

SUFFOLK BRANCH NEWSLETTER

The

Suffolk Argus

Summer 2022

Volume 84



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment



Members' Afternoon and AGM 2022

THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT
STOWUPLAND VILLAGE HALL, IP14 4BG
SATURDAY 8TH OCTOBER 2022 2.30PM

A SHORT AGM WILL BE FOLLOWED
BY TALKS FROM:

JAMES CORTON,
COUNTY BUTTERFLY RECORDER.

PATRICK BARKER, A CONSERVATION AWARD WINNING
FARMER FROM MID-SUFFOLK WHO
WILL BE TALKING ABOUT HIS APPROACH TO
FARM CONSERVATION FOR BUTTERFLIES,
MOTHS, AND OTHER WILDLIFE.

SUSANNAH O'RIORDAN, BC CHEQUERED
SKIPPER PROJECT MANAGER, WHO HAS
OVERSEEN THE INTRODUCTION OF THE SPECIES IN
ROCKINGHAM FOREST.

THERE WILL BE A **RAFFLE** AND A
PHOTO COMPETITION, AND TIME TO
TALK OVER A CUP OF TEA.

MORE DETAILS WILL APPEAR ON THE WEBSITE.

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Butterfly Conservation

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Contents

Member's afternoon and AGM <i>by Peter Maddison</i>	2
Branch contacts	3
Volunteers <i>by Peter Maddison</i>	5
Editorial <i>by Trevor Goodfellow</i>	6
Nectar sources for garden butterflies <i>by Richard Stewart</i>	7
Two additional butterfly species for Christchurch Park <i>by Richard Stewart</i>	7
Lepidoptera art <i>by Trevor Goodfellow</i>	8
Brimstone and buckthorn review <i>by Kev Ling</i>	8
Buckthorn trees at Halesworth <i>by Ken Derham</i>	9
Tales of the unexpected <i>by Kev Ling</i>	10
Honeysuckle project – continued <i>by Trevor Goodfellow</i>	12
Orange-tip observation <i>by Jane Leng</i>	12
2021 Suffolk Butterfly Report <i>by James Corton</i>	13
Gatekeeper <i>by Ian Whybrow</i>	28
Photo competition winners <i>by Kev Ling</i>	29
Events report <i>by Trevor Goodfellow</i>	30
Poem <i>by Ian Whybrow</i>	30
Orange tip <i>by Kev Ling</i>	31
Honeysuckle distribution maps <i>by David Dowding</i>	32



Volunteers

Peter Maddison

A huge thank you to all our volunteers: you are the backbone of the Branch. It is your work, your enthusiasm and your optimism for the future that make us what we are now.

I'm delighted that through the trials of Covid our Branch membership has topped 600, and that many of us have volunteered time and skills in addition to paying our annual subscriptions! A huge number of us have been involved in recording butterfly sightings and the report of our work is to be seen in the 2021 Butterfly Report which can be read within these pages. A huge thank you to James Corton who took on the role of County Butterfly Recorder and produced this report – no mean feat when grappling with new computer programmes and an avalanche of records. Please send your records in again this year using iRecord, the Casual Record sheets found on the Recording page of the website, the recently updated Garden Butterfly Survey, WCBS and Transect surveys through UKBMS. Which ever method you use, your records are wanted! Individual transect surveys work well when small teams are able to cover for one another so that the full spread of the season's surveys can be achieved. We are always looking for help with both WCBS and full transects – contact Twm Wade if you have a notion that you want to know more.

In a previous newsletter I asked for your local knowledge to help us plan some new event walks in the less well recorded parts of Suffolk and this summer we will have new walks in the Halesworth / Wissett, and also the Stoke-by-Nayland areas. When this newsletter arrives with you, we will be heading towards the peak

of the butterfly season when, during July, eight events are planned. If you would like to meet people with a similar interest, why not join us at one or more of these events.

Species Champions. David Dowding took on the role of Silver-studded Blue Champion some time ago and he collates and assesses the records that are sent in from the various colonies each year. Do you have a particular interest in a species and would like to have a countywide perspective of its distribution and abundance - Wall Brown, perhaps, or Grayling (recently reclassified as 'Endangered'), or Dingy Skipper or one of our other butterflies? Choose your species and get in touch to discuss.

The committee is always looking for new ideas and projects, so if you have thoughts that you would like to air, do contact me or another committee member. An example of a recent success has been a member coming forward to offer to produce a full index of past Argus newsletters, which will mean that finding out about species and places to go to see them will become a doddle!

A particularly important role that we will need to fill is that of Conservation Officer. Rob Parker, after many years in the role, has given notice that he wishes to step down. We are looking for one, two or three people who can fill his shoes! Rob has worked countywide, but there is no reason why we should not have two or three volunteers keeping an eye on conservation issues within their areas of the county. If you would like to know more about the role, please get in touch with me.

Editorial

Trevor Goodfellow

It was a treat to get some good weather for this year's butterfly spotting. A slow start with very few moths until May but several early butterfly species brightened up the days.

I am looking forward to hearing from those members who had some Buckthorn whips, any eggs or larvae? Hopefully you are getting better results than me. At the time of writing this I had not seen a female brimstone until spotting a couple of caterpillars on old Buckthorn.

This season's Argus includes part of the 2021 Butterfly Report assembled by our new Suffolk recorder James Corton. He urges us to use iRecord online or via mobile ap. to ease his burden, I for one was not too keen on it, until I tried it. Much like the SMG moth recorder, once you are set up it becomes straight forward.

The first hawk moth in the trap in early May is always a pleasure, just one Poplar Hawk and a few other macros, but by the end of the month there was a boost giving me 7 Poplar hawks and 30+ other species.

I helped with moth trapping as part of the Bury Water meadows Group bioblitz on the night of the 20th and results were dismal. Although 2 actinic and 1 MV traps were in use from 9 pm till midnight, I understand that many trappers elsewhere had similar results on 'moth night' the previous night.

Butterfly highlights for me so far were my first ever sighting of the beautiful Marsh Fritillary at a sensitive site in Suffolk and some Adonis blues in Cambridgeshire. Apart from these 'exotics', the sight of several Small Heaths at home makes me happy too.

I should draw your attention to the words of our chairman on page 5 as we are keen for willing members to join the committee and find a new Conservation Officer to replace Rob Parker who is unfortunately needing to step down.

Copy date for Autumn 2022 is 25th September

Front cover photo Heath Fritillaries by Mark Brewster



Possibly freshly emerged Pale Tussock by Annette Burton

Nectar Sources for Garden Butterflies: M to O.

Richard Stewart

Yes, I did M last time but on reflection Mahonia ought to get a mention. Our garden encyclopaedia describes this yellow flowering species in glowing terms: 'unrivalled as a winter adornment for gardens'. Our editor has a 'Charity' variety which is a good late nectar source, especially for bees. Obviously with winter flowering it will attract few butterflies but any sighting of a butterfly emerging from hibernation to feed on a warm and sunny winter's day is a real bonus. That is what happened to us at the Cambridge Botanical Gardens on 13th January 2020. There is a separate winter garden, and a Red Admiral was feeding on a sunlit Mahonia and, when we returned a few hours later, it had moved to a second flowering Mahonia now in the sun.

N is for Nasturtium which I usually associate with companion planting i.e., diverting egg-

laying Large and Small Whites from nearby cabbages. Trudie's wildlife garden at Aldeburgh has examples of this. However, it may be worth growing even if you have no vegetables, first for its bright colours and secondly because, in the oft quoted 200 best 'Butterfly Plants For The Garden', it was recorded as a nectar source for thirteen species.

O is for Osteospermum and we have a long sunlit border of them at one edge of our lawn. In 2021 this nectar source was in flower from May to a few remaining in early December. So far, our records are of six species nectaring: Orange Tip, Large White, Green-veined White, Small Tortoiseshell, Gatekeeper and Ringlet. If the 'Top 200' is again consulted the number of recorded nectaring species rises to an impressive eighteen.

Two Additional Butterfly Species for Christchurch Park, Ipswich.

Richard Stewart

I must admit I wasn't too surprised when I found a Silver-washed Fritillary in the park's butterfly garden on 29th July 2020. It is after all our largest fritillary and a powerful flier. It was also recorded in 2020 on bramble below the 'Urban Buzz' wildflower beds along Valley Road. Adrian Richards saw a maximum of four and we had two visitations to our garden Buddleia in Westerfield Road. Both of these locations are less than a mile from the park. The park sighting was on a gusty day with the butterfly using its large size to cling onto buddleia. I had predicted its future presence in my book 'The Butterflies in Christchurch Park', published in 2016, but I hadn't predicted the second one. In fact, I grouped it with three

other species that I said were unlikely to be seen in the park because of their sedentary nature or specialist habitat requirements. So just to prove me wrong the two small butterflies which I thought were both Small Coppers, on 16th July, received a closer inspection from my wife Anne-Marie, who announced that one was a Small Heath. David Dowding also saw one in the park at a later date. The area where it was seen was close to a path to the east of the tennis courts and fitness equipment. On reflection the combination of short and longer grasses should fit its requirements so in future a colony may be established.

Lepidoptera Art

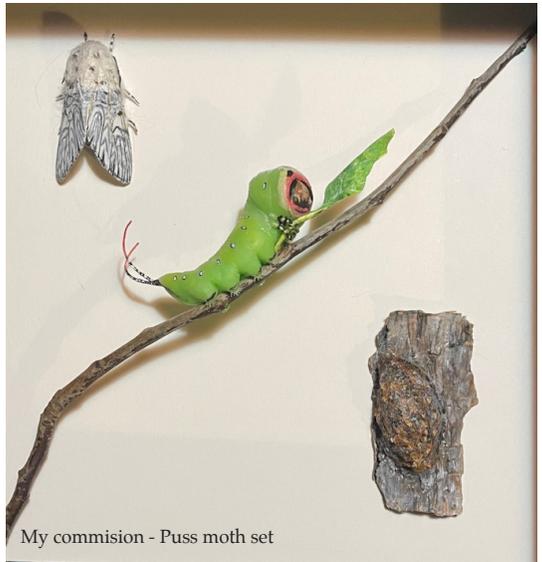
Editor

I searched the interweb for clearwing moth info and spotted a photo of 3 different species resting on a human hand! My first reaction was what a lucky beggar! (From a photographic viewpoint). A (much) closer look revealed that the Fiery, Hornet and Welsh clearwings in the photo were actually finely hand-crafted replicas!

I visited the artist's website: hachiware-art.blogspot.com to find a plethora of amazingly realistic lepidoptera. Izumi Segawa uses air hardening clay and other materials to create the life-sized mini masterpieces, including larvae. Too much to mention here so I recommend you search the website, I am sure you will be tempted to purchase something, I was.



Clearwings artwork
by Izumi Segawa



My commision - Puss moth set

Brimstone & Buckthorn Review

Kev Ling

In January of this year, the Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation facilitated the delivery of 500 Buckthorn plants to 85 members, promoting the conservation of Brimstone butterflies in our county. Thank you for everyone who got involved.

It was great to see such continued interest a project that has delivered thousands of plants across Suffolk in recent years. It is hoped that

all of the plants are safely in the ground and responding well.

With the dry spring we have experienced, it is worth reminding everyone, of the importance of a little nurturing during the first year. Most importantly of course is keeping them watered. You may also want to think about pruning. Using secateurs, you can prune back to a bud on selected stems, which will promote a thicker

bush. Don't worry about losing some of the new growth, as Buckthorn responds well to pruning and will bounce back well the following spring.

Most importantly, we want to hear about the success you have had with your buckthorns. This can be by way of a short article for the

Argus or just by reporting your sightings to us at sightings@suffolkbutterflies.org.uk Please tell us the location of the sighting (with OS reference if you know it) and how many you saw. Keep checking those plants for eggs and larvae over the coming weeks and good luck.

Buckthorn trees planted on Halesworth Millennium Green

Ken Derham

Butterfly Conservation kindly donated five Buckthorn saplings which were planted by volunteers at Millennium Green. Two Alder Buckthorn and three Common Buckthorn were positioned in a sunny space near the New Reach. Although they will take a couple of years to establish, we look forward to seeing the sulphur yellow male Brimstone butterflies, or the paler females around the green. I will be pleased if

you see them, to report them on the Millennium Green website or to any of the volunteers who work on the Green on Wednesday mornings. Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation are keen to receive any sightings of Brimstone activity too.

(Common Buckthorn is also known as Purging Buckthorn for its strong laxative effect).



Fitting mulch mat to suppress weed growth by Ken Derham



Watering in by Ken Derham



Trees planted by Ken Derham



Scrub Triangle with newly planted buckthorns

Tales of the Unexpected

Kev Ling

Spending the spring and summer months looking at Butterflies is an exciting time in itself. Observing the many species, we have to offer. For some, a little bit of travelling is involved in order to see those that are not found in Suffolk. For most of the time, we see Butterflies where we expect to find them, such as Dingy Skippers at Kings Forest or Silver Studded Blues on the Suffolk Heaths. However, I get a particular thrill by seeing the unexpected. That's not to say that those species shouldn't be there, it's just that I was unaware of their presence. I would like to share one or two of those moments with you.

The first that springs to mind is during a visit in 2010, to the Partnach Gorge in Garmisch Partenkirchen, Germany. Nowadays, some simple internet searching would reveal what wonders await me. However, at the time of my visit, I didn't even have one of those new-fangled devices called a mobile phone. We had walked through the gorge to an open area where two rivers meet. Having perched ourselves on a pebbly beach by the water's edge to begin tucking into our lunch, an unexpected visitor landed by our side. It was none other than a stunning Purple Emperor. I gingerly reached for my camera and captured my first ever glance of His Imperial Majesty. A chance encounter that will live long in the memory. As we headed back through the gorge a similar encounter with a Map and Swallowtail put the icing on the cake for that day.

Another surprising sighting came in 2013 during a holiday to Chamonix in the French Alps. The butterfly in question was a Small Tortoiseshell. Not much of a surprise you might say, but this particular example was happily going about its business on the 12,605ft summit on the Aiguille



di Midi, a mountain in the Mont Blanc massif. Never before had I seen a butterfly anywhere near this altitude and it got me thinking as to why it had chosen to on this particular day. It was a barren, snowy and rocky landscape with little or no vegetation, so I am still intrigued as to why this occurred. If anyone has any theories, I would be glad to know.

Back in the UK, I have encountered some other unexpected moments too. From a very young age, I have enjoyed family holidays in Snowdonia, a place that is very close to my heart. I have lost count of the times I have climbed Snowdon, walking its many paths to the summit. During this time, I have seen some of our more common species gracing its slopes, such as those from the Nymphalidae and Pieridae families. However, during May of 2018 as we started out on the Watkin Path from Nant Gwynant and not long into our walk, a flash of orange whizzed by us. I hastily tracked it into some bracken by the side of the path and to my surprise it was a Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary. This was a species that I had not seen reported in this area before. In fact, they are not that common in Snowdonia. It's closest relative the Pearl Bordered Fritillary was the closest I had previously got at Eyarth Rocks,

Denbighshire, a couple of years before. In May of 2021, I had my second unexpected sighting of a Welsh Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary whilst walking through Newborough Forest on the island of Anglesey. This has got me wondering how many more locations in the area contain small colonies of this fantastic butterfly. You can be assured I will be keeping a close eye out in future.

The Peak District National Park is another favourite location for us, with its stunning landscape and hiking routes. One such location where we based ourselves in May 2017 was Castleton in the High Peaks. One of our walks was along the ridge from Mam Tor to Losehill. At the summit of Mam Tor, I spotted a pair of butterflies in the distance performing an aerial ballet. As they settled, I inched towards the ridge edge for closer inspection. To my surprise, I had stumbled across a pair of Wall Browns (my first sighting in the UK for eight years). The 3km walk across the ridge produced a further five examples, all of them doing exactly what it says on the tin and sunning themselves on the dry-stone walls by the footpath.

Even nearer to home in Ipswich, we have the wonderful location of Landseer Park. In recent

years its wildflower meadow and chalk bank has hosted a large range of species, including Marbled Whites. I had just returned from a week in Sussex, enjoying the Butterflies of the south downs, which included Small Blue. As I took a walk around Landseer Park, I could be forgiven for thinking that I had seen my last Small Blue of the year. We were still a week or two away from the first Marbled White and I was enjoying the first Meadow Browns and Skippers of the season, when something caught my eye. On closer inspection, it was indeed a Small Blue. A very rare sighting indeed and the first recorded in Suffolk for many years. We are still not certain as to whether this was an introduced species, but there had been other reports of this species in Norfolk at the same time, so there is a slim chance that it found its way here naturally. What is encouraging is that four years later on 14th May 2022, I again saw the first Small Blue of the year at the same location. So, it certainly is enjoying this habitat.

Wherever you choose to roam, keep an eye out, as you never quite know what will be around the next corner. Maybe a butterfly that's new to you, your first sighting of a particular pair in copulation, or even a species in its early stages. It makes our amazing pastime even more exciting.



Small Pearl-Bordered
Fritillary, Watkin Path,
Snowdon by Kev Ling

Honeysuckle Project – continued

Editor

David Dowding’s sterling work planting Honeysuckle foodplant to support the White Admiral around Ipswich was featured in the Spring issue but space constraints forced me to omit some images which you can now see below and back cover.



Honeysuckle planted at base of Pine tree by David Dowding



Established Honeysuckle being watered by David Dowding



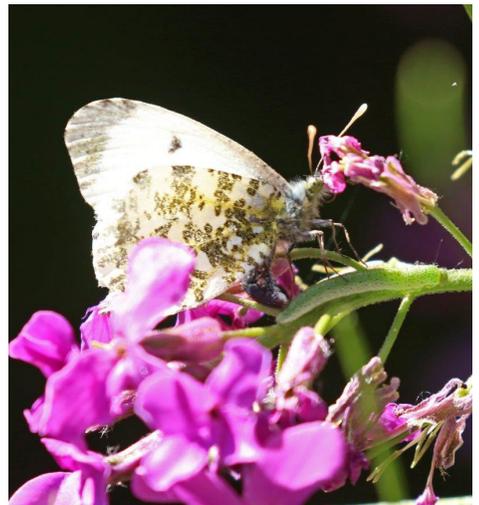
Honeysuckle ready to plant by David Dowding

Orange Tip Observation

Jane Leng

Trying to keep up with the gardening following Andrew’s death last year, I have been busy pulling weeds in the vegetable garden before they seed. One of them has been Shepherd’s purse, *Capsella bursa-pastoris*. Much to my amazement last week, I saw an Orange-tip female laying on some of the flowering plants. I now have a vase of Shepherd’s Purse with at least five larvae at various stages of development, and several yet-to-hatch eggs.

I have never heard of this being a food plant, but I have noticed that I have very little lady’s smock in flower, and the Sweet rocket seems to be flowering very late, so this may be why Shepherd’s purse is being used. There is a fair amount of Garlic mustard about, but that seems less popular, in this garden at least.



Orange Tip on honesty by Trevor Goodfellow

2021 BUTTERFLY REPORT

Summary



A male Wall brown and Small Tortoiseshell interacting at SWT Carlton Marshes

1. Introduction

The 2021 report is my first Butterfly Report since taking on the baton from Bill Stone. He set and maintained a very high standard of work and I realise he will be a hard act to follow. I am very grateful for his training and support during my initiation as he showed me the ropes, particularly the database for producing Suffolk records, maps, charts, and graphs from the national datasets. Initially, I intend following a similar report style for continuity but with a view of adapting it in subsequent years, as necessary.

I would also like to thank all the recorders, who help to build an accurate and county-wide picture of our butterfly populations. The goodwill of

people prepared to spend time observing and recording our butterflies is appreciated and without it this report would not be possible.

About myself, I have had an almost lifelong interest in butterflies. While at primary school this developed into a major interest when I bred 'cabbage white' butterflies from caterpillars. This was beyond my Dad's understanding, being a former farmer. The 'Clouded yellow' year of 1983 further fuelled my passion and I've been hooked ever since. I feel privileged to take up this role of County Butterfly Recorder for Suffolk and work alongside others who care about Suffolk's butterflies for future generations.

2. Overview of UK 2021 weather

2021 was slightly warmer than average for the UK. Overall, it was a sunnier than average year in many northern and western areas but many parts of the south, including East Anglia, were duller than average. Notable extreme events during the year included wintry weather with snowfalls during January and February, a hot spell in July and heavy rain in October. While not being a year where records were broken frequently, like 2020, it had some extremes of weather that will have impacted both our migrant and native species. It is one of the top twenty years for temperatures but not one of the top ten. This is largely due to the imbalance of heat throughout the year. Late winter and spring were noticeably colder than usual, lowering the annual average which was still very warm due to higher seasonal temperatures from June to December.

The mean temperature was 9.3 °C, which is 0.1 °C above the 1991- 2020 average. The rainfall total was 1077 mm, which is 93% of the 1991- 2020 average. The rainfall total was 1391 hours, which is 99% of the 1991-2020 average. For Suffolk, temperatures were at the average, rainfall 85- 95% and sunshine 90- 95% of the 1991- 2020 average - so a little drier and duller than the UK average.

2021 opened with the coldest January since 2010 and was followed by a bitter February (the lowest temperature recorded since 1955, in Scotland, was -23°C) bringing snow and strong winds, with Storm Darcy being the standout storm of the season. Overall, winter was colder and wetter than normal.

Following this cold start, March continued the pattern until a warm spell arose late in the month, producing highs of up to 24.5°C for a few days before a return to colder weather. April was the sunniest on record but accompanied by chill winds which kept daytime temperatures below the minimum flight temperature for almost all butterflies and night temperatures were often below zero. In fact, April produced the highest number

of air frosts for at least 60 years. The weather became milder in May with fewer frosts and higher daytime temperatures. However, it was a cloudy and often rainy month, the fourth wettest May. Spring was ultimately a cool season, 1.0°C below average temperatures but also sunny.

Summer was the ninth warmest on record although the UK was divided north-west and south-east with regards to this, the north-west enjoying the sunnier and warmer weather and the south-east being cloudier and wetter than typical. Suffolk seems to have straddled the line and had a fair amount of warmer weather but was also refreshed by some of the rain coming north. July produced a heatwave and some heavy rain. Some unusual weather patterns resulted in the first ever named July storm, Storm Evert, with high winds and heavy rain battering butterflies during peak flight season.

Autumn was again warm compared to other years, the third warmest on record. Overall, it was also a wet autumn, but this was largely due to two particularly rainy days in late October, one of which was record breaking (Cumbria recorded over 200mm rain on each of those days).

3. Recording and Geographic coverage

The Butterflies for the New Millennium (BNM) recording scheme remains the key focus for general distribution and numbers of butterflies. 2021 is the second year of the current five year (2020-2024) recording period. In total, with a few late submissions, 36,155 records were received for 2021 and butterflies were recorded from 738 county tetrads (2km x 2km squares), representing 67% county coverage equating to an average 9.7 species per tetrad. Even allowing for further late additions to the 2021 dataset, this is lower than the previous year. A tentative explanation for this is the effect of successive UK national and local/ tiered lockdowns due to coronavirus and the trend towards staying local, even when restrictions were lifted.

4. Residents, gains and losses

Annex A tabulates the most common butterfly species by tetrads recorded in, from least to most. The end column shows the percent change over the previous year. This reveals that in 2021 there were more losers than winners. This is to be expected when the total number of tetrads surveyed is considered, down from 798 in 2020 to 738 in 2021 (92.5%). Suffolk BAP species will be dealt with in section 6. *Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) - Species*. Blues and hairstreaks fared the worst with most species being recorded at less than 70% of their 2020 levels. Our three naturally occurring hairstreaks would all seem to have had poor years. **Green hairstreak** was recorded in just 44% of squares compared to 2020. **Purple hairstreak** didn't fare much better at 46% and **White-letter hairstreak** was recorded in 60% of squares relative to 2020. The cold spring may explain the Green hairstreak figure. Many butterflies were deterred from flying during the cold April and mild but overcast May. Recorders may have been deterred by the inclement weather too. The long-term effect of Covid and successive lockdowns led to many people staying local and recording more from gardens and local parks, even after restrictions were lifted. Consequently, wilder areas may have been recorded less and these are precisely the type of site where many hairstreaks and blues will be found.

Grassland specialists such as **Browns and Skippers** seem to have declined except the **Wall brown**. The hot spell in summer 2020 left many grassy areas withered by drought. Any young larvae hatching would have been faced with a shortage of green grass. Wall brown are a heat loving species and, in Suffolk, are recorded from coastal marshes. These tend to retain soil moisture well even in drought and a plentiful supply of grass is available throughout the year. A similar picture emerges with the skippers. **Essex skipper** and **Large skipper** were reported at 57% and 54% of 2020 values respectively. **Small skipper** did slightly better at 64%. All grassland skippers fared worse than the Browns and the annual

cutting of many areas such as parks, cemeteries and churchyards may be a contributing factor to this. 'Sm-essex' skippers (Small/Essex) remain in the grass sheath over winter as developed first instar larvae and when cut, it will either be carried off site for hay or be blown by the wind - larval survival rates are bound to be low. **The Dingy skipper** was reported at only 50% of 2020 figures. Here the picture is complex because the butterfly was already rare in Suffolk and has declined further, yet it inhabits rural areas and would have been more under-recorded from people staying local as a result. There is hope not only from this argument but from recent survey work that the Dingy skipper can maintain its hold in Suffolk. This and all BAP species are dealt with further in section

4a. Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) - Species.

Only three species were recorded at greater levels than in 2020, these were **Clouded yellow** (+7%), **Purple emperor** (+24%) and **Painted lady** (+90%). Clouded yellow and Painted lady are both migrants and their numbers vary considerably from one year to another. The increase in Purple emperor records is welcome and may be significant. Theberton wood is a known site for this species but in 2021 it was closed for a long time by Forestry England for management which meant many Purple emperor larvae and pupae would have been killed in tree clearance and those which survived to adulthood would not have been recorded. The 24% increase seems all the better with this in consideration. Two species remained unchanged, **Chalkhill blue** (2 squares) and **Large tortoiseshell** (4 squares) both being recorded from the same number of tetrads as in the previous year. This is not statistically significant, however, since both species were reported from just a few squares in each year.

The **Small tortoiseshell** has declined nationally by 79% since 1976. This has eased somewhat in recent years (44% since 2002 and 27% since 2012). Recent research has shown evidence

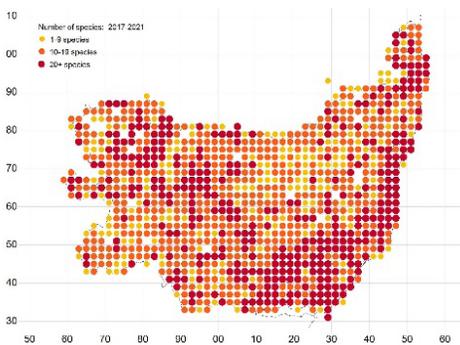
that the species is moving toward single broods despite global warming. The reason speculated is that *Sturmia bella*, the parasitoid tachinid fly that came from mainland Europe and has reduced the population considerably since the 1980s, is mainly active in the summer months. Small tortoiseshell populations which are single brooded escape this form of mortality and recover. If this theory is applied to Suffolk, it is possible that this species will increase once more to pre- 1980s levels.



Orange-tip ovipositing

5. Trends

The 2017- 2021 rolling 5- year figures are slightly down on the previous figures for 2016- 2020, mainly because of the decrease in recording in 2021. A total of 1056 tetrads were recorded from with an average 16.2 species per tetrad. This is almost the same as the previous year which was an all- time high for recording and species density.



Five- year rolling figures (2017- 2021 inclusive)



Female Gatekeeper nectaring on yarrow in Lowestoft north cemetery

6. Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) – Priority Species

Suffolk hosts seven species of butterfly that are listed as UK BAP priority species. In alphabetical order, these are Dingy skipper, Grayling, Silver-studded blue, Small heath, White admiral and White-letter hairstreak. They are dealt with individually here.

The first sighting of **Dingy skipper** was on 9th May and the last sighting on 14th June. Despite the cool spring, the species emerged only two days later than in 2020. It remained on the wing much later though (last sighting on 23rd May in 2020). This very localised butterfly is at real risk of extinction in Suffolk. It was recorded from six squares, up from four in 2020 but this is not the complete picture. In the King’s Forest during 2021, sightings have reduced from six squares in 2019 to four in 2020 and now to two squares in 2021. Accounts were received that Forestry England had undertaken some extensive work in the rides where this delightful species tends to be found in, so much so that the habitat was no longer suitable. In the next year or two the situation may revert as the habitat recovers. The forest is a large mosaic of micro- habitats, and the butterfly seems able to seek out new areas of suitable habitat. Encouraging news has been

received from 2022 surveys regarding this species and the analysis of those ongoing surveys will be presented in the 2022 Report. A further four sightings were seen beyond the forest area in previously unrecorded sites – these are dealt with in section 9. Releases. Nationally, the species showed a -13% (fall) in numbers from 2020, a 6% (gain) in the ten-year trend and a -6% (fall) in the UK BMS 1976- 2021 trend series.

The first **Grayling** was sighted on 11th July and the last one on 17th September. The species was recorded from fewer squares than in 2020 (36 squares compared to 48 in 2020) but most of this reduction comes from single sightings. Overall, it was recorded less frequently compared to 2020 in the east of the county but more in the north- west. The Breckland populations are even more fragile than those on the Sandlings so this is a little bit of good news. The highest count was 40 on 29th August from Upper Hollesley Common. Nationally, the species showed 0% (no change) in numbers from 2020, a -4% (fall) in the ten- year trend and a -71% (fall) in the UK BMS 1976- 2021 trend series.

The first **Silver- studded blue** sighting was on 10th May and the last sighting was on 6th September. It was recorded from 10 squares in 2021, three fewer than the 13 in 2020. In practice, these ‘lost’ squares are adjacent to other squares and almost certainly the butterfly has not lost much territory. Long- term there is doubt over the continued suitability of sites, particularly due to overgrowth of heather and scrub encroachment. Peak numbers were recorded over a two-day period, 1st and 2nd July (88 and 87 at Blaxhall Common and Purdis Heath, respectively). Nationally, the species showed a 2% (gain) in numbers from 2020, a 176% (gain) in the ten- year trend and a 76% (gain) in the UK BMS 1976- 2021 trend series.

The first **Small heath** sighted was on 23rd March and the last one on 4th October. Sightings were continuous but with lower numbers in early August due to broods overlapping. It was

recorded from 153 squares in 2021 compared to 216 in 2020, a decrease of 63 squares. The highest single count was 68 at Cavenham Heath on 12th September. Unlike some BAP species, this species is found across the county albeit in low counts. Numbers do fluctuate from year to year and this is one reason why it is still vulnerable. Highest counts came from sites which are heathland/forestry by type and include Cavenham Heath, King’s Forest, RSPB Minsmere and coastal heath, dunes and marshes. Nationally, the species showed a -17% (fall) in numbers from 2020, a 74% (gain) in the ten- year trend and a -45% (fall) in the UK BMS 1976- 2021 trend series.

The first **White admiral** sighting was on 26th June and the last sighting was on 28th August peak number of sightings around mid- July. It was recorded from 40 squares in 2021 compared to 51 in 2020 (and 58 in 2019), a decline of 11 squares. The peak number seen was 15 on 11th August at RSPB Minsmere on a transect walk. The butterfly appears to be doing well in some locations and increasing whereas in other locations it is declining and becoming locally extinct. This is a complex trend which I cannot go into deeply here. It appears to benefit from global warming and maturing woodland; however, it requires some management of woodland once it is mature and in sites where this is not happening, it is showing signs of decline. Nationally, the species showed a -24% (fall) in numbers from 2020, a 4% (gain) in the ten- year trend and a -24% (fall) in the UK BMS 1976- 2021 trend series.

The first **Wall brown** sighted was on 24th May (first brood) and the last one sighted (second brood) was on the 5th September. Peak numbers were seen on 5th June (11) for the first brood and 15th August (15) for the second brood, both at SWT Carlton Marshes. It was recorded from 22 squares in 2021 compared to 23 in 2020, a decline of only 1 square. The worrying decline of the Wall brown has been linked to its production of a third brood. It’s always had a partial third brood in warmer years but with global warm-

ing this has become the norm and not so partial. Research shows that offspring from this late third brood do not grow large enough in many cases to survive the winter. In 2020 a partial third brood was produced and many worried about the future of colonies, some of which were very small. The first brood of 2021 appeared in late May due to the unseasonably cold spring, a full two weeks later than in 2020. The second brood was also delayed, producing adults from very late July to early September. No third brood was reported, most likely due to the delay experienced by the cold spring. It remains to be seen if there is a benefit in 2022. The picture for 2021 seems complex. The species was recorded in more squares in 2020 but at lower populations. It was recorded in greater numbers in core sites in 2021 but was absent from some squares. Overall, there appears to be more, good than bad news because the species is actually showing signs of increase in certain sites. At this point, I would like to thank Robert Quadling, based at SWT Carlton Marshes, for his commitment in surveying this species. Nationally, the species showed a 20% (gain) in numbers from 2020, a 5% (gain) in the ten- year trend and a -87% (fall) in the UK BMS 1976- 2021 trend series.

The first **White- letter hairstreak** sighting was on 23rd June and peak numbers were seen in late July with the last sighting on 25th August. It was recorded from 27 squares in 2021 compared to 45 in 2020 (and 51 in 2019), a decline of 18 squares. This is an elusive species and even at known sites it can be difficult to observe. It is undoubtedly under- recorded but still appears to be in decline in our county. Many sites recorded in 2020 were not recorded in 2021 yet specimens at new sites were recorded, including a substantial colony in central Lowestoft. Nectaring specimens gave good views on several occasions at both sites. I would like to encourage people to search for this species. The south and east of the county have the least records. Nationally, the species showed a -18% (fall) in numbers from 2020, a 197% (gain) in the ten- year trend and a -78% (fall) in the UK BMS 1976- 2021 trend series.



A male White-letter hairstreak
nectaring on yarrow in Lowestoft Town

7. Migrants

A single **Camberwell beauty** was reported from Beccles in late August and early September. This was probably a truly wild specimen due to the observation of a few others along the east coast, including one in north Norfolk. Our winters are considered to be too mild for adults to successfully hibernate and no follow up sightings have been recorded to my knowledge (up to this date, May 2022).

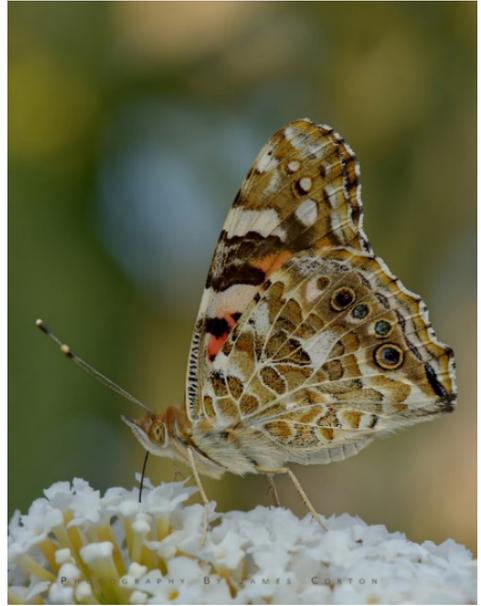
Clouded yellow vary in number from year to year with occasional 'bumper years.' 2021 was an average year but produced a number of specimens all along our coastline, including 18 at Carlton Marshes. Similar numbers were recorded from Landguard Point and the Hollesley area. Further inland there were fewer sightings, mostly singletons from the west and south- west of the

county. The first sightings were in mid- July and sightings continued into the first week of November, peaking in the third week of September.

Four sites recorded **Large tortoiseshell** in 2021, three on the coast, unsurprisingly (Felixstowe, Snape and Eastbridge areas), and one inland near Hadleigh. A single specimen was seen in early April and this was probably a post-hibernation specimen rather than a migrant. Excitement has been growing in recent years due to the number of spring sightings and confirmed breeding of this species on the south coast. It is some way from being confirmed as a permanent UK breeding species but the increase in numbers bodes well for butterfly watchers, particularly in coastal areas.

2021 was a fairly quiet year for **Painted lady**, certainly compared to the last 'Painted lady year' of 2019. It was recorded throughout the county but at significantly lower numbers than its compatriot migrant, the **Red admiral**. The first wave of specimens arrived in the second week of May with simultaneous records being received from Felixstowe up to Gunton (Lowestoft) on the same day. Their offspring and subsequent waves of immigrants produced the main summer population in early to mid- August. Sightings continued into late October when those which had not migrated south would have been killed by the start of winter storms and colder night temperatures.

Evidence suggests that in most years a few Red admiral hibernate and the March and April specimens reported in 2021 were most likely post- hibernation. A steady but slow influx of migrants occurred from May through into summer compared to the noticeable wave of Painted lady. A steep rise in sightings in early August is probably a mix of UK bred specimens and further migrants. Sightings continued into November when they entered hibernation or else had migrated south.



Painted lady nectaring on buddleia

8. Other notable species

Here I will limit myself to Brimstone, Chalkhill Blue and Southern small white.

The Buckthorn project for **Brimstone** has been run for over twenty years now, giving time for planted bushes to mature. Some records of breeding have already been received and this must only boost the populations of Brimstone butterflies in urban and rural areas where few buckthorns were growing naturally. I have noticed more Brimstone flying in Lowestoft and surrounds than 15- 20 years ago. An added benefit to planting buckthorn is that it hosts Holly blue larvae too, as well as a number of moth species, such as Emeralds and Oak eggar. More information on the Buckthorn project can be found on the BC Suffolk website.

No **Chalkhill blue** reports were received from the west of the county in 2021 but there is anecdotal evidence that a colony is in existence on the Suffolk side of the border with Cambridgeshire.

With the lifting of all Covid restrictions, it will be good to establish the strength of our Suffolk populations. There is also a report of a new colony in the north of the county which is most likely a release. This location is also being kept secret, partly because it is on private ground and partly to protect what may be only a small colony. The habitat appears suitable and the foodplant is present so this colony may become established. A singleton was observed in Landseer Park in July, the nearest known colonies are many miles away near the Cambridgeshire/Suffolk border and this sighting is being treated as a release in section 9. *Releases.*

The **Southern small white** is a species subject to much recent scientific study and has caught the attention of European butterfly enthusiasts due to its rapid movement northwards through Europe (now known to be due to a change of foodplant rather than global warming). It is now found in Holland and France in coastal localities, sometimes in large numbers, and since many of our migrants come from the south and east many people were expecting to see a new species added to the UK list in 2021. This did not happen. Reasons speculated include unfavourable winds and temperatures and the difficulty in separating this species from related white butterflies. To add to the difficulty, it is a variable species, not only from brood to brood but within each brood. It will take careful examination to positively identify this species. That stated, it is surely only a matter of time before this species colonises Britain. Suffolk is one of the most likely counties to record this species first, so it is worth observing coastal sites in particular.

9. Releases

This section deals with probable and confirmed released populations even if there are naturally occurring populations elsewhere in the county. For example, both Chalkhill blue and Dingy

skipper are recorded from naturally occurring populations in Suffolk but releases elsewhere in the county are dealt with here.

The **Brown hairstreak** is still present at Piper's Vale and Belstead Brook areas of Ipswich. It has been recorded as eggs during winter counts and in late summer as adults emerge. The first adult record was on 13th August and the last on 3rd September, with a peak count of four adults on 18th August. It may be under-recorded as, like many hairstreaks, it is elusive. There is no evidence that it is being "topped up" but any information on this or other release is always welcome.

A single **Chalkhill blue** was observed in Landseer Park on 25th July. No other record exists from the site, even though Landseer is regularly visited by butterfly enthusiasts. It is likely a single specimen released and either dispersed from the site or was predated before any other recorders could see it. There is also evidence that another site in the north of the county has been used as a release site. This will be monitored and reported on.

Two records were received for **Dark green fritillary**, one in Ipswich and one in the north-west of the county, both singletons, on 9th and 16th July. It is possible the Ipswich sighting was an offspring of those seen in 2020 at Landseer Park. Unless "topped up" it is unlikely that the species will gain a foothold in the area.

Four individual **Dingy skippers** were sighted well outside the King's Forest region, in the Ipswich area (2) and west of Ipswich (1) as well as to the north of Thetford forest (1). The Ipswich sightings (3) are undoubtedly releases since this species is not known to migrate or disperse large distances. Such small numbers are also unlikely to breed successfully, even if suitable habitat is available.

A record was received of two **Marsh fritillaries** on 5th June in the north of the county. Follow up enquiries confirm this species and suggest a deliberate introduction to a site which has larval foodplant. There is evidence that this species has bred on the site in 2021 but, as always, there is doubt over the viability of a colony introduced in this way. Monitoring of the site in 2022 will continue to assess the population. The site details are being withheld for now due to the sensitive nature of the habitat and its flora and fauna i.e. high levels of footfall could damage the site.

Marbled white was again reported from Landseer Park and a nearby site, Piper's Vale at Orwell Country Park. The first record was on 23rd June and the last record on 19th August, with a peak count of eight on 21st July. Recorded since 2008, there is anecdotal evidence that the species is "topped up", casting doubt over the viability of this population.

A total of 34 **Small blue** sightings were recorded from Landseer Park in Ipswich from 27th May to 13th July, however, this number almost certainly contains duplicate records from people using more than one method of recording – something to be reviewed for the next reporting season. The peak number was five, seen on 1st June. The July sightings represent a very small second brood, the first brood having finished in mid- June.

10. Distribution maps and flight charts

The full set will be available along with late records and data imports in an extended report to be published by Suffolk Naturalist Society (SNS) in the New Year.

11. UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UK-BMS)

Transects are highly effective at monitoring habitat specialist butterflies and their habitats. They are resource intensive surveys, demanding

commitment and consistency of approach from the surveyor but provide a uniquely clear view of historical and emerging trends in butterfly populations. The 2021 results from transects walked in Suffolk have been included in the database. These include transects in areas where Suffolk BAP species occur, such as RSPB Minsmere (Grayling, Silver-studded blue, Small heath, White admiral and White-letter hairstreak) and SWT Carlton Marshes (Small heath and Wall brown) which, between them, cover all but one BAP species (Dingy skipper).

12. Wider Countryside Butterfly Scheme (WCBS)

The WCBS complements transect recording on semi-natural habitat and forms part of an integrated approach to butterfly monitoring through the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS). It runs as a partnership between Butterfly Conservation, the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology (CEH) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC). The scheme targets common and widespread butterflies by selecting random 1km tetrads which are then subject to a minimum of two visits, ideally in July and August.

The records generated from the scheme are included in the Suffolk dataset and represent a significant contribution both in terms of record numbers and also in respect of the locations involved. There are always WCBS squares available for adoption in Suffolk and if you are interested in getting involved with butterfly surveys then please consider this. The Suffolk coordinator, Twm Wade, would be pleased to hear from anyone interested.

13. Summary of Annexes

All the annexes not published here will be available in the forthcoming full report to be published by SNS.

The Suffolk Argus

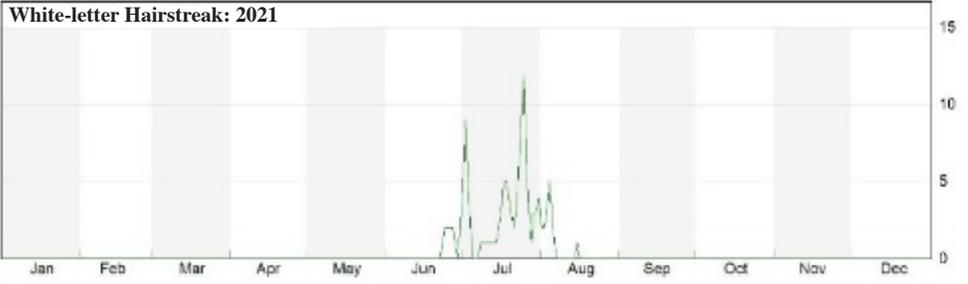
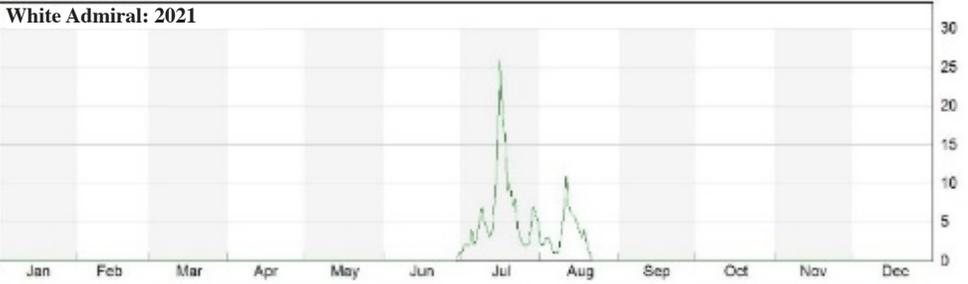
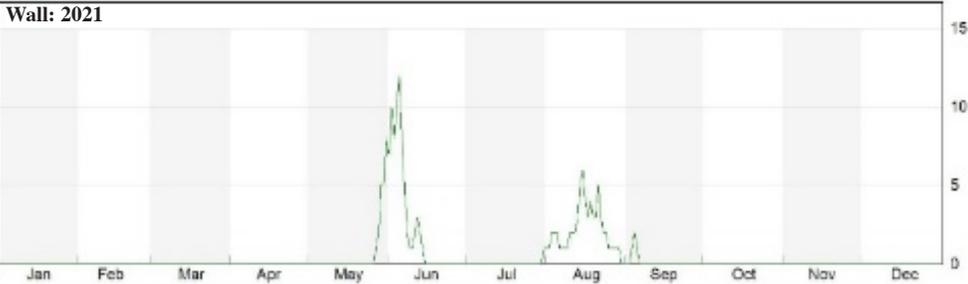
Annex A – Scarcity for 37 species seen in Suffolk in 2021

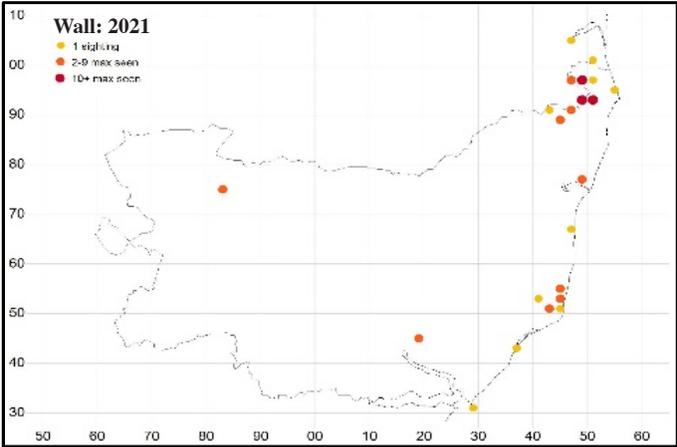
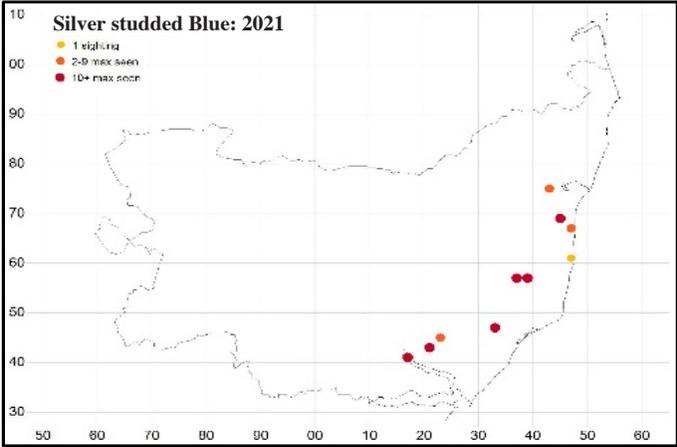
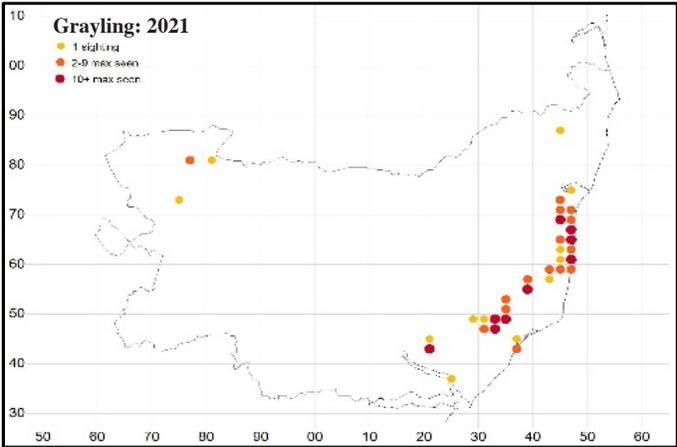
% of 798 Tetrads	2020 Tetrads	Species	2021 Tetrads	% of 738 Tetrads	Change
N/A	N/A	Camberwell Beauty	1	0.14	N/A
0.3	3	Swallowtail	1	0.14	0.33
0.2	2	Chalkhill Blue	2	0.27	1.00
0.5	4	Dingy Skipper	2	0.27	0.50
0.5	4	Large Tortoiseshell	4	0.54	1.00
1.6	13	Silver-studded Blue	10	1.36	0.77
2.1	17	Purple Emperor	21	2.85	1.24
2.8	23	Wall Brown	22	2.98	0.96
5.6	45	White-letter Hairstreak	27	3.66	0.60
3.7	30	Clouded Yellow	32	4.34	1.07
9.7	78	Green Hairstreak	34	4.61	0.44
6.0	48	Grayling	36	4.88	0.75
6.3	51	White Admiral	40	5.42	0.78
11.4	91	Silver-washed Fritillary	56	7.59	0.62
16.9	135	Purple Hairstreak	62	8.40	0.46
17.5	140	Essex Skipper	80	10.84	0.57
21.8	174	Brown Argus	88	11.92	0.51
24.5	196	Large Skipper	106	14.36	0.54
24.0	192	Small Skipper	122	16.53	0.64
27.0	216	Small Heath	153	20.73	0.71
43.7	349	Holly Blue	186	25.20	0.53
37.9	303	Orange-tip	195	26.42	0.64
43.2	345	Common Blue	198	26.83	0.57
41.6	332	Brimstone	257	34.82	0.77
50.1	400	Speckled Wood	269	36.45	0.67
45.1	360	Small Copper	270	36.59	0.75
49.4	395	Green-veined White	278	37.67	0.70
60.2	481	Comma	327	44.31	0.68
56.3	450	Small Tortoiseshell	338	45.80	0.75
23.1	185	Painted Lady	352	47.70	1.90
52.6	420	Ringlet	358	48.51	0.85
72.5	579	Gatekeeper	492	66.67	0.85
84.8	677	Peacock	502	68.02	0.74
77.1	616	Meadow Brown	519	70.33	0.84
83.4	666	Small White	558	75.61	0.84
82.7	660	Large White	563	76.29	0.85
76.9	614	Red Admiral	599	81.17	0.98

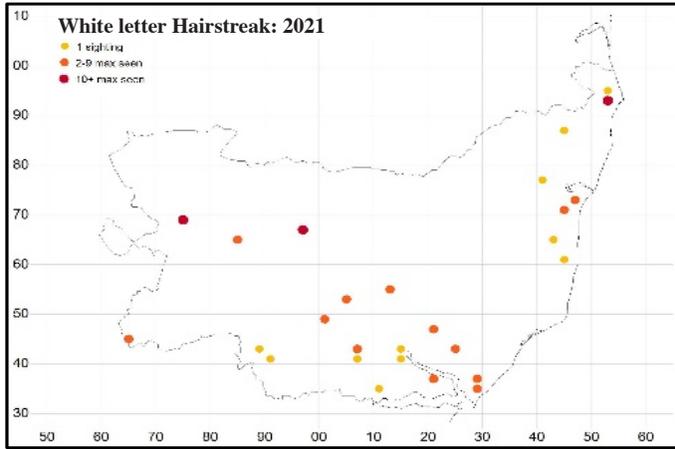
Note 1: Brown Hairstreak, Small Blue, Dark Green Fritillary & Marbled White not included (releases)

Note 2: Dingy Skipper sightings from King’s Forest area only (others assumed to be releases)

Note 3: Change column is % change compared to previous year’s value







Marsh fritillary at an undisclosed site in north Suffolk

END OF BUTTERFLY REPORT 2021 (SUMMARY)

Smile!

Butterfly Conservation, recently received a quarterly donation of **£398.57** 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: **£2,870.22** to Butterfly Conservation

The Gatekeeper

By Ian Whybrow

By the path up to the summerhouse
a squadron of gatekeepers is provoking
the purple oregano.

Zeus has forbidden them
the nettles, the plummy buddleia
and the fallen apples
just so they can flicker up
in a soft and powdery cloud
as you pass
and shower you with
a summery golden
tickling thrill
to beat Danae's.

‘Since July 2020 I’ve set myself the challenge of writing a poem a day – at least one. Like everyone else, I’ve been inspired by the legendary Captain Tom and would be thrilled if you’d sponsor me. Everything you donate will go to the charity’. Ian.

See www.elizabethslegacyofhope.org providing life-changing prosthetic limbs for children around the world stricken by war, surgery, and accident.



Gatekeeper by Ian Whybrow

Photo Competition: The winners

For the second year running, our Suffolk Branch Photographic competition was held online, due to continued absence of a face-to-face AGM.

We were blessed with a good number of entries, showcasing not only British Butterflies and moths, but also their behaviours too. In fact, two of the top three featured species in copulation.

Our winner for 2022 is Mark Brewster and his wonderful image of Heath Fritillaries, taken at Hockley Wood in Essex. Congratulations Mark.

This year's competition was a closely fought one, with just a couple of votes separating the top three.

Coming a close second was Jane Henderson's lovely image of an Emperor Moth at Westleton Heath. Hot on her heels in third place was Debbie Brown with

a rather fortuitous image of two Wall Browns in copulation.

On behalf of the branch, I would like to thank everyone for their entries and would urge everyone to get out with their cameras in 2022. Who knows the next star of our photographic competition, could be you?

See website for the 2022 competition.



1st Place - Heath Fritillary by Mark Brewster



2nd place - Emperor moth by Jane Henderson



Wall Browns by Debbie Broom

Events Report

08/05/22 Pakenham Water Mill Wildlife Day, Trevor Goodfellow.

A warm sunny day brought lots of visitors to see attractions such as SWT, BTO, Bat Group, Beekeepers, Hedgehog helpers and many other stalls including our BC Suffolk Group stand. The BTO guy spotted a Green Hairstreak and rushed towards it as it settled on a straw bale. It was encouraging that so many young children could identify some of the butterflies featured on the stand and an artist who has started painting butterflies was very keen to join BC. Brownies entertained us with a maypole dance and folk

music by talented singer/guitarist Daisy of ‘The Floozies’. Bees and butterflies were attracted to the plants on the Langham Walled Garden plant stall run by Steve and Catherine.

11/9/22 Langham Walled Garden Harvest Fair: We have been invited to have a stall to represent BC. A small fee applies but anyone interested in doing this should contact Lainey at lwgnursery1@gmail.com or ring her or Catherine on 07840 014858 or 07908 589222. Please contact a committee member first.



A close look for an Adonis Blue with a seeing eye

for Trevor Goodfellow by Ian Whybrow

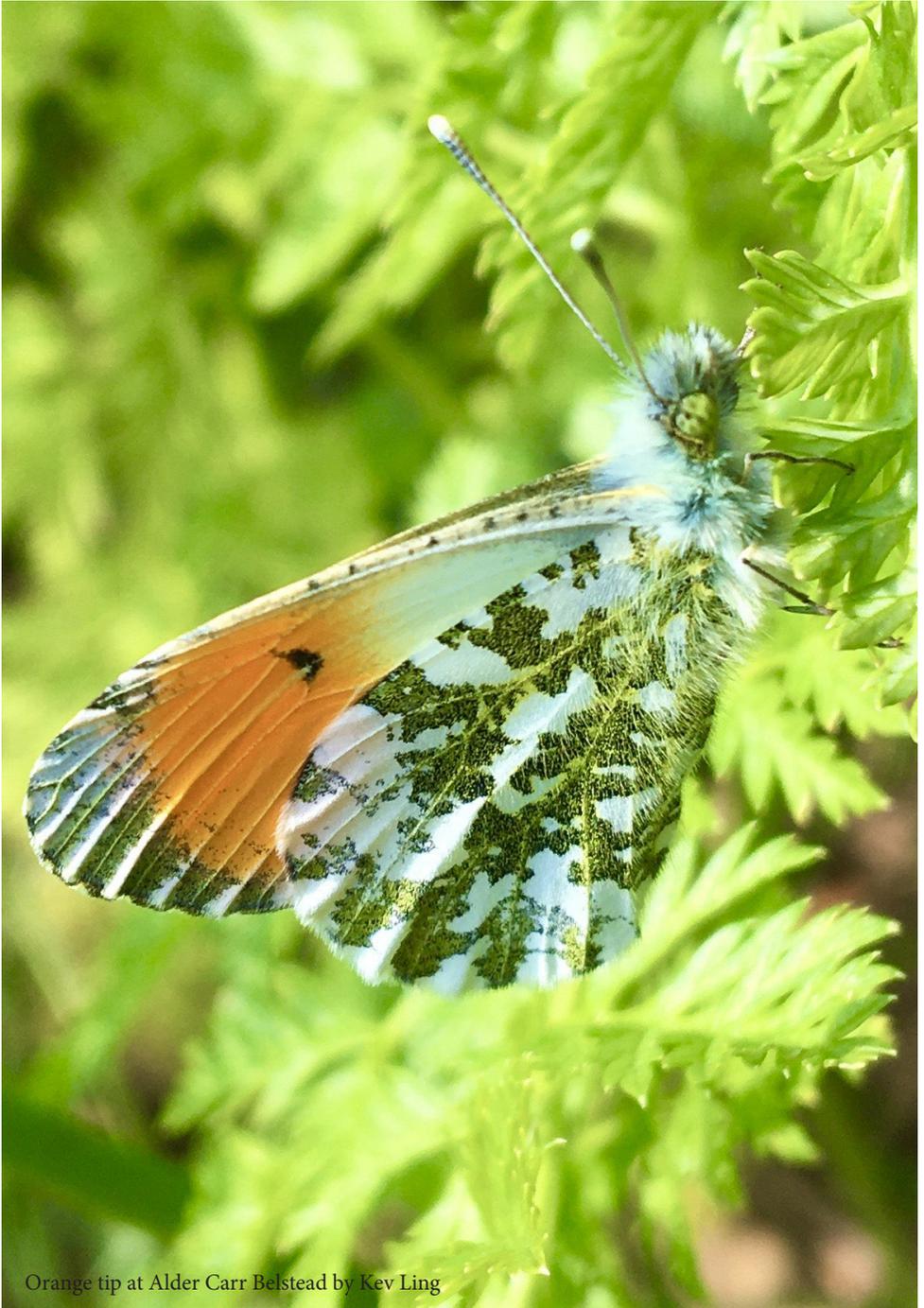
At Devil’s Dyke, the racecourse end,
the Watered Gallop on one side, Newmarket
Stud on the other

we meet our lepidopterist friend
properly long lensed and booted up
for the endeavour.

The sun’s gone in, the wind blows through,
too strong for any kind of resident in blue
to perch or hover

but we hear willow warbler and whitethroat
and he points out a pasqueflower, caught
surfacing from under cover.

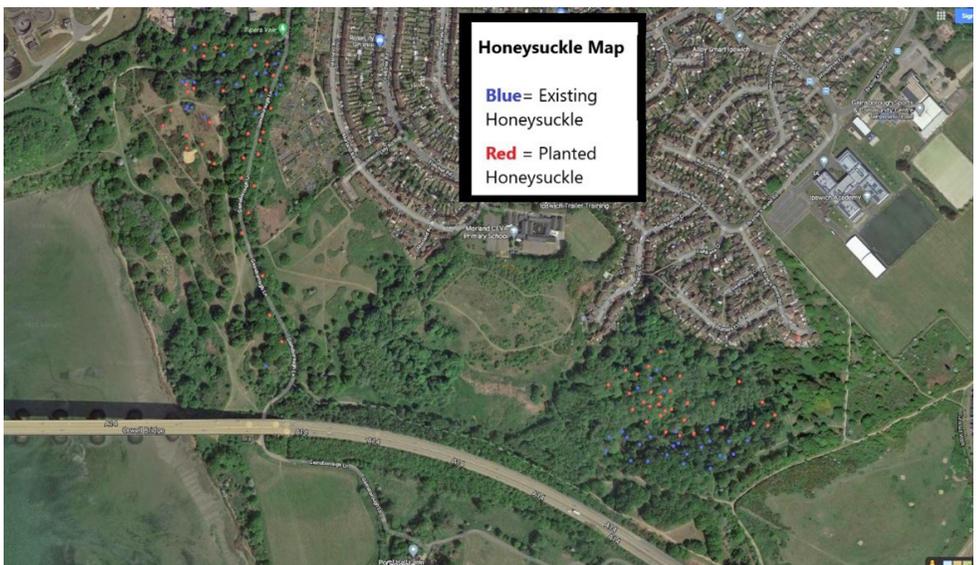
We’re looking now. Another little purple knot -
of bugle? – no, nor heather, as we thought.
Milkwort. Our first. Thanks, Trevor.



Orange tip at Alder Carr Belstead by Kev Ling



Honeysuckle locations Piper's Vale by David Dowding



Honeysuckle locations Orwell Country Park by David Dowding