Butterfly Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SUFFOLK

The Suffolk Argus

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

Orange-tip Female nectaring on Green Alkanet photo: Rob Brown

Spring *2017* **Volume 68**

UKBMS Awards 2016

Our congratulations go to Rob Parker who, at the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS) 40th Anniversary Meeting, held near Oxford in November 2016, was presented with a Certificate (and a very nice bottle of English wine, Rob says!) in recognition of his Outstanding Contribution to this scheme.

The Elephant at the Bottom of the Garden (page 12)

Elephant Hawk-moth larva
Photo: Adrian Richards

Elephant Hawk-moth
Photo: Neil Sherman

Editorial

Peter Maddison

In several of our recent editions of the newsletter there have been articles about plants that attract butterflies to our gardens. They're usually nectar bearing plants for the adults, less frequently has there been information about the plants we can grow for butterflies and moths to lay their eggs and for caterpillars to feed. In this edition we put this right! Julian Dowding and others have generated a mine of information about what you can grow and the lepidoptera to look out for. The article is a fantastic, in-depth reference point. Do read it and act! And do write in with snippets or longer articles about your successes and, perhaps, your failures. Let us know what has worked in your garden or allotment.

We have news of an exciting new project 'Wild Ipswich'. Although it is still in its formative stage, the intention is clear: to bring together the wildlife organisations within the town that are striving for the conservation of nature. At this time of national political upheaval and economic uncertainty it's good to know that conservation bodies here will be pooling their efforts and making sure their voice is heard.

To make our voice heard at events such as the Spring Wood Celebration Day (1st May), the Plant Heritage Plant Fair at Helmingham Hall (28th May) and at Trudie's Garden Open Day (30th July) we need some help from our members. If you are prepared to spend a couple of hours or so helping committee members on our stand I encourage you get in touch. We have a number of free entry tickets for the Helmingham event. **We would like to attend other events but we can only do this if help from the membership is forthcoming.**

I've edited the Argus for twenty editions since 2008, so it's time for a change of editor. If you can collate Word documents - we have a willing and much appreciated group of contributors - and can discuss with the designer/printer how you would like the newsletter to be laid out, the editor's job can be yours! Don't hold back, get in touch with me to discuss the future of the newsletter! It's possible for the job to be shared between two or even three people.

In the winter months who doesn't dream of sunny days and making holiday plans?
We have foreign holiday reports to tempt you, and a report of one of our Suffolk events at Trudie Willis's garden in Aldeburgh, a very well-attended event that we've held annually since 2006 and from which Trudie has most generously donated the proceeds to the Branch.

I write this piece as a cold spell, the likes of which we haven't experienced for at least four years, seems to be coming to an end. During this time of frosts butterflies will not have stirred and used up valuable energy, harmful moulds and bacteria might not have survived, we might be heading for a year of butterfly abundance. Let's hope so. We know that winter will give way to spring, celandines will produce early nectar and when the dandelions flower Brimstones will be on the wing. It's not long to have to wait.

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Contents

New Members

The following new members are warmly welcomed to the Suffolk Branch. We hope you find your membership interesting and enjoyable and that you will be able to take part in some of our events and work parties.

Miss R Bell	Ipswich
Mr W Brame	Felixstowe
Miss D Dann	Saxmundham
Mr S R & Mrs C Bennett	Lowestoft
Mr P Blanchard	Ipswich
Mrs R Buckmaster	Ipswich
Mrs S Day	Lowestoft
Ms S Edmunds	Ipswich
Ms F Ellis	Halesworth
Mr J Ellis & Ms P Booker	Halesworth
Mrs J Ferdinand	Sudbury
Mrs J Hardiker	Bury St Edmunds
Mr R Hoye	Beccles
Mrs P Jewby	Bury St Edmunds
Mrs K La Porte	Newmarket
Mrs N Peck	Bury St Edmunds
Ms E L Powney	Newmarket
Mr C Robson	West Row
Mr J Shute	Ipswich
Mrs J Spencer	Sudbury
Mrs K Stanford	Brandon
Mr J Turner	Lowestoft
Mrs S & Mr B Wood	Woodbridge
Mrs M & Mr S Wooldridge & Family	Brandon

Creating Wildflower Meadows & Growing Native Plants in the Garden for Butterflies, Moths, Bees and Other Insects.

Sir David Attenborough says, "If we and the rest of the back-boned animals were to disappear overnight, the rest of the world would get on pretty well. But if the invertebrates were to disappear, the world's ecosystems would collapse." The sad thing is, we already stand on the edge of a precipice, watching many of our native butterflies, moths and bees disappear from our countryside, yet we know many of the causes. The loss and degradation of habitat through changes in agricultural practice, run-off from fertilisers, industrial and housing development, and the use of pesticides such as neonicotinoids which contaminate the food chain are some of the worst problems. It's all extremely worrying and we often feel that there is little that can halt this decline. However, we can all do our part by joining conservation groups like Butterfly Conservation, volunteering for conservation projects, lobbying politicians and trying to avoid buying food from crops which are grown in environmentally unfriendly ways. Creating wildlife areas in our garden offers another way forward and can provide vital habitat and safe haven for some of our disappearing species… and much enjoyment.

Ipswich Borough Council are introducing their Ipswich Wildlife Network, encouraging people to help protect wildlife and provide wildlife corridors by utilising gardens in a more sympathetic way for wildlife. They say, "Wildflower meadows are crucial to wildlife, but across Europe these habitats have been drastically reduced. This is bad news for pollinators such as bees and butterflies who depend upon them for both nectar and reproduction. How you can help: Sow areas in your garden with wildflower meadow seed mixtures, to help these struggling insects to survive and flourish using wild plants and creating wild habitats." A map and more information about this initiative can be found on their website here:
https://www.ipswich.gov.uk/sites/default/files/ipswich_wildlife_network.pdf

Other initiatives across the country have been set up with similar aims. B-Lines is an initiative by the charity Buglife. https://www.buglife.org.uk who say, "Imagine trying to travel around Britain without our road and rail network …Well for much of our wildlife this is the reality - it is confined to tiny fragments of habitat and unable to move across the countryside as our climate and landscape rapidly changes…Over 97% (an area the size of Wales) of all flower-rich grasslands have been lost in Britain since the 1930s, reducing pollen and nectar sources and leading to a serious decline in the wildlife depending on wildflower-rich habitat." B-Lines aims to create and restore at least 150,000 hectares of flower-rich habitat across the UK. Making this happen will take time and will need farmers, land owners, wildlife organisations, businesses, local authorities *and the general public* to work together to create flower-rich grassland in the best locations.

So why not get involved wherever you live? If creating a garden wildflower meadow from scratch appeals to you, the following information is to point you in the right direction:

1. Choose a sunny area (as large or small as you like) and seed mixture based upon local conditions, whether damp or free draining, and whether the underlying soils are clay, sand, chalk and limestone, or loam. There are hundreds of species and also meadow mixtures which can be obtained from reputable seed/plant suppliers to suit your needs.

2. Remove topsoil or turf to decrease nutrient levels. Many meadow wildflowers are smothered by dominant, nutrient-hungry species such as thistles, docks and nettles, so it's necessary to impoverish the soil to benefit the wildflowers.

3. Sow evenly with your chosen seed mix. This usually best takes place in autumn/winter because many seeds (but not all) need a period of chilling before they can germinate. Thoroughly mix the seed before sowing in a bucket of dry sand or subsoil for a more even coverage. Mixing this way also scarifies the seed coat of some of the harder seeds, enabling moisture to get in, thus aiding germination. Some seed will land on the ground covered by a fine layer of sand or subsoil, other seed will land exposed. This is not a problem. You can also add some cornfield annuals such as Corncockle, Cornflower, Corn Chamomile and Corn Marigold to your mix, to provide a nurse crop for the other flowers while they are establishing, and also create colour and nectar in the first year.

4. In the first year after sowing, if using cornfield annuals as a nurse crop, cut/mow the meadow in summer after flowering, mid-late July. Then rake off, creating habitat piles from the arisings which can be used to provide shelter for other wildlife such as Slow-worm, Common Toad and Grass Snake. If you want to keep the hay for animal feed, then rake it out and turn it at least twice to dry in fine weather before collecting it up.

5. If not using cornfield annuals, cut in the first spring and again in summer, after flowers have set seed, usually late July/early August.

NB. Most meadow species won't flower much until their second year, so cutting or mowing helps by removing nutrients and preventing unwanted dominant species establishing at the expense of meadow flowers. It also helps to create a balanced sward which is more easily mown. By cutting again in autumn, more pockets of bare soil will open up for wildflower seed to germinate in. Whether you cut using a scythe, hook or mechanical mower is entirely up to you!

You can alter the timing of the cuts to suit your own preferences and weather conditions, but aim for at least 2 cuts each year to reduce soil fertility. The summer cut should take place before autumn wind and rains knock the sward over, and before stems have become woody, otherwise you may find cutting more difficult. Try to avoid cutting the entire meadow in one go, to give insects a chance to 'move on'. Follow up a few days later and aim to finish all cutting within 2 or 3 weeks.

6. You can also leave a *small* area totally uncut through winter, since some insect species need standing dead stems and seed heads for overwintering. However, it is important to bear in mind that leaving areas uncut forever is not a good idea, since they will return nutrients to the soil and develop a rank sward at the expense of your wildflowers and the insect life they support. Therefore, vary the location of any uncut areas each year and cut these when practical to do so.

7. You will now have your wildflower meadow and an already developing ecosystem, however large or small. Fill your senses with the dazzling array of life before you and be amazed at the sheer variety of species you

attract into your garden. You can also take heart in knowing you are helping reverse the decline in our wildlife.

If creating a meadow is outside your scope or desire but you still like the idea of growing beautiful native wildflowers or naturalised species to provide a haven for insects in your garden, then consider some of the following plants which can be grown in borders, lawns, around ponds and bog gardens, or under fruit trees, to provide pollen and food for insects throughout the year. Many of these you will be familiar with, others perhaps not.

1. **Primrose - *Primula vulgaris***. Perennial, height 10-15cm. Pale yellow flowers Feb-May attract early spring bees, butterflies like Brimstone and moths like Green Arches, Vine's Rustic and Silver Ground Carpet. Grows well under trees, woodland edges, damp grassland and flower banks.

Brimstone on Primrose by Beryl Johnson

2. **Red Deadnettle - *Lamium purpureum***. Annual, height 10-30cm. Pale to dark pink flowers provide nectar from late Feb-Mar, especially for waking Brimstone, Small Tortoiseshell and other spring butterflies, Muslin Moth and Plain Golden Y. Good for emerging bees. Can be grown in garden borders or a wild patch. Sun or semi-shade. Often seen as a weed but rather beautiful and sometimes one of the only flowers providing nectar in late winter for early emerging insects.

3. **Dandelion - *Taraxacum officinale***. Perennial, height 10-25cm. Golden yellow flowers from Mar-Oct. Attracts Brimstone, Small Tortoiseshell, Dark Chestnut moth and bees. Often seen as a weed and underrated as a nectar and larval food plant. Grows well in lawns or meadows, and cracks in the concrete!

4. **Lungwort - *Pulmonaria officinalis*.** Introduced perennial, though there is a rare native Pulmonaria found in Suffolk. Height from 20-30cm with blue/pink flowers from Mar-May. Irresistible to Hairy-footed Flower Bee – Anthophora plumipes.

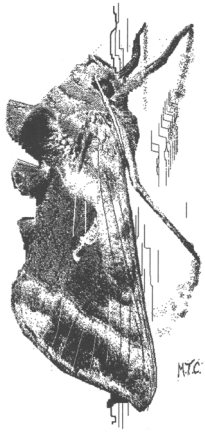
5**. Lady's Smock/Cuckoo Flower - *Cardamine pratensis***. Perennial, height 30-60cm. Beautiful delicate pale pink flowers from Apr-Jun, providing nectar and larval foodplant for Orange Tip and Green-veined White and is also larval foodplant for Meadow Longhorn Moth - Adela rufimitrella. Prefers damp meadows and pond edges.

6. **White Deadnettle - *Lamium album***. Perennial, height 20-60cm with white flowers May-Sep. Good for long-tongued bumblebees.

7. **Green Alkanet - *Pentaglottis sempervirens***. Perennial, height 30-70cm with cobalt blue flowers May onwards. It's very good early nectar for butterflies and bees. Attractive to Holly Blues and Broad Bordered Bee Hawkmoth which nectar on it as well as the Red Mason Bee - Osmia bicornis along with its smaller cousin Osmia caerulescens, the early bumblebees like Bombus pratorum and B. terrestris and the Hairy-footed Flower Bee - Anthophora plumipes. In Ipswich it is also popular with the very rare mining bee Lasioglossum sexnotatum. Maybe not a wild

flower but it is naturalised in woodlands and semi-shade. Can be a rampant thug if not controlled a bit!

8. **Bugle -** ***Ajuga reptans***. Perennial, height 10-20cm with deep bluish/mauve flower spikes, from Apr-Jul, attractive to Orange Tip, Green-veined White, Hawkmoths, Silver Y and Common Carder Bee to name but a few. Grows in semi-shade and damp soils, scrub and fertile soils. Does well in garden borders.

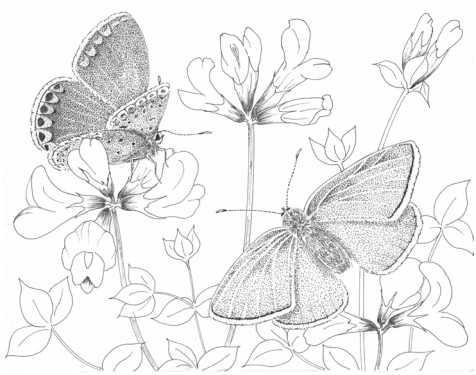


Silver Y by Mervyn Crawford

9. **Greater Celandine -** ***Chelidonium majus***. Perennial, height 40-60cm with Canary yellow flowers from Apr-Oct. Very good for pollen for mining bees. Again in Ipswich it is popular with Lasioglossum sexnotatum. Grows in hedgerows and woodland rides.

10. **Comfrey -** ***Symphytum*** **species**. May-Jul. Height to 1m. Long tubular mauve-pink flowers popular with long-tongued bumblebees like the Garden Bumblebee - Bombus hortorum, although you'll be able to observe nectar robbing by short tongued bumblebees like Bombus terrestris that bite through the flower to make a hole. Grows well in borders.

11. **Birdsfoot Trefoil -** ***Lotus corniculatus***. Perennial, height 5-20cm. Bright yellow flowers, May-Sep, attractive to bees moths and butterflies, especially Common Blue, Clouded Yellow, Five and Six-Spot Burnets, Green Hairstreak, Burnet Companion and Latticed Heath, all of which use this as a larval host plant. Tolerant of dry infertile soil and does well in 'garden meadows'. Can be grown in lawns and like clover, survives cutting but best to allow a small area of lawn to be cut infrequently, enabling the plant to flower and attract butterflies and moths.



Common Blue on Birdsfoot Trefoil by Beryl Johnson

12. **Meadow Cranesbill -** ***Geranium pratense.*** Perennial, height 30-60cm. Blue violet flowers, Jun-Aug, attractive to butterflies and moths, particularly Brown Argus, Beautiful Plume and bees. Grows well in borders and garden meadows but it is quite tall, so use sparingly so as to avoid crowding out shorter species.

13. **Selfheal -** ***Prunella vulgaris***. Perennial, height 10-20cm. Violet purple flowers, Jun - Oct. Can be grown in lawns and short meadows where occasional cutting will produce flowers throughout the season. Particularly attractive to Holly Blue, Meadow Brown, Burnets and bees.

14. **Hemp Agrimony - *Eupatoria cannabinum***. Perennial, height 30cm-1.5m. Tiny pink flowers late Jun-Sep, massed together into a large flat-topped head. Very good for Gatekeeper, White-letter Hairstreak, Painted Lady, Peacock, Silver-washed Fritillary and Comma. Grows better in open sunny conditions and prefers damp but once established will grow in drier areas and meadows. Because it is a large plant, if growing in small meadows, best to grow sparingly or towards the back to avoid outcompeting smaller species. Grows well in garden borders.

15. **Yellow Rattle - *Rhinanthus minor***. Annual, height 30-50cm. Yellow flowers, May-Aug. Grows in meadows and provides nectar for bees. Also is as a semi parasite of grasses, robbing them of nutrients and helping to keep the sward short which benefits wildflowers, so should be included in any mini meadow sowing scheme. Can be grown in lawn areas if cut only occasionally and allowed to flower and set seed.

16. **Foxglove - *Digitalis purpurea*.** Height to 1.5m. Purple-pink flowers. Like Comfrey it is popular with long-tongued bumblebees like the Garden Bumblebee – Bombus hortorum.

17. **Viper's Bugloss - *Echium vulgare***. Biennial, height 30cm-1m. Violet blue flowers, Jun-Oct. Larval foodplant of Painted Lady and source of nectar for Hummingbird Hawkmoth. Grows well in dry sandy conditions or well drained soils.

18. **Field Scabious - *Knautia arvensis***. Perennial, height 60cm-1m. Pale mauve flowers from Jun-Oct attracting many summer species, including Burnets, Small Tortoiseshell, Browns, Skippers, Peacock, Red Admiral, Marbled White, Small Copper, Whites, Twin-spot Plume and many bees and hoverflies. Likes rocky or clay, free draining soils but will grow well in garden borders and garden meadows. A fairly tall plant so should be used sparingly in small meadows.

19. **Wild Marjoram - *Oreganum vulgare***. Perennial, height 30-50cm. Pink (sometimes white) flowers Jun-early Sept. Attractive to Small Copper, Gatekeeper, Blues and bees. Used as a foodplant by the common and attractive Mint moth Pyrausta aurata. Found naturally in dry, infertile and usually calcareous soils. Ideal for mini meadows, garden borders and some rockeries.

20. **Mullein - *Verbascum* species.** Biennial, height to 2m, yellow flowers on tall spikes from Jun-Aug. Good for bees but also the foodplant of the colourful caterpillars of the Mullein moth.

21. **Toadflax - *Linaria* species**. Perennial, with spires of yellow or purple flowers to 50cm, Jun-Sep. Good for bees but also used as foodplant by Toadflax brocade moth (another colourful caterpillar) an increasing species certainly in gardens in Ipswich. Also Toadflax pug uses it as a foodplant (flowers).

22. **Purple Loosestrife - *Lythrum salicaria***. Perennial, height10cm-1.5m. Long spikes of magenta flowers late Jun-Oct. Good nectar and very prolonged flowering. Prefers non-acid soils and damp areas but will grow well in borders. In meadows, it can be placed towards the edges so as not to shade shorter species. Attracts Holly Blue, Brimstone, Red-tailed Bumblebee, hoverflies and many other species. A larval food plant of Elephant Hawk-moth.

23. **Knapweeds - *Centaurea* species.** Perennial, height to 1m with purple flowers from May-Sep. Good nectar for the meadow. Popular with summer butterflies and particularly male bumblebees.

Gatekeeper on Knapweed by Mervyn Crawford

24. **Common Fleabane - *Pulicaria dysenterica***. Perennial, height 30cm-1m. Deep yellow flowers from Jul-Sep. Attracts numerous butterfly species, especially Common Blue and Brown Argus. Used by Powdered Quaker as a larval food plant and a wide range of bees. Grows best on damp or wet soils, so consider growing in bog garden or near pond.

25. **Devils-bit Scabious - *Succisa pratensis***. Perennial, height 15-60 cm. Purple flowers Jun-Oct. Provides good late nectar for butterflies and pollen and nectar for bees and hoverflies. Larval foodplant of Twin-spot Plume. Grows in wild patches and damp areas. In the wild found in woodland, damp/ wet areas, and chalk grassland.

26. **Ivy - *Hedera helix.*** A native shrub that could be conserved and allowed to flourish and flower and whose yellow flowers are a very important late nectar plant for bees, hoverflies and butterflies. Honey bees love it, as does the recent UK coloniser the Ivy Bee - Colletes hederae that gets all its nectar and pollen from Ivy alone. Rare beetles like Oedemera femoralis and hoverflies like the Golden Hoverfly - Callicera spinolae are both attracted by it. Holly Blues of course use it for their summer generation and its nectar is great nectar for Red Admirals.

27. ***Nicotiana* species.** Height, 30cm - 1m. Cultivated species with white, yellow and red flowers from Jul-Sep. Used by hawkmoths for feeding at dusk, and very effective attractant for the large and spectacular Convolvulus hawk moth. Good invasion of this species last autumn with many sightings by people at this plant.

Field Scabious

Extract from Butterfly Conservation Suffolk **facebook** page 10th Nov 2016

'A few **Field Scabious** plants (*Knautia arvensis*) are proving to be a precious late food source for the remaining pollinators here at Landseer Park, Ipswich.

This hardy perennial is one of the best value nectar sources around. Some of these plants have flowered from May-Nov and this year we have recorded 18 different species of butterfly feeding on them. It is also a favourite with day-flying moths and bees.

Typically a chalk grassland species, its long stalked flower heads also allow it to survive in less frequently grazed or mown areas on a range of soils.

In gardens it will survive well in wildflower areas but can also thrive on rockeries and gravel beds.

A must have for any butterfly enthusiast's garden / allotment or wild area. Seed is the cheapest way to establish the plant but plugs are available for about £1 each from most British Wildflower specialists.

Please try and check for native provenance.'

The Elephant at the Bottom of the Garden

Adrian Richards

Several years ago I decided to plant as many native wildflowers in my garden as I could. As well as attracting butterflies to the nectar and birds to the seeds, I was surprised by the large number of other different insects that appeared. Aside from Honey and Bumblebees there was a huge variety of solitary bees and wasps.

Last July while wandering around my garden with a camera, I spotted a leaf-cutter bee visiting a flowering clump of Purple Loosestrife. As I took a few photos of it visiting a flower, I noticed that something had eaten most of the plant's leaves. It was then that I spotted an enormous caterpillar clinging to one of the plant's main stems out in the open. I had weeded around the plant a couple of days before. That caterpillar had been in plain sight and I hadn't even noticed it. What a sight, it was pale green with two pairs of enormous black and white eyes near the head. This was an Elephant Hawkmoth caterpillar. If disturbed, its eyes swell up to scare off predators, as if it didn't look scary enough already!

After a little research, I found that most of these caterpillars when full grown are brown. It is only rarely that they are green in the final instar, as was this one.

The moth itself is mainly golden-olive with bright pink bands on its wings and body. It flies from May to September and is apparently not uncommon in parks and gardens.

I saw the caterpillar for several more days. After it had disappeared the plant it was feeding on was reduced to almost a skeleton, a testament to its ferocious appetite.

Who knows if you look around your garden next summer you may spot an elephant of your own!

Recorders wanted for Suffolk's Silver-studded Blue Butterflies

Helen Saunders

Members of the Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation have for some years been monitoring the Silver-studded Blue butterfly, which although rare, is found across many of Suffolk's Heaths.

We are looking for volunteers to walk a couple of the transects, at Dunwich Forest and Minsmere, during the butterflies' flight period (June-July)

We are also involved in helping to restore heathland habitat for the butterfly and other species. As part of the Ipswich Heaths project, we have regular work parties and would welcome new volunteers.

If you would like further information about becoming involved, please email Helen Saunders at: helens919@gmail.com

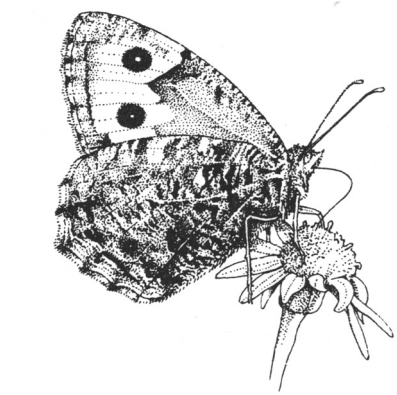
Garden Open Day at Prior's Oak,Leiston Road,Aldeburgh, by kind permission of BC member Trudie Willis, Sunday 31st July 2016

Richard Stewart

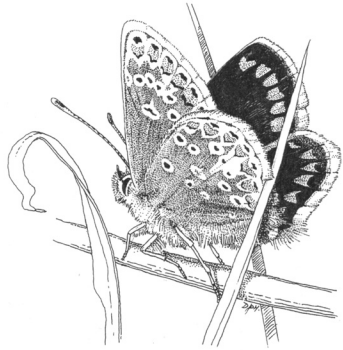
This was a very successful day with visitors being guided around the extensive garden by members of our Suffolk branch. Bee-keeping and moth identification were other attractions plus a stand of BC material, including helpful leaflets about butterfly gardening. Swallows were nesting next to the stand and other wildlife included a very impressive great green bush cricket and distant calls of muntjac and green woodpecker. Inside the old railway carriages there were notes and photos of other wildlife seen in the garden, including foxes, badgers and a muntjac fawn just two weeks previously.

On the guided walks the buddleias were the main attraction to both visitors and butterflies, a wide range of varieties and colours flowering for most of the year. Other important habitats were pointed out, such as areas of longer grasses, nettle beds and bramble clumps, with a marked change of habitat at the top of the garden. Seventeen species were recorded while I was there: Essex and Small Skipper, Large and Small White, Small Copper, Brown Argus, Small Heath, Ringlet, Meadow Brown, Speckled Wood, Comma, and larger numbers of Gatekeeper, Peacock, Red Admiral , Grayling and Painted Lady, the last two species emphasising the importance of location, Trudie's garden being close to the sea and the RSPB's North Warren reserve. There were also Purple Hairstreaks dancing in the oaks within the main car park. Trudie was very eager for us to count the money before we went at the end of the day and when Peter announced the total we could see why - an incredible sum of £579-80 towards the work of Butterfly Conservation.

Trudie opens her garden to a variety of charities each year and I included her garden as one of two in my recently published 'The Butterflies in Christchurch Park'. These were as part of the section about butterfly gardening and the other being the RSPB garden at Flatford - both full of inspirational ideas. Looking back over previous years I discovered that Trudie has made this an annual event since 2006 and Butterfly Conservation is extremely grateful for her continuing support.



Grayling by Douglas Hammersley



Brown Argus by Douglas Hammersley

Wild Ipswich

Matt Berry, Ipswich Borough Council

Last October a meeting was organised by Ipswich Borough Council (IBC) to discuss a new concept for bringing all the conservation organisations with an interest in Ipswich together under one banner – Wild Ipswich.

The meeting was attended by representatives of Suffolk Wildlife Trust, RSPB, Suffolk Biodiversity information Service, Ipswich Wildlife Group, Suffolk Amphibians & Reptile Group, Suffolk County Council, Greenways Countryside Project and officers from IBC, including the Strategic Planning and Parks & Cemeteries Services. The suggestion received full support around the table and from those unable to attend from Butterfly Conservation and Buglife.

The idea has evolved out of the IBC Ecological Network plan, which as the name suggests, is a map and associated policy showing the core wildlife sites and corridors, which together form a vital support and travel system for all the wildlife in the town. This plan and associated wording now forms an integral part of the IBC Core Strategy, which when adopted will form a unique and strong policy to assist IBC in protecting and enhancing biodiversity, particularly when it comes to town planning and the development control process. This is a huge step forward towards making awareness and consideration of biodiversity issues mainstream, and as important as trees and other more traditional considerations.

The aspirations are high; to halt biodiversity loss and reverse the trend of decline to one of enhancement and expansion of biodiversity instead. We all know how difficult this will be to achieve, but it is surely the only goal we should be considering and striving for if we want a wildlife rich and healthy natural environment.

Ipswich is already doing good things. The ecological network approach has received numerous plaudits and praise for being something of a trail blazing initiative, especially because it is being taken much further forward than merely mapping where wildlife sites and corridors are – we're actually trying to do something about making things better too! Then there has been the Ipswich Heaths Project from Butterfly Conservation, a landscape level project for protecting the Silver-studded Blue and other associated heathland wildlife, along with the habitats themselves. And now we're about to see Ipswich become an 'Urban Buzz' town with a new project funded by Buglife. The aim of this is to create 100 new wildlife sites to benefit pollinators – clearly these habitats will benefit a multitude of other wildlife too, including butterflies and moths.

There is also the SWT Hedgehog project currently underway in the town, a perfect demonstration for how vital a linked landscape is to wildlife as hedgehogs can roam quite a distance and they also require significant areas in order to sustain viable breeding populations.

There has never been a better time for the

level of interest in wildlife in Ipswich and there has never been more need than there is now for some serious action to protect it! The next step requires us to declare a vision for what we want Wild Ipswich to do. It is still being discussed but we expect it to be along the lines of the following:

"Create a nature-rich town that puts wildlife at its heart and on our doorsteps, giving everyone the opportunity to experience the joy of nature every day."

How will this vision become reality?
We will make this happen by building a resilient ecological network to give wildlife the freedom to move throughout the town via; strategic town planning and site level development management; looking after and improving existing core wildlife sites; increasing space for nature by securing new sites; working with landowners to build biodiversity into their businesses; and identifying where we can thread wildlife corridors throughout Ipswich.

Our vision is also about inspiring and empowering people, and benefiting their communities and immediate environment. We will inspire people street-by-street, area-by-area, to turn the town into a nature-rich, connected landscape.

Wild Ipswich is for anyone living and working in the town to help transform gardens and open spaces into a town-wide nature reserve. Together, if we connect habitats and green spaces, we can create wildlife corridors, enabling wildlife to move easily around the town and link to the wider countryside.

In summary the main priorities for taking things forward are to:

Inspire people and communities to care and take direct action for nature

Have a launch event for Wild Ipswich in 2017.

Host a programme of public events to give people the help they need to transform and re-wild their homes, gardens and local areas. Design a Wild Ipswich website hosting information and interactive features.

Publish a quarterly Wild Ipswich magazine.

Create a coherent and resilient ecological network

Maintain, improve, and increase our current wildlife habitats and sites.

Restore and create new areas for wildlife.

Join them up – through continuous corridors or via stepping-stones.

Increase the wildlife value of the wider landscape.

Wild Ipswich is still in its infancy but we hope that things will start to happen fairly quickly this year and there will be opportunities for people to get actively involved. We also hope that this might be a model followed elsewhere and that the concept of making our towns and cities wilder will catch on around the country.

Book Review, 'The Butterflies in Christchurch Park' Author, Richard Stewart with photos by Liz Cutting

Editing and layout by Martin Sanford

Available from the Reg Driver Visitor Centre, Christchurch Park, Ipswich. Price £7.50

Proceeds will go to the improvement of the park's facilities, including additional planting for nectar and egg-laying.

The striking cover photo of an Orange-tip butterfly on Garlic Mustard entices the potential reader to turn the page and be guided through the 25 species of butterfly recorded in the 82 acres of Ipswich parkland.

The author, who was Suffolk Butterfly Recorder 1994-2002, lives in the vicinity of the park so he is well versed in the favoured habitats and the life cycles of the species that have been seen in the past, and he acknowledges the help received from members of the public who have sent him butterfly records.

The first major chapter which tours the park's habitats, begins at the Soane Street entrance, and winds its route through the park so that 21 distinct zones are described. Although I have a basic knowledge of the park I found the numbered habitats on the accompanying map invaluable for a good understanding of the locations. Details of the wildflowers and the butterflies that are likely to be seen nectaring in each habitat, and photos by the author of swathes of lavender, perennial borders and a bank of flowering broom are real encouragement to take a walk on a sunny day around the park.

The longest chapter in the book 'Butterfly Species Recorded in the Park' gives detailed information about the life cycles, identification and the requirements of the adult and caterpillar stages. Helpful identification hints such as, 'Holly Blue often flies at a higher level than Common Blue' are included. Supplementing park records, the author compares some species with his observations elsewhere eg Small Copper highest park total recorded 6, whilst at Rushmere Common the author's highest total is 369. He observes heavy tree cover in the park which is suitable for overwintering butterflies and describes venturing elsewhere in Suffolk into World War Two pillboxes to count overwintering Peacock butterflies.

Written in a flowing, easy style it's all interesting stuff, made all the more enjoyable by the inclusion of Liz Cutting's excellent photographs of each of the species. I think my favourite is the Peacock taking sap on the truck of a gnarled tree or, perhaps, the Brimstone nectaring on an English Bluebell. The photos, few of which are less than half a page in size, lead the reader on through the book to a chapter discussing predators: parasites, birds, spiders, dragonflies, the list goes on and includes human interference, but in down-to-earth fashion the author acknowledges that 'there are many other interested bodies connected to the park as well as the wildlife one'.

The future looks promising. The Friends of CP are an enthusiastic group and together with IBC there are plans for the planting of several hundred Buckthorn (lucky Brimstones), Broom, Gorse and Honeysuckle as well as nectar bearing herbaceous plants.

Readers are encouraged to create their own butterfly gardens and in a chapter devoted to this the author shows what will be in flower during Spring, Summer and Autumn and speaks of the delight in seeing different butterflies coming to the garden. He enthuses, 'but an even greater satisfaction…..' is to be had if butterflies can be enticed to lay eggs by making their favoured food plants available and he informs readers of some of the plants and methods to achieve this. The author cites a successful mini meadow sown in an Ipswich town front garden.

The book concludes with an Epilogue of Haiku poetry. These three line poems immerse one in the Four Seasons of Butterflies In Christchurch Park.

Peter Maddison

What is the European Conservation Action Network ..... EuCAN ?

EuCAN is a Community Interest Company (CIC) working in the UK and other countries of Europe to involve more people and communities in the conservation management of their local environment, by providing training and practical experience, in nature conservation and in sustainable land management and food production enterprises.

EuCAN CIC started life in 2007 as the European Conservation Action Network, a project linked to The Kingcombe Centre in west Dorset, and funded entirely by the Leonardo da Vinci strand of the EU Lifelong Learning Programme. Since 2007, The European Conservation Action Network has set up 23 different two-week placements and enabled nearly 300 volunteers to visit 11 partner organisations in the EU.

Would you enjoy travelling with EuCAN to other parts of Europe to help our partners with their environmental protection challenges?

EuCAN offers many different ways to become involved. We have an exciting programme. Have a look at our website to get an idea of the range of activities we have been involved with!
http://www.eucan.org.uk/

Taking a break *Nigel Spring/EuCAN*

EuCAN Working Holiday to La Brenne, November 2016
…..in which two Suffolk BC members took part *From the Eucan website*

There were 13 in the EuCAN group that spent seven nights in La Brenne in central France, November 21st to 30th and worked for five days with our partners and friends at La Chérine Reserve. We cleared tree heather and thorn scrub from several areas of marsh, one of them the habitat for the rare Alcon Blue butterfly, *Maculinea alcon*; we removed more of the invasive ash trees from a former meadow on La Touche Reserve to enable the Snakeshead Fritillary plants to flourish there. We enjoyed the wonderful hospitality of our French friends, ate delicious food and were treated to the most amazing Crane spectacles that we have ever experienced. The local population of wintering and passage birds totalled over 7000 while we were there and on two evenings we went out to watch the birds rise up in skeins of 50-100 from the maize fields where they spend the days and head for the nearby lake where they spend the nights on the edge of the reedbed.

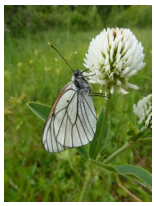
We stayed in the village gîte and cooked our own meals as a group but our final supper in the hotel in the village square was one of Bernard's best yet – it included the two pike we had been given as a starter and the wild boar haunch presented to us by our friend Christian as the main course.

Our very grateful thanks go to everyone in the group and to all our French friends for helping to make this such a successful visit – we hope to be back soon! A selection of the photos from the visit can be seen on our Flickr site.

European Conservation Action Network

EuCAN Community Interest Company

Conservation volunteering, contracting and training in the UK and Europe, with local groups in south and west Somerset and in the Weymouth/Dorchester area.



Plans for 2017 include:

April Study Tour to Holland - Oostvaardersplassen rewilding project and other sites

June Wildlife holiday in the Csik area of Transylvania

Late June/July Visit to La Brenne central France, butterflies, moths, dragonflies etc

Summer tbc Peat mire restoration and other habitat improvement in Estonia

Early August Haymaking and Scything Festival in Transylvania

Late August Bird-ringing camp Croatia

EuCAN CIC is registered in England and Wales as a Community Interest Company limited by guarantee.
Registered Company no. 7513162. Registered Office: 346, Mundens Lane, Alweston, Sherborne, Dorset DT9 5HU.

www.eucan.org.uk

The European Interests Group

The European Interests Group (EIG) is a branch of Butterfly Conservation like the county branches, but its focus is European butterflies rather than UK butterflies. Membership is open to all members of Butterfly Conservation at an additional cost of £10 a year. It is the branch to join if you want to learn how to identify butterflies that you see in Europe, to find out where best to see them, and to learn about conservation and survey projects. EIG circulates a newsletter to members twice a year, and the following article is reproduced from their May 2016 edition. For more information, for back issues of newsletters, and information on butterflies by country, please go to their website www.bc-eig.org.uk.

A butterfly holiday your partner will enjoy

Simon Spencer Chair, European Interests Group

I am very lucky that my wife loves looking at butterflies and really appreciates the great places that it takes us in Europe. Not everyone is quite so lucky and I suspect that there are also female butterfly watchers whose husbands are not that keen on walking up mountains but it is usually the other way round. Most British holiday makers head for the coast and are after sun and sea and a bit of relaxation.

If a compromise is to be had and a butterfly holiday is also to be enjoyed by the other half then with a little thought it can be arranged. Greece is a popular tourist destination and has some wonderful beaches but most tourists go to the islands or Crete where the butterfly fauna is limited. Crete only has 60 species but does have 4 endemics. Mainland Greece has a few resorts in the tourist brochures and has many more butterflies. There is Parga in the north west, Stoupa in the south of the Peloponnese and Pelion and Halkidiki in the north. One of our favourite resorts is Olympiada about an hour's drive east of Thessaloniki but it has very few Brits.

Timing

Timing is also very important. I favour September when the magnificent Two-tailed Pasha (*Charaxes jasius*) has its second flight period (the other one is in May). This is one of Europe's most spectacular butterflies and is a coastal specialist feeding as a larva on Strawberry trees *(Arbutus sp*). It is the only European example of the family Charaxes which is common in the tropics. September is also a good time to see another beautiful butterfly the Plain Tiger *(Danaus chrysippus)*. This species is markedly coastal and does not tolerate cold or frost. It is a continuous breeder and we were amazed to see about 300 fresh specimens nectaring on some Tamarisk trees near Stoupa in September last year.

Eastern Aegean

With the current troubles in the Eastern Aegean one might think twice about going to Lesbos and Samos. The migrant crisis has

probably ruined them as a tourist destination but they do have some good butterflies. Samos has its own Grayling (*Hipparchia mersina*) and the Orange-banded Hairstreak (*Satyrium ledereri*) which is a bit of a climb as well as Eastern Brown Argus (*Kretania euripilus*). It is also a good place to see Southern Swallowtail (*Papilio alexanor*).

Mainland Greece

You will see a lot of the common Greek butterflies on or near the Greek coast . The Southern Comma (*Polygonia egea*) is usually common and the Southern White Admiral (*Limenitis reducta*) with its single row of dots flies until September. Two skippers are decidedly coastal - Pygmy Skipper (*Gegenes pumilio*) and Mediterranean Skipper (*Gegenes nostrodamus*) but can also be found inland. Pygmy Skipper is more common and likes dry rocky places like dry river beds and beaches.

From the coast of the mainland you can take a trip inland quite quickly and visit some of the more mountainous areas for the day. Depending on the time of year you will have a chance to see some of Greece's 230 species. In July and August it makes a welcome change from the 40°C or more on the coast. Archaeological sites are often good for butterflies and often have Tree Grayling (*Hipparchia statilinus*). Roadside springs with their excellent drinking water often are good places to stop to see mud puddling blues. A good lunch in a taverna will give you the opportunity to spot Geranium Bronze (*Cacyreus marshali*) on the potted geraniums and watch the Scarce Swallowtail (*Iphiclides podalirius*) drifting by.

Records

If you do go to Greece we have a useful recording form for Greece as an Excel spreadsheet on the www.bc-eig.org.uk website under 'countries' and Lazaros Pamperis our colleague in Greece will be glad of your records. For those that visit Greece regularly or live there part of the year Lazaros and I are planning an EIG initiative for butterfly monitoring in Greece in 2017

Catfield Fen appeal victory

Butterfly Conservation, Plantlife and the RSPB welcomed an inspector's decision to refuse two water abstraction licence renewal applications that threatened rare wildlife at Butterfly Conservation's Catfield Fen nature reserve. This is good news not only for the endemic Swallowtail, but also the rare Fen Orchid. Thanks to all of you who wrote in to support the conservation view and to Greenwings Wildlife Holidays who donated a large sum to help in the legal battle.

The Life Cycle of the Orange-tip

William Langdon

This article appeared in the Somerset Branch newsletter and is reproduced with kind permission of the author William Langdon.

For Birdwatchers, the first sign of spring, a new season ahead, is the first Swallow, or perhaps the first Chiffchaff. For botanists, the first bulbs, Snowdrops or perhaps Crocuses. But for us butterfly watchers, there is only one: the Orange-tip, Anthocharis cardamines.

Orange-tips are well-loved and familiar butterflies for us all, and in this article I aim to explore their life cycle and gain an extra layer of understanding of this beautiful creature.

The word: cardamines in this butterfly's Latin name literally means 'crucifers' and it is to these plants that Orange-tips are tied throughout their lives, starting of course, with the egg.

The Egg

Orange-tip eggs are laid on a broad variety of Crucifers, most often Garlic Mustard *(Alliaria petiiolata)*, on dry, light soils, Cuckoo Flower *(Cardamine pratensis)* on boggier, peatier ones, and Honesty *(Lunaria annua)* in gardens. Less often they can be found on Hairy Rock Cress *(Arabis hirsuta)*, Hedge Mustard *(Sisymbrium officinale)*, Large Bitter Cress *(Cardamine amara)*, Winter Cress *(Barbarea vulgaris)* and even Turnip *(Brassica rapa)*.

Interestingly, this variety of foodplants mean the Orange-tip can be described as oligophagous (using a variety of foodplants of similar species) rather than monophagous (using just one foodplant, e.g. The Chalkhill Blue - *Polyommatus coridion* with Horseshoe Vetch – *Hippocrepis comosa*) or polyphaghous, (using several foodplants of different genera e.g. the Comma – *Polygonia c – album* on both Nettle – *Urtica diocia* and Elm – *Ulmus* sp.).

Despite this rather catholic approach to the species of plants on which they lay, female Orange-tips are very fussy about the actual plants they choose, going only for sunlit, prominent, crucifers, growing alone about a metre from the hedgebank or wood edge. It is thought selection of solitary plants is a sort of 'don't put all your eggs in one basket' attempt to combat parasitism, whilst sunlit, prominent plants growing proud of the hedgebank or wood edge have more access to sunlight and therefore more ability to photosynthesize, grow and provide food for the developing larvae.

When laying, female Orange-tips tend to fly somewhat weakly along hedgerows and wood edges (attempting to avoid the attention of amorous males), locating suitable looking plants on the wing before alighting on them to test further their suitability through specially adapted cells in their feet.

Should the plant pass all these tests, the female will bend her abdomen quickly round and deposit a single egg on the plant's stalk, just below the flower.

Eggs are nearly always laid singly on each flower head, owing to the larva's cannibalistic nature. There are however exceptions to every rule, and each season, I normally find one or two pairs of ova. On large plants like Garlic Mustard which produce lots of seed pods, each flower-head can have an egg on, but on Cuckoo flower, with its smaller size, there are typically just one or two on the whole plant.

The egg itself is roughly spherical in shape, with a micropyle at the top (allowing the entry of the male's sperm) and aeropyles geometrically arranged up its side (pores allowing for the entry of oxygen for the embryo within).

When laid, it is a greenish white, quickly turning a pale yellow, then a deep orange within 2 or 3

days. It is at this stage that the egg is most visible and easily found by methodically searching Garlic Mustard plants on a hedgebank or Cuckoo flower in a meadow – particularly enjoyable and satisfying for young children with their sharp eyes.

About 24 hours before hatching, it becomes almost wholly transparent, clearly showing the features of the larva within, before the larva eats its way out, between a week and a fortnight after it was laid.

The Larva

Upon hatching, the larva is only a few millimetres long and enjoys its first meal on the protein rich egg from which it has emerged. At this stage, in its first instar (skin), it is small and golden brown with a large black head and black hairs along its length, the latter tipped with secretions most distinctive when the larva is seen against the light.

It feeds on the developing seedpods of the plants, resting lengthwise along them and leaving them peppered with little notches where it has bored its way in for the seeds present there.

As mentioned earlier, the larva is cannibalistic and will eat any other egg or smaller larva that it encounters. The ready food source of seedpods allows it to grow quickly, passing through a total of 5 instars and 4 moults. The first instar, is the golden brown described earlier, and as the larva passes through subsequent instars, it becomes greener, from a grey green second instar to a magnificent final instar, decked out in a pale green and white, and perfectly camouflaged upon the seed pods which sustain it.

Through all these stages, the larva relies on its excellent camouflage and positioning, resting lengthways along the seed pod to avoid the attention of predators, but a larva is by no means guaranteed survival, and Jeremy Thomas suggests that during the 3 to 4 weeks Orange-tips spend as caterpillars, 10% will be eaten by another larva and another 15% will succumb to starvation (particularly on smaller foodplants like cuckoo flower), and many others will fall victim to the parasitic fly, *Phryxe vulgaris*, or as they grow larger, predation by birds. As such, somewhere between a fifth and a quarter of larvae actually survive to become pupae.

The Pupa

The pupa or chrysalis is a subtle creation, rather boomerang-like in shape and a pale green when first formed, later fading to one of two colour forms, either pale brown (wonderfully camouflaged among dead plant stems) or bright green, rather less well camouflaged and therefore rarer.

It is most often formed on a vertical surface, typically in bushes and other tall vegetation away from the foodplant, and more rarely on the stems of the foodplant (this seems to particularly be the case if the foodplant is honesty).

The pupal stage is the longest of the Orange-tip's life, lasting from July, when it is normally formed, right through to April the next year when the adult emerges. Signs of the adult's imminent emergence begin to show up to a month before, when the pupa darkens visibly, then, about 10 days before, its markings begin to show through the pupal case.

In the subsequent days, the markings gradually show more clearly until the adult emerges, a full 7 months after it pupated. Emergence is a surprisingly quick process, lasting only around 20 seconds, with the adult orange tip remaining near its pupa for some time, allowing its wings to expand and harden.

The Adult

The male Orange-tip is one of the most conspicuous of British butterflies, patrolling ceaselessly along hedgerows, wood edges, lanes and gardens in search of unmated females, which

New pages are being added to the Suffolk Branch website.
http://www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk

The **Events Programme 2017** is available on the website, where updates will be posted during the season.

34 species **distribution maps**, based on the 2011-15 recording period, have been prepared by Bill Stone, and are available now.

The **sightings** page 2017 is already under way, with two species being seen outdoors by the end of January. Keep an eye on the page to see butterfly trends and to add your own sightings as the season progresses.

will await him, perched on the plants on which they pupated.

Males are unrelenting in their search for the object of their desires, investigating any white object they chance upon, be it the white flowers of stitchwort, a Green-Veined white, or a plastic bag, nothing seems to escape their notice. Should they come upon an unmated female, courtship is brief, and mating which follows, lasts for about 40 minutes.

Once mated, males continue their ceaseless search, whilst females wait for their eggs to mature before depositing them on suitable crucifers. They are more subtly marked than males, with black rather than orange wing tips, and even after mating have to fend off the advances of patrolling males, alighting and raising their abdomens perpendicular to their bodies, whilst the scorned male flies frustrated around her, normally giving up after a minute or so.

The orange-tip is pretty well distributed throughout the UK, with our unique subspecies, *britannicus* (having longer and narrower forewings than that of the holotype described in Sweden) found in mainland England, Wales, and patchily in Scotland, and *hibernica* (with smaller size and stronger black markings on the underside of both sexes and more yellow on the female's underside) in Ireland.

Adult Orange-tips are relatively easily found on country lanes and wood edges where their favoured foodplants grow, and they can easily be encouraged into the garden, a bit of Cuckoo flower by the pond, some garlic mustard along the fence. This is pretty much all it takes to have orange tips on tap, and in our garden, the adults feed, lay and roost on the Garlic Mustard I grow, undoubtedly worth the small effort, for there can be fewer sights finer than a male Orange-tip on patrol, his wings shining in the sun.

But when you see one, remember the struggle he has been through as a caterpillar, the odds he has overcome, and plant some foodplant in a sunny spot, ready for next spring!

The Life Cycle of the Orange-tip

See article Page 21

Photos by William Langdon

Freshly laid egg

Mature egg

1st instar caterpillar

late instar caterpillar

30 days before emergence

2 days before emergence

male emerging

male upperside