

# **The Birds of Wimbledon and Putney Commons 2017**



Lesser Redpoll

**Incorporating the Butterfly and Dragonfly  
Reports for 2017**

# **Index**

<b>The Birds of Wimbledon and Putney Commons - Report</b>	<b>Page 1</b>
<b>Obituary - David Wills</b>	<b>Page 5</b>
<b>Details Of Birds Recorded On Wimbledon And Putney Commons in 2017</b>	<b>Page 7</b>
<b>Butterflies of Wimbledon and Putney Commons 2017</b>	<b>Page 17</b>
<b>Dragonflies of Wimbledon and Putney Commons</b>	<b>Page 19</b>

## THE BIRDS OF WIMBLEDON AND PUTNEY COMMONS 2017

Welcome to the 2017 Wimbledon and Putney Commons bird report.

Inevitably, this year's edition is somewhat thinner due to the sad death of the report's principal contributor, Dave Wills, who will be very much missed, having provided a comprehensive record of the bird life of the Common for some 40 years or more. Hopefully, the increase in proposed bird walks for 2018 will encourage more people to become involved and help continue with this invaluable record which provides a vital means of monitoring the Common's biodiversity.

For 2017, clearly, the star bird of the year was a Yellow-browed Warbler found by Les Evans-Hill. This species is on the increase from its Siberian/Ural breeding grounds with September and October the best time to see one.

As part of the widespread autumn invasion by Hawfinches from Eastern Europe to the UK, Les managed to record two overflying birds. It is still worth checking any hornbeam trees as these are one of the few birds that are able to crack the tough seeds of this tree.



**Hawfinch**

Ben Andrew (rspb-images.com)

Another species seemingly on the increase has been the Firecrest with a raft of sightings of this charming bird in the autumn. Unfortunately, the Dartford Warbler that appeared in autumn 2016 and stayed until March 17 did not reappear in the second winter period. Nevertheless, the open areas of large gorse clumps and heather at Ladies Mile should provide ideal habitat if one does return.

While no surveys were conducted this year, populations of the main warblers notably Blackcap, Chiffchaff and Garden Warbler appeared normal although perhaps Whitethroat did not seem quite so abundant. Recent reports in the national press regarding the decline in insects is clearly a concern for all these species so the areas of scrub and bramble on the Common are ever more important, not only for those nesting near or just above the ground but for food

as well. There were just two singing Willow Warblers this year, but no further records after early May so these may have just moved through in the end.

Other concerns have been the dearth of Woodcock sightings – this does appear to be a species that is struggling and there is now some anecdotal evidence of disturbance by dogs having an increasing impact. Spotted Flycatcher is another missing species where once again, lack of insect food may be a likely cause for poor breeding success. House Martins and Starlings may be experiencing a similar fate while the reduction in Greenfinch numbers on the Common is reflected by a national decline of 59% over the last 10 years, certainly in part, due to the disease Trichomonosis.

To end on a brighter note, hopefully the return of the Swallows to the Common each Spring is now a permanent feature and with further nesting opportunities in the Windmill complex clearly available, it is hoped their small colony will increase.

Finally, there were well over a dozen records for one of the Common's more charismatic birds, the Stonechat – the Plain and adjacent heather patch are clearly significant stopping off points for this species on their spring and autumn migrations although it is still somewhat of a mystery as to their exact origins and where they are heading to and from.



Please do keep the sightings coming in and hope to see many of you out and about on the Common in 2018.

Adrian Podmore  
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Thanks are extended to all contributors to this report, a full list of which may be found below, and to Angela Evans-Hill for producing the report.

Contributors: Annabel Bound (AB), Peter Carlill, Bella Covill (BC), Angela Evans-Hill, Paula Graystone, Graham Guthrie, Peter Haldane (PH), Les Evans-Hill (LEH) Clive Hilton, Oonagh McGrath, Mike McNabb, Paula Redmond, Simon Riley, Simon Rocksborough-Smith (SRS), Tim Straw (TS), Mike Waller, John Weir, Jan Wilczur, David Wills (DW) and Steve Woolfendon.

# Obituary

**David Leonard Wills**

**7<sup>th</sup> August 1939 – 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017**

Alongside E.D. McMillan and R.H. Kettle, part of the legacy that Dave Wills has left behind has been a record of bird reports that spans 42 years of bird life on Wimbledon Common and Putney Heath.

In addition to the species lists that he provided, each annual report would also contain an introductory passage where Dave would highlight certain significant bird sightings that had been made during the year, weather patterns that had affected the bird life on the Commons or the effects that certain habitat management had had on specific species.

Dave once said “one of the pleasures of compiling the Commons’ annual bird report is that no two years are ever quite the same” and while some things such as the level of disturbance that effected the ground nesting birds on the plateau remained a particular concern for Dave, reading through past bird reports there were obviously many other things that provided a great deal of delight for him.

Never slow to thank the contributions made by those he called the Commons’ ‘dependable team of contributors’, some of the many highlights that have been mentioned during the course of Dave’s annual bird reports have included the eighth successful year (2008) that Hobbys nested on the Commons, the return of nesting Skylarks to The Plain in 2015, the return of the Dartford Warbler to the heathland in 2016 after an absence of almost 78 years and the first time in which the Commons achieved the recording of over 100 birds (101 to be accurate) in a single year (2010).

Due to his unwavering enthusiasm, the number of people who benefited over the years from Dave’s expertise and knowledge of the Commons’ bird life is impossible to estimate but reading through the bird reports from 1999, there is perhaps one passage that highlights so much about the way he felt about the area that he affectionately referred to as ‘his patch’.

*“All things considered we have much to be grateful for. Thanks to careful management, the Commons continues to host a rich variety of habitats and can boast a wildness that few places so close to the centre of London can equal, and, of course, it unfailingly attracts a wide range of birds, usually between 80 and 90 species each year. For those of us who do much of our bird watching in its heather clad plateau or its woodland glades, the Common and its birds are inseparably linked: for us, it is a special place, a place where the disappointment of the odd, unproductive visit is easily tempered by its prevailing qualities, or where, conversely, the occasional highlight, perhaps in the form of a Firecrest or a Wheatear or the flushing of a snipe, instils an elation that is infinitely greater for having occurred on this well-trodden patch of ours.”*

Peter Haldane  
Conservation and Engagement Officer  
Wimbledon and Putney Commons

DETAILS OF BIRDS RECORDED ON  
WIMBLEDON AND PUTNEY COMMONS 2017

*Observers' initials are shown against records where appropriate – All references to first-time breeders or to new additions to the Common's list of species relate only to recent history: 1974 to 2016.*

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**Species**

**Mute Swan**

*Status: prior to 2007, an irregular visitor to the Common's ponds, but has since bred at Queensmere in five of the past eleven years.*

While a pair were present at Queensmere, there were no successful breeding attempts this year.

**Greylag Goose**

*Status: bred at Kingsmere in each year from 2000 to 2005, but has since become an infrequent visitor.*

One at Rushmere on 27 Mar (DW), two flying south over Fishpond Wood on 1 Dec and two flying south over Beverley playing field on 20 Dec. (SRS)

**Canada Goose**

*Status: breeding resident.*

**Egyptian Goose**

*Status: a regular non-breeding feral visitor.*

**Mandarin Duck**

*Status: feral breeding resident, usually one or two pairs.*

Three on Kingsmere 24 Sep (AP et al).



**Eurasian Teal**

*Status: scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Five on Beverley Brook on 27 Jan (PH), three at Kingsmere on 6 Mar (DW) and three (two males & one female) on Beverley Brook at Putney Lower Common on 24 Nov (PH).

**Mallard**

*Status: breeding resident with numbers increasing during the autumn and winter.*

**Northern Shoveler**

*Status: winter visitor and passage migrant.*

Eight at Kingsmere on 2 Jan and two here on 14 Feb (DW).

Returning birds were a pair on Kingsmere on 24 Nov (BC) with three on 24 Dec (AP).

### **Tufted Duck**

*Status: breeding resident (since 2000), winter visitor and passage migrant.*

### **Little Grebe**

*Status: chiefly a passage, but an occasional breeder, water levels at our ponds permitting.*

### **Cormorant**

*Status: a regular visitor to our larger ponds, primarily in the winter months.*

### **Little Egret**

*Status: scarce visitor, increasingly observed flying over in recent years.*

One flew over Kingsmere on 24 Dec (AP).

### **Grey Heron**

*Status: regular non-breeding visitor.*

### **Red Kite**

*Status: scarce passage migrant, exclusively observed flying over.*

One over Ladies Mile / Parkside area on 5 Mar (Paula Redmond), one soaring high above Thatched Cottage on 3 Apr (LEH) and one possibly the same bird, above the seventh tee, mobbed by two Buzzards, on the same day (BC).



*Little Egret*

### **Sparrowhawk**

*Status: breeding resident.*

A male with a juvenile were regular visitors to the Thatched Cottage during November and December (LEH).

### **Common Buzzard**

*Status: regular migrant and visitor in recent years.*

Recorded in every month, maxima were four displaying above Parkside on 28 Mar (Mike Waller), five above the Jerry Hill / Cemetery area on 2 Apr (Jan Wilczur), four over the Windmill on 22 Sep (AP) and three there on 6 Oct (AP / TS).

### **Kestrel**

*Status: breeding resident.*

### **Hobby**

*Status: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.*

The first record for this returning summer migrant was for one on The Causeway on 23 May (LEH). Two flew over the Mounds 17 Aug (Mike McNabb) while single birds were seen over Kingsmere (AP) and at Thatched Cottage both on 22 Sep (LEH).

### **Peregrine Falcon**

*Status: scarce visitor, usually airborne.*

One was seen chasing swifts over the Ravine 8 Jun (LEH) while one flew over Tibbets Corner 23 Nov (Mike Waller) and one over Putney Heath 17 Nov (Oonagh McGrath).

**Moorhen**

*Status: breeding resident.*

**Coot**

*Status: breeding resident.*

**Jack Snipe**

*Status: scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.*

Singles flushed from the Plain's heather patch on 14 Feb (DW) and from the Plain on 7 Mar (DW, Jan Wilczur).

**Common Snipe**

*Status: passage migrant and winter visitor, can be numerous following wet spells of weather.*

**Woodcock**

*Status: regular passage migrant and winter visitor - can be elusive.*

One flushed in woodland near Inner Windmill Rd on 16 Mar (PG) with singles flushed from heather at Memorial Ride and in the Farm Bog area on 21 Mar (PH).



Woodcock

**Common Sandpiper**

*Status: scarce passage migrant.*

**Black-headed Gull**

*Status: common winter visitor and passage migrant.*

**Common Gull**

*Status: fairly common winter visitor and passage migrant.*

**Lesser Blacked-backed Gull**

*Status: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

**Herring Gull**

*Status: uncommon winter visitor and passage migrant, mostly seen flying over.*

30 seen heading SE over Beverley Meads on 11 Oct (SRS).

**Great black-backed Gull**

*Status: rare winter visitor and passage migrant, occasionally observed flying over.*

**Common Tern**

*Status: non-breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.*

One flew over the Windmill, heading SW on 11 Jul (AP).

**Feral Pigeon**

*Status: fairly common feral resident, confined chiefly in the Common's perimeter.*

**Stock Dove**

*Status: breeding resident.*

A pair at Fishpond Wood on 16 Dec with display flying taking place (SRS).

### **Woodpigeon**

*Status: common breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

### **Collared Dove**

*Status: scarce reeding resident.*

### **Ring-necked Parakeet**

*Status: naturalized breeding resident.*

### **Common Cuckoo**

*Status: passage migrant, has become increasingly scarce in recent years.*

### **Tawny Owl**

*Status: breeding resident.*

One sat in holly on the north slope of Queensmere 13 Mar (DW) and one in hollies at the rear of Wildcroft Manor, Putney Heath on 28 Mar (DW).

One calling on Beverley Meads on 20 Dec (SRS) while one was regularly calling around Thatched Cottage (LEH).

### **Common Swift**

*Status: regular summer visitor, appearing to breed outside of the Common's perimeter.*

Hundreds were seen arriving over the Common on 4 May (LEH). The only summer record was for twenty feeding over the Plain 11 Jul (AP) which was a poor count for this species.

Well known for its early departure, the last record was for 13 Aug (LEH).

### **Kingfisher**

*Status: an occasional non-breeding visitor to our ponds and Beverley Brook.*

One at Beverley Brook on Putney Lower Common 24 Nov (PH).

### **Green Woodpecker**

*Status: breeding resident.*

### **Great Spotted Woodpecker**

*Status: breeding resident.*

### **Lesser Spotted Woodpecker**

*Status: scarce visitor in recent years.*

One in woodland near Bluegate GP on 30 Mar (BC) and a later sighting at Springwell Cottage in October (AB)

### **Skylark**

*Status: passage migrant, very occasionally breeding.*

Singles on the Plain 24 Aug, flying over Plain 12 Nov and flying south over Ladies Mile 24 Dec (AP).

### **Sand Martin**

*Status: scarce passage migrant.*

### **Swallow**

*Status: regular passage migrant, has started to breed in bred again in recent years.*

The first sighting was near Sunset Road on 31 Mar (BC) with birds back at the Windmill on 16 Apr (Angela Evans). A pair bred successfully in the feed barn while another pair took up residence in



*Lesser Spotted Woodpecker*

one of the garages although breeding was not confirmed. There were six flying around the Windmill on 1 Aug while three on 24 Aug appeared to be the last of the year, signalling an early departure for these birds (AP).

### **House Martin**

*Status: currently a scarce passage migrant, much declined in recent years - last bred in 2004.*  
20 moving through, feeding over the Plain on 1 Aug (AP).

### **Tree Pipit**

*Status: scarce passage migrant, formerly bred but not since 1990.*

### **Meadow Pipit**

*Status: passage migrant and winter visitor, formerly bred but not since 2003.*

32 through in an hour, heading SW over plain on 14 Sep (AP).

One's and two's throughout late autumn on the Plain with a maximum of nine on 20 Oct (TS).

### **Grey Wagtail**

*Status: scarce breeding resident and passage migrant.*

Two at Kingsmere with same or another individual at Hookhamslade Pond on 24 Sep (AP et al) and various sightings along Beverley Brook on Wimbledon Common.

### **Yellow Wagtail**

One flew over, calling briefly near Hookhamslade on 24 Sep (AP et al).



### **Pied Wagtail**

*Status: irregular breeding resident and winter visitor.*

A pair had been around the buildings at the Windmill for much of the summer, but breeding was not confirmed. Five at Rushmere on 22 Sep (AP).

### **Robin**

*Status: abundant breeding resident.*

### **Wren**

*Status: abundant breeding resident.*

### **Dunnock**

*Status: common breeding resident.*

### **Whinchat**

*Status: regular passage migrant, occurring mainly in the autumn.*

The only record for the year was a single at the Plain's heather patch on 8 Sep (John Weir).

### **European Stonechat**

*Status: regular passage migrant and scarce winter visitor.*

For the first winter period, single birds were on the Plain on 5th, 16th and 19 Jan followed by sightings on 15th and 16 Feb and 4 Mar. (DW).

Singles birds were also at Ladies Mile on 20 Feb and 4 Mar, with two there on 26 Feb (DW). In the autumn, a female/juvenile was at the heather patch from 16th to 22 Sep (AP / John Weir) with three on the Plain 27th & 28 Sep (LEH), another female / juvenile on 6 Oct (AP), a male 27 Oct (John Weir) and an impressive six on 29 Oct (LEH) all on the Plain.

### **Northern Wheatear**

*Status: regular passage migrant.*

The only spring record was for a single at the Triangle on 23 Apr (LEH). A male (John Weir) and a female bird (AP) were on the Plain 24 Aug.

### **Blackbird**

*Status: common breeding resident.*

### **Fieldfare**

*Status: passage migrant and winter visitor, scarce in some years.*

One at Ladies Mile on 9 Mar (AP) was the only sighting for the first winter period. An early autumn record was of two on 28 Sep (LEH) while a dozen flew west over Kingsmere on 12 Nov (AP et al).

### **Song Thrush**

*Status: fairly common breeding resident.*

### **Redwing**

*Status: regular winter visitor and passage migrant.*

25 were in the hollies in the South Wood on 6 Jan and 40 were feeding there on 13 Feb (DW). Triangle Wood hosted 20 birds on 30 Jan (DW) with 30 in the Green Ride Woods 16 Feb (DW). 20 were in the Clockhouse Wood 7 Mar (Jan Wilczur). A dozen at Beverley Meads on 31 Mar (SRS) was the last record for the first winter period.

The first autumn arrivals were ten over Putney Heath 7 Oct (LEH).

### **Mistle Thrush**

*Status: breeding resident.*

### **Grasshopper Warbler**

*Status: scarce passage migrant.*

### **Blackcap**

*Status: common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, with the occasional bird wintering.*

The first singing birds of the year were heard at two sites on 19 Mar (Graham Guthrie, DW)

### **Garden Warbler**

*Status: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.*

### **Lesser Whitethroat**

*Status: a passage migrant in recent years, formerly more numerous, but has not bred since 2002.*

### **Common Whitethroat**

*Status: breeding summer visitor and passage migrant.*

Three fledged juveniles being fed by parents near Somerset ride on 11 Jul (AP).



### **Dartford Warbler**

*Status: rare visitor*

Found again at Ladies Mile on 15 Feb (Jan Wilczur), heard on 24 Feb (DW) with good views of a singing bird there on 1 Mar (BC). Singing well on 2 Mar and again on 4 Mar where it ascended in song flight (DW) with a further sighting at Ladies Mile on 7 Mar (Jan Wilczur). It was heard and seen again on 9 Mar (DW, AP) but this proved to be the last record for the year.



### **Common Chiffchaff**

*Status: common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant, with the occasional bird wintering.*

First singing birds were on 13 Mar with three individuals (DW).

Seven on 22 Sep (AP) were part of a large movement through London while two at the Mounds on 6 Oct (AP) and one at Ladies Mile 7 Oct (LEH) were the last records for the year.

### **Willow Warbler**

*Status: formerly a common breeding summer visitor and passage migrant - much declined over the last two decades.*

The first singing bird was at Ladies Mile on 5 Apr (AP). On the bird walk on 7 May there were individuals singing at Ladies Mile and at Clockhouse Wood but there were no further records.

A passage migrant was at the Mounds 24 Aug (AP).

### **Yellow-browed Warbler**

*Status: rare but increasing autumn migrant.*

One near Hookhamslade on 28 Sep (LEH). Heard first, due to its diagnostic call, this increasingly observed vagrant from its Siberian/Ural breeding grounds will almost certainly be a first record for the Common.

### **Goldcrest**

*Status: breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

A peak count of 10 on the 27 Sep (LEH).

### **Firecrest**

*Status: scarce winter visitor and passage migrant.*

Only one record was received for the first winter period with a single seen in hollies north of Queensmere on 8 Feb (Peter Carlill).

For the second winter period, records for singles came from Stag Ride, Queensmere 12 Nov (Paula Redmond), Putney Vale cemetery 13 Nov (Peter Carlill) and Windmill Road 28 Nov (AP).

Reports for December included singles again at Putney Vale cemetery 2 Dec (LEH) and 16 Dec (Peter Carlill) followed by birds at Queensmere 24 Dec (AP) and Somerset Ride 25 Dec (LEH / AEH).

### **Spotted Flycatcher**

*Status: passage migrant, becoming much scarcer.*

### **Long-tailed Tit**

*Status: common breeding resident.*

c30 in the Western Woods on 11 Jan and a similar number at Ladies Mile on 30 Jan (DW). A pair was seen nest building in gorse at Ladies Mile on 7 Feb (DW).

**Marsh Tit**

*Status: scarce visitor, the last positive evidence of breeding being in 1979.*

Not observed directly on the Common but seen regularly for the last three winters in a garden at Tibbets Close (Mike Waller). Very likely to be the origin for the pair that bred on the Common in Spring 2016.

**Blue Tit**

*Status: common breeding resident.*

**Great Tit**

*Status: common breeding resident.*

**Coal Tit**

*Status: breeding resident.*



*Marsh Tit*

**Nuthatch**

*Status: breeding resident.*

**Treecreeper**

*Status: breeding resident.*

**Jay**

*Status: breeding resident.*

**Magpie**

*Status: breeding resident.*

**Jackdaw**

*Status: common resident and occasional breeder.*

**Carrion Crow**

*Status: breeding resident.*

**Starling**

*Status: scarce breeding resident.*

30 at Rushmere on 4 Dec (Clive Hilton).

**House Sparrow**

*Status: scarce breeding resident.*

**Brambling**

*Status: scarce passage migrant and winter visitor.*

**Chaffinch**

*Status: breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

### **Hawfinch**

*Status: rare passage migrant*

One flew over the causeway heading towards the village on 9 Dec (LEH) with another flying over the skip area on 21 Dec (LEH). These birds were part of a widespread invasion from their eastern European breeding grounds where failure of the mast crops were likely to be the main cause for the dispersal.

### **Greenfinch**

*Status: breeding resident, becoming scarcer*

Five at Ladies Mile 7 Oct (LEH).

### **Goldfinch**

*Status: scarce breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.*

The highest count of the year was for 25 / 30 in the Causeway Scrub area on 16 Feb (DW).

### **Linnet**

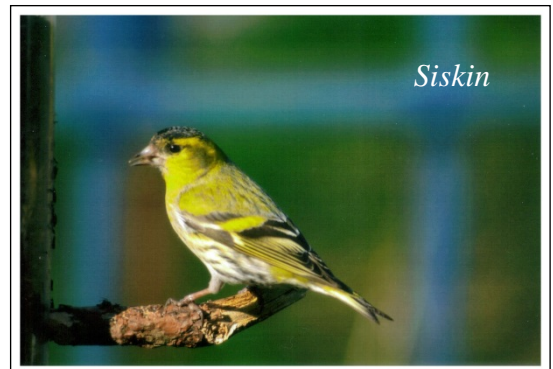
*Status: occasional passage migrant*

One flew over the Plain on 22 Mar (AP) with one at Ladies Mile on 7 Apr (DW).

### **Siskin**

*Status: winter visitor and passage migrant.*

At least ten in trees at Kingsmere on 3 March (DW/AP) with one calling as it flew SW over the Plain on 12 Nov (AP).



### **Lesser Redpoll**

*Status: winter visitor and passage migrant.*

At Ladies Mile, six on 4 Jan, 20 in birch trees on 10 Jan and 12 on 14 Feb (DW).

Ten were on the Large Mound on 24 Feb (DW), six at Ladies Mile on 4 Mar (DW) and three over there on 25 Mar (DW).

A flock of 20 at Ladies Mile 12 Nov (AP et al) and 25 at Hookhamslade on 6 Dec (BC).

### **Reed Bunting**

*Status: passage migrant and winter visitor, occasionally breeds.*

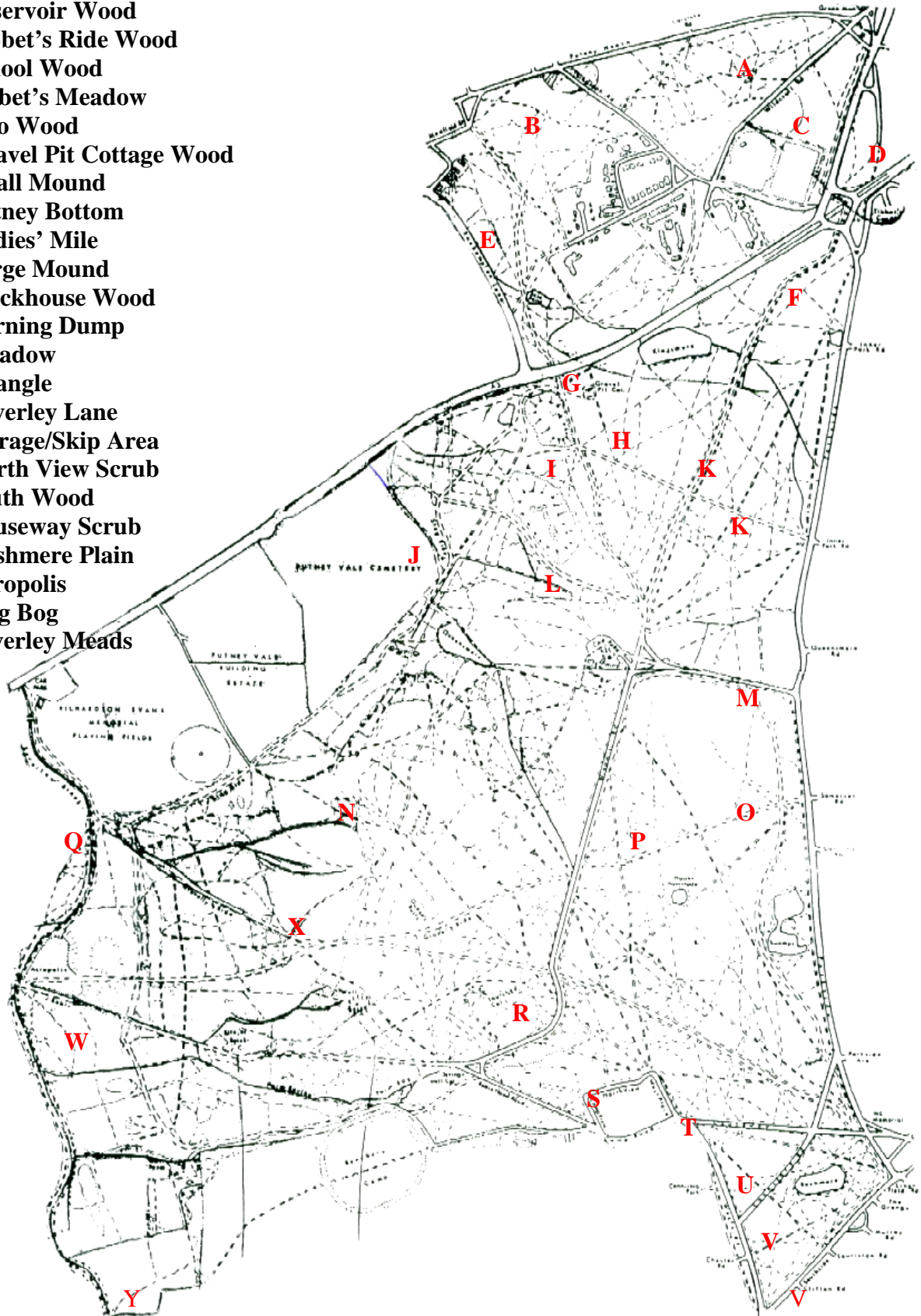
A flock of 11 at Ladies Mile on 15 Feb (Jan Wilczur) with one at Ladies Mile on 6 Apr (Simon Riley).

A male in the Plain's heather patch on 11 Jul (AP) with further sightings of two birds by Peter Haldane around this time suggest a pair may have attempted to breed on or near the Plain.

There were four on 7 Oct (LEH) and five on 8 Oct (TS) at Ladies Mile.

## A GUIDE TO FORMER, OR IMPROVISED, PLACE NAMES USED IN THIS REPORT

- A** Exeter House Wood
- B** Church Wood
- C** Reservoir Wood
- D** Tibbet's Ride Wood
- E** School Wood
- F** Tibbet's Meadow
- G** Scio Wood
- H** Gravel Pit Cottage Wood
- I** Small Mound
- J** Putney Bottom
- K** Ladies' Mile
- L** Large Mound
- M** Clockhouse Wood
- N** Burning Dump
- O** Meadow
- P** Triangle
- Q** Beverley Lane
- R** Storage/Skip Area
- S** North View Scrub
- T** South Wood
- U** Causeway Scrub
- V** Rushmere Plain
- W** Acropolis
- X** Stag Bog
- Y** Beverley Meads



## Butterflies of Wimbledon and Putney Commons 2017

**Small skipper** – common in grassland areas

**Essex skipper** – uncommon, however probably overlooked as difficult to differentiate from small skipper

**Large skipper** – common in grassy/scrubby areas. 2017 was a good year for this species.

**Clouded yellow** – irregular migrant. Not recorded 2017, it was seen in 2016

**Brimstone** – common throughout

**Large white** – uncommon in 2017

**Small white** – common in more open areas

**Green-veined white** – common in more open areas

**Orange tip** – uncommon but widespread, along woodland edges

**Green hairstreak** – uncommon. Newly discovered in 2017, may have been overlooked in prior years

**White-letter hairstreak** – uncommon, a few colonies survive around elm stands

**Purple hairstreak** – very common, although it is often overlooked as it spends the majority of its life high in the oak canopy

**Brown hairstreak** – eggs found on blackthorn in 2016. None found in subsequent “egg-hunts” in 2017



*Green Hairstreak*

**Small copper** – uncommon in areas of short grassland and heathland areas

**Common blue** – common in grassland areas. Warm weather in May encouraged more than last year

**Holly blue** – common in open woodland

**White admiral** – uncommon in woodland areas. 2017 was a good year for this species with more records than 2016. It may be increasing

**Purple emperor** – last recorded in 2016. Despite its size this species can be overlooked as it spends the majority of its life in the high canopy.

**Red admiral** – a migrant species that was seen regularly.

**Painted lady** – a migrant species. 2017 was a poor year for this species with only a few records

**Small tortoiseshell** – uncommon in more open areas

**Peacock** – common in more open areas

**Comma** – common in more open areas

**Silver-washed fritillary** – irregular wanderer. One or two are recorded most years along woodland edges

**Speckled wood** – common in dappled woodland

**Marbled white** – irregular wanderer. One or two are recorded most years in open areas

**Gatekeeper** – very common in grassy/scrubby areas. This species was especially abundant in 2017 encouraged by the warm weather in June and early July

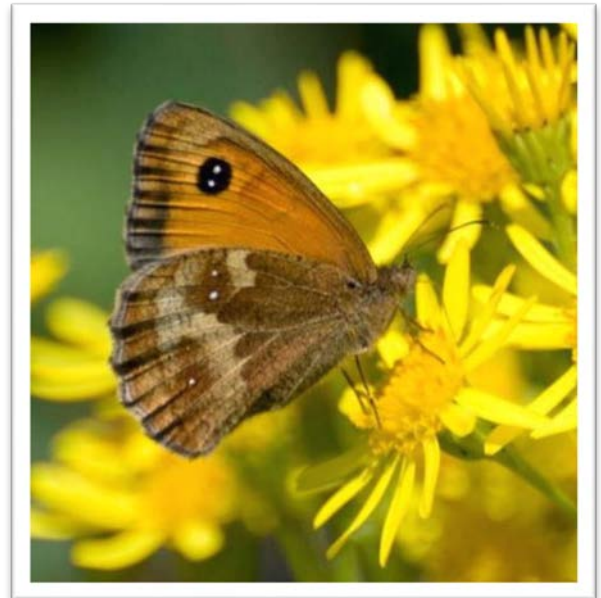
**Meadow brown** – very common in grassland areas. This species was especially abundant in 2017, particularly in June and early July.

**Ringlet** – common in areas of longer grassland. This species was especially common in 2017, particularly in June and early July.

**Small heath** – common in short turf areas



*Small Tortoiseshell*



*Gatekeeper*

Simon Riley  
January 2018

## 2017 – Damselflies and Dragonflies of Wimbledon and Putney Commons

Overall, 2017 was a record year for number of Dragonfly species recorded (20) but with population numbers at a noticeably lower level than 2016. The first half of the year was particularly lacking in rainfall, causing Bluegate Pond to almost dry up by the end of June, with reduced water levels at most of the other ponds as well. Although this has been a fairly regular occurrence over the years, it remains to be seen how populations will be affected over the next couple of years as a result.

### Damselflies

**Banded Demoiselle** – regular in small numbers on Beverley Brook, occasionally turning up elsewhere on the Commons

**Emerald Damselfly** – fairly common on Bluegate Pond and occasionally recorded on other ponds



*Emerald Damselfly, Bluegate Pond  
June 2017*

**Willow Emerald Damselfly** – seen for last three years as part of expanding UK population. Only seen in small numbers on Bluegate Pond in 2017



*Willow Emerald Damselfly, Bluegate Pond,  
September 2017*

**Large Red Damselfly** – fairly common on several of the ponds

**Azure Damselfly** – common on several of the ponds

**Common Blue Damselfly** – abundant on Queensmere and common on several of the ponds

**Blue-tailed Damselfly** – fairly common on several of the ponds

**Red-eyed Damselfly** – regular in small numbers on Queensmere and occasionally on other ponds

**Small Red-eyed Damselfly** – fairly common on Queensmere and occasionally on other ponds

### **‘True’ Dragonflies**

**Hairy Dragonfly** – one record on Hookhamslade Pond in 2017 compared to several there and on Bluegate Pond in 2016

**Migrant Hawker** – fairly regular on several ponds and met with occasionally away from water

**Southern Hawker** – fairly regular on several ponds and met with occasionally away from water

**Brown Hawker** – regular on Queensmere and occasionally elsewhere

**Emperor Dragonfly** – fairly common on Queensmere and regular on most other ponds and away from water

**Four-spotted Chaser** – regular on Bluegate Pond and Hookhamslade Pond

**Broad-bodied Chaser** – fairly common on Hookhamslade Pond and regular on Bluegate occasionally and Farm Bog

**Black-tailed Skimmer** – regular on Bluegate Pond and occasionally on other ponds



*Black-tailed Skimmer, Bluegate Pond, June 2017*

**Black Darter** – one record on Bluegate Pond in 2017, the first since 2009. A star sighting (and photo/film) by David Element. Until the early 2000s there was a significant breeding population, but currently the nearest others are on Esher Common.

**Common Darter** – as common as its name suggests in most areas, although perhaps less so than 2016

**Ruddy Darter** – fairly common around Bluegate and Hookhamslade and regular at several other ponds

Bill Budd  
January 2018

