SUFFOLK BRANCH NEWSLETTER

The Suffolk Argus

Volume 76 Autumn 2019

Butterfly Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SUFFOLK


Marbled White - Landseer Park by David Walsh


Two-Tailed Pasha by James Mann

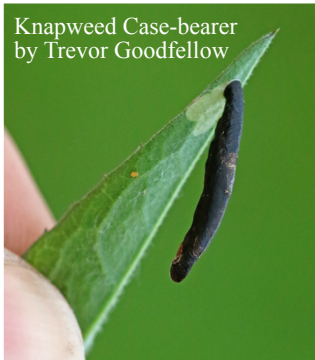

Brimstone Pupating by Alan Beaumont


Brimstone by Jane Henderson


Purple Emperor - Bonny Wood by Jon King


Brimstone Pupa by Jane Henderson


Brimstone Larva by Alan Beaumont

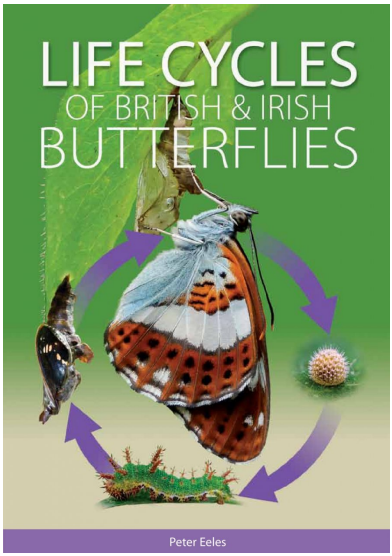

Knapweed Case-bearer by Trevor Goodfellow

14.30 hrs on Saturday 30th November 2019

SUFFOLK BRANCH AGM AND MEMBERS AFTERNOON

Venue: Stowupland Village Hall
Map Ref: TM070600
Post Code: IP14 4BG

The AGM will be followed by members' slides, then light refreshments, the annual **photo competition** and our guest speaker



Peter Eeles

In 2002 Pete created the acclaimed 'UK Butterflies' website and later 'Dispar', the website where papers are published. Peter has held various positions, including Chair in the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch and in 2016 created BC's 'Garden Butterfly Survey' website. He is a recipient of the Marsh Award for the 'Promotion of Lepidoptera Conservation'.

Peter Eeles has recently written the book

Lifecycles of British and Irish Butterflies

Visit the informative UK Butterflies website www.ukbutterflies.co.uk Further AGM details will be announced on the Branch website.

NEW! SBC pin badges on sale at AGM for £2.50 (usually £3.00)

Suffolk Branch *Contacts*

President
Howard Mendel

Chairman
Peter Maddison
Barnmead, Fishpond Rd,
Waldringfield,
Woodbridge IP12 4QX
Tel: 01473 736607
email: prmaddison@yahoo.co.uk

Membership Secretary
Jillian Macready
Tel: 07980 208442
Email: jmacready@outlook.com

Treasurer
Kevin Ling
email: kevling2013@aol.com

Secretary
Julian Dowding
84, Clapgate Lane,
Ipswich IP3 0RE
Tel: 01473 436096
email: julian.dowding@ntlworld.com

County Butterfly Recorder
Bill Stone
20, Langstons, Trimley St. Mary,
Ipswich IP11 0XL
email: butterflies@sns.org.uk

Transect and WCBS Co-ordinator
Twm Wade
email: twm.wade@ yahoo.com

Conservation Officer (Butterflies)
Rob Parker
66, Cornfield Rd.,
Bury St Edmunds IP33 3BN
Tel: 01284 705476
email: robparker024@gmail.com

County Moth Recorder
Neil Sherman
email: moth@sns.org.uk

Conservation Officer (Moths)
Tony Prichard
email: tony.prichard@btinternet.com

Committee Members
Helen Saunders *Volunteers' Co-ordinator*
email: helens919@gmail.com
David Dowding
Adrian Richards
Matt Berry
email: matt@greenwings.co.uk

Website
Richard Perryman
email: richard.perryman@ntlworld.com

Newsletter Editor
Trevor Goodfellow
email: trevor@greenfarm.org.uk

Regional Officer, Eastern England
Sharon Hearle
Tel: 01638 484145
email: shearle@butterfly-conservation.org

The Suffolk Argus is published by the Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Butterfly Conservation or the Branch.

Contents

Editorial

Trevor Goodfellow

During a strange year of weather, we were treated to mass migrations of Peacock, 'Whites' and Painted Lady including several sightings of aberrations (page 12). Now the summer has passed, all too quickly, I hear you say, it is an ideal time to concentrate on our moths for those who have light traps, or even if you just check out a porch light. I am keen to promote moths more so any stories or photos you can send me will be considered for future issues.

This issue's cover features the Heath Fritillary, historically a Suffolk species, now extinct here. Where it does survive in other counties, is mainly due to sterling conservation work carried out by much valued volunteers much like our Silver Studded Blue projects for example. Perhaps it is worth considering a reintroduction if a suitable site that supports Cow-wheat could be located?

Lots of interesting items to inspire you in this issue including David Tomlinson's Georgian Painted Lady adventure and nearer to home, Ross Bentley's upbeat Landseer park article.

Please also pay attention to the OPM item on page 25 which explains the risks when encountering the Oak Processionary Moth as larva, pupa or imago.

I have been to many places this year on butterfly hunts and surveys and met some very friendly and enthusiastic lepidopterists. All that fresh air and exercise, anticipation and occasional disappointment, still amounts to a very pleasurable time making the most of our somewhat unpredictable weather.

Thanks go to Steve Honeywood for his guided tour of Halls Farm, Norton (Photo page 28) on July 1st, Winner of FWAG pollen and nectar prize. A great turnout of over fifty conservation minded farmers and related company representatives. Interest was shown in butterfly surveys so please contact Rob Parker if you are interested in surveying a farm near you, a good opportunity to get records from privileged access to private land. **Copy date for next issue is January 26th 2020.**

Cover image: Heath Fritillary by Trevor Goodfellow

The Brimstone Saga

Alan Beaumont

In the 'A Flora of Suffolk' by Martin Sanford there are no records of the two larval food plants Buckthorn and Alder Buckthorn of the Brimstone butterfly in the north east of Suffolk. This corner of Suffolk lies between Lowestoft and Hopton and is to the north of the river Waveney. The absence of the larval food plants is evident in the scarcity of the adult brimstones in the area. It is uncommon in our 'wildlife' garden. We decided to purchase a buckthorn shrub and eventually contacted a nurseryman in Cambridgeshire who was fortunately coming to the Street Fair in Bungay. He would bring a specimen with him, although he only had a few. We purchased the potted Buckthorn he brought. Whilst we were positioning the 6-foot-high specimen in front of our 8-foot-high south facing wooden fence a female Brimstone flew over the fence and laid 7 eggs on the leaves of the Buckthorn. It was the first Brimstone we had seen in the garden this year, the 14th May. The butterfly had obviously detected the aroma of the plant for it was not visible. Of the seven eggs laid we bred one indoors from early in June. This larva fed much faster than the six on the food plant. This meant we had to feed it each day with at least one new leaf. We observed the larva pupating in June and its subsequent emergence. We did not see any more larvae on the plant and can only assume they were fed to the Dunnock that breed in the garden!

Adult and Pupa by Alan Beaumont

On the Frits

Trevor Goodfellow

Heath Fritillaries have been extinct in Suffolk since the nineteenth century, and as I was keen to add them to my spotters list, so after researching books and online for whereabouts and flight times, I finally contacted Cambridgeshire & Essex Branch via BC website.

I emailed Rob Smith, Essex County Recorder who replied very quickly to my email and gave me advice and concise directions.

On the spur of the moment, on June the 1st, I drove to Hockley Wood, and arriving at the car park at the north end of the wood, I realised that in my haste to grasp a good 'weather window', I had forgotten the very useful directions Rob had given me (as I write this I now realise that with the wonder of modern technology, the email was on my phone all along).

I walked into the pretty, public access, mixed deciduous wood, following Rob's route from memory.

Downwards along a ride to a bridge and passing patches of cow wheat (food plant), I turned a corner and spotted two Frits. Neither of them wanted to rest so I admired them for a while and proceeded. After passing the time of day with several friendly folk, I arrived at the southernmost ride. Many Heath Fritillaries flitted around a few inches off the ground and hesitating at various leaves and grasses. In the end, I managed to get several photos and decided to zig-zag back to the car. On the way I met Richard, at well over six feet tall, his shadow was a welcome refuge from the hot sun, and he told me he was doing a count. We talked butterflies for a while, and I carried on. It was about 25 degrees centigrade and it seemed that the frits were livening up, maybe males searching for fresh hatch females. I counted about twenty then gave up.

It was an extremely pleasant walk and the extensive conservation work that has been done appears to be paying off. I gather from other butterfly chasers there, that the Heath Fritillary has been seen in numbers at other sites nearby too.

Thanks to Cambridgeshire & Essex Branch and particularly Rob Smith and well done to the volunteers who cleared scrub and widened rides etc.

Heath Fritillary by Trevor Goodfellow

Summer of '19

Trevor Goodfellow

At home I had a better show of Holly Blue and Small Tortoiseshells than 2018 albeit still low numbers, but first brood Common Blues and Brown Argus in single figures.

Painted Ladies numbered up to thirty instead of the usual singleton. Unlike previous years, the Privet blossom was over before the Gatekeepers hatched, this normally coincides with a drop in Meadow Brown numbers and a rise in Ringlet numbers over the season, but this year Ringlets seemed to be on the wing for a short spell.

Jane Henderson's kind donation of surplus Brimstone caterpillars was added to the resident population on my Buckthorn. These arrivals had stripped her Buckthorn bushes so I welcomed them to my home. Certainly, more sightings of Brimstone this spring since the Buckthorn established.

I wonder if the apparent increase in parasitic wasps, ichneumons and spiders might affect all caterillars' survival whatever time of the year, as I am sure their camouflage won't help them much against such threats.

Five-spot Burnet had a boom year, and Cinnabar better than last year. In fact, moth numbers were overall average, made up from 400 species recorded so far of a 600 species ongoing count. Clouded Border, Riband Wave, Confused, Common Quaker and some micros increased in numbers over last year, some of last year's species were not seen at all this year, which is normal.

After finding my first case-bearer larvae this year, I needed to educate myself a bit. Neil Sherman has been most helpful but before bothering him (again) I needed to read a few books.

Field Guide to Micro Moths of Great Britain and Ireland is one essential book for this purpose as the fine Richard Lewington illustrations packed on to the pages allow the reader to compare many similar species together, with comprehensive descriptions. However, Coleophora are tricky, as there are 109 species and few are easily identified by sight alone, requiring either a microscope for genitalia inspection or larval case on foodplant to help define the species.

Much like a caddis, the moth larva builds a case with silk, mining the leaf from the safety of the case. Similarly, bagworms (Psychidae) can closely resemble the caddis larval form.

It must be said that many of these 109 widespread tiny moth species will not appear in your garden. Some are rare, and like most lepidoptera, geology and flora dictate the often singular foodplant per species.

Knapweed is plentiful at home and has been a magnet to hoverflies, bees, butterflies and moths. Sometimes I amaze myself when I stumble across a very small puzzling feature. As I am wearing specs as I type this, to find a larval case under the leaf of Knapweed was very lucky. I took a few photos for record and sent them to Neil who confirmed it as Knapweed case-bearer – *Coleophora conspicuella* (page 2) a recent UK colonist, new to Suffolk.

Painted Ladies, (it wasn't just the British Isles that enjoyed an invasion)

David Tomlinson

Painted Ladies are such stunning butterflies that summers like the one we have just enjoyed, when they so abundant, are always memorable. I encountered my first Painted Ladies of 2019 in southern Spain and Morocco in early April. Numbers were modest, and there was no indication that this was going to be an exceptional year for these long-distance migrants. Then, in early May, I flew to Kutaisi in eastern Georgia for a birdwatching holiday. On our very first morning, driving east towards Tbilisi, we saw numerous Painted Ladies from the car. We were travelling at speed - not many people drive slowly in Georgia – so identification was at first a challenge, but it soon became clear that there was a steady migration taking place, with every painted lady heading determinedly north.

Our first few days in Georgia were spent high in the Caucasus mountains, looking successfully for birds such as Caucasian Snowcock and Caucasian Black grouse. The weather was variable, but when the sun shone there was an abundance of Painted Ladies to be seen. Many of these were nectaring on dandelions rather than migrating - most were beautiful fresh specimens. Modest numbers of Small Tortoiseshells kept them company, joined once by a Camberwell Beauty.

Over the following days we travelled widely throughout Georgia, going as far south-east as Chachuna Sanctuary, close to Azerbaijan. Here, in the arid steppe, there were still Painted Ladies to be seen, but in modest numbers. Birds like Rollers, Hoopoes, Bee-eaters and a host of larks kept us entertained. There were butterflies, too, though we were a little early for most species. My favourite find was the stunning Little Tiger Blue.

A huge overnight thunderstorm, coupled with torrential rain, led to an unscheduled early departure back to Tiblisi, and then we drove west into the Lesser Causacus, the mountains separating Georgia from nearby Armenia and Turkey. Here, at 6,000ft, we encountered our first Clouded Yellows of the trip, but they remained surprisingly scarce. However, we did reconnect with the Painted Ladies in a big way: it was clear that a huge migration was still taking place. We spent 15 May walking high in the mountains near. It was a wonderfully sunny day, but because of our altitude not hot. Distant Cuckoos called, Water Pipits were breeding in these alpine meadows and Red-fronted Serins were to be seen, but we failed on our quarry, Caspian Snowcock.

I sat for a while, soaking up the peace and the solitude as my companions walked ahead in their quest for the Snowcock. As I sat on a high ridge, with expansive views south towards Armenia and Turkey and north to Georgia and the Greater Caucasus, I watched and counted the Painted Ladies. Their numbers were impossible to estimate, but I made a number of rough counts of the insects passing in a minute within about 40 yards of me. The average was about 30, with some modest counts of around 25 butterflies per minute (bpm), to over 50bpm. Counting was easy, as they were all heading north. Only once before, have I witnessed a similar migration of Painted Ladies, and that was in northern France in May 1998. (photo page 10)

My counts were clearly unscientific, but they did give an indication of the huge size of the migration I was witnessing. The number of individual butterflies involved must have been very many millions. We know that the Painted Ladies that reach us have their origins in North Africa, and presumably these migrating hordes in Georgia had a similar origin, but a look at the

map suggests that perhaps they had started in the Nile Valley in Egypt, flown north through war-torn Syria and into Armenia before appearing in Georgia. It was a memorable experience. I had gone to Georgia to see bird migration, which proved disappointing (though the birdwatching was terrific), but it was the butterfly migration that will remain most memorable.

My butterfly list for 11 days in Georgia was modest, not quite reaching 30 (compared with nearly 200 birds), but I was there too early in the season for most species. However, it you fancy some pioneering butterflying, I recommend Georgia, you can now fly there direct and cheaply with Wizz Air from Luton, and it is a fascinating and friendly country to visit, with great food and wine.


Painted Lady by David Tomlinson

Dukes of Bedfordshire

Trevor Goodfellow

Leaving Thurston at about 09.00 hrs, I arrived at Totternhoe Knoll just after 11.00 hrs. As I collected my camera from the car boot, I was filled with anticipation. I asked a khaki clad couple, armed with binoculars if they knew where the Old Quarry was. They explained that it was about a mile away then when I said I was looking for Duke of Burgundy butterflies, they both said, 'so are we'. They pointed me in the direction of a chalk escarpment where Dukes had been seen in numbers the day before (always the way). We got talking again after about a 50-metre walk and I spotted a Small Blue. I had not seen one for 50 years, so I was thrilled as I classed this as a result in the event of not finding the Dukes.

I diverged from the couple and wandered around spotting more Small Blues and Dingy Skippers but no Dukes.

Although I wanted a short stay to avoid rush hour on the return trip, I decided that a 145-mile round trip deserved a more thorough search. I walked back to a gateway with an information board showing a handy 'you are here' map of the site. The 'Old Quarry' where the Dukes were known to be was barely a mile away, so I took a direct path to it.

Absolutely zero butterflies on the 15-minute walk but on arrival at the quarry site, I spotted more Dingies and Small Blues. Following a well-trodden path, I walked through some sheltered scrub to finally see my first Duke of Burgundy. I took some record shots as it was a bit tatty and ventured on to the old quarry proper.

On the way down a slope I saw two dukes who were very obliging and rested for a photo shoot (photo page 11). Further into the bottom of the quarry several Green Hairstreak and Small Blues danced around and possibly a dozen more Dukes.

Checking my watch, I couldn't believe that I had only been there an hour or so and doubled back to the car. I bumped into the couple I met earlier, and

they introduced themselves as Suzanne and Dick from Luton. After discussing how they should join BC, I shook hands and carried on back to the car, passing two people walking eleven dogs! From a Chihuahua to a Labra-Doodle and all in between.A gorgeous day although a cool breeze was probably the reason why the dukes were sheltering. A fantastic site: Green Hairstreaks, a few Small Heaths, lots of Small Blues and Dingy Skippers everywhere and of course the Duke of Burgundy.

The journey back took well over 2 hours after sitting in a roadworks queue in Hitchin for 30 mins.

Duke of Burgundy by Trevor Goodfellow

Snippets to intrigue

Discovered by Rob Parker

In his journal, Charles Darwin notes that a German scientist was charged with heresy in Chile as late as the 1830s because he could transform larvae into butterflies.

If you have heard the deafening wall of sound male cicadas create in southern climes, bear in mind that it would be twice as loud if the females joined in, but as an ancient Greek saying has it: “Blessed are the Cicadas because they have voiceless wives”.

Read “Extraordinary Insects” by Anne Sverdrup-Thygeson, (Harper-Collins, 2019) for more intriguing quotes, such as:

“Nature is nowhere as great
as in its smallest creatures”
PLINY THE ELDER
Naturalis historia 11, 1. 4,
Ca.79 CE

Butterfly Aberrations

Rob Parker

Melanism is a condition which results in an excess of black scales compared to the normal form of a particular species. It results from higher than normal temperatures during the final process of metamorphosis, as the wing scales are arranged just before emergence from the pupa. Experiments have shown that exposing pupae to unusually high temperatures in the hours before emergence can produce spectacular melanic specimens - almost totally black in extreme cases. In nature, an unusually hot summer is rarely enough to trigger melanic forms. A poorly selected pupation site might allow direct sunlight to overheat the pupal case, or a falling branch might disturb the pupal resting place with the same effect.

Other Causes of aberration are recessive genes:

Single gene difference (Monohybrid inheritance)

Double recessive gene difference (Dihybrid inheritance)

Discontinuous variation

Continuous variation

Multifactorial inheritance

(Further information: Variations in British Butterflies by A. S. Harmer)

Examples recently spotted by members are shown on page 27.

Brown Argus with missing spot by Jane Henderson

Garden Nectar Plants for Butterflies - D is for Dandelion and Dames' Violet

Richard Stewart

We get plenty of dandelions in our garden, mainly seeds from the roadside grass verge which doesn't get cut very often. I don't imagine many of us actually cultivate dandelions, but the plant is a vital early nectar source for butterflies coming out of hibernation and early bees. I also love the deep orangey yellow colour, distinct from the other early spring yellows of primrose, coltsfoot, aconite and celandine. In Madeira last year we watched a Clouded Yellow flying without stopping over several beds of clover in seafront gardens before nectaring on an isolated dandelion. Doctor Margaret Vickery ran the national garden butterfly survey for many years and the results were summarised in 'Butterfly Plants for The Garden'. Dandelion is in the top two hundred plants, not surprisingly, attracting twenty different species of butterfly and being particularly favoured by Green-veined White, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell. These are all species seen relatively early in the butterfly year, when dandelions are most abundant.

Dames' Violet or Sweet Rocket- incidentally the apostrophe can be before or after the 's'. This hasn't done so well in our garden, attracting just Red Admiral and Painted Lady. It is a tall plant with an attractive scent, a multi-coloured perennial which spreads easily. I always associate it with the long front border of Marsh Cottage, along the lane leading to the reserve at the RSPB's Strumpshaw Fen in Norfolk. Since the death of Martin George (see Suffolk Argus 67) his widow hasn't put up the sign inviting visitors to walk up this long border to photograph butterflies, but they can still be clearly seen from the adjoining path. Here I have recorded nectaring Large and Green-veined White, Brimstone, Orange Tip, Peacock and Painted Lady plus the one it was planted for, the Swallowtail, since it flowers late May and early June, when they are first on the wing. Again, referring to 'Butterfly Plants For The Garden' nineteen species were recorded for this plant- probably twenty as I doubt there were many records of garden Swallowtails-with it being the favoured nectar source for Green-veined White, Large White, Small White and Orange-Tip.

Charaxes Jasius - Two-tailed Pasha

James Mann

I read with interest David Tomlinson's article in the summer 2019 Suffolk Argus. Here in the Pyrenees Orientals department in the south of France strawberry trees grow like weeds so we often see two-tailed pashas. As well as being territorial I have found that here they also tend to be hill-topping. I can reliable see them at Saint Ferréol Hermitage which sits on a hill above Ceret. Unlike David I have never seen one settle with open wings, must be something to do with our type of strawberry tree.

Not on my head, but a couple of years ago when I was showing a young couple around a Roman Fort that dominates the roman road that ran from Rome to Spain, I had one land on my chest, not easy to photograph, the man said he did not know how to use my camera, the woman "does it bite" the two-tailed pasha flew off. Another close encounter of the closed wing kind. I am now checking large butterflies with open wings.

On my weekly keep fit walk on Tuesday 13 August 14 kilometres 4 hours, with a climb of

400 metres. As I was coming down into a valley to cross an ancient stone bridge, something large drifted across in front of me and disappeared over a fence I looked over and there it was a Two-tailed Pasha sitting on a rotten apple, wings closed, before I could get my camera it was off. 30 minutes later approaching the old mill in the next valley I saw a large butterfly sitting in the middle of the road, another Two-tailed Pasha, this one stayed for photos. It took flight and did several circuits of its territory and landed on a fence. I crept up thinking 'open wings', no chance, but I got a good photo of a profile of its tails (photo page 2).

Both these sightings were in valleys so there goes my hill-topping theory. Why don't these butterflies read the books?

Later: I think Two-tailed Pashas are like London buses, when one comes along etc. While walking at Saint Ferréol Hermitage, a large butterfly bounced off my chest and then flew off with his mate, two more Two-tailed Pashas! Another day, I then went to Taillet a village a bit inland at 600 metres many oaks but few strawberry trees. I sat outside the church having my lunch and decided to set up my tripod to photo myself (photo below).

I turned around and there on my seat sat a Two-tailed Pasha (photo insert below). I saw yet another one on the walk back. Now I have said this I probably won't see another one till next year.

I continue my search for open wings.

The author James Mann

A nectaring plant new to us

Derek Soper

Whilst cutting away a multitude of rampant rose shoots recently, just in time I noticed a plant with small pinkish flowers along the stems that I had not seen before. Moreover, in the sun it was providing nectar for several white butterflies and a Large Skipper. This was in July. Clearly, having square stems it was labiate, a member of the deadnettle family, so of course floras were consulted. It proved to be *Balliota nigra,* the Black Horehound.

This plant is a native perennial, found in margins and waste ground, hairless, quite tall but fairly straggly needing support from other species. The tubular flowers are described as lilac or pinkish-mauve adpressed singly or in small groups around the stems. The whole plant has a characteristically purplish appearance.

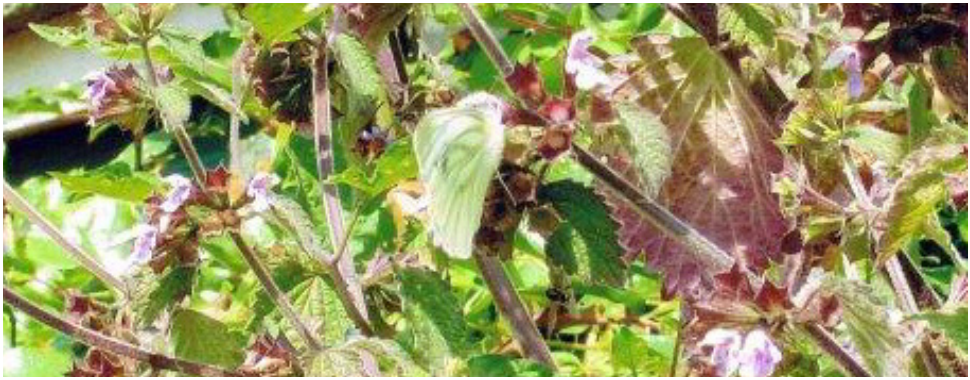
From the nectaring viewpoint it has a long flowering period: June to September, attracting

butterflies and bees. (The Black Horehound is not very closely related to the White Horehound, *Marrubium vulgare*, which is not straggly and has downy leaves.)

Why I write this is, though someone will no doubt prove me wrong, I cannot recall ever seeing the Black Horehound mentioned in articles or advice on providing butterfly nectarers. So, when clearing through rough ground by cutting, scything, or other means do look carefully and let this valuable plant thrive.

I am indebted to Valerie for the accompanying picture.

Black Horehound by Valerie Soper



Breeding Brimstones

Jane Henderson

The Brimstone, such a welcome sight on a Spring day, is one of my favourite butterflies. To help increase the Brimstone population I decided that putting some bushes of its larval host plant into the garden would be a good idea, as well as an interesting project, and in 2017 we bought five Alder Buckthorn saplings.

The saplings produced no leaves in time to attract any passing females, being planted late in the spring and the following year no Brimstones took any interest in them. However, towards the end of April 2019 we were delighted to see two females laying eggs on the bushes (photo page 2) and after a week it seemed like a good precaution to protect the eggs from birds. We constructed an arched frame from smooth, flexible willow branches pushed into the ground, tied together with string and put 1/2" mesh plastic garden-netting over. This covered two adjacent bushes and was held down around the base with tent pegs.

I had read that the eggs should take about two weeks to hatch, but in reality, it was five weeks later that I counted twelve small, green larvae. As the days passed more and more caterpillars were emerging and I netted one more bush for their protection. About three weeks after seeing the first few caterpillars, over seventy were counted. While the larvae ate and ate, the leaves on the young bushes became fewer and fewer until they were almost defoliated. Realising that things were looking desperate and that the caterpillars might not have enough food to get them through to the pupal stage, I contacted Jillian (Suffolk Branch Membership Secretary) who kindly agreed to take some to put on her own

Buckthorns, and Trevor (Suffolk Argus Editor) likewise took a few.

Jillian had received 8 Buckthorn bushes from the Buckthorn & that Brimstones project Suffolk BC Branch had resurrected after a successful first campaign in 1998. This time the aim of the campaign was twofold: to boost the numbers of Brimstone in the county, also to get more people involved in wildlife gardening. Jillian had seen Brimstone in her 2.6-acre field which she is managing as a wildflower meadow for butterflies and had seen caterpillars in 2018 but never any Brimstone laying eggs. She and Trevor are neighbours and he has semi mature bushes on his property, so one day in June I turned up at Jillian's field with a cool box full of little green caterpillars and a paint brush with which to transfer them and we set about putting them on the still very puny bushes at Oak Meadow and the rather more substantial bushes at Green Farm. About 20 were rehomed.

Meanwhile in my garden, a good number of the fully-grown larvae had taken themselves away out of the nets to pupate elsewhere. Wanting to see at least some of them complete their journey to adulthood, I took two just on the point of pupating indoors where they became pupae within a matter of hours, leaving one on the bush with a very fine mesh wrapped around to keep it there. Interestingly, the two indoor pupae took thirteen and fourteen days respectively to hatch while the final one, outside, took twenty days to hatch.

In the final 36 hours before the butterfly hatches the wing area of the pupa turns from green to yellow, and the features beneath such as the antennae, eyes and mouth become more and more visible. The markings around the edges of the wing change from orange to dark grey in the final hours. It is fascinating and absorbing to watch this wonder of nature.

Although a large number of caterpillars did hatch and grow to full-size, I was both surprised and disappointed that in the end I saw only four adults – one which must have survived on its own, and the three which I cossetted. Presumably predation by birds or rodents at the pupal stage is a big hazard that butterflies face. Jillian reports that she saw the caterpillars on a number of visits to the bushes, eating and getting larger, but she never saw any pupae develop or indeed any butterflies flying in the meadow in the later part of the summer. We will endeavour to try the whole thing again until we know we have a healthy population of Brimstone in our respective green spaces!

Transferring caterpillars to bushes by Jillian Macready

Pupa by Jane Henderson

One Man Went to Mow…

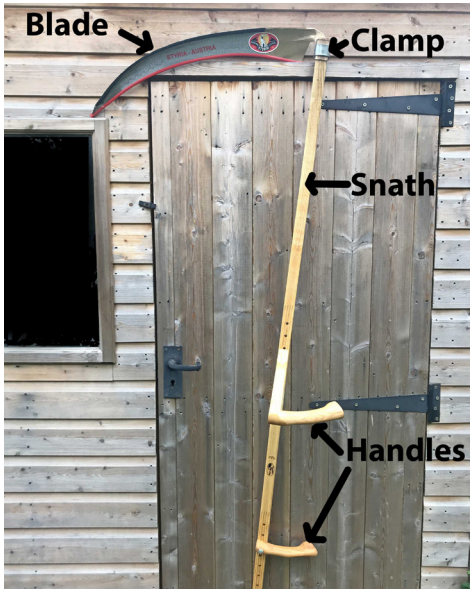
Julian Dowding

Over the last few years, I'd seen 'proper scythes' being used and became convinced of their effectiveness. Colourful wildflower meadows managed this way to cut hay for livestock, still attracted innumerable butterflies and moths. I also became aware of a new wave of interest spreading rapidly across the UK for this method of maintaining wildflower meadows. There are even scything competitions held in the UK and Europe where people can learn more about this ancient technique (from the Bronze and Iron Ages) and see their effectiveness, particularly alongside bar mowers. People in the UK are beginning to think that perhaps the old methods are the best.

Eventually, I got some Austrian scythes (from a UK supplier). These are beautifully crafted, lightweight, easily assembled with ash snaths and handles and steel blades, which can be peened, tempered and honed to produce a fine cutting edge. They come in different sizes to suit any individual's height. Each handle is also adjustable for a comfortable working position. I coated the wooden parts with raw linseed oil to protect from moisture, taught myself the basics and set about mowing. Even so, I was keen to have instruction from somebody well acquainted with scythes and so my son and I booked training and bought a few more scythe kits from Richard Brown, an instructor based in Norfolk who has been using scythes for many years. A group of 12 of us were soon mowing areas of grassland in Ipswich parks. We already knew the basics but were shown small ways to improve things. There's little that can go wrong with scythes and they are much simpler than petrol driven machines. For me, one of the mysteries was knowing whether the blade was sharp enough, because sharpening has to be done every 5-10 minutes in the field. I needn't have worried because in no time at all, Richard had all of us sharpening proficiently with the little whetstones which come with each scythe set. It takes barely a minute to sharpen and get mowing again. We were also taught some Tai chi, since using a scythe well has a lot to do with posture, balance, and flexibility. After basic tuition and lunch, we moved to a meadow and within an hour, we'd cut 2/3 of an acre. Many trainees said that they really disliked using bar mowers and brush-cutters but that these hand scythes would give them the freedom to cut areas that they never before would have dreamed possible. Some went on to buy their own scythes. It's also worth saying that after a full day's work, you really don't feel the strain. The quiet swish of the blade moving through vegetation and leaving a neat windrow is very relaxing and the work gives a gentle 'all body' work out. You also can talk to people because it's so quiet, and you're not cut off from the rest of the world with personal protective equipment as you would be when using heavy machinery.

For a couple of years now we've been mowing meadows this way and we're thrilled at the results, not just seeing more wildflowers but also experiencing more of the invertebrate life than would have been the case using machines. One notable insect which appeared was the melanic form of the rare Large Garden Bumblebee. It's a BAP species which is new to Ipswich and in serious decline nationally.

If you would be interested in attending a day's scything course, please check next year's Events Calendar. Places will be limited to 12 people. Alternatively, go out and buy scythes like we did. A complete Austrian scythe set including blade, snath (the long wooden bit with handles), blade clamp, sharpening stones and a small book on scything, costs around £120 plus postage.



2019 Events Reports

Landseer Park – 29th June

Finding the valley of the butterflies in the centre of Ipswich

Ross Bentley, Environment writer - East Anglian Daily Times

A heatwave at the end of June: perfect conditions for early summer butterflies and tucked away in central Ipswich, the perfect setting.

I had joined members of the Suffolk branch of Butterfly Conservation to take a leisurely stroll through Landseer Park to see what we could find - it was to be a wonderful morning outing.

Leading the way was David Dowding, a wildlife and education ranger with Ipswich Borough Council, who has been involved with enhancing the town's parks for pollinators for more than seven years. This work was ramped up in 2017 when the Buglife charity provided funding for its Urban Buzz Ipswich project, a two-year initiative aimed at partnering with local community groups to bring bees, beetles and butterflies into the heart of the town.

Led by David and thanks to the enthusiasm and hard work of more than 800 volunteers, over 100 buzzing hotspots were improved for pollinators by introducing a variety of wildflowers, bug-friendly garden plants and flowering shrubs intended to peak at different times from mid-April to mid-October and thus provide a long window of opportunity for nectar seeking invertebrates.

The Urban Buzz Ipswich teams worked on high profile locations such as Holywells Park, Christchurch Park and Landseer Park, with partners including Ipswich Borough Council, Greenways Countryside Project, Butterfly Conservation Suffolk and the Ipswich Wildlife Group - all with the aim of bringing colour and wildlife back to the parks and open spaces of Suffolk's county town.

This summer, then, offers a chance to see how this work has borne fruit.

What a selection

Such is the subtle majesty of our native wild flowers that their beauty only becomes truly apparent close up: the lilac of field scabious; the flamboyant blue spikes of viper's-bugloss; the yellow, honey-scented lady's bedstraw - the names conjuring up images of their usage back centuries ago when people understood better the properties of our natural flora.

Once among the flowers and grasses, and moving slowly along the mown tracks, the butterflies also came into view - and what a selection we saw. A fresh-looking Small tortoiseshell got the ball rolling, proudly showing off its velvety red-orange wings. Then, the Painted ladies got into the act - the intricate wing patterns of this pale pinky-orange long-distance migrant a delight.

Among the grasses, Meadow brown butterflies flitted, showing flashes of their orange-dotted upper wing; Essex skippers skipped - at one point we saw four of these little orange gems congregate at a small puddle-pond, taking on water in unison. A chocolatey-brown Ringlet butterfly hugged the nooks and crannies at the base of the grasses - moving in and out of the shadows.

Treasure

What sets Landseer Park apart from other open spaces in Ipswich is its history. During the 1960s, this valley that leads gently down to the River Orwell was used as a landfill site, when it was full, it was capped with soil and left to settle. No

houses can be built on this 50-acres of undulating terrain, so it has just been left to be. Whereas in the more formal parks in Ipswich wildflower areas are limited to the outside areas to provide a corridor for wildlife, about 80% of Landseer Park is now dedicated to nature - the clay soils used to cap the landfill providing a contrast of soil types to the sandy areas elsewhere. I think of what might be buried below but realise that the true treasure is now found above ground.

And it's not just butterflies that are found here. David says several species of rare bumblebee frequent the environs, including the large garden bumblebee. I see and avoid an imposing hornet mimic hoverfly while dazzling blue Emperor dragonflies make regular appearances. I'm not sure if it is the same dragonfly that keeps popping up to keep an eye on us or whether there are number of these hovering majesties here to lunch on the banquet of insects before them.

Magic moment

For me the highlight came as we approached an area of knapweed and we caught sight of a Marbled White butterfly. This beautifully chequered creature, who proves that you don't need colour to be stunning, is common in the south west of the country but rarely seen in East Anglia, although David tells me the species is slowly starting to make inroads into Suffolk. This one won't sit still long enough for us to get a good view. - it moves in an agitated manner across the tall grass, obviously in search of a mate.

Later, we find two Marbled Whites mating (photo page 28), their rear ends fused together. But there is no privacy for these two-winged lovers, as people get close to take photographs - it's a magic moment for all involved!!

Moving up into a wooded area, more butterfly species make themselves known; small Speckled Wood butterflies flutter across our path, as if welcoming us to their domain, while a rare White-letter Hairstreak butterfly is spotted up in the canopy of some coppiced elms. These butterflies are tricky to see and are generally viewed as a dark triangle silhouette against the sky.

Tired of craning my neck, I follow a more familiar Red Admiral butterfly - a treat in red and black - out of the woods, and head onwards.

With the sun shining, we drive on to Felixstowe for an afternoon by the sea, an ice-cream and fish 'n chips - the works.

But amidst all the man-made fun, my mind keeps thinking back to the natural wonders of Landseer Park. At this time of year, it is a truly wonderful place.

Cavenham Moth trapping – 5th July

Sharon Hearle

This event was run in partnership with Shifting Sands which is a Back from the Brink partnership project funded by Heritage Lottery Fund. The event was held at Cavenham Heath national Nature Reserve with help from wardens Michael Taylor and Chris Hainsworth. (Photo page 2)

Early arrivals were treated to fine display of Purple Hairstreaks in the sunshine on the low Oaks around the car park and fleeting glimpses of Silver Washed Fritillary along the footpath.

The first part of the event was to open the actinic battery-operated moth traps which had been set the night before. It had been a fairly cool, dry night but there were 28 moths in the traps including some stunning examples of Buff Tip, Swallowtail, Fox Moth, Tawny-barred Angle and Large Emerald. One of the Breckland specialist moths Lunar Yellow Underwing was also recorded.

We continued for a walk around the reserve to particularly search for the green Forester moth

which was found alongside the main track on one of its favourite nectar sources – Viper's Bugloss which favours disturbed ground next to the sandy track. A humming-bird Hawk moth was also seen nectaring at this plant.

We heard about work on various experimental plots aimed at encouraging rabbits after huge losses due to disease have been reported in the Brecks.

The grazing & burrowing of rabbits creates the conditions that rare/endangered species need to survive. But rabbit numbers have been falling here continuously since the 90's, so the Brecks heaths are becoming overgrown by coarse grasses and shrubs, forcing the Breckland's less competitive rare plants and insects out. But 2019 will see the Shifting Sands team begin field trials to encourage and enhance rabbit populations across 5 Breckland sites!

Escaping the heat in the woodland were able to record further Silver Washed Fritillaries and Ringlets.

Other species seen were small and Essex skipper, small copper to name a few.

Wyken Vineyard - 19th July

Rob Parker, Jillian Macready and Trevor Goodfellow

Unpromising weather shouldn't put you off a butterfly walk and 5 hardy, or perhaps optimistic souls ventured out for the butterfly walk on 19th July at Wyken Hall estate. It was led by Rob Parker and Jillian Macready to coincide with the start of the Big Butterfly Count which runs for a month in July and August.

We were greeted by Sir Kenneth Carlisle, owner of Wyken Hall Estate, who wished us well on our quest.

We started off by examining the contents of Trevor Goodfellow's moth trap: a small battery powered Robinson type trap with a UV light source, switched by a light sensor to only operate at night. He had positioned it the previous day off the beaten track in some fairly densely wooded part of Wyken Wood, since this wood is fairly well used by the customers of the Leaping Hare Café on route to going to look at the vineyard, which is planted on a south facing hill at the south side of the estate. We were pleased with the numbers getting a lovely pair of hawkmoths, Poplar and Privet. We also had numerous Black Arches, Dingy and Common Footman, July Highflyers and *Endotricha flammeallis*. Other moths of note were 2 Drinkers, Swallow-tailed, 2 Rosy Footman (see photo below), 2 Mother of Pearl, 2 Early Thorn and many others too numerous to name, a total of 34 species (plus 2 more species recorded during our walk).

Rosy Footman by Trevor Goodfellow

After the moths had been noted for the Wyken records, which go back to the 1980s, we walked through the wood. Turning right at the first track to a known Silver-washed Fritillary site, the rain started to gently trickle through the trees enough to get us reaching for our raincoats, it wasn't going to be an easy task to spot them and indeed we did not see the species in the whole of the walk. Further on along the middle track of Wyken Wood, we studied a group of oak trees and found several very high Purple Hairstreaks, none close enough to get our cameras on!

At the end of the wood is a gate into pasture with some llamas and sheep. Beyond that is the old tythe barn which is the Leaping Hare Café, it was tempting to go and have a cup of coffee but the rain had eased and the sun was trying its best so we decided to push on in case this lull was temporary. We walked through Wyken garden, which is a destination in its own right, then on to the meadows beside the lake. Much of Wyken is farmed sensitively for biodiversity and this field is a heavenly sight in the middle of June with wildflowers as far as the eye can see. It had recently been cut for green hay, but the margins had been left and there was still plenty of space for wildlife. Here we saw Meadow Browns and Ringlets in their dozens as well as all three summer Whites and a Comma and a good deal of other insect life. A 6-spot Burnet posed for photographs.

Red Lodge Heath - 27th July

Twm Wade

We all recall the heat on Thursday 25 July and how that changed very quickly. The forecast for the following Saturday was cool and wet and so it was. I watched the rain all morning, but it did get brighter and the rain got lighter, so I arrived in hope more than in expectation. On cue, the rain stopped and four people from the conservation group arrived. Just before moving onto the heath we were joined by a fifth.

The heath is a mixture of nutrient-poor grassland, bramble, bracken, young oak trees and scrub all criss-crossed by paths. We did not enter the area of former pits which is wooded. On our way round we saw 8 species. These were: Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Common Blue, Large White, Small White, Essex Skipper, Peacock and Cinnabar moth caterpillars. After 2 hours of gentle meandering, we returned pleased with what we had seen.

Trudie Willis Wildlife Garden Open Day, Aldeburgh - 28th July

Richard Stewart

First, I must apologise for not recording the 2018 event here, mainly because the wind, rain and cloud conspired to give me a personal total for the day of single Large and Small White, Painted Lady, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown and three Gatekeepers. Despite these conditions donations of around £300 were raised for our branch.

The 2019 weather was marginally better- at least it didn't rain but the sun only came out just as we were packing up. Still, visitors had bees, moths, tortoises, goats and sheep plus the Suffolk Wildlife Trust to visit and with donations for the garden and refreshments totalling £364-21. Despite the weather the species seen totalled fifteen: three Whites, Red Admiral, Peacock, Painted Lady, Brown Argus, Common Blue, Small Heath, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Gatekeeper, Small Copper and Grayling. An Essex Skipper was also seen on neighbour's land. Grayling appeared at both ends of Trudie's ten-acre garden, alighting on parked cars and the side of the caravan. However, the butterfly of the day was undoubtedly a superb Red Admiral in pristine condition, seen close-up and photographed by many as it rested on low grasses with its wings fully open.

Once again, we thank Trudie for her hospitality and generosity.

Kenton Hills, Sizewell Belts and Broom Covert - 3rd August

Peter Maddison

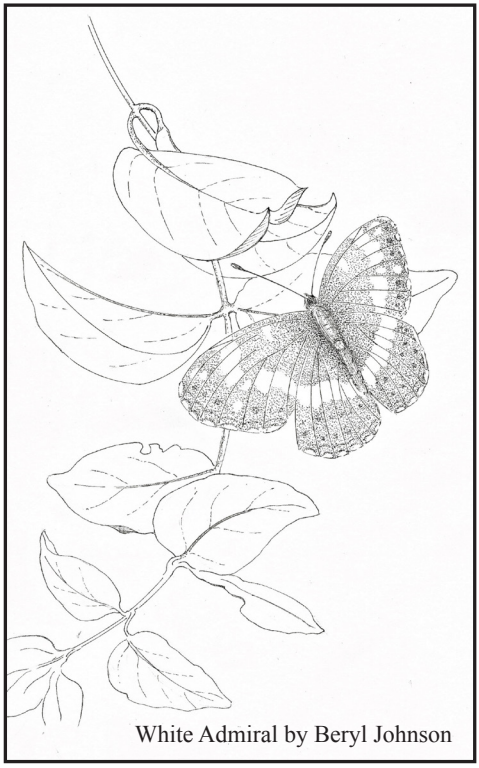
The brambles around the edges of the sheltered Kenton Hills car park usually host a good selection of Skippers, Browns, Peacocks and Commas, but not today. Cloud, which gradually thinned through the morning, dissuaded butterflies from appearing and it was not until we

had walked onto the Sizewell Belts path that the Common Blue, Meadow Brown, Painted Lady and then Gatekeeper appeared. Small Heath were seen as we following the path up onto Leiston Common and then, dropping down to a sheltered part near the wood, several fresh Brown Argus were observed and their id confirmed when seen alongside Common Blue. By this point wasp spider and adder had also been added to our list.

Although it was a bit late in the season we hoped to see White Admiral and at a suitable bramble on the edge of the wood where birch were strewn with honeysuckle we searched, apparently in vain. However as the group moved off a keen photographer amongst us held back to photograph Red Admirals and Commas on the bramble. A minute or two later he caught us up with a photograph of that other admiral. Returning quickly to the bramble, there the White Admiral remained, wonderfully camouflaged against a bunch of flowers, and only seen when it ambled on to the next flower.

Following the permissive path alongside the Belts there were good views across the meadows and on to the power stations. The prospect of them doubling in size was envisaged, as was the loss of vegetation on distant Goose Hill, but it was good that the tree belt and Coronation Wood which do such a valuable job of screening the lower parts of the power stations will remain. Moving on to the bridlepath at Broom Covert, a few Grayling were spotted on the path ahead of us and then back on the Common a pleasant surprise was the patch of heather and ling that held Grayling, Small Heath, Small Copper and Brown Argus.

Back at the car park we agreed that this had been a pleasant walk through a variety of habitats with good opportunities for people to brush up on their identification skills. People began to depart, but a few remained and a search of the low level elms around the car park brought to light White-letter Hairstreak, whilst in the oaks above were Purple Hairstreak. 17 species had been recorded during the morning, but surprisingly Large White and the Skippers were not seen.



White Admiral by Beryl Johnson

Big Butterfly Count at Pakenham Water mill - 8th August

Trevor Goodfellow

Several families and other butterfly counters of all ages turned out on the morning. Warm sun tempted 12 species to show, some not on the checklist. Purple Hairstreak, Holly Blue, Common Blue and Brown Argus were the highlights. Thanks to Sheila, Jonathan and helpers for gazebo and coffee. (photo page 28)

News round

True Blue

Taken from 'Broadleaf South East'

After seeing a Small Blue at the Woodland Trust's first world war centenary wood at Langley Dale, Keith Elliot masterminded a scheme to encourage colonisation of this butterfly which possibly originated at North Downs.

Taking advice from botanist Peter Wakeham, Kidney Vetch was planted in 20 ft scrapes on the chalk areas.

Keith hopes that the North Downs sourced Vetch proves successful in hosting the UK BAP species.

Up with your Dukes

Excerpt from 'The Guardian' website

"This is a species (Duke of Burgundy see page 11) that has come back from the brink," says Dan Hoare of Butterfly Conservation. "We've halted the slide towards extinction and in some landscapes, it is genuinely marching back across the landscape. That's a real cause for celebration." Hoare, the director of UK conservation at this small charity, headed a programme to halt the species' extinction in Britain. The Duke's caterpillars eat common wildflowers, cowslips or primroses, but the butterfly is oddly fussy: it doesn't like the open downs favoured by most warmth-loving butterflies, nor does it thrive in dense woodland. It requires lightly grazed grassland and scrub, or coppiced woodland.

Conservation scientists began to save the Duke by first assessing the reasons for its disappearance from former haunts: 57% of extinctions were caused by "lack of management" – too-shady woodlands or too-scrubby grasslands. But 27% of extinctions were caused by "excessive management" – grassland grazed too heavily or cleared of scrub. Ironically, these clearances were often funded by well-meaning conservation schemes to ensure that flower-rich chalk grassland remained free of bushes and trees. As Hoare puts it: "The Duke doesn't like the way our conservation effort is funded, with grants awarded every 10 years to remove all scrub in one go. That's disastrous – Dukes want scrub-removal little and often."

When I call Dave Wainwright, who coordinates Butterfly Conservation's efforts to revive the Duke in North Yorkshire, he is resting beneath a tree after reaching "three figures" for Dukes in a single day for the first time in his life. "After last summer's drought, the caterpillars' foodplants were wilted and I was predicting all sorts of horrors this year, but I'm counting very, very good numbers," he says.

The effort to save the Yorkshire Dukes began in the early 00s, with areas of hawthorn scrub cleared from steep-sided valleys to create a mosaic of suitable cowslip-rich grassland. Woodlands were also coppiced. The key, says Wainwright, was to connect existing habitat to new areas. Volunteers have also been crucial, monitoring numbers to show where the management is working and where it isn't. Esme Walton, 80, from Helmsley, North Yorkshire, encountered the Duke while out walking one day, and began volunteering to record its numbers every week over the summer as part of the national UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme.

'When I was a caterpillar…'

Sciencedaily.com

Butterflies and moths are well known for their striking metamorphosis from crawling caterpillars to winged adults. In light of this radical change, not just in body form, but also in lifestyle, diet and dependence on particular sensory cues, it would seem unlikely that learned associations or memories formed at the larval or caterpillar stage could be accessible to the adult moth or butterfly. However, scientists at Georgetown University recently discovered that a moth can indeed remember what it learned as

a caterpillar.

The Georgetown researchers found that tobacco hornworm caterpillars could be trained to avoid particular odours delivered in association with a mild shock. When adult moths emerged from the pupae of trained caterpillars, they also avoided the odours, showing that they retained their larval memory. The Georgetown University study is the first to demonstrate conclusively that associative memory can survive metamorphosis in Lepidoptera--the order of insects that includes moths and butterflies and provokes new questions about the organization and persistence of the central nervous system during metamorphosis.

"The intriguing idea that a caterpillar's experiences can persist in the adult butterfly or moth captures the imagination, as it challenges a broadly-held view of metamorphosis -- that the larva essentially turns to soup and its components are entirely rebuilt as a butterfly," says senior author Martha Weiss, an associate professor of Biology at Georgetown University.

"Scientists have been interested in whether memory can survive metamorphosis for over a hundred years," says first author Doug Blackiston, who completed the interdisciplinary research while earning a PhD in Biology from Georgetown University in the labs of developmental biologist Elena Casey and behavioural ecologist Martha Weiss. The brain and nervous system of caterpillars is dramatically reorganized during the pupal stage and it has not been clear whether memory could survive such drastic changes.

The findings of the Georgetown researchers suggest the retention of memory is dependent on the maturity of the developing caterpillars' brains. Caterpillars younger than three weeks of age learned to avoid an odour, but could not recall the information as adults, whereas older caterpillars, conditioned in the final larval stage before pupation, learned to avoid the odour and recalled the information as adults. In addition, the results have both ecological and evolutionary implications, as retention of memory through metamorphosis could allow a female butterfly or other insect to lay her eggs on the type of host plant that she herself had fed on as a larva, a behaviour that could shape habitat selection and eventually lead to development of a new species.

One for the Album

Found by Rob Parker

[Ulmus 'Nanguen' (selling name Lutèce) is a complex fourth generation Dutch hybrid cultivar ... Lutèce exhibited a high resistance to Dutch elm disease when inoculated with unnaturally high doses of the causal fungus Ophiostoma novo-ulmi,] {extract from Wikipedia}

Hants & IoW Branch have planted some Lutece, including the one photographed. The White-letter hairstreaks (*Satyrium w-album*) found it naturally although over what distance is not known (to Rob at present). (Photo page 28 and below).

Satyrium W- Album Ovipositing on Lutece

Oak Processionary Moth *(Thaumetopoea processionea)*

Excerpt from www.forestresearch.gov.uk

Current situation: OPM is established in most of Greater London and in some surrounding counties, but the rest of the UK is designated a Protected Zone. In July 2019, the UK Plant Health Service intercepted several cases of oak processionary moth caterpillars on recently planted oak trees imported from the Netherlands and Germany. Around 60 interceptions have now been identified in the UK, and a list of affected counties can be found under 'Distribution'. Swift action is being taken by Forestry Commission, APHA and the Devolved Administrations to eradicate recent interceptions, including tracing recent imports of oak trees, on the ground surveillance, and the destruction of caterpillars and infested trees.

Please check any large imported oak trees (girth >8cm at 1.2m above the root collar), and report any findings through Tree Alert. If you trade in oak trees and suspect OPM, please contact your local APHA Plant Health Inspector.

As a result of these interceptions, strengthened measures on the import of most species of oak have been introduced to protect the UK from the threat of this tree pest. Further details can be found in 'Official action' below.

July 2019: Around 60 interceptions of OPM have been identified in the UK on recently imported oak trees. Affected counties in England include Cambridgeshire, County Durham, Devon, Dorset, Essex, Gloucestershire, Greater Manchester, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Lancashire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, London, Merseyside, Middlesex, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Southampton, Staffordshire, Suffolk, Surrey, Warwickshire, West Midlands, Wiltshire and Yorkshire.

Older caterpillars develop tiny hairs containing an urticating, or irritating, protein called thaumetopoein. Contact with the hairs can cause itching skin rashes and eye irritations, sore throats, breathing difficulties and, rarely, allergic reactions in people and animals. The risk of exposure to these hairs is highest in May and June.

The caterpillars can shed the hairs when threatened or disturbed. The hairs can be blown by the wind, and they accumulate in the caterpillars' nests, which can fall to the ground. They can stick to trunks, branches, grass and clothing as well as tree surgeons', forestry and ground-care workers' equipment, such as ropes.

Among the groups most vulnerable to the health hazards are:

• curious children and pets;

• people who work on or close to oak trees;

• anyone spending time close to infested trees; and

• grazing and browsing livestock and wild animals.

Caterpillars: have a distinctive habit of moving about in late spring and early summer in nose-to-tail processions, from which they derive their name. The processions are often arrow-headed, with one leader and subsequent rows of several caterpillars abreast;

• live and feed almost exclusively on oak trees. They can sometimes be seen processing across the ground between oak trees;

• will usually only affect other broad-leaved tree species if they run short of oak leaves to eat - they have been observed feeding on sweet chestnut, hazel, beech, birch and hornbeam. However, they generally cannot complete their development on other tree species;

• cluster together while they are feeding on oak leaves and moving from place to place;

• are only seen in mid- to late spring and early summer (May, June and July);

• have very long, white hairs which contrast

markedly with the much shorter, almost undetectable irritating hairs;

• have a grey body and dark head. Older larvae have a central dark stripe with paler lines down each side; and

• are not usually found on fences, walls and similar structures, such as garden furniture.

Report a sighting: If you believe you have found an OPM nest or caterpillar, please report it immediately to us.

Use our Tree Alert on-line pest and disease reporting form to report sightings.

Your reports will be assessed by our scientists and forwarded to the Forestry Commission for the appropriate action.

You will need to upload a clear, well-lit photograph to Tree Alert, but do not risk contact with the hairs to get it.

Beach Spectacular

Andrew Neild (FRES; Scientific Associate of the McGuire Centre, University of Florida)

I am a member of Herts & Middlesex BC, spending my annual 2 weeks holiday here in Aldeburgh, where I've been visiting (and lived as a kid) since the late 1960s.

I mention this to emphasise a point – I have never in my life seen so many Peacock butterflies – dozens and dozens, as reported also on your sightings page by others. I noticed the same at Minsmere. In fact, most butterflies on buddleia are Peacocks. I've seen very few other nymphalids ...

Now for the explanation .... on the hottest day last Thursday (July 25th), I spent about twenty minutes on the beach and noticed a few peacock butterflies coming off the sea, but never paid much attention as I was distracted by my family. The next day, with an hour on my hands, and my brother and niece, we noticed that the Peacocks were all coming at right angles to the beach, from the sea – clearly migrating. We saw all of them from about 50 metres out, and up to 25 metres either side of us.

We estimated one per minute over that one hour, and as I say, on a front across the beach of say 50 metres. This represents a staggering number of butterflies coming ashore: conservatively 1200 specimens per kilometre front. Given the large numbers at Minsmere, it seemed safe to assume that the front extends at least to there, and presumably much further afield, both south and north.

Every so often a small wave of 4-5 Large whites would also come in. We also noted a lot of small flies, and a couple of very large dragonflies. Overhead we spotted large numbers of swifts flying very high, massed over the beach, clearly enjoying the feast.

To be honest, I was initially sceptical and of the opinion that the butterflies were just confused Suffolk specimens that had drifted off to sea, but it quickly became obvious that this was not the case. The butterflies were flying in directly from the sea, and because of their white colour, the Pieris could be seen much further away, probably up to 200 metres distance. There can be no doubt they were migrating.

The weather conditions on Friday when we observed this were interesting – it was very hot, and sunny, the sea was calm, and there was a light breeze coming off the Suffolk coast. At around 5 pm this suddenly changed – a light cold breeze kicked up off the sea, onto the land, the sea became a little choppy, and almost immediately we saw no more butterflies. I have no idea if the butterflies had timed their departure to avoid the cold breeze, or if the breeze itself was enough to seal their doom at sea ...

It was fascinating that the only species migrating were Peacock and Large White; and I confess I was not aware of any reports for the migration of either species.

Orange Tip - *ab antiquincunx bryk* by Trevor Goodfellow

White Admiral at Bonny Wood by Jon King

Common Blue ab *radiata courvoisier* by Trevor Goodfellow

White-Letter Hairstreak by Dave Jones

Common Blue ab *apricata-supracaerulea* by Trevor Goodfellow

Small Copper ab *radiata caeruleopunctata* by Trevor Goodfellow

Silver Washed Fritillary ab Confluens - Ramsey Wood by Kev Ling

SWF ab. Confluens - Wolves Wood by Michael Bamford

Satyrium W- Album Ovipositing on Lutece

Cavenham Moth Trapping see page 19

Gatekeeper by Bill Stone

FWAG Halls Farm Open Day by Jeanette Dennis - Ashtons Legal

Marbled Whites- Landseer Park by David Walsh

Noah, Tula and Becky Boughton at Pakenham Watermill BBC