoilbank South**

Harbury South is also an SSSI and contains populations of Dingy Skipper, Green Hairstreak and Grizzled Skipper. Historically the site also had a population of the Small Blue and is a Warwickshire Wildlife Trust reserve. A transect continues to monitor the site.

Update: In spring contractors removed 0.5 ha of dense scrub. The Small Blue Action Team and the Probation Service cleared a further 0.5 ha. Cleared areas have been seeded with Kidney Vetch. Contractors removed further scrub in late 2011. Further work is planned by volunteers this winter.

### **Leamington to Banbury Network Rail Line The Bull Ring**

This is an active Network Rail line embankment.

Update: A large area of scrub has been cleared by contractors on both the west and east sides of this SSSI. Negotiations are underway to carry out further work by volunteers.

### **Lighthorn Heath**

This area contains colonies of Grizzled Skipper and Dingy skipper

Update: This area has been entered into HLS. The first ever Green Hairstreak was recorded this year.

### **M40**

Update: The area near Bishops Itchington has well established Kidney Vetch.

### **Napton Reservoir**

This is a British Waterways site. A successful collaboration project with the local fishing club British Waterways and Butterfly Conservation created several butterfly banks from spoil used when a pond was cleared. Volunteers have planted the butterfly banks and bare areas with Kidney Vetch and seeded the same areas with Common Bird's-foot-trefoil.

Update: Kidney Vetch has been successfully established. A Dingy Skipper was recorded from the site for the first time in 2011.

### **Nelsons Quarry**

Nelsons Quarry is an SSSI and a former site for the Small Blue and Dingy Skipper. The Grizzled Skipper still persists and the Green Hairstreak may still be present.

Update: A further area has been cleared of scrub by contractors in 2011. Following the colonization of the Chalk Carpet in 2010 the Dingy Skipper also recolonised in 2010. The population of Grizzled Skipper increased. No Green Hairstreaks were found. An estimated 1000 Kidney Vetch plants have become established but no flowering was detected. Lack of flowering appears related to rabbit grazing. There was evidence that some Kidney Vetch flowered this year allowing further plants to become established from their seeds. Further work by contractors is planned for October 2011.

### **Parkfield Road**

This is a CEMEX site.

Update: Early plans are in place to establish a wildlife site in a cleared area. Seeding of Common Birdsfoot Trefoil and Kidney Vetch is planned for October. Negotiations are still underway for easy access to the site to allow monitoring and management.

### **Rover Gaydon**

Update: The 4 x 4 test track area was seeded with Kidney Vetch in 2011. Both the Grizzled and Dingy Skippers were confirmed to be breeding on the site.

### **Southam Bypass North**

Update: In 2010 Small Blue adults were seen on the site. As the Small Blue seen was the first seen in Warwickshire it is likely the colonization took place in 2009. The Small Blue colony increased in size in 2011 and a further Dingy Skipper was also recorded indicating the species has colonized the site.

### **Southam Quarry**

Southam Quarry is an active cement quarry and works and is very important as it contains large colonies of Small Blue and Chalk Carpet moth. It also has good populations of Grizzled Skipper, Dingy Skipper and Green Hairstreak.

Update: The old spoil bank, a former Small Blue breeding area, has now been fully capped with spoil following a EN directive. The compensation field has been reseeded with a wildflower seed mix and grazing has been facilitated. Safety bunds have been seeded with Kidney Vetch. A timed count has been established on the site.

### **Southam Quarry Old Site**

This site owned by CEMEX contains a very small colony of Grizzled Skipper.

Update: The old mixing area is being partly filled with spoil. The boundaries of the filled area have been seeded with Kidney Vetch and Common Birdsfoot Trefoil. Following clearance of part of the site by Small Blue volunteers the Grizzled skipper recorded its highest ever numbers in 2012.

### **Southam Quarry Extension**

This is an active CEMEX quarry.

Update: A safety bund has been seeded with Kidney Vetch. A survey in 2011 found that Kidney vetch has become established. Further seeding with Kidney Vetch and Common Birdsfoot trefoil took place in 2011. This is now a prime site to be colonized by both the Small Blue and Dingy Skipper.

### **Stockton Cutting and Works Site**

Most of this site is owned by CEMEX and a small area of the cutting is SSSI and owned by the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Warwickshire County Council. The site contains a colony of Grizzled Skipper and maybe Green Hairstreak; it formerly contained Small Blue and Dingy Skipper colonies.

Update: The majority of the cutting was cleared of scrub by contractors and volunteers in 2011. A further substantial area was cleared of scrub by the Small Blue Action Team and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. The area has been raked by volunteers and seeded with Kidney Vetch and Common Birdsfoot Trefoil. Both Kidney Vetch and Common Birdsfoot Trefoil have become well established. The first Dingy Skipper was recorded on the site since 2005. An adult Small Blue was recorded following eggs being discovered in 2010. A strong colony of Small Blues should now become established.

### **Stockton Locks**

This site has 2 owners and contains populations of Grizzled Skipper and Dingy Skipper.

Update: The area owned by Warwickshire County Council has been leased to a farmer on a 5 year lease. This area has now been entered into ELS with a view to it being entered into HLS in due course.

### **Ufton Fields**

This site is an SSSI owned by Warwickshire County Council and managed by the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. The site used to contain 2 separate colonies of Small Blue, Dingy Skipper and Green Hairstreak. The Grizzled Skipper still survives and the Dingy Skipper recently recolonised. A transect has been re-established on the site.

Update: Contractors have completely cleared the scrub from the Man Orchid Field. The Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Small Blue Action Team have cleared further scrub from between the Man Orchid Field and Snipe Meadow. Additional Scrub has been cleared from the butterfly glade and the ridges area. Cleared areas have been seeded with Kidney Vetch and Common Bird's-foot-trefoil. The Grizzled Skipper and Dingy Skipper populations have increased. Contractors cleared further scrub from Snipe Meadow in September 2011.

### **Ufton BIFFA Landfill Site**

This site which only has a short time left as a landfill site, contains a small colony of Grizzled Skipper. The project is actively working with BIFFA and other partners to create wildlife habitat as the site is restored.

Update: The site is still being restored.

## Other News

CEMEX were presented with the Marsh award at the Butterfly Conservation AGM 2010 for outstanding support for conservation.

## National Meeting

A National Small Blue action group has been established. A meeting took place on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> June 2011 a report will be established in due course.

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This project has only been made possible thanks to the support of the following organizations:-



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