



Butterfly
Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

50th Anniversary



The Suffolk Argus

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



Brimstone nectaring on Purple loosestrife Photo: Trevor Goodfellow

Shifting Sands Project King's Forest 2018

Viper's Bugloss growing profusely in a disturbed margin on the edge of the King's Forest.

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Photo: Sharon Hearle



Box-tree Moth



Box-tree Moth adult
Photo: Neil Sherman

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Box-tree Moth larva
bohringer friedrich

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Clouded Yellow larva

Photos: David Basham Page 20



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New Members

New Members are warmly welcomed and that you will be able to take part in the recording of butterflies and join some of our events and work parties.

**Copy date for the Suffolk Argus
Summer edition is Sunday 27th May 2018
Please send articles, photos and illustrations
to Trevor Goodfellow trevor@greenfarm.org.uk**

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Butterfly Conservation

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Editorial

Peter Maddison

We start the year with good news. Jillian Macready has taken over the role of Membership Secretary from Tracie Beattie - thank you Tracie for your work during the past year - and Trevor Goodfellow is to become the new editor of *The Suffolk Argus*. Discussions have been going on during the production of this newsletter and Trevor will take the reins for the Summer Edition. Thank you to both Jillian and Trevor for taking on these roles. Both individuals join the ranks of volunteers who organize and run the Suffolk Branch, and to whom we are extremely grateful for their devoted time and work.

2018 is the 50th Anniversary Year of Butterfly Conservation, the organization being registered as a charity on 10th March 1986. To mark the occasion Branches have been invited to take part in a Conservation Day of Action. Suffolk Branch will be at SWT Blaxhall Heath, a special heathland for us where, in 2007, a translocation of Silver-studded Blue butterflies took place. The butterflies are thriving and on the 10th March we will be joining the regular team of volunteers who conserve the heath by pulling pine seedlings that seed all too easily into the free-draining soil. You can find more details elsewhere in the newsletter. Why not join us for some or all of the day?

You will see that we have another full programme of events which, to cut printing costs, is not being produced as a separate card, but takes the centre pages of this newsletter. Online readers can print these pages or, and I urge all members who have access to a computer, check the Branch 'Events' webpage as it is online that new events and other updates will be notified through the summer.

Apart from butterfly walks there are a number of moth events. All members are welcome

to our events and I hope that as a beginner in identification or as a skilled observer you will want to join in.

At this time of year I usually exhort members to record butterflies and send their records to Bill Stone, the County Recorder. This year is no exception - all records are valuable. In 2018 there are a number of focused recording opportunities.

There is a call for recorders at four separate locations in the county to work in conjunction with Suffolk Wildlife Trust on farm butterfly surveys. We have a number of Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey 1km squares that need to be surveyed, there is an appeal for a single recorder or a small team of recorders to survey a transect at Dunwich, and there are colonies of Silver-studded Blue butterflies that need to be counted at both Dunwich and Minsmere. You will find articles within these pages about the projects. Please consider joining the volunteers who add to our knowledge of Suffolk's Lepidoptera.

One of the first species to emerge is the Brimstone and to see it flit through the garden on one of those warm days in late February or March lifts spirits. If the butterfly is not in your district it might be because the larval food plant - Buckthorn - is not present. The distribution map of Brimstone butterflies, that you can see on the website, shows a lack of sightings particularly in mid-Suffolk and a scattering of 'black holes' in the south-west and east of the county. This winter's 'Brimstones and Buckthorns' project, funded by the Susie Mellor legacy, is targeting those areas, and Parish Councils have been offered free Buckthorn whips in the hope that parishioners will be encouraged to plant them. You can read more about the project on our website. Your village might be involved - keep your ear to the ground!

Jim Foster (1936-2017)



Jim and Ros at Meathop Moss, Cumbria. Suffolk Branch holiday 2013.

Jim was a very active member of many organisations including his local church, the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Ipswich and District Natural History Society (now ended) and Butterfly Conservation. He served in many positions on the IDNHS committee, including as President and gave many talks, particularly about his antipodean adventures with his wife Rosalind (Ros). She often features as the single human in wild terrain and also as a measure of height or distance. Members had many opportunities to visit their large garden at Stonham Aspal where the snake's head fritillaries seemed to multiply each year. It was rich in wildlife, sometimes presenting problems, such as a leak in one of the ponds caused by the activities of a water vole.

Both were fully involved in our Suffolk BC branch, attending many meetings and regulars on the 'weekend away' trips, including the last one in Sussex, 2014. Having been an accountant Jim was not surprisingly a meticulous record keeper and he was one of the Principal Recorders for the recently published 'Suffolk Dragonflies'. He also provided the Swallowtail photo for my 'Millennium Atlas of Suffolk Butterflies'. Jim had a good sense of humour but I'm not sure if he ever completely forgave me about the Willow Emerald incident. It was early on during its colonisation, Jim had a photo lined up, someone

asked me where it was, I pointed it out and off it went. Jim also constantly 'pulled my leg' about the many times I seemed to be the only one able to spot Purple Hairstreaks high up in oak trees. His eyesight problems didn't help but on one occasion I persuaded him to stand next to me for about ten minutes until he had seen them.

Jim was at our BC AGM in 2016, looking forward to possibly attending field meetings in 2017, but it was not to be. Before the years of bad health that afflicted both of them in their latter years Jim had edited the 'Suffolk Argus' editions 24-35, but eventually they had to sell their beloved house and move to Stowmarket, Ros to a care home and Jim living close by, so he could see her each day. The funeral service at the village church had representatives from the wildlife organisations mentioned above and included in his family was his son who had previously been to some of our BC field meetings. The service itself was a successful mixture of Jim's abiding Christian faith and his love of nature. Ros was unable to be there because of her health but a poem she had written was included among the readings. It was perhaps fitting, without being anthropomorphic, to see two Speckled Wood flying together just outside the porch after the service had ended.

Richard Stewart

Suffolk Branch Butterfly Conservation

AGM 25th Nov 2017

Accounts 1st April 2016 -31st March 2017

Opening Balance	1013.78		
Income		Expenditure	
Subscriptions	2730.00	Insurance	-50.55
VAT	35.80	Field Equipment	-388.98
Bank Interest	1956.04	Printing	-85.00
Donations	631.04	Argus	-1321.00
Maddison & Parker	255.00	Stationary	-39.13
Felixstowe SWT	25.00	Postage	-610.34
Fundraising (Raffle)	47.50	AGM Costs	-61.14
Closure of Petty Cash A/c	33.93	Computer Purchase	-571.94
		VAT	-51.2
	5714.31	5714.31	-3179.28
Total Income	6728.09	Total Expenditure	-3179.28
			6728.09
Closing Balance c/fwd			3548.81

Notes

Donation £631.04 was from the Trudie Willis Garden Open Day.

Maddison/Parker/Felixstowe SWT were for talks given to various wildlife and gardening groups.

Bank Interest was made up of two parts:

Interest from deposit account £456.04

Transfer from deposit account £1,500.00 (legacy withdrawal from deposit a/c)

Calling for Butterfly Recorders for Local Farmland Surveys

Rob Parker, Conservation Officer (Butterflies).

Juliet Hawkins, SWT Conservation Advisor.

In 2017 Butterfly Conservation in Suffolk teamed up with Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT) for a very successful farm butterfly survey - we hope the first of many. Wendy Cooper, a BC member volunteer, was asked by SWT to carry out a systematic survey over two transects on John Pawsey's organic Shimpling Park Farm near Lavenham - as part of a larger programme of surveys being undertaken including birds, dragonflies, amphibians and plants - so that he can see how butterflies, amongst other taxonomic groups, fare under his organic regime. SWT provided the maps, the insurance for Wendy as a volunteer, and introduced her to the farm with a brief. Wendy walked the two transects (fixed routes) once a month from April to September and submitted the records with some comments to SWT's farm conservation adviser Juliet Hawkins, who then drafted a report on the findings and some management recommendations to John. It was a great outcome for all - Wendy enjoyed recording over 20 butterfly species (and will undoubtedly return), John established what he had and how he could improve management even more, and SWT was pleased to ensure advisory recommendations had a good evidence base. And in 10 years time the replicable transect can be repeated and we can all see what has changed.

Following the success of this first little pilot partnership, BC and SWT are keen to extend this to other interested farms where local butterfly enthusiasts might enjoy walking transects through different habitats, monthly on nice sunny days from April to September, and submitting their records to the landowner via SWT. For the enthusiast this provides a good opportunity for someone who wants to get out and about and explore butterfly patches they haven't been on before, and for the landowner they get some meaningful records in return! However, we do appreciate that it is a regular commitment and not for the faint-hearted! New requests to survey come in all over Suffolk and where we know we have offers to survey, we

can offer volunteers. In 2018, we are especially seeking help with several SWT projects:

North-east Suffolk where SWT is working with a re-wilding project on a large estate will see positive management changes for wildlife and baseline survey information would be very valuable.

Rougham where the aims of the charitable Rougham Estate Trust is to improve wildlife conservation and again SWT is co-ordinating surveys that measure the changes following more sympathetic management such as in the ancient woodland.

Bramfield Parish where SWT is working with three sympathetic farmers who want to work together to ensure their conservation efforts are more 'joined up' and well connected and where SWT wants to make a case study of the efforts.

Stour Valley where SWT is working with a group of farmers linked to SWT Arger Fen Nature Reserve near Assington to re-connect habitats and strengthen corridors for wildlife.

If you live near the above areas and are interested in taking on a farm transect or two, or if you live elsewhere and are interested in getting involved locally to you, then please contact Rob Parker at robparker@waitrose.com to register your interest. We will be able to give you more information about which farms are participating, and how to set up your transect walk. The idea is to use the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme methodology, although there is no requirement to register these walks or to use the online recording scheme. The Suffolk recording scheme will of course receive your records, and you will benefit from access to interesting habitat on privately owned farmland.

Ideally, we need half a dozen established recorders who are confident with their identifications.

Shifting Sands Heritage Lottery Project in the Brecks of Norfolk and Suffolk

Sharon Hearle, BC Regional Officer, Eastern England

Your help is needed to survey and monitor butterflies and moths in the Kings Forest – training can be provided, beginners or experts welcome lots of different ways to help.

Shifting Sands is the project name for the Brecks part of the national Back from the Brink project with funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the next 3 years. Back from the Brink is one of the most ambitious conservation projects ever undertaken and at a national level aims to save 20 species from extinction and benefit over 200 more through 19 projects that span England; from the tip of Cornwall to Northumberland. Butterfly Conservation is part of this major partnership and it's the first time ever that so many conservation organisations have come together with one focus in mind – to bring back from the brink of extinction some of England's most threatened species of animal, plant and fungi.

In the Brecks the aim is to restore and create a mosaic of habitats for the Brecks' rarest wildlife. As part of Shifting Sands the Forestry Commission will be embarking on a project to significantly widen a network of forest rides on the west side of the B1106. This will be achieved by removing timber trees and adding habitat detail to those rides through rotational mowing, rotovating and other work to create bare ground and add variety along a network of rides linked to patches of heathland. We expect that this will benefit many scarce invertebrate species of particular interest to Butterfly Conservation such as Dingy Skipper, Grayling, Lunar Yellow Underwing, Grey Carpet, Forester and Basil Thyme Case-bearer which are already present in King's Forest but mostly on the east side of the B1106.

Elsewhere on the Suffolk heaths there will be a major focus on boosting rabbit numbers. The heaths were, for hundreds of years, home to lots of rabbits – great habitat managers, which are now in sharp decline. The project will aim to boost rabbit

populations on these heaths so that rare plants and their associated insects can recolonise the more open, rabbit-disturbed ground.

Butterfly Conservation will be involved in delivering training events, survey and monitoring work in the Brecks over the next 3 years and in 2018 this will be at King's Forest. There will of course be many other species that will also be recorded during our survey work. There will be four main events at King's Forest in 2018 aimed at volunteers including beginners. Moth traps will be set the night before and opened at 10am where the moths can be viewed before they are released again. This can be a great opportunity for photography. We will then embark on a walk of the forest ride network to record butterflies and day flying moths. We are aiming to collect baseline information in 2018 before the main ride widening work begins. This data is vital and will help Forestry Commission to design ride management work in the future over the entire network.

If you are already involved in monitoring and survey work in the Brecks and in particular the regular Dingy and Grayling surveys please continue and all this information is valuable.

Help needed with the following:

Moth identification in the morning and help retrieving the overnight traps.

Day flying moth surveys between April and September.

Caterpillar surveys both daytime in spring/summer and early evening in the winter.

Training provided if needed. Please get in touch if you can help at all.

Sharon Hearle Regional Officer

shearle@butterfly-conservation.org

Tel 07920131526 or 01638 484145 (message)

Warm, Dry, Summer Days are Never Boring for Recorders of WCBS Squares. - One Person's View.

Twm Wade

It was through the promotion of the transect scheme for recording butterflies that Butterfly Conservation (BC) established a sound basis for estimating butterfly numbers across the UK. It had one flaw in that sites tended to be selected because they were places where butterflies were abundant or to monitor the effect of changes in habitat, man made or otherwise. So as to put these records into a national context, BC started the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) scheme. This new scheme has transects but their location is randomly selected and you only need walk them twice in the year.

In Suffolk we have 42 sites all of which are 1km OS squares. Each square is crossed by 2 transects separated by 100m so it is not a long walk although some are a bit remote from convenient parking. There are 21 recorders or surveyors. Some do 3 squares, some do one. Some just walk in the key months of July and August but some do more to catch the spring-flying species.

For 2017 all the numbers are in and they make interesting reading.

* The grand total of butterflies recorded in 2017 was 4,790.

* The highest number in any week was 843 and that was the second week of July.

* The highest weekly number in August was 624 in the first week.

* In the key month of July, 2166 were recorded; nearly half the grand total.

* In the key month of August it was 1,419.

* The best early recording was in the third week of May: 143.

The most numerous species was the Meadow Brown at 785 counted. The Gatekeeper was a distant second at 599 followed by Small White (562), Large White (541) and Ringlet (506). The least numerous was the White Admiral at 2 counted. Then, in single figures, we have Clouded Yellow (5) then Silver-washed Fritillary and Green Hairstreak (7 each).

The most widespread species was the Small White seen in 30 OS squares. They were closely followed by: Speckled Wood and Meadow Brown (27 each) then Large White (26). By comparison the Green Hairstreak was seen only in one square, followed by Clouded Yellow and White Admiral (2) then Silver-washed Fritillary (3). We then have an oddity with the Grayling being seen in 4 squares but there were 104 of them. Some people get all the luck.

These results are due to a few individuals giving of their time on warm, dry days in late spring and the whole summer. These numbers are for Suffolk and will be combined with others across the UK. Without them, BC could not be as effective

as it is when it comes to influencing government, and BC would not have the good academic links currently enjoyed. If you want to take part, at present we have 10 squares available (listed below).

Squares Available to New Participants

Grid Ref	Town or Parish of Square	Post Code of Square
TL7573	Icklingham	IP28 6PZ
TL8161	Ickworth	IP29 5QE
TL8381	Thetford (west)	IP24 3ST
TL9479	Coney Weston	IP31 1HL
TL9577	Coney Weston	IP31 1DL
TM0378	Redgrave	IP22 1SA
TM3180	St James, South Elmham and Metfield	IP19 0HT
TM4069	Darsham	IP17 3PH
TM0969	Wickham Skeith	IP23 8LX
TM2160	Framsden, Framlingham	IP14 6HN

If interested, please contact: twm.wade@yahoo.com

Spend a sunny hour or two at Dunwich or Minsmere during late June or early July.

We need volunteers for Minsmere and Dunwich where butterfly counts will be made on two or three sunny days during the late June - early July Silver-studded Blue flight period. These areas are some of the best for Silver-studded Blue in Suffolk, so it is vital that we monitor

their progress. It will help to inform future management of the sites.

If you are interested, in helping with the summer surveys, training will be given if necessary, please contact Helen at: helens919@gmail.com

A Request for a Transect Recorder.

SITUATION VACANT

Transect Walker - Dunwich Forest

Suitable for all – able-bodied, wheelchair or mobility scooter users
 Required from 1 April for 26 weeks each year
 One walk per week of just over an hour
 An interest in identifying butterflies is necessary

Experience is not necessary
 Access to a computer is helpful

Two or three people might share the job.

For further information contact Twm Wade
twm.wade@yahoo.com

Box Bothering Moth

Tony Prichard

Suffolk gardeners can look forward to some unexpected (and probably unwanted) visitors in the near future as the micro-moth *Cydalima perspectalis* (also known as the Box-tree Moth) becomes settled in the county. This Asian pyralid moth is probably native to China and Korea but was accidentally imported to mainland Europe around 2007 when it was first noted in Germany and the Netherlands. Around the same time the moth was recorded in Kent in 2007 and then in Surrey in 2008. Since then it has spread rapidly across Europe and England too, where it has been recorded in many of the southern counties and even as far north as Yorkshire and County Durham. Several recent Suffolk records have come to my notice ranging from Ipswich, Hollesley and up the coast to Lowestoft. It is likely that any further spread will be rapid as the adults are reported to be good fliers and it is possible that some of the individuals recorded along the southern coastal areas are primary immigrants rather than residents.

The adult moth is quite large for a micro-moth with a wingspan of around 40-45mm and is a glossy white with dark brown wings borders, thorax and head and should be readily identifiable. A more uncommon form that is dark brown all over may be a bit more of a challenge. It may be found flying from April to September with

the moth having two or possibly three broods a year.

It is the caterpillars that are most likely to attract the attention of gardeners as they feed on the leaves and bark of Common Box (*Buxus sempervirens*) causing visible damage to the leaves. Those with topiary trees will find this insect's arrival most unwelcome as in the absence of specific predators numbers of larvae can build up in a locality, leading to large parts of trees being covered in larval webs and damaged brown leaves. It is thought that larger larvae may also damage the bark of the tree and putting the tree under stress and possibly leading to its death.

My experience of this moth is from Italy where I found the species in an ornamental garden with small hedges of Box. I would not have said that there was a lot of visible damage to the hedging and the sight of these moths, easily disturbed into flight by tapping the bushes, was a pleasant distraction in an otherwise mundane garden. I would be interested to hear of any further sightings of this moth or its caterpillars in Suffolk.

Butterfly Conservation Suffolk Branch Events 2018

Winner of 2017 Photo Competition Class 1 *Holly Blue* by Jane Henderson



For more details visit
www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk



Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

50th Anniversary

**Butterfly
Conservation**



Saturday 10th March

CONSERVATION DAY OF ACTION

Suffolk Branch at SWT Blaxhall Heath.

Join the work party at this Silver-studded Blue heathland site.

Meet: small car parks either side of B1069, Tunstall to Snape road.

Map Ref: TM382566

Post Code: IP12 2EJ

Time: 10.30 - 14.30

Wear suitable work clothing.

Tools provided.

Bring lunch if staying.

Contact: Peter Maddison 01473 736607

or SWT Reserve Warden, Terry Peake

01728 746004

Saturday 28th April

BUTTERFLY WALK

Spring Butterflies in the King's Forest

Meet: West Stow Road, just east of Country Park

Map Ref: TL803714. park on track at edge of forest

Time: 10:30 to 13:00

Contact: Rob Parker 01284 705476

Monday 7th May (Public Holiday)

FREE FAMILY EVENT*

Spring Wood Celebration Day

Join Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation and lots of other conservation groups at Kiln Meadow.

Butterfly and other guided walks, wood crafts, children's activities, music and storytelling. Park at Bourne Park off Stoke Park Drive and take free minibus to the event on Kiln Meadow.

Where: Kiln Meadow, off Marbled White Drive, Ipswich

Map Ref: TM143416

Time: 11.00 am to 4.00 pm

Contact: Helen Saunders

Email: helens919@gmail.com

Thursday 10th May

MOTH TRAP OPENING AND BUTTERFLY SURVEY

Shifting Sands Project with Sharon Hearle

All welcome. Suitable for beginners.

Join Sharon Hearle to see moths caught the night before in 5 traps set in the forest, followed by an optional 3 mile walk to record butterflies and moths.

Dingy Skipper might be found. Bring packed lunch and drinks if staying for the walk. Ticks are present in Kings Forest.

Meet: Kings Forest Picnic Site Car Park opposite ride

203, just off B1106

Grid Ref: TL825747

Approx. postcode: IP28 6UY

Time: 10.00am – 2.00pm

Contact Sharon Hearle

shearle@butterfly-conservation.org

Tel 07920131526

It is very helpful to know before if you are planning to attend.

Sunday 13th May

PAKENHAM WATERMILL OPEN DAY

The mill is open as part of the National Mills Weekend.

Theme: Mills and Wildlife. Suffolk Branch Butterfly Conservation, other conservation groups and local interest groups attending

Time: 11.00am - 4.00pm

Further details:

<http://www.pakenhamwatermill.org.uk/>

Wednesday 16th May

BUTTERFLY WALK

SWT Newbourn Springs Reserve for Spring butterflies

Meet: Reserve car park

Map Ref: TM 274433

Post Code: IP12 4NY

Time: 10.30am - 1.00pm

Contact: Peter Maddison 01473 736607

Friday 18th May

MOTH TRAP OPENING AND BUTTERFLY SURVEY

Shifting Sands Project with Sharon Hearle

All welcome. Suitable for beginners.

Join Sharon Hearle to see moths caught the night before in 5 traps set in the forest, followed by an optional 3 mile walk to record butterflies and moths. Bring packed lunch and drinks if staying for the walk. Ticks are present in Kings Forest.

Meet: Forest Lodge Car Park at West Stow Ride 205, between West Stow Country Park and West Stow Hall.

Grid Ref: TL814715

Approx. postcode: IP28 6HB

Time: 10.00am to 2.00pm

Contact Sharon Hearle [shearle@butterfly-](mailto:shearle@butterfly-conservation.org)

[conservation.org](mailto:shearle@butterfly-conservation.org) Tel 07920131526

It is very helpful to know before if you are planning to attend.

May

DINGY SKIPPER SURVEYS

Kings Forest and Suffolk Brecklands

Various surveys and walks during May (subject to weather conditions and access restrictions)

Further information will be on our website when details are finalised.

Sunday 27th May

GARDENING FOR BUTTERFLIES*

Plant Heritage Spring Plant Fair at Helmingham Hall

Come and find Suffolk Branch in the Conservation Zone at Plant Heritage (Suffolk Group's) Spring Fair at Helmingham Hall Gardens. There will be children's activities on offer so this event is suitable for our family members too.

Map Ref: TM186576

Time: 10.00 am – 16.00 pm

£7 entrance fee per person. All children under 16 years free.

Friday 15th June – Monday 18th June

GREENWINGS EVENT, NORFOLK

Swallowtail Weekend with Patrick Barkham

Join *The Butterfly Isles* author and Guardian writer **Patrick Barkham** across the border for a weekend of Swallowtails and other Norfolk wildlife. As well as daily excursions in, on (by boat) and around the Broads, Patrick will also be giving an illustrated talk on one of the evenings. We also anticipate running a moth trap overnight at least once, from Patrick's nearby garden. As with all Greenwings Lepidoptera focused holidays 10% of profits are donated to Butterfly Conservation.

Where: Norfolk ([click here for more details](#))

Contact: Greenwings (01473 254658)

Email: enquiries@greenwings.co.uk

This trip is the sole responsibility of Greenwings Wildlife Tours Ltd

Friday 6th July

MOTHS AND BUTTERFLIES

The Moths and Butterflies of Landseer Park County Wildlife Site

Evening Moth Trapping at Landseer Park, Ipswich.

Time: 9pm (evening) - packing away by midnight.

Meet: look for the light in the park and find us at the moth traps.

Map ref: TM 17621 42743

Contact: David Dowding 07736 826183

or Sam Chamberlin 07712 281307

Saturday 7th July

MOTHS AND BUTTERFLIES

The Moths and Butterflies of Landseer Park County Wildlife Site

Moth Identification & Butterfly Walk at Landseer Park, Ipswich.

Time: 10.00am (morning).

Meet: Landseer Park car park.

Contact: David Dowding 07736 826183

or Sam Chamberlin 07712 281307

Sunday 8th July

BUTTERFLY WALK

Butterflies of Piper's Vale (Orwell Country Park)

Butterfly Walk on Piper's Vale, Ipswich

Time: 10.00am - finish around lunchtime.

Meet: Pipers car park Map ref: TM 178 419

Contact: Julian Dowding 07910 170609

Thursday 19th July

MOTH TRAP OPENING AND BUTTERFLY SURVEY

Shifting Sands Project with Sharon Hearle

All welcome. Suitable for beginners.

Join Sharon Hearle to see moths caught the night before in 5 traps set in the forest, followed by an optional 3 mile walk to record butterflies and moths. Forester moth might be found. Bring packed lunch and drinks if staying for the walk. Ticks are present in Kings Forest, please cover up.

Meet: Kings Forest Picnic Site Car Park opposite ride 203, just off B1106

Grid Ref: TL825747

Approx. postcode: IP28 6UY

Time: 10am - 2pm

Contact Sharon Hearle shearle@butterfly-conservation.org Tel 07920131526 It is very helpful to know before if you are planning to attend.

Saturday 21st July

RED LODGE HEATH SSSI

For butterflies and moths, potential 20+ species

Members, novices and families welcome.

Meet indoors to see moths trapped locally the night before, followed by a tour of the heath and woodland margins. A rare day-flying moth is known to be on this site.

Meet: Millennium Centre, Magnolia Close Post Code: IP28 8TT

Map ref: TL699703

Times: start at 10:00, tour about 11:30, end about 13:00.

Contact: Twm Wade 01638 577446 or 07743 305363

Email: twm.wade@yahoo.com for more details

Fri 20th July to Sun 12th August

BIG BUTTERFLY COUNT

For more details visit <http://bigbutterflycount.org>

Sunday 29th July

GARDEN OPEN DAY*

Wildlife Garden Open Day

An invitation from BC member Mrs Trudie Willis, to visit her 10 acre garden, including a Buddleia and Honeysuckle collection.

Meet: Park at Prior's Oak, Leiston Road, Aldeburgh (B1122 Leiston to Aldeburgh Road)

Map Ref: TM452591 Post Code: IP15 5QE

Time: 10.30 am start

Contact: Peter Maddison 01473 736607

Wednesday 1st August

MOTH TRAP OPENING AND BUTTERFLY SURVEY

Shifting Sands Project with Sharon Hearle

All welcome. Suitable for beginners.

Join Sharon Hearle to see moths caught the night before in 5 traps set in the forest followed by an optional 3 mile walk to record butterflies and moths. Grayling might be recorded. Bring packed lunch and drinks if staying for the walk. Ticks are present in Kings Forest, please cover up. Meet: Forest Lodge Car Park at West Stow Ride 205, between West Stow Country Park and West Stow Hall. Grid Ref: TL814715 Approx. postcode: IP28 6HB
Time: 10.00am – 2.00pm

Contact Sharon Hearle shearle@butterfly-conservation.org Tel 07920131526 It is very helpful to know before if you are planning to attend.

Saturday 4th August

BUTTERFLY WALK

Grayling Hunt starting in the King's Forest

Meet: Recess on west side of B1106.

Map Ref: TL825739, almost opposite Ride 204 sign.

Contact: Rob Parker 01284 705476.

Saturday 11th August

BUTTERFLY WALK

Search for declining Wall Brown at SWT Carlton Marshes Reserve

Carlton Marshes is a major stronghold for the Wall Brown in Suffolk

Meet: Reserve Car park Map Ref: TM 508920

Post Code: NR33 8HU

Time: 10.30am bring lunch

Leaders: Peter Maddison and Robert Quadling

Contact: Peter Maddison 01473 736607

Saturday 18th August

BUTTERFLY WALK

Sutton Heath, Woodbridge

Target species Grayling, Small Copper & summer Dragonflies.

Grid Ref for Parking: TM306475 Start time:

10:00am

Contact: Kevin Ling Mobile: 07443 623987

Saturday 17th November

SUFFOLK BRANCH AGM AND MEMBERS AFTERNOON

Venue: Earl Stonham Village Hall

Map Ref: TM 097598 Post Code: IP14 5HJ

Time: 2.30 pm.

The AGM will be followed by members' slides then light refreshments, the annual photo competition and our guest speaker, **Patrick Barkham, who is the author of books including 'Butterfly Isles: A Summer In Search Of Our Emperors And Admirals', and is a features writer for The Guardian.** Further details will be announced in The Suffolk Argus and on the Branch website.

Important information

Late cancellation of events - Please contact the leader before an event (except those marked *) to give a telephone number so that we can contact you if the event has to be cancelled at the last minute.

Dogs may be allowed at some of the events. Please contact the leader in advance to find out if the event is suitable.

Safety - there are hazards in the countryside and everyone taking part in an event has a responsibility (duty of care) for their own and others safety. The leader will brief you before setting off, with details of any known hazards and what to do in an emergency. People take part in these events entirely at their own risk. The Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation cannot accept liability for any injuries or losses during the course of an event.

Membership

People who are not members of Butterfly Conservation are welcome to our events but please contact the leader beforehand to check the availability of places. You can join Butterfly Conservation and the Suffolk Branch at www.butterfly-conservation.org

Butterfly Conservation

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Purdis Heath SSSI project update and observations

Julian Dowding

Work at Purdis Heath to improve habitat for Silver-studded Blues continues apace since the end of the WREN grant funding in Dec 2016. The Ipswich Heaths Project may have finished but work must continue at Purdis (and other local heathland sites) if we are to improve habitat for Silver-studded Blues and other species. This is something that's easily overlooked. For heathland habitats work has to be on-going due to the nature of heathland succession. To this end, volunteers have worked particularly hard over the course of the year and will continue to do so into the foreseeable future.

Since December 2016, around 1,000 hours has been given freely by our intrepid Purdis volunteers. I hope you will agree that they all deserve an enormous pat on the back for this effort, whether they come once or twice a year, or attend every 'First Saturday of the Month' work party. The more so, since they've been turning up like this for 7 years now, and have often responded to appeals for help on a more ad hoc basis in between times! This work continues even during rainy weather, and more often than not, it has been to cut gorse, a prickly subject at the best of times. So if you get a chance, and you know who these heathland lepidoptera lovers are, please do show your appreciation and let them know how valuable this work is!

In the course of the past 7 years, since Suffolk Branch stepped in at Purdis to save the ailing SSB colony, much has been achieved. Apart from helping to stabilise the colony of SSB, there have been many other new species recorded at Purdis. Helen Saunders and David Basham have worked incredibly hard collecting data and as of now, we have over

1,100 species records for Purdis. I recall this figure being around the 200 mark just a couple of years ago.

Of note, for the second year running we have had breeding Woodlark. The birds were again heard singing in spring 2017 (as in 2016), but the daytime song seemed to disappear. We feared they had vacated the site, but fortuitously, a moth-session one night with David Dowding, showed this was not the case. At 10:30 pm the song was heard, and continued until we went home around 3 hours later. More mothing through spring and summer provided good evidence that the birds were breeding. A sound recording was made of a male in full song in May, singing with as much volume and melody as the Nightingales which were also present. Later in the year, two adults and a juvenile were seen on one of the sandy scrapes we'd created in the course of our work programme, which added further evidence of breeding. To hear them singing at night was a wonderful surprise for me, and it appears that this behaviour is well known, in spite of the fact they are more often heard during calm warm periods during the day. Whether this nocturnal behaviour is in response to day-time disturbance by irresponsible dog walkers (who encourage their pets to go bounding through the heather in spite of our notices appealing to them not to do so) we really don't know. We're just pleased to have the birds. Neil Sherman, who is a great supporter of the heath, informed us that another pair were heard singing at the nearby Ipswich Golf Club. This is an encouraging sign that the species is beginning to feel at home in the area.

There were two surprising new Purdis plant

records for 2016/17. Firstly, Broad-leaved Helleborine, discovered by Anne Cooper on one of the paths and secondly, Common Dodder, found by Stella Wolfe growing as a parasite on Ling, on one of the older sandy scrapes. This plant is very scarce in Suffolk. Grayling butterfly was present in good numbers, as it was in 2016, taking advantage of good periods of summer weather. It continues to be found right across the site, both north and south of Purdis Farm Lane.

In the woodland belt, plenty of good bird species including seven pairs of Nightingales were heard. Three pairs of Willow Warbler, Garden Warbler, Chiffchaff, Linnet, Blackcap, Cuckoo, Lesser and Common Whitethroat, and Woodcock have also all added much avian interest to the site. The sub song of Wood Warbler, a species pretty much absent from Suffolk was also heard.

That all these fabulous species are doing reasonably well must in part be due to the enormous efforts volunteers have put in to restoring about two thirds of the site back to good heathland, whilst encouraging diversity within the outer woodland belt and by creating eco-tones between the two distinct habitats, i.e., a gentle merging from one habitat type to another. The careful use of bunds, ditches and dead hedges also, to an extent, provides protection and shelter for some species.

All of this interest and effort will continue. At least one more scrape is being created this winter, thanks to the work of Buglife and their Urban Buzz Project Officer, David Dowding. This will bring the total number of scrapes to 14. Three of these are on the northern section (north of Purdis Farm Lane). More gorse removal is also planned, together with a gentle thinning of trees in the woodland belt to create a more varied structure there. Greenways will

continue to provide help with their annual 'Megabash' scheduled for 20 January.

As for Purdis Silver-studded Blues, they're holding their own. Although the peak population count in 2017 is slightly down on the previous year, we don't think there's cause for alarm as numbers are still much higher than in 2010 when they hit an all-time low of only 4 and Suffolk Branch stepped in to try and reverse the decline. Furthermore, with the large amount of work we've had to undertake to restore habitat, it's probable that in the course of our work, particularly forage harvesting of mature heather and the creation of sandy scrapes in order to create young heather stands for the future, many SSB eggs unfortunately will have been lost under machinery. More positively, the species was again recorded right across the southern section of the site, south of Purdis Farm Lane. It was also again seen on Dartford Scrape created in 2011, and for the first time on Hawthorn Scrape, which was created in winter 2013/14. Both of these scrapes are slowly coming into condition for the butterfly, with good Bell Heather and other heathland plants now developing well. We remain optimistic about the future of the butterfly at Purdis.

I would like to close this update with an appeal to people, to come forward and help us in our work at Purdis. Whether it be for winter work parties, or summer recording of the species, we would love to see you and you would be made to feel welcome. We have a wonderfully sociable group of volunteers, but with the end of funding we are feeling the pressure somewhat, since nearly everything now has to be done by hand. If you are interested or would like to find out more about the work, please contact Helen Saunders our volunteer coordinator.
Email: helens919@gmail.com

Conservation Day of Action Saturday 10th March 2018

Join the Suffolk Branch of BC and the SWT volunteers at Blaxhall Common

Help conserve the heathland and benefit Silver-studded Blue butterflies and other heathland species at this successful SSB translocation site.

Meet: small car parks either side of B1069, Tunstall to Snape road.

Map Ref: TM382566 Post Code: IP12 2EJ

Time: 10.30 - 14.30

Wear suitable work clothing. Tools provided. Bring lunch if staying.

Contact: Peter Maddison 01473 736607
or SWT Reserve Warden, Terry Peake 01728 746004

Butterflies in Christchurch Park, Ipswich - An Update.

Richard Stewart

It is now almost a year since 'The Butterflies In Christchurch Park' was published and during the last twelve months Marie and I have continued to monitor species. Of the 25 different butterfly species listed 23 were recorded in 2017, the Wall and Grayling being the missing ones, only having single park records from some years ago. Common Blue, not seen by us in 2016, was thankfully recorded in three separate areas and more Brimstone sightings were reported early in the year. Hopefully this species will benefit from additional buckthorn planting. Gorse and broom have also been planted along the northern edge but the two Green Hairstreak sightings in 2017 were again in the bushes below the tennis courts. Marie also recorded Orange-tip caterpillars on hedge garlic close to the Westerfield Road park railings.

Regrettably two good butterfly habitats, the woodland reserve and adjacent orchard, have suffered from anti-social activities, which is

a pity as both have received extra larval food plants such as buckthorn and honeysuckle, the latter hopefully to attract White Admirals which have been recorded scarcely a mile away.

There are still several issues of concern within the actual butterfly garden but one management decision has helped the park's butterflies, since the long grass areas from the tennis courts up to the northern boundary have been left uncut even as I write this, in mid-November. One species to benefit has been the Brown Argus, seen twice in 2017 with only two previous park records. However the species to benefit most from this long grass has been the Small Copper. One count was in double figures, including var. *caeruleopunctata* with faint blue spots on the lower hind wing. The abundance of yarrow, a favoured nectar source, probably increased its presence and we recorded it right up to 22nd October.

Clouded Yellow on Purdis Heath, Ipswich

David Basham and Julian Dowding

Around mid-October 2017 we were having an impromptu midweek work-party, using the Branch's Tree Poppers to pull unwanted Gorse plants out of the ground.

As a result of part of the Ipswich Heaths Project over the last five years we've been able to create around 10 scrapes where the nutrient-rich topsoil layers have been stripped back to allow particularly Bell Heather *Erica cinerea* to germinate and grow without too much competition. One thing that does still compete with it though is the Gorse, which has a tendency to really go for it when the bare sand is exposed which is why we try to keep it under control. Pulling it out of the ground with the Tree Poppers, although slightly laborious, has been found to effectively deal with it permanently. Cutting is no good as it grows back stronger and we really don't like having to use any chemical control.

We were nearing the end of our shift when I noticed a little green caterpillar curled up on the ground next to a little clump of Gorse and grass where I had been working. Something about its appearance made me pick it up to have a better look at it, and then walk over to Julian to show him. He looked at it for a bit, raised his eyes and said that he reckoned 'Clouded Yellow' which was a bit of a surprise to both of us - compounded by him getting a connection on his phone and more-or-less confirming it by looking at a

couple of pictures on the internet. I took a few pictures of it for recording purposes and put it back near its clump of grass.

I sent one of the pictures to Bill Stone who forwarded it to Richard Lewington and he confirmed Clouded Yellow *Colias croceus*.

We haven't seen an adult Clouded Yellow on the heath this year but the evidence is clear that a female has been present. The butterfly is noted for its liking of leguminous plants when ovipositing and things like Lucerne and Birdsfoot Trefoil are often quoted. We don't have much more than a handful of Birdsfoot Trefoil plants, and no Lucerne, but do have a lot of Birdsfoot *Ornithopus perpusillus* so we wonder whether that is being used at Purdis perhaps.

A quick search of various leguminous plants a few days later didn't reveal any more larvae close-by to the one we found, but it is very likely that there are more around.

As much as it is possible to gauge the age of a caterpillar by looking at it we reckon this one is about three quarters grown. If we get a fairly warm next few weeks it is just possible it may finish feeding up, pupate and hatch sometime around mid-November. It may be worth a visit to the heath mid to late November if we get any really warm days to see if any Clouded Yellow are flying.

Red Lodge Heath SSSI in July - An Invitation

Twm Wade

If you are a resident of the west part of Suffolk you may well have heard of Red Lodge. The A11 used to pass through the place, which probably has discouraged you from ever visiting, but there is an under-appreciated gem at the historic heart of the village. What is now a SSSI was an industrial site abandoned some 60 years ago. It is home to rare insects like the The Five-banded Tailed Digger Wasp, *Cerceris quinquefasciata*, (one of six Red Data Book species recorded there) and has over 20 species of lepidoptera.

2018 will be the fourth year we have used this site for an event. One year it was wet, yet we still found butterflies. Last year we started off showing moths that had been caught just outside Red Lodge the night before. Sharon Hearle had trapped them but unfortunately could not stay so Mervyn Crawford stepped in to say what was there. We then moved to the heath itself.

While on site it is easy to forget just how close you are to houses and a busy road. There are areas of meadow grassland full of wild flowers alongside bramble, bracken, scrub, trees and wetland. The grassland is both acid and chalk-based. Some is long, some is trodden, some is grazed short by rabbits, all of it has minimal management. It is generally sheltered from the worst of the wind and I expect we will have a good show of butterflies this year.

We will meet at 10:00 in the Millennium Centre (IP28 8TT) on 21 July. There is plenty of space to park. The format will be the same as 2017, starting with the moths indoors so even in bad weather there will be something to come for. As one who focuses on butterflies, I have to admit that in 2017 I found this first part of the event a civilised introduction to moths and it would have made a good event on its own. I did not count the number of moths Sharon brought but it was a diverse selection of about 20 species. I do recall being introduced to the Ear Moth and there was a young lad present who knew more about moths than me.

The weather was good so we went out before 11.30 and it gave us more time to explore the different parts of the heath. In the 90+ minutes we saw 17 species of butterfly and at least three moths with the caterpillar of the Cinnabar Moth being most abundant. While we did not find a Purple Emperor or a Silver-washed Fritillary, the various habitats sustain good numbers of butterflies and moths, and the diverse species that go with them. You will not be disappointed and are welcome along with your family and friends. I hope you can make it.

Twm Wade

(for more information please contact me by email: twm.wade@yahoo.com)

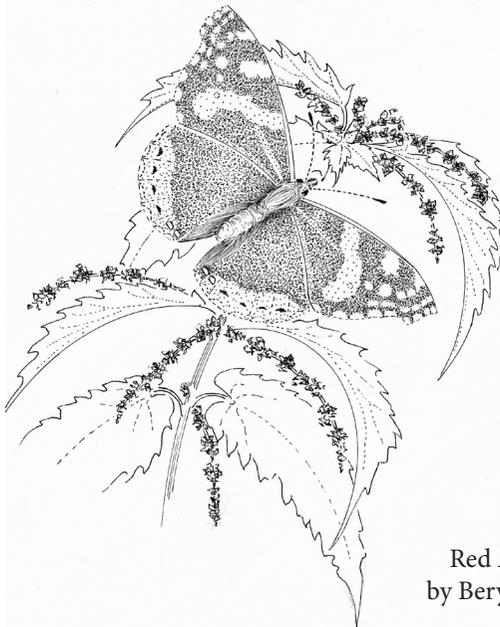
**Sunday July 30th 2017. Open garden at Prior's Oak,
Aldeburgh, at the kind invitation of BC member Trudie Willis.**

Richard Stewart

For once other wildlife 'stole the show', at least momentarily. A red kite flew over, the increasingly rare turtle dove was recorded and by the end of the day three separate webs of the wasp spider had been discovered, a new species for the garden. As usual bees, moths and abundant refreshments added to the experience and the nesting swallows still managed to feed their young despite the close presence of a parked four by four. Other birds heard or seen included green woodpecker and goldfinches. I found Purple Hairstreaks in two separate oaks but the 'star of the day' was the Red Admiral, at least fifty, some probably flown in from

the continent. Other butterflies recorded were: Small Skipper, Brimstone, Large and Small White, Common Blue, Small Copper (one var. *caeruleopunctata* with blue spots at the bottom edge of the hindwings), Painted Lady, Comma, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Small Heath and Grayling.

As usual there was no entry fee but a request for donations and the final total was an incredible £706-12, all of which went to our branch funds. Thank you once again Trudie for your generosity, organisation and continued presence all day.



Red Admiral
by Beryl Johnson

Twitching for the Elusive Butterflies

Alan Beaumont

In the 2017 programme of events for our year was the one for 10th June to Salcey Forest in Northamptonshire for the Wood White and possibly the Black Hairstreak. Was this true and not just a misprint? Both my wife and I were keen to see these two butterflies, and they would be 'lifers'. A phone call to our Chairman, Peter, confirmed the meeting was planned and he was leading it. Another phone call to Bill Whybrow would he like to consider going to the other side, almost, of England for two butterflies. He replied certainly and he would be willing to drive there. So this would be the last two British species for my total list.

Bill plotted the route and on the 10th June we would be off. However the weather forecast for the day was anything but 'helpful' and Peter understandably cancelled the meeting. We were not the only disappointed members surely. However a few hours later Bill suggested, after searching the Internet, there is another site closer to Lowestoft for the Black Hairstreak at Glapton Cow Pasture and the weather forecast was now promising.

I didn't need any persuasion. So off we went. A couple of hours later we arrived at the first venue, Fermyn Woods Country Park with its parking, information, toilets, café and walks, one of which showed pictures of the Black Hairstreak in its information leaflet. A Ranger told us she had

seen a Black Hairstreak that morning and had sent a visitor off to see if he could locate such a prize. However she suggested there was a better chance of seeing *Satyrium pruni* at the Cow Pasture site and gave us appropriate direction instructions. The drive along a concrete track through an arable field was ignored and we kept to the road to the Cow Pasture now woodland of mixed tree species.

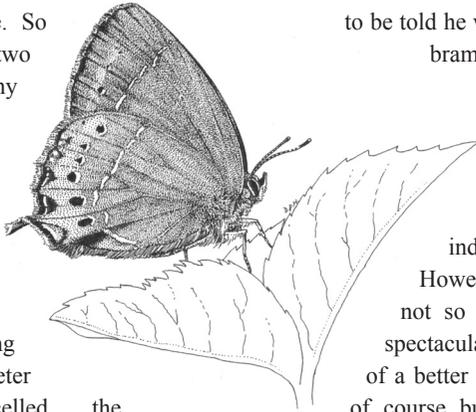
Here we met an obvious, knowledgeable naturalist and we were not completely surprised, to be told he was the warden! 'The third

bramble patch on the left was his directions' and low and behold nectaring on the bramble flowers were Black Hairstreaks. We saw 9 individuals in total, wow!

However the bumblebees were not so delighted in seeing these spectacular butterflies but for want of a better word chased them off and of course bumblebees are formidable insects.

Whilst we did not see any Black Hairstreaks in good condition, to see a 'lifer' in the butterfly sub order was well worth the journey to the Midlands. Oh yes it is planned to see, and hopefully to photograph, the Wood White and the Glanville Fritillary in 2018 to make the full list of the British species.

*Illustration: Black Hairstreak
by Douglas Hammersley.*



Events Round up mid-June to August 2017 ~ extracts from event notes and Suffolk BC website Sightings page reports.

The **17th June at Felixstowe Ferry** was a warm day with variable amounts of sunshine and a stiff breeze off the sea. Meadow Brown and Skippers were plentiful in the gardens of the hamlet, the Millennium Green and the river wall to Kingsfleet. The four white species, Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Ringlet and Common Blue were recorded there too. Dragonflies, including several Emperor Dragonflies, were noteworthy. The walk continued along the Tomline wall to the Golf Club wood with Green Hairstreak and Speckled Wood being added to the list of species which totalled 16 for the day.

An event focusing on butterfly identification at **Holywells Park on the 24th June** had to be hastily rearranged 'around the corner' at **Landseer Park** when it was found that preparations for a music event were underway on the Holywells meadows. However, nothing was lost - we found the huge expanse of grassland and wildflower meadow at Landseer filled with an abundance of Small and Essex Skippers, Common Blue, Ringlet and Meadow Brown. Whites, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell and Marble White were observed.

An evening of **Moth Trapping on the 7th July and Moth and Butterfly Identification on the morning of the 8th July at Piper's Vale, Ipswich** introduced onlookers to some notably macro moths which included Olive, Festoon, Six-belted Clearwing, Scalloped Shell, Leopard Moth and Cream-bordered Green Pea. 16 butterfly species were seen including Purple Hairstreak and a mating pair of Silver-studded Blue.

Grim weather on the **12th July** was disappointing for those who hoped to see the **Landseer Park** wildflower meadows and associated butterflies at their best. We look forward to better weather for the 2018 visit!

In the far west of the county a **Butterfly and Moth Talk and Walk was held at Red Lodge on the 15th July**. See the Red Lodge event article elsewhere in this edition of *The Suffolk Argus*.

After a grey, damp start on the **15th July at Wolves Wood** the sun came out for a little while and 6 people set off to see a reasonable number of Silver-washed Fritillary, 3 or 4 White Admiral (the target species were ticked!) and also a couple of Purple Hairstreak, Gatekeeper, Ringlet and Red Admiral.

Taking place during Big Butterfly Count, the **Summer Butterflies at Ramparts Field event on the 22nd July** was another event aimed at butterfly identification and recording for BBC. No Grayling or Forester Moths put in an appearance but 12 butterfly & 5 moth species were recorded.

Trudie Willis opened her formal and wildlife gardens for the Suffolk Branch on 30th July. This was another huge success, the details of which can be read in a separate article in this edition of *The Suffolk Argus*.

13th August RSPB North Warren. A sunny start to the morning encouraged into flight a good number of Common Blues on the coast path from Aldeburgh, and several Meadow Browns and Gatekeepers were identified on

the path across the reserve. Later, however, increasing cloud cover deterred butterflies from flying and although Small Heath, Small Copper and Grayling were seen, none were as plentiful as had been hoped. Red Admiral, Peacock, Painted Lady, Comma, Small Tortoiseshell, Speckled Wood, Ringlet and Large, Small and unidentified whites were all recorded, as well as 6 Hummingbird Hawk-moths and several Six-spot Burnet moths. In the end, the somewhat disappointing number of 15 butterfly species was outnumbered by the 18 participants on the walk....who nevertheless had an enjoyable day.

The final field event of the season took place on the 19th August at SWT Trimley Marshes. Bill Stone had this to say: ‘This event focussed on the fantastic Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserve at Trimley Marshes. The reserve is a Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI), covers over 200 acres and includes a variety of marsh and wetland habitats. One of the best ways to enjoy the reserve is to undertake a circular walk (almost 6 miles) and this is what 7 BC Branch members and I did today. Unfortunately, the weather was not great with the after effects of Hurricane Gert causing strong westerly winds and, at times, thick cloud cover. However, we started the walk in bright sunshine and following the path down towards the River Orwell we soon found our first butterflies of the day with Large White, Small White and Green-veined White being seen alongside the field margins. A stop at a field corner provided views of sunlit oaks and a single Purple Hairstreak was seen here. Further stops along the path by sunny bramble thickets and hedgerows led to us adding Speckled Wood, Holly Blue and Red Admiral to the day list. On reaching the track to the reserve itself we took a short

detour up to the Fagbury Viewpoint. Along this track there were dozens of Small Whites along with several Large and Green-veined Whites and more Speckled Woods. We also added a few more Purple Hairstreaks, our first Peacock and a Small Tortoiseshell. A butterfly walk is never just about butterflies and we spent some time watching a large gathering of dragonflies hawking in a sheltered corner. Checking carefully through these revealed the vast majority to be Migrant Hawkets with several Common and Ruddy Darters, a few Southern Hawkets and Emperors. Of note, many pairings of Migrant Hawkets were seen, appearing almost as black balls as they flew around. A bonus butterfly species was also seen in the shape of a late White Admiral. Returning to the main track we carried on to the reserve, walking slowly along the path, ensuring that all butterflies seen were identified. This concerted effort led to us adding Common Blue, Painted Lady, Comma, Meadow Brown and Gatekeeper. Reaching the Visitor Centre allowed us some protection from the increasing wind and cooling temperatures and we decided to stop here for lunch. After lunch, we pressed on and continued to walk around the reserve seeing a few more species in the form of Small and Large White, Red Admiral, Common Blue, Holly Blue and Speckled Wood. At the start of the walk I had set the target species of the day as Clouded Yellow and we came across several very suitable fields with clover and creeping thistle near Loompit Lake and Grimston Hall. Sadly, none were seen but we certainly tried our best to find one. By the time we returned to the cars we had seen 15 species of butterfly which all agreed was a good total given the weather.’

On My Travels for Butterflies – Devil’s Dyke, Cambs

Kevin Ling

Situated a stone’s throw from the Suffolk border, Devil’s Dyke is one of the most important chalkland sites in the region and a haven for Lepidoptera. It has something to offer, which ever part of the butterfly season you visit. During late spring, it is a reliable site for Dingy Skipper and Green Hairstreak, as well as the other expected species at that time, including Orange Tip, Holly Blue and Brimstone. This article focuses on the summer and the appearance of the Chalk Hill Blue (CHB).

The Chalk Hill Blue is easily distinguished, when compared to the Common Blue. It is a slightly paler blue with a thin black border and white fringe. The females being a chocolate-brown colour (see photos).

Being of chalk grassland, Devil’s Dyke is abundant with the distribution of Horseshoe Vetch, the larval foodplant of the CHB. Add some warm summer sunshine and you have the recipe for something quite special during late July/early August. A recommended parking spot is at the entrance to the National Stud (TL619615). I like to park a little south east of here though on the B1061 (TL632603) and follow the path back for 1.5 km. The steps up to the dyke lead from this layby and after 200 metres you cross a railway line and follow the path ahead. On my visit the first CHB were soon seen on the edge of the path, tempting me and my camera. The clear skies had given way to partial cloud and at 09.30 the breeze was a little cool. As a result, the CHB were taking shelter down on the grassy slopes. However, as I passed, good numbers took to the wing and my count along this stretch of the dyke rose to about 160. I believe there was probably 2-3 times that

number hidden down the grassy slopes out of the breeze, but I kept to the footpath to avoid damaging the plants. The male to female ratio in this first part was 20:1. There were also other species to be seen, including the odd Marbled White, Brown Argus, Red Admiral, Comma, Gatekeeper and Meadow Brown.

After crossing the A1304, I moved over to the stretch of dyke that runs parallel to the July Racecourse (the first of the parking spots detailed previously). With the sun putting in a more sustained appearance and the temperature rising, what a difference! As I climbed up onto the dyke once more I was greeted with what can only be described as an explosion of CHB, so many that I simply couldn’t take an accurate count (but well in the hundreds). After a while I gave up trying and just enjoyed the spectacle. As I walked I had to take great care for fear of treading on some unsuspecting mating pair, of which there were a lot. As I focused my eyes on the sheltered sunny slopes, dozens of CHB were airborne just inches above the grass. There were many males in search of a mate but there were far more females in this section too, with the ratio being more like 10:1 in favour of the males, compared to the earlier section I had walked. It was a photographer’s dream too. Normally one has to be patient when trying to get just the right shot. On this day I was spoilt for choice with the CHB coming to me as I soaked up the sun’s rays.

As we continue to see a decline in our British butterflies, it is sadly becoming all too rare to sit in one spot and be surrounded by so many butterflies. Devil’s Dyke is a welcome change to that. On a hot sunny day, there can be few places more rewarding.

Red Lodge Heath SSSI Event 2017



Photo: Paul Harrison Page 21

On My Butterfly Travels

Devil's Dyke



Chalk Hill Blue Butterflies

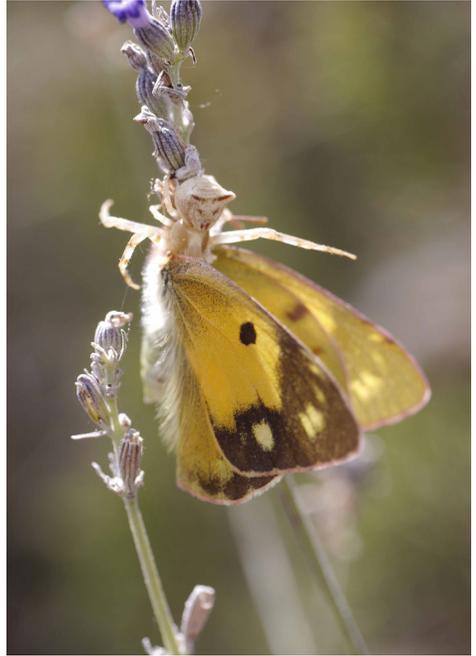
Male nectaring on Common Knapweed
male and female

Photos: Kevin Ling

Photographic Competition 2017
Class 2 Photo taken outside the UK
The three photos awarded 1st



Dusky Heath
by Derek Norris



Clouded Yellow
and Crab Spider
by Jane Henderson



Swallowtail
by David Pitt