

SUFFOLK BRANCH NEWSLETTER

The Suffolk Argus

Volume 94

Spring 2026



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment



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Editorial

Spring 2026-

This is my first issue as the editor for this newsletter! My name is Carla and Trevor has been helping me as I take on this new role.

Thank you to everyone who has welcomed me and I look forward to receiving any contributions to the newsletter.

I am 20 years old and, although, I am not currently living in Suffolk, I lived there for about a year and a half in 2024/2025. I am originally from a little town called Bognor Regis on the south coast.

I have an interest in butterflies mainly because of their symbolism. They are very meaningful to me. They symbolise hope, change, freedom, joy and beauty! They are a reminder that sometimes things can feel really dark, but there is still hope for life and beauty beyond that.

Whenever I see one, I can't help but smile.

I love spending time outside in nature and I really enjoy taking photographs of nature too. Taking photos allows me to notice and appreciate the little details of nature that we can so easily take for granted!

I don't know many different types of butterflies or moths but I am learning and I am hoping that this opportunity will help me to do that more.

Thank you,

Carla Stevens

**Copy date for Summer issue is 24th May
2026**

Please send your contributions to me:

thesuffolkargus@gmail.com



My favourite butterfly is a Blue Morpho. This photo was taken by me in a butterfly garden in Hassocks, West Sussex. I like to play around with editing so I made the background black and white.

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Help within the branch - where we are now

Peter Maddison

In early January the posts of Chair and County Butterfly Recorder have not been taken.

For the immediate future I will continue as acting Chair, in the hope that a new Chair will soon come forward.

As yet no one has been appointed to the CBR position, but all 2026 butterfly records will be verified for the national database by Toby Tydeman. Hopefully, a new county recorder will come forward soon to analyse and report on the 2026 record.

James Corton will be working on the 2025 Butterfly Report for publication in the Argus and in the Suffolk Naturalist Society Transactions later this year.

Support for the planning and running of indoor and outdoor meetings is needed, as is help with the giving of conservation advice and projects. Any questions -

prmaddison@yahoo.co.uk or peter.maddison@butterfly-conservation.goassemble.com

Clouded Yellow

Jane Leng

Jane Leng contacted me hoping someone could help her. Jane says:

It was taken in my "private nature reserve", aka "biodiversity project" in Theberton, on October 25th 2025. I wasn't able to photograph it with open wings.

I assume it hatched in this area, offspring of an earlier immigrant. From my reading, it is unlikely to survive the winter, but this may change in future years.

I haven't been able to discover how populations in Europe overwinter, whether as egg, larva, pupa or adult

I was interested in the dark patches along the outer edge of the hind wing, as none of the pictures I found showed them.

Hopefully some of the experts can fill in the gaps!



Clouded Yellow by Jane Leng

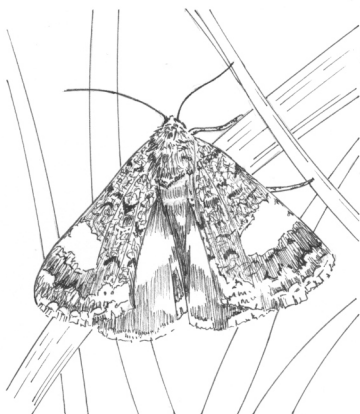
Chair's Report 2024-25, with some updates

Peter Maddison

I might be expected to begin this report by extolling the wonderful butterfly season of 2025 and indeed the abundance of butterflies this summer has been hugely better than in 2024. Sadly, the general decline in butterflies since the early years of this century dipped to particularly low levels by 2024 and although this year's butterflies in grassland, heath and wood have been more plentiful, they are only just equalling the numbers recorded 4 or 5 years ago. Habitat destruction, climate change and pesticide use are major contributors to decline and BC, Buglife and Bumblebee Conservation Trust are working closely to urge governments, land managers, businesses and the public to take immediate steps to reverse declines in insect abundance, diversity and distribution. They call for widespread restoration of insect-rich habitats, bold reductions in pesticide and pollutant use, stronger legal protections, and major investment in research, monitoring and public engagement.

It is easy to sit back and let statements such as this wash over us but as members of BC we realise the need for change and hopefully we are doing something about it.

Perhaps you didn't mow your grass so much this year, you encouraged a garden corner of wild growth or planted a few nectar-rich shrubs and flowers. Thank you for doing that and for your subscription which helps BC's work nationally.



Sketches by
Beryl
Johnson

For our Branch to do more for our county's butterflies we need help from our membership – people who are able to offer time at public events such as the huge Helmingham Plant Heritage event in May where in the past we engaged with the public about the ups and downs of butterflies and moths. We are requested to attend smaller events, but sadly we are unable to take these up owing to a lack of man power.

I would encourage members to consider joining our loosely formed committee too. No specific role in mind other than a desire to see butterflies prosper and to have ideas about how we can achieve this in the county. We have 4 meetings a year. These are by Zoom – our committee members live in the Newmarket, Lowestoft and the Ipswich area, so, face to face meetings being impractical, we use Zoom. What we need are people with project ideas and the willingness to work on those ideas.

Thank you to Julian Dowding, our Branch Secretary, who has taken the Minutes at our meetings. At the last Members' Meeting Kev Ling stood down as our Treasurer – thank you Kev for your work over several years in this post – and we welcomed Saul Moorhouse as our new Treasurer. Toby Tydeman joined us as Butterfly Verification Assistant and his valuable work has eased the role of our Butterfly Recorder, James Corton.



Trevor Goodfellow has been working on the Suffolk Argus with Carla Stevens who has become our Newsletter Editor and now is in the process of producing our new edition.

The introduction of a Customer Relations Management (CRM) system at head office has affected the way in which the Argus is delivered to our members. Once the final proof is obtained it is passed on to head office for final formatting, printing and delivery. In the last couple of years or so the cost of producing the printed newsletter has risen considerably – less of our subscriptions became available for conservation work – and the decision was taken that the electronic version would be the version that everyone with an email address held by head office, would receive. Hardcopies would continue to be sent to those without an email address and to electronic recipients who inform head office of their wish to receive a hard copy. We continue to publish the Argus three times each year and are grateful for the good selection of articles that members provide. Thank you, and please keep them coming.

Another innovation has been the introduction of Assemble which is part of the CRM. Volunteers who are working on UKBMS transects and those who help with events will have been enrolled. It is a scheme for volunteers to log their activities and the time spent on those activities. It is an information hub and a secure means of communicating with fellow volunteers. Insurance is guaranteed to those who are part of Assemble.

Events - We ran slightly fewer events this year. They were mostly well attended and it was good to be joined by members of the Essex branch for the walk at Northfield Wood where White Admiral, Silver-washed Fritillary and, for a few lucky people, Purple Emperor were watched. We welcome suggestions for new walks, but if we are to maintain our events programme, we need new volunteer leaders. Please consider offering a walk and your time as co-leader or leader.

Silver Studded Blue by Kev Ling



Website - We have a comprehensive website which is maintained by Richard Perryman. Richard says, 'The Home page is kept updated with new information that is important for the running of the branch. Also links to new reports produced by Butterfly Conservation, UKBMS etc that people might not be aware of. The purpose of the Sightings page is to provide an easy way to find out what butterflies are flying and where. Particularly useful for more unusual sightings e.g., a Wall Brown has been seen at Stoke-by-Nayland. If people are aware of this they can make extra effort to look in the area.

The Distribution Maps are updated to 2023 and show where in Suffolk each species can be seen. It is not easy to find this information anywhere else.

The Suffolk Butterflies page shows the flight times for each species and also the first sighting date of each for the last 12 years. It is interesting to see how the date of the first appearance can differ by three or four weeks.' The UKBMS transect recording scheme produces consistently high-quality data and Twm Wade is to be thanked for his work as co-ordinator of the scheme here in Suffolk. The scheme flourishes owing to the recording skills and time devoted to survey work by a small army of our members. Thank you to those involved with UKBMS transects and WCBS squares. We are always in need of new people joining the scheme – contact Twm if you would like to hear more.

Thank you also to all our other recorders who make casual records, Garden Butterfly Scheme records or survey site specific species counts. Trevor Goodfellow is stepping down from his role as Newsletter Editor and we thank him for his work in this role over many years. The branch has a 'loan a moth trap scheme' in which members may borrow a moth trap for a period of time without having the expense of owning a trap. Trevor has been our volunteer who has been running the scheme for several years, but now would like to hand over this role to someone else, possibly in the Ipswich area, he says.

Mark Brewster has been an enthusiastic member of the committee and apart from leading walks at his local Northfield Wood and helping at Pakenham Watermill open days, he has been keen to link up with his local village conservation groups and has encouraged them in their endeavours to create and maintain village wildflower areas. Sadly, owing to health issues, Mark will be stepping down from the committee. We thank him for his work and wish him well.



Common Blue by Mark Brewster

Thank you to Liz Cutting for her work as Membership Secretary. The most recent data from head office indicated that we have over 600 household memberships. Liz creates the occasional emails to members that give branch news, but as the new CRM has come into play, almost all communications are now handled by head office. We are not told who our members are. If you do have questions about your own membership contact preferences, You are asked to contact the BC membership dept directly. 01929 406015, or at membership@butterfly-conservation.org

2024 and 2025 have been more than unusual butterfly seasons. James Corton, our County Butterfly Recorder has seen the worst of it and then the best of it - 4 Clouded Yellow records last year, well over 100 records this year! (2025) Ably assisted by Toby Tydeman, the work of the County Recorder has eased and James has decided that he wishes to step down from his post. We need a new County Recorder – a fascinating role in which the CBR gets first view of new sightings and seasonal butterfly trends. If you have an interest in butterflies and an eye for data analysis, we need you as our new CBR. Get in touch.

Early in the year I informed the Committee of my intention to resign as Chair at the October Members' Afternoon. I've been Chair for the last 10 years and it's time for a change – new blood bringing in new ideas. In the Summer Argus I wrote of my decision. To date a volunteer has not come forward to take on the role but I'm hopeful that someone will step up very soon. Do contact me if you think you would be interested in having an overview of the branch, and be the primary link with other branches and head office.

Europe's biggest blue

David Tomlinson

I'm a regular visitor to Lake Kerkini in northern Greece, where both the birds and butterflies never fail to delight. However, as we all know, butterflies have good and bad years, and the spring of 2025 proved to be a poor one for butterflies. Perhaps I was too early this year, as I was there in the first half of May, but I failed to see either the number or variety of species that I expect. In a good year it's quite possible to see 100 species in a week there, though late May is the best time to go, when the Nettle-tree Butterflies are flying in their thousands.

However, this year I did find one species that I was neither expecting, nor had seen before. It was an Iolas Blue (*Iolana iolas*), the largest of all the blue butterflies that occur in Europe, and noticeably bigger than our own Large Blue. I was looking for birds rather than butterflies at the time, but I noticed a small group of butterflies puddling on a gravel track. The majority were Silver-studded Blues, but with them was one individual that was clearly much larger than its companions.

Frustratingly, it refused to settle with its wings open, and was somewhat reluctant to fly. My companion persuaded it to flutter, so I took a series of photographs (at f10 with a shutter speed of 3200/1 sec, using an Olympus OM-1 with a 100-200mm lens). These revealed what a stunningly beautiful butterfly it was, and enabled me to identify it.

Butterflies of Britain and Europe (A&C Black) describes it well: "The deep blue tone of the male, combined with a powerful, direct flight, makes this butterfly veritably majestic. Sadly, this regal species is not often there to be appreciated, with only two or three individuals occurring in even the best localities... The butterflies do not congregate in colonies, but tend to wander for long distances, and this, coupled with their strong flight, means sighting are often brief."

Iolas Blues are quite widespread but sporadic in their distribution, which is biased towards Italy and the Balkans. It may have been a butterfly that I'd never seen before, but I will certainly be looking for it again.



Iolas Blue (*Iolana iolas*) by David Tomlinson



Dingy Skipper Summary 2025

By Trevor Goodfellow (SBBC Species Champion)

First sighting of an adult Dingy Skipper (DS) was on 20th April at the end of ride 204 in King's Forest at Wordwell end. According to our County Recorder, this is 5 days earlier than the previous earliest sighting. I returned on the 22nd with a volunteer and we found 4 mostly at Jesse's plantation (top end of ride 204).

Robbed by changing weather and personal commitments, an organised count was cancelled.

A last-minute gathering of 3 volunteers on the 12th May, searching ride 204 area, 18 were counted in total.

Yet again FE logging and ride work interfered with the DS habitat, and I wonder if this small colony can sustain such disturbance in the long-term.

It must be said that the trees grow very quickly and cast longer shadows each year. This alters the suitability of the ride margins and the vegetation that grows there.

If the DS was more mobile and the colony was much bigger, perhaps the forestry work would have less immediate impact and more long-term benefits.

A visit to Centre Parcs (Elveden) was worthwhile on the 13th May; guided by Donald the Senior Conservation Officer, we found one DS in a clearing previously favoured by the butterflies. Lack of records or inconsistency may be because the onsite transect does not cover the area where the DS have been seen. Donald ensured me that future DS records will continue to be gathered diligently.

Another observation which may come as no surprise, is the lack of any other early butterfly species abundance this year. Speckled wood, Orange-tip, Brown Argus and Common blue seem thin on the ground at the time of the main count and Small heath and Small coppers in small numbers too. Brimstone population appeared average.

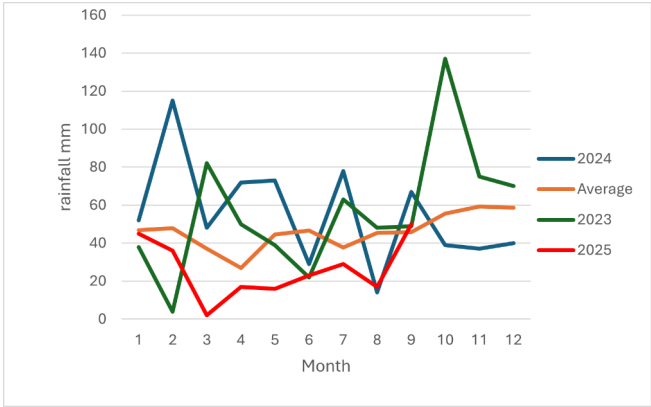
At home in Thurston on the 23rd May, I found a male DS in our garden. It is suspicious but just maybe, a larva travelled here attached to a deer or an egg passed through its gut perhaps. It is more likely that it was released nearby. Fingers crossed there is a female too.

On the 26th I re-found the same individual in our other meadow which has much more greater bird's foot trefoil. Although only 20-30m from the original sighting, the DS would have had to fly through a tree belt or indirectly over a tall hedge to find the other meadow. This is useful information as it demonstrates a certain amount of adaptability and shows that they will fly higher than their usual half a metre to explore new territory.

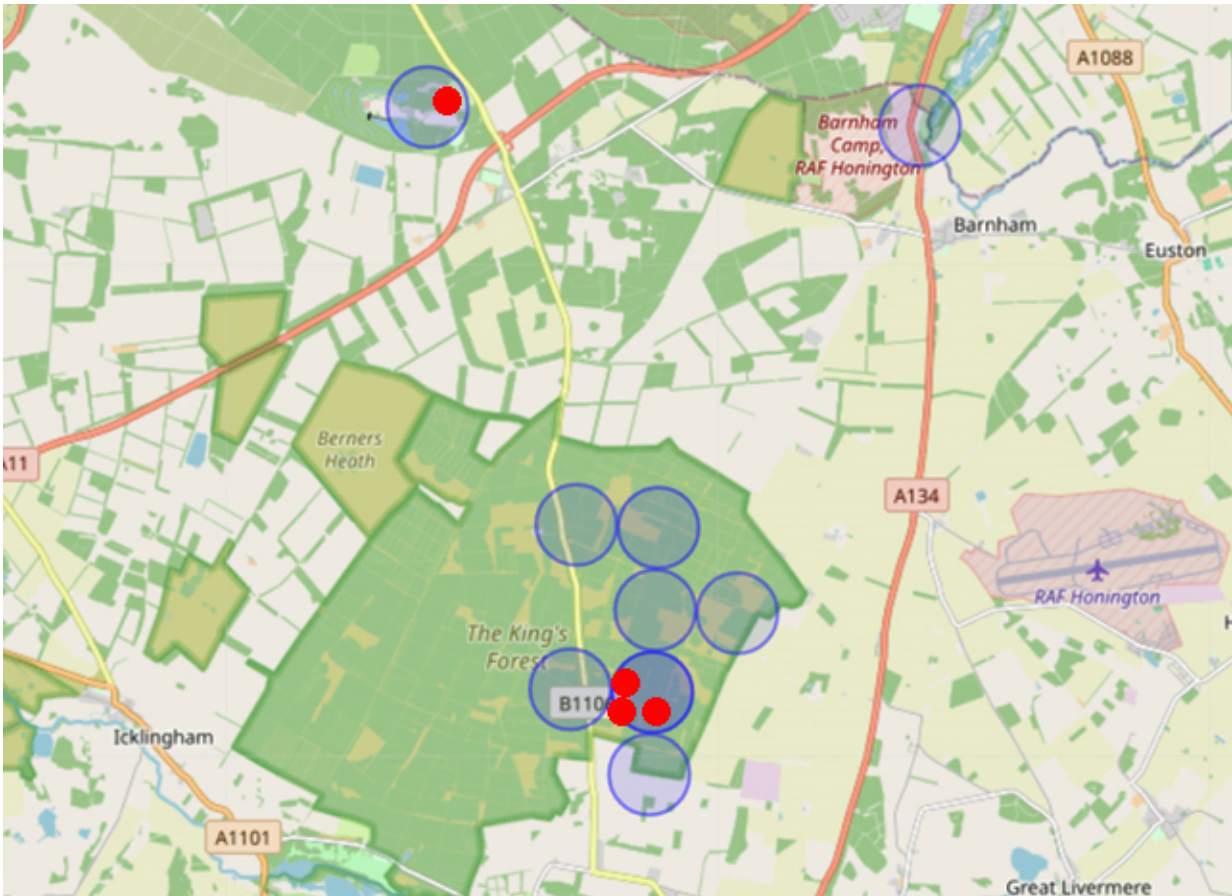
Other sightings reported were at ride 202 on the 11th May. Ride 202 or Chalk Lane as it is known, very often throws up a sighting or two but not supported by subsequent sightings suggesting that they may be passing through on their end of season dispersal.



Records for 2025 show a modest improvement on 2024 but no signs of other colonies establishing other than a glimmer of hope at Centre Parcs. A peak count of 18 on May-12th may just be enough to support the 2026 colony.



Male Dingy Skipper in Thurston by Trevor Goodfellow



Dingy Skipper distribution map (West Suffolk) 2000 -2024 (Blue) 2025 (Red)

2025 Garden Butterfly Records

Richard Stewart

2024 was definitely a year to forget in our garden at Westerfield Road Ipswich. The low total of sixteen species only had the consolation of knowing that it was agreed to be a very poor year at both local and national levels. 7th March marked the start in 2025 with a male Brimstone nectaring on Bowles mauve wallflower. The day after a Comma arrived and on the 9th a Brimstone was feeding on a bed of violets and the first Peacock was seen. No more new species were seen on a month that was one of the driest on record and the highest ever for the amount of sunshine. April 1st produced a Green-veined White and next day the same species was nectaring on Bowles mauve wallflower and a bed of Forget-me-not. Large White came on 3rd then both male Orange Tip and Small White the next day. On 6th two further nectar sources were visited, with a Peacock on plum blossom and Small White on lady's smock. The 13th had mated Orange Tips on Honesty, a sometimes used larval plant, and at the middle of this month I pruned the other half of our main buddleia, a month after the other half to hopefully prolong the flowering period. Holly Blue came on the 20th Speckled Wood on the 27th and a day later the first Red Admiral was feeding on laurel blossom. In some years this species overwinters in our pine tree. That brought the total to ten species by the end of April.

Small Copper was first seen on May 12th and next day a pristine Painted Lady once again had me marvelling at how far it had travelled. On the 19th both Holly Blue and Large White were nectaring on dame's violet. June brought a Comma that for some reason hung upside down on our washing line and the first Gatekeeper on the 29th, with three Meadow Browns the next day. A superb Silver-washed Fritillary was feeding on buddleia on July 7th, not our first garden record but still very welcome. A day later a Small Copper was nectaring on both flowering Marjoram and Thyme.

On 12th July at least five white butterflies were nectaring on lavender and on the 16th a Large White fed on knapweed. 7th August produced the first deadheading of buddleia to encourage new growth. By this time windfall plums, soft and fermenting, had been placed in a bowl and attracted feeding Red Admiral and Comma.

On the 11th verbenas attracted a feeding Common Blue and on the 18th we recorded probably our most welcome species, a Grayling feeding on buddleia. This was our first garden record since 2016 and the Grayling is in reality a relatively large species which is deceptive as it always lands with closed wings, except during courtship. Golden rod had a Small Copper which produced a superb mix of colours, on 1st September, with both Red Admiral and two Speckled Wood feeding on sunlit open ivy umbels. We were particularly pleased to record a Brimstone feeding on sedum spectabile on the 29th since it was in a pot and moved to a sunnier spot when it flowered. A Peacock fed on verbenas on the 30th and our last recorded butterfly was a Comma on 6th October. This was earlier than normal but we spent most of the rest of the month on holiday in Spain.

The total of nineteenth species not only improved on 2024 but also had repeat visits from several species, including Painted Lady, Small Copper, Common Blue and Brown Argus. It was obviously a much better year, with one butterfly garden at Kelsale having twenty two different species.



Some points from the October 2025 Members' Meeting

Peter Maddison

About 30 members were welcomed to the meeting and it was noted that attendance has not picked up since the end of the Covid years.

Recording butterflies is vital in building a picture of the state of our butterflies and must be a mainstay of branch activities.

Groups of local people in villages such as Shingle Street and Great Waldingfield have been supported by us in supplying wildflower seeds for meadow and chalk bank enhancement.

Further conservation work has not been possible at Purdis Heath, but those parts of the heath where work was completed 7-10 years ago are now in prime condition and this year's count of Silver-studded Blue yielded 556, about a 40-year record.

The Treasurer reported that accounting for the branch has changed. We now have to apply for an annual budget (from BCHQ). Our account remains healthy as does our Legacy Fund, but we do need to utilise this money to help lepidoptera across the county.

After the refreshment break, during which members voted in the Photographic Competition, browsed the book stall and bought raffle tickets, Pete Eeles gave an enthralling and thought-provoking talk on UK butterflies. He focussed on the checklist of British species and how this has changed and how it is changing now with migrants, vagrants and introductions. He finished with what we might expect to see in years to come and with questions from the audience.



Winners of the photo competition

1st Place - Mark Brewster - Clouded Yellow. (the front cover of this issue)



2nd Place - Rob Reeve - Green Hairstreak.



3rd Place - Steve Green - Elephant Hawkmoth.

Beyond Our Borders

Richard Stewart

This is the first of a series looking at good butterfly sites beyond Suffolk, in this article focus being on the Devil's Dyke in July, only a few tantalising yards from the Suffol border. Most visitors naturally leave the car park at TL618613 and head left up a short series of steps and onto the dyke. Our journey is by train and then taxi so we usually explore the other side, where a footpath starts just before July Lodge. The initial wooded area can sometimes be rather overgrown but it's worth persisting as I recorded White-letter Hairstreak there in 2018, but not since, and in 2023 we recorded twelve Brimstones nectaring on sunlit tall thistles. The wood can be circumvented by walking across the field to the left, but you have to negotiate a gate and fence. Once you pass through a gate the path presents no problems and the nectar source attracting many species is on the right, an ever expanding bed of marjoram. We did make a mistake in 2025 by visiting late in July when the flowering had almost finished which produced a day total of just nine species, with no Marbled Whites or Dark Green Fritillaries.

By walking further along colonies of Small Heath can be added to the list and since the return is along the same path it gives a second opportunity to closely examine the flowering marjoram which on a sunny day can attract double figures of feeding species. If any species can't be seen it only takes about ten minutes to head back, cross the busy road and look for it on the other side of the dyke. Depending on your preference, and vagaries of weather and adult emergence, Marbled Whites are more numerous early in July-100+ on 8.7.2023- and Chalkhill Blues later-100+ on 25.7.25. A visit in mid July would probably lead to good numbers of these two species. Finally, the chalk flora is impressive, a rare habitat in Suffolk, and consequently there is an abundance of both nectar and larval plants.

Best day total in July on 18.7.2024: Small, Essex and Large Skipper, Small, Green-veined and Large White, Brimstone, Comma, Red Admiral, Peacock, Chalkhill Blue, Small Copper, Dark Green Fritillary, Small Heath, Marbled White, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown-a total of seventeen. Other July visits add Speckled Wood, Holly Blue, Brown Argus, Common Blue and Small Tortoiseshell, making a July total of twenty two species.



Meadow Brown
by Carla Stevens

A Clouded Yellow Year To Remember

James Corton



Male Clouded Yellow , freshly emerged after being reared by James Corton

It has been a few years since I saw Clouded Yellow in this country so it was quite a surprise to see my first for some time in June. What appeared at first to be a Large White flying inland as evening fell had an unusual flight pattern. As it neared, I could see it was the helice form of Clouded Yellow as it searched for a place to roost for the night. It was the first of a few exciting encounters. Soon afterwards I was treated to an even bigger surprise. In a town centre car park, a typical form female was fluttering around, laying eggs every few seconds on Bird's-foot Trefoil. I reached for the camera and got a couple of shots before she moved off, oblivious to my presence. I collected only the one egg and raised this at home (Clouded Yellow can lay up to 600 eggs). It hatched out as a male butterfly after a month (they grow fast!) and I released it just up the coast from where it was collected (photo supplied). I deliberately have not given details on the numbers seen or how far inland they reached because I didn't wish to spoil it for those waiting for the 2025 Report—see the next edition!

Moth Traps

Trevor Goodfellow

Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation currently has various moth traps for members to borrow.

This service has been coordinated by Trevor Goodfellow for the last few years and is now hoping someone near Ipswich can take over.

If you are intrested please contact email:

trevor.goodfellow@butterfly-conservation.goassemble.com



Glanville Fritillaries by Liz Cutting



Female Wall Brown by Robert Quadling



Red Admiral by Carla Stevens



Peppered Moth Larva by Trevor Goodfellow



Purple Emperor drawing by Izumi Hatchiware



Swallowtail by Mark Brewster