



Butterfly
Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

50th Anniversary



The Suffolk *Argus*



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



Painted lady: Trevor Goodfellow



Glanville Fritillary by Alan Beaumont
(See page 11)



Glanville Fritillary mosaic Bonchurch IOW
by Alan Beaumont (See page 11)



Butterfly Conservation walk Sutton Heath by Ross Bentley EADT (See page 12)

An important Branch post will become available when Dom Hill will be resigning his role as Treasurer at our 2018 AGM in November.

We are grateful to Dom for both managing our account and for over-seeing the recent move to central financing by Head Office.

The search is on for someone to fill this position. Perhaps you are thinking of devoting some of your time to volunteer work. Here is your opportunity to find out more about this post.

Treasurer's Role

Book-keeping for BC Branches is done by BC Head Office, so the Treasurer's role for the Suffolk Branch is not too demanding and no prior financial experience or technical qualifications are required.

The Treasurer has to liaise with Head Office in order to: arrange the payment of invoices, maintain a spreadsheet of Branch transactions and reconcile against Head Office information, and present simple accounts for the Branch AGM.

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Butterfly Conservation

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Saturday 17th November

SUFFOLK BRANCH AGM AND MEMBERS' AFTERNOON

Venue: Earl Stonham Village Hall

Map Ref: TM 097598

Post Code: IP14 5HJ

Time: 2.30 pm.

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

Patrick Barkham

**the author of books including 'Butterfly Isles: A Summer In Search Of Our
Emperors And Admirals', and is a features writer for The Guardian.**

Further details will be announced on the Branch website.

Editorial

Trevor Goodfellow

Another packed issue for you. Lots of news and events to report and lots of members actively recording and reporting their summer tales and a new regular feature giving some planting ideas for attracting butterflies into your gardens.

The heatwave was a mixed blessing and although the struggling butterflies did manage to offload their eggs onto something greenish, it remains to be seen whether we see any further declines because of this in 2019. At home I recorded 2mm of rain over eight weeks: 30th May – 26th July, compared with 167mm for that period in 2017.

I personally noticed a severe lack of peacock and small tortoiseshell locally, but small heath, brown argus and common blue second/third broods did well, so I hope the scorched lawns that were replaced by vigorous weed regrowth, and consequent weed-killer, will not thwart the late ovipositing females.

White-letter and purple hairstreaks were easier to see as they descended to ground level to feed, more noticeably than normal as I suspect their honeydew food source was affected by the summer's high temperatures, possibly due to the trees drawing sap from the leaves in drought defense – who knows?

Most active members will have seen a continual increase in silver-washed fritillary

sightings and many have seen the odd few in their gardens for the first time. I too have seen two in the garden this year, a 100% increase on last year (sounds good). I have successfully transplanted lots of our wild violets from the garden to the corner of a neighboring wood in the hope that some will make their home there.

My 2018 home moth records are the best ever and at the time of writing I have recorded over 380 species including 42 new species to the list making a running total over 650. I must say that my home-made Robinson trap works well but only a couple of nights showed significant numbers.

Special congratulations to Helen Saunders for her very successful fund-raising work ('Community Matters' page 7) and Kevin Ling and Jillian Mcready for their promotional work with 'East Anglian Daily Times' Ross Bentley ('Weather or not' page 12).

If you are a **Flickr** member, please join the **Suffolk Butterflies** group. This works well with SBC sightings page if you want to track down a certain species as non-BC members post photos there too.

Copy date for the Spring 2019 issue is 27th January

Community Matters

Helen Saunders

In June we took part in Waitrose's Community Matters Scheme.

We had a voting box, alongside 2 other charities, where customers could add tokens to the charity of their choice.

At the end of the month £1000 is shared between the 3 charities.

From the main branch, we raised £600 and at the smaller branch in the town center £246. A fantastic total of £846 was raised for Suffolk branch.

Many thanks to all of you who added your tokens, or told people about the project.



2018 Photographic Competition



After a long dry summer out with your camera, who knows, you could be the star of this year's BC Suffolk Photographic Competition. This is a traditional part of our annual AGM and will be held on Saturday 17th November at Earl Stonham Village Hall.

In a revised format this year, there are three categories, with a prize for the overall winner whose photograph attracts the most votes.

- **UK Butterfly or Moths** (any species photographed during 2018 in the UK)
- **Overseas Butterfly or Moth** (any species photographed during 2018 outside of the UK)
- **Early Stage Butterfly or Moth** (Ovum, Larva, Pupa) – it is hoped this category will encourage you to search for and photograph the developmental journey to adulthood.

Have an enjoyable Summer and we look forward to seeing you and your photographs at our AGM.

Full details of the competition will appear on the events page of our website.

BC Event 21st July – Lukeswood

Kevin Ling

There were no last-minute worries of poor weather curtailing our butterfly walk at Lukeswood. In the grip of the longest and hottest summer in forty years, those that attended were anticipating what might be seen.

Lukeswood is managed by volunteers from “Elmswild”, a community woodland group established in 2003. Their aim is to involve the local community of Elmswell in building wildlife habitats that will provide for a wide range of species, whilst motivating the next generation of wildlife enthusiasts. In addition to the newly planted woodland site at Lukeswood, they also manage Kiln Meadow, a community nature reserve with pond, more woodland and a developing wildflower meadow. Regular events are held in addition to their conservation work parties. These include bioblitz and their popular Apple Day.

In 2009 the Lukeswood project was a winner of the People’s Millions competition. Subsequently the 4-acre site in Elmswell village was purchased, enabling them to fulfil an ambition to own and operate a community woodland.

Nine years on and the transformation is incredible. I first visited Lukeswood during the winter of 2017/18 where I met with Mary & Peter who lead the conservation of the site. I delivered a number of Buckthorn to them as part of BC Suffolk’s Brimstone & Buckthorn project. Immediate success was had with egg laying females visiting the newly planted whips (see last issue of the Argus for photograph). When I returned in July for our guided walk event there was an array of established habitats ranging from woodland, grassy rides, hedgerows and wildflower meadows. Since the project began a staggering 1683 trees have been planted (one for every house in the village). This in addition to the established trees already on site which include oak and the rare Black Poplar.

To the morning of 21st July 2018. Mary & Peter

welcomed me and a short reconnaissance walk around the site commenced before our visitors arrived. Of particular note were a row of Oak trees along the western edge of Lukeswood. I immediately began scanning the canopies in the hope of sighting a Purple Hairstreak that I could hold as my trump card for the walk proper. Alas there were none to be found at this time.

The walk began after Mary had given a short introduction to the history of Lukeswood and the ongoing conservation work they do. The extreme temperatures and absence of rain this summer had had a profound effect on some plants. This was evidenced by a lack of grassland specialists such as the golden skippers and browns. However, we were not to be disappointed by what was to come. Very quickly we encountered the first of ten Brown Argus. Common Blues were also in attendance and a similar number of these were counted. Seeing an example of each in close proximity helped aid everyone’s identification skills, especially as they both had their wings closed initially. The two close spots on the leading edge of the hindwing (looking like a figure eight) in the Brown Argus being a key differentiator from the Common Blue. Fortunately, the male Common Blue opened its wing to satisfy me that I hadn’t misled the group.

There was an abundance of Fleabane in flower, which proved popular with a number of species, including two Painted Lady. It was lovely for the group to see this magnificent butterfly, which would be in short supply this summer. Peacock and Holly Blue were ever present in the wildflower meadow, as were Gatekeepers. The latter being the most widely seen species of the day with a count of thirty. A healthy number of whites were seen throughout the site with Large White outnumbering the Small by 2:1. Other species seen in single numbers were Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Small Skipper, Red Admiral and Green Veined White.

The last section of the walk led us to the Oak trees where I hoped a Purple Hairstreak would put in an appearance. The first couple of trees didn't yield anything, but we were soon treated to a couple further along the path. When at rest, they proved very difficult to point out high in the canopy. I don't think my "*see that big branch with the leaves, well just look left and up from there*" helped much. As if on cue, a Purple Hairstreak descended to a low branch just above head height. Everyone was able to get a good view and take several close-up photographs. This proved to be the highlight from a walk that included 15 species of butterfly. Mary and Peter then provided

the group with much deserved drinks and cake before it was time to say goodbye. Everyone has been made to feel so welcome

If you have not yet visited Lukeswood, I would highly recommend that you do. Everyone involved with this project has done an amazing job in providing their community with such a haven for wildlife and I would like to give credit on behalf of Suffolk Butterfly Conservation for their continued efforts. If you would like to find out more about Lukeswood, or indeed pay them a visit, the following should prove useful to you.

E-Mail: info@elmswild.org.uk

Location: Church Road, Elmswell TL984631

Early Fliers

Rob Parker

When deciding where to find early morning butterflies in unfamiliar terrain, I always suggest starting in the place which has been longest in the sun. Of course, this may be on the other side of the valley, but the lie of the land will suggest a place closer to you that is already in the sun, and you can start there.

In recent weeks, (I am writing in the hot spell at the end of July 2018) overnight temperatures have been in the high 20s, and butterflies have been sunning themselves in the sun's first rays and taking to the wing earlier than usual. This morning, two Small Whites were fluttering at the bedroom window by 07:10.

By 08:00, I was standing in a patch of sun that had just come peeping over the top of the woodland belt at the top of Mount Road in Bury St Edmunds. A short walk along the parched track produced sightings of just 4 species – Meadow Brown, Small White, Gatekeeper and Common Blue; just one of each.

I returned to the same spot after breakfast and at 09:15, I noted that the sun had been on this patch for another hour and 15 minutes.

The same short walk produced exactly the same 4 species, but this time, 2 of each.

An hour later, a repeat walk revealed progress – the same 4 species, but this time, neatly 3 of each. Clearly, it takes time for butterflies to soak up the sun preparing for flight. Interesting that all 4 species responded in such a uniform fashion.

I put the next hour to better use and walked down the seeded margin of Mount Road, checking on the bird-foot trefoil that had been so prolific last year, and the Common Blues that had colonised. I saw 15 males flying and 2 females. Several males and one of the females were "dwarf forms" – tiny specimens probably resulting from the larvae not becoming fully grown as a consequence of their food plant becoming parched out.



Illustration:
Beryl Johnson

Tour of Duty

Richard Stewart

Butterflies During the June-July Hot Weather In 2018.

This certainly brought out the butterflies and here are three short accounts of my sightings:

26th June- Wolves Wood, Suffolk: Forty-two Silver-Washed Fritillaries represented my earliest ever sighting of this species and easily my highest ever total at this location. They were spread fairly evenly along the circular path through the wood, and I also recorded five White Admirals, over fifty Ringlets, my first two Purple Hairstreaks of the year plus Large Skipper, Large, Small and Green-Veined Whites and Meadow Browns. This is now a more sunlit wood compared to the darker and wetter habitat I first visited many decades ago. Sunlit glades abound though the largest, the first along the clockwise path from the entrance, does need some scrub removal from close to the path. One clump was about seven feet high and nine feet wide.

28th June-Holkham NNR, North Norfolk Coast. It was again forty-two, this time Dark Green Fritillaries, another personal record and all seen between the large buckthorn clumps and the end of the pine belt. All those observed closely were in pristine condition, either flying or nectaring on bramble. Flowering privet nearby was being used by other species but not these fritillaries. Despite the hot spell it was cool and cloudy here until mid-afternoon, possibly explaining no sightings of either White-Letter or Purple Hairstreaks at the usual locations along the lane. Other species recorded were Small and Large Skipper, Green-Veined White, Common Blue, White Admiral, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Small Heath and Ringlet. A 'meadow' of orchids, close to the sea buckthorn, included an abundance of marsh helleborine and at least one bee orchid, presumably created by cutting down scrub and

letting the seed bank come through. Another highlight was two circling red kites at the road end of Lady Ann's Drive.

4th July-Devil's Dyke, Cambridgeshire.

I explored the part reached from the road directly heading out from the centre of Newmarket. This cuts through the dyke and I initially explored the left side i.e. furthest from the car park. This has an area of woodland with a few sunlit glades where I found Brimstone and Comma. Thanks to a 'tip-off' in Wolves Wood I also had a good view of one White-Letter Hairstreak. Emerging into the full sunlit I soon discovered a large clump of marjoram. I sat down close by and counted twelve different species feeding on it or flying over, such an abundance of butterflies that I couldn't do an accurate count. These were Small and Essex Skipper, Large, Small and Green-Veined White, Small Tortoiseshell, Dark Green Fritillary, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown and Ringlet. The other two were Marbled White and Chalkhill Blue, my earliest ever date for the latter. I also added Peacock and Small Heath close by but surprisingly a large sunlit bramble bush was definitely second best for butterflies compared to the marjoram. On the other side of the dyke I didn't add to my species total but there was a greater number of both Marbled Whites and Chalkhill Blues, including a mating pair of the latter. It was very hot on top of the dyke which might explain, during the three plus hours I was there, I did not encounter another person actually walking on the top path.

These were three very different habitats and the total of butterfly species at all the sites was twenty-five. Given the time of year I would probably have expected, in addition, just Holly Blue, Brown Argus and Small Copper. All three were recorded elsewhere during this hot and dry spell.

The Search For The Glanville Fritillary

Alan Beaumont

Looking through my card indexes and photographic records for July 1971 there are two records for the attractive butterfly, the Glanville Fritillary. The two references are 'open wing', studio, and closed wing, studio. Studio meant that I or a friend somehow would have bred this butterfly from a purchased pupa as there are no references for any larva.

The fritillary butterfly was photographed using a Praktica IV SLR camera and Agfa slide film. Both photographs are grainy and not very sharp; the pictures are over 47 years old and will therefore need replacing. The idea is to photograph all the English butterflies, in their natural habitat. One obvious area to see and photograph Glanville Fritillaries is on the Isle of Wight. This will involve staying on the island for a couple of days in case bad weather prevents any hope of seeing the butterfly.

We and others in 2017 on the searching for the black hairstreak in Glapthorn cow pasture didn't initially see the hairstreak due to wet weather so had to re-arrange our schedule. This is reported in Suffolk Argus in Spring 2018. The journey to the Isle of Wight is more stressful than to Glapthorn, there of course the ferry journey across The Solent not always a smooth ride.

We decided to go with Shearings Coach Holidays a company we have been with on many occasions and they offered a 5-day, 4-night holiday in Sandown on the Isle of Wight which is close to Ventnor. Ventnor

is a named site for the butterfly. There are frequent buses between the two towns where one can use your bus pass. With three days there is of course the opportunity of at least one fine day when this attractive butterfly will be flying. Our first day, June 5th was overcast but a couple of male Glanville were flying, and they allowed a close approach, so their picture was secured. We walked eastwards from Ventnor along the Wight Way and saw more Glanvilles but not photographed. The Way is well trodden, and many visitors were interested in knowing what we were 'snapping'. Many of the fellow walkers knew the butterfly and one man is a recorder for the butterfly and we obtained much information from him.

There is also a notice board which gives more information of the life history of the insect which was also very helpful. Further along the walk is a mosaic of the Glanville fritillary which was somewhat unexpected. Is there perhaps an opportunity to have similar ideas for the Swallowtail in a Norfolk reserve?

On the return to the hotel we were greeted by a colony of red squirrels that were feeding on the squirrel table which was also unexpected. Whilst there are more possibilities of seeing the Glanvilles on the western part of the island by the Needles but that is south west facing chalk cliffs and hence more chance of wet weather.

THE END

Weather or Not

Ross Bentley

What better way to start the weekend than a stroll across a Suffolk heath in search of butterflies?

We had congregated at Sutton Heath near Sutton Hoo to look for graylings and small coppers under the direction of Kevin Ling and Jillian Macready, members of the Suffolk branch of the Butterfly Conservation charity (page 2).

The organisation holds regular walks, working parties and moth trap events at locations across the county and throughout the year, designed to create habitats, survey population numbers and educate.

Bewitched

The initial overcast and breezy conditions weren't ideal for butterflies but within minutes we had seen our first grayling which favours the sandy coastal heath habitat found at Sutton Heath where purple heather, fern and gorse are in abundance. Graylings, I discovered, are best spotted in flight - as they jolt and tack just above the vegetation and offer orange flashes of their wing markings. But once they are on the ground, where they like to spend time, they are masters of camouflage - with their wings closed tightly to show only the mottled grey underwing, which blends in perfectly with the heath floor and woody stems of the heather.

The grayling demonstrates why people become bewitched by butterflies - many are adapted to survive in a certain kind of habitat and they and their caterpillars may only feed on a select number of plants. It means many species have their own unique character and habits.

As if to underline this rigid preference for a certain habitat we entered a small wooded area and only a few steps in were greeted by a speckled wood butterfly, dancing at waist height in front of us - its brown and white markings on show. Later, as we emerged from the trees and the sun came out, we gathered round a small copper butterfly content for its orange and black wing patterns to be admired at length as it feasted on nectar from a flower on a gorse bush.

Emerging early

Walking with Kevin and Jillian made the whole experience much more fulfilling as they were able to talk with knowledge about these habits. Kevin also spoke about how the unusual weather we have experienced this year has impacted on different species.

He said the mild weather in February and March encouraged some hibernating species to emerge early but immediately after there was a protracted cold spell, the notorious Beast from the East, which killed off many of these before they had a chance to mate. This meant fewer eggs were laid than normal.

Kevin said: "By the time the eggs hatched, it was getting really hot - this is perfect for adult butterflies, as they nectar, mate and lay eggs. However, this had a profound effect for caterpillars, as the burning heat dries out the larval host plants, many of which withered severely, meaning the caterpillars couldn't feed up, and many perished before pupation."

One butterfly that missed its spring breeding opportunity was the small tortoiseshell. A once common site in our countryside and gardens,

this species has been all but absent from our nettle patches this summer, according to Kevin, who said comma and peacock butterflies have also been impacted.

Woodland winners

There were some clear winners this year though - butterfly species found in woodland - purple and white-letter hairstreaks, white admiral, silver-washed fritillary and purple emperor - were able to take shade from the heat and all appear to have done reasonably well and from records received so far seem to be widely distributed.

In respect of the two hairstreak species mentioned there have been more records from gardens than in previous years and a count of several hundred purple hairstreak was reported on Rushmere Heath Golf Course in July. There has also been an influx of whites on the wing this summer, with large white leading the way in numbers seen. They managed this by quickly breeding through two life cycles, and then receiving reinforcements from a summer immigration.

But Kevin said among butterfly species that produce second generations there have been a large number of individuals which are smaller in size than normal. This has been particularly evident with common blue, small copper, small heath, holly blue, speckled wood and green-veined white.

Kevin added: "This is the consequence of poor development and growth in the caterpillar due to parched food plants and the impact of hot temperatures on pupation."

A key Suffolk site which has been extensively managed by Suffolk Butterfly Conservation in recent years is Purdis Heath in Ipswich. Silver-

studded blue had their best year for very many at this site while around 2,000 were counted at a site in Dunwich where they are also found.

Big Butterfly Count

July and August saw Butterfly Conservation's 'Big Butterfly Count' - a key public recording of butterflies, which helps assess the health of our environment. As this survey relies heavily on garden and public space sightings and counting the familiar species, the damage done to the early flyers, such as comma, small tortoiseshell and peacock, will no doubt see a reduction in the numbers seen, according to Kevin.

Parched food plants, the cold spring and weak first broods will all have significant impact on next year's butterfly counts; only then will we be able to count the damage done to butterfly populations in 2018.

Kevin added: "For many, what seemed like a glorious summer at the time, has failed to bring the normal variety of species to our gardens but August has provided some much-needed rain and some wildflowers are looking a little more refreshed.

"After the last severe drought that the region experienced, in 1976, the wider countryside species took several years to recover, while for specialist butterflies such as the silver-studded blue, a full recovery has never been possible.

"This is a testing time for our butterflies and we need the help of everyone to ensure that we can enjoy them for years to come."

This article first appeared in the East Anglian Daily Times in August – visit: www.eadt.co.uk/news/environment

Mimicry in Butterflies

'World's weirdest events' BBC2 – Chris Packham

Papilio dardanus (African Swallowtail)

For many years entomologists only found males, which are usually regular in colour and pattern, but it was later discovered that the females mimic other species that are

distasteful, giving them protection from predators.

It has recently been discovered that there can be up to twelve different females in a single brood, each resembling different species.

Fake News?

The Times Newspaper, December 2017.

Spotted by Rob Parker.

Hundreds of visitors attended Xiaodubai Park in Mashan County, Guangxi, in December for an exhibition advertised as an opportunity to “let butterflies land on your finger”.

Instead of the swarms of dancing butterflies promised to visitors, who paid 15 Yuan per ticket, they found a display of hundreds of plastic replica butterflies stuck on poles.

A spokeswoman for Yulin Beishang Exhibition Service Company, which created the display, said: “We didn’t say they are real butterflies in the ad.”

One visitor wrote on social media: “We felt conned, it is not worth the visit at all. Feelings are hurt.” A user of Weibo, China’s version of Twitter, wrote: “Can I pay with fake bank notes?”

Slippery Slope?

The Times Newspaper 22nd June 2018

Butterflies have declined in England’s farmland and woodlands, and poor land management is partly to blame, according to a government report.

Since 1990 butterfly numbers have fallen by 27 per cent on farmland and by 58 per cent in woods. Species in long-term decline on farmland include the gatekeeper, large skipper and small tortoiseshell. In woodland the brown argus, common blue, peacock and purple hairstreak have also declined.

The report by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) blames the

decline in woodland species on the “lack of woodland management and loss of open spaces in woods”. It does not offer reasons for the decline in farmland species, but conservation groups blamed the loss of wild areas and use of pesticides on crops.

A small rise in butterflies was recorded last year but the long-term trend remains negative, the report says.

Nigel Bourn, director of science at Butterfly Conservation, said: “That the worst five years ever for butterflies have all been in the last decade should ring major alarm bells.”

Bad news for our Hairstreaks.

Broadleaf (Woodland Trust) magazine 2018

An emergency plan to see off *Xylella fastidiosa* has been drawn up by Government, as the deadly bacterium continues to wipe out olive trees across southern Europe. 'If we find it in the UK we will spring into action,' DEFRA's plant health chief Prof. Nicola Spence tells Broadleaf. 'All host species within 100m will be destroyed and we will institute a 2km surveillance zone and a 5km buffer zone to restrict movement of plant material'

Xylella infects other commonly imported plants

including lavender and oleander, and if it reaches these shores it could jump onto several native tree species, including oaks.

Soon after DEFRA published its strategy, yet another new tree pest was detected in the UK, the Zig-zag sawfly. Its larvae can defoliate entire elms, and it has become the 22nd pest prioritised by Observatree, the UK surveillance squad whose volunteers are trained by the Woodland Trust.

New threat to elm trees.

Forestry Commission website

Elm zig-zag sawfly (scientific name *Aproceros leucopada*) is an insect pest of elm trees (*Ulmus* species). Its larvae feed on elm leaves, and can defoliate whole trees, making the trees vulnerable to other

threats, and depriving other invertebrate species of food. Evidence of its presence was first found in the United Kingdom in 2017, and the first specimens were found in 2018. (photo page 23).

'Good wasps'

Bury Free Press 22nd August 2018

Wasps are hugely beneficial to the garden, says RHS principal entomologist Dr Andrew Salisbury. 'the social wasps are hugely important beneficial predators – the grubs in the nest need to be fed a protein diet and that is other insects. Caterpillars are a favourite'.

'I have watched them remove every single cabbage white caterpillar from a patch of nasturtiums, and we have reports of them feeding on box tree moth caterpillars. They come in, sting the caterpillar, remove the head and fly off with the body to feed the grubs'.

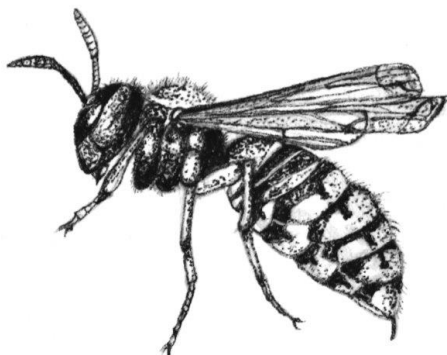


Illustration:
Deborah Vass

A few thoughts on Lawns

*Published with the kind permission of Dafydd Lewis
(Amateur Entomologists' Society)*

Having originated from medieval grazing enclosures for livestock, by the end of the 17th century lawns had become something of a status symbol, representing land not required for building or food production. After the invention of the lawn mower, in 1830, they became popular for communal sports and leisure pursuits, eventually evolving into desirable outdoor recreational areas for middle-class householders. A well-manicured lawn is a sign of status and respectability, whatever the size of one's estate.

Following the hum of the 'final mow of the year' this autumn, the leaf blowers were active in my part of leafy Surrey, returning the lawns to their pristine condition. After all, both commercial experts (1) and the BBC (2) caution that leaves will ruin our lawns by causing disease and moss growth; moreover, the worms they encourage will even attract moles! Raking them (good exercise) and applying moss-killing chemicals are clearly the order of the day.

Leave the leaves?

However, that revolutionary anarchist organisation, Buglife - the Invertebrate Conservation Trust, recommends the total opposite. Their advice on maintaining a happy wildlife garden includes 'Let dead leaves lie as food for worms and other decomposers which are good for the soil.' (3). This contrarian stance is supported by others, ranging from the Woodland Trust to random individuals such as David Wolfe, who believe in leaving the leaves in order to create habitat for small creatures, provide soil nutrients, and to save waste, pollution, and that most important commodity, time (4).

The Woodland Trust and others in fact recommend allowing our lawns to become meadows that will provide a home for wildlife, mowing them only once or twice a year. However, the Lawn Period in human history is not over, and continues to evolve. Visiting a cottage in a nearby street some weeks ago, I complimented the householder on his well-kept front lawn – all 6 square feet of it. It transpired that the poor chap used to find it hard to mow, but ever since it was laid with astroturf it now only requires an occasional vacuuming to keep it tidy. It was very realistic, and will last hundreds of years.

Until the lawn-or-no-lawn debate is resolved I will hedge my bets and retain a neatly mown area in our wild garden, large enough to accommodate a moth trap.

(1) Lawnsmith (2018), 'Leaves on the Lawn', web article: <http://www.lawnsmith.co.uk/topic/lawn-cuttings/leaves-on-the-lawn>

(2) BBC (2014), 'Autumn Lawn Care', archived web article: http://www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/basics/techniques/lawns_autumnlawncares.shtml

(3) Buglife, 'Wildlife Gardening', web article: <https://www.buglife.org.uk/activities-for-you/wildlife-gardening>

(4) Wolfe, D. 'Scientists Urge: Don't Rake Your Leaves! - Here's Why'. Web article: <https://www.davidwolfe.com/dont-rake-leaves>

Planting for Butterflies

Pete Newby

Butterflies are a great visitor to our gardens and there are many types of plants we can plant to feed butterflies and allow them to collect nectar.

It's essential to plant in warm sheltered areas where possible.

You can plant wild flowers using scatter boxes and also a wide range of garden plants which will help butterflies from March until the first frosts.

Bug boxes and bug hotels are good for butterflies to lay eggs and also other insects.

To help butterflies out of hibernation you can plant apples/pears, grape hyacinths (*muscaria*), bluebells, heathers (*erica*) for early blossom, for nectar annual wallflowers are beneficial.

Herbs such as oregano, basil, rosemary, thyme, mint are a favourite of butterflies as well as lavender.

If you are planting shrubs to attract butterflies you can plant them to cover flowering through the

growing season such as Heathers - *calluna* (mid-summer to autumn), *Ceanothus* (late summer to autumn), *Cistus* (late spring to June), *Hebes* (all summer), single Roses (through summer), Buddleia (July to August), *Erysimum bowles* mauve (April to summer) and also *Escallonia* which can be used as a hedge.

Honeysuckle (*Lonicera*) is a great climber for butterflies to get nectar from.

If you want perennials then the best is *Verbena bonariensis* (August to October), there is also Centaurea, Ajuga and Sunflowers. For architectural effect *Echinops* (globe thistle) are great.

Food is very important for butterflies, especially to help food reserves plants such as Ivies, Broom (*Cytisus*), Holly, Oak and Blackthorn are good, but if you are keen, plant Hops (*humulus*).

Remember in the autumn butterflies are building up reserves for winter and leaving windfall apples on the ground is a great source of food.

More Butterfly planting Ideas

Rob Parker & Peter Maddison

Yesterday I bought a plant of *Verbena rigida* and planted it on the rockery in the cool at 7pm.

This morning at 8am it was already attracting its first small Whites!

The plant is a dwarf variety of *Verbena bonariensis*, with ball-shaped blossoms, and is sold as a perennial.

Monty Don, the TV gardener, recently used the phrase "no plant is more popular with butterflies, hoverflies, bees and wasps" when introducing

a Korean plant - a "lovely plum-coloured umbellifer" – *Angelica gigas*. Has anyone tried it out?

Rob Parker

I've grown the ordinary form of angelica but not this purple form. It grew in semi shade where its huge heads didn't attract much insect life, perhaps I ought to try it in full sun. It's a biennial but seeds itself about readily. Perhaps *gigas* is a better species. With a height of 2 metres it's certainly architectural.

Peter Maddison

Garden Nectar Plants for Butterflies

'A is for Arabis'

Richard Stewart.

This is hopefully a series of short articles in alphabetical order and listing good seasonal nectar sources. In general terms all plants should be in sunlit clumps rather than being planted individually and not the 'double flower' variety which aren't usually native species.

The first is for early spring, the alliterative aubretia and arabis. These provide welcome nectar for species emerging from hibernation or as new adults early in the year. We have a border in our garden of these two species plus yellow alyssum which admittedly doesn't

attract so many butterflies. The three together make a welcome splash of purple, white and yellow early in the year.

In our garden arabis has provided nectar for Orange Tip, Small White, Green-Veined White, Peacock and Comma. Aubretia has also attracted these five plus Brimstone, Large White, Green Hairstreak, Holly Blue, Red Admiral, Painted Lady and Small Tortoiseshell. Aubretia possibly attracts more species because it has a longer flowering period compared to the other two.



Illustration:
Beryl Johnson

Common Foodplants

Birch	copper underwing	lime hawk	plus many other moths
Bird's foot trefoil	common blue	dingy skipper	plus many other butterflies
Blackthorn	brimstone	peppered moth	plus many other moths
Bramble	angle shades	garden tiger	plus many other moths
Buckthorn	brimstone	emperor moth	and other moths
Cabbage	cabbage moth	large yellow underwing	and other moths
Cinquefoil	common emerald	kent black arches	and other moths
Clovers	common blue	clouded yellow	and others
Dandelion	hebrew character	silver - Y	and others
Dogwood	holly blue	privet hawk	and others
Fuschia	elephant hawk		
Gorse	silver-studded blue	holly blue	plus other moths
Grasses, various	large/small & essex skippers	speckled wood	plus browns & many moths
Hawthorn	brimstone moth	dun-bar	plus many other moths
Ivy	holly blue	red twin-spot carpet	and other moths
Lilac	privet hawk	leopard moth	and other moths
Nettle	peacock	comma	& other moths & butterflies
Plantains	ruby tiger	ingrailed clay	and other moths
Roses	common quaker	march moth	plus many other moths
Willows	poplar hawk	puss moth	plus many other moths
Willow herbs	elephant hawk	small elephant hawk	and other moths

Source: 'Foodplant List for the Caterpillars of Britain's Butterflies and Larger Moths'.

By Tim Crafer. Published by Atropos.



Illustration:
Comma by Beryl Johnson

An Unexpected Abundance of Red Admirals

Rob Parker

2018 has been a confusing season in many ways. The early false spring tempted species hibernating as adults to fly earlier than usual, and then to be caught out by an unseasonably cold spell, followed by the long drought that parched the nettles at the time that the larvae of Red Admirals, Small Tortoiseshells, Peacocks and Commas ought to have been feeding up. All these species had their development interrupted and were hard to find in the summer months. The buddleja burst into flower on time, but the blossom was devoid of butterflies; it seemed as if 2018 would prove to be a poor season for all those species.

And yet, I can report one unexpected sighting of Red Admirals in the King's Forest. On 1st August, Sharon Hearle, our Regional Officer, assembled a field meeting as a contribution to recording a baseline species list on behalf of the Forestry Commission. It was a fine, sunny morning, and we left the Forest Lodge car park at West Stow for the northbound ride. After a few paces, we were aware that there were Red Admirals all around us, some were rising from around our feet, others were chasing in the sunny glade to our right, and plenty were settled on the trees and brambles around us. We noticed that the track on which we were walking was strewn with squashed cherries fallen from the mature cherry trees above us, although there were no concentrations of butterflies actively feeding on the cherries. There were 6 sunning themselves together on the end of an outbuilding, and another 6 on the other end. We walked a hundred yards watching this spectacle with amazement, and the sighting ceased abruptly as we walked on up the track. Two hours later, after a good search of the forest ride, we had seen 17 species, but almost no more Red Admirals. We had speculated as to whether they would

still be present on our return, and we were not disappointed. Their behaviour was as before, a cloud of them flying up from the track and chasing one another, plenty more to be seen resting all around. Another hundred yards brought us back to the car park – where there were none. Someone asked how many there had been, and I offered an estimate of at least 30, others thought more, but we did not attempt an accurate count.

I speculated that we had been lucky to walk into a mass emergence from the vigorous nettle patch nearby.

The following day, I suggested to my wife that I could take her to that spot, though I could not promise that the Red Admirals would still be present. To my great surprise, we were treated to a re-run of the same spectacle. There was an abundance of *Vanessa atalanta* in exactly the same spot, and behaving in the same way – joyous chases of 3 or 4 together, coming up from the path at our feet and circling in the sunny glade. This time, we made an organized count as we walked back through “Admiral Alley”. In that short stretch, we recorded an absolute minimum of 40. As before, they seemed fond of the cherry-strewn track, but were not seen with their probosces out. They had spread out a little though; there were a few in the car park, and a couple more flying further down the exit route.

Since then, there has been a great dearth of Vanessids, and as I write in September there is still plenty of Buddleia in flower without butterflies and excellent mounds of ivy blossom offering nectar – but not a Red Admiral to be seen!

What a confusing season!

The A14 Project – Update

Twm Wade

My introduction to the Chalkhill Blue (CHB) was a key moment in my activity within Butterfly Conservation. Here was this remote colony in Suffolk on a patch of ground about the size of a tennis court and they were so beautiful and precious; something had to be done. The vision is to provide a method of introducing CHB to Suffolk by natural migration from the Devil's Dyke in Cambridgeshire and to make a link with this remote colony along the A14 and A11. I realised that the key was to find a trial plot where the introduction of Horseshoe Vetch (HV) would result in establishing a new colony of CHB.

For me there was a steep learning curve. There was finding the site and getting the owner to buy into the idea. There was the procurement of seed or plants from a local source and, if it was seed, how to achieve a good germination rate. There was the physical business of planting and monitoring both the success rate of planting and its effect on the butterfly population.

Work started in 2015 and Plant Heritage volunteered to grow plants from seed for free. We got both HV and Birdsfoot Trefoil (BFT). Sadly, the BFT was the Greater variety not Common BFT but the advantage was that it was less liable to suppression by tall grasses. We nearly ended up with trays of plants and no site to plant them but finally the land owner, Highways England, agreed and we planted in November 2016. At the start of 2017 there was a change of management and access was withheld but I got on site in May to find that we seemed to have a 40% success rate in the planting. In 2017 I planted Common BFT plugs for all to die and am now advised to use prepared seed; all the way through lessons have been learned.

In terms of butterflies, monitoring has not been as methodical as it should be but we do get a result. The trial site is in a deep cutting of the A14 close to Exning. It is an area that was previously grazed by rabbits so relatively free from scrub. It is next to an arable field recently planted with trees under a stewardship scheme. Both the woodland and cutting were monitored. The woodland area is about twice that of the cutting.

Here are some statistics:

In 2016 there were 6 visits when 16 species of butterfly and moth were recorded mostly in the 'wood'. There were no visits in July. The counts were: 40 in the wood and 15 in the cutting.

In 2017 there were 6 visits when 20 species of butterfly and moth were recorded. The one visit in May only recorded one Peacock but there were 2 visits in July. The counts were: 73 in the wood and 34 in the cutting. Looking at Common Blue (CB), 2 were in the wood and 4 were in the cutting one of which was female. This year, 2018, I tried to visit once a fortnight so there were 10 visits. Twenty-two species of butterfly and moth were recorded. The counts were: 150 in the wood and 147 in the cutting. Looking at CB, we have 33 in the wood and 59 in the cutting.

The increase in CB numbers is evidence that the introduction of a nursery plant can significantly improve the numbers of a target species. The concentration of CB in the cutting was awesome and they may have been undercounted. The HV and Greater BFT plants are still there so there is every possibility that a female CHB has visited unseen and they will be spotted next year. Only time will tell. Please let me know if you want more information or have questions.



Illustration: Meadow brown Beryl Johnson



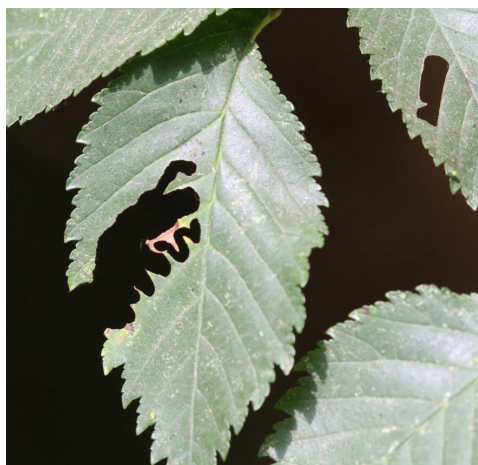
Grayling Hunt King's Forest
by Trevor Goodfellow



Purple Hairstreak - SWT
Farmland Survey
by Trevor Goodfellow



Silver Washed Fritillary -
SWT Farmland Survey
by Trevor Goodfellow



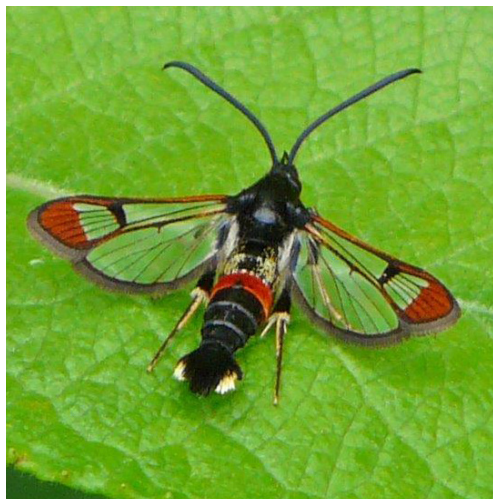
Zig-zag sawfly larval feeding pattern.
by Trevor Goodfellow



Yellow-legged clearwing by Sam Chamberlin



Current clearwing by Sam Chamberlin



Red-tipped clearwing by Trevor Goodfellow



Ochsenheimeria taurella by Trevor Goodfellow