

# The Butterflies of Lympsnam



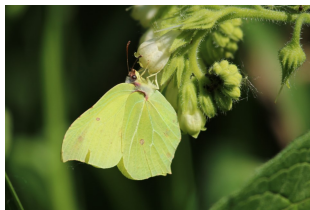
## **A short guide to the Butterflies of Lymphsham**

### **Part 1: March to May**

I have always loved the challenge of photographing Butterflies and have travelled around the county to do this. Lockdown gave me the opportunity to explore and record the amazing variety we have on our doorstep.

The first 5 Butterflies to appear in the village are those which hibernate over the winter in the adult (Imago) form, **Brimstone**, **Peacock**, **Small Tortoiseshell**, **Red Admiral** and **Comma**. When the temperature rises above 13°C they will start to emerge from the shelter of hedgerows, trees and outbuildings and take to the wing to find food and then a mate.

Flashes of yellow signal the arrival of the **Brimstone** (right)— they can be seen flying along verges, the churchyard and in gardens. Both have distinctive leaf shape wings; the males have the brimstone yellow colour whilst the females are a pale green.



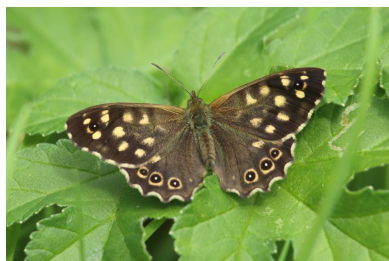
The **Small Tortoiseshell** (left) can be seen in large numbers in the village especially along the nettle strewn banks of Middle Rhyne (follow the footpath from Hope Farm round to West Road). Along with the Peacock, they use the Common Nettle as a food plant for their caterpillars.

The beautiful colours of the **Peacock** with their glorious eyespots, in stark contrast to their pure black underwing and the distinctive orange and white stripes on the black wings of the **Red Admiral**, will start to appear in gardens as well as along verges and hedgerows, where they will feed and bask in the sun.



The striking **Comma** (left) named after a silver comma on their underwing rather than the shape of their wings is another which can be found in the hedgerows on sunny days. All of these 5 butterflies can be seen throughout the summer. Blackberry flowers will always attract them in good numbers.

As we move into April those butterflies that have overwintered as a Chrysalis (Pupa) start to emerge. Walk down the muddy footpath at the end of South Road or through the tree-lined path down to Dulhorn Farm and you will spot the **Speckled Wood** basking on leaves, where rays of sunshine penetrate the canopy.





Whilst you are looking at leaves, keep an eye out for the **Holly Blue**. This beautiful little butterfly likes Holly, Ivy and Bay leaves and can be seen where they occur; check out the churchyard and old ivy covered walls around the village.

Last year saw huge numbers of **Orange Tip** Butterflies (right) in the village, attracted to spring plants in gardens and on verges. They are the most distinctive of the four 'whites' that take to the wing in April and May. The **Large White**, **Small White** and the **Green Veined White** make up the set. The **Orange tip** is easy to identify but the others are very similar and I would suggest a field guide to help you with this.



Choose a sunny day in May and take a wander down Wick Lane and then carefully cross the railway tracks and follow the footpaths through the fields back down to Middle Rhyne. If the grass is high you will be surrounded by a sea of **Small Heath** Butterflies (below), later on in the month they will be joined by the similar but significantly larger and darker **Meadow Brown**

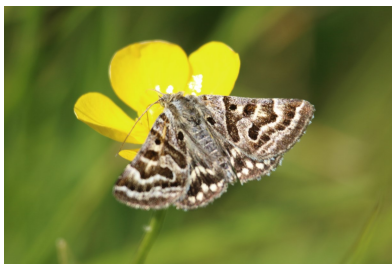


If you take the time to look closely you may spot other Moths and Butterflies in amongst them. The thin **Grass Veneer** moths are plentiful but if you are lucky you may catch sight of a **Mother Shipton** Moth (below). Named after the markings on the wing, which resemble an old woman's face. (see close up below) I will leave you to 'google' **Mother Shipton** to find out her story!



In the next edition I will explore those Butterflies which emerge later in the year, but if this has sparked an interest in Butterflies then check out Somerset Butterflies Conservation at:

[www.somersetbutterflies.org.uk](http://www.somersetbutterflies.org.uk)



By Jim Bishop