

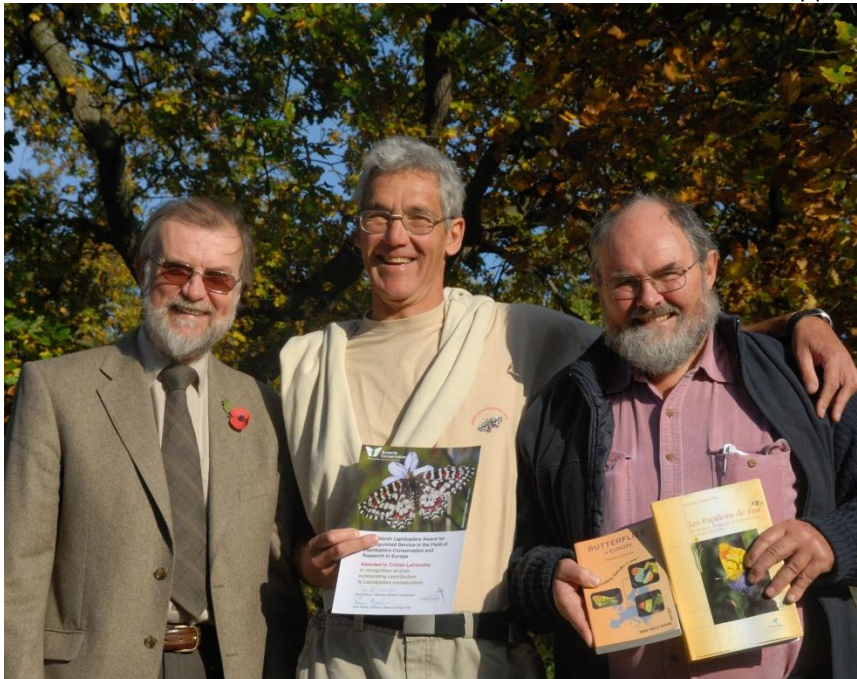
Tristan Lafranchis 1960 – 2025

It is with profound sadness I report the death of my special friend Tristan Lafranchis, the eminent French naturalist and entomologist, whose books changed for good the study of butterflies. It was a great privilege and a very special time for us to explore Greece with him, his wife Tatiana and his young children, camping in the mountains and using his 'Butterflies of Europe – a new field guide and key' to learn how to identify European butterflies. This book was a game changer for European butterflies and though identification keys were normal in Entomology they had never been done for European butterflies before. This book is still the 'bible' of European butterfly people and I have often met people carrying it on butterfly sites in Europe. It is available as a free download <https://diatheo.weebly.com/butterflies-of-europe.html>. He had already published 'Les Papillons de jour de France, Belgique et Luxembourg' so was well known to French entomologists. He was very against collecting and though he often handled butterflies they were always released immediately. He taught me to examine, very gently, the genitalia of male *Mellitea* fritillaries, using a hand lens which is the easiest way to separate some members of this group.

Tristan was also an expert botanist and his approach to butterflies was always informed by the plants he found. He would examine *Gentiana cruciata* for the eggs of Alcon Blue *Phengaris alcon*. Sanfoin (*Onobrychis Sp.*) would always get him excited as it is the foodplant of many rare blues. Tristan taught me not only about butterflies but about life. He followed his passion, living frugally on his book income and doing tours for Greentours and then Greenwings. We had the luxury of a campervan, they had ancient tents and a battered Renault. The camping places were magical and butterflies unforgettable.

Tristan rarely came to England but was one of the first recipients of the Marsh European award for services to Butterflies in 2011.

2011 David Dennis, Tristan Lafranchis and Simon Spencer Marsh Award Ceremony photo Jim Asher



His presence as a speaker at the European Butterflies Group conference in Digne les Bains in 2013 was crucial for bringing the Butterfly people of France together for the first time and was his only recent public appearance at a conference in France. True to form he showed us an Osiris blue egg on Sanfoin.

He will be sorely missed by a lot of people.

For full biography in French <https://diatheo.weebly.com/biographie.html>
Simon and Anne Spencer

Tristan Lafranchis looking for butterfly eggs (Photo Jim Asher)



Osiris Blue egg on Sanfoin (photo Jim Asher)



Some of Tristan's Books

