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## THE HABITAT

The mix of trees, such as oak and elm, shrubs such as bramble, holly and ivy as well as grasses and flowers such as ragwort all contribute to making this a butterfly haven.

Elm is the sole food plant for both the scarce *White-letter Hairstreak* butterfly and *White-spotted Pinion* moth and oak feeds the *Purple Hairstreak*.

Bramble, hogweeds, nettles and ragworts are also important sources of nectar and food for the butterflies and other insects.

The dapple shaded rides are good for some woodland species such as *Holly Blue* and *Speckled Wood*, while the grasses and flowers may attract *Meadow Brown*, *Gatekeepers*, *Marbled White* and *Skippers* among others and the tree canopy is usually home to the *Hairstreaks*.



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## OTHER SITES



There are two sites within 2 km of Potton:

**Potton Wood** ●

**The Lodge RSPB Reserve** ●

Both are excellent for a mix of woodland and grassland butterflies. Potton Wood is particularly noted for *Silver-washed Fritillary* and the occasional *Purple Emperor*. Both have also been seen infrequently at the Lodge. Potton also has *White-letter* and *Purple Hairstreak* and the latter is common at the Lodge.

**For butterfly ID on your walk and to record your sightings, download the IRecord Butterflies App to your phone.**

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## THE POTTON BUTTERFLY WALK

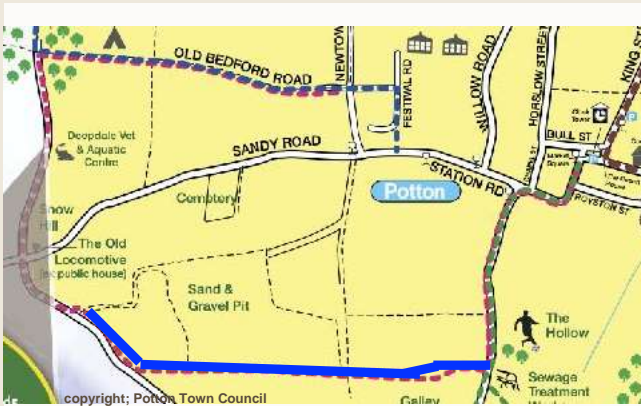
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*Gatekeeper and White-letter Hairstreak*

This leaflet introduces you to the Carthagena Way County Wildlife site. It describes some of the summer butterflies that may be found along the bridleway including one of the species that make this site so valuable.





**Key**  
 Butterfly walk ————  
 Walks around Potton 'Walk 3' - - - -

Carthagena bridleway became a County Wildlife site in 2018. It was notified due to two scarce species - the *White-letter Hairstreak* butterfly and the *White-spotted Pinion* moth.

The site extends from the Biggleswade Road in the east to Carthagena Road in the west, running parallel to the Carthagena Golf Course. It forms part of 'Walk 3', described in the leaflet 'Walks around Potton', available from the library or printed as a download from Potton Town Council website.

Start either at the permissive path by the entrance to the disused quarry on Carthagena Road, or from the Biggleswade Road. Usually the best section is from halfway along at the junction of Sutton Mill Road, heading west toward Carthagena Road.

# THE CARTHAGENA BUTTERFLIES

Butterflies can be seen along the bridleway from spring through to autumn on calm, warm days. The best time to look is mid-morning to mid-afternoon. Different butterflies emerge at different times of year and this will influence the species you see. Mid-June to late July is when you might see most species and when the Brambles are in flower. Although not a long walk, the more time spent looking, the more you might see. On a good day, at the peak time of year, one might see between 15 and 20 species over a couple of hours or so.



## **Holly Blue**

Unlike its 'blue' relatives, the **Holly Blue** has a blue tinge to its underwings. It is also prefers woodier areas. Look for it flying around Holly in spring and Ivy in summer. The **Peacock** is among one of our most familiar butterflies and along with two or three other species lays its eggs on Stinging Nettles. Like many of the other butterflies at this site it likes to nectar on Bramble flowers.

## **Peacock**



Holly Blue



Peacock

## **White-letter Hairstreak**

These stars of the walk are frustratingly hard to see due being small and their habit of perching in the top canopy of their favourite food plants. The **White-letter Hairstreak** feeds exclusively on Elm and the **Purple Hairstreak** on Oak. Against a bright sky, the latter often looks grey or silver. Check both trees and low down on Bramble flowers.

## **Purple Hairstreak**



White-letter Hairstreak



Purple Hairstreak

## **Marbled White**

These two species are markedly contrasting in where you will find them. The **Marbled White**, which confusingly is related to the 'brown' butterflies, likes open grassland where it can be quite abundant. The **Speckled Wood**, as its name suggests, is more of a woodland butterfly that you will see flitting about the glades along the walk.

## **Speckled Wood**



Marbled White



Speckled Wood