



Butterfly
Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

The Suffolk Argus

The Newsletter of the **Suffolk** Branch of Butterfly Conservation



Wall butterfly at Shingle Street by Malcolm Farrow

Brimstones and Buckthorn at Jimmy's Farm



Steve Backshall and Jimmy Doherty address the crowd



Steve, Rob and Jimmy plant Buckthorn

See 'Brimstones and Buckthorn' on page 10 Photos by Julian Dowding



Brown Scallop larva



Bucculatrix frangutella mines



Dark Umber larva

Moth larvae and mine found on Buckthorn Photos by Tony Prichard

The Wall - a single species survey

See page 8



Wall female
Photo Douglas Hammersley



Wall male
Photo Jonathan Tyler

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New Members

We welcome the following new members who have joined the Branch and we look forward to meeting them at our events this year.

Mr D Basham	Ipswich
Mr & Mrs D and J Chew	Haverhill
Mr & Mrs W and C Cooper	Lawshall
Mrs A Davey	Ipswich
Mr P Douch	Lowestoft
Ms J Keeley	Newmarket
Ms C Lowry	Cambridge
Mr D Owen	Stowmarket
Miss J Reeve	Needham Market
Ms H Saunders	Ipswich

Editorial copy date

Contributions for the Summer edition of our newsletter are very welcome and should be sent to the Editor, Peter Maddison, no later than Saturday 24th September 2011.

Any piece of writing considered to be of interest will be published and we also welcome line drawings, prints and photographs.

Contributions (preferably electronic) can be sent to the address on page 4 or by email to: prmaddison@yahoo.co.uk

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Butterfly Conservation

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Editorial

Peter Maddison

As the season unfolds we watch intrigued as butterflies appear half a month or so before their expected emergence!

We can only observe as the high altitude jet streams and anti-cyclonic weather patterns bring us months of dry, warm weather, and phenological surprises; and it seems that we have no more control over the present climate of government directives and financial cutbacks.

However it is evident that people power is persuasive: the government had to rethink their policy on forestry sell-off and within Suffolk it is people pressure that has brought about the reprieve of some public services. The Branch committee sought clarification from the County Council about the proposal to dispose of Country Parks. Knettishall Heath and Ramparts Meadow, for example, have important butterfly and moth interest and our committee has been able to offer specific management advice.

The swingeing cuts to the grants from central government are beginning to affect the environmental work done by professional bodies and charities. As jobs are lost the prospect of holding on to our wildlife and its further enrichment present a huge challenge.

The support that Butterfly Conservation members give has become even more important. Our subscriptions are our first line of support, and in this newsletter Richard Stewart considers the benefit of joining other Branches. This is not only informative for members it is financially beneficial to BC too. Recording is another means of offering support and whilst Rob

Parker is delighted to receive all your butterfly records, Mark Nowers is leading this year's special survey of the Wall.

The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey continues for its third year and we have an extensive field events programme in which the identification and recording of butterflies takes a high priority. Our events are open to everyone. Beginners seeking help with the naming of butterflies are very welcome to join us, as are experienced enthusiasts who may be searching for a single target species. Or perhaps the fascinating world of moths intrigues you, Tony Prichard our county moths Conservation Officer, whose address is on the Contacts page, would be pleased to hear from you. The Moth Group has a full programme of events throughout the season www.suffolkmoths.org.uk.

Richard Stewart has sent an update about his recently published book of haiku poems, *Dark Sky Dancing*. He writes: 'Thanks to publicity in this newsletter and elsewhere, plus very good reviews in poetry magazines, all the original print run and extra copies ordered have been sold. A profit of just over a hundred pounds was made, all going to Butterfly Conservation. Most was sent to our Suffolk Branch, hopefully to help in the renewed Brimstone and Buckthorn campaign.'

Thank you, Richard!

That Was The Spring That Was!

Rob Parker

The weather of March, April and May 2011 has set historic records for lack of rain, and East Anglia has been drier than anywhere else. Sunshine hours have also been well above average and the impact on our flora and fauna has been considerable, with early bluebells hitting the headlines, soon followed by complaints from farmers trying to grow crops. Gale-force winds in May blew sandstorms across West Suffolk and pig farms lost their topsoil.

But what about the butterflies?

Remember the snow of December 2010? The frosts of the winter must have taken their toll on the species hibernating as adults - particularly the relatively delicate Red



Holly Blue
by Mervyn Crawford

Admirals. A few sturdy Small Tortoiseshells and Peacocks ventured out on fine days in February, but it was mid March before they were out in numbers, accompanied by Brimstones and

Commas. By then, the sun was warming everything up and it seemed that spring might be early and mild. Those species that had overwintered as pupae - Orange-tip and Holly Blue most noticeably, appeared in good numbers early in April, and kept flying through a protracted spell of good weather. Temperatures were well above the norm for April, and reached record-breaking levels by 20th (23°C where I was in West Suffolk). By this time, all the Whites had emerged, along with Speckled Wood and Small Copper. All the hibernators were still on the wing, and

the Red Admirals joined them, perhaps as immigrants. What a shame we did not have an April field meeting in this year's calendar.

On the Devil's Dyke (just into Cambridgeshire) the first Dingy Skipper was noted on 23rd April, and was flying in Suffolk by 4th May. The Norfolk Swallowtails were emerging by 5th May - much earlier than usual.



Green Hairstreak
by Douglas Hammersley

Early May also brought Green Hairstreaks out, and this was the beginning of a good season for them. Three were sitting basking in the morning sun on the day of our first field meeting at Purdis Heath, though sadly they had disappeared by the time our group assembled at 2pm. The hot weather induced wandering instincts, and Green Hairstreaks began to turn up in unfamiliar places. A garden in Bury St Edmunds and an old quarry not far from Sudbury were both new records for their respective 10 km squares. Like the Holly Blue, the Green Hairstreak has had one of those long spring flight periods where it gets seen more often than usual. Brown Argus too, seems to be running a populous first generation.

Our Dingy Skipper hunt in the King's Forest found them in reasonable numbers on 6th, 13th & 14th May, and although they were again absent from RAF Barnham, there does appear to be a colony in the adjacent Barnham Heath, which is a Norfolk Wildlife Trust reserve (in Suffolk). This is good news as it provides some hope for re-colonisation at RAF Barnham by what is now our rarest butterfly.

Strong winds and overcast skies took over from 16th May, and suddenly it seemed that the 'May/June Gap' had started. The Vanessaids were no longer flying, the smaller butterflies were all sheltering, and even the Whites were scarce.

The Silver-studded Blue was on the wing in Cornwall by 15th May, which is well ahead of usual. As I write this (24th May), I can tell you that the Silver-studded Blue larvae at Minsmere have mostly pupated, so we could be heading for an early season with them. [See update note below, Ed] That is significant for the rest of the species which have overwintered as eggs or larvae, and we should be seeing them soon. The Large Skipper ought to be appearing any day now, to be followed by the Browns, whose grass-feeding larvae may have had a hard time munching on parched pastures.

Given all of the above, it is quite surprising that none of the 2011 records that have reached me so far are earliest-ever records for Suffolk. But perhaps you know better? Take a look at the flight-time table on the back cover to get an idea of how the season will progress through the summer. Many of the spring species are bivoltine (double-brooded) and will make a second



Wall
by Douglas Hammersley

appearance in late summer. One of these is the Wall, and this year it is the subject of a special survey. Please send in records of any you see this summer/autumn - even if you are not enrolled for the 'Single-species survey' (for more detail see page 8).

Still unknown, is whether this will be a good year for migrants, although you will remember that in 2009, the Painted Lady invasion got underway on 24th May - the very day I write this note. Let's hope that there will be clouds of migrants to brighten up our autumn.

2nd June Update.

In the event, Large Skipper broke cover on 30th May. On the same day, Silver-studded Blue broke all records by appearing a whole week ahead of Suffolk's earliest-ever record (7th June 2007). The first was Rob Macklin's sighting at Aldringham Walks, closely followed by others at Ransomes, Purdis Heath and Martlesham Heath, where 18 were counted on 2nd June. Not to be outdone, White-letter Hairstreak also put in a startlingly early appearance also on 2nd June - 18 days ahead of the standing record. Summer has arrived with a bang!



White-letter Hairstreak
by Douglas Hammersley

The Wall Brown Butterfly – a Single Species Survey

Mark Nowers is leading the survey for the Suffolk Naturalists' Society and has written the following article, which will appear in the 'White Admiral'. Suffolk BC members are encouraged to take part in the survey.

In conservation terms, the phrase 'formerly common resident' is particularly gloomy. I haven't hit 40 yet, but I despair of the fact that the House Sparrows that used to plague my father's vegetable patch when I was just a boy and nested in the cracks under the eaves are no more. For the delightful borough of Croydon, the House Sparrow is very much a 'formerly common resident'. Here in Suffolk, House Sparrows are still relatively common and it fills me with joy to see them gorging on millet in our front garden. However, there are other species that are vying for that infamous moniker, the Wall being one.

Declining fortunes

A tremendous amount of fieldwork has been undertaken over the last fifteen years and this has served to highlight a significant decline in records of the Wall. In the five year period of the millennium survey (1995-1999) of Suffolk's 1089 surveyed tetrads, the Wall was recorded in 350 (32%), with a distinct bias towards the coast and the Brecks. Over the most recent five-year period (2005-2009) of 997 tetrads, records were received from only 122 (12.2%). In 2010, records came from just 21 tetrads (4% of those surveyed), with no records from the west of the county.

Where you can help

Twenty-one tetrads, surely the decline cannot be that severe? Reasons for the decline are poorly understood and as such, the species has been allocated to the BAP category of 'Research Only'.

To the best of my knowledge, one of the primary drivers for readers of the *White Admiral* is to monitor our county's wildlife; therefore, I would like to ask for your help

in surveying sites for the Wall this year. Rob Parker has devised a list of paired tetrads across the county which we would like to get surveyed, ideally during both the May and August flight periods. One is a known or promising site and the other is an adjacent or nearby square from which no records have been received in the last four years. This is not an arduous task. If you have not surveyed for butterflies before, you are missing a treat. At its simplest, it is a leisurely walk in the sunshine with a map, notebook and pencil. I can't think of a more pleasurable pastime.

The "Research Only" BAP category for the Wall will be greatly assisted if we can compile as much up to date information as possible. Even if you are unable to survey specific tetrads, any observations will of course be welcome. Monitoring is the bedrock of conservation and the combined distribution and expertise of SNS membership can truly help here.

Further reading

For more information, I would direct you to Rob Parker's monograph in the Spring 2011 edition of the *Suffolk Argus*.

Getting in touch

If you would like to get involved, please email marknowers@btinternet.com or call 07562 980870. We will endeavour to offer survey squares close to your home or in your area of choice. First come, first served.

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks to Rob Parker for providing the impetus for this survey and for allowing me to reproduce some of the detail from the aforementioned monograph.

The Importance of Butterfly Branches

Richard Stewart

I think that my membership of other Butterfly Branches is still the highest among Butterfly Conservation members - a total of ten. I must admit this was initially done as a necessary way of keeping in touch with other parts of the country when I was the Suffolk Butterfly Recorder and involved in the nationwide Millennium Survey. Now of course more websites are available.

This multiple membership has produced many benefits. First there are regular newsletters, and over the years I have contributed to all ten. I have also occasionally attended both field and indoor meetings, both involving early starts from Ipswich. Over the years I have made many contacts, and Marie and I have been on holidays arranged by Branches, to areas that include the Lake District, Isle of Wight and the Spanish Pyrenees on three occasions with two different Branches.

This membership has also given me chances to see many species no longer found in Suffolk and such information has largely contributed to my seeing sixty-one species in this country. I would consider that the other great benefit of having close contacts with other Branches is being able to have local knowledge about species and where to find them. Otherwise you could travel some distance, spend many hours exploring a site, yet end up frustrated. Local knowledge sought out beforehand would give precise location details - except of course for particularly rare and vulnerable species. You don't of course actually have to be a Branch member to avail yourself of this

knowledge as it can usually be provided by the County Recorder or Branch Contact, these being listed in the national magazine or on websites. Our own Branch regularly uses this facility on out of Suffolk trips or longer weekends away. Perhaps the best recent example was on our day trip on May 12th 2010. Colin Lucas was our site expert and local contact, on a relatively dull and windy day when we could have spent fruitless hours around Totternhoe Quarry without finding any of the rare Duke of Burgundy. He took us to a deep gully, the remains of a mineshaft, just as the sun emerged. Most of us would have dismissed it since there was a steep descent to a burnt out motorbike at the bottom, surrounded by beer cans. This was however a suntrap, the temperature much higher than elsewhere, and there we found three Duke of Burgundy and a Dingy Skipper.

Think about joining other Branches - it doesn't cost much extra and gives you a detailed insight into other areas and their varied moth and butterfly activities.



Duke of Burgundy
by Douglas Hammersley

Brimstones & Buckthorn

Julian Dowding

In 1998 Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation, along with Ipswich Organic Gardeners Group, Ipswich Wildlife Group and the Wildlife Rangers at Ipswich Borough Council launched the Brimstones and Buckthorn initiative. The scheme was essentially a wildlife gardening exercise, encouraging people to plant Buckthorn bushes in their gardens and thus attract Brimstone butterflies, since Buckthorn is the sole food plant of the butterfly which is known for its ability to travel miles to find the bush to lay its eggs on.

The initiative, which also addressed a certain scarcity of the butterfly in the East of the county, was successful. In just two years over 2000 bushes of both Common / Purging Buckthorn *Rhamnus cathartica* and Alder Buckthorn *Frangula alnus* were planted in the target area, and female Brimstones soon homed in with the first one turning up during fine sunny weather at a home in Bildeston on May Day, 1999. Bushes were planted for a further 3 years until 2003 and as a consequence butterflies were to be seen in increasing numbers in the area. For example, there were 242 records of Brimstones for East Suffolk in the 5 - year period 2000-2004 and this had risen to 644 for the period 2005- 2009.

The campaign also raised awareness of the merits of the bush for other species as well. Buckthorn flowers provide nectar which seems particularly attractive to bees and hoverflies, and later in the year, shiny black berries provide a valuable source of food for

birds. As for other Lepidoptera, it is known that Green Hairstreak occasionally oviposits on Common Buckthorn and Holly Blue will utilise Alder Buckthorn as well as their more normal larval food plants. A number of moth larvae including *Bucculatrix frangutella*, are occasionally found on *F. alnus* and Brown Scallop and Dark Umber have also been found on *R. cathartica*.

That the bush is found more often in hedgerow mixtures sold at garden centres these days must be good for biodiversity but there is still room for improvement. Thirteen years on therefore, and Suffolk Branch are rolling out Brimstones and Buckthorn once again. We aim to increase both the range and number of Brimstones seen in the county whilst at the same time, getting more people involved in wildlife gardening and in caring for the wider environment, by providing the butterfly with valuable stepping stones across the county.

This time around the campaign will be using the internet to collate data and plot the whereabouts of any Brimstones arising from bushes planted through the initiative. This should make it a bit more interesting and interactive than before because people will be able to view their records of plantings and sightings on a website with a map containing details of all the other records from the scheme. It also has the potential to provide far more up to date feedback and to find out what other insect taxa are associated with Buckthorn.

To these ends this winter we will be sending out 2000 bare-rooted whips to the public along with planting details. Bushes will be free although any donations will be gratefully received. Participants will be asked to monitor growth and to look out for Brimstones and egg laying activity over the following two years. £1,000 has been received so far for the project which includes £500 from Suffolk Naturalists' Society and further help from HSBC. We will be producing a poster to help promote the campaign and seeking to publicise it through local media outlets once again.

The value of wildlife gardening and in particular, the fascination for insects, was brilliantly emphasised by TV celebrities

Jimmy Doherty and Steve Backshall, at Jimmy's Farm this April. At the opening of Jimmy's tropical butterfly house at Wherstead, 3 Buckthorns were ceremonially planted in the adjacent wildlife garden to increase the availability of habitat for native butterflies. We also collected names and addresses from around 75 families and 3 schools wishing to sign up to the scheme. (See photos).

The initiative is open to anyone. If you are interested or would like to encourage other non BC members, then please contact either Matt Berry or myself. Our contact details can be found on Page 4.

Keep in touch with Suffolk Branch news



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www.twitter.com/BC_Suffolk

Recycling made even easier!

A message from Poppy Mackie, BC Senior Fundraising Officer

ReclaimIT will recycle your mobile phones and used printer cartridges for Butterfly Conservation's financial benefit. Additionally, you can order the recycling envelopes for free by phone or online from ReclaimIT. This saves BC a huge amount of staff time and postage costs. Every penny helps!

Tel: 01635 876 900

Email: Info@reclaim-it.com

Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey

An update from Zoë Randle, BC Surveys Officer

The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) will be running from 2011 for at least another 3 years. Many thanks to all of you who took part and helped to encourage participation in the WCBS. Last year 686 random 1km squares were covered by over 500 recorders – a fabulous achievement, although a 10% reduction in coverage achieved in the launch year of 2009.

The WCBS will be running in a similar fashion to 2009 and 2010, as a collaborative project with BTO and CEH. I look forward to working with you in the coming months, recruiting volunteers, providing support and promoting the scheme wherever possible.

We are currently analysing and interpreting the 2010 data and the WCBS feedback newsletter will be circulated in the near future. If you wish to take part in the 2011 WCBS please contact your Branch Champion. If you do not know who your Champion is or if you require any advice on the survey, please contact Zoë Randle survey@butterfly-conservation.org or phone 01929 406006.

Peter Dare is the Suffolk Branch WCBS Co-ordinator Tel: 01502 47801 or peterxema@aol.com

Big Butterfly Count (16th – 31st July 2011)

Richard Fox, BC Surveys Manager

The momentum for this year's Big Butterfly Count is building. With the help of Sir David Attenborough and Mike Dilger (from BBC1's *The One Show*), we achieved good media publicity at the beginning of April urging the public to prepare their gardens now (by planting butterfly-friendly plants) for Big Butterfly Count. Publicity is also starting for the Big Butterfly Count survey itself, with information being sent out to a wide array of monthly magazines. The Big Butterfly Count website has been overhauled and the downloadable ID chart and recording form has been redesigned.

In May, there will be further changes to the

site with the integration of educational materials for teachers (under the banner 'The Butterfly Effect' and developed by the National Schools Partnership). The aim is to improve awareness and knowledge about butterflies and to encourage children to take part in Big Butterfly Count both during the final days of the school term but also at home with their parents or grandparents. There has already been much interest from primary schools, so we hope this campaign (which is funded by Marks & Spencer) will greatly boost the number of participants, as well as making many more people aware of Butterfly Conservation and the work we do.

Downe Bank and Fackenden Down, Kent

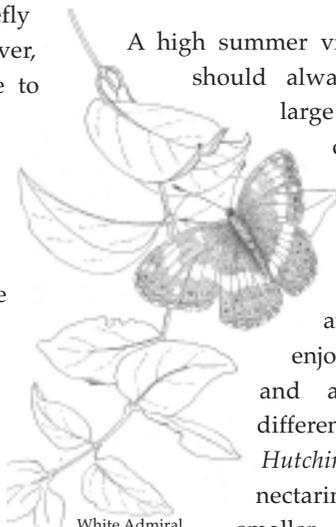
Sunday 18th July 2010

Paul Johnson

As the hands of Downe's church clock slipped past ten thirty, our group of ten proceeded out of the village, filing along a narrow meadow-side path which leads, eventually, to Cudham. Few butterflies were active here, although the bright wing tips of a fast-flying Red Admiral briefly punctuated the overcast sky. However, once we had reached the entrance to Downe Bank the degree or two of extra warmth and better habitat quickly brought rewards; a Green-veined White fluttered ponderously along the hedge line and a Holly Blue descended onto a bramble blossom. Then, the unmistakable flight of a White Admiral which settled obligingly on a buddleia. This was unexpected as I hadn't recorded this species here before. Later, we saw three more suggesting a genuine colonisation and adding to an already impressive species list for a small site.

We eventually made it onto the chalk grassland part of the site – having first watched nectaring Red Admirals and Commas on a bramble, and a powerful fritillary which refused to pause and join them. As with previous visits, we followed the narrow path through the southerly section first. A few battle-scarred Large Skippers loitered in the longer grass,

Ringlets were numerous whilst Meadow Browns simply abounded. Fritillaries flew past periodically, their identities unconfirmed until a male butterfly began to loop around a female in a courtship flight unique to the Silver-washed.



White Admiral
by Beryl Johnson

A high summer visit to Downe Bank should always incorporate the large bramble at the far corner of the reserve, and today this particular spot did not disappoint. Here, there was another chance to enjoy White Admirals, and an opportunity to differentiate between *Hutchinsoni*-form Commas nectaring alongside a smaller, much more ragged individual destined to see out the winter hibernating in some hidden recess. Then amongst these conspicuous species, a White-letter Hairstreak was located minding its own business on a blossom. Another was quickly detected and soon we were able to watch at least four hairstreaks together. Amongst them was one very fine individual, its white letter as sharp as the pinstripe on a city trader's suit.

A few people lingered at the bramble and

were rewarded by close views of nectaring Silver-washed Fritillaries. The remainder started to record grassland species on the



Marbled White
by Beryl Johnson

reserve's northern section; a mating pair of Common Blues, two Brown Argus, a few Small Skippers weaving through the sward and Marbled Whites settling on the knapweed flowers they favour so strongly. We also noted a number of immaculate Small Coppers including the blue-spotted aberration, *caeruleopunctata*, which is quite unusual on chalk. Though we had already seen – and were still to witness – a number of rarities, I'm not sure that any quite surpassed those Small Coppers for vivacity and colour.

After lunch, during which were entertained by a Peacock (avian variety) strutting about in the centre of Downe village, we drove to the Darenth Valley – an area which is perhaps easily overlooked en route to better-known downland sites in Surrey and Sussex, and which hadn't featured before on a Suffolk Branch events programme. The valley's richest butterfly site is Kent Wildlife Trust's Fackenden Down; a long, west-

facing escarpment divided into three compartments (which facilitates winter grazing), each with its own character, sward structure and microclimate.

We were some way from the entrance to Fackenden though when we were detained – if that is the right expression for what was a very enjoyable interlude – at a stand of creeping thistles. A *Hutchinsoni* Comma was what attracted us first, but our attention soon turned to a number of male Chalkhill Blues (wanderers, most probably, from nearby White Hill), the day's only confirmed Essex Skipper and a White-letter Hairstreak. I saw the latter species here once over a decade ago, but had since largely forgotten about the colony and the straggling line of roadside elms which supports it.

On reaching Fackenden, we were greeted by a blaze of colour from the knapweeds, Marjoram, Field Scabious and Bird's-foot Trefoil growing in profusion in the first compartment by the site's entrance. We



Meadow Brown
by Beryl Johnson

were not alone in enjoying the flowers here for many butterflies had too been drawn to this part of the reserve. Amongst them were Meadow Browns, Gatekeepers, Small Coppers and Brimstones already embarked on their pre-hibernation fuelling. In a shaded corner away from the throng, a Red Admiral nectared on Hemp Agrimony.

We moved on to Fackenden's central section, searching primarily for Dark Green Fritillary and Small Heath which represented two missing pieces in the day's entomological jigsaw puzzle. Instead, two Marbled Whites were noted feeding on Field Scabious whilst a female Small Skipper was observed laying eggs within the crease of a grass stem. The sun was strong now, illuminating the wings of Lycaenids; many male Chalkhill Blues flew alongside a few chocolate-coloured females, bright second brood Common Blues were frequent, and the count of Brown Argus – with their clean lines and deep, rich ground colour – quickly reached double-figures.

At the reserve boundary we turned back, following the track at the base of the down and enjoying the shade afforded by the adjacent hedge. A wasp's nest was noted by the track, adding further diversity following the discovery earlier of three irascible Adders and two benign Slow Worms beneath some of the many refuges which are dotted about what is one of the richest reptile sites in the south-east.

As we rounded a corner, a large butterfly nectaring at a prominent stand of Field Scabious brought us to a halt. It remained

just long enough for us to note its warm orange ground colour, the black lines radiating from its body out to the rounded wing tips and the distinctive, near-white wing margins. Then our only Dark Green Fritillary was gone, flying over the wire fence and haring off up the slope.

We didn't quite manage to fit a Small Heath-shaped piece into the jigsaw, but with the Dark Green Fritillary providing such a good finale to such a good day it didn't seem to really matter.



Dark Green Fritillary
by Douglas Hammersley

Acknowledgements – with thanks to Irene Palmer and Paul Glanfield of Kent Wildlife Trust for permitting access to the northern section of Downe Bank.

Species list – Small Skipper, Essex Skipper, Large Skipper, Small White, Green-veined White, Large White, Brimstone, White-letter Hairstreak, Common Blue, Holly Blue, Chalkhill Blue, Brown Argus, Small Copper, White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary, Dark Green Fritillary, Comma, Red Admiral, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Marbled White, Ringlet.

Warminster, Wiltshire for Marsh Fritillary Tuesday 24th – Wednesday 25th May 2011

Peter Maddison

The Wiltshire visit was advertised as a two-day event, but several people within the group decided to make a proper break of it and spend extra days within the county. They were pleased with their decision: several good butterfly sites were visited and plentiful butterflies were seen, some took bracing walks on the downs and others visited Salisbury for the Constable exhibition.

The focus of our expedition was to join with the Wiltshire Branch of BC on their field trip to Upton Cow Down and Cotley Hill, both of which lie close to Warminster. Thirteen members and friends from the Suffolk Branch met with eleven members of the Wiltshire Branch and, led by Geoff Hobson, who walks a transect at Upton Cow Down we set off across the well vegetated cattle pasture on the Down. We were fortunate to have fine weather but the brisk wind was a hindrance that discouraged butterflies from flying on the exposed downland slopes. At the start of our walk at Upton Cow Down, and in the lee of a dense blackthorn hedge, Common Blue, Small Blue, Adonis Blue and Small Heath were seen in good numbers but further out on the hillside relatively little was seen, although a Speckled Wood and a fleeting glimpse of a Wall at speed were recorded by some of the group.

The afternoon was spent at Cotley Hill, our target species being Marsh Fritillary. This is part of the Warminster Ranges Defence Estates land, where thin, chalky soils encourage only moderate and in places quite sparse vegetation. On the ungrazed

hillside colourful flowering plants such as Horseshoe Vetch, Cinquefoils, Milkwort and Early Purple Orchids were found amongst the thin grasses.

The south-westerly facing slope is ideal for heat seeking butterflies and several Dingy Skippers and Grizzled Skippers were counted, but the wind had not abated, so in the shelter of a small beech wood and some scrubby hawthorn we searched out our target and other species. Several Large Skippers, a Green Hairstreak, an early Meadow Brown, and numerous Small Heaths, Brown Argus, Common Blue, Adonis Blue, Small Blue, and a Brimstone and Peacock, were counted. Jim Foster, who had visited the site earlier in the week, had photographed a Duke of Burgundy, a species that had not been seen at Cotley Hill for many years.

Marsh Fritillaries had emerged early this year and, whilst in East Anglia, I had some concern as to whether this short-lived butterfly would still be on the wing. I need not have been concerned. Alan and Beryl Johnson together with Richard and Marie Stewart had seen the species earlier in the week at White Sheet Downs, and Jim and Ros Foster had recorded them at Cotley Hill. Today we were fortunate and at least 20 individuals were watched. Many of these butterflies were worn and 'greasy', but a few were in fine condition. Poets and photographers rejoiced.

Our thanks to the Wiltshire Branch for making our joint venture a successful one.

Black-veined Whites and Cepas

James Mann recalls the summer of 2009 in the south of France

After our first sighting of a Painted Lady on the 14th April 2009 we soon became accustomed to them being the predominant species. By the end of April droves of them were flying in from the sea and moving north like leaves drifting off the trees in the autumn. They seemed never ending and we usually gave up before the influx of the day stopped. At night many of them roosted in the lime tree outside our bedroom window. As the first rays of the sun touched the top of the tree movement started and progressed downwards with the sun. Soon hundreds of Painted Ladies were nectaring on the flowers, turning the tree from green to orange, the number far too great to count. This spectacle was repeated each morning until the flowers had dropped. Not all were bound for northern climes, many stayed with us all the summer. My last sighting was a single scruffy example on the 26th November. We had seen vast numbers flying north, but not a single one returning south, so either they returned in clandestine groups or they relied on those remaining in Africa to supply next year's stock.

Starting out on our randonnée on the 15th June we assumed that it would be more of the same. We decided on 'the chemin de fer and Tour Batere'. We parked at Col de la Reducta, 889 metres altitude, above the village of Montbolo situated just up the valley from us, at night we can see their streetlights from our garden. We proceeded along a track which was bordered by various flowering plants including a lot of brambles. These flowers attracted several butterfly species with a fair number of Painted Ladies. As we climbed above the 1000 metres level the number of Whites

increased and to my delight most of these were Black-veined Whites, including many mating pairs. After a final steep climb to 1123 metres we arrived at Formentere, the now abandoned, first station of the railway built at the end of the 19th century to transport iron ore from the mines of Ménerats, Rapaloum and Pinosa. At Formentere a furnace reduced the ore before it was taken by cableway 5 kilometres to Amélie-les Bains for further smelting. The railway line extends for 12 kilometres, twisting and turning through the beech forest, in and out of the ravines, with a very slight incline, 100 metres in total, so that the weight of the ore in the waggons caused them to travel down the slope at a speed that could be controlled by the brakes on the engines. The engines were like miniatures from the Wild West. The only sign that the railway ever existed is the odd rotting sleeper.

After having our coffee we proceeded along the route of the old railway. The first kilometre is an open track lined on the downslope side by brambles, thistles and other flowering plants. Yves and I were left far behind as we vied with each other to see which of us could take the best photograph of the masses of mating Black-veined Whites. To add variety we saw Marsh Fritillary, Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Cardinal, Large, Small and Marbled White, Gatekeeper and Spanish Gatekeeper, Sooty and Scarce Copper, Skippers, both Swallowtails, Tortoiseshells, Peacocks Clouded Yellows, Walls and of course more than a few Painted Ladies.

Leaving the open area and entering the

section shaded by the beech trees all the sun lovers ceased and at first we had to be satisfied with Speckled Woods. Several of the group deserted the railway line and moved either left up the slope into the beeches or right down the slope into the beeches. What were they looking for? Although it was June and not September I was informed that the shaded conditions were just right for Champignons, they were off searching for Cepes. On and off one or another returned to the track to get us to admire what they had found and to tell us in detail how they, or their wives, were going to prepare them for eating. By the time we left the trees each of the five ramassers had collected around a kilogram of mixed Bolet à Pied Rouge and Cepe de Bordeaux with the odd Girolle, all very good for eating so I am told.

I stayed with the group on the path and soon spotted a considerable number of Chimney Sweeper moths. They seemed very static, but as soon as I got my camera out they were off. In a small clearing where the sun was shining through into a vertical rock face I could see a large, brown butterfly and on close inspection it proved to be a Large Wall. Unfortunately it was too high up for a good photograph, but luckily I had got a super one a couple of years ago.

Due to the various conferences about the comestibility of various fungi we were now way behind time, so after about 4 kilometres of the railway we climbed to the left up the steep slope directly for Tour Batere. As we cleared the trees we could see the tower about two kilometres in front of us. In the sunny area we saw more of the same butterflies plus Speckled Yellow moths, Burnets, Garden Tigers and a Humming-bird Hawk-moth. We arrived at the tower

just after midday for our lunch and sat on the grassy bank at the foot of the tower, basking in the sun. The tower stands at an altitude of 1429 metres, and as it was built during the 14th century as one of a series of signal towers, the views are magnificent. Several other signal points can be seen from here. During the day signals were by smoke, during night by flames and on the very rare foggy days by runner, and hope he didn't get lost in the fog. During lunch, washed down with the traditional glass of red wine, our butterfly count was added to by at least two types of Blue and some species of Mountain Argus.

The first part of our descent was over an open rock strewn hillside where we encountered Grayling and Great Banded Grayling. As we left the stony area and proceeded towards the woods many of the species seen during the morning returned with a high percentage of Blues and Coppers. The path through the woods led us back down to the start of the railway track at Formentere. We walked through several sun-washed clearings that supported yet more Black-veined Whites locked in an activity to increase their numbers.

After an absence of seven hours we arrived back at our cars and were able to mull over two unexpected achievements. The fungi hunters collected a great bounty at an unusual time of the year and I had seen the Painted Lady relegated from first place in the numbers game.

With my limited knowledge I had identified over 30 butterfly and 5 moth species, an expert would have increased this by a considerable amount, particularly on the moth side, but all in all a very satisfying day.

'Lady of the Butterflies'

by Fiona Mountain

A review by Richard Stewart

This is a long, well written and meticulously researched novel about the life of Eleanor Glanville who, as one biographer recorded, 'gained great happiness from natural history in the middle of great fear and sorrow'. She is of course immortalised by giving her name to the Glanville Fritillary.

The book can simply be enjoyed as a gripping story of life in the un-drained Somerset marshlands after the deeply divisive English Civil War. It features her relationship with her Puritan father, two very different husbands and James Petiver, famous as a pioneer of Lepidoptera studies. It also comments on the very limited legal rights, especially those of inheritance, afforded to women and there is also much study of her varied relationships with the estate workers, particularly after the failed Monmouth rebellion. Eleanor is wilful and determined, a 'free spirit' whose pursuits set her at odds with the norms society imposed on the behaviour of 'genteel' ladies. She tries to persuade her cook and maid to leave windfalls for feeding butterflies and her rearing of species throughout their life cycle increasingly feeds the rumours about her being a witch and a lunatic.

Her scientific life blossoms when she meets James Petiver, who has an apothecary's shop in London. Through him she also gets to know Hans Sloane, John Ray, Sir Francis Bacon and others dedicated to the study of butterflies. Even here she initially has to

dress as a boy to get involved. She is then immersed in the early work related to giving butterflies a proper nomenclature, and deciding on the common names of British species that we still use today. There are many passages relating to fieldwork, covering such species as the Swallowtail, Large Copper and the Purple Emperor, and the continuing discoveries related to life cycles and larval food plants. Petiver also has a wide list of very active correspondents and collectors, many abroad.

I won't divulge the ending but just conclude by saying I thoroughly enjoyed the novel itself and the fascinating and detailed account of the infancy of Lepidoptera studies in our country – and regrettably how much of this has now gone, with many of our rarer species in decline.

Published: Preface, 2009,
paperback ISBN 9781848091641



Glanville Fritillary
by Mervyn Crawford

The Best Plants For Summer Nectar

From the BC website - the five favourites

Buddleia (The butterfly bush)

Very easy to grow in almost any soil. Different varieties will flower in pink, red, purple, and white. Usually in bloom through July and August. These shrubs need pruning well in Spring as they can grow 5' to 8' from the ground in a single season.

Verbena Bonariensis

Stems up to a metre tall support heads of lavender flowers from August to October. Easy to grow from seed, plant March-April in well-drained soil. Can provide useful height at the back of a border. Only half hardy so can be a short lived perennial.

Lavender

Flowers are lilac-blue in color and grow on spikes through the summer. Plants can be used for edging beds or grown to form an attractive, low-growing hedge. It will thrive

in a sunny, sheltered position in well-drained soil. Lavender should be planted in April or May and pruned back to encourage bushy growth.

Perennial Wallflower (Bowles Mauve)

Produces a profusion of sweet-scented purple flowers from April all through the summer. Wallflowers make great bedding plants and will grow well in full sun or light shade. Plant in well drained soil.

Marjoram (Oregano)

A perennial herb, growing from 20 to 80 cms tall. White, pink or purple flowers grow on spikes from June to September. A good edging plant and useful ground cover, requiring little maintenance. The smaller varieties also do well in rock and alpine gardens.

Butterfly haiku from the summer section of Richard Stewart's Dark Sky Dancing

Large White

Cabbage destroyer
But against a deep blue sky
Admire its beauty.

Speckled Woods

Two brown butterflies
Dancing beneath dappled leaves
Battling for sunspots.

Still

Along the leaf spine
Brimstone caterpillar rests
Green on green unseen.

Late Summer

On top of soft plum
The feeding red admiral
A deep crimson splash.

Events for the second half of 2011

Tuesday 19th July 2011

Lodge Farm, Westhorpe, Stowmarket – an invitation from the Barker family to survey the butterflies of their farm. Winners of the FWAG Silver Lapwing Award 2009 and Farmers Weekly Countryside Farmers of the Year 2010.

Meet: Lodge Farm, Westhorpe

Map Ref: TM040702 (Landranger 155)

Time: 10.30 am

Leader: *Peter Maddison* Tel: 01473 736607

Bring packed lunch (This is a re-arranged event from 2010)

Saturday 23rd July – Sunday 31st July

Save Our Butterflies Week

Sunday 24th July 2011

Aldeburgh – an invitation from B.C. member Mrs. Trudie Willis, to visit her Wildlife Gardens (10 acres) including a Buddleia & Honeysuckle collection

Meet: Park car at 'Priors Oak', Leiston Road, Aldeburgh (B1122 Leiston to Aldeburgh Road).

Map Ref: TM452591 (Landranger 156)

Time: 10.30 am

Moth trap catches will be examined during the morning, and butterfly and moth information will be available.

Saturday 30th July 2011

The North Downs between Betchworth and Dorking in Surrey for chalk downland species and Silver-washed Fritillary.

Contact Paul Johnson in advance if you are able to take part. Tel: 01892 516384

Distance: 5 miles, with one very steep ascent and one steep descent.

Meet: Dorking Deepdene railway station,

Map Ref: TQ170501 (Landranger 187)

Time: 10.30 am

Leader: *Paul Johnson*

Saturday 6th August 2011

Black Holes Bash A survey of 6 under-recorded tetrads (TM 1874, 2074, 2274, Stradbroke, 2674, 2874)

Meet: Park in Stradbroke village, meet at church

Grid Ref: TM232740 (Landranger 156)

Time: 10:00 am

Leader: *Rob Parker* Tel: 01284 705476

Bring packed lunch.

Saturday 13th August 2011

Purdis Heath, Ipswich. Butterflies, flora and fauna. The second of two natural history surveys in conjunction with Suffolk Naturalists' Society. Important conservation work was carried out on this SSSI heath during the winter of 2010-11.

Meet: Ipswich Golf Club Purdis Heath visitors' car park

Map Ref: TM205429 (Landranger 169)

Time: 2.00pm

Leader: *Matt Berry* Tel: 07599243026 Email: matt.berry@sky.com

Bring own refreshments

Sunday 14th August 2011

RSPB Reserve North Warren for general species.

Meet: North end of the Aldeburgh car park.

Map Ref: TM468581 (Landranger 156)

Time: 10.30 am

Leader: *Nigel Cuming*, (Heteroptera Recorder for Suffolk)

Tel: 01206 330019

Refreshments are available in Thorpeness or bring packed lunch

Saturday 20th August 2011

County Moth Night at Purdis Heath (tbc)

Meet: Bucklesham Road lay-by

Map Ref: TM212423 (Landranger 169)

Time: 8.30 pm

Leader: *Tony Prichard* Tel: 01473 270047

Bring torch and warm clothing

Saturday 24th September 2011

A.G.M. & Members' Evening at Bucklesham, near Ipswich

Venue: Village Hall in Levington Lane

Map Ref: TM244419 (Landranger 169)

Time: 6.00 pm for 6.30 pm

The A.G.M. will be followed by light refreshments and members' slides

See the Branch website for all of the season's events:

www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk/events

Cotley Hill, Warminster



Grizzled Skipper



Adonis Blue



Adonis Blue



Marsh Fritillary



Marsh Fritillary

Photos Jim Foster
See Page 16

Downe Bank and Fackenden Down



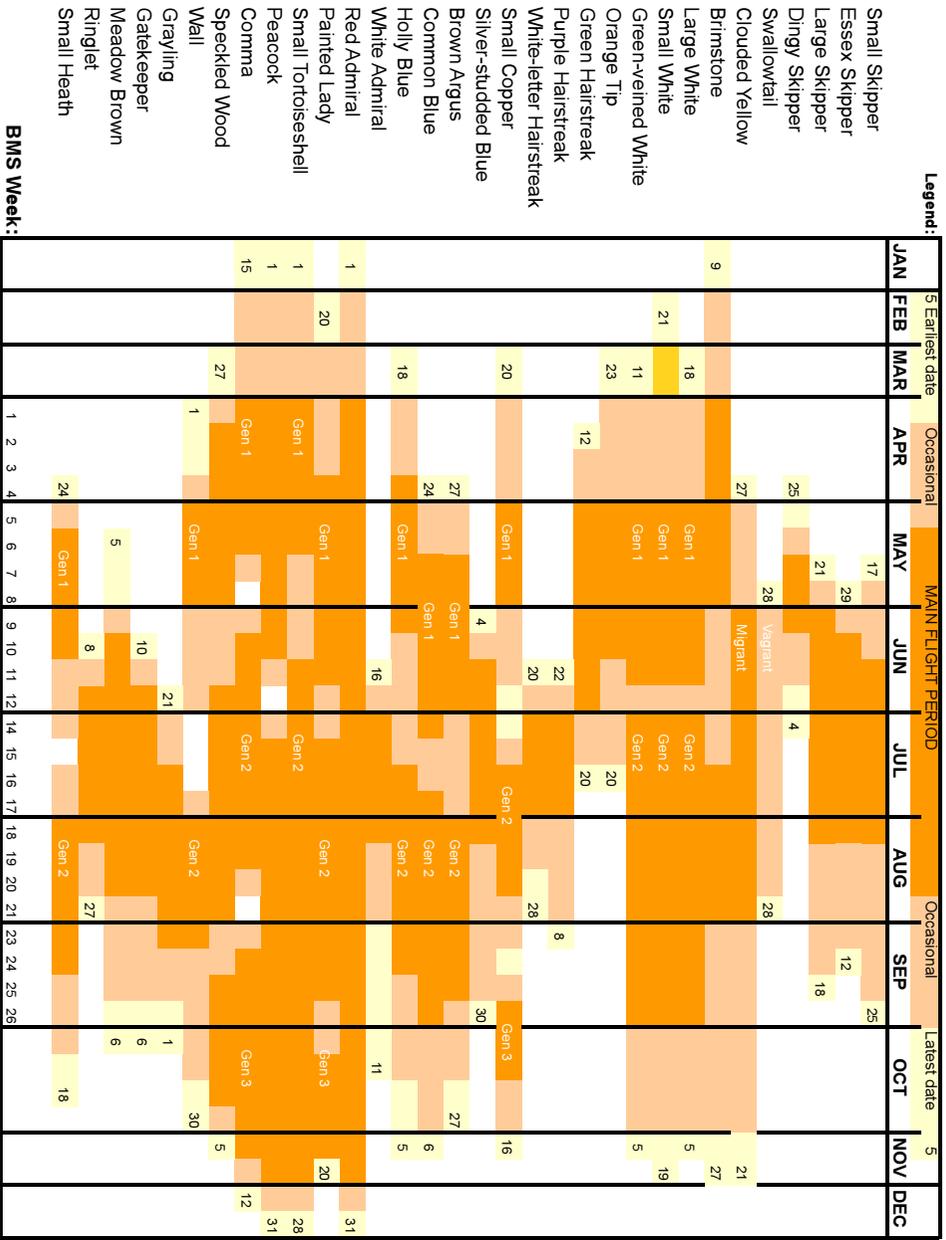
Small Copper form *caeruleopunctata*

Photos Peter Maddison
See Page 13



Jim gets his photo at Downe Bank

FLIGHT TIMES FOR SUFFOLK BUTTERFLIES



Note: Flight periods based on average results from transects & RP records 2000 to 2010.