

Barnes Common

Butterflies

Barnes Common is one of the best places to see butterflies in Central London. The 30 butterflies that can be found on the Common and 5 of our day-flying moths.



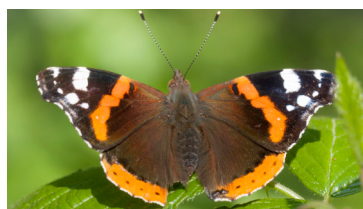
Peacock

Hibernator. Gliding flight like the Small Tortoiseshell but appears stronger, larger and darker. Low numbers on the Common.



Large White

Widespread and abundant. Black tip extends further down the wing than the Small White. Both are erratic flyers.



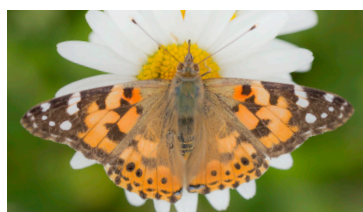
Red Admiral

Hibernator and migrant. Most common *Vanessid* on the Common. Often seen feeding on ivy flowers in the autumn.



Small White

Common and widespread. Wings appear more matt than Large White, with a less pronounced black tip.



Painted Lady

There are only a few recordings on the Common each year of this elegant migrant.



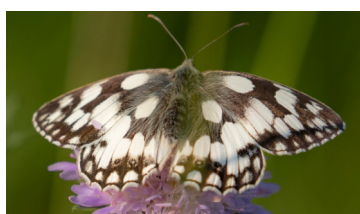
Green-Veined White

Haunts damper, shadier margins than other whites and has a flappier flight. Identified by patterning on the underwings.



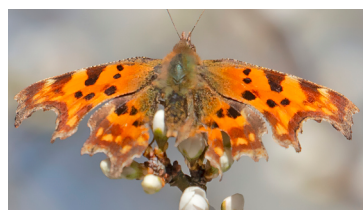
Small Tortoiseshell

Hibernator. Gliding flight like Peacock but also whirrs in flight. Seen in low numbers on the Common.



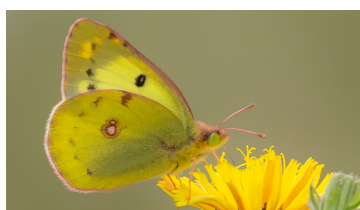
Marbled White

The range of these distinctive butterflies is increasing in Surrey. Flying late June/through July.



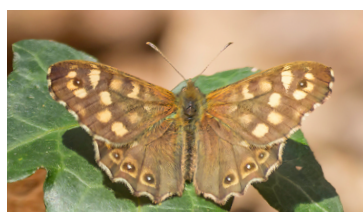
Comma

Hibernator. Reasonable numbers on the Common. Underside dark with white comma marking visible when settled and wings closed.



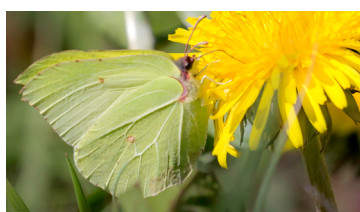
Clouded Yellow

A special sighting in late Summer. Migrants arrive from the Mediterranean, and a few make their way to Barnes.



Speckled Wood

Typically seen in woodland throughout the summer, often flying, almost floating, in dappled sunlight.



Brimstone

Hibernator. Female (left) is pale green and male bright yellow. Female in flight is easily confused with other whites.



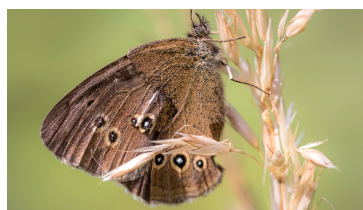
Dark Green Fritillary

A downland/grassland species. Flying late June to August in more open areas than the similar silver-washed fritillary. Hindwing underside with distinctive silver spots.



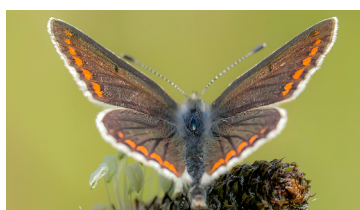
Orange Tip

A sign of Spring. Male's orange tip is distinctive. Female easily confused with whites but tends to fly in straighter lines.



Ringlet

Only a few recorded on the Common. Darker than the Meadow Brown, and with no orange colouring.



Brown Argus

Flight period May and August. No blue near body (cf female common blue). Appears silvery in flight. Often basks with wings open.

Photo Credit: Alan Harris



Common Blue
Sadly not "common" in London, flies erratically over grassland in late summer.



Small Heath
Sometimes seen flying low over finer grassland between June & August. Their numbers are declining rapidly in the UK.



Holly Blue
earlier emergence than Common Blue with which it can be confused. Flies near ivy and holly where the female lays her eggs.



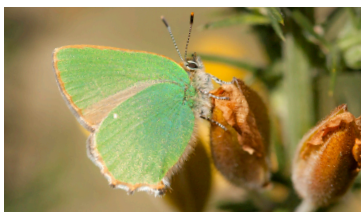
Large Skipper
First skipper to emerge in May & continues through June/July. They perch on bramble, often several together, with wings close to the body. Forewings mottled.



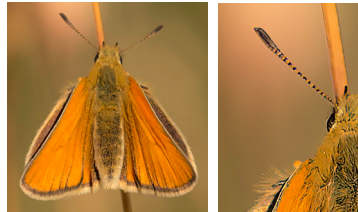
Purple Hairstreak
Small, appearing silver-grey when flying high in oak trees on warm evenings in July & August.



Small Skipper
Seen in July & August flying over long grass. Easily confused with the Essex Skipper. Antennae tips have orange underside.



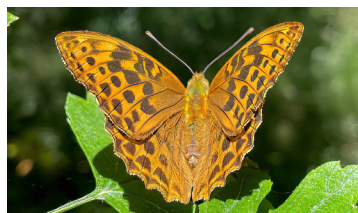
Green Hairstreak
A few of these are seen on gorse hotspots in Spring. The iridescent green underside apparent only when perched.



Essex Skipper
Seen in July & August with Small Skipper with which it is easily confused. Antennae have darker tips.



White-letter Hairstreak
Elusive butterfly whose males fly around the tops of elms. Visible around midday in July. Eggs recorded on elms in Barnes.



Silver-washed Fritillary
A woodland butterfly. Flying late June to August. Male bright orange colour. Females more greenish.
Photo Credit: Karen Goldie-Morrison



Brown Hairstreak
Egg first recorded on Barnes Common in 2021 & adult in Aug 2022. Elusive on blackthorn & ash stands.



Cinnebar
Seen in high summer on grasslands. Distinctive black & yellow banded caterpillars found on common ragwort.



Meadow Brown
A widespread summer butterfly of grassland. Forewing eyespot has one white spot. Underside hindwing has black spots.



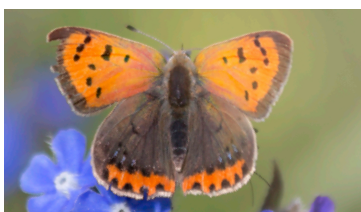
Six-spot Burnet
Seen in high summer on grasslands. Attracted to a range of of flowers, including thistles, knapweed & scabious.



Gatekeeper
Smaller & brighter coloured than the Meadow Brown with two white spots in forewing eye. Often nectars on bramble. Flying Jul/Aug.



Jersey Tiger
Flash of orange hind wing colour in flight. In high summer all over Barnes - in gardens and on the Common.



Small Copper
Fast flyer, hard to identify in flight, but unmistakable at rest. Several can sometimes be seen nectaring together in the acid grassland. Can be seen throughout summer.



Mother Shipton (left) & Burnet Companion.
Easily confused with the skipper butterflies.