

# South Downs Way Ahead NIA

Best Practice Event 26 September 2013

Alfriston, East Sussex

**Ecosystems Services – Achievements 2012 and 2013**

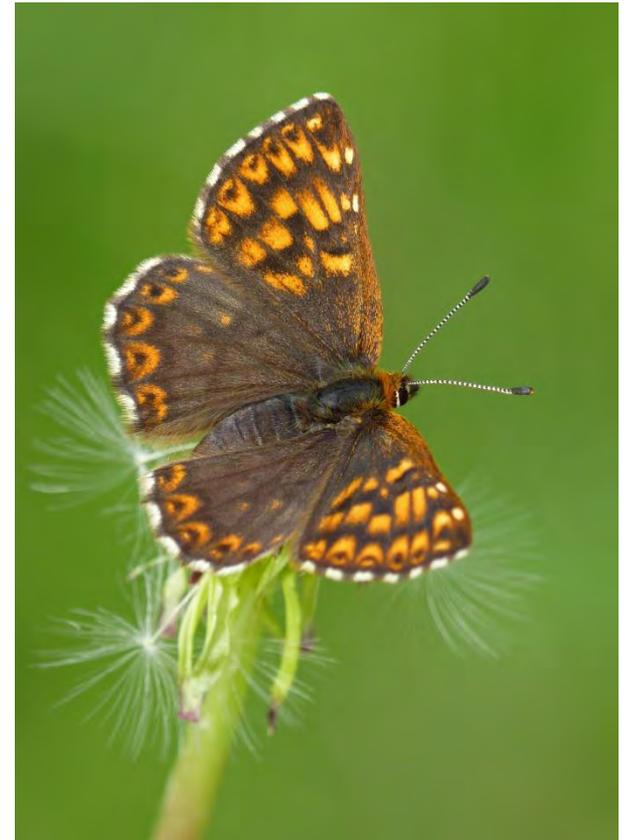
Chantry to Chanctonbury Project



# Vision and Aims

**NIA South Downs Way Ahead vision:** A better connected and inspirational chalk ecosystem, sustainably managed to enhance biodiversity and people's well-being for now and the future

**Chantry to Chanctonbury Project aim:** Improve, extend, create and link chalk grassland habitat suitable for the endangered Duke of Burgundy butterfly



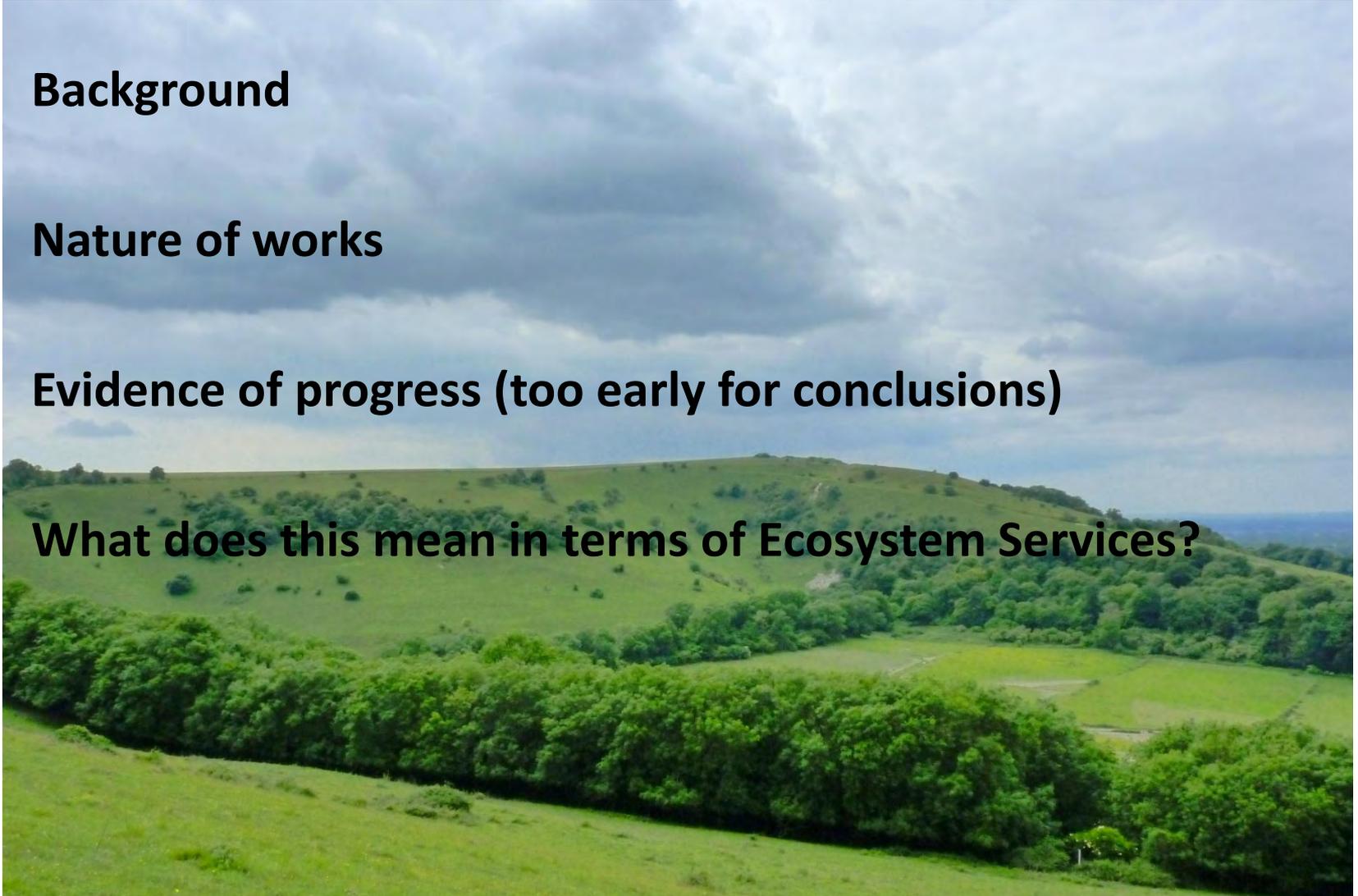
# Content

**Background**

**Nature of works**

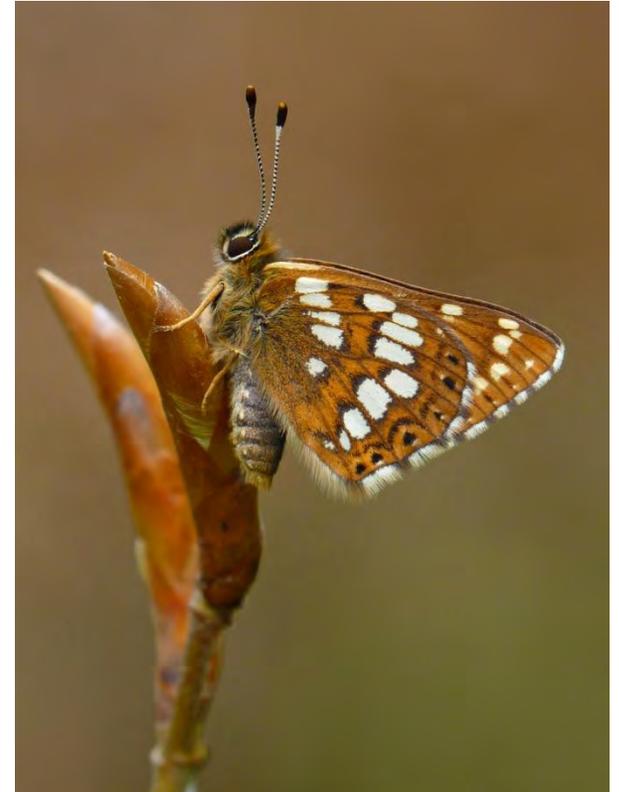
**Evidence of progress (too early for conclusions)**

**What does this mean in terms of Ecosystem Services?**



# Status of the Duke of Burgundy

- The Duke of Burgundy is one of the UK's fastest declining butterflies, down by nearly 50% in 10 years
- Estimated number of remaining colonies varies between 90 and 130 (difficulty with definition of 'colony')
- Most of these are very small and considered vulnerable – medium and particularly large (>30 specimens seen per day) colonies are now very rare
- Long-term conservation will rely upon the successful maintenance of metapopulations existing over networks of suitable habitat (**landscape scale**)



## Other Beneficiaries

The Duke of Burgundy is the flagship species for the 'Chantry to Chanctonbury' project

Representative of a suite of invertebrate species which occupies the awkward ground in early to mid successional calcareous grassland habitats

*Osmia bicolor*



# Working In Partnership (West to East)

1) **Hampshire/Sussex borderlands** including Harting & Hooksway areas: 'Dukes on the Edge' Project

Formerly led by SDJC & BC Sussex

Other parties include West Dean Estate, SDNPA, BC Sussex, National Trust, HWT

2) **Heyshott to Kithurst Escarpment**

Other parties include Murray Downland Trust, Graffham Down Trust, Barlavington Estate, Norfolk Estate, Springhead Estate

3) **Chantry to Chanctonbury NIA Project South Downs Way Ahead** Other parties include BC Sussex, Wiston Estate and local farmers



**Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust**



# Chantry Hill

Scrub cutting and removal of secondary woodland

Bare ground creation

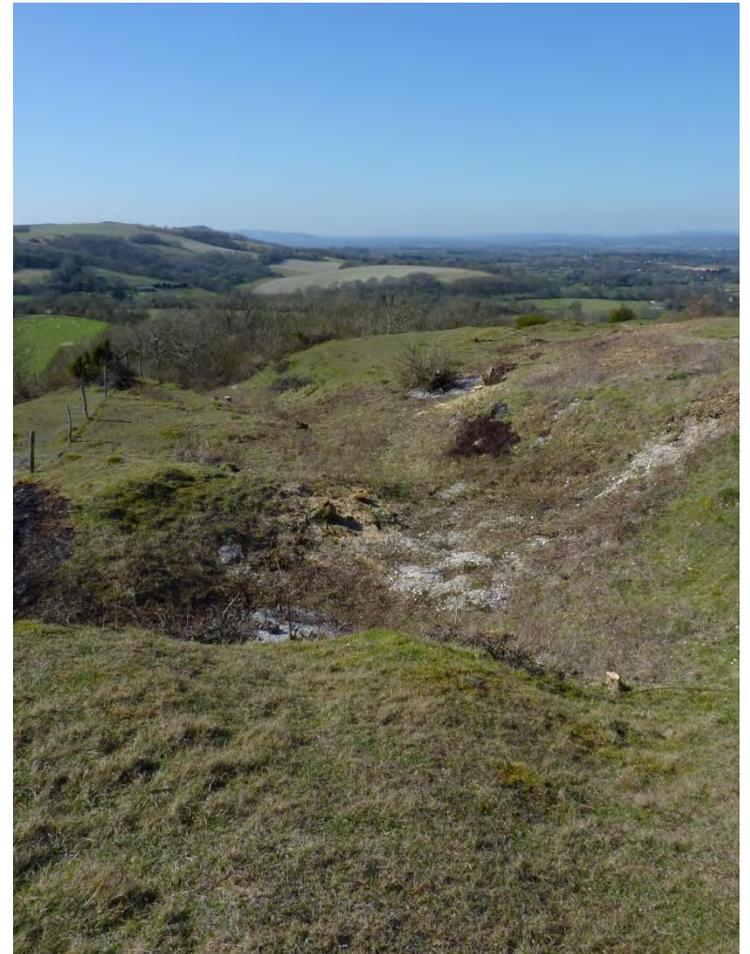
Change in grazing regime



# Washington Pits

Scrub cutting

Change in grazing regime



# Chanctonbury Ring

Scrub cutting and removal of secondary woodland

Implementation of grazing



# Evidence of Progress

## Duke of Burgundy

2010 & 2011



2012 & 2013 (NIA)



# Evidence of Progress

## Green Hairstreak

Total adult counts for Sussex 2012 = **38**

Adults seen on cleared slope at Chantry Hill on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2013 = **63**

Early stage regeneration of scrub (food-plants) over cleared area



# Evidence of Progress

## Small Blue

Total number seen at Chantry Hill

2010: **1**

2011: **0**

2012: **1**

2013: **3**

Bare ground creation encourages Kidney  
Vetch growth



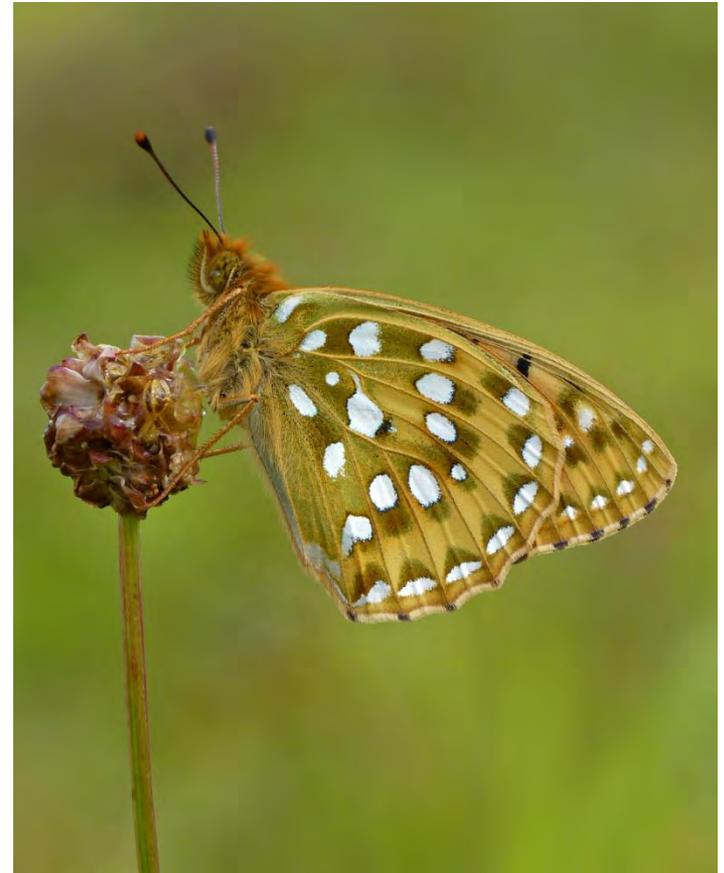
# Evidence of Progress

## Dark Green Fritillary

Maximum daily count Chantry Hill

2010: **1**  
2011: **2**  
2012: **0**  
2013: **55**

Increase in *Viola* spp. following change to grazing regime



# Evidence of Progress

## Silver-spotted Skipper

### Known distribution West Sussex 2012:

Newtimber Hill (Poynings)

Chantry Hill (Storrington)

### New discoveries West Sussex 2013:

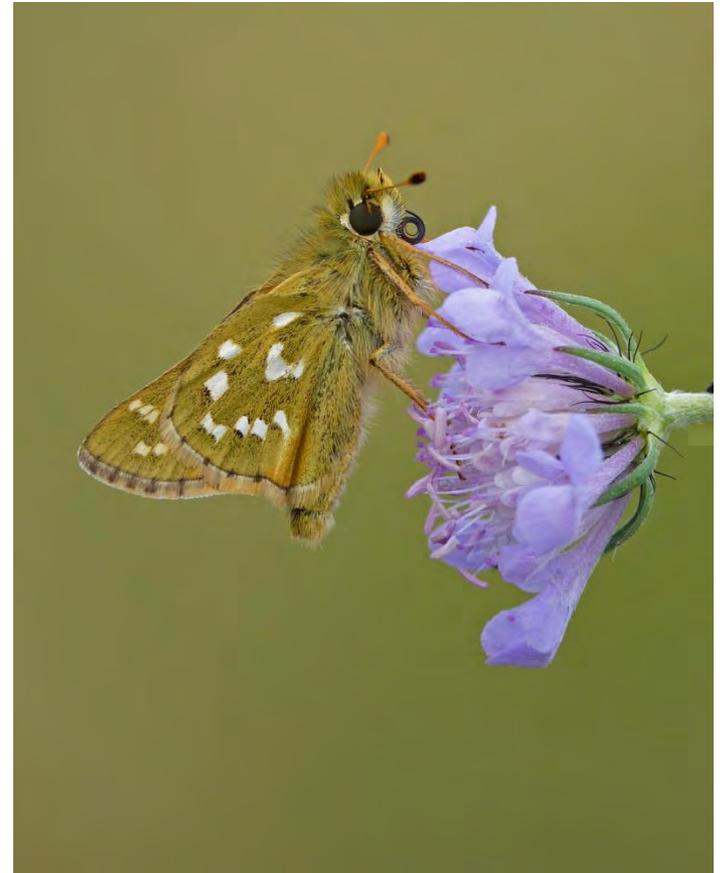
Washington Pits (A24)

Cissbury Ring (A24)

Waterhall (A27)

Benfield Hill (A27)

Mill Hill (A27)



# What does this mean in terms of Ecosystem Services?

## Regulating Services:

**Most of the benefits provided by actual project work, for example:**

- a) Scrub & tree removal allows more rainwater to enter aquifer
- b) Reversion to chalk grassland reduces chemical input
- c) More wild flowers – more pollinators

## Cultural Services:

**Most of the benefits provided by looking at butterflies, for example:**

- a) Physical health benefits
- b) Spiritual connection with nature

**What value can we attribute to the enjoyment felt by many in looking at butterflies?**

**How much of it goes on in our NIA?**

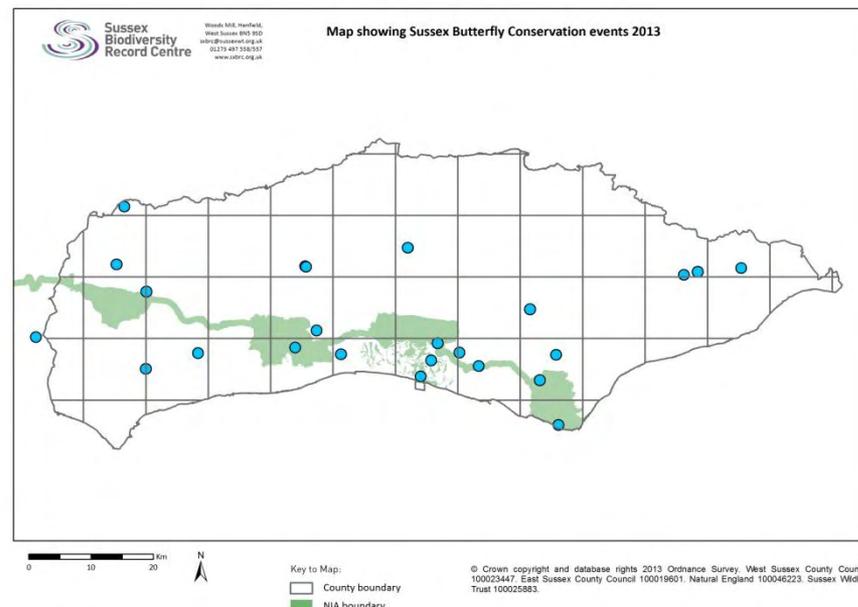
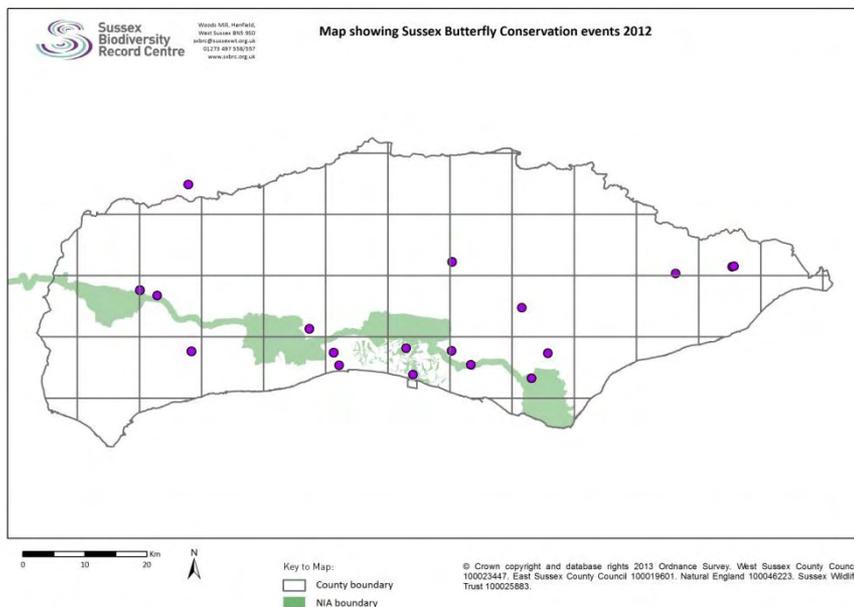
# Butterfly Conservation Sussex Branch Guided Walks

## 2012

Total events	<b>22</b>
Events in NIA	<b>10</b>
Total attendance	<b>414</b>
In-NIA attendance	<b>234</b>

## 2013

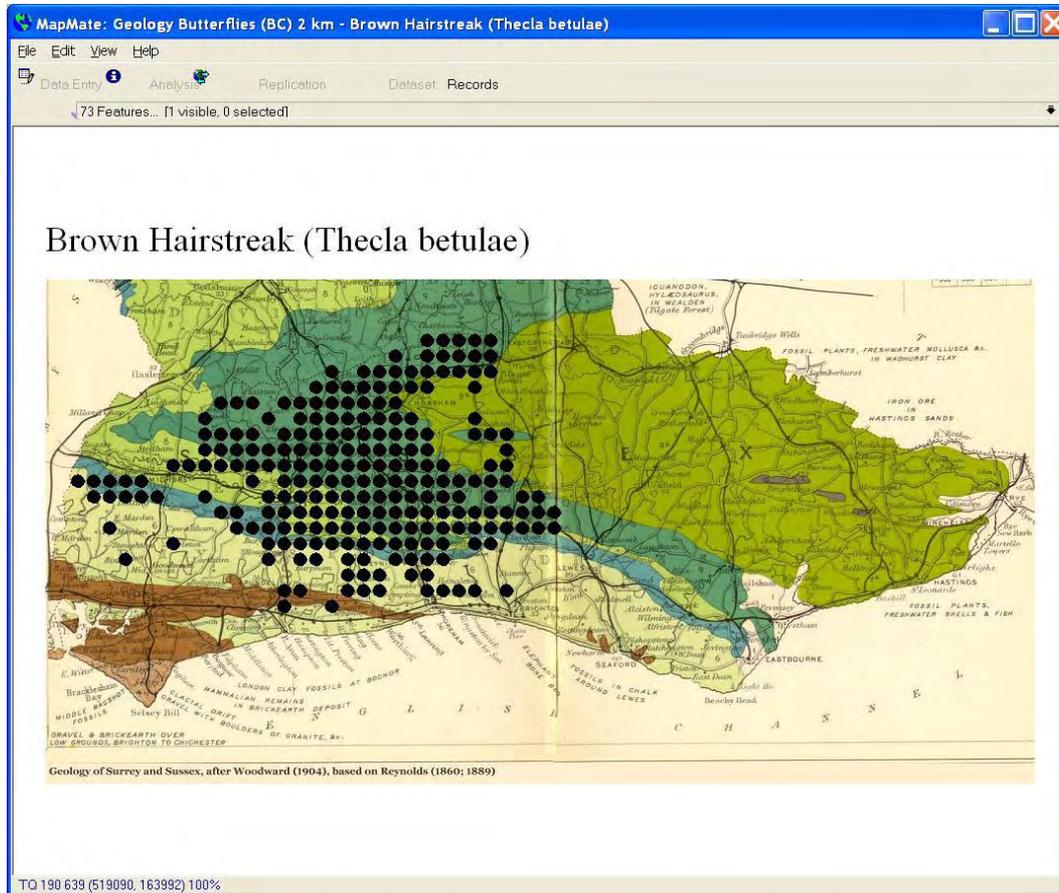
Total events	<b>35</b>
Events in NIA	<b>13</b>
Total attendance	<b>709</b>
In-NIA attendance	<b>243</b>



# Butterfly Conservation Sussex Branch Recording Effort

Total butterfly records 2012 = **27,897** (>50% in NIA)

Total days spent recording per annum = **>750** (>50% in NIA)



# How Many Person/Days Spent Enjoying Butterflies in NIA?

## SDNPA Visitor Survey 2012: Environment Element

*“Wildlife watching and photography were amongst the most popular activities”*

60% participants as measured at 44 sites where surveyed sites had either a nature conservation or heritage designation, or heavily used for recreation

Without a dedicated, specific survey we have to guesstimate

Perhaps **15,000 person/days**?



# What Value to Wildlife Enthusiasts?

“Priceless”



# Thank You

Chantry Hill looking towards  
Chanctonbury

