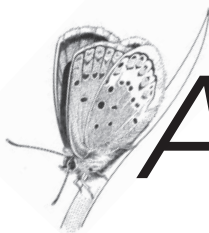




**Butterfly
Conservation**

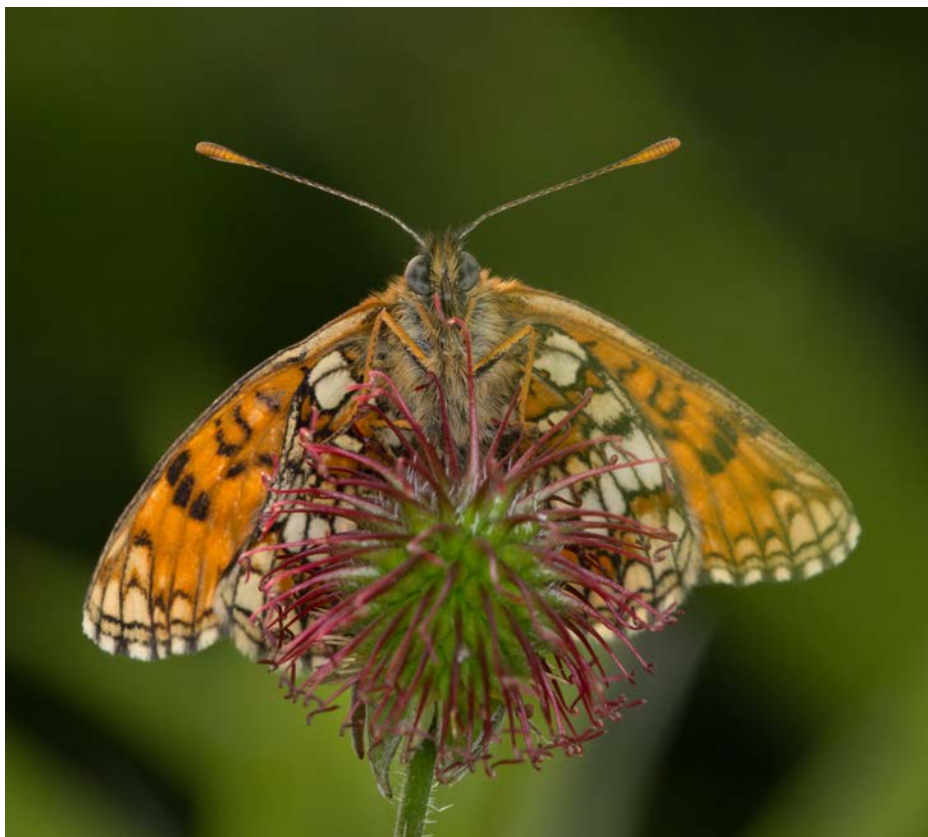
Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

The **Suffolk** *Argus*



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

Heath Fritillary, Hockley Wood, Essex (see p14) photo Liz Cutting www.lizcuttingphotos.com





Silver-washed Fritillary *Argynnis paphia* form *valezina*
Bonny Wood 2015 photo Trevor Goodfellow



Hummingbird Hawk-moth egg on
Red Valerian
See Mike Dean's 'Postscript' page 9



'Mystery caterpillar identified
through the internet'
See David Basham article page 11

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Editorial

Peter Maddison

In late September I returned from County Durham where, on flowering Knapweed and Thistle in a disused railway cutting, I had been watching Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock and even rather tired Meadow Browns nectaring. Here in Suffolk, Peacock had gone into hibernation and the butterfly season seemed to be more or less over. No doubt in a spell of fine weather a scattering of butterflies will continue to be seen and Red Admiral will be an elegant October visitor to flowering ivy.

The end of the season is marked by our AGM. This year it was held at Ixworth and both East and West Suffolk members attended in good numbers. Committee members gave overviews of our finances, membership – read some impressive figures on page 5 – and the 2015 butterfly year. Presentations followed on the Purdis Heath Project, enhanced by a DVD showing the year's work, the Yellow-legged Tortoiseshell invasion of 2014 and How to id. Skippers. For the first time a Photographic Competition was held and in the UK Butterfly class Liz Cutting and Cara Philips took 1st and 2nd place respectively. In the Butterfly Photographed Abroad class Ed Hutchings won both 1st and 2nd place. In the Video Class Twm Wade was the only entrant - he won! Congratulations to the winners and thanks to all who entered to make this a competition of high quality photos.

Mike Dean, who after 10 years in the Chair, stood down this year and a presentation was made to him by Rob Parker. Peter Maddison (Argus Editor for the time being but not much longer!) was elected as the new Chair, the Committee which included two additional members, David Basham and David Dowding, was elected nem con. We will miss Mike's cheery and relaxed way of conducting our meetings and we wish

him well in his national position as the Vice Chairman of Butterfly Conservation.

When County Recorder Bill Stone gave an overview of the season he quipped that he had received only 2,000 butterfly records so far this year. There's some way to go before he reaches the 26,000 records that he received in total in 2014. Bill expects a busy autumn! Don't forget to send your records to him as soon as possible and preferably no later than 30th November.

The Committee is in the process of planning Events for 2016 and these will be posted on the website early in the new year, earlier than the printed Events Programme card is likely to be available.

Work parties will take place on Purdis Heath on the 1st Saturday of each month throughout the winter. Contact Julian Dowding or Helen Saunders (Contacts page) for more information. Also within the radius of the Ipswich Heaths Project, conservation work continues at Martlesham Heath on the 2nd Sunday of the month. Contact Phil Smith phil.j.smith@btinternet.com or 01473 625630.

We might have come to the end of our butterfly year but that doesn't entirely mean time off, feet up in front of the fire and good butterfly books to hand (Peter Marren's *Rainbow Dust: Three Centuries of Delight in British Butterflies* and Matthew Oates' *In Pursuit of Butterflies: A Fifty-year Affair* are great reads). It is the start of the new season! Leaves will soon have fallen and that will be the time to search for hairstreak eggs. White-letter Hairstreak on elms both Wych and hedgerow trees, and Purple Hairstreak eggs on oak. Start recording early, there's a good chance new colonies will be found.

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Butterfly Conservation

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New Members

Susan Sidle, Branch Membership Secretary

The following new members are warmly welcomed to the Suffolk Branch

Mrs B & Mr C Black , Newmarket

Mr M Jones, Stradishall

Mrs V & Mr T Cork & Family, Newmarket

Mrs D Kearsley, Gislingham

Ms R Dalziel, Framlingham

Mr A King, Ipswich

Mrs N Dickson, Great Livermere

Mr D Kissinger, Corton

Mr R Foulkes & Miss H Kwasnyczka, Bury St Edmunds

Mr J Myers, Pakenham

Mr C & Mrs A Francis , Great Waldingfield

Mr D & Mrs P Poole , Tostock

Mrs D & Mr J Franklyn-Bray & Family, Bungay

Mr R Quadling, Lowestoft

Mrs R J Gibbs & Family, Freckenham

Mrs H Stollery, Ipswich

Mrs J & Dr J Greenacre & Family, Pakefield

Mr M & Mrs L Turner , Woodbridge

Mrs J N Henderson, Chattisham

Mrs L Welham, Needham Market

Mr A Hinchliffe, Ipswich

Mr J & Mrs J Wright & Family, Rushmere St Andrew

In addition to Butterfly Conservation's Welcome Pack, all new members (including those just new to Suffolk branch) should have received a Welcome Letter from me as Membership Secretary by email or through the post. If you don't think you have received your branch Welcome Letter, please let me know.

We extend an especially warm welcome to our three new family members.

Suffolk Branch currently has 478 household members, which means that as a branch we have doubled in size over the last five years. This is wonderful news for Suffolk's butterflies and moths so thank you very much for your support.

Contact details for Susan Sidle: susansidle361@gmail.com or 01379 643665.

Do we have your email address?

Occasionally we would like to communicate information to members at short notice eg event reminders and changes to events.

It would help if we had your email address. Please email your name to myemail@suffolkbutterflies.org.uk using your normal email address and 'email address' as the subject. This can then be added to our membership list.

Editorial copy date

Contributions for the next edition of our newsletter are very welcome and should be sent to the Editor, Peter Maddison, no later than **17th Jan 2016**.

Any piece of writing considered to be of interest will be published and we also welcome line drawings, prints

and photographs.

Contributions (preferably electronic) can be sent to the address on the Contacts page or by email to: pmaddison@yahoo.co.uk

Suffolk's Improving Butterfly Diversity.

Rob Parker

During the Millennium Survey (1995-1999) we used Richard Stewart's recording sheet, which featured 32 species, these being residents, regular migrants & the Swallowtail, an irregular vagrant. Although the **Queen of Spain Fritillary** put in an unexpected appearance during the survey, and seemed to breed on the east coast for a few years, we kept the familiar recording sheet into the new millennium and the Queen of Spain never made it to the sheet as it faded. It has only been seen twice since I took over from Richard as County Recorder at the end of the 2002 season. I printed a large stock of recording sheets and felt that Suffolk's species were set in stone for some years to come.

Looking back, I am pleased to report a much more interesting period, as unexpected arrivals drifted in to Suffolk, leaving us wondering whether they were here to stay.

Camberwell Beauty found its way across the North Sea in small numbers in 2002, 2003 and 2004, and then in good numbers in 2006, when we had a proper immigration with 30 definite sightings spread across the county. Whether they would survive the winter was answered in the spring of 2007, when 7 appeared. Whether they would meet and mate was the next question, but only 3 more were detected in the rest of that season. In 2008, just 2 were found, with the same numbers showing up in 2009 and 2010. There have been no more since then, but it is not quite clear what they did not like about our climate.

Purple Emperor was the subject of clandestine releases in Theberton Wood from 2000, and eventually breeding took

place and the releaser made their presence public in 2005. The colony is well monitored and appears to be self-sustaining or better. By 2009, sightings at Minsmere (10 miles from Theberton) and at North Warren in 2011 suggested they were spreading their wings, although they were seen only at Theberton in 2012. The following year, two enthusiasts from the Hertfordshire Branch working on a long-term study of the species found them flying close to the Cambs border, and by 2015 had identified them in 4 Suffolk tetrads. The belief here is that *iris* has survived at very low population densities, unconnected with the Theberton releases.

Large Tortoiseshell is a species that was breeding in Suffolk relatively recently, but has been considered extinct here since about 1956. Nonetheless, it continued to produce one or two sightings every couple of years until 2008. These were probably immigrants, quite possibly coming into Felixstowe amongst a cargo of timber from Scandinavia. After a 5 year gap, one singleton turned up in 2014, so we can consider it a sporadic vagrant.

Scarce Tortoiseshell, or the Yellow-legged Tortoiseshell, hitherto a resident of Central and Eastern Europe, made a remarkable invasion of the East of England in 2014, and at least 2 alighted in Suffolk. Like the Large Tortoiseshell, it hibernates, and there were 5 ex-hibernation sightings in UK in spring 2015. One was at Felixstowe and two were seen together at North Warren, neither locality having had a 2014 sighting. It would appear that the density of the immigrants was probably insufficient to result in pairings anywhere in UK, so this

could be a once-in-a century occurrence. But who knows? Their numbers are increasing in Sweden, and we may see them again (please!).

Painted Lady is a regular migrant, and is on the original list of 32. Nonetheless, the outstandingly strong immigration which took place in 2009 deserves a mention here. Many bred here and some overwintered, but they have not become true residents.

Silver-washed Fritillary, absent since 1969, had a general expansion of its UK range in 2006, with 3 singles reaching Suffolk. After a gap of 2 years, 3 were found in a private wood near Stowmarket, and 2009 marked the beginning of its breeding in Suffolk. It has been seen every year since then in an increasing number of woods right across the county; a very welcome natural spread of an attractive large species. In 2014, we had 111 sightings in 33 Suffolk tetrads.

Dark Green Fritillary is resident in Norfolk, and occasionally strays are found crossing the border. There was one in 2006 and 2 in 2011. It is now apparently well established along the Devil's Dyke in Cambridgeshire, so we should continue to see it occasionally along that border too.

Long-tailed Blue is common on the continent and uses beans as its larval host plant. It is a small butterfly, yet has strong migratory tendencies. Singles were found in 2006, 2009, 2010 and 2011, but it was unclear whether they were genuine immigrants, as there are well-documented accounts of their larvae and pupae turning up in good health in packets of fresh beans imported from Kenya and Spain. In 2012 there were widespread wild migrants arriving all over the UK. In Suffolk, we had at least 5, these being a mix of migrants

which laid eggs on sweet pea, and, a few weeks later, their progeny.

Marbled White has been gently expanding its UK range towards Suffolk over the last decade, getting closer in Essex, and becoming common along the chalk of the Devil's Dyke in Cambs. Strays made it to Suffolk in 2007, 2009 (3 singles) and then, quite unexpectedly, a handful was found flying in Ipswich's Landseer Park in 2010. It seems probable that these were released in suitable grassland, where they have continued to thrive. Indeed, they appear to have spread wider than the original park, and may now be colonising in other grassland around Ipswich.

Unlikely Appearances

Heath Fritillary was another mystery arrival in Landseer Park along with the Marbled Whites, but this was a single and has not been seen since.

Wood White does breed in suitable woods in the East of England, but not in any Suffolk woods. Yet a sighting was made in Wolves Wood in 2013. This is being treated as an intentional release. The larval host plant, Meadow Vetchling, does grow in the wood, but not in quantity. It is mentioned here just as an example of how clandestine releases can muddy the water of biological recording.

High Brown Fritillary is one of Britain's rarest declining butterflies, flying only in a few select locations in the west of the country, and without a history of migration. So it was an astonishing surprise when a single turned up at Landguard in 2014. Enquiries established that its population in the Netherlands was occasionally mobile, so it may have been a wild butterfly that crossed the North Sea, although the release of a reared specimen seems more likely.

Chalkhill Blue is another denizen of the Devil's Dyke. It can fly long distances and is prompted to disperse during periods of very hot weather, so it is unsurprising that they are occasionally found elsewhere in Suffolk. As the Devil's Dyke lies outside of Suffolk's biological recording area (VC26), it has long been treated as non-Suffolk, and undeserving of a place on our species list. Singles were noted in 2003 and 2006, but only in 2013 was a breeding colony found on a chalky outcrop in a private SSSI in West Suffolk. The small colony was still healthy at the time of writing (September 2015), and long may it remain so.

Brown Hairstreak was present from 2007, but went unreported until 2015's surprise announcement of a breeding colony close to Ipswich. It is about a hundred miles from its better-known localities in the south of England, so we are left wondering whether it was the subject of a clandestine release, or has survived undetected for 50 years. Let us hope that it will continue to flourish now that it is no longer a secret.

Exotic Species.

During the same period, a number of exotic species made unexpected appearances, and are mentioned here for the record. Two North American Tiger Swallowtails were found in the Long Melford area in 2009; these were eventually acknowledged to be insects reared from foreign stock and released nearby. A single Monarch found on the Shotley peninsula in 2011 was more likely to have been an escape from the butterfly house at Jimmy's Farm than a long-distance migrant, as the winds were from the wrong quarter, and no others appeared elsewhere in UK at that time. More recently, Black/ Ozark Swallowtail and Cleopatra put

in unexplained appearances in 2014. These were followed by a Clipper Butterfly and Zebra Longwing in 2015. None of these can be explained as natural.

So the quandary for the County Recorder is which of the above species merit inclusion in the Suffolk recording sheet. If we discount the exotics, and treat the Wood White and the Heath Fritillary as releases that did not survive, that leaves 11 species to consider (listed in bold type above). But only 5 of these are known to be currently breeding in Suffolk, and therefore merit inclusion. Welcome to: Purple Emperor, Silver-washed Fritillary, Marbled White, Chalkhill Blue, and now the Brown Hairstreak. Bill Stone produced a new list for 2015, and this added Purple Emperor, Silver-washed Fritillary, Marbled White, and Chalkhill Blue to the original 32 species, making 36. It looks as if the Brown Hairstreak qualifies too, and next year's recording sheet will need space for 37. When I arrived in time for the Millennium Survey, I would never have dreamt that we would be adding 5 extra breeding species in the next 20 years. In two of these cases, the introduction was at least partly by hand of man.



Chalkhill Blue by Douglas Hammersley

Observations on the egg laying behaviour of the Orange-tip *Anthocharis cardamines*

Mike Dean

One of the veritable joys of being retired (well, from full time employment anyway) is the luxury of sometimes taking time to actually observe things. Instead of the manic dash from A to C via B, one can sit comfortably in the garden reading or admiring the handiwork.

That was what I was doing, indeed, one sunny day this spring when I became aware of a secretive 'white' butterfly that was paying particular attention to some Jack by the Hedge plants, sometimes named Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) which I like to keep going in the border. Closer inspection revealed nothing very rare, just a female Orange-tip inspecting the plants with the obvious aim of laying a few eggs; I'm sure many of you have witnessed the rather skittish behaviour of slightly hovering flight around the flower heads with the occasional touchdown.

What began to intrigue me was that for some of the plants this female made a touchdown with an immediate take off – no hanging around at all. For other plants much more interest was taken and I witnessed at least two eggs actually being laid. So, I had to ask myself why there was such divergent behaviour as all the Garlic Mustard was in full sun on the same soil with the same sheltered aspect. At this point I was forced, sadly, to get out of the chair to examine things at first hand and after a bit of scrutiny, I think that I had found the answer – the plants which seemed not to be attractive to our female were being patrolled by the very common black ant (*Lasius niger*) whilst the attractive plants further away were not. My surmise is that the female Orange-tip immediately sensed the proximity of the ants

and quite understandably, came to the quick conclusion that this particular plant wouldn't serve as the ideal nursery but would serve as an ideal brunch table for the ants! Something had obvious attractions for the ants although no aphids were present as far as I could see, so I'm not really sure what that was.

Maybe some of you readers know that particular answer?

Postscript

I didn't expect to be writing twice in this edition of the Argus but there was something else I observed in the garden at the start of August. This time I wasn't lounging around in the sunshine, but actually doing some tidying up, when I became aware of a Hummingbird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* darting around the flower heads – actually quite a common sight this season. The strange thing was that this time, instead of feeding from the flowers of the Red Valerian *Centranthus ruber*, it was actually inspecting the forming seed heads; suddenly there was an almost imperceptible touch down, a slight curve of the abdomen, and then it was off. I watched this happen nearly a dozen times before the insect left at pace but I had one seed head marked in my head.

As assiduous search yielded a solitary, green and spherical egg (see photograph). I shan't be dead-heading the valerian until season end now to see what develops!

The interesting thing is that valerian is not normally noted as a larval food plant but I do have a strong reminiscence that I read this in a book by L H Newman many years ago when I was a mere lad.

Garden Nectar Plants - Spring

Richard Stewart

Following on from Bill Stone and Peter Maddison in Volume 62, I have analysed all the nectar sources used by butterflies in our north Ipswich garden. Of the 28 species recorded in our garden, all but four have been observed nectaring, the exceptions being Swallowtail, Clouded Yellow, Brown Argus and Small Skipper. Two other plants have just been used for egg-laying and there is also use of soft fruits in autumn. Sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between a distant butterfly landing on a plant and actually feeding from it, but here close focus binoculars such as Papilio have been very helpful.

There is also inclusion of summer species where appropriate and the list is in order of number of species observed nectaring:

Aubretia - a sunlit bed is next to our pond and visible from the nearby kitchen; a longer stretch is towards the back of the garden: Brimstone, three Whites, Orange-tip, Green Hairstreak, Holly Blue, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Comma = 12.

Alternifolia - an early flowering buddleia with long elegant mauve florets: Small White, Green-veined White, Holly Blue, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Comma, Meadow Brown = 7.

Arabis - next to Aubretia in a long border and flowering slightly later, thus giving a long continuity of nectar: Small White, Green-veined White, Orange-tip, Peacock, Comma = 5

Hyacinth - a large sunlit collection under buddleias: Brimstone, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Comma = 4.

Laurel flowers - large plants in both front

and back gardens: Small White, Green Hairstreak, Red Admiral, Peacock = 4.

Cotoneaster flowers - Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Small Tortoiseshell = 3.

Pyracantha flowers - Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell and Holly Blue laying eggs.

The last two are high up so some nectaring species may have been missed.

Mexican Orange Blossom - front garden: Large White, Small White, Common Blue = 3.

In addition other nectar sources in spring, visited by one or two species, are: pink geranium, periwinkle, grape hyacinth, crocus, honesty, dame's violet, plum blossom, daffodil, dandelion, glory of the snow, forget-me-not, purple primula, white bluebell and campanula. This gives a total of 22 spring nectar sources out of a whole year total of 53. Two plants just used for egg laying are garlic mustard (Orange-tip) and buckthorn (Brimstone).

This is not a complete list, just the ones observed in our garden. I am conscious of excluding nettles, the main egg-laying plant for several species. My garden experience with this plant has been largely negative and my conclusion is that you need large sunlit beds plus the species concerned usually prefer to use nettles in the countryside.



Comma by Beryl Johnson

Mystery caterpillar identified through the internet

David Basham

The first weekend in July I was at my allotment in Ipswich when a field neighbour came over to show me a small green caterpillar that he'd found on his Loganberries. Because I'm interested in natural history I can usually have at least an educated guess at identifying most commonly found things and am usually pretty good with our butterflies. I had to admit though in this case that I didn't know what caterpillar he'd found. My instinct led me to think it was a Lycaenidae larva but which one I didn't know. I took some pictures of it resting on my thumb so I could do some research and he put it back where he'd found it on his plot. I had a good look through my Thomas and Lewington butterfly book and was fairly sure that it was Lycaenidae but still couldn't really see what species it was. I had a look online on the species account pages of the UKButterflies website with the same result. I couldn't really see anything that looked quite like it. Wondering how to push the ID on I contacted Bill Stone our county recorder, enclosing the pictures, and asking him if he recognised the caterpillar. He came back to me saying that he didn't really either but suggesting that as a next step I could put the pictures up on the UKButterflies website forum and ask for an ID

there.

I thought this was a good idea so duly registered and next day posted my pictures up. I purposely kept the description reasonably brief so as not to give away what my suspicions were, and so as not to lead anybody to an ID at this stage. I quickly had a number of contributors who gave their opinions which varied between unfeasibly late White-letter Hairstreak, through Holly Blue and to Green Hairstreak. The final consensus was the latter, Green Hairstreak, which was nice as that backed up my own suspicions.

What was also particularly nice, and satisfying, about that was that this larva was found about 3m away from where I'd planted some Birdsfoot Trefoil on the edge of my plot a couple of years ago. Birdsfoot Trefoil is one of the noted Green Hairstreak larval foodplants so it is possible that that is where the larva fed up before wandering off perhaps to find somewhere to pupate. If that is the case I will have attracted breeding Common Blue, Green Hairstreak and Burnet Moth to my inner Ipswich allotment just by planting the right wildflower. Simple to try and very satisfying when it works out.

Oh! My Lady

In honour of the Painted Lady

Twm Wade produced a short video of a Painted Lady alighting, feeding and flying, which he showed at the AGM. The commentary was his poem, which is reproduced below.

Oh! My Lady.
(In honour of the Painted Lady)

Oh! My Lady
So elegantly dressed
With colour combined
With camouflage.

Oh! My Lady
None fairer than you
Please take the nectar
Before you fly.

Oh! My Lady
So elegant and fair
I pray return and
Bring Joy.

The Colonisation Continues

Richard Stewart

In the last 'Argus', number 63, I wrote about seeing a Silver-washed Fritillary at Wheatfen Broad in Norfolk. I didn't expect two further new sightings in 2015 and both were within seven days of each other. The first brought our garden total up to 28 species when, sitting in our dining room at Westerfield Road, Ipswich, I saw an orange butterfly fly past. Size and a more overall orange distinguished it from a Comma and I moved fast enough to identify it as it fed briefly on our buddleia davidii. My wife Marie was upstairs and missed it but obligingly it flew back for a second brief circuit so she had a good view. This was on 15th July and seven days later I was at Sutton Hoo, a good place for butterflies with mixed habitats and proximity to the River Deben. As I was recording butterflies feeding on

bramble along the Pinewood Walk, not far from Chestnut Walk wood, a Silver-washed Fritillary flew past and then fed on bramble. I left a message for the wardens and then consulted Bill Stone's distribution map from 2014. There was actually a record from south Ipswich in 2014 so our garden sighting was little more than two miles away. However the Sutton Hoo sighting is in a big gap for current distribution.

This is a species I never imagined I would see in Suffolk and to record two at new locations within a week was a real bonus. I wrote a letter about the garden sightings, this being published in the East Anglian Daily Times. I pointed out that our garden is only about five hundred yards from Christchurch Park, which has several buddleia bushes, particularly in the butterfly garden.

Moth Trap Building

Trevor Goodfellow

A long time ago when I was on limited income and the cost of a Robinson trap was prohibitive I cobbled up a trap using a plastic bin, a funnel and a Mercury vapour (MV) lamp and lamp-holder, but as the years went by I stopped using it when the bulb blew, and it ended up on the scrapheap.

Recently, I have been using a donated actinic (fluorescent tube) type, ideal for built up areas. It runs off a car battery and has a mild, purple glow. Soon it was time to rebuild a Robinson trap, as I have no neighbours to annoy with the blinding, bright light! As I am still 'careful' with my money, and the price of a new trap now exceeds £200 I

made my plans.

I bought a small plastic bin for about £5, a metal funnel shaped strainer for £2.99, and then popped in to a local sheet plastic supplier (All Plastics, Bury St Edmunds) where I purchased a sheet of flexible clear 'plastic' and an off-cut of thicker acrylic like Perspex. I did however need to know how much I needed so with regards to the clear collar part, I found a template calculator online which allowed me to economically cut to shape two pieces and rivet them together in a way that fitted both the top of the bin and the top rim of the strainer (funnel). The 'fin' part was a bit of bespoke

fettling and assembled with the use of odd aluminium plates and small nuts and bolts, and with some experimentation I decided on a three-fin assembly. I also decided to make a clip on rain cover out of the remaining clear acrylic sheet (all about £6).

A key consideration needed to be the height of the lamp in the funnel part, so I bent a metal strap to hold a ceramic lamp-holder (about £3) in the centre of the funnel with a 50mm hole cut into the bottom.

At first I opted for the simple 125W Eddison screw type Mercury blended lamp (about £4) as this does not require extra electrics such as ballast etc. The down side of this choice is that the lamp gets very hot and therefore will not like any spot of rain and moving it when hot can blow it.

I always had the idea that after a year's usage I would upgrade to full Mercury vapour. My decision to use an ES (screw fitting) lamp holder enabled an easy transition as the MV and MBV fittings are then the same, all I needed was a new lamp and the switch gear which comes at a cost of about £30 - £50 and kits are available online. The idea being that the lamp 'warms up' gradually

as the control gear (ballast) feeds power in gradually. Some familiarity with electrics is advised.

I assembled the ballast gear in a weatherproof box but I then thought, I could plug it in-line at the power point end in the shed where it will be safe. I could also unplug it and re-use the MBV lamp if necessary.

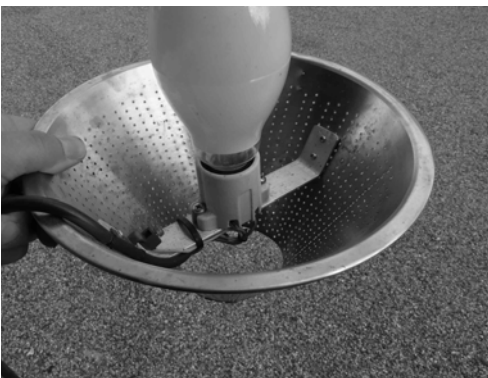
It is worth noting that the ultra violet frequency range is different in all three lamps: actinic, Mercury vapour and Mercury blended, which can have an effect on the moth species that are attracted. Drop some egg boxes into the bin for the moths to rest amongst and away you go.

Using the trap proved it to be a great success. One must always consider that attracting a large number of moths could also attract hungry bats and when releasing the trapped moths be aware that birds might be attracted to them and take their toll.

Have a go, even if you use a regular light bulb, it can still work.

Be aware that homemade moth traps ought to be checked by a qualified electrician.

For more information contact trevor@greenfarm.org.uk



Funnel with lamp holder



Complete with fins and rain guard

Heath Fritillary at Hockley Wood, Essex, 23rd June 2015

Peter Maddison

Shall we, shall we not? That was the question on the morning of the 23rd June. Total cloud cover and little prospect of improvement didn't encourage us to make the lengthy journey to south Essex where the only East Anglian colonies of Heath Fritillary are to be found. The forecast for later in the week was better, but we had made a date and by the end of the day we were glad that we had stuck by our decision to go.

Arriving at Hockley Wood at 10.30am we found that Liz, who had already completed a Turtle Dove survey in the north of the county, had arrived at the wood some time prior to us and had located a roost of the Heath Fritillary.

The cloud cover was still entire and combined with a cool breeze we donned fleeces to make our way to the area of the wood that had been coppiced in the last couple of years.

The Heath Fritillary is known as the Woodman's Follower and its survival in the woodlands of the south-east is dependent on woodland that is regularly coppiced. Butterfly numbers were reduced considerably when the practice of coppicing was discontinued in the 19th and 20th centuries, but the sensitive management of some woodlands in the butterflies' range has allowed the growth and seeding of Common Cow-wheat, the butterflies larval food plant and the fritillary has prospered, although numbers fluctuate considerably from year to year.

The butterfly is a weak flyer, dispersing to newly coppiced areas of woodland provided

they are within a few hundred yards of one another. They are much less likely to travel over agricultural or urban belts to colonise new woodland.

It wasn't long before Liz found a pair of Heath Fritillary nectaring on bramble and once we had got our eye in we were all able to find nectaring fritillaries. In the glades there was almost no breeze and it was noticeable that at bramble level, a couple of feet above the ground, the temperature was slightly higher than at our head height, pity we didn't have a thermometer with us. The butterflies

were very reluctant to fly, making it possible to have close and lengthy observations of both wings closed and open. The day had been a success and when 12 had been counted we were very pleased that we had made the journey. A few more were seen but by the time we had reached 15 we were probably beginning to double count. Few other species were

seen, but Meadow Brown, Large Skipper and Speckled Wood put in appearances.

After lunch and by 2.00pm the weather had shown no sign of improving so instead of visiting another woodland in the area Richard, Marie and I made the short journey to the RSPB Reserve at Wallasea Island, where spoil from the London Crossrail Project is being brought to create a saltmarsh reserve. The permitted walk along the river wall gave long views over the Essex marshes. On the banks of the wall a few Meadow Browns, Large Skippers and a Painted Lady were recorded.



Heath Fritillary by Beryl Johnson

Landseer Park and Pipers Vale for acid grassland, woodland and heathland butterflies, 9th July 2015

Julian and David Dowding

We started at 9am, parking in Landseer Road car park and set off past the wildflower banks. With fine weather and lots of nectar flowers in evidence, we saw 8 species on the Knapweeds and Thistles growing right by the car park. Stella remarked that she'd never seen so many skippers all in one place. Red Admiral and Painted Lady were also observed. We then walked around the lower meadow adjacent to Oulton Road and Dereham Avenue. Here we saw Small, Essex and Large Skippers, Gatekeepers, Marbled Whites, Meadow Browns, and Ringlets. We then moved along the wet area adjacent to Medway Road, adding Brimstone, Green-veined White, Holly Blue and Comma to the list of species seen.

After the meadow, we moved up through the woodland behind Medway Road and saw two or three White-letter Hairstreaks, a species that several members of the group had expressed a keen interest in seeing. It was a challenge to find these, as they would only occasionally flit out from the Elms in what appeared to be

territorial behaviour lasting just a few seconds and then dash back to a leaf where they disappeared from view. Leaving the Elms, we moved through the avenue of Limes and found Speckled Wood, a species which was seen patrolling small sunlit patches under the trees. The next stop was at one of the flower banks to admire the cornfield annuals which the IBC Rangers had sown earlier in the year. Not many butterflies were present here other than a few Skippers but the range of colourful flowers was impressive, with Corncockle, Cornflower, Corn Marigold, Field Poppy and many others in full bloom.

We then visited Pipers Vale, to investigate the small area of heathland which was created in 2007. Here we found two Silver-studded Blues but no Grayling. Later, Purple Hairstreak was seen on the Oaks. In total 19 species of butterfly were seen on the day. Thanks must go to IBC Wildlife and Education Rangers for their good stewardship of the areas visited.

In the news

Suffolk farmers have recently been granted a derogation to use neonicotinoids. In 2013 the EU banned these pesticides for use on flowering crops for two years. Research had linked them to the decline in bees and since then there has been evidence that other forms of wildlife are affected. Neonicotinoids are persistent systemic pesticides that are used particularly on oilseed rape crops. They are applied to seed coatings and are taken up by every part of the plant including the pollen and nectar. The East Anglian Daily Times has recently reported that researchers are concerned that these pesticides are ending up in non-target species. Researchers who examine plants at the sides of fields, often those planted along arable fields as part of the EU agri-environment schemes to attract wildlife, say there is now evidence that neonicotinoids are ending up in wildflower pollen.

In March 2014 in answer to the Governments proposed Pollinator Strategy Butterfly Conservation stated, 'butterflies and moths are not critical crop pollinators (as far as we know) but are part of a suite of insects responsible for pollination of wildflowers. They are essential if we are to maintain a full range of pollination services for a range of ecosystems'.

Red Lodge Heath SSSI, 11th July 2015

Twm Wade

It was during the winter that I suggested to the Suffolk Wildlife Trust that we organise a butterfly identification event at Red Lodge Heath just prior to the Big Butterfly Count. Very quickly we had agreement and I found myself committed to organising two Suffolk Branch events and an AGM photographic competition in 2015. For someone who only started showing interest in butterflies in 2012 and is renowned for taking poor photographs, it did seem a little ridiculous. Mercifully, help was soon at hand and the arrangements were in place in good time.

For my first event at Bradfield Woods, it was cool and cloudy and the few loyal or brave souls enjoyed the walk. There was a good mix of expertise for moths, butterflies, botany and photography and so we all learned something.

At Red Lodge it was different. It was calm, warm and sunny as we assembled at the Millennium Centre and there in the car park was a buddleia with an abundance of butterflies: Large White, Comma, Red Admiral, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and Painted Lady. I could point out the key differences between the Small Tortoiseshell and the Painted Lady without reference to the copy of the Big Butterfly Count ID sheet which everyone had.

We moved on to the heath which is being encroached upon by trees but is valued as 'a mosaic of dry acid grassland, chalk grassland, lichen heath and wet woodland

with ponds'. Once on the grassland area, we saw plenty of Ringlets and Meadow Browns followed by Small Skippers which are not shown on the BBC-ID sheet. We did see the Large Skipper so they learned how to tell those two skippers apart but did not find an Essex Skipper. We also saw the Small Heath, Small Copper, Speckled Wood, Small White, Green-veined White, Brimstone, Gatekeeper, Common Blue, Holly Blue, Six-spot Burnet and Cinnabar caterpillars.

I made reference to food plants such as bramble, ragwort and thistle which are not always seen as 'nice'. Sharon Hearle was a great help when it came to moths and I was pleased to have her with me along with Mervyn Crawford as the group did spread across the site. At the lunch-time break, Mervyn and I were invited to have our lunch in a neighbouring garden by two that had been with us all morning and at the end there was a general appreciation of the day. In truth, it may have been different if the event had been the next day, Sunday, when it rained and was cloudy all day.

And what did I learn? It is a risk to organise an event yet people do come forward to help and support. Butterflying is best done on calm, warm, sunny days and these are not available on demand so arranging an event is a chancy business whatever your expertise. I will certainly be doing it again; on a good day there is nothing to beat seeing over 20 species of butterflies and moths.

Bonny Wood for Purple Emperor and other woodland butterflies, 11th July 2015

Julian and David Dowding

The aim of this walk was to try and locate Purple Emperor, which had been noted there in the previous two years and also the host of other woodland butterflies known to inhabit the woodland.

We set out from Barking Tye Village Hall at 9am blessed with 22°C and clear skies, after first chatting about the recent resurgence of interest in Purple Emperors in Suffolk, following research into this species in Suffolk by Liz and Andrew from Herts and Middlesex Branch BC and the Purple Project launched by Suffolk Branch in 2014. We walked a footpath running alongside the fields towards Bonny Wood. At a suitable point in the landscape we stopped to give guests an overview of the small complex of woods in the area and of Liz and Andrew's method of finding the butterfly by watching highpoints in the canopy which might prove attractive to male Purple Emperors wishing to set up assembly areas. We spent some time rubber-necking but to no avail, so moved on. When we reached the path veering off to Barn Grove, a couple of guests said they'd seen an Emperor flying across the field from Priestly Wood. I was taken aback as it seemed improbable to see one away from the woods and so quickly. However, when we reached an area where about 40 straw bales had been dumped at the side of the spinney, a stunning male Purple Emperor circled us and alighted on one of the bales where it then sat probing some substance with its proboscis. Liz and Andrew's work had shown the butterfly to

be quite capable of moving between woods. 5km was a short hop and 10km a long hop. It seems that they were indeed using the entire woodland complex. I had remarked on the phone to one of the guests when booking the event, that given the nature of the woods and the probable thin density of the butterflies, finding the Emperor would be a bit like finding a needle in a haystack. How ironic then, that we found one sitting on a straw bale!

After about an hour watching the butterfly and taking many photos, some of the group walked further along and entered Bonny Wood. Those left behind at the bales saw another Emperor circling higher in the trees. A male White Admiral was seen briefly in the wood, followed by Ringlets, Silver-washed Fritillaries, Meadow Browns and numerous Whites. Also seen were Large Skipper, Small Skipper and Gatekeeper. Eventually we reached a ride where two males and one female Purple Emperor were seen gliding along. This brought the total up to 5 Purple Emperors for the day. Another butterfly of the purple persuasion was Purple Hairstreak. We watched and photographed a male which was sitting low underneath a branch and found a freshly emerged male clinging to a grass stem. The total number of species seen on the day was 15.

I wish to thank Suffolk Wildlife Trust for their successful management of Bonny Wood and for mowing the rides before our walk! Thanks also to Barking Parish council for kindly allowing us to use their car park.

Angles Way Wall Brown Survey, 11th August 2015

Peter Maddison

The Wall Brown, the range of which is diminishing rapidly in Suffolk, has been recorded in the Carlton Marshes and Somerleyton area, in fact this part of the county seems to be a hotspot for the species. We identified the Waveney valley as a suitable place to extend our surveying and The Angles Way, which follows the river, was an obvious route for us to take.

A train to Beccles, walk the path to Oulton Broad and a train home ...easy, though slightly off-putting was the 9.5 mls distance between the two stations which, at butterfly recording speed, was bound to take 'some' time.

Arriving at the Beccles Marshes at 11.00am in warm weather we anticipated good numbers of the more common species but the vegetation was still wet from overnight rain and we found just two Peacock in the first few hundred yards of meadows. As the morning warmed further Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Green-veined White and Small White became plentiful.

In the more northern section of the Beccles Marshes willow, alder and some oak line the path and there on an oak, Richard Stewart pointed out a Purple Hairstreak. Although we spent a few minutes staring up at the canopy no more were observed. It was not until after crossing the line of the dismantled railway that the first of two Wall, the second quickly followed, were noted. And then the best bit..... as we walked around the Worlingham marshes a further nine Wall

were counted. Interestingly, they were fairly well spread as they patrolled the path, crossing one another just occasionally, giving short chases and continuing on their way. It was here that we stopped for lunch and to find ourselves sitting with two or three Wall Brown flitting past was a treat. I hope that for many more years we'll be able to do just that in Suffolk.

In the early afternoon lengthy cloudy spells took the edge off the temperature and the strengthening south-east wind caused the butterflies to seek shelter and us to realise how exposed to the weather the river wall on the Castle Marshes and eastwards is. At this point one further Wall was seen and later on at the Carlton Marshes another was recorded.

The poor weather had spoilt the afternoon but the recording successes that we had had indicate that further surveys on the marshes to the north of North Cove and through to Barnby ought to reveal more Wall.

Arriving at Oulton Broad station late in the afternoon we were pleased to find that the train was on time. My thanks to Roger for his map reading, Stella for her botanical expertise and Richard for his knowledge of butterflies and wealth of anecdotes, all of which had made this an enjoyable day.

Species seen along the way were ES, SW, GVW, WB, SpW, MB, GK, RA, P, C, ST, PH, HB.

A Summer Update on the Transect Monitoring Scheme

Ian Middlebrook and the UKBMS team

After a record breaking year in 2014, I'm please to say that the transect monitoring scheme is continuing to grow this year. Nearly 100 new transects have been registered with us and 120 new recorders are using the online data entry system. We really appreciate all the efforts of transect recorders, new and old, towards the fantastic dataset that has been produced over the

years.

One of the great benefits of the online data entry system is that we can see what's been happening almost immediately. Here are a few stats from the summer.

After a warm spring, temperatures since April have certainly been a touch lower than last year:

Average Walk Temperature °C so far in 2015
(2014 in brackets):

April 16.1 (15.3)
May 16.2 (17.0)
June 19.1 (19.8)
July 20.9 (22.3)

The top 5 butterflies counted for each month this year across the UK:

April

1. Peacock (14254)
2. Brimstone (7705)
3. Small Tortoiseshell (5238)
4. Orange Tip (2781)
5. Speckled Wood (1498)

May

1. Brimstone (7276)
2. Orange Tip (4792)

3. Peacock (4430)
4. Green-veined White (4404)
5. Common Blue (3668)

June

1. Meadow Brown (32965)
2. Common Blue (9198)
3. Marbled White (7955)
4. Small Heath (7881)
5. Silver-studded Blue (6251)

July

1. Meadow Brown (115195)
2. Ringlet (60581)
3. Marbled White (32578)
4. Gatekeeper (31076)
5. Small Skipper (14072)

Estonia Butterfly Tour, 8th – 15th July 2015

Rob Parker, on behalf of Greenwings Wildlife Holidays

Many people head south on holiday to see butterflies around the Med or in the Alps, assuming that the Baltic states are too far north to be interesting. Yet Estonia is a relatively untamed country, a land of forests, lakes and islands. It is on the great migratory routes for birds and moths. It has a very high proportion of its land designated as National Parks or nature reserves, but not the over-regulated sort. About the size of the Netherlands, Estonia has less than a tenth of the Dutch population. They have wonderful botanical diversity, particularly orchids, and are proud of their wooded meadows, ancient deciduous forests and bogs – an unfamiliar habitat to most entomologists, so that Bog Fritillary, Cranberry Fritillary & Cranberry Blue are likely to be species we have never seen. The forests are home to majestic giants like Poplar Admiral, Camberwell Beauty, Purple Emperor and Lesser Purple Emperor. Large Coppers and Large Blues are both to be found in their respective habitats. A mix of typical European species with unfamiliar northern species such as Baltic Grayling and Lapland Ringlet. These were the thoughts that drew us to try Estonia.

Day 1. After a 2 hours 40 minute flight from

Gatwick by Easyjet we landed in Tallinn on time at 4pm. We quickly turned our backs on the airport and drove south-east along good quality roads (EU funded). The country is flat and sparsely populated and the drive gave an opportunity to absorb the open environment as agriculture and villages gave way to forests and rivers. Our driver answered our questions as we ate up the kilometres en route to Tartu, and the south-eastern corner of the country. Our destination was Mooste, a former manor, where we were welcomed to a converted and beautifully modernised vodka factory. The setting was exquisite, tranquil and overlooking a large lake. We stayed there for the first 3 nights, and enjoyed a high standard of catering throughout.

Day 2. We were driven to the Jarvselja Forest, where we had an appointment with Erki Ounap, one of Estonia's foremost entomologists, and author of the latest (2014) guide to Estonian butterflies. A Purple Emperor dropped down to welcome us as we stood outside the forest study centre of the Tartu University. He briefed us on the season, which was proving to be poor for butterflies, and on the places to look for our target species. He then led us through the forest to the

margin of the adjacent Uulike Bog. The ground under our feet was soft with deep moss and bilberry and cranberry. It was wet in places, but not muddy. Before long, we were chasing our first Moorland Clouded Yellow and we were inspecting the Silver-studded Blues at our feet. Eventually one of the Blues was found to be a Cranberry Blue – another rare butterfly. After lunch we drove on towards Piusa railway embankment, and started to notch up some more familiar species, noting that we had Pearly Heath and Chestnut Heath as well as Small Heath. A sudden downpour overtook us and we moved further along the railway line to the final destination, a sandy track catching the afternoon sun along a steep embankment. Here we were pleased to find the Purple-shot Copper as well as some of the 23 fritillaries on the Estonian list. At one point we were just 400 meters from the Russian border.

Day 3. Under a grey sky, we drove north to a part of the Karkna Forest known as a haunt of the Poplar Admiral. The wide ride through mature osiers looked promising, but it was a while before the sun came out and at first only the Ringlets were flying. As the weather improved we were delighted to encounter the Large Chequered Skipper, Geranium Argus and Amanda's Blue. The Lesser Marbled Fritillaries outnumbered the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, and then we found the distinctive Scarce Fritillary. The Wall Browns were very large, and at first we thought they could have been Northern Wall Brown, which would have been a new species for one of us. Alas they weren't! They turned out to be Large Wall Brown instead. We were alert for Poplar Admirals, but the closest we came was a White Admiral. Sadly the sky was grey again so we ate our packed lunch and headed back for a proper look at the Jarvelja Forest. Again we chose a likely looking ride for *populi*, but that was not to be; we had to make do with another Purple Emperor. Actually, it was a very agreeable spot, particularly for the Large Chequered Skippers, although most of the species were repeats of the morning's tally.

Day 4. Already it was time for our transit from the South-east corner to the western extremity of

Estonia. Naturally our guide stopped at suitable spots en route. The first was in the landscape preservation area at Ainge, and a recent clear felled area was productive. We added Large Grizzled Skipper, Black-veined White, Northern Brown Argus, Mazarine Blue, Heath Fritillary, and Purple-shot Copper. After that, it was the Tihemetsa Forest, and we chose a sunny ride with a wide ditch surrounded by flowery grassy margins. Here we found Large Coppers chasing the abundant Lesser Marbled Fritillaries up and down the ditch, both glinting glorious gold in the sun. And there was an unexpected Black Hairstreak resting on a thistle. All too soon, we were back on the road, and headed for Parnu, Estonia's largest coastal resort, facing south in the Gulf of Riga. We took lunch in the pretty town centre and then moved on to Nedrema wooded meadow – an interesting habitat of well-spaced mature deciduous trees letting sunlight into a mass of flowers at ankle level. Most of the blue/yellow flowers were cow wheat (not the one we have in Britain, but of 5 other varieties). The first butterfly we spotted was the Woodland Brown – a species now extinct in much of Europe – and there were a dozen of them at our feet! Also present were plenty of Lesser Marbled Fritillaries and the delightful Large Chequered Skippers. By the time we reached Tuhu bog it was late in the afternoon, and we walked the boardwalk with a brisk wind blowing across the open habitat, seeing only a handful of familiar species, but in the company of a Small Tortoiseshell that kept moving ahead of us across the boards. We got to Matsalu National Park in time for a rendezvous with an evening boat ride in search of beavers.

Our second boat of the day was much larger – the 22:15 sailing for the ferry to the island of Saaremaa, which is about 7 times the size of the Isle of Wight. The crossing arrives at Muhu Island which is linked to Saaremaa by a causeway, and at that hour we had plenty of light still, but with a pleasing pink tinge. By midnight we reached the Loona Guest house, our home for the next 3 nights. It had been a long day and we were ready for bed.

Day 5. Our first day on Saaremaa Island was spent

in the vicinity of our guesthouse at Viidumae nature reserve, beginning with light woodland which was home to a strong colony of the Woodland Brown. We found them in the grass, up trees, chasing and pairing, generally at home in an area they seemed to have all to themselves. It was nice to have photographic opportunities with such a scarce species. We looked in vain for the Dusky Meadow Brown and enjoyed the company of so many fritillaries, all of which had to be inspected, and eventually one of them turned out to be Nickerl's Fritillary. After lunch, we went on to see an alvar habitat at Kogula. This is an unusual dry area of limestone pavement, covered with a very thin soil layer, which is home to unusual plant species. It was surprising to find shrubs and small trees growing there, but the pavement was broken and the cracks allow the roots to get established. Relatively few butterflies flew here; but the species were interesting. Chestnut Heath and Heath Fritillary were very much at home, and Northern Brown Argus, Small Blue, Geranium Argus, Wall Brown and even Woodland Brown were found too. So was Wood White – but was it *L. sinapis*, or *L. juvernica* – the Cryptic Wood White? Fortunately enough homework had been done for us to know that both species were present in Estonia, and DNA testing on a large sample had established that they flew together with the Cryptic Wood White in preponderance. We were not equipped for microscopic genitalia inspection in the field, so we had to leave it at that. Apart from a second specimen across the road, this was the only Wood White encounter of the week. Later in the afternoon we moved further up the peninsula of Tagamoisa to a larger patch of alvar where the invasion of scrub and trees had spoiled the original wooded meadow habitat. The result was the addition of Silver-washed Fritillary to our list; as is often the way, they were flying in company with White Admiral. In this case, Woodland Brown was present too. We returned to our guest house at Loona, a former manor house, now nicely converted for visitors to the Vilsandi National Park.

Day 6. We rose early for the drive down to Saare, on the southern tip of the Sorve peninsula, a former Soviet border site. We had an appointment

with the enthusiast who empties the moth traps close to the lighthouse which attracts migratory birds as well as moths. The 4 moth traps are part of a chain using similar traps for the national monitoring scheme. Unusually, one of the traps is different to the others. It features 2 UV lights, one suspended about 5 meters above the other, with a line of sight to the lighthouse, and the other situated at ground level underneath shallows treated with wine & treacle lures. The high lamp, the blossom or the sugar attract moths to the vicinity and the moths finish up in the bottom trap. The result is a very different catch to the other traps. The site itself is an outdoor military museum, with Marti Martenson's private natural history museum in one of the remaining buildings. The museum housed a collection of Estonian butterflies as well as a series of interesting moths caught at the site. We were able to look at specimens of some of the butterflies we had not so far found, such as a comparative set of Large Tortoiseshells and Scarce (Yellow-legged) Tortoiseshells. We lingered until the day had warmed enough for butterflies to be on the wing, and then set off for the ditches alongside the coast road, where we hoped to find coppers. The common species were already on the wing, and it was half an hour before we had a new species – very fresh Graylings, the ordinary *Hipparchia semele*, sadly not the rare Baltic Grayling. At that point, the Scarce Coppers appeared, making a good start to the morning. Only a short drive from there, we started along a forest track to the Kommando Punkt, a derelict Soviet coastal gun position conveniently located in a forest of mature osiers. A whoop of delight came as we found a Poplar Admiral conveniently grounded in the middle of the road. In the absence of traffic, we were able to spend 10 minutes hunched beside what had been our most desired target butterfly. It flew for us several times, returning to us at the roadside and posing on Rob's sweaty wrist for a memorable photographic session.

If the morning session had been a triumph, our luck changed as we reached our next site, where we had hoped to find Large Blue. Just as we reached the car park, the heavens opened and we opened our picnic basket inside the car. There

was no point in staying, so we drove on, waiting for the storm to pass. The rain had stopped as we reached Looe oak forest, but nothing much was flying. We stopped to look at an enormous clump of lady slipper orchids, sadly well past flowering, and nearby, we found a mating pair of Woodland Browns. We made a detour to see the famous meteorite crater at Kaali before returning to the Large Blue site. Sadly, the grass and clover sward was wetter than walking through standing water, and nothing was flying. Our local guide Peeter devised a plan for the following day. By starting early, and re-booking on a later ferry back to the mainland, we would be able to grab 45 minutes for a final Large Blue hunt.

Day 7. It worked! By 08:15 the next morning, we had reached the site, the Tehumardi monument, a memorial to lives lost in a Soviet-German battle there in 1944. It seemed to be too early to find our quarry, but the sun was on the sand dunes and we soon spotted a Large Blue. Shortly after, we were photographing a mating pair. By 09:00, we were back on the road and headed for the ferry. It is a 24 minute crossing on a large ferry (almost the size of a cross-channel ferry). As soon as we reached the mainland we were en route to Laelatu, another large well-known wooded meadow. Sadly we arrived to the sound of a lawnmower, and we found that most of the meadows had been cut in the past 24 hours. We found nothing new until we spotted a Brimstone crossing the road on our way to a delightful farmhouse lunch stop. Remarkably, we had seen very little of our familiar British butterflies. We chased a few Whites at the farm, but they were Green-veined Whites, not Large or Small. We went the whole week without seeing either. Our final site was Mukre bog, and it was 5pm before we reached it. It was a lovely calm evening and an abundance of Silver-studded Blues were flying lethargically or roosting as we followed a boardwalk through forest, past attractive lakes and round in a loop to find a host of roosting butterflies on the rushes along one side of the lake. These could only be inspected by moving carefully over the squelchy moss. A nice mix of fritillaries and blues yielded the Bog Fritillary and Idas Blue. Sadly, it was time to leave for Tallinn. We wished we could

have stayed longer there. We were delivered to the capital city and spent a comfortable night in the Bern Hotel, conveniently close to the city wall around the medieval town.

Day 8. A morning in Tallin is a hectic experience, and the tour included an expert guide to show us all the sights of this lovely historic capital. Heli tailored the walk to our interests, so we saw the natural history museum instead of doing too many churches. Perhaps we were losing half a day's butterflying, but it was definitely well worthwhile. After lunch, it was nice to be able to get from the hotel to the airport in just 14 minutes!

Species Recorded. 46 species were recorded during 6 days in the field – about 41% of Estonia's butterflies. This is a good proportion for one week disturbed by unseasonal rain. Had the 2015 season not been so abnormal (cool dry spring reducing normal abundance and disrupting emergence dates), a week in Estonia could be expected to yield even more interesting species. One measure of the season was the Tartu University's judgement that the season to 9th July represented the 2nd worst of their 12 year series. Another was the poor showing of common British species. Quite remarkably, we did not find the following species that ought to have been common in both Britain and Estonia at the time: Large White, Small White, Small Copper, Holly Blue, Peacock, Comma, or Speckled Wood. We walked through many suitable pieces of woodland muttering to ourselves, how could we not find Speckled Woods here?

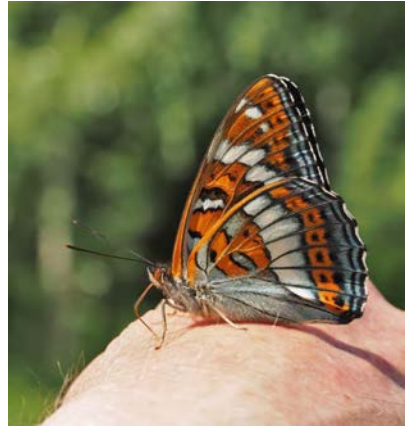
Summary. The tour was a trailblazer to establish the potential of a proposed itinerary for future butterfly tours. Despite some heavy rain, unusual at this time of year, we saw a host of exciting butterflies and the trip was a great success.

Fancy visiting Estonia in 2016? Greenwings are returning for more between 3rd – 10th July. This time the whole holiday will be led by leading Estonian lepidopterist Erki Ounap. Find out more by visiting www.greenwings.co or phoning 01473 436096

Estonia



Rob Parker and Poplar Admiral



Poplar Admiral



Woodland Brown



Large Chequered Skipper
photos John Maddocks

Bonny Wood



White Admiral
photo Trevor Goodfellow



Emperor flies to the straw bales
photo David Dowding



**AGM
Photographic Competition
2015**

Class 1
Photographed in the UK

1st
'Four Wood Whites'
Liz Cutting

2nd
'Holly Blue'
Cara Phillips

