



Butterfly  
Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

# The Suffolk Argus



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

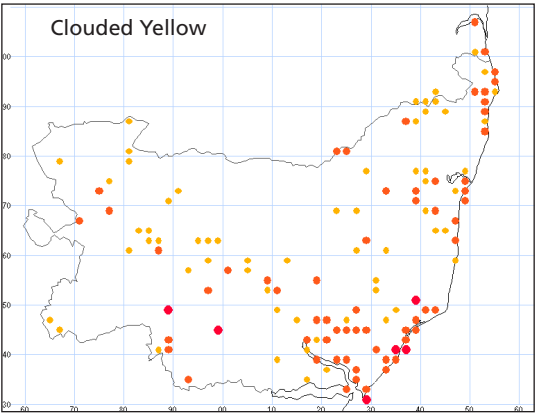
The enigmatic Clouded Yellow *Colias crocea* f. *helice* ab. *nigra* Aigner (page 8)



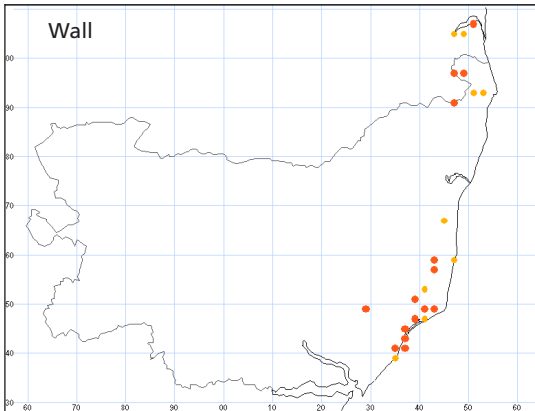
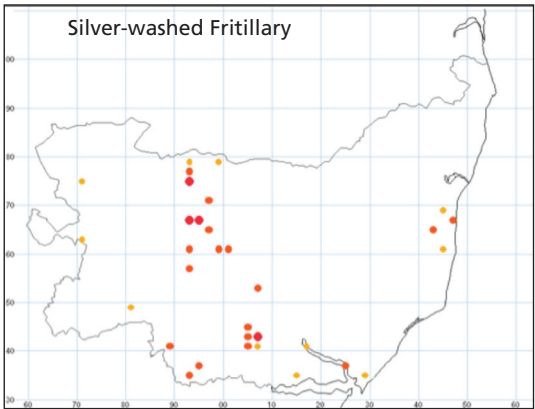
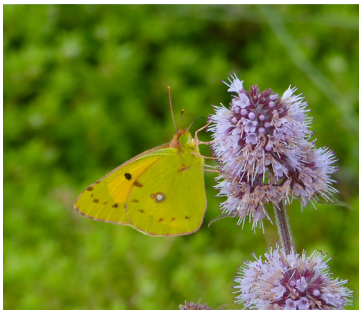
Photographed by Paul Rusher at Bawdsey

**Suffolk Butterflies 2013**

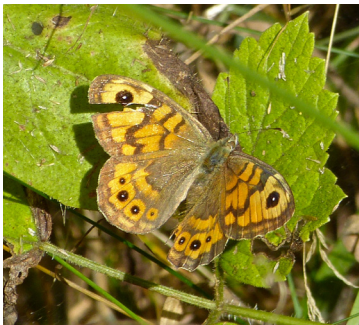
(see page 7)



Clouded Yellow



Wall



**Key:**  
● 1 sighting  
● 2-9 max seen  
● 10+ max seen

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## New Members

We welcome the following new members and look forward to meeting them at our events this year.

Ms S Bennetts	Saxmundham	Mr K Ling	Ipswich
Mr A Bimpson	Ipswich	Mrs H Macleod	Hollesley
Mr M & Mrs G Bladi	Ipswich	Mrs A Newcombe	Woolpit
Mrs J Blofield	Ipswich	Mrs N & M Nickerson & Family	Lowestoft
Mrs J Bridger	Brandon	Mr J & Ms G Owen	Dalham
Miss D Broom	Hornchurch	Mrs J Piper	Halesworth
Mrs S Collinson	Woodbridge	Mr J Rankin	Bury St Edmunds
Mr A Craven	Nowton	Mr A & Mrs C Sadler	Brome
Ms D Edwards	Earl Soham	Mr A Smuk & Mrs Y Westley	Ipswich
Miss R Garnett	Hacheston	Mr D Sweeting	Martlesham Heath
Mr J Harper	Rendlesham	Miss L Summer & Mr N King	Brandon
Miss Harris	Great Cornard	Mr B Taylor	Bury St Edmunds
Ms H Hepburn	Thrandestone	Miss G Teoli-Kendall	Trimley St Mary
Mr E Hopkins	Saxmundham	Dr S Tucker	Woodbridge
Rev'd P Ind	Woodbridge	Mrs E Walling	Ipswich
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Butterfly Conservation

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## Editorial

*Peter Maddison*

In 2013 our Branch membership leapt. Now we have members in over 400 households, that's a 22% increase on our 2012 membership! New members you are most welcome! No doubt you joined because you believe in the conservation of butterflies, moths and our environment, and no doubt you want to be involved.

We have an extensive Events programme and in the first article of the newsletter Matt Berry writes to invite you to join us at any or all of the events and he notes particularly the New Members' Days in both the east and west of the county. Julian Dowding updates us on the Ipswich Heaths Project, and you may wish to become involved in some of the conservation work parties that are held throughout the winter months.

Recording butterflies is of prime importance: if we don't know what we've got how do we know what we are losing or, hopefully, gaining. Bill Stone, our county recorder received over 18,000 records in 2013, but he wants more in 2014! Recording sheets are available on the website [www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk](http://www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk) where a regularly updated county 'Sightings' page can be found.

Twm Wade has become the new co-ordinator for the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey and he writes to encourage you to join in with this none too onerous survey.

Read here about the Chalkhill Blue colony that has recently been discovered in Suffolk, read about the observations of butterflies that members have made and, in the coming months make your own observations. Enjoy!

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## Events for 2014

*Matt Berry*

You will have found your 2014 event programme card with this issue of the Argus. I'd just like to point out some of the highlights of the year and explain the focus of one or two newer style of event that you may not be familiar with.

There are two dates this year for what are being called 'New Members' Days'. The idea behind them is to help recently joined members (of which there have been many in the past few years!) learn more about Suffolk and its Lepidoptera and to learn practical skills for identifying and recording butterflies. It can also help

you become more familiar with how the Suffolk Branch works and meet members of the committee, turning us from names on a page into real people! The format for these events is as follows. We start with an indoor session and presentations along the lines of 'Why Record Butterflies?' 'Habitat & Ecology' and 'The Status & Identification of Species'. This leads on to heading outside to do some practical fieldwork and recording, with help on observation skills, identification of species and habitat and larval host plants. I encourage you to try these events this year as I'm sure you'd get a lot out of them,

particularly if all of this is rather new or daunting to you. We're here to help and support you in becoming even more informed and interested (or obsessed) with butterflies and moths! But please do register in advance as places are limited.

We also have a focus on our heathland sites in the east of the county. The Ipswich Heaths Project is a big deal for us as a branch and we want to share what we've been doing to improve sites for wildlife and to come together and record butterflies and moths as part of our monitoring programme. So starting off we've got the first New Members Day event at Martlesham Heath in the spring, as outlined above. Then, during National Insect Week, we're running a moth night at Pipers Vale in Ipswich. We finish the season with a summer walk at Purdis Heath SSSI in Ipswich, looking for Grayling and other interesting heathland wildlife. The vast majority of work in the heaths project has been on this site so we're very keen to monitor how wildlife responds to the habitat management we're undertaking – recording during such events is a valuable way of contributing to this.

Heading out of the county (as we tend to do occasionally!) we've got an interesting day planned looking for Wood Whites in June. Our Regional Officer, Sharon Hearle, will lead the event and she knows the area well so I'm sure that will be well worthwhile attending, especially if you haven't seen Wood Whites before. We are also venturing north, over the border into Norfolk. Our neighbours have very kindly invited us to visit Kelling Heath with them, to look for Silver-studded Blues and find out more about the management and history of the site.

If your passport allows you to travel even further afield than Norfolk then there are butterfly watching weeks available in France and Greece, being offered by Greenwings Wildlife Holidays. These are the sole responsibility of Greenwings, but Butterfly Conservation does receive a 10% donation from the profits. The leaders include well known author and butterfly/flower expert Tristan Lafranchis and Roger Gibbons, an expert on French butterflies. Not only are these holidays in beautiful and sunny places but there are often 100 or more butterfly species to see, some in large numbers. This kind of spectacle can be quite different and awe inspiring if you're more used to the modest numbers of butterflies we generally see in the UK.

Finally, if you would like to get more involved in the running of events then we'd love to hear from you! We depend on volunteers to make them happen and one can never have enough help! You don't have to be an expert on butterflies or moths, a friendly disposition and an interest in the subject are more than adequate qualifications on most occasions. Quite often we need more people willing to be at a stand to speak to people and give out leaflets and membership forms, or to help with craft and children's activities. If that sounds like you, then please do get in touch with us!



Comma by Beryl Johnson



## Suffolk Butterflies 2013

Bill Stone

I had hoped to be able to provide a thorough overview of the 2013 Suffolk Butterfly year but I am still trying to finalise the butterfly records received. So far over 18,000 records have been added to the record database and I am still receiving more each week. Unfortunately, working full time means that I can only number crunch the records in the evenings and weekends so please bear with me. I have instead picked three species to provide brief comment on as they highlight some interesting and worrying developments.

Firstly, 2013 will be remembered as a brilliant **Clouded Yellow** year. This immigrant to the UK from North Africa and southern Europe was first seen in Suffolk in April this year. It was then seen in each month through to November with peak numbers being seen in July and August. Several counts in excess of 20 have been received and several records of the female form *helice* were also recorded (see Rob Parker's article). The map (page 2) shows the location of the 325 records received and it is clear that the butterfly penetrated well into Suffolk through the river valleys but with most records, as expected, along the coast. It is also worth mentioning that several observers recorded evidence of pairing and egg laying.

In 2012, the **Silver Washed Fritillary** in Suffolk was seen to increase its numbers within known woods and expand its range into suitable surrounding woodlands and habitats. In 2013, this pattern has continued with the butterfly being recorded in 32 squares. Some very high counts in excess of 50 butterflies have

also been made with several recorders noting pairing and egg laying taking place. A total of 89 records have been received with some being recorded in urban gardens, near railway lines along with some records of this species being seen flying over open fields close to known woodland strongholds (Pakenham Woods). As can be seen in the map (page 2) the butterflies have spread out from the known woodland strongholds.

The **Wall**, in 2012 was seen to have its range reduced even further with the Suffolk population being squeezed into several pockets along a narrow strip on the east coast. Sadly, 2013 has shown no real positive development in this situation. In 2012 the Wall was recorded in 23 tetrads, in 2013 it has been recorded in 24. Again as in 2012, the vast majority of records come from the known strongholds of East Lane/Shingle Street, Orford and the Lowestoft/Waveney Valley. The most westerly record in east Suffolk was at Sutton Hoo. There were no accepted records of Wall in the west of the County. The map (page 2) shows the dire situation of this species in Suffolk.



Clouded Yellow  
by Beryl Johnson

## An Enigmatic Variation

Rob Parker

2013 was “A Clouded Yellow Year”, and many observers delighted in watching them in the fields where they lingered. Fortunately they took photos, which I did not, although I did enjoy the sight of them at various inland sites. *Colias crocea*, the Clouded Yellow, lays its eggs on lucerne (alfalfa) if it can find it, but will settle for clover if it has to. So the best localities for seeing them were the flower-rich coastal spots where they made their first landfall for refreshment. If there was clover, they stayed on, eggs were laid, and a second generation emerged in September and flew well into October.

Can you tell a male from a female? Generally, this is quite easy if you get a view of the upper surface - as the black margins to the forewings are solid black on the males, but disrupted by a string of yellow blotches in the females. Take a look at the photos on Page 24 and you can see the difference. When they settle, they rarely bask, but generally clamp their wings tightly closed, making it difficult to differentiate between the sexes - unless you get close up and the light is falling through the wings towards you. The fresh female generally has a rich orange-yellow ground colour, but a small proportion (about 5%) appear with an almost white ground colour. In flight, these can be mistaken for a “White” by an unimaginative observer, or, by an optimist, for a Pale Clouded Yellow. I let one fly by at Cavenham, and pointed it out to my companion as the pale female form.

So, it came as no surprise when several people asked whether these were *Colias hyale* - the Pale Clouded Yellow. I had to disappoint a couple of observers with an explanation that they were *helice* - the white

form of the female, properly known as *Colias crocea* form *helice*.

On 20th August, Paul Rusher visited East Lane at Bawdsey and managed to get some nice photos, and I got the *helice* story out again. Later, taking a second look at one of his underside photos (cover photo Page 1) a penny dropped and I realised that I was looking at solid black forewing markings - shouting male at me. Since *f.helice* occurs only in the female, I knew there was a problem. After a good deal of searching for accurate descriptions of the forms and aberrations of the various species, I made an enquiry with Alec Harmer, the author of *Variation in British Butterflies*, and he was able to tell me that a solid black submarginal marking does not always mean male. There is an uncommon aberration in which some female *crocea* lack the normal yellow blotches, and this has been named *pseudomas* Cockerell when it occurs in the otherwise normal Clouded Yellow. However, a similar aberration can also occur in form *helice* (the white form of the female), and this has been named *ab. nigra* Aigner.

So the butterfly Paul photographed is *Colias crocea* f. *helice* *ab. nigra* Aigner - a female Clouded Yellow of the “white” female form and the aberration with black borders suppressing the pale spots normally occurring in females. I find it difficult to say how rare this might be, but let’s just say that it is so rare that it took a real specialist to identify it.

I think that is probably sufficient tricky taxonomy for one article!



## Ipswich Heaths Project - Purdis Heath SSSI update for the Silver-studded Blue

Julian Dowding



Efforts have continued over the winter months, often in spite of gloomy weather predictions, with regular work parties on the first Saturday of the month of between 16 and 19 volunteers

clearing gorse and birch scrub from the heath. These along with more informal sessions accomplished much habitat work.

This work will allow a follow up machine cut of mature heather by a technique known as forage harvesting. By choosing where we cut we can encourage the growth of early stage or pioneer and building heathers, interwoven with areas of mature heather. This will create a mosaic of different age structures of heather suitable for the Silver-studded Blue butterfly and the ant upon which it depends. The interface between tall and short heather will create a beneficial micro-climate providing shelter for the butterfly, and warm places for the female butterfly to lay her eggs. It should also increase the abundance of Bell Heather, the butterfly's principal nectar plant, which is in short supply. In the not too distant past, livestock grazing would have created this structure, but today our only recourse is by human intervention.

During the winter period we are also aiming to scrape back other areas, where heather has become old and degenerate, to the underlying sand, by using a JCB. By judiciously strewing these scraped areas with heather clippings, containing Bell Heather seeds, we hope to encourage new heathers to germinate. Scraping also removes much of the decomposing heather and gorse litter, which if left on site would eventually add unwanted nutrients to the site, which is already a problem for Purdis and its heathland flora and fauna.

Work has also started to create suitable conditions to help the butterfly increase both the size and range of its colony on a section of the heath north of Purdis Farm Lane. This has been achieved with additional help from Greenways Project and Ipswich Wildlife Group. The work will also provide a habitat link from Purdis to Ipswich Golf Course, where, in the not too distant past, the butterfly was recorded on suitable habitat. The map highlights the area with an obvious white arrow showing the direction we hope the butterflies will take, given the prevailing south-westerlies.

With the current level of interest in the site, we are constantly learning of other species which seem to be benefiting from habitat work. Last summer, five Graylings were recorded on just one day and Small Heaths were also present. Both of these are noteworthy BAP species. The heath is also a good place for Small Coppers, Green Hairstreaks and Common Blues.

The management of the woodland edge, with the removal of scrub and invasive species such as Birch, has extended and improved the woodland - heathland interface. This is an important zone particularly for birds and reptiles. A number of Woodcock have been observed here and although probably only wintering birds, they are very welcome. For those of you with an ornithological interest, it might be worth searching the site for roding Woodcock at dusk and dawn in early spring, just in case they are in fact breeding.

The east and south facing edges, particularly where dead hedges and habitat piles have been created using scrub removed from the heathland, have also been brilliant in providing habitat for Viviparous Lizards and Slow Worms. Again, these are BAP species. Hopefully, some of you will visit the site over the coming weeks and months and enjoy this rare fragment of what was once an extensive tract of heathland stretching from Ipswich all the way to Lowestoft. If you see anything interesting, please let us know. There are a number of ways of keeping up to date with what's going on. Please see contact details page.

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## **The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS)**

*What it is about. A simple way to become involved in Butterfly Conservation.*

*Twm Wade*

Are you like me six months ago, not knowing what "WCBS" stood for or what it was about? Would you like to be involved with Citizen Science (the use of amateurs to assist with scientific projects)? Can you spare two dry, sunny summer days a year in your local area to identify and count butterflies?

*So what is it about?*

The purpose of the WCBS is to provide evidence about the abundance of common and widespread butterflies. A secondary outcome can be to identify areas where there is a dearth or absence of butterflies which is as important as finding a colony of a rare, specialist species.

*What does it involve?*

A standard method has been set out which is both practical and provides statistics with scientific merit (website: [www.ukbms.org/wcbs.aspx](http://www.ukbms.org/wcbs.aspx)). The commitment of time is much less than surveying a transect, and developing or average identification skills are acceptable. The scheme requires 2 surveys to be done, one each in July and August in a local kilometre grid square, at a gentle walking pace along a route you have chosen being about 1.5 miles long; enjoy. The square is allocated to one person (but there is nothing to stop you taking friends or family).

*What is the scientific outcome?*

Each year BC produces a report giving the immediately available statistics about

species, numbers, ups & downs, squares surveyed and a general roundup so that each surveyor knows what they have been part of. In time, it will become apparent what is happening to butterfly populations across the UK and help inform government and environmental organisations about this beautiful insect. In truth, we do not know how important the survey will be as time progresses. Scientifically, good data collected over time can be used in a wide range of studies by students and professors alike and is so much better than hearsay.

*How do I get involved?*

I have been asked to take on the role of WCBS Co-ordinator for the Suffolk Branch. You may choose a square from the

schedule in a location that is convenient to where you live. When you contact me I will provide you with a plan of the square, guidance, H&S advice, the standard letter to a landowner whose land you wish to cross, electronic forms for recording your work, and as much help to get you started as I can.

*Finally*

This is meant to be fun I hope you will feel you are contributing to butterfly conservation in Suffolk and across the UK in a practical way. To get started please contact me on:- email

twm.wade@yahoo.com or post - Northbrook, North End, Exning, Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 7JT.

## WCBS Squares Available to New Participants

Grid Ref	Town Parish of Grid	Post Code of Grid
TL6545	Haverhill	CB9 9PP
TL7779	Eriswell	IP24 3TX
TL8381	Thetford (west)	IP24 3ST
TL8482	Thetford (west)	IP24 3QP
TL9859	Rattlesden	IP30 0RR
TM0057	Buxhall	IP14 3DL
TM0058	Buxhall	IP14 3DH
TM2975	Cratfield	IP19 0DP
TM3180	St James, South Elmham and Metfield	IP19 0HT
TM3183	St Margaret, South Elmham	IP20 0PJ
TM3568	Peasenhall	IP17 2NQ
TM4069	Darsham	IP17 3PH
TM5195	Flixton, Lowestoft	NR32 5PB

## A View from the Bridge?

*Mike Dean*

*Chair of Suffolk Branch and BC Trustee*

I'm sure that almost all of you who are reading this at the moment know all about butterflies, especially those that we are lucky enough to see in Suffolk, and probably know quite a lot about moths as well. However, you might not be so aware of our own society, Butterfly Conservation (BC); I say that with a little certainty, as before I became a Trustee for BC at the 2012 AGM, my own knowledge was certainly a little hazy!

BC was formed by a small group of dedicated naturalists in 1968 following the alarming decline of many beautiful butterflies across the nation and at that time it was sited in Quorn in Leicestershire, run I believe, from the then Chairman's living room! Its *raison d'être* is very simple: the conservation of butterflies, moths and our environment but, as we all appreciate, the practice is much, much more complicated. Today, BC Head Office can be found at East Lulworth in Dorset which is a lovely corner of rural England but a devil to get to either by road or public transport; it's set up as a charity, which means that it has to abide by very strict and complicated regulations laid down, like other charities, by the Charity Commission, especially in the way the society behaves and how it allocates it's spending. Our society has paying membership (us) and local Branches which implies that Branches & members all fall under the same rules and regulations that BC itself does, which means that Branch autonomy can only go so far and there can sometimes be tensions.

BC is headed by a long-standing Chief Executive (Martin Warren) who is charged with running the operational side of the organisation along with his staff. The overall strategy and governance of the society (in conjunction with Martin) is

overseen by a Board of Trustees (the BC Council). Currently there are 15 Trustees who come from all walks of life and all different types of background from finance and marketing to education, as a balance of skills is essential as many of the issues that face BC as a charity are pretty complicated. The Council is chaired by a Trustee (currently David Dennis, with vice chair Jim Asher) and the Council meets formally 4 times a year to keep on top of business.

All this may seem a far cry from the joy of most members, which is to get out in the summer sunshine hunting and watching lepidoptera! However, driving the strategy of BC at the highest level is really important because BC needs to manoeuvre within the national conservation and political landscape so as to have as much clout as possible whilst carrying the flag for lepidoptera conservation. In this sense that position is recognised by the current BC 2020 Vision; numbers of members is very important when talking to politicians and national funding bodies. You will hear more of all of this over forthcoming years.



Orange-tip (f) on garlic mustard by Beryl Johnson

## The Chalkhill Blue Returns

Rob Parker

The Chalkhill Blue is back in Suffolk after a 90 years' absence. Well, it is not quite as simple as that, as readers of "The Butterflies of Suffolk" (Mendel & Piotrowski, 1986) will know. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was known from the chalk-pits at Little Blakenham and Blakenham Parva, Creting Hills and lesser chalky outcrops at Moulton, Eriswell, Dalham in the west, and even at Felixtowe and Lowestoft in the east. However, it began to thin out, and was last known to be breeding in Suffolk from a series of 16 specimens taken in Barton Mills in August 1923.

Even then, a healthy colony continued to breed on the Devil's Dyke – along the border with Cambridgeshire. It is well known that the Cambs/Suffolk administrative boundary lies along the top of that florally rich, chalky, archaeological feature. It is less well understood that the present administrative county boundaries are not relevant to biological recording. For that purpose, the Victorian Vice-county boundary divides VC26 (Suffolk) from VC29 (Cambs); it crosses Newmarket Heath a couple of hundred yards to the Newmarket side of the Devil's Dyke, leaving the Chalkhill Blues in the Cambridgeshire recorder's domain. The long-standing Suffolk butterfly recording sheet does not list the species, and somehow, the butterflies seemed content to keep it that way.

Over the past 10 years, volunteers of the Cambs Wildlife Trust and the Cambs & Essex Branch of Butterfly Conservation have been working hard to extend the suitable habitat along the dyke by clearing scrub on the southern side, and encouraging the spread of horseshoe vetch – the larval host plant for *Lysandra*

*coridon*, to give the butterfly its scientific name. A butterfly transect, walked every week in the 26 week season by our very own Sharon Hearle allows us to measure the progress of the colony from year to year. In recent years, the numbers have risen back towards the "boundless profusion" in which they were said to fly there in 1858. Over the same decade, *coridon* has been doing rather well in the south of England too, straying away from its established colonies in particularly hot weather. Just south of the Devil's Dyke, lies another similar, but smaller line feature – the Fleam Dyke, where the chalkland was also receiving the attention of conservationists, and in the past 5 years *coridon* has established a second stronghold there. Further south still, lies the Roman Road, and when it reached there, perhaps we should have sent out search parties along the Suffolk border – but we did not.

We were taken by surprise. An entry on the Sightings page of the Branch website [www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk](http://www.suffolkbutterflies.org.uk) in August 2013 made us sit up though. A visitor from London claimed to have seen 30 *coridon* on a chalky site near Cavenham. So naturally, your county butterfly recorder shot out there to see whether this could possibly be true. Although it was a gloomy day, it did not take long to confirm that at least 7 were indeed present. A few days later, on 20th Aug, I returned to the site in good weather, in the company of Twm Wade and the Estate gamekeepers. We counted 50 *coridon*, some settled, some flying, some pairing, some fresh, others worn. This was no gaggle of vagrants, but an established colony.

By now, I was in touch with Rupert Kaye,

the visitor who made the first sighting, and he told me they had been there for several years. He checked his diaries and found that he had noted some on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2010, but had not appreciated at the time, that we believed that we did not have *coridon* in Suffolk. My impression is that they are properly established, and had not just covered the 14 km from the Devil's Dyke during the extremely hot weather of August 2013. It seems quite likely that there were other touchdowns at points between the Cambridgeshire colonies and Cavenham, so a quick search of likely chalk outcrops and quarries was made by a small bunch of enthusiasts, but we were approaching the end of the flight period, and only one single *coridon* was seen at a different site, on the railway embankment

close to Higham, by Tim Wesley. It would be helpful if others wish to join in a search of that area next year.

As for the breeding site, I need to make it clear that it is on privately owned land, and that whilst I had the landowner's consent, his approval does not extend to unauthorized visitors. An August search for chalky outcrops with public access, for example the protected roadside verges astride the Cavenham – Lackford road at TL770698, or the historic sites mentioned in Mendel & Piotrowski would be a better use of resources. Bear in mind that the last thing we want is to upset the landowner. Visit the Devil's Dyke first to get your eye in for *coridon* and for the horseshoe vetch.

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## The Dingy Skipper – Suffolk's rarest breeding butterfly

Rob Parker

Judged by the number of tetrads in which it is found, the Dingy Skipper has become Suffolk's rarest breeding species in recent years, and by 2010 it was restricted to one healthy colony in the (FC) King's Forest, and an ongoing search at the sites from which it had disappeared over the previous 6 years was optimistically kept up. There were a couple of small rays of light during the 2012 season, but the counts at the King's Forest site were on the low side, so my expectations for 2013 were low.

It actually turned out much better than I had ever hoped. The deferred spring of 2013 may have suited the species in some way. Although they were late on the wing by a couple of weeks, first sighting was on 19th May and the annual count on 26th May found a total of 83 flying over a much wider area than usual. Visits to outlying

sites on the 2nd & 7th June produced nice surprises with a total of 11 seen on Thetford Heath and its immediate vicinity, and the first sighting at RAF Barnham since 2005. In the meantime, the staff at Center Parcs also had their first sighting since 2006.

The King's Forest is a large site; usually it is seen in 2 tetrads, but this year it was in 4, and the spread is partly down to conservation work done (at our suggestion) by the Forestry Commission - rides were widened about 4 years ago to let more sunlight in. This seems to have paid off, and elsewhere the bird's-foot trefoil has spread naturally, extending the flight area eastwards. It seems that they bred well and dispersed somewhat - confounding our gloomy expectations. Let's hope the unexpected surge continues in 2014.



## An Update on the Population of Silver-studded Blue over the 6 years since its Translocation to Blaxhall Common.

Rob Parker

The translocation in 2007 of 60 adult Silver-studded Blues to Blaxhall Common in 2 batches from 2 different donor sites was notified to the Joint Committee for the Conservation of British Insects, and followed up with a detailed account of the re-establishment attempt in a special edition of the Suffolk Argus (2008). The consents required us to accept the obligation to maintain the habitat and to monitor the health of the colony over a minimum period of 5 years. What follows is a progress report on what appears to have been a successful establishment. A longer version has been submitted to Invertebrate Link and to Butterfly Conservation's head office.

The code of conservation practice for the translocation of invertebrates (JCCBI, 2010) and the International guidelines for reintroductions and translocations (IUCN, 2013) both stress the need for responsible post-release monitoring, outcome assessment and continuing management of the release site. The importance of disseminating information on establishment attempts is also stressed.

The Common is owned by Blaxhall Parish Council and the Suffolk Wildlife Trust is responsible for the management of the site, both professionally and with the assistance of a team of local volunteers led by Terry Peake. Over the period since the translocation, the common has been forage harvested in such a way as to create patches of pioneer heather, extending the area of suitable habitat for the Silver-studded Blue. The volunteer work parties have kept the silver birch encroachment under control and

have cleared areas of gorse and other scrub.

A single-species transect was established in time for the emergence of the 2008 generation, and has just completed its 6th year of monitoring. This too has been organized by the volunteer team, with the results fed back to the County Butterfly Recorder and to UKBMS. Transect results have been the prime means of monitoring the health of the colony. The table below provides 4 different elements of results, 3 of them entirely transect derived:

1. A progressively rising single day peak count for each year.
2. The total count for the whole transect season. This also rose progressively, apart from a slight dip in 2012 (a poor season for most species).
3. The number of consecutive transect weeks in which *P. argus* was recorded. This is a coarse reflection of the total flight period for the season.
4. The expansion of the flight area, firstly within the 8 sections of the transect, and latterly beyond the boundaries of the transect. The observations were made mostly by the local volunteers, and some by casual recorders on occasional visits to the site. The most significant expansion has been to a triangle of pioneer heather to the south west of Section 1. On two occasions, singletons have been seen to the south of the B1069.

One additional element became available in 2013, through the co-operation of Dr Neil Ravenscroft, a professional ecologist living in Blaxhall. He conducted an independent

assessment of the flight areas, walked 3 mini transects and extrapolated the likely population of the entire site to something in the order of 900. (Ravenscroft, N., 2013,). This is materially higher than the sum of the

peak one-day transect count and the highest off-transect count (160 + 51 = 211), and may be optimistic. It caters for the incomplete detectability of butterflies in the heather habitat not visited by the transect route.

**Monitoring Silver-studded Blue Population at Blaxhall Common**

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
<b>Highest single-day Count</b>							
60 released	13	16	24	45	48	160	[1]
<b>Transect Annual Total</b>							
n/a	41	38	70	155	133	476	
<b>Flight period in transect weeks [2]</b>							
	5	5	6	9	7	6	[1]
<b>Flight Area [3]</b>							
2008 close to 3 original release points							
2009 some off-transect sightings							
first single sighting south of the road 2012							
plus 51 on pioneer heather in SW close to road 2013.							

**Independent Assessment of Total Population for entire site [4]** 900

**Notes**

- [1] The 2013 season started late and was compressed to 6 transect weeks, with mass emergence pushing peak single day count to 160.
- [2] Simplified to transect weeks; when earlier or later sightings arose these extended the flight period, but are ignored here for consistency.
- [3] Off-transect sightings varied from year to year. In 2013, the 51 counted off transect were present a week before the peak count of 160.
- [4] See Ravenscroft, N., 2013 for method used for population assessment on 14<sup>th</sup> July 2013.

It is clear from the table that the establishment attempt got off to a very satisfactory start and this was featured in the journal of the Royal Entomological Society “Antenna” (Parker, 2012). The two donor sites have also been monitored, and show no evidence of damage following the donation. The receiving site passed the fragile three to five-year danger zone, and the results for 2013 look re-assuring by every measure. However, there is no cause for complacency; regular habitat management remains a key requirement if this colony is to continue

to thrive. Fortunately the motivation of everyone involved remains strong.

**References:**  
IUCN, 2013, Guidelines for Reintroductions and other Conservation Translocations.  
JCCBI, 2010, Invertebrate Translocation – a code of conservation practice.  
Parker, R., 2008. Report on Translocation of Silver-studded Blue, *Plebejus argus* to Blaxhall Common, Suffolk. In Suffolk Argus Special Edition, Summer 2008  
Parker, R., 2012. Monitoring a translocation of Silver-studded Blue in Suffolk. In Antenna 36 (1).  
Ravenscroft, N., 2013 (unpublished email) Silver-studded Blue Counts.

## The Wall in 2013

*Richard Stewart*

In recent issues of the Argus Rob Parker has given detailed analysis of the Wall's national and county decline. In the past few years I have only located it on the coast, previously having recorded it from several inland sites, including the Fynn Valley transect walk.

In 2013 I went to four locations on a Wall search, all previously having held this species. The first, on 20th July, was the river walk from Slaughden back to the far side of Aldeburgh, using the lower, more sheltered path, which has more nectar sources. None was found, but I did count a welcome 49 Small Tortoiseshell, virtually all of them nectaring on thistles and almost certainly migrants.

East Lane Bawdsey on 24th July also was unsuccessful and I noted that the area cleared of vegetation, for pipes/cables to come ashore, was just in the area where I had seen them previously. The day's highlight was a close view of a hare, slowly ambling across a stubble field, as I sat eating my lunch, camouflaged by the nearby Martello tower.

A much longer walk from Boyton to Hollesley produced four Clouded Yellow which were my first in Suffolk since 2009, one a deep saffron colour. Right at the end of the river section, where a footpath heads inland to the Hollesley Bay colony, I at last found just one Wall. The date was 14th August.

The best was still to come, on 29th August at Orford. By sheer coincidence I had

contacted our editor the previous date, on a different matter, and when I mentioned my forthcoming visit he told me he had been there that day, recording six Wall, and giving me their location. My visit produced five, four of which were well apart from his sightings. Subsequent correspondence has revealed that others saw the Wall in this area in 2013, including Beryl and Alan Johnson, Chris Strachan and Debbie Broom. Peter's comments included:

'All the Walls were well separated except for two that were performing courtship spirals that went on and on. Two of the other females were flying low over the long grasses and descending every few metres into the grass, working their way deep into the base of the grass, then emerging within 30 secs or so. Egg laying I presume, but the chosen places were not particularly hot, dry tussocks on the path edge. All very fascinating to watch. But I dread what the people of Orford must have thought about the loiterer on the river wall. I won't go back 'till next year!'

Several sightings were well away from the river path, along the surrounding lanes. I have sent Bill Stone all the relevant notes and marked locations on a large scale map. Perhaps in 2014 we can organise a one day comprehensive survey of the whole area. This is obviously, at present, a valuable hotspot for this threatened species.

## Garden Buddleja

Richard Stewart

As a follow up to Bill Stone's article in volume 57, here are observations on our garden buddlejas in 2013. We have an early flowering *B. alternifolia* which over the years has attracted six feeding species: Small and Green-veined White, Holly Blue, Small Tortoiseshell, Comma and Meadow Brown. It is, anyway, worth having just for its long cascades of light purplish flowers.

The late flowering yellow *B. weyeriana* has attracted seven: Large and Green-veined White, Peacock, Red Admiral, Comma, Speckled Wood and Gatekeeper. The late flowers particularly attract Red Admirals and with constant deadheading it flowered through to mid December.

The other three are *B. davidii* varieties, one

in a pot and the other two having attracted sixteen species so far: all three whites, Brimstone, Large Skipper, Holly Blue, Peacock, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Comma, Painted Lady, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper and the two rarest, Purple Hairstreak and Grayling. The latter, in 2013, was our first garden record for over ten years. Twenty species were recorded in the garden this year, helped by good views from our kitchen window of the main buddleja. On some days it was difficult to count numbers accurately, with a maximum on one day of 21 Small Tortoiseshells (what a contrast to previous years) and 26 Peacocks. The flowering period was extended by six separate deadheadings and the main *B. davidii* was still flowering up to the 29th October.

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## Clouded Yellow - Field Note

Bill Stone

On the 12th October 2013, I visited East Lane in the hope of finding some Clouded Yellows and to have a good look around for other butterflies. On arriving at the car park I immediately saw a male Clouded Yellow flying away strongly over the bank edge of the first lagoon. I waited on the lagoon corner for it to return in the hope that it may stop long enough for me to photograph it. After a few minutes, the butterfly returned but it showed no sign of settling, instead it seemed to be patrolling the bank area and the path that runs between the lagoons and the sea wall.

I watched it for a while and then was quite surprised when it flew straight at a pair of Common Darter *Sympetrum striolatum* that were flying in tandem. The butterfly appeared to try and break the pairing. It failed and then flew away resuming a strong patrolling flight. Watching it at close range through binoculars I saw it again fly at another pair of Common Darters. This time the darters were flying low over wet ground in the centre of the path. Again, the butterfly was seen to physically fly into the darters and this time succeeded in breaking the pairing. However, after achieving this the butterfly just flew on. I watched this particular male

Clouded Yellow do this to two more pairs of Common Darters before it flew strongly north along the path and out of sight.

I saw at least three other Clouded Yellows (male –a much tattier butterfly than the first one and two females) during my visit but none showed any similar behaviour.

I have seen a number of butterfly species acting aggressively towards each other, for example male Green Hairstreaks flying out from perches on Broom. However, I have never come across a butterfly which appeared to deliberately go out of its way to disrupt other insects in such a way as seen with this Clouded Yellow. It would be interesting to hear from anyone else that has come across this behaviour.

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## Great Glemham Farms and Pound Wood, 3rd August 2013

*Rob Parker*

By kind invitation of Lord Cranbrook, (President of SWT and a Vice President of Butterfly Conservation) we made a survey of Airfield Farm, sited on the old Parham airfield on 3rd August.

A party of 14 members were met by Lord Cranbrook's son Argus and escorted to a most unusual County Wildlife Site - the disused runway, alongside a half-built solar farm. When the wartime airfield was returned to agriculture, the concrete runway was smashed up and most of the rubble was removed from the site, at which point the contractor went bankrupt and the site was abandoned. The lime-rich runway shaped recess that remained was not fit for agriculture and was left to natural regeneration. Many years later, the quality of its flora was recognized and CWS status was awarded. Occasional surveys of the flora and some of the fauna have been conducted, but until this visit, the lepidoptera had not been properly examined. The site we found was deeply rich with flowering knapweed and plenty of common butterflies were enjoying the nectar. As we walked, we appreciated that there were plenty of other, less evident, plants beneath the knapweed, and a

patchwork of scrub was expanding across the site in places. Many of the trees were now mature and sheltered the site from the wind, but the impression was that the site was becoming too overgrown.

The enormous field alongside the CWS was a work-in-progress, having almost filled up with surface mounted solar panels. Our host explained that the intention is to sow wildflower-rich seed mixes under the panels, including nectar and pollen rich plants for the benefit of bees and lepidoptera - and to graze the sward with sheep. It had been necessary to raise the panels to give sufficient clearance for the sheep, and then to adjust the angle of the panels downwards to minimize visual impact from the surrounding countryside. A boundary hedge will be planted to obscure the view as well. This was all of great interest, and we finished with an appreciation that a great deal of thought has gone into ecological aspects of managing the land for electricity generation, farming for sheep, and conserving habitat for wildlife too.

The third element of interest was a pleasing area surrounding a string of fishing

lakes. These are used by the local angling club, and for general recreation, being accessible to local people too. There were nice areas of mixed scrub, attractive to both birds and butterflies, and the subsoil extracted during the digging of the ponds has produced a fine crop of orchids. We added Painted Lady and Brown Argus, bringing the total for Airfield Farm to 15 species (see table below).

For the afternoon, we moved on to Pound Wood, a Woodland Trust site that was their first large scale woodland creation planting on previously agricultural land.

After a picnic lunch, we took a stroll through the woodland and meadows, seeing 16 species in the tetrad north of

Great Glemham - 3 whites, 3 skippers, Peacock, 2 Painted Lady, Ringlet, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Common Blue female, Speckled Wood, Small Heath, one Purple Hairstreak, and Comma. The lacewing that landed on Twm Wade's monocular was admired close-up by everyone and the 'spot of the afternoon' award went to Beryl Johnson who, without binoculars, saw a low-flying Purple Hairstreak. We also recorded Southern and Brown Hawker. My thanks to Richard Stewart who kindly took the lead for the afternoon.

#### Species List

AM. - CY, SS, ES, LS, LW, SW, GVW, - BA, CB, PL, P, C, GK, MB, R.

PM. - SS, ES, LS, LW, SW, GVW, PH, BA, CB, PL, P, C, GK, MB, R, SH.

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## **Greenwings' Balkan Butterfly Holiday, 15-22 June 2013**

*Bill Stone and Julian Dowding*

Our base was the little town of Kalavryta, situated in the foothills of Mount Chelmos, in the Peloponnese region of Greece. The area is a wilderness of pine forested slopes, merging into flowery grasslands and rock at around 800 metres and is renowned for its endemic flora and fauna. Butterfly species such as the rare, beautifully coloured Chelmos Blue, found in Europe only on Mt Chelmos, are not only a delight to behold, but creatures which must be preserved. It's a very peaceful place too, often with only the hum of bees or the tinkling of goat bells to punctuate the silence. To be out on this vast magical mountain, which is sometimes known as 'Aroania', will always engage the mind and lift the spirits.

The group of ten guests was guided by celebrated author and naturalist Tristan Lafranchis and Suffolk's own Julian

Dowding and Bill Stone. The holiday was run by Greenwings Wildlife Holidays.

**Day 1: Chelmos.** The first day following our arrival. The weather was perfect with blue skies interspersed with light cloud cover as we headed out onto the mountain exploring different habitats ranging from gullies to scree and meadows. All around us in huge numbers flew Black-veined Whites, Cleopatras, Large Tortoiseshells, Greek Clouded Yellows Powdered Brimstones and Amanda's Blues. The group was thrilled that we found all of our key target species: Pontic, Chelmos, and Odd-spot Blue and Southern Swallowtail.

**Day 2: The coast.** Search for the Two-tailed Pasha. We stopped en route at a meadow by a stream, to see curious looking Nettle-Tree Butterflies along with Southern White Admirals, and good numbers of Escher's



Blues. Great Banded Graylings were ubiquitous among the many other species there. At a gorge, beautiful pink *Crepis rubra* flowers added a splash of colour to the impressive geological feature rising up high above and around us. Tristan had prepared a bait for the Pashas, and with his hand held out of the window, Pashas were soon following the car. Equally impressive were the swathes of wild oleander, their pink flowers seeming to touch the deep azure sky. Our third site was a walk back along the gorge walls in a successful search for new brood Southern Comma butterflies.

**Day 3: Undisclosed location.** Tristan had spent a few years studying the 3 regional Anomalous Blues and took us to a secret spot high in the mountains to see them all together. We were delighted to find all 3: Grecian, Ripart's, Anomalous. We lunched at the top of the mountain overlooking the Gulfs of Patra and Corinth whilst Scarce Swallowtails, Ilex and Sloe Hairstreaks fluttered all around us. On returning towards Kalavryta we encountered innumerable Balkan Marbled Whites, imbibing nectar from *Echium italicum* and also our first Grecian Coppers.

**Day 4: Hidden glades.** Greenwings had visited the area in 2010, thus it was a treat this day to lead Tristan to a new spot. A flowery meadow was filled with a huge variety of butterflies. Flashes of violet and metallic orange Purple-shot Coppers took our breath away, Queen of Spain Fritillaries gilded every other flower, whilst beautiful Marbled Fritillaries dabbed their eggs onto Brambles. Ambling up the mountain track we watched Pearl-bordered and Dark Green Fritillaries with Grizzled Skippers nectaring on the many clovers and sages, whilst we paused occasionally to take photographs or sample the delicious wild strawberries growing

there. Wood Whites in this part of Greece choose *Dorycnium hirsutum* on which to lay eggs. We saw plenty of these. At the glade we picnicked by a babbling stream, frequented by nesting Grey Wagtails, picking their food from the small boulders and stones. Clumps of the beautiful pink valerian species, *Centranthus longiflorus*, provided a banquet for many butterflies including Cleopatras and Brimstones. The glade was filled with so many butterflies but the most exciting and interesting discovery was that of the Blue Argus. We all watched spellbound as the male settled, rubbing his hindwings back and forth, while the female buzzed him 6 inches or so overhead.

**Day 5: The road south.** By steep banks above a stream shaded with overhanging oriental planes all sounds were drowned out by a chorus of freshly hatched singing Cicadas. We followed the stream, meeting Camberwell Beauties, Balkan Marbled Whites, Mallow Skippers and Chapman's Blues along the way. A short walk after lunch saw our first Oriental Meadow Browns nectaring on an abundance of pink flowered bramble. Our last stop of the day by a rushing stream full of half submerged waterside vegetation was alive with butterflies. Tristan had implored us to check every butterfly, particularly the blues. And so it was that we observed our first Meleager's Blue, mud-puddling in a mixed group which also included Chapman's and Common Blues, Grecian and Sooty Coppers. Flying above the water, Silver-washed Fritillaries performed their courtship and all around, Cleopatras filled the air. Lattice Browns perched on half submerged branches and an interesting skipper proved to be our first Sage Skipper of the holiday. We were also added Oberthur's Grizzled Skipper to our list whilst being serenaded by purring Turtle Doves.

### Day 6: Chapel meadow and ridge.

The alpine terrain above the snow line promised a very different selection of wildlife, particularly flowers and birds and the opportunity to watch hill-topping butterflies looking for mates. A Delattin's Grayling flew up the slope whilst a fine male Peloponnese Wall Lizard (an endemic species) basked on a rock to warm up. Silver-Studded, Common, Escher's and Balkan Zephyr Blues were all flying as the sun warmed the lower slopes. On Mt. Avgo we stopped briefly for Woodlarks singing their beautiful song from the pines and firs, whilst a Wheatear perched on the buildings. As we began the ascent, Queen of Spain Fritillaries and Large Tortoiseshells seemed to be following us. When the vehicles could go no further, we parked and carried on upwards, passing a huge patch of melting snow. Here we watched Alpine Accentors and one of the true alpine specialists, Clouded Apollo, which was out in force, flying over the vegetation looking either for mates, nectar, or *Corydalis blanda* on which to lay eggs. Mountain Small Whites involved in courtship activity appeared in huge numbers, along with Spotted Fritillaries, Eastern Zephyr and Adonis Blues. We were well above the tree line now at around 2,000 metres and in a truly alpine setting with patches of snow still on the ground in the middle of summer. Tristan pointed out *Ranunculus ficarioides*, and then *Verbascum acaule*, a small stemless variety of *Verbascum*. He uttered his surprise at seeing Grecian Coppers which had never before been recorded there above 800m. At the ridge we observed at least 20 Camberwell Beauties hill-topping, along with Swallowtails, Large Tortoiseshells and Painted Ladies. It was a real privilege to witness such a wonderful natural spectacle. Here we finally enjoyed a number of Blue Argus females egg-laying on *Erodium chrysanthemum* in the sward. After such excitement we rested

for lunch and headed back down to a spot that Tristan had noted earlier. Upon arrival we were amazed at the spectacle of *Crocus sieberi*, growing in purple profusion all around the damp patches left by the receding snow.

### Day 7: Floriferous meadow outside Kalavryta.

Our final day in this beautiful corner of Greece. We had an afternoon flight back to the UK so time was limited. However, we made one final excursion to a meadow close to Kalavryta. This lush area was filled with echiums and thistles which provided plenty of nectar for myriad Eastern Bath Whites and Cleopatras. A small track lined with flowering mints attracted both Lesser Fiery and Sooty Coppers. A pair of *Malacosoma franconica*, moths (members of the Eggars and Lappet family) had united on a flower stem providing a good chance to observe the sexual dimorphism of the species with the females being possibly twice the size of the males. In total we recorded 97 different butterfly species during our holiday and much other wildlife.

If all this has all whetted your appetite, you might like to know that Julian will be running the trip himself this June with a 10% discount for branch members. The services of a local botanical guide will also be enlisted in order to take an interest in the rich flora of the area. For the full report and more about Greenwings and their conservation ethos visit [www.greenwings.co](http://www.greenwings.co)

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Summer copy date  
Sunday 18th May 2014

## Purdis Heath Megabash January 2014



Matt & Dave



Anne & Susanne

Bonfire Building  
Photos by Helen Saunders

## Greenwings' Balkan Holiday 2013



Purple-shot Copper Photo Julian Dowding



Lesser Fiery Copper Photo Bill Stone



Balkan Zephyr Blue *Plebejus 'brethertoni'*  
Photo Tim Norris



Chelmos Blue Photo Julian Dowding



## 2013 A Clouded Yellow Year



Clouded Yellow Helice Form



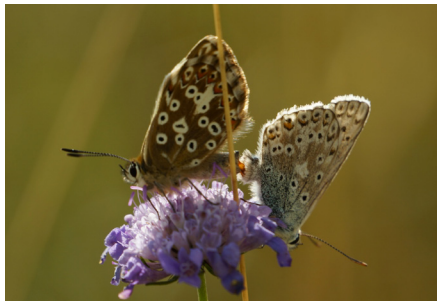
Clouded Yellow female



Clouded Yellow male

Photos Tim Bagworth

## Suffolk's Chalkhill Blues



Chalkhill Blue pair  
Photo Twm Wade

Chalkhill Blue male  
Photo Rob Parker

Chalkhill Blue male  
Photo Rob Parker

