

SUFFOLK BRANCH NEWSLETTER

The **Suffolk Argus**

Volume 77

Spring 2020



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment





Beryl Johnson (1938 - 2019)

Contents

Branch contacts	4	Every Little Helps <i>Twm Wade</i>	19
Wildflower Seeds	5	Available WCBS sites <i>Twm Wade</i>	20
The Suffolk Argus	5	Observations <i>James Mann</i>	22
The 2019 AGM <i>Peter Maddison</i>	6	Oak Processionary Moth <i>James Mann</i>	22
Branch Accounts <i>Kev Ling</i>	8	Snippets	23
Suffolk Moth Group New Website <i>Steve Woolnough</i>	9	Garden nectar plants <i>Richard Stewart</i>	24
Beryl Johnson <i>Richard Stewart</i>	10	Sweet Rocket <i>Jane Leng</i>	24
In Search of British Butterflies <i>Liz Cutting</i>	11	Light trapping <i>Trevor Goodfellow</i>	24
Events Calendar	13	More snippets	25
Common Birdsfoot & SSB <i>D. & J. Dowding</i>	18	Recommended reading <i>Trevor Goodfellow</i>	26

Editorial

Trevor Goodfellow

The recent passing of Beryl Johnson has saddened all those who knew her (page 10). As a valued member over the years, she will be sadly missed. Her wonderful illustrations have adorned many issues of the Suffolk Argus, so as a tribute, the cover of this issue features one of those drawings: 'Large Skipper', the editor's choice from her large portfolio. More of her illustrations feature throughout this issue.

The 2019 AGM was well attended, and Peter Eeles talk was both interesting and informative, and congratulations to the AGM photographic competition winners: Neil Sherman and David Pitt (see page 13 & 27).

Well done to Liz Cutting for completing her photo list of all UK butterfly species, an account of her epic task is can be found on page 11.

On page 26 I have listed a few books members

might be interested in, although I suspect many of you will already have these books on your shelf, and amongst other features are: some strange and unusual topics, exotic species which readers can read with wonder, and the 2020 events calendar pull-out in this issue shows most of the upcoming events that you are encouraged to support but be sure to check the SBC website for up to date information.

As a new decade dawns, and climate change is trending, I am reminded in this age of statistics that my own life now spans eight decades! This doesn't reflect my actual age and demonstrates the often-misleading statistics that we are now bombarded with.

Happy 2020 and I hope your butterfly chasing is fun and fruitful.

Copy date for the next issue is May 24th, 2020

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Butterfly Conservation

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Wildflower Seeds

Within the envelope of this newsletter you will have found a packet of wildflower seeds for you to sow. There are 2 grammes in each pack for sowing up to 2 square metres of soil.

You can sow in flower beds or containers; the choice is yours.

Each packet has a mixture of annual and perennial nectar and food plant varieties, including:

Oxeye Daisy, Birdsfoot Trefoil, Wild Marjoram, Cornflower, Knapweed, Lady's Bedstraw, Field Scabious and Viper's Bugloss, Sainfoin, Wild Clary, Tufted Vetch and Corn Poppy.

Tips for growing:

1. Choose a sunny area (about 2 sq. metres)
2. Remove any 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 your seed mix evenly. This usually best takes place in winter/early spring because many seeds (but not all) need a period of chilling before they can germinate. The seeds supplied have had some chilling already to help. Thoroughly mix the seed before sowing in 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 into them, thus aiding germination.

4. Keep seed moist if there is a sustained dry period.

NB. Most perennial meadow species won't flower very much until their second year, so cut the patch in late summer after the annuals have flowered. This will help remove nutrients and keep unwanted dominant species establishing so that you have more flowers (particularly perennials) in the second year.

You can alter the timing of cut to suit yourself but it should take place before autumn wind and rains knock the sward over and before stems have become too woody to cut easily.

Members who read the electronic copy of the Suffolk Argus are encouraged to request a packet of seeds from Peter Maddison via email: prmaddison@yahoo.co.uk by the end of February and he will post them to you. Some seeds will grow to provide nectar for butterflies, moths and other pollinators, whilst others will become larval food plants, which is a vital aspect of a butterfly's life-cycle that is often overlooked. Good luck with your sowing, let us know how you get on. The wildflower seed project has been financed by the Susie Mellor legacy.

The Suffolk Argus as a PDF

Peter Maddison: Chairman

The Newsletter in its electronic form is available for all to read on the Homepage of our website <http://www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk> In time we intend to build a library of newsletters.

Many of our members receive the posted hardcopy version, but if you feel that the electronic newsletter would suit your needs and thereby help to reduce the number of printed copies and postage, we would be very grateful.

Money saved in this way would boost our conservation funds.

If you would like to opt out of the hardcopy, please email our Membership Secretary Jillian Macready jmacready@outlook.com. All members who receive email communications will be informed by email when each new edition of the newsletter is available on the website.

The 2019 AGM

Peter Maddison

Held on the 30th November at Stowupland Village Hall, where 68 people were present.

The Chair's report focussed on the much-appreciated work of volunteers in Branch activity. Most of the people in the room volunteered to record butterflies either through transects, WCBS, Garden Butterfly Count or casual recording, and it was their thoroughness that allowed the annual Butterfly Report to be compiled by County Recorder, Bill Stone.

Those volunteers who were involved with the organisation and leading of field events were thanked. It had been a busy year with 18 field events held and 5 public events attended, but poor weather in the late summer months had caused the cancellation of a couple of events and poor turn out of attendees at some others. Trudie Willis was thanked for her kindness in once again opening her garden and for donating £364 to the Branch.

Three editions of *The Suffolk Argus* were produced and the new format for the cover has been well received. Editor, Trevor Goodfellow, is keen to receive photos for consideration as future cover images and of course articles, photographs and illustrations are always welcome.

The Chair thanked the Committee for the volunteer work they had carried out in their various roles, which had helped to ensure the successes of the year.

Membership stands at 588

households, which shows an increase of 23 household memberships during the year.

The sale of Purdis Heath has been protracted and we have not been able to gain access for conservation work. It is hoped that NE will make progress before the coming winter so that management of re-growth on the scrapes can be undertaken.

The Martlesham Heath Silver-studded Blue colony suffered a serious setback in September when a fire burnt its way through much of the southern section. It is estimated that 50% of the colony succumbed.

SBBC founder members Steve Goddard and Beryl Johnson died during 2019, both of whom did much towards the success of the Branch and Suffolk's Lepidoptera. Obituaries will be published in the *Suffolk Argus*.

Bill Stone, County Recorder Butterflies gave an overview of the 2019 season. He thanked recorders for the special effort they had made to



record in tetrads which had little or no coverage in preceding years, and as a consequence of which we completed the 5-year Millennium Scheme with records from 99.8% of the county's tetrads.

Neil Sherman, County Moths Recorder thanked SBBC for the donation of £1000 from the Susie Mellor Legacy towards the development of the new Suffolk Moths Group website. During the year Tony Prichard had resigned as CMR and in recognition of his 22 years work with the Moths Group, Tony was handed the Butterfly Conservation Outstanding Volunteer Award, which had been announced at the recent national AGM.

Committee Elections. Tony Prichard, Adrian Richards and Bill Stone resigned from the committee. Bill Stone remains as County Butterfly Recorder. Steve Woolnough was elected to the committee with the role of liaising

between SMG and BC. All other members of the committee were re-elected.

After the refreshment break, short talks were given by Sharon Hearle and David Dowding, and a video by Twm Wade. Our guest speaker, Pete Eeles, author of the recently published *Lifecycle of British and Irish Butterflies*, spoke about the immense task of producing the book.

Winners of the Photographic Competition:

Early stages: Neil Sherman Coxcomb
Prominent larva (see photo inside back page)

European: David Pitt Large Chequered Skipper (see photo inside back page)

UK: David Pitt mating Lulworth Skippers (see photo events calendar cover)



Suffolk Branch Butterfly Conservation Accounts 2018 - 19

Opening Balance	2017 - 2018	2018 - 2019
	1 April 2017	1 April 2018
Income	£3548.81	£5543.34
Subscriptions	3246.00	3258.00
VAT	21.50	84.01
S.Mellor Legacy Deposit	1681.00	1146.00
Donations talks	207.00	225.00
Donation member		30.00
AGM Raffle & Books	54.00	143.00
Donation Open Garden	706.12	315.00
Grant AONB		1000.00
Interest	174.65	310.04
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£6090.27	£6541.05
 Expenditure		
T&S Cons Vols		20.10
Printing (Conservation)		106.90
Events (Conservation)		18.74
Suffolk Argus	1178.40	1086.00
Stationary		28.40
Postage	635.74	617.31
AGM expenses	82.02	249.83
Insurance	63.34	
Moth Trap	336.50	89.10
Equipment	1241.89	
Deposit for AGM Hall	40.00	
SSB Recording expenses	88.20	
Buckthorn Project	419.66	
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	£4085.75	£2218.38
 Closing Balance	£5543.33	£9866.01
	31 March 2018	31 March 2019
	C/Fwd	C/Fwd

A New Website for the Suffolk Moth Group

Steve Woolnough



In December, a new website was launched for the Suffolk Moth Group following sponsorship help from Butterfly Conservation Suffolk branch and the Suffolk Naturalists Society. In addition to providing a reference guide and photo archive of the moths of Suffolk, there are updated records and distribution maps. There is also the function to enter your records online and upload your own moth photos directly onto the site. Registration for this is a simple process, just needing a username and password. There are links to other moth-related websites, plus a diary of SMG events that all BC members are very welcome to attend (there are no fees).

To date, feedback on the website has been very encouraging. SMG are keen to obtain more records and photos for the site, especially of day-flying moths that BC members may record during their survey work. Have a browse of the site and see what you think. Find it at: <https://suffolkmoths.co.uk/>

If you like what you see, perhaps you may consider Golden Cinnabar membership. This allows access to interactive maps showing and more detailed access to records. There is no set fee, just a donation is requested of whatever you believe appropriate and the funds raised go to help cover the website's running costs.

Suffolk Moth Group is an informal group of like-minded enthusiasts who are keen to increase interest, observer coverage and records of the moths in Suffolk. As such, there is no set membership, so anyone, whatever their level of expertise from a beginner just starting out to the more experienced recorders will be welcomed at any SMG event. All we ask is that you either upload your records directly onto the site or send them to the County recorder, Neil Sherman (details on the website of how to do this). In addition, SMG members hope to attend some BC events explaining

moth trapping. Where practical, moth traps will have been set up the night before, so that the capture can be viewed on the day of the event.

After many years of noteworthy service, Tony Prichard has stepped down as County Moth Recorder. The new CMR is Neil Sherman, another highly experienced 'mother' who has contributed to many publications over the years.

Worthy Winner

Steve Woolnough

We are pleased to hear that our new County Moth Recorder, Neil Sherman, has won the coveted Conservation Greenkeeper of the Year Award for 2020 for his environmental work at Ipswich Golf Club.

To quote the award citation, Neil Sherman has been a fundamental part of Ipswich Golf Club, Purdis Heath and that can be seen through its ecologically diverse and fantastically beautiful rough areas. Neil has performed positive and interesting work in renewing the heathland characteristics of the course and it is rare to meet a greenkeeper with quite as much ecological knowledge as him.

Both SBBC and SMG extend their congratulations to Neil on his well-deserved success.



Six-spot Burnet by Trevor Goodfellow

Beryl Johnson (1938 - 2019)

Richard Stewart

Beryl was remembered at our recent AGM, with several of her illustrations projected onto the screen. These works of art graced the front covers of the 'Suffolk Argus' from Volume 14 July 1998 to Volume 40 Spring 2007 and Beryl's illustrations still regularly appeared inside, with a White Admiral in the Autumn 2019 edition. For many years before our Suffolk Branch was formed, Beryl was applying her considerable artistic talents to front covers of the Ipswich and District Natural History Society newsletter. Her wide range of skills won her, on five separate occasions, the annual Herbert Drake award, a tawny owl sculpture.

Most of Beryl's work familiar to BC readers is in black and white so it was apposite for her colour drawings to be available to those going to 'The Shannon' at Bucklesham after her memorial service. I have several of those colour creations since Beryl often sent me hand-painted birthday cards with humorous interpretations of some of our adventures in the rain forests of Latin America. One features a moonlight canoe trip with large bats overhead. In the water two large Black Caiman are discussing potential prey. One says, 'I don't really fancy another gristly tourist for supper tonight, do you?'

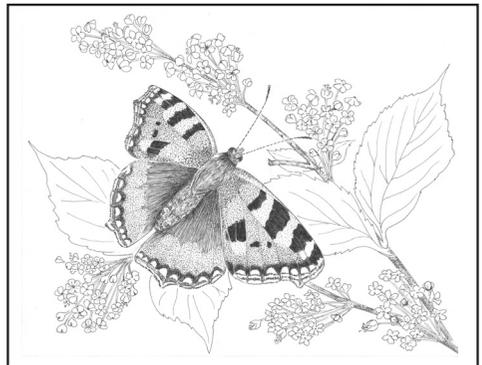
The other replies 'No, my dear, I was thinking of trying vegetarian.' The back page shows just two hats floating on the water, the ones Marie and I, vegetarians, were wearing!

Beryl and Alan organised many 'away' trips covering several days and at these and on field meetings she was always assiduous in ensuring everyone was safe and accounted for, acting, as one of the family tributes in the service stated, as a shepherdess to keep her flock safe and happy. Those weekends took much organising, not just accommodation but arranging field visits, some of which needed permits and/or local knowledge. They introduced us to new species not encountered in Suffolk and different landscapes as well. For example, on a trip based at Arnside Knott, I recorded seven new species for that year. It wasn't always plain sailing. On that same trip Beryl didn't see the rare Large Heaths at Meathop Moss, having to return to the car after being stung by a horse fly. On another trip Alan and Beryl had to make a difficult but correct decision not to visit the North Downs, the climax of our trip, because the

weather was bad and the long and steep climb from Gomshall up to the top of the Downs would have been dangerous.

Both Alan and Beryl acted as Membership and Field Meetings officers for many years after our Branch was formed and we will always be indebted to them for offering us so many lifts to venues for field meetings that otherwise we would have been unable to attend. 'Small kindnesses' from Beryl were mentioned in the service and I can remember one refreshment stop when I couldn't find any non-dairy cakes. Beryl, with a big smile, left me the cherry from her own cake. She loved gardening and some of our garden ferns, plus water snails and newts in the pond, are thanks to their advice and generosity. Beryl was a long-term member of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust and other conservation bodies. This life-long passion was mentioned many times in the service, Paul her son recollecting many nature trips with her. She was a very observant field naturalist and Alan has confirmed how well she could pick out and identify species without binoculars. Paul recollects how she was 'keen to share both her love of nature and her fondness for local green spaces', emphasising the importance of carefully recording all sightings.

Beryl and Alan spent 49 happy years together, having been married in 1970. Despite Alan's tender, loving and patient care, Beryl eventually moved to the Prince George care home on the edge of Ipswich, fortunately close to their home. Her legacy will be the many fond memories left behind as an artist and naturalist. Hopefully many more of her illustrations will appear in future editions of the 'Suffolk Argus'.



Small Tortoiseshell by Beryl Johnson

In Search of the British Butterflies

Liz Cutting

It was early in the year 2015. I was looking through my various wildlife photos and musing about priorities for the coming year and thinking that maybe I could do more butterflies. Examining my files, it seemed that I had seen and photographed 32 species of British Butterfly in the UK (I had photographed a few more British species abroad but decided that they didn't count). I knew the British list was in the high 50s and thought that it ought to be feasible for me to see and photograph all of them before I depart this earth. At that time, all my sightings and photos were fairly local and were just whatever I came across in my wanderings around East Anglia.

So firstly, I thought I'd identify what is actually on the British list. Discounting the Cryptic Wood White, which occurs only in Ireland (from a British perspective) and as far as I could ascertain could probably not be separated from Wood White (photo page 12) without dissection, there are 58 species on the list. I noted that it didn't include Camberwell Beauty (a species I had seen but not photographed) nor Clouded Yellow, which I had photographed. I was curious about what the 'rules' were for being included on the British list; Rob Parker was very helpful, but it seemed far too complicated for my little brain, so I moved on and concentrated on my project.

I thought that with a bit of planning I might add up to 10 species in 2015. In fact, by the end of the butterfly season, my total had moved on to 52 – 20 new species, this was way beyond my wildest dreams. In the middle of May, an occasional photo buddy asked if I'd like to join him on a day trip to Cotley Hill in Wiltshire as he'd been told there were a few butterfly species there he'd like to photograph, including Marsh Fritillary. It seemed a long trip for a day, but he was happy to drive so we set off at the crack of Sparrows and arrived on site soon after 8 am. Later that morning I had seen and photographed 5 new species including Marsh Fritillary (photo back page), Adonis Blue and Small Blue. So, we thought we'd try somewhere else for the afternoon and headed for Bentley Wood in Hampshire, a site with a fantastic species list. With a bit of work, I had added another 3 species including Duke of Burgundy. What a brilliant start to my project!

As Spring became Summer I managed to add Chequered Skipper, Northern Brown Argus and Black Hairstreak – I had a two-week jaunt to Shetland and decided to take my time getting there and back and seek out these species in Glasdrum Wood, St Abbs Head and Glapthorn Cow Pastures respectively. In high Summer, Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation had a field trip to the Hockley Woods complex near Southend to look for Heath Fritillary, so I joined in that. Later in the Summer I went to a cousin's Golden Wedding 'do' in Cheshire so I devised a plan that involved a few extra days here and there and a few somewhat circuitous routes so that I could go via Aston Rowant and try for Silver-Spotted Skipper (photo back page), have a couple of days in North Wales as I had been told that Gt Orme is good for Wall Brown and then return from Cheshire via Chambers Farm Wood in Lincolnshire for Brown Hairstreak. It was a productive Summer. Not all the photographs were as good as I'd have liked, but I had moved on to 52.

After that of course, it all becomes a lot more difficult. The six remaining species were Glanville Fritillary, Large Heath, Mountain Ringlet, Large Blue, Scotch Argus and High Brown Fritillary. These all had relatively small populations in a few far-flung corners of the UK and even where geographic location was similar between species there was the small matter of different flight seasons. Glanville Fritillaries (photo back page) are pretty much restricted to the Isle of Wight, but I'd heard that there had been an 'unauthorised' introduction at Hutchinsons Bank in Surrey and duly made a trip there in 2016. I had a planned weekend with a friend to do bird photography in Yorkshire during the Summer, and we went to Crowle Moor on the way home to look for Large Heath (photo inside back page); we did eventually find a couple, but they were really hard work.

Four species to go. Mountain Ringlet was next, courtesy of good friends who live in Perth and who invited me up for a few days in Summer 2017; even better they are wildlife photographers and knew some good sites. I did Large Blue at Collard Hill and Scotch Argus (photo back page) at Arnside Knott in 2018; they were reasonably easy to find though not numerous and both involved some mileage. As usual if I am on my

own, I took several days and included other sights and (non-butterfly) species in the area.

That just left High Brown Fritillary, a species I had photographed in Bulgaria but never seen in the UK so that was my target for 2019. I am fortunate to have friends who had moved from the Suffolk/Essex border to North Devon in late 2018. Even more fortunate they could put me up and would be very understanding about me spending time looking for my target species in the area around Heddons Mouth. Now as you will know, Dark Green and High Brown Fritillaries are superficially rather similar and you need a good view, preferably of the underside, to separate them. Of course, they are on the wing at pretty much the same time and share the same general area but it's probably fair to say that Dark Greens are rather more numerous; I knew it wasn't going to be easy. I went to Heddons Mouth area on three consecutive days. My approach was to photograph anything that was a Fritillary and work out afterwards whether it was High Brown. On the first day I was pretty sure I had seen and photographed one, but it really wasn't a good enough photo to be sure. On the second day, I got a definite High Brown photo

(see back page), though it couldn't be described as any more than a record shot and was rather distant. I did bump into the local Warden doing a butterfly transect and he suggested a couple of spots I might try, though he said numbers weren't great. It was late afternoon though, so I decided to leave it to the next day. At one of his suggested locations I climbed a large gate into a meadow; there was a big drop the other side and I wondered whether I'd be able to get back out as there was wire netting on the gate (and getting back out did prove to be a struggle). It turned out to be a good site though and I encountered at least four High Browns and managed to get a few photos, not award winners for sure, but certainly satisfactory enough.

So, where do I go from here with my butterfly photography? Well my priorities will change I guess, but there is plenty of scope for different photos of many species – wings open/closed, male/female, nectaring, mating etc and there is certainly scope for better photos of some. There may also be an occasional opportunity to photograph non-adult life stages. Some projects are just never finished.



Wood White at Silverstone by Liz Cutting

2020 Events Calendar

The Suffolk Argus



Lulworth Skippers by David Pitt



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Support butterflies, moths and our environment



**Saturday 21st March - Suffolk Moth Group
Indoor Meeting. A day of talks and information
about the county's moths**

Where: Bucklesham Village Hall, Levington Lane,
Bucklesham

Map Ref: TM242417; Post Code IP10 0DZ

Time: 10.00 am - 4.30 pm

Details on SMG website www.suffolkmoths.co.uk

**Saturday 21st March - Spring Scything
Experience, Landseer Park.**

**1st of two introductions to scything with
traditional scythes.**

This taster session on the techniques of cutting
wildflower meadows and grasslands with scythes
will also benefit butterflies, moths and bees. Not
only will you learn how to scythe but we will also
explain why this old method of managing grasslands
is exceptionally good for our native wildlife.

This first event is at the Spring Equinox, just as
the grass has begun to grow. Scything is simple,
enjoyable and suitable for anybody. Modern scythes
are also very lightweight and easy to work with.
There will be another event in late summer (9th
Aug) if you can't attend this one.

Bring your own lunch and suitable sturdy,
waterproof footwear. We will provide the scythes
but please book in advance as there are limited
places.

Where: Landseer Park

Grid ref: TM176425

Time: 10am - 3pm

Contact: Julian Dowding mob: 07910 170609
julian.dowding@ntlworld.com

**Saturday 25th April - Early spring species at
Barnhamcross Common**

Event suitable for novices and new members.

Meet; Large car park on playing fields at northern
end of Barnhamcross Common.

Map ref: TL866816 - on west side of A134 (Bury St
Edmunds to Thetford road)

Time: 10.00 am, disperse approx 13:00

Contact: Rob Parker 01284705476.

**Sunday 3rd May FREE FAMILY EVENT*
Spring Wood Celebration Day**

Note - Due to the 2020 May Day bank holiday
having been moved from Monday 4th May, to
Friday 8th May (VE Day) Ipswich Spring Wood
Day will be held on Sunday May 3rd 2020, 10.30
- 16.30

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: 10.30 am to 4.30 pm

Contact: Helen Saunders

Email: helens919@gmail.com

**Sunday 10th May - Wildlife Day; Suffolk
Butterfly Conservation attended event*
A well-attended National Mills Day event with
BBQ and bar.**

Where: Pakenham Water Mill

Map Ref: TL936696; Post code: IP31 2NB

Time: 11.00 am - 4.00 pm

More details phone 01359 230275

**Tuesday 12th May - Introduction to Butterflies
and Day flying Moths - identification and survey
methods**

**Shifting Sands Project Event with Sharon Hearle.
All welcome suitable for beginners**

Join Sharon Hearle for beginners training with a
session indoors followed by visit to King's Forest to
practice. Dingy Skipper might be found.

Meet: Elveden Village Hall - a green tin building
near the main Elveden Farm shop complex

Grid Ref: TL822799, Approx. Postcode: IP24 3TJ

Time: 10am - 3pm

Please bring packed lunch and drinks if staying for
the walk.

NOTE: Ticks are present in Kings Forest so wear
suitable clothing.

Contact Sharon Hearle Email:

Email: shearle@butterfly-conservation.org Tel
07920131526

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

(Sharon is Butterfly Conservation Regional
Manager, East of England)

**Saturday 16th May - Bioblitz
We are joining forces with Clare Country Park for
a Bioblitz, including a butterfly walk**

Where: Clare Country Park

Meeting Place: Old Goods Shed

Map Ref: TL770451

Time: 10.00 am

Contact: Kevin Ling 07443 623987

Saturday 30th May - King's Forest for spring species

Dingy Skipper possible

Where: King's Picnic site (Forestry Commission) on east side of B1106

Map ref: TL825753

Time: 10:00 am, disperse approx 13:00

Contact: Rob Parker 01284 705476.

Sunday 7th June - Brampton Wood Nature Reserve, nr Huntingdon for Black Hairstreak

Meet: Brampton Wood car park; Grid Ref: TL184698, Sat Nav: use PE28 0DB and continue west, away from A1, for 3/4 mile

Time: 11.00am

Leader: Peter Maddison Email: prmaddison@yahoo.co.uk 01473 736607

Contact the leader for details.

Sunday 14 June - Moth Trapping at Landseer Park County Wildlife Site.

Meet at the car park off Landseer road and walk to the lower meadows and moth light.

Where: Landseer Park

Map ref: TM176425

Time 9pm 'til Midnight

Contact: David Dowding & Sam Chamberlin davetdowding@outlook.com schamberlin@hotmail.com

Saturday 27th June - Pakenham Wood for Silver-washed Fritillary & White Admiral.

Where: meet in large car park behind Pakenham Church

Map ref: TL930670

Time: 10:00, disperse approx 13:00

Contact Rob Parker 01284 705476.

Saturday 4th July - Northfield Wood for Woodland Butterflies

for Silver-washed Fritillary & White Admiral

Where: Northfield Wood, Onehouse

Time: 10:30 am start

Meet at Community Centre

Grid ref: TM021596

Contact: Kevin Ling 07443 623987

Thursday 9th July - Introduction to Forester Moth and other day flying moths - identification and survey

Shifting Sands Project Event with Sharon Hearle. All welcome, suitable for beginners

Join Sharon Hearle for beginner's day and leisurely walk at Cavenham National Nature Reserve

Meet Car Park at Cavenham Heath approach from

Tuddenham

Grid Ref: TL749725 Approx postcode CB7 5PR

Time: 10.30 - 1pm

Please bring a drink and sun hat

NOTE: Ticks are present in the Brecks so wear suitable clothing. Click here for advice

Contact Sharon Hearle Email: shearle@butterfly-conservation.org Tel 07920131526

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

(Sharon is Butterfly Conservation Regional Manager, East of England)

Fri 17th July to Sun 9th August - BIG BUTTERFLY COUNT*

Big Butterfly Count

For more details visit www.butterfly-conservation.org or www.bigbutterflycount.org

Saturday 18th July - Dunwich Forest for mid-summer butterflies

Meet: St Helena Way car park, Westleton Rd Grid Ref: TM466709

Time: 10.30am

Leader: Peter Maddison Email: prmaddison@yahoo.co.uk 01473 736607

Saturday 25th July - BUTTERFLY WALK at Mildenhall Warren Lodge

It is a 2-mile walk along an established route with wide forest tracks, areas of open grassland and a wide perimeter track between the conifers and arable land. We should see a good spectrum of species.

There are information boards on the historic use of the area making it an interesting walk suitable for all.

Families welcome

Where: Mildenhall Warren Lodge

Time: 10.00 am

Meet at the car park. Off the A1065, passed the Recycling Depot

Map Ref: TL735752; Post Code: IP28 7JQ

Contact: Twm Wade email twm.wade@yahoo.com

Sunday 2nd August - 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

Email: prmaddison@yahoo.co.uk 01473 736607

**Thursday 6th August - Big Butterfly Count; Suffolk Butterfly Conservation attended event*
Well supported event in lovely surroundings.**

Where: Pakenham Water Mill

Time: 10.00 am – 1.00 pm

Map Ref: TL936696 Post code: IP31 2NB

More details ring 01359 230275

Saturday 8th August - The Wall and other butterflies of SWT Carlton Marshes

Meet: SWT Carlton Marshes car park Grid Ref:

TM508920 Post Code: NR33 8HU

Time: 10.30am

Leaders: Peter Maddison and Robert Quadling

Email: prmaddison@yahoo.co.uk 01473 736607

Sunday 9th August - Summer Scything Experience, Landseer Park Summer scything event. 2nd introduction to scything.

Another taster session on the techniques of scything to benefit wildflowers and invertebrates. This event takes place after most summer flowers have begun to

go over.

Bring your own lunch and suitable footwear. We will provide the scythes. Please book in advance as there are limited places.

Where: Landseer Park

Grid ref: TM176425

Time: 10am-3pm

Contact: Julian Dowding, Mobile:07910 170609 or julian.dowding@ntlworld.com

Saturday 17th October - Suffolk Branch A.G.M & Members Event

Venue: Stowupland Village Hall

Grid Ref: TM 070600, Post Code: IP14 4BG

Time: 2.30 pm.

The AGM will be followed by the guest speaker, members' slides, light refreshments and the annual photo competition. Further details will be announced in The Suffolk Argus and on the Branch website.

**November
Butterfly Conservation National Annual General Meeting**

Important information

As with any other activity, there are hazards in the countryside and everyone taking part in an event has a responsibility (duty of care) for their own safety and that of others. We try hard to ensure that our events present no greater hazard than any other walk in the countryside, but we would encourage anyone planning to attend an event to read and act on the following advice:

- Wear appropriate footwear. If there are unusual requirements these will be noted in the event programme, but stout shoes are a minimum requirement for any walk.
- The leader will brief you on the trip before setting off, with details of any known hazards and advice on what to do in an emergency – please listen carefully.
- By their nature, butterflies are not always to be found next to the path and will offer many opportunities (temptations) to wander off the track. It's easy to be distracted and to miss potential hazards such as rabbit holes, fallen or hanging branches, barbed wire etc. Beware of wet grass or moss, particularly on sloping ground. Children are welcome at branch events but, if under 16, they must be accompanied by a responsible adult (maximum of two children per

adult). If you are bringing children with you, please ensure that the event is within their capability.

- Dogs may be allowed at some of the events. Please contact the leader in advance to find out if the event is suitable.
- If you are uncertain about any aspect of an event or activity, please contact the leader in advance.

Contact details can be found with each event entry. Do let the leader know if you need, or can offer, a lift. If you decide to leave early, please tell the event leader. Please note that persons who take part in these events do so entirely at their own risk and The Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation cannot accept liability for any injuries or losses during the course of an event.

Binoculars, cameras, field guides and notebooks are always useful. For moth nights bring a torch and eye protection (i.e. polarised sunglasses or wide-brimmed hat). Remember, most nature reserves do not permit dogs. Map references are based on the Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 Landranger series and are approximate. They refer to the rendezvous, not the site. Anyone is welcome to come along, Branch members or not.

Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation (SBBC)
Photographic Competition

At the 2020 AGM there will be a photo competition for photos taken in the UK or abroad by a member of SBBC.

There are two categories

UK Butterfly or Moths (any species photographed during 2020 in the UK)

Overseas Butterfly or Moth (any species photographed during 2020 outside of the UK)

Competition Guidelines

A maximum of five entries per person. Such entries can be spread across more than one category

Maximum size for photographs is 12" x 8".

There is no video category.

All photographs must be taken during 2020

The winning entries for each category will be published in a future edition of the 'Argus'.

There will be a prize for the overall photograph that gains the most votes.

In the event of a tie, the competition organiser shall have the casting vote.

Whilst every care is taken with entries, the BC Suffolk Committee cannot be held responsible for any damage or loss of photographs.

Enjoy your Summer of Butterflies and we look forward to seeing your photographs at our AGM.

Kevin Ling

SUFFOLK MOTH GROUP INDOOR MEETING - 21ST MARCH 2020.

Neil Sherman, County Moth Recorder moth@sns.org.uk

Doors will open at 9.30am for setting up, refreshments and general chat plus looking at exhibits. The meeting will officially start from 10am. Some of the group will then be lunching in a local pub just down the road from around 12.30pm onwards. Please let me know if you intend to eat at the pub well before the meeting day so I can phone in advance to let them know numbers. Or you can bring your own food along, the hall can be left open for those doing this. The meeting will continue until we have run out of talks etc, possibly around 4.30-5pm.

This year our guest speaker will be Sharon Hearle from Butterfly Conservation. Sharon is the Eastern Region Senior Conservation Officer and is involved with many Butterfly and Moth projects in the area. Sharon will be telling us about the Regional Action Plan as well as work on the high priority moths in Suffolk which includes Marsh Carpet, the Breckland species plus the Sloe Carpet.

Following Sharon's talk there will be the chance for members to show presentations. A digital projector will be available for those with digital presentations or images. This year if members could restrict their talks to 30 minutes duration then that will allow us to show what everyone has produced as well as the chance to ask questions.

Tables will also be provided for those with exhibits. It would be useful if you are intending on giving a presentation to let me know. I hope to do a demonstration

of a moth dissection for those who are interested, a technique that is not as hard as it first appears.

Refreshments (tea, coffee and cake/biscuits) will be provided. There will be a request for voluntary contributions towards the cost of hiring the hall.

If you are doing a Powerpoint presentation then you should save it in OpenOffice format or if you use Microsoft Office then Office 2007 format or earlier.

Bucklesham Village Hall is not far from the Nacton A12/A14 roundabout to the east of Ipswich. From the A12/A14 roundabout take the minor exit after the A12 exit but before the A14 Felixstowe exit. This exit is signposted to Bucklesham and leads via a single track road to Bucklesham Village. At the end of this road you will reach the village, at the T junction turn right into Bucklesham Road. Take the next right turn into Levington Lane and the village hall is a short distance down the lane on the right.

A map of the location can be viewed by following this link. The OS Grid Reference for the hall is TM242417. If you need any more detailed instructions in how to get there then do get in contact with me.

All are welcome - if you are just beginning to become interested in moths, this is a great event to meet up and find out all about it.

Hopefully see you there!

Common Birdsfoot (*Ornithopus perpusillus*) as a key larval foodplant of Silver-studded Blue larvae on Suffolk heathland

D. and J. Dowding

Silver studded Blues are a key heathland species in Suffolk with complex ecological behaviour. Although they are still found in the east of the county, they are becoming increasingly fragmented with now less than 30 known colonies.

The lifecycle of Silver-studded Blue has long been under researched, but is a subject we have been trying to better understand over the past 5 years.

It had often been thought that *Erica* and *Calluna* (heathers) were larval foodplants for Silver-studded Blue larvae. This is because they are dominant species throughout the butterfly's habitat and are also regularly used for oviposition. Field research however has shown this to be a false assumption, and in keeping with many other blues, they seem to stick to Legumes (*Fabacea/Leguminosae*).

The preferred locations for egg-laying are often heather stems and dead vegetation including bracken, which are likely to be unpalatable to grazing animals. The egg stage lasts around 9 months, so it may be that the butterfly is looking for a more protected substrate on which to secrete the eggs during the winter. In spring when the larvae hatch, they might be translocated up to several metres away onto *Fabaceae* by *Lasius niger* (Black ants). Birdsfoot Trefoil (*Ornithopus perpusillus*) is a pioneer species and its distribution on a heathland changes annually in response to disturbance. In well grazed sections of pioneer heathland where the butterfly thrives, gorse, broom and other *Fabaceae* are very limited, but there is often lots of Birdsfoot and on the heaths we've been observing, this is the preferred foodplant.

We'd had lots of luck searching for pupae in ant nests but time searching 'on all fours' in May and June for larvae often went unrewarded. The breakthrough moment came when, following a larva in an area of sparse sward, showing no interest whatsoever in Bell Heather but rather vigorously

eating Birdsfoot. In the past two years, searching for patches of *Ornithopus* has proven a key way of finding larvae, although it is often not until the circling of energetic ants that the well camouflaged larva is located!

Conservation work for Silver-studded using an excavator to re-establish pioneer heathland has in turn helped make suitable conditions for large carpets of Birdsfoot. It is actually a far more common plant than we first thought but is less obvious in more established grassland where it blends in amongst the other plants and mosses.

1. Spot the caterpillar on Birdsfoot. (photo page 27)
2. Abundant Birdsfoot in an area of recently burned heather- note the proximity of dead heather stems, a well observed substrate for oviposition. (photo page 27)
3. Close up of Ant, Caterpillar and Birdsfoot. (photo below)



**Ant tending SSB larva
Close up of ant jaws feeding on secretions of the pore cupola organ**

Every Little Helps - Recording Butterflies and Moths

Twm Wade

For those who attended the AGM, you know how much Butterfly Conservation value the contribution made by volunteers. The contribution may be physical effort or something less strenuous like walking. Conservation is dependent upon knowing what is where, and where there is an absence of wildlife. It is all a matter of abundance and how widespread.

In 1976 Ernie Pollard promoted a system for counting and recording what butterflies were seen and where. These are known as 'transects' which is a walk along a set route done weekly for 26 weeks of the year from 1 April. At a local level they are useful for monitoring the effect of changes to the environment of an area. Regionally as well as nationally, they give an insight into broader changes which can then be used to influence regional or national policy.

By way of illustration, I can use the figures from the 2019 season to give you an idea of what is recorded for Suffolk. The total number of butterflies recorded is 29,346. The two most numerous species were the Meadow Brown with 5,568 and the Ringlet with 4,599; others were a lot less. The least numerous were the Dingy Skipper, the Clouded Yellow and the Large Tortoiseshell, with one each. We also know which UK species were not recorded.

Butterfly Conservation acknowledged that transects were selected by the walker so established the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) scheme in 2009. This scheme uses the methodology of the transect and that of the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Breeding Bird Survey (BBS). One-kilometre

Ordnance Survey (OS) squares are selected randomly and I try to find volunteers to establish across the site two more-or-less parallel routes which are divided into ten sections. We ask that the volunteer surveys the area at least twice a year, not weekly.

The numbers collected are always going to be less but as more squares get walked the better the numbers will reflect the abundance and spread of species. In 2019 the total number of butterflies recorded is 6,589. The most numerous were the Meadow Brown with 1,499 and the Gatekeeper with 832, closely followed by the Small White with 803. At the other end of the scale we have two Marbled White. We then have the 4 White-letter Hairstreak and 6 Green Hairstreak.

As you might expect, the most numerous are likely to be the most widespread but the most widespread was the Small White seen in 31 squares. Then there is little to separate the Meadow Brown (29), the Large White (28), Gatekeeper (28), Peacock (27), Speckled Wood (27), Painted Lady (26), Red Admiral (26) and the Ringlet (25). The least widespread are the Marbled White (1) and the White-letter Hairstreak (2).

These two types of transect provide a statistical framework for the hundreds of casual recordings. It is the casual recordings that give the full picture across the county and relies upon lots of people reporting their sightings. There are 3 key words: what, where, when. And you can make this contribution when you like and where you like. What you see is a matter of luck, maybe, and when recorded it adds to information held.

Available WCBS sites in Suffolk

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

TL8164 Westley IP33 3RB

Location: Less than a mile from Junction 42 of the A14, west of Bury St Edmunds and the village of Westley.

Description: There are no public paths across the square but 2 private ways. The map shows a track going west from Old Church Lane which crosses arable land (I think) to a public path. There also seems to be a way through Old Warren Wood which has potential.

Ownership: Unknown. Please use the Landowner Letter; <<http://www.ukbms.org/Downloads/WiderCountryside/WCBS%20Landowner%20Letter%202018.pdf>>

TL8381 Thetford (west) IP24 3ST

Location: It is less than a mile off the A11 junction at Thetford (southern round-about) and between the rifle range and the A11 Elveden bypass.

Description: route established; 29 species recorded. There is ready access outside the range danger area. The walk starts at Olley's Farm and goes west for about 1Km. There is a track to follow going south to the return route which is a bit wild following a track near the edge of the Forestry Commission (FC) property. You can park at the junction or at Olley's Farm if you get the FC key.

Ownership: Forestry Commission. Known contact Neil Armour-Chelu, Ecologist at Santon Downham, IP27 0TJ; 01842 816019.

TL9248 Lavenham CO10 9PE

Location: It is south-east of Lavenham and bisected by the A1141 Brent Leigh Road. It is about 10 miles south of Bury St Edmunds.

Description: There are public footpaths as well as the road in this steep-sided valley. It looks as if there is a mixture of habitats.

Ownership: Unknown. Please use the Landowner Letter; <http://www.ukbms.org/Downloads/Wider_Countryside/WCBS%20Landowner%20Letter%202018.pdf>.

TL9462 Beyton IP30 9AH

Location: It is south-east of Beyton, south of the A14 at J46.

Description: There are public footpaths and a minor

road crossing the area. It appears to be an area of arable farming with the remnants of hedges.

Ownership: Unknown. Please use the Landowner Letter; <http://www.ukbms.org/Downloads/Wider_Countryside/WCBS%20Landowner%20Letter%202018.pdf>.

TL9479 Coney Weston IP31 1HL

Location: It is south of and adjoining Knettishall Heath some 5 miles east of Thetford. The square includes a small section of the Icknield Way Trail (IWT).

Description: There is one public path (East-West) which links a minor road to IWT. A second route would require permission from the farmer. Google Maps shows any route being mostly arable.

Ownership: Unknown. Please use the Landowner Letter; <http://www.ukbms.org/Downloads/Wider_Countryside/WCBS%20Landowner%20Letter%202018.pdf>.

TL9577 Coney Weston IP31 1DL

Location: It is immediately south of Coney Weston village with Pinnocks Farm at its centre. It is about 6.5 miles south-east from Thetford.

Description: Apart from the road out of Coney Weston to Barningham, there are no public paths across this site. It is an arable area.

Ownership: Unknown. Please use the Landowner Letter; <http://www.ukbms.org/Downloads/Wider_Countryside/WCBS%20Landowner%20Letter%202018.pdf>.

TM0378 Redgrave IP22 1SA

Location: The square is about 10 miles east of Thetford and is at a place called Crackthorn Corner west of Redgrave. It is mostly South of the county boundary and the source of the Little Ouse River.

Description: established route, 12 species recorded. The route starts in Mill Lane, crosses the road to a path east and then north of Gressingham Foods. It then turns south to Fen Road onto Hinderclay Road and Southern Lane. The route has intermittent trees and grass verges.

Ownership: Unknown. Route uses public rights of way.

TM1233 Brantham CO11 1PT

Location: This square is east of Brantham which is about 6 miles south of Ipswich. The southern part of the square is the mudflats of the River Stour. Brantham Hall Farm is in the northwest corner of the square.

Description: The square includes a section of the Stour and Orwell Walk which is joined from the north by Newmill Lane. There is a potential for 2 east-west routes with the landowner's permission.

Ownership: Unknown. Please use the Landowner Letter; <http://www.ukbms.org/Downloads/Wider_Countryside/WCBS%20Landowner%20Letter%202018.pdf>.

TM1944 Ipswich (Hospital and Copleston High School) IP4 5PD

Location: This square includes Ipswich Hospital and Copleston High School along with part of Rushmere Heath. It straddles the A1189.

Description: This is a very much an urban area with open spaces and areas in government ownership. It should be interesting for someone wanting something different. Finding a route north-south should be possible.

Ownership: The school and hospital is in public ownership and conditional access should be possible. Rushmere Heath is occupied by the Rushmere Golf Club. The club may be pleased to be part of a butterfly survey as it does their environmental credentials good. Please use the Landowner Letter; <http://www.ukbms.org/Downloads/Wider_Countryside/WCBS%20Landowner%20Letter%202018.pdf>.

TM3180 St James, South Elmham and Metfield IP19 0HT

Location: The square is south-west of Lowestoft and the village of St James South Elmham. It is also west of Park Farm and includes Docking Hall.

Description: This is an arable area and may have little concession to the environment as far as I can see from Google. There are public paths some of which may have been diverted to give the 100m separation required.

Ownership: Unknown. Please use the Landowner Letter; <http://www.ukbms.org/Downloads/Wider_Countryside/WCBS%20Landowner%20Letter%202018.pdf>.

TM3388 Bungay NR35 1PE

Location: Bungay is about 11.5 miles west of Lowestoft off the A143. The square includes the south-western part of Bungay and straddles the B1062. Interestingly, part of the square is in Norfolk.

Description: This square is a mixture of urban and rural habitats with a flood plain to the north. It includes an area of public access and an escarpment. There is woodland and public rights of way; an interesting patch. It should be worthwhile contacting the landowner.

Ownership: Unknown. Please use the Landowner Letter; <http://www.ukbms.org/Downloads/Wider_Countryside/WCBS%20Landowner%20Letter%202018.pdf>.

TM3568 Peasenhall IP17 2NQ

Location: This square is south of Peasenhall on the A1120 and some 2 miles west of Yoxford on the A12.

Description: established route, 24 species recorded. This is an arable area where hedgerow trees have been retained. The route starts at a watercourse called The Gull near Gales Farm and ends near Streetgrove Farm. It is possible to create a circular route.

Ownership: Unknown. Route uses public rights of way.

TM4069 Darsham IP17 3PH

Location: This square is just a short distance to the north-east of Yoxford and includes Darsham station.

Description: established route, 14 species recorded. The area is bisected north-south by the rail and diagonally by the A12. All sections are along public rights of way. One section is along the A12. There is no convenient circular route.

Ownership: Unknown. Route uses public rights of way.

TM4663 Leiston IP16 4UL

Location: This square is immediately west of Sizewell Power Station. It includes an area known as Sizewell Belts.

Description: It is mostly an area of conservation as mitigation for the Sizewell Power Station. It has a range of habitats but no direct access from the road and public paths only cover one corner.

Ownership: Suffolk Wildlife Trust either owns or has a long-term management role in the area.

Observations

James Mann

Upon reading the Autumn 2019 Argus I felt that some of the articles were worthy of comment. I found David Tomlinson's "Painted Ladies" interesting. He says he saw his first Painted Ladies of 2019 in Southern Spain and Morocco in early April in modest numbers.

Living in the very south of France on the borders of Spain and the Mediterranean, we have only seen our normal modest numbers throughout the whole summer, meaning that the Painted Ladies that migrated in great numbers to the U.K. must have all taken the Eastern Route. Why?

During the summer of 2018 we had hardly any Swifts, yet in 2019 they were back to normal numbers. Did the 2018 Swifts migrating to the U.K. all take the eastern route taking our normal population along with them? Has anyone investigated this?

During the last big migration of Painted Ladies several years ago for several mornings our in-flower Lime tree turned orange with the first rays of the sun shining on several hundred Painted Ladies. During the day they flew north like the biblical locusts.

Oak Processionary Moths, we do know the problem.

James Mann

About 10 years ago my wife Anne and I were at Panissars a Roman frontier post where the road from Rome crossed into Spain. I was crawling around comparing the Roman foundations which are cut square and level into the rock with early medieval ones that have the walls built straight up off the surface rock. Anne, who had wandered off in the direction of the site of the Roman border Inn, came rushing back shouting that she could hear caterpillars eating the leaves of the Green Oak trees. "Rubbish" says I and followed her off to prove her wrong, but she was not wrong we could clearly hear thousands of Oak Processionary Caterpillars munching and devastating a swathe of oak trees.

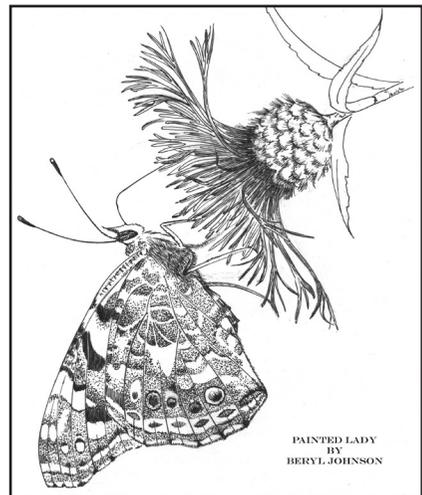
The following Sunday we decided to go to a vigneron at Belasta de la Frontier. The frontier since the treaty of Corbeil on 11 May 1258. Looking across a valley Anne said that it looks as if there has been a fire but she said that it can't be as nothing is black, as we came to it on the road we could see a swathe some 50 metre wide marching down the side of the valley, up the other side and over the top and out of sight in a totally straight line of Green Oaks totally devoid of leaves.

It was pleasing to read about the invasion of Peacocks into Suffolk; here Peacocks are about as rare as Clouded Yellows are in Suffolk but again here Clouded Yellows are about as common as Whites in Suffolk so you can't have it all ways.

As in most places, butterflies are few and far between in the winter but with the Chateau Villargeil vigneron in their second year of going organic the numbers of birds we feed with seeds and boules has vastly increased. Our regulars are a dozen or so of each Blue and Great Tits double figures of Chaffinch and Greenfinch, vast numbers of sparrows, a few Robins, Blackbirds and Thrushes, the odd Starling and a pair of Collard Doves and a cheeky Nuthatch who shows off running up and down the lime tree and then does easy feeding of the seed and boules. For the exotic, three or four mornings a week our lime tree is visited by three Great Spotted Woodpeckers. The pair chase each other around the bare branches while the single gets fed up and drops down to join the smaller bird on the boules.

The Mimosa is out, next the almonds and then Spring.

The vigneron was concerned that they might attack the vineyards, but they did not. Since then, they have been back to low levels with no further devastation. In the U.K. where they are not endemic it seems a good idea to 'Exterminate'.



PAINTED LADY
BY
BRYL JOHNSON

An unusual case?

Trevor Goodfellow

In 2017 I spotted a Red Admiral which had retained its pupal shell on its abdomen. I had never seen this before or since, until Jane Henderson showed me a Small Tortoiseshell photo displaying the same anomaly, taken in 2014. I can find no references to this in any books or online so I assume it is a normal occurrence and we just happened to see it minutes after hatching or an environmental or weather affected issue.

The Red Admiral was certainly unaffected by this and I assume that the case would soon break away. Perhaps the hatching process was limited by the poor health of the imago and it couldn't quite swell enough to split the case during emergence. (photos page 27)

I sent the photo to Bill Stone (County Butterfly Recorder 2017)

Plastic eating caterpillar

Curr Biol. (2017) The web (Found by Rob Parker)

Researchers who were using plastic bags to carry caterpillars have discovered that one species can digest polyethylene, a ubiquitous plastic that is one of the toughest to break down.

Wax moth (*Galleria mellonella*) caterpillars live in beehives, feeding on honey and wax. Paolo Bombelli and Christopher Howe at the University of Cambridge, UK, and Federica Bertocchini at the University of Cantabria in Spain noticed that plastic bags holding the caterpillars quickly developed holes. To investigate, the team observed the caterpillars on polyethylene film in the laboratory and found that about 100 of them

could degrade 92 milligrams of the plastic in around 12 hours - a much higher rate than that achieved by microbes known to break down polyethylene. Homogenized caterpillar cells had the same effect, showing that the creatures are digesting the plastic, not just chewing it.

This ability may help the caterpillars to digest beeswax, which contains compounds that are chemically similar to polyethylene. It's not clear whether the caterpillars produce their own polyethylene-digesting enzymes or rely on gut microbes to break down the plastic, the authors say.

Number of the Beasts

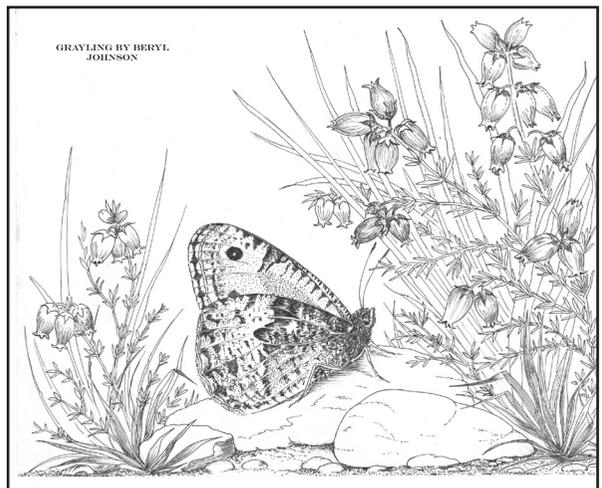
Trevor Goodfellow

Worldwide, 500 species have become extinct in the last hundred years and human population has increased by over 6 billion! (1.6bn in 1900 and 7.7bn to date, and counting!)

(source: www.onekindplanet.org & www.worldometers.info)

In less than 200 years, over 400 species have become extinct in the UK including 62 moths and 13 butterflies (Daily Mail).

Anyone believe in reincarnation?



Garden Nectar Plants for Butterflies- E is for Erigeron

Richard Stewart

In my 'Encyclopaedia of Gardening' this comes under 'Fleabane' a plant we associate with wet meadows, commons and other pastures, late flowering and a bright yellow. In 2019 it was attracting many Painted Ladies at Beeston Common near Sheringham. This was on 31st August 2019 but on an earlier visit, 22nd June, my fifteen minute walk from the railway station gave me plenty of opportunity to see Painted Ladies feeding on the garden version, Erigeron, normally pink or lilac in colour and because of its short height and long flowering period it is very popular, particularly at

the front of borders or in small front gardens. In fact, its common name is 'Seaside Daisy'. There are taller and earlier flowering varieties making it possible to be an annual, biennial or perennial. It can flower into November and in her survey of 'Butterfly Plants for the Garden' Margaret Vickery lists six nectaring species i.e Small Copper, Small Skipper, Small Tortoiseshell, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper and Common Blue. With Painted Lady, and both Holly Blue and Green-veined White from our previous garden, that brings the total to at least nine different species

Sweet Rocket

Jane Leng

In response to the article on page 13 of issue 76 of the Suffolk Argus about nectar plants for butterflies, I think it is very important to publicise the fact that Dame's Violet/ Sweet Rocket/ *Hesperis matronalis* is a popular food plant for Orange Tip butterflies. The eggs are laid on the backs of the flowers, usually only one or two per terminal cluster. They are pale green when first laid, bright orange when they are close to hatching, but still hard to see. The caterpillars feed on the developing seed pods, and are well camouflaged, lying along the length of the pod.

The problem with regarding Dame's Violet purely as a nectar source, is that dead heading to prolong flowering

may remove a whole generation of Orange Tip larvae.

I have grown it for nearly thirty years in this garden, and it seems to be the most popular food plant, with Hedge Garlic and Lady's Smock second, and honesty last choice, though they are all used to some extent. I have got my eye in, over the years, and if essential, I will go through a plant stem by stem, and transfer caterpillars to another plant of the same species, but eggs and hatchlings are still very hard to spot.

Variations in flowering times of these three foodplant species may be useful to the Orange Tips, to give more resilience to different weather patterns affecting butterfly emergence and flowering time.

Light Trapping

Source: Entomologist's Record Volume 131 part 5

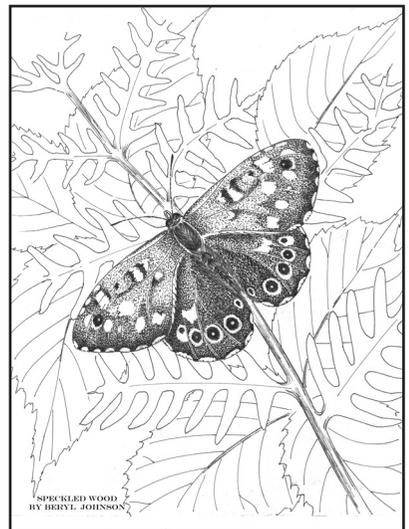
Clive Craik & Andy McLeod studied the difference in performance between 125w MBF Robinson light trap and 20w Wemlite Robinson trap carrying out their extensive trials over 53 nights in a period between March and May 2017 in one location.

Measurement results revealed the Mercury lamp delivered 7.4 times the total radiation than the Wemlite and 72 times as much UVB in addition to 1.6 times UVA.

The conclusion was somewhat

unsurprising but, the MBF lamp captured 1.7 times as many species as the Wemlite.

The results of the testing were much more detailed than can be reported here, but the significance of the test was to prove that ongoing accurate moth recording using light traps will be seriously affected by EU Directive 2011/65/EU (Restriction of the Use of Certain Hazardous Substances in Electronic and Electrical Equipment).



The smell of success

BBC TV 'In the air' and 'Butterfly' by Thomas Marent

The males of the longest living butterfly, The Pasionvine (*Heliconius*), give off a pheromone to lure a mate from far afield. After mating, the male leaves a scent that repels other males from mating with her.

The Apollo (*Parnassius*) goes one step further and plugs the female's vulva to ensure her fidelity.

Male Glasswing butterflies (*Gotha Arduinna*) give off a pheromone cocktail to lure a mate which includes the identity of the larval foodplants that can influence the female's choice for a mate, namely poisonous plants which will pass on protection from predators.

Green is the colour (rarely)

'Butterfly. A photographic portrait' by Thomas Marent

The colour green is rare in butterflies which begs the question why? As one might think that would be an ideal camouflage colour.

The Green hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi*) is one of the only European butterflies sporting green, although its colour is structural (caused by light diffraction) rather than pigmental.

Nightmare on Elm trees

Various sources, Trevor Goodfellow

Since Dutch Elm disease was discovered in England in the 1970's, an estimated 60 million British Elms have been lost from our countryside.

Ulmus Lutece has been released after 20 years of field trials in France. It was hybridised, crossing *Ulmus - minor, glabra, exoniensis* and

wallichiana.

U. Lutece has been found to host White-letter Hairstreaks but as yet the success of their full life cycle using this species of Elm, has not been proven (to my knowledge).

Tibetan Treasure

BBC 4 'Wild China'

Locally called 'Summer grass Winter bug' (photo below), an unusual crop is harvested in the Tibetan Himalayas, between 3,000 and 5,000m above sea level.

The below ground feeding caterpillars of *Endoclitia* and several other Genera of moths are often attacked by fungal spores which, after consuming the body, erupt 4-10cm from the caterpillar's head when fruiting, stretching above ground like a horn.

Areas where they are found, are carefully kept secret and it is thought that the indigenous Yak were observed invigorated after grazing on them.

In excess of £50,000/Kg can be made from the sale of these curious looking dead larvae, which are cleaned and sold at markets and even city

high-street stores, to those who believe in the powerful properties they might possess.



Summer grass Winter bug

Recommended Reading

Editor's choice:

***Life Cycle of British & Irish Butterflies* by Peter Eeles**

What can I say? I would consider this the Bible for butterflies. In depth descriptions and great, sometimes stunning photography showing species in their habitat, wings open, wings closed, mating etc. habits, habitats, foodplants, eggs, larvae the lot! A valuable asset to butterfly conservation.

A quality hardbacked book you will keep picking up.

***A Comprehensive Guide to Insects of Britain & Ireland (revised edition)* by Paul Brock**

Paul has compiled this new edition of an already popular book of insects featuring nearly 3,000 photos.

A comprehensive guide showing distribution, life cycles, habitat etc for beetles, bugs, flies, bees etc. and easy to navigate with useful comparisons grouped on the pages.

Hoverflies and Beetles species well represented, and butterflies are covered in good detail but the moth section, as one might expect from a non-specialist book, is shy of many species so I suggest a specialist moth book for macro or micro moth identification (see below). That is not to detract from the book's value to the reader, just a comment.

***British Moths (2nd edition)* by Chris Manley**

A good photographic guide for quick I.Ds. Covers all micros and macros with accompanying brief description with flight time, foodplant and distribution.

Similar species presented side-by-side is a plus for tricky identifications. For a more comprehensive description I suggest *Moths of Great Britain & Ireland* by Sean Clancy for macros and *Field Guide to the Micros of Great Britain & Ireland* by Phil Sterling & Mark Parsons, brilliantly illustrated by Richard Lewington.

***Butterflies of Britain & Ireland a field and site guide* by Michael Easterbrook**

Distribution maps and photos complemented by useful guides to where the species can be seen. Comprehensive descriptions of life cycles and habitats along with identification keys.

Atlas of Britain & Ireland's Larger Moths (Pisces publications)

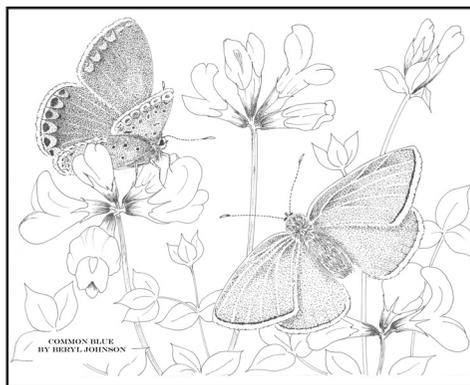
At last the arrival of this long-awaited production. What must have been an epic task for all involved and well worth the wait, this quality hard-backed book is all one can ask of a moth book. Despite not covering micros, 893 species are covered, but you may need your reading glasses as the text is crammed into nearly 500 pages and the information provided is thorough and well laid out. It also gives thanks to recorders and to those (including myself) who sponsored each species via a pre-production online auction. In this way useful financial help was raised to help support the production costs.

***Climate Change and British Wildlife* by Trevor Beebee**

An excellent, up to date, informative and thought-provoking publication. Trevor covers all manner of climate change affected wildlife and using facts and figures along with photos, he highlights many issues including chain reactions that the reader may not have considered. A beautifully produced hardback book, easy to read and worthy of any bookshelf.

***Field Guide to the Caterpillars of Great Britain and Ireland* by Phil Sterling**

Due for publication in March 2020, this book compliments the other specialist Bloomsbury Wildlife Guides in the series, also illustrated. It has 352 pages in hard or paperback with 1000 colour illustrations by the ubiquitous Richard Lewington.





Coxcomb Prominent larva on Birch
by N Sherman



Clifden Nonpareil
by Mike Cowling



Spot the caterpillar on Bird's-foot



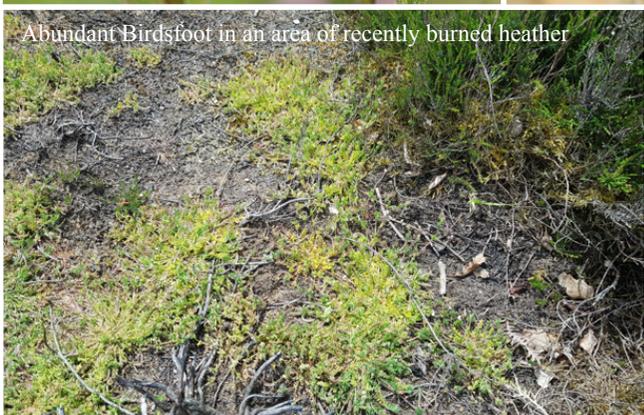
Large Chequered Skipper by David Pitt



Small Tortoiseshell by Jane Henderson



Red Admiral by Trevor Goodfellow



Abundant Bird's-foot in an area of recently burned heather



Large Heath at Cowle Moor
by Liz Cutting

High Brown Fritillary at Heddons Mouth
by Liz Cutting



Glanville Fritillaries at
Hutchinsons Bank by
Liz Cutting

Silver-spotted Skipper at Aston Rowant by
Liz Cutting

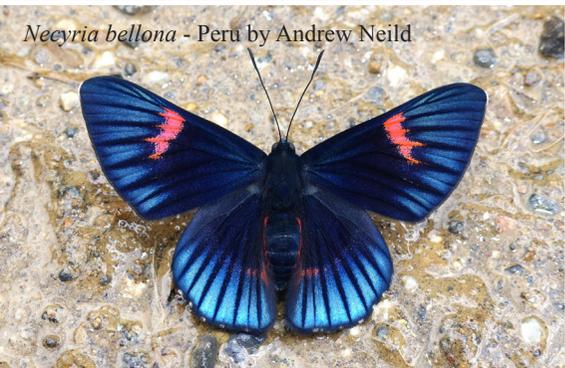


Chorinea octavius -
Peru by Andrew Neild



Swallowtail - Ibiza by Ellynor Fitch

Scotch Argus at Arnside Knott by Liz Cutting



Necyria bellona - Peru by Andrew Neild



Polygrapha tyranthina - Peru by Andrew Neild