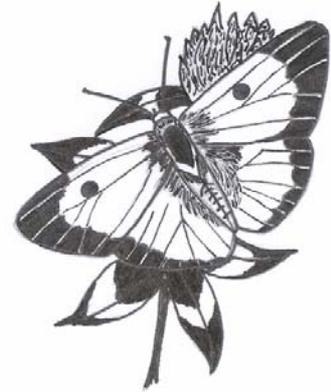


BUTTERFLY REPORT FOR 2000

(Medina Valley Centre Nature Reserve)

Janet Ager



The butterfly index for 2000 is given in figure 1, together with the previous years' records for comparison. The transect was walked on 23 out of the 26 weeks of the recording season, the other three were not suitable for butterfly recording. The ITE butterfly monitoring scheme outlines suitable weather conditions as being above 13 °C, between 13 and 17 °C when there is at least 60% sunshine, and above 17 °C in any conditions as long as there is no rain. There is also a time restriction from 10:45 – 15:45 (ITE, 1981). No butterflies were seen on 4 of the 23 walks – on two of these conditions were not considered suitable, as the temperature was too low.

This year saw some slight changes made to the transect walk including the introduction of our new butterfly garden at the south end of the main building, an area that receives a great deal of sunshine in the summer. Since the Monterey pines have grown up so much the old area was getting increasingly shaded and so was not attracting the numbers of butterflies that it used to. The new area began attracting butterflies early on in the year with a red admiral on 7th March, which had presumably over-wintered. The 2000 season gave a total species count of 21, which is in line with that observed in recent years. The total count of 437 individuals was down once again, in fact it was the lowest total since 1993, probably due to the wettest Spring since 1981 (D Simmons, pers. comm.). A notable increase was seen in *clouded yellows*, *large whites* and *wall browns*.

April was very wet and temperatures were well below average accounting for no butterflies being seen in this month. In May, which was somewhat warmer, five species were recorded, the first being the *orange tip*, followed by *small white*, *speckled wood*, *common blue* and *small tortoiseshell*. The latter had a poor year on the Island generally, and only three were recorded in the Centre grounds this year. June and July were reasonably dry and bright with only the odd wet day. 18th July gave the highest number of individuals seen on one walk with 83, spread between eight different species.

Some species were still feeling the effects of last year – *small white*, *small skipper*, *red admiral*, *peacock* and *marbled white* were stable but still low when compared to the summers of 1997/98, and there was a notable decrease in *gatekeepers*, *small copper* and *speckled wood*.

Clouded yellows were a very noteworthy species this year – the first in the Centre grounds was recorded on 23rd June (not on a transect walk) and the last in October (also not on a transect). Ten specimens recorded on transects is the highest in any season since records began in 198 and there were many other sightings during the late summer. Also we had our first ever sighting of a *white admiral* on the MVC reserve. Although generally a woodland species, it put in an appearance in our new butterfly garden on 17th July.

Overall, it was another disappointing year for butterflies, mainly due to the cold start in April, and exceptional amounts of rain in April and May.

Figure 1. Butterfly species list and sightings at Medina Valley Centre (SZ503909) for 1999 and 2000.

Species	1999	2000
Brown Argus	-	-
Brimstone	*	*
Clouded Yellow	-	10
Comma	7	7
Common Blue	20	14
Dingy Skipper	-	-
Gatekeeper	150	99
Green Hairstreak	-	-
Green-veined White	2	1
Grizzled Skipper	-	-
Holly Blue	3	-
Large Skipper	14	9
Large White	10	28
Marbled White	41	44
Meadow Brown	130	129
Orange Tip	2	2
Painted Lady	-	2
Peacock	2	4
Purple Hairstreak	1	-
Red Admiral	2	5
Ringlet	-	-
Silver-washed Fritillary	-	-
Small Copper	32	13
Small Heath	-	-
Small Skipper	12	15
Small Tortoiseshell	3	1
Small White	23	25
Speckled Wood	34	15
Wall Brown	8	14
White Admiral		*
Number of species recorded	20	21

* indicates that the species was seen during the year, but not during a transect walk.
 - indicates that the species has been recorded on the reserve, but not seen this year.

Reference:

Institute of Terrestrial Ecology (1981) *Butterfly Monitoring Scheme*

Figure 1. **MAP OF MEDINA VALLEY CENTRE NATURE RESERVE**

Key: G1, G2 and G3 denote the three areas of "neutral grassland"

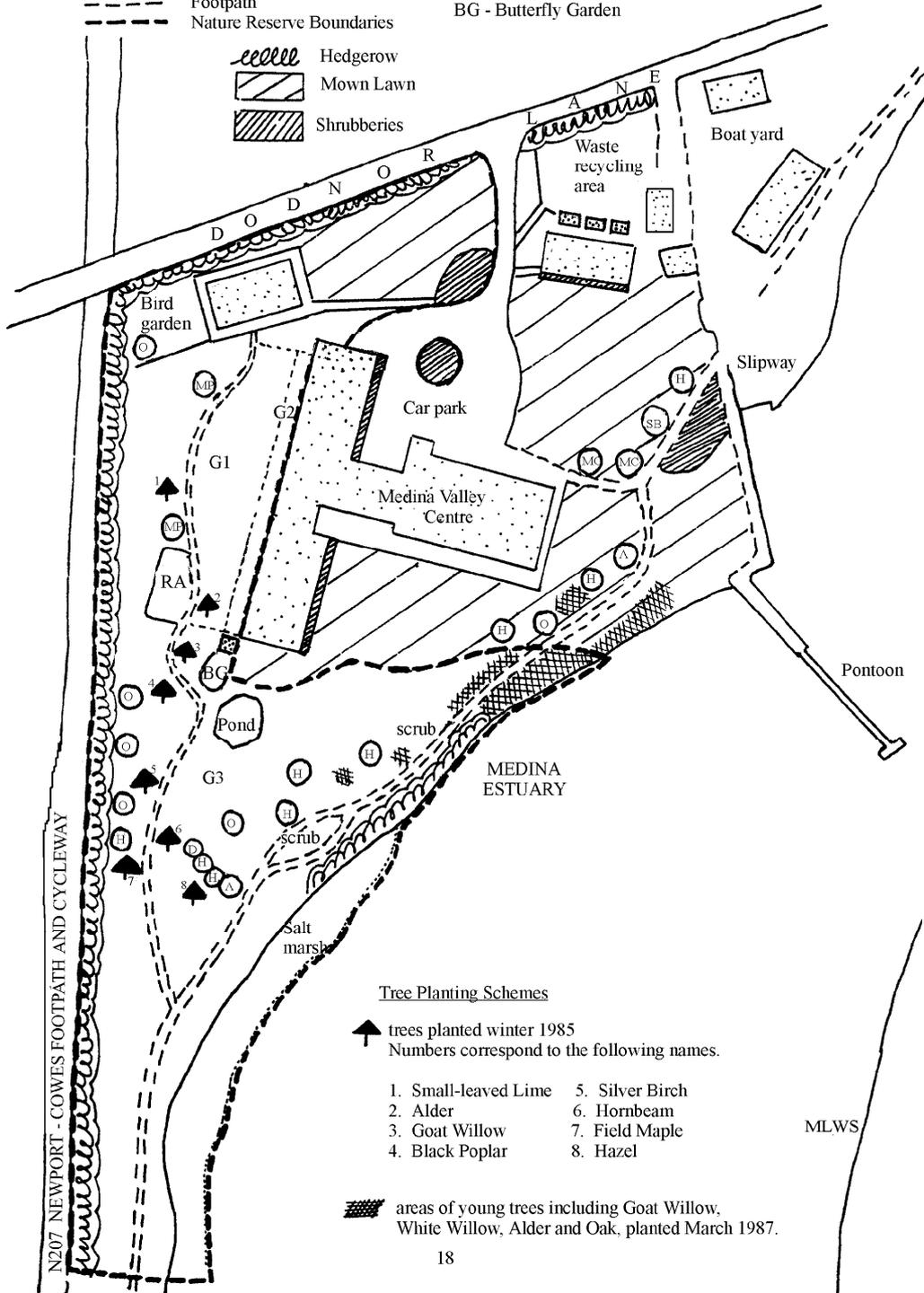
○ Tree (abbreviation for name also given below)

Tree abbreviations:

O - English Oak	MP - Monterey Pine	MC - Monterey Cypress
D - Dogwood	H - Hawthorn	SB - Silver Birch
A - Apple		RA - Reptile Area
		BG - Butterfly Garden

--- Footpath
 - - - Nature Reserve Boundaries

~~~~~ Hedgerow  
 ▨ Mown Lawn  
 ▩ Shrubberies



Tree Planting Schemes

▲ trees planted winter 1985  
 Numbers correspond to the following names.

- |                      |                 |
|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Small-leaved Lime | 5. Silver Birch |
| 2. Alder             | 6. Hornbeam     |
| 3. Goat Willow       | 7. Field Maple  |
| 4. Black Poplar      | 8. Hazel        |

▨ areas of young trees including Goat Willow, White Willow, Alder and Oak, planted March 1987.