

SUFFOLK BRANCH NEWSLETTER

The **Suffolk Argus**

Spring 2022

Volume 83



Map showing Woodland entrance, road and turnaround & internal cross-ride work areas October 2021.

KEY:

— = Ditch Lines. □ = Scrub Management Areas. — = 3m Coppice Width. — = 3m Pollard Width.

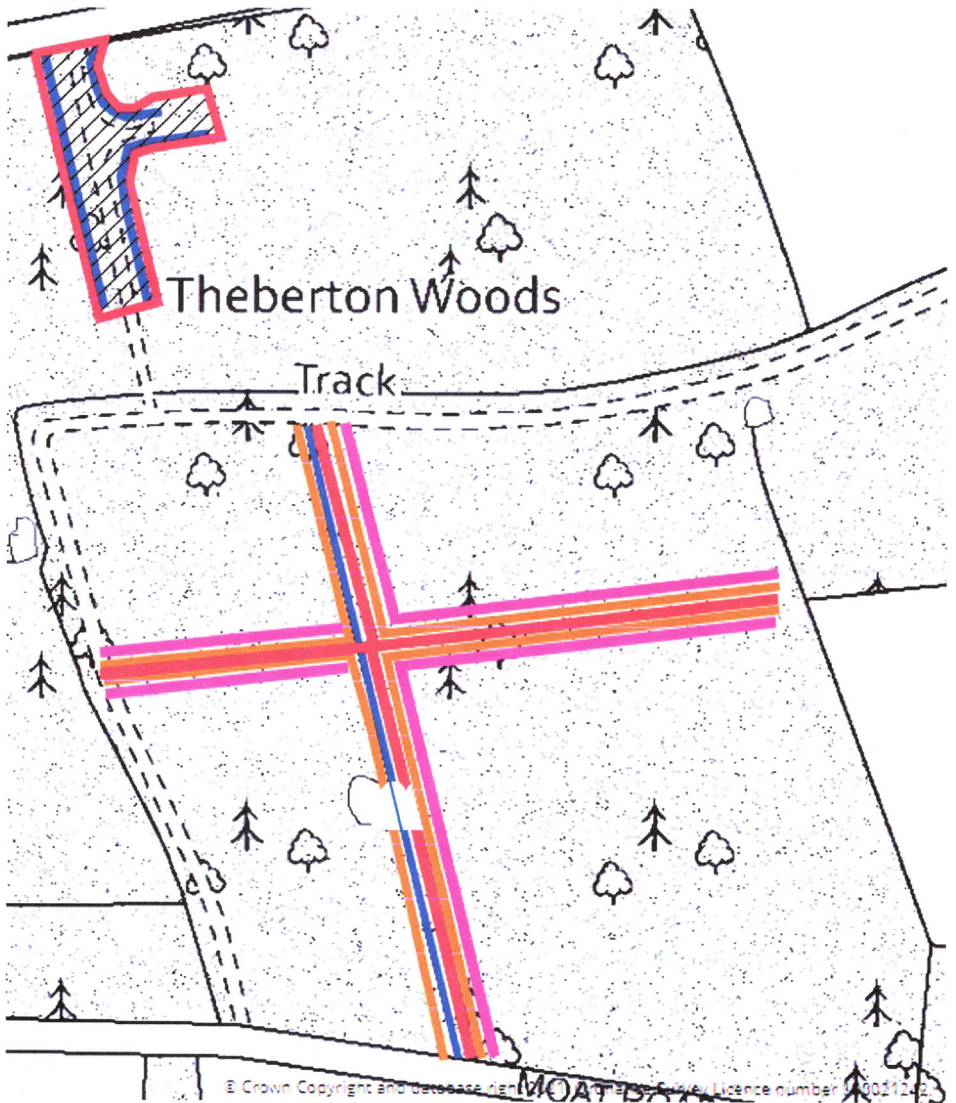


Figure 1 Cross Rides (see page 6)

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Butterfly Conservation

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Contents

Branch contacts	3
Editorial	5
Theberton Wood <i>by John Lepley</i>	6
Events 2022	9
Honeysuckle Project <i>by Davis Dowding</i>	14
Newsround	14
In Search of Scotch Argus <i>by Kev Ling</i>	16
Clouded Yellows <i>by Robert Quadling</i>	17
In Search of Swallowtails <i>by David Tomlinson</i>	18
Irony <i>by Trevor Goodfellow</i>	19
Wind Beneath the Wings <i>by Jane Henderson</i>	20
The Wall Butterfly at Somerleyton <i>by Richard Stewart</i>	21
Nectar Sources for Garden Butterflies <i>by Richard Stewart</i>	21
Pupal Problem <i>by Sandra Holmes</i>	22
Request for Argus Index <i>by Peter Maddison</i>	23
Moth Traps	23
Editor's Book Review <i>by Trevor Goodfellow</i>	24
Big Butterfly Count 2021	24



Editorial

Trevor Goodfellow

How quickly it seems that we arrived at the short dinky days of winter.

One uplifting memory of earlier in the year for me was finding my first Purple Emperor caterpillar!

In October, I assisted John Lepley, Julian Dowding, and a team at Theberton Wood to rescue some larvae from areas due to have forestry work undertaken.

I would like to thank all those passionate wildlife lovers for their work and time liaising with Forestry England (FE) and other interested parties. Thanks go to John for taking the time to update us on the ongoing FE Theberton Wood work (see page 6).

Although some species did well, most did badly as the 2021 Big Butterfly Count report shows on page 22.

The events calendar is being compiled which you will find within these pages but please check the SBC website for up-to-date information.

Following the excellent 'Line of Duty' TV

SBC Moth traps are available for members to borrow again this year. Please email me at trevor@greenfarm.org.uk to book.

series, we are bombarded with acronyms and abbreviations, (I noticed that 'Fashion at Tesco' decided not to follow the trend). Please comply with current COVID regs. when attending any SBC events at SSSIs in search of SWF and WA (e.g).

In these times of climate change concerns and pressure to reduce our carbon footprint, I must remind members that they can choose to receive the Suffolk Argus by email rather than the printed version which is expensive to print and distribute.

As postage and printing costs rise, any way of reducing our outgoings goes a long way to help save funds to further butterfly conservation projects.

Thanks again to all those members who took time to contribute to this edition.

Copy date for the summer issue is May 29th, 2022.

Cover image: mating winter moths - Operophtera brumata by Trevor Goodfellow



Theberton Woods – Update on Forestry England operations 2021 and beyond

John Lepley

Theberton Woods are situated approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile West of Theberton Village. The main access, with limited parking, is off Pretty Road.

As well as good populations of Purple Emperor, Silver-washed Fritillary and White Admiral, the woods are home to many other insects, birds (including nightingale, spotted flycatcher and marsh tit), at least 5 species of bats, and a host of interesting plants (including bird's-nest, greater butterfly and early purple orchids) and fungi. Great-crested newts breed in the ponds.

The history of the woods is being researched by a key local enthusiast, who has found evidence of woodland on the site dating back to 1783 and perhaps even earlier. The possibility of Theberton being assigned ancient woodland status is supported by the presence of several potential ancient woodland indicator (AWI) species, including guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*) and possible Midland hawthorn (*Crataegus laevigata*).

Forestry England (FE) had previously published a document entitled “Theberton Woods Thinning Operations 2022”, which was only accessible to the general public via the Theberton Eastbridge Parish Council website: <http://thebertonandeastbridge.onesuffolk.net/assets/Parish-Council/Forestry-England-Theberton-Woods-Thinning-Operations.pdf>

This document stated the intention to harvest between 12.5 and 20% of the trees during late Summer and Autumn 2022. It also outlined the removal of “intruding vegetation, including Salix

species” from the entrance roadway and turning area, “widening of rides” and maintenance and resurfacing of the roadway / turning area. Unfortunately, no detail was provided on exactly how the above work was to be carried out.

Given the importance of the site, local residents were naturally concerned that management work should be carried out sensitively and in a manner which would not damage the flora and fauna.

Following negotiations with local enthusiasts, FE made two important concessions, firstly that, for the initial work on the roadway / turning area at least, equipment would be used to gently lower cut branches to the ground and secondly that a small team of volunteers would then be allowed to search the cut material and rescue any Purple Emperor pupae.

When the initial work took place on 29th June 2021, unfortunately neither of these things happened, leaving the volunteers feeling frustrated and let down. FE cited Covid restrictions as the reason for failing to allow volunteers onto the site, even though up to 30 people were allowed to meet outside at that time.

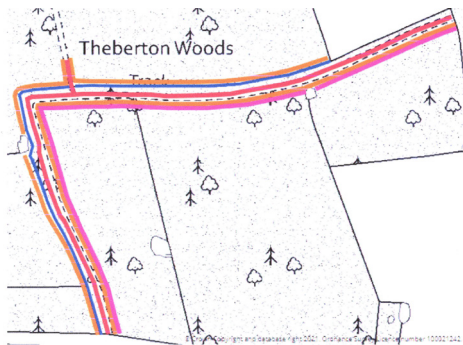
After these disappointments, a group of local residents and enthusiasts worked in various ways to engage with FE to influence the management work going forward.

Sam Felton has been associated with Theberton Woods for many years. He is incredibly knowledgeable and always makes time to meet and greet visitors to the woods and assist them in finding butterflies, plants and animals. Following

the events in July, Sam encouraged visitors to write to Forestry England, expressing their concerns.

Others engaged with FE, through a formal complaint and freedom of information requests. Some also raised the issue with Theberton-Eastbridge Parish Council and attended a Parish Council meeting on 4th August 2021 to set out their concerns. The Committee Chairman and Parish Clerk were very helpful and supportive. After the meeting, the Chairman wrote to FE inviting them to a future Parish Council meeting, to discuss their ongoing thinning plans. Through the Parish Council, we were also able to ensure that the issue was on the radar of the newly elected Leiston District Councillors.

This multi-faceted approach appears to have been at least partially successful as, on 1st September 2021, FE advised verbally that they were now looking at a smaller thinning operation, phased over “several years” and that the work on the rides would also be phased, albeit initially over only two years.



Map Showing September / October 2022 - Outer ride work area.

KEY:

- = Ditch Lines.
- = Scrub Management Areas.
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- = 3m Pollard Width.

Figure 2 Outer rides

We subsequently received reasonably detailed information on the plans for the rides. Phase one, work on the entrance track and the “cross rides” (see figure 1 on page 2), was scheduled during October 2021 and involved cutting back encroaching vegetation to widen the rides, with some associated coppicing and pollarding

to create a “stepped” effect. Please see below diagrams showing Forestry England’s phased plans for this work and “before and after” photographs showing the effect of the work so far:



Figure 3 Before



Figure 4 After

We asked for as much notice as possible of the commencement of the October ride works, however in the event, we were informed only 4 days before the work was due to start. Despite this short period of time, local enthusiasts, and Butterfly Conservation (BC) members were able to conduct several organised “searches” for Purple Emperor larvae. As a result, a small number of larvae were rescued; hopefully to be seen as adults in the 2022 flight season.



Figure 5 Larvae



Figure 6 Ride work

On the first day of the ride work, 15 October 2021, representatives from FE attended the site and met with local enthusiasts and a BC representative. FE verbally shared their plans going forward.

At that meeting, the FE representative with oversight for the proposed work, seemed to take most of our concerns on board, in particular, the potential to remove far less timber than that mentioned at previous discussions (which had earlier caused alarm) and to do this on a sectional rotation. Similarly, our request to manage the rides on a 2-3 year rotational basis appeared to

gain favour, although in the short term, this would be done on a 2 yearly rotation to allow access for timber removal. Another positive outcome of that meeting was that the number of Sallows identified to be either left alone, pollarded or high-pruned during the work on the rides was increased and we are grateful for this.

Of more concern was a brief mention of possible plans to create a number of deer stalking paths through the remaining tracts of forest. The need for this will be challenged, as local observations indicate that both fallow and red deer numbers are low and there is no real evidence of a deer browsing problem.

The second phase of the ride work, dealing with the “L” shaped outer ride, is expected to take place in September / October 2022 and will follow a broadly similar approach to phase one.

Although FE have still not confirmed their phased timber thinning and harvesting plans in writing, or in any detail, we have been assured that nothing will happen until plans are in place and have been scrutinised. We await written confirmation of the quantity of timber to be extracted and exactly what is meant by “over several years”. We hope that local residents will be given an opportunity to discuss and comment on these plans at a future Theberton Eastbridge Parish Council meeting in 2022.

Relations and communications with FE have improved since July 2021. In fairness, FE subsequently indicated that they had not expected their initial plans to prove so controversial. They also seemed surprised that so many people cared about the woods and were prepared to actively engage. As a result, FE now seems prepared to work with and take on board the concerns of naturalists who love the woods. Hopefully, in future, once FE and BC have agreed a new methodology for volunteering, locals and BC can get involved with helping on ride work and other monitoring activities. This has the potential to increase our understanding of the flora and fauna and enhance the conditions for them.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many local enthusiasts, Sam, and BC members who engaged with FE, and of course all the volunteers who painstakingly searched for larvae

during October. (photo page 28)

It would be unrealistic to expect the woods to remain untouched forever, without any management intervention. Indeed, if such intervention can be carried out sensitively, it is to be hoped that it can be beneficial to wildlife in general, and hopefully not too detrimental to Theberton's important population of Purple Emperors. To paraphrase one of our local enthusiasts, 'Theberton is one of the best, if not *the best* broadleaf woodland in all East Suffolk'. It therefore merits special consideration.

Although the management work carried out so

far, together with that proposed for the future, is substantial, many areas of the wood could remain largely untouched. It is to be hoped that all these areas will continue to be used by the Purple Emperor and all the other flora and fauna found therein. It also offers scope for it to become a showcase woodland, showing a desire from all parties to get things right for biodiversity and people.

Hopefully by engaging constructively with FE on an ongoing basis, we can ensure that this very special place can continue to be enjoyed by nature enthusiasts for generations to come.

Events

Saturday 9th April 2022 - Spring Scything Experience, Landseer Park.

1st of two introductions to scything with traditional scythes, together with a demonstration of peening (cold forging) the scythe blade with a hammer to repair chips/cracks, and to thin the blade ready for whetting with a stone.

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.

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 (6th Aug) if you can't attend this one or would like to do two.

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.

Email: julian.dowding@ntlworld.com

Sunday 8th May 2022

Wildlife Day at Pakenham Water Mill

Admission £3 – children free.

Conservation groups including Suffolk Butterfly Conservation. Wildlife, craft and activity stalls. Music and Maypole dancing. BBQ, tea and cakes.

Where Pakenham Water Mill

Map grid ref: TL936696. Post code: IP31 2NB

Time: 11.00 am – 4.00 pm

Contact: More details phone 01359 230275

Thursday 19th to Saturday 21st May 2022

National Moth Night

Theme - Woodlands have been chosen as the theme of Moth Night 2022 and we will also be welcoming daytime records.

For more information see www.mothnight.info

Tuesday 5th July 2022

Newsons Farm visit

By kind permission of Frances and Roland Bee, an invitation to visit Newson's Farm for its 13 acres of meadow and woodland wildlife habitat. New members and those wanting help with butterfly identification are most welcome

Where: Newson's Farm, Bury Road, Thorpe Morieux, Bury St Edmunds IP30 0PB

Map grid ref: TL932548

Time: 10.30am start

Contact: Peter Maddison for details of the event. Email: prmaddison@yahoo.co.uk 01473 736607

Friday 8th July 2022

Purple Emperor Survey, Theberton Wood.

A walk around Theberton to see how the Purple Emperors are doing.

Bring your own lunch and suitable footwear. Beware of ticks. Please let us know in advance if you are coming.

Where: Theberton Wood

Grid ref: TM 421656 meet at the entrance off Pretty Rd, Theberton. IP16 4RY

Time: 10am-3pm

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

Saturday 9th July 2022

Moth Trapping at Bixley Heath SSSI Ipswich To Survey Reedbed and Sedgebed Habitats

Meet: Along main site track at stream. Entrance off Bucklesham Road. Please bring a torch.

Grid Ref: TM199429

Time: 21:00

Leader: Sam Chamberlin

Contact: schamberlin@hotmail.com 07712281307

Monday July 11th – Friday July 15th 2022 - One of these days. The actual day to be arranged according to weather conditions. The website will be updated with the actual day or ring Trevor Goodfellow (number below)

Purple Emperor walk at SWT Bradfield Wood

A walk to see Purple Emperor, Silver-washed Fritillary and White Admiral.

Where: SWT Bradfield Wood

Map grid ref: TL935580

Time: 10.00 hrs end: 12.00 hrs

Contact: Trevor Goodfellow 07900 696960

Thursday 14th July 2022

**A morning walk in the Wissett area, near Halesworth, for summer species.
New members welcome.**

Meet: Wissett Church and Village Hall car park

Grid Ref: TM365793 Post Code: IP19 0JQ

Time: 10.00am

Leaders: Chas and Sally Keyes, and Peter Maddison

Contact: Peter Maddison 01473 736607

Friday 15th July to Sunday 7th August 2022 BIG BUTTERFLY COUNT*

Big Butterfly Count

For more details visit

www.butterfly-conservation.org or www.bigbutterflycount.org 22zz

Saturday 16th July 2022

**A butterfly survey at Gifford's Hall Park, Stoke by Nayland, and in the
Polstead and Shelley area.**

Where: TBA

Map grid ref:

Time:

Leader: Peter Maddison 01473 736607

Contact the leader near to the date for parking and other details.

**Date TBA - 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 01284705476

Sunday 31st July 2022 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 grid ref: TM452591 Post Code: IP15 5QE

Time: 10.30 am start

Contact: Peter Maddison

Email: prmaddison@yahoo.co.uk 01473 736607

**Saturday 6th August 2022 - 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 using the contact details below, as there are limited places.

Where: Landseer Park

Grid ref: TM176425

Time: 10am-3pm

Contact: Julian Dowding mob: 07910 170609, or email

Email: julian.dowding@ntlworld.com

Saturday 8th October 2022 at 2.30 pm

Suffolk Branch A.G.M & Members Meeting.

Stowupland Village Hall

[Enter our photographic competition in early 2022 - details later](#)

November

Butterfly Conservation National Annual General Meeting

Honeysuckle Project

David Dowding

Butterfly Conservation purchased 200 native honeysuckles winter 2020/ 2021 to be planted in Orwell Country Park. The aim is to create improved breeding habitat for White Admiral (photo page 28) and Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth, both of which occur sporadically at the site but are not well established. Their larvae feed upon Honeysuckle. An additional 50 plants were purchased and planted at the Dales Local Nature Reserve for White Admiral, which again occurs sporadically at the site. There are reasonably strong colonies of White Admiral to the south of the River Orwell, so any increase in population or spread on the northern side would be welcome. White Admiral is a Suffolk BAP species.



Bee Hawk larva by David Dowding

Newsround

Nigel Cuming

Peter Maddison

We were sorry to hear that BC member Nigel Cuming died in October 2021. Nigel was the Heteroptera Recorder for Suffolk and his enthusiasm for the world of insects and particularly ‘bugs’ was demonstrated on the occasions that he led field event walks for us during the early years of this century.

It is normal on our event walks to leave the car park fairly swiftly, but I recall one walk that Nigel led at Dunwich Forest where it took us 20 minutes of back bending, if not hands and knees, searching for and finding *Croizus hyoscyami*,

As well as a larval foodplant, Honeysuckle (*Lonicera sp.*) is also an important nectar source for Hawk-moths, with its fragrant night-time scent and long nectaries.

The bulk of the planting occurred in February 2021, with the plants positioned on the shady side of stumps, trees, or fences. At Piper’s Vale a number of Honeysuckles were planted in more open heathy areas for Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moths.

We continued nurturing the plants with watering sessions over the summer and although a few plants have been lost to deer browsing etc., we estimate having around 125 healthy growing plants, or around a 50% success rate, which we will review again this spring.

As a contingency plan we have started to take cuttings from larger plants in the country park and potted them up, so we will be able to replant every year. We currently have 40 well established plants ready as replacements to be planted next month.

This work has been generously funded by the Susie Mellor Legacy.

a geometrically patterned and striking red and black bug which was relatively new to Suffolk. On another occasion at RSPB North Warren, it was *Nysius huttoni* that was found, a species that on this reserve Nigel had recorded for the first time in the UK in 2007. Twenty-two species of butterflies, including Wall, was the highlight for most of the group on that day at North Warren, but for Nigel, his highlight was undoubtedly the finding of Lesser Cockroach. Events were always entertaining and informative.

We extend our condolences to Marion, Nigel’s wife, and his family.

Suffolk Butterflies Abundance and Distribution

Twm Wade

The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) was designed to be able to assess abundance and distribution of butterflies using a randomised system of selecting survey locations so the whole county is covered. I find it interesting to learn what species were most abundant and most widespread across Suffolk and propose to share that information with you.

The WCBS relies on volunteers walking across a 1Km OS square and counting butterflies as they go. This year twenty-nine species were recorded and the total number of butterflies was 5887. The week with the most butterflies counted was the week ending 21 July. The most abundant species for the year was the Meadow Brown at 1250, a distant second being the Small White at 864. It is a matter of luck what you see as you walk a WCBS transect but we do record species uncommon in Suffolk. This year it was two Purple Emperor.

The WCBS is a good way to get started in learning about butterflies in a practical way. You will probably get to know a new patch of Suffolk with new opportunities to take photographs. There are nine squares available; see www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk/WCBS for fuller details. The numbers are correct to 8 November 2021.

Neonics Again

Discovered on the web 'National Institute of Health (USA)'

'We recently reported a novel mode of action in monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) larvae exposed to neonicotinoid insecticides: arrest in pupal ecdysis (the process of shedding the old skin (in reptiles) or casting off the outer cuticle (in insects and other arthropods). Following successful larval ecdysis. In this paper, we explore arrested pupal ecdysis in greater detail and propose adverse outcome pathways to explain how neonicotinoids cause this effect. Using imidacloprid as a model compound, we determined that final-instar monarchs, corn earworms (*Helicoverpa zea*), and wax moths (*Galleria mellonella*) showed high

susceptibility to arrested pupal ecdysis while painted ladies (*Vanessa cardui*) and red admirals (*Vanessa atalanta*) showed low susceptibility. Fall armyworms (*Spodoptera frugiperda*) and European corn borers (*Ostrinia nubilalis*) were recalcitrant. All larvae with arrested ecdysis developed pupal cuticle, but with incomplete shedding of larval cuticle and unexpanded pupal appendages; corn earworm larvae successfully developed into adults with unexpanded appendages. Delayed initiation of pupal ecdysis was also observed with treated larvae. Imidacloprid exposure was required at least 26 hours prior to pupal ecdysis to disrupt the molt. These observations suggest neonicotinoids may disrupt the function of crustacean cardioactive peptide (CCAP) neurons, either by directly acting on their nicotinic acetylcholine receptors or by acting on receptors of inhibitory neurons that regulate CCAP activity.'

Suffolk Moth Group

Editor

The group's extensive recording around the county has been applauded by Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT). Their monitoring and recording included many SWT sites which revealed several species of interest including *Oxypteryx atrella*, *Nyctegretis lineana*, and *Catocala fraxini*.

For more details go to: <https://www.suffolkwildlifetrust.org/news/fabulous-new-records-suffolk-moths>.

Smile for Charity

Butterfly Conservation, recently received a quarterly donation of £360.23 from AmazonSmile, thanks to customers shopping at smile.amazon.co.uk or with AmazonSmile turned ON in the app. To date, Amazon has donated a total of: £2,471.65 to Butterfly Conservation.

The Suffolk Argus

In search of Scotch Argus at Smardale Gill

Kevin Ling

Following the previous year's lockdown, the opportunity for holidays returned in 2021 and our family enjoyed two weeks in the stunning Yorkshire Dales. To have the freedom to roam once again, was a reminder never to take our great British countryside for granted. One such location that was in our plans was Smardale Gill Nature Reserve, just over the border into Cumbria near Kirkby Stephen.

Smardale Gill is one of only two significant locations in England where the Scotch Argus *Erebia aethiops*, can be observed. The other being Arnside Knott on the northeastern tip of Morecambe Bay.

Our journey began from the beautiful Yorkshire village of Askrigg. Ahead of us was a twenty-mile drive to Kirkby Stephen, via Muker and Keld. This route is perhaps one of the most stunning drives in all of England, with regular stops taken, to enjoy the jaw dropping views.

Following a week of somewhat cloudy weather, the forecast for Monday 2nd August promised full sun and temperatures in the low 70's. I had been scouring the Cumbria BC website for sightings of the Scotch Argus during the preceding days and just prior to our visit only the odd one or two had been recorded. However, my estimation was that today's conditions would produce their first mass emergence. I just hoped we had timed it right.

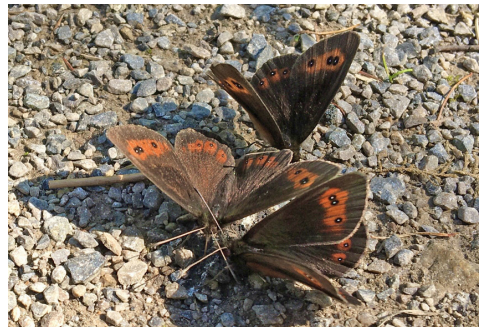
Smardale Gill Nature Reserve is managed by the Cumbria Wildlife Trust and follows the course of a former railway line along a steep sided woodland bank, taking in the majestic Smardale Viaduct (see photo below) along the way.



Scotch Argus by Kev Ling

Our starting point was at the small hamlet of Smardale (NY743083). As we entered the small car park, we were surprised to see our first ever Red Squirrel, as it darted in front of the car. The flat footpath to the viaduct is approximately a 1.5 mile walk and is suitable for all ages and abilities. After a further Red Squirrel encounter, our walk began to deliver some butterflies. The first half mile of the path is tree lined and not surprisingly Speckled Wood and Red Admiral were the first to be noted. Thereafter, the grassy banks each side of the footpath give way to wildflowers, with Knapweed and Scabious a plenty. There is also an abundance of Blue Moor Grass, which is the primary larval food plant of the Scotch Argus at this site.

As we approached this section of the walk, our gaze was immediately diverted to the sight of good numbers of butterflies hugging the hillside (see photo below).



Scotch Argus by Kev Ling

What followed was an experience we will never forget. We had timed our visit to perfection. The mass emergence was indeed under way and within minutes, it seemed that wherever we looked, fresh adults were emerging from the long grass. Looking towards the base of each plant, we observed them twirling around the stem, gradually making their way to the top as their

wings dried. As with the other species such as Ringlet, the colour of a freshly emerged Argus is stunning. Its upper side has a dark brown, almost velvety appearance with bright orange markings, containing several distinct eyespots.

It was not long before freshly emerged adults start to mate, and we were lucky to observe one or two pairs in copulation. Being only a single brood species, the flight period for the Scotch Argus lasts just a few short weeks. This year, they were a little late emerging, but their usual time on the wing is late July to early September.

As we approached the viaduct, numbers continued to increase, peaking at between 200 – 300. I would estimate that over the entire 50-hectare reserve, those numbers would have reached 1000. An interesting observation, as with a number of other species, was that when a lone cloud obscured the sun and sent the site into temporary shade, activity was curtailed, and the Scotch Argus would either settle on the flower head of a nearby scabious or make their way down a grass stem. Within a few moments, the sun re-appeared, and an explosion of movement once more filled the area, with what seemed small clouds of butterflies jostling for position. Pleasing to those with a camera, this species is very easy to photograph and stays settled in position for long periods of time.



Scotch Argus by Kev Ling

Of course, despite this spectacle, there were a number of other species to enjoy, including Dark Green Fritillary, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock,

Red Admiral and a plethora of whites. There was even a very late Northern Brown Argus noted by other visitors, although this particular species evaded us on the day. As we took lunch, we watched the viaduct where a Kestrel was paying regular visits to a nest, feeding its chicks. This location is as good for birds, as it is butterflies.

To see a new species in the British Isles (I had only seen a single example of this species in Austria) is always a thrill. However, what excites me most, is to enjoy butterflies on a grand scale. Seeing them in such large numbers as they emerge, reminded me of visits made to Devil's Dyke in Cambridgeshire for Chalk Hill Blue. To witness clouds of butterflies, not just individual sightings here and there.

Smardale Gill will last long in our memory and is one of the most impressive sights for Lepidoptera, that I have visited in the country. I cannot recommend it enough and if you are ever in this part of the world, you should stop and indulge yourself in a morning of unadulterated butterfly heaven.

Clouded Yellows

Robert Quadling

On Saturday 9th September 2021 I decided to take a walk round SWT Carlton Marshes as the weather was sunny and warm looking for a possible 3rd Gen Wall Brown butterfly, so I headed for the sluice which is a hot spot for this butterfly, but none seen only a couple of Red Admirals. I then headed back along Share Marsh trail to the Sprats Water trail which goes behind the trees to an open meadow area. I got to a section of the path where tree line starts to close into a tree tunnel, it was on the open ground in front of this that I counted 18 Clouded Yellows flying in from the East and briefly dropping on to the flowering Ragwort flowers for a few seconds before flying off towards the West. This is the first time I had ever seen so many Clouded Yellows on this reserve in one place, we are lucky if one is seen in a year, so this was special day for the reserve. (see photo next page)



Clouded Yellows by Robert Quadling

In Search of Swallowtails

David Tomlinson

Elba is best known as the Italian island where Napoleon was exiled to after his forced abdication following the Treaty of Fontainebleau, but little seems to have been written about its butterflies. I've only visited the island once, on a holiday with my parents many years ago, but I do remember vividly the abundance of butterflies I encountered. Though I'd always been interested in birds, butterflies were a new branch of natural history for me and armed with my butterfly net I spent many happy hours discovering Elba's rich variety of Lepidoptera, which was so much more varied than that at home in England.

Remarkably, a few of the butterflies I caught on Elba still survive in my collection today, including the wonderful *tiger-striped scarce* Swallowtail and the equally beautiful common. Intriguingly, my specimen of the latter is rather small - are island races of this widespread insect smaller, or is my specimen a runt? I do remember the thrill of finding that both species of Swallowtails were common on the island. This was 20 years before the publication of Higgins and Riley's *A Field Guide to the Butterflies of Britain and Europe*, so identifying the butterflies I caught was a considerable challenge. The swallowtails were great, as they were instantly identifiable.

On subsequent summer holidays in Europe, I became increasingly familiar with both

Swallowtails, and especially *Papilio machaon*, which I found was widespread over much of Europe, occurring in a wide variety of habitats. I had, of course, read about the British race of *P.machaon*, *britannicus*, but it was to be many years before I ventured to the Broads in search of it. Here, even in its stronghold, I found it frustratingly difficult to see, in contrast, it's a much easier butterfly to observe in France, Spain and Italy. The two races are quite different in their choice of food plant, for while *britannicus* breeds almost exclusively on milk parsley, the continentals will happily lay their eggs on a range of umbellifers, from wild carrot to fennel. The latter also have two broods, hence the fact I encountered them on my summer holidays. Poor old *britannicus* rarely manages more than a single brood which flies in late May and June.

Last spring, I resolved to make a special effort to go in search of *britannicus* in the Broads, but where was the best place to go? In the end I joined my friend David Tipling on a day's swallowtail-hunting. David is a professional nature photographer who takes clients out to photograph wildlife; last year he decided to add Swallowtail photography to his springtime offerings, so our day was spent researching the best locations he could take his customers (and establishing a suitable pub for lunch).

Our day started at the RSPB's reserve at Stumpshaw, a site long famous for its swallowtails. Though we glimpsed a distant butterfly or two, they were barely visible with binoculars and impossible to photograph. I was reminded of the sentence in *Butterflies of Britain and Europe*, a photographic guide, which states that this "restless butterfly is almost invariably difficult to photograph". Impossible seemed more appropriate than difficult. Next, we tried Howe Hill nature reserve, another swallowtail hot spot. Again, we had distant sightings, but nothing to point a camera at.

Finally, we came to the Norfolk Wildlife Trust's reserve at Hickling, hoping that our luck would

change. It was a perfect June day, with no wind and warm sunshine, so conditions could hardly have been better. Walking along the path we met people who had seen our quarry, so our hopes were raised, but once again our sightings were of fast-flying butterflies skimming the reeds at speed. The challenge of photographing a swallowtail was much greater than I had anticipated.

Not to be deterred, we carried on along the trail, enjoying views of several of Hickling's special birds, including Bitterns, Bearded tits and Hobbies, while a surprise was a somewhat unlikely Hooded crow. We continued to glimpse the odd Swallowtail powering past, but that was it, until we came across a small group of people, blocking the path. You've guessed it: they were admiring a co-operative Swallowtail that was even posing to have its picture taken. Fortunately, I was armed with a long lens on my Olympus OMD E-M1 Mk II, a 200-400mm zoom. (This is what is known as a Four Thirds camera: with the lens zoomed to 400mm it is the equivalent of a 800mm lens on a 35mm camera).



Swallowtail by David Tomlinson

Opportunities were fleeting, as the butterfly was restless, while it would have been easier if there hadn't been another 10 photographers all keen to get their shot, but eventually I scored. For those interested in such details, my photograph was taken at 1/5000th sec, with the lens wide open at f6.3, the ISO 800.

Walking on, we found another freshly emerged

individual that was equally happy to have its photograph taken, and this time we had the butterfly to ourselves. Success! My Swallowtail was not in the net, but perfectly captured on my memory card, a reminder of a beautiful day's butterfly hunting in the Broads.

I must add a postscript to this story. The following day I returned to Hickling with a friend from Kent, also a keen photographer.



The weather was, once again, perfect, so we were optimistic of success. We walked the same route, saw several butterflies, but not one gave even the briefest opportunity to photograph it.

Irony: {i- ron-ee}

Noun: the expression of one's meaning by using language that normally signifies the opposite often for comic effect.

e.g. (not) – Blackadder: 'do you know what irony is?' Baldrick: 'yes, it's like goldy and bronzey'.

In previous issues I have highlighted the exploits of a local housing development by Hopkins Homes.





New estate road names in Thurston

Their apparent initially helpful attitude ended in the removal of over 100m of Elms potentially eradicating the White-Letter hairstreak colony previously recorded there.

The developer even used the WLH in promotional material to enhance their homes and to create a conservation concerned image to prospective buyers, although a photo of a Black Hairstreak was used.

I recently investigated whether the proposed planting plan had been adhered to but apparently not yet. Beyond the turf and shrub of the frontage there was very little evidence of any trees or shrubs, although the development is barely half complete.

As I turned the car around, I spotted a road sign 'Red Admiral Heights leading to Peacock Way'. Further searching revealed: Brimstone Close, and Meadow Brown Way. I hope these road names improve the resident's awareness of the butterflies that will hopefully colonise the estate and its green spaces, we shall see. Editor.

Wind Beneath the Wings

Jane Henderson

Marion Wells' query about a pile of moth wings found at the base of a tree (issue 82) in her friend's

garden prompted me to respond as we have had a similar experience. Every summer something has been dropping numerous moth wings from a favourite position somewhere amongst the rafters of an open-fronted wooden field shelter and just as in Marion's photo, most of the wings were from Silver-Y and various types of Yellow Underwing moths.

On some days when Peacocks were on the wing, I have also found their wings on the floor of the same building, but in a different spot, again they appeared to have been dropped from one position. There could be the wings of as many as 11 Peacocks on any one day.

Bats are known to have feeding perches which they habitually use, so I think this explains why both Marion's friend (1) and I have been finding heaps of discarded moth wings. As to the butterflies, the most likely culprit was a wren which had a moss-lined nest on a high shelf in the field shelter and was seen flying in and out of the building during the summer, although I never did see a wren catching one.

I have been collecting some of the wings and the photo of the moth wings shows that bats are no respecters of beauty. I can see The Herald, Burnished Brass, Buff Tip and Angle Shades to name but a few.

(1) Apology: the item referred to in volume 82 should have credited Dr Annie Hitch for the photos taken under a Lawson Cypress in Knodishall. Editor.



Peacock wings collection by Marion Wells

The Wall Butterfly at Somerleyton-20th August 2021

Richard Stewart

This was a species I failed to see in 2020 as the weather wasn't very good on my visit to Carlton Marshes. Having read Lilian Pitt's article about the Wall at Somerleyton (Suffolk Argus, volume 79, Autumn 2020, page 25) my wife Marie and I decided to visit the church where Lilian had persuaded the Church Warden that the Wall was now an endangered species and would benefit from longer grasses being left behind the church. It was a fairly long walk from Somerleyton railway station, which incidentally has attractive floral displays maintained by volunteers. Our last part of the journey was along a busy road where we had to walk on a verge of short grass. This turned out to be to our advantage as the verge adjoined the boundary wall of Somerleyton estate and Marie spotted one Wall before we reached the church, settled, in good condition and appropriately on the wall.



Wall Brown by Richard Stewart

Near the church carpark we found a clump of bramble and just failed to identify a small dark butterfly which flew off- possibly a late Purple Hairstreak as both oak and ash were nearby. Inside the churchyard the two nectar sources remaining and being used were knapweed and ragwort. We recorded Painted Lady, Peacock, Gatekeeper and Meadow Brown but the Wall butterflies were the most numerous. However, they were seldom settling for long in one place and with all but one looking identical and in good condition we found it difficult to agree on a total. Marie suggested five but I went for seven, given that we had seen one

before the church and another on the way back, in almost the same spot, so probably best to count this as just one, plus three together in the car park followed by another three just afterwards, feeding on the same ragwort plant that was now in sunlight. The weather during our two-hour survey was mainly cloudy with sunshine later.

This appears, thankfully, to be a 'hotspot' for an increasingly rare species and on our return walk we were aware of Ragwort being abundant in many fields close to the estate's boundary wall, suggesting that this species could well have other discrete colonies beyond the churchyard. Much of the Somerleyton estate is to be rewilded and there is an opportunity for our members to survey it for butterflies. The details are in the Suffolk Argus volume 82, Autumn 2021, page 16.



Somerleyton Church car park, where 3 Walls were seen together by Richard Stewart

Nectar Sources for Garden Butterflies- M is for Michaelmas Daisy and Marjoram

Richard Stewart

At the last count we had recorded nectaring by at least one butterfly species on fifty-nine different garden plants- but sometimes even a very good nectar source disappoints. This applies to our Michaelmas daisies as we have just recorded Red Admiral and Large White nectaring. The reasons include just a small clump surrounded by vigorous plants not allowing any expansion and although it is in the sun the flowers are a very pale violet. The general impression is that the deeper the violet is in the flowers the better it will be for nectaring. As a contrast Margaret Vickery in her top two hundred 'Butterfly Plants

The Suffolk Argus

for The Garden' survey which I have mentioned before has Michaelmas daisy in her top five, with twenty-two different species visiting. Frequent visitors included Small and Large White, Small Tortoiseshell, Comma, Painted Lady, Peacock, Red Admiral and Small Copper. The last mentioned provided a superb contrast as it fed on deep violet Michaelmas daisies in the butterfly garden of Christchurch Park, Ipswich on 15th September 2021. There is an even better display of this plant in the nearby Wolsey Gardens. The great advantage of this nectaring source is its late flowering, sometimes into winter, and it can also be grown in pots or easily lifted and divided for a greater garden presence. Marjoram is also in the top five, attracting twenty-nine different species. I always associate this excellent nectar source with the wider countryside and every year my wife and I visit a particularly productive and expanding marjoram bed on the Devil's Dyke which attracts a wide variety of nectaring species including Marbled White, Chalkhill Blue and dark Green Fritillary. As a perennial garden plant, it needs little maintenance other than cutting back the spikes after flowering and it also can be grown in pots and divided to produce more plants. Our main bed is next to thyme and when the two are flowering together on a sunny summer's day they attract multitudes of insects, especially bees. We have recorded eighteen different species nectaring on marjoram, actually making it one ahead of our buddleia davidii. The eighteen are: Essex and Large Skipper, the three whites, Small Copper, Brown Argus, Common Blue, Holly Blue, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Comma, Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, and Ringlet. As a footnote, laurel which was described as early flowering in the previous article had an unexpected partial garden flowering in August. It attracted nectaring Red Admiral and our largest hoverfly, *Volucella zonaria*. For those with access to the 'White Admiral' newsletter there is an article about this species in edition 88, Summer 2014.



Essex Skipper by Trevor Goodfellow

Pupal Problem: A Tale of Two Caterpillars

Sandra Holmes (see also volume 82 page 17)

Caterpillar No 5 (of 10): Orange tip caterpillar taken from Garlic Mustard in my garden 10/6/21, length 17mm and held in a white 2Kg carton with a sheet of clear glass over it (nothing can get in except the food I give it) grew normally for 6 days until at 28mm length it pupated on the side of the box 17th June. 9 days later overnight of 26th June a fly pupa was seen below the butterfly pupa. The Fly pupa was given to Peter Vincent, it hatched 16 days later when he identified it as a female *Phryxe vulgaris* (photo below).



Phryxe vulgaris pupa and Orange-tip pupal case by Sandra Holmes

Caterpillar No 6 (of 10): Orange tip caterpillar taken from Garlic Mustard in our meadow 10/6/21 at 14mm length. Grew normally over 8 days to 30mm and pupated on the seed pod. On 27/6 after 8 days, we found a fly pupa. This occurred during daylight during a 5-hour window when we were out. Interestingly the fly pupa was lying some 10

cm away from the butterfly pupa. See provided photo. How did it get there? crawled as a grub perhaps? This was also given to Peter Vincent where it again hatched after 16 days in to a male *Phryxe vulgaris*.

How did the fly eggs get into the caterpillar?

Basket Case

Nature's Weirdest Events (BBC2)

The ubiquitous Chris Packham presented the viewers with a small basket like cocoon found in the Amazon. Dangled on a long silk from a leaf in the rain forest, the larvae of the Urodid moth, spins this intricate cocoon resembling a basket with an elongated honeycomb construction. It is suggested that the net like cocoon helps reduce weight to preserve the integrity of the suspension silk yet still providing protection from predatory ants and other insects. The adult moth, one of the 'False Burnets', is grey and otherwise unremarkable.

Arctic Survival

Frozen Planet (BBC 1)

Sir David Attenborough's icy masterpiece featured the amazing life cycle of the Arctic Woolly Bear moth (*Gynaephora groenlandica*). The 'woolly bear' like larva feed for just 5% of its life, for the rest, it is mostly frozen. It can be up to 14 years until it finally pupates within a spun silk cocoon usually attached to a rock to prevent it blowing away in the intense icy gales. This longest living known caterpillar can survive temperatures of below minus 60 degrees centigrade in its Arctic home! The adult moth has a narrow window of opportunity to hatch in the Spring and successfully mate.

Save the (insert species name here)

Trevor Goodfellow

As I am a member of a conservation organisation, I thought I should give up my diesel vehicle in favour of an electric (EV) one to do my bit to help combat climate change.

After pondering the future of humanity, I am now even more convinced that to save ourselves, we first need to save everything else!

One used to hear 'save the Whale' then 'save the Snow leopard', Panda, Pangolin, Red squirrel, House sparrow, now we seem to be at a point where almost all our wildlife needs saving, and we need them all! I believe we can only survive if we have the natural world alongside us. Any failure along the way will affect us too unless us humans become extinct perhaps. Not yet, I am not sure that the natural world will regain its biodiversity without some help from us first. Then consider our extinction or shoot off to colonise some far-off planet to start all over again, probably ending up at the same point. This is just my opinion and not based upon any science but let us all do what we can to save our butterflies, that is a start.

Due to a global shortage of semiconductors (chips) restricting new car manufacturing, I have been given no delivery date for my new EV ordered in November 2021, just a shrug of the shoulders and a 'could be May, June 2022 possibly later'.

Request for Argus Index

Peter Maddison

After my AGM appeal for ideas for projects, a member got in touch to suggest that a comprehensive index to past copies of the Suffolk Argus would be a useful tool. The index would cover species and locations and much more. In fact, it would be as comprehensive as the compilers would have time to spend doing the work! Clearly, the task would be easier if a small team took on the project. If you are interested in being involved, please get in touch with me. pmaddison@yahoo.co.uk

Moth Traps

Members are reminded that moth traps will be available for loan again this year so please contact me on trevor@greenfarm.org.uk for details and T&Cs.

Editor's Book Reviews

Editor

Chris Manley has now published the third edition of the *'British & Irish Moths'*. Improving on the second edition by including variations, adventive and migrant species that were not covered before. 2,503 species covered by 4,300 excellent photos in natural setting across 450 pages make this a very useful book for identifying our moths. Many of the photos are new and complete this fine updated masterpiece. Having several species side by side on the page helps the reader to see subtle differences between species in some families and distribution maps and short descriptions are adequate. I personally favour cross referencing with Sean Clancy's *'Moths of Great Britain*

& Ireland' for a more thorough description for macro moths and British Wildlife Publishing – *'Field Guide to the Micro Moths of Great Britain & Ireland'* for micros.

'Butterflies' by Martin Warren is a beautiful, substantial hard backed book covering all aspects of British butterflies, their culture, life-cycles and habitats. Wonderful photos by Peter Eeles and other photographers compliment the text making this an interesting and informative read, in fact I reckon most readers will have a 'I didn't know that' moment as new science and anecdotes are shared with the reader throughout.

BIG BUTTERFLY COUNT 2021 - SPECIES RESULTS IN THE UK

	Big Butterfly Count	Abundance	Ave per count	% change from 2020
	2021 UK			
1	Small White	252,151	1.88	-5%
2	Large White	229,218	1.71	-16%
3	Meadow Brown	197,060	1.47	33%
4	Gatekeeper	133,726	0.99	-30%
5	Red Admiral	75,394	0.56	-10%
6	Ringlet	63,311	0.47	81%
7	Peacock	61,668	0.46	-63%
8	Small Tortoiseshell	38,543	0.29	-32%
9	Marbled White	28,704	0.21	213%
10	Green-veined White	27,784	0.21	-9%
11	Small Copper	22,897	0.17	11%
12	Comma	21,320	0.16	-32%
13	Speckled Wood	18,086	0.13	-41%
14	Six-spot Burnet	15,964	0.12	42%
15	Common Blue	14,376	0.11	-59%
16	Painted Lady	12,180	0.09	44%
17	Holly Blue	10,018	0.07	-58%
18	Brimstone	7,984	0.06	-33%
19	Silver Y	3,661	0.03	53%
20	Scotch Argus	2,326	0.02	n/a
21	Jersey Tiger	2,034	0.02	n/a
	TOTAL	1,238,405	9.21	-14%

Star rated

Editor

More rated lepidoptera features seen in the media. 'Gardening Which' – Headed by a full-page image of an Elephant hawk moth, the 4-page article 'Moths in your garden' feature, really catches the reader's eye. Angle shades, Brimstone, Garden tiger, Humming-bird hawk plus various caterpillar photos are accompanied by short descriptions of where they are found and larval foodplant. A colourful selection of well-chosen species with reference to moth trapping and Butterfly Conservation to engage the magazine subscribers. Also featured in the pest department

Ask Iris

Sandra Holmes: My indoor Orange Tip caterpillars have now pupated. I have put lids on their boxes and taken them out into the garage to overwinter. My question is when to get them out again and what drives emergence of the butterfly: temperature, day length, or genetically determined?

Iris: Orange-tips emerge from late April but usually May. It is thought that some pupae go through two winters before emerging (*M. Esterbrook* – 'Butterflies of Britain & Ireland') although normally one winter, a period of 10 months as a pupa (*P. Eeles* – 'Life Cycles of British & Irish Butterflies'). The eclosion (hatching) is controlled by hormones triggered by daylight length, humidity, and temperature (*Iowa State University*). As with other species, natural selection has probably allowed the balance of the various triggers to help coincide with the foodplant availability and this is passed on in the genes.

I would keep your pupae in a safe place away from mice and spiders and in early April, allow some daylight to fall on them if this is to help trigger eclosion. Perhaps you could keep half in the dark and half by a window to prove a point?

was mention of a 'tomato moth' caterpillar. Not having heard of one, I had to Google it to find that it is the Bright-line Brown-eye - *Lacanobia oleracea*.

Hidden objects PC game where one of the objects one searches for appears to be a Wall Brown. Where a generic representation would have sufficed, an unusual but welcome choice for the game designer one might think.

Sandra also asked: '1- Could you please define 'instar', I understand it means stage, but how are these defined and how many of them? 2- Do all caterpillars shed their skin? and how often?'

I am aware that it happens in the Peacocks and Tortoiseshells (*Nymphalidae*), but I have now kept Orange-tips under observation for 3 years. I observed them several times a day and measured their length every 2 days from 6mm to pupation at 28mm and am yet to see any changes their skin. either shed or reabsorbed'.

Iris: All Butterflies have between 4 and 6 instars depending on the species. The term Instar refers to a stage between each moult (ecdysis) of their skin. The skin or exoskeleton does not grow so when they reach their limit, the caterpillar releases ecdysone, a hormone which softens and absorbs the skin. The new skin beneath is then inflated by 'inhaling', when the skin hardens, it facilitates their further growth. Orange-tips for example have 4 instars, *Nymphalidae* mainly have 5 or 6, e.g. Dark Green Fritillary has 6.

(see also 'Pupal Problem' page 22)

The Suffolk Argus

Hans Onhipps: If a plane crashes on the border of two countries, where do they bury the survivors?

Iris: Easy one Hans, you don't bury survivors.

Honor Role: I heard of twin brothers where one was born in February and the other was born in March! How come?

Iris: Well, they were both born in the month of February in the town of March in Cambridgeshire.

Eileen Tudor-Right: What is vinegar made from?

Iris: It is made when bacteria convert ethanol (alcohol) into acetic acid.

Ovrun Outte: When is the next solar eclipse?

Iris: The next total eclipse in the UK is on 12th August 2026.

Colin de Clowns: Is it true what they say about Dixie?

Iris: No, and the sun doesn't always shine either.

Zendin de Clowns (no relation): Which is the best way to Amerillo?

Iris: Head west on highway 40 from Folsom Texas, listen for a church bell ringing then ask for 'Sweet Marie' she will be waiting there.

Al Beback: When did slavery become a statutory offence in the UK?

Iris: Surprisingly recent, 6th April 2010 which became the 'Modern Slavery Act 2015'.

If you have anything that you would like to ask Iris, humorous or otherwise, please send an email to: Ask Iris c/o editor@greenfarm.org.uk

Suffolk Argus Crossword Solutions (issue 82)

Across

2. Copper
3. Eclosion
7. Trefoil
9. Bats
11. Swallowtail
13. Admiral
16. Emperor
17. Coleophoraridae
18. Death's head

Down

1. Clearwing
2. Cinnabar
4. Pusmoth
5. Nettles
6. Elm
8. Leafminer
10. Larvae
12. Large
14. Golden
15. July
19. Nectar



Marbled White by Trevor Goodfellow



Lunar Hornet moth at SWT Bradfield Wood by Trevor Goodfellow



Small Whites on Purple Loosestrife by Trevor Goodfellow



Hatched Emperor moth eggs by Trevor Goodfellow

The Suffolk Argus



White Admiral at Piper's Vale by David Dowding



Tom, Sam, Julian and Bob at Theberton Wood by Trevor Goodfellow