

JANUARY MEETING

1st Talk

Butterflies of South East Kent

A talk by Richard Sturt reported by Terry Sutton

Richard Sturt OBE, the former Dover coroner and solicitor, was our guest speaker again at St Mary's parish centre at our January meeting. He has spoken to members of the society a couple of times before on various subjects but this time was about one of his hobbies—watching butterflies!

Richard told me his interest in the subject went back many years and followed his father's pursuit on similar lines.

Using a PowerPoint presentation Richard told the meeting that even in winter 59 species of butterflies could be found in the United Kingdom of which some 40 were located in or near Dover. He produced a map of East Kent, pinpointing where the various types of butterflies were to be found there.

Woods and forests were favourite places but also grassland at Lydden, the Alkham Valley, Watersend, Langdon Cliffs, the Western Heights and Folkestone Downs.

His beautiful pictures ranged from the Red Admiral to the Duke of Burgundy (the latter hatching from a chrysalis in the spring). There were large and small whites, the delicate Orange Tip, the Speckled Wood, Green and White

Hairstreaks (Temple Ewell and Alkham). Also shown were the minute Small Blue, immigrant Painted Ladies, the eye-catching Marble White, and the not-to-be forgotten Adonis Blue found at Lydden and on the hills above Folkestone. There were many more types shown.

Richard also told of us of the remarkable arrangements between the Adonis Blue and ants.

"The Adonis Blue and Chalkhill Blue are attended by ants and the chrysalises actually sing to them. They are then taken down into the ants' nest where the ants suck the honey like fluid out of the chrysalis. Later the ants attend the emerging adult taking it to the surface, ready to dry its wings and take off," revealed Richard.



Adonis Blue (male)