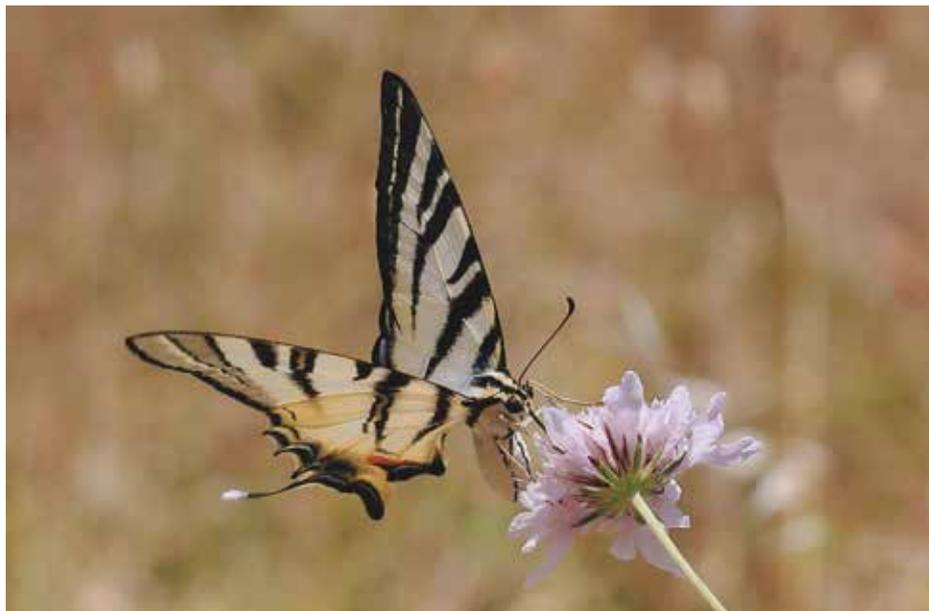

NORFOLK BRANCH of Butterfly Conservation



**Butterfly
Conservation**

NEWSLETTER 88 AUTUMN 2014

Butterfly Conservation
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NORFOLK BRANCH - OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

Chairman	Judy Dunmore
Hon. Treasurer	Roland Rogers MBE
Membership Secretary	Karen Husband
Conservation Officer	Dr. Bernard Watts
County Recorder	Andy Brazil
Transect Co-ordinator	Alan Dawson
Catfield Fen Reserve - Liaison	Mandy Gluth
Field Trip Organisers	Ann and Bob Carpenter
Events Organiser	Vacant
Publicity	Kiri Stuart-Clarke
Newsletter Editor	Mike Gasson
Minutes Secretary	Derek Longe
Moth Officer	Greg Bond
Webmaster	Neil Saunders
Committee Member	Dave Brice
WCBS Co-ordinator	Julian Bull
Catfield Fen Reserve - Warden	Dr. Keith Bacon

[Contact details are available in the print version of the Newsletter]

Norfolk Branch web-sites	www.norfolk-butterflies.org.uk http://butterfly-conservation.org/291/norfolk-branch.html
National web-site	www.butterfly-conservation.org

**The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author(s)
and not necessarily those of the Society**

**Part of the cost of printing this newsletter has very kindly been donated in
memory of Mr John Edward Mallett, originally of Stiffkey, Norfolk**

Front Cover Photographs are from the 2014 Photographic Competition

Front Cover: Overall winner of the 2014 Photographic Competition – Scarce Swallowtail in Greece by Harry Faull **Inside Front Cover:** Winner of Category A – Swallowtail in flight by Roger Fay (top); Brimstone in Foxley Woods by Helen Burrell (bottom left); Southern White Admiral in Greece by Harry Faull (bottom right)

Chairman's Notes

By Judy Dunmore

Following a request in the Spring Newsletter I'm delighted to say that Mike Gasson volunteered to take over the role of Newsletter Editor. This edition is, therefore, the last one Peter Lindsley has been involved with and the first for Mike – a joint production. Peter had been doing the job for more than 12 years and has moved the presentation forward into the excellent biannual magazine we all enjoy today. Our grateful thanks must go to Peter for all his hard work and I wish Mike well for the future.

As documented in the last Newsletter, Angela Woodrow, our Events and Publicity Officer has also decided to stand aside. Kiri Stuart-Clarke has volunteered to take on Publicity but, as yet, we are without an Events Co-ordinator. This is an important role and one which has grown in recent years. When Angela started, 15 years ago, the Branch only regularly attended two public events each year. In the intervening years many different things have come on stream and this year we had a presence at ten different events (and turned down several more). This is the time we get to engage with the public, enthuse children and to recruit new members. Angela will be greatly missed and I must thank her for all her hard work and dedication. We will not be able to continue in this way unless someone volunteers to at least take on the organisation. (see separate details on page 7)

Writing this on 1st October, it has been a glorious day with white butterflies still in evidence in my garden. We can all look back on a lovely long summer, here in Norfolk even August was good. In general butterflies have responded well to a second good summer running, with numbers picking up after the wet year of 2012. Silver-studded Blues were out early so that they were all but over by the time we had our field trip (last year on a similar date they hadn't even emerged). Silver-washed Fritillaries did well in Holt CP, the population growing each year. Two of the Valenzina form were seen and photographed by many. There was excitement when Yellow-legged Tortoiseshells started appearing but, unfortunately, I was not one of the lucky few to see one.

Ann and Bob Carpenter organised a very varied field trip programme over the summer but, typically, the weather was not at its best on the chosen dates. However, there was always something of interest to be seen.

Our membership now stands at around 650 households and this summer Karen Husband our Membership Secretary and I undertook two New Members Days – these were by invitation only and consisted of a morning presentation about Butterfly Conservation and butterfly identification, followed by an afternoon butterfly walk nearby. We had excellent feedback from those who attended and we would expect to do something similar in 2015.

Some years back we stopped holding indoor winter talks in Norwich because attendance was so poor. We have decided that we should re-start these meetings in order to engage with all the new members who have joined us in recent years. With this in mind there will be a meeting at the end of January in Norwich where Alan Dawson will show photographs he took on a butterfly trip to Bulgaria. (see page 6 for details) I hope as many of you as possible will come along; if there is a good response we will endeavour to hold two such meetings during the winter 2015/16.

Recent AGM with Talks and Photographic Competition

By Judy Dunmore

This year we held our AGM and Members Afternoon at Norwich City College. This change from the usual venue of County Hall was made due to uncertainty about football fixtures – Norwich City Football Club take over all the parking at County Hall on match days. However, in the event, the room was not large enough, making it difficult to circulate, serve refreshments and view the wonderful photographs entered in our competition. On the plus side we did not have to move quantities of large tables and chairs around; the room was set out for us and a tea urn provided. The more central venue, with plenty of parking, also allowed people to spend time in the city before attending. The Committee will need to look again at arrangements for 2015.

On the day I welcomed 59 members, there were many new faces, some who had only joined recently and others who just had not been along to a meeting before. I sincerely hope they found the atmosphere welcoming and that we will be seeing more of them in the future.

The afternoon started with an excellent illustrated talk by Dave Horsley about Blue butterflies and their life-cycle. Dave had some fascinating information and kept everyone enthralled. His talk was enhanced by videos as well as still photographs of several blue species, including all our Norfolk ones. Pictures of ants tending different stages of blue larva were particularly interesting. His knowledge was infectious and he gave insights into the demise and then re-introductions (authorised and illegal) of Silver-studded and Chalkhill Blues and their current situation. The interval that followed allowed people to vote for their favourite photos and sample the excellent cake made by some of the Committee.

The AGM then followed and in order to keep this part of the afternoon to a minimum, as usual I just focused on a few areas. Most of what the Branch does is well-documented in the two annual Newsletters. This year, in the light of Angela's decision to stand down, I spoke extensively about our attendance at public Events and made an earnest plea for someone to come forward and take on this important role. I was delighted to announce a Branch Facebook page, launched that day by our website manager, Neil Saunders. I went on to cover the reasons behind the £7000 transfer of funds to HO and to delight in the spread of Silver-washed and Dark Green Fritillaries, sightings of Yellow-legged Tortoisehells and other highlights of the summer.

Next came the presentation of the Branch Accounts. Here I must apologise to all those present as Roland had forgotten that these would not be published until this Newsletter and had not brought along copies for those attending. Bernard Watts then took over the reins for Committee elections. Four existing members, Alan Dawson, Mandy Gluth, Derek Longe and Judy Dunmore were re-elected, Mike Gasson was elected as Newsletter Editor and Kiri Stuart-Clarke as Publicity Officer. Unfortunately no-one came forward to help with Events Co-ordination.

The afternoon concluded with a short presentation by Greg Bond, our Moth Officer, about Norfolk moths in 2014. Greg gave a light-hearted overview of the public moth events we had organised during the year and what had been seen. Moth trapping, particularly at home, is a growing hobby and hopefully this will have inspired even more of our members to consider getting involved. Everyone seemed to enjoy the afternoon and if you were not able to come along this year then I hope you will try and join us in 2015.

Field Trips and Events 2013/2014

As with any activity, there are hazards in the countryside, but when organizing the field trips we take every care to ensure that our events present no greater hazard than any other walk in the countryside. **Please note the following:**

Clothing – wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Generally, stout shoes are needed for any walk, and a sun hat and sun screen are advisable in hot weather. Insect repellent can be useful.

Refreshments – you should bring plenty of liquids in hot weather and are advised to bring a packed lunch.

Weather – if the weather forecast is poor, telephone the contact person to check whether the walk is going ahead.

Wednesday 7th January – 7.30pm at Blakeney Scout Hut HQ

Members Open Evening

Bring along your photos etc of memories of 2014. A laptop computer and digital projector will be available.

Contact: Peter Lindsley, Tel: 01263 838335

Friday 30th January – 7.30pm United Reform Church, Ipswich Road

‘Butterflies of Bulgaria’

Illustrated talks by Alan Dawson

The Hall is south of the ring road, access via Lyhart Road – see website for map

Contact: Judy Dunmore, Tel: 01263 822550 or Alan Dawson, Tel: 01603 454092

Wednesday 4th March – 7.30pm at Blakeney Scout Hut HQ

‘British and European Fritillaries’

An illustrated talk by Bernard Watts

Contact: Judy Dunmore, Tel: 01263 822550

Friday 27th March – 7.30pm United Reform Church’ Ipswich Road, Norwich

Open Evening

Bring along your digital files, prints and DVDs to share with others.

A laptop computer and digital projector will be available.

Venue details as above

Contact: Peter Lindsley, Tel: 01263 838335

Wednesday 6th May – 7.30pm at Blakeney Scout Hut HQ

‘Wildlife of FYR Macedonia – an unknown part of Europe’

An illustrated talk by Greg Bond

Contact: Judy Dunmore, Tel: 01263 822550 or Greg Bond 01263 579520

Sunday 17th May – Field Trip to Cut-Off Channel at Stoke Ferry 10.30am

Target species Dingy and Grizzled Skipper.

Directions: From Mundford take the A134 to Stoke Ferry. At Stoke Ferry roundabout take 2nd exit into village, turn left just after church, continue and turn left into School Lane and meet at the end TL696990. See website for map.

Contact: Mandy Gluth, Tel: 01603 871069

It's Goodbye From Me ... and Hello From Him ...

By Peter Lindsley

After over 10 years of producing the Newsletter, some medical problems are causing me trouble, so I felt I needed a rest and stepped down as Editor at the recent AGM. We are fortunate that someone with the necessary knowledge and skills has stepped up to take over the role.

Mike Gasson, who is currently Editor of the 'Journal of the Hardy Orchid Society', officially took over from me at the 2014 AGM. I'm sure he will make a very good job of the Newsletter and no doubt breath some much needed new life and vitality into it.

May I take this opportunity to thank those of you who have supplied articles and photographs over the years for your input. Also many thanks to the committee who have also supplied articles and photos; without the input from members and committee alike, there simply would not be a Newsletter. So please continue the good work and keep Mike knee-deep in items, well maybe ankle-deep anyway.

By Mike Gasson

As mentioned by Judy in her Chairman's Report, this Newsletter is a transitional one put together by the outgoing and incoming editors. I would especially like to thank Peter for his help in introducing me to the publication and showing me the ropes – this has been absolutely invaluable for a newbie! Peter also makes an important point in mentioning the supply of articles for the Newsletter. Although the regular reports are a major and important part of the contents, the publication can only be enhanced by contributions from our members. I am always happy to get feedback, so don't be afraid to raise any issues with me (moorend@globalnet.co.uk). As we had a little free space in this issue I have included a small article (page 20) by way of introduction. Hopefully, it will illustrate some of my interests, both entomological and botanical!

Events Co-ordinator and Helpers

We are urgently looking for someone to take on the role of Events Co-ordinator. Responsibilities include:

- Maintaining and storing sales goods and free leaflets
- Maintaining and storing display material
- Liaising with Event Organisers
- Arranging rotas of helpers

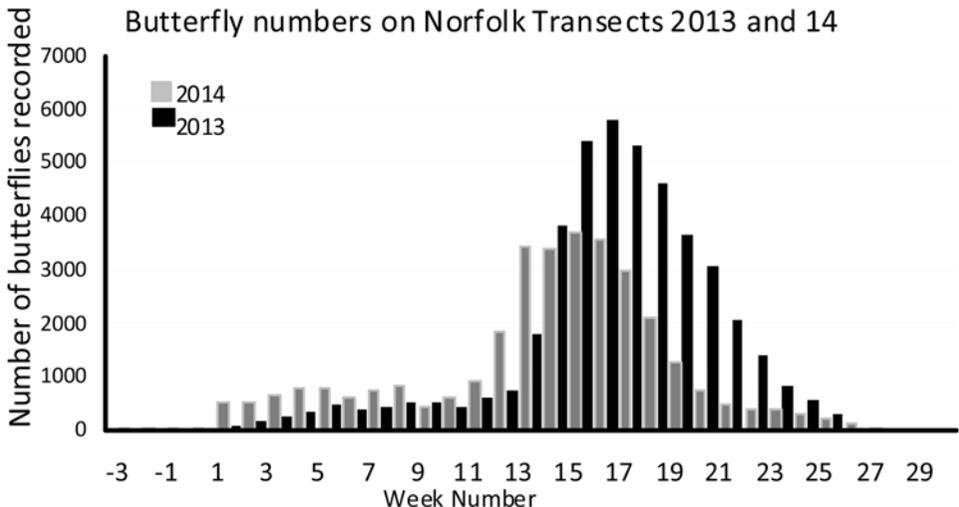
IT IS NOT ESSENTIAL TO ATTEND EVERY EVENT

In order for us to continue to attend as many Public Events as possible we also need people to volunteer to help on the day. You do not need to be available for every event, but if you feel you can help at some then this would spread the load and make it possible for us to be out there engaging with the public at much as possible. Spreading the conservation message and encouraging people to both provide wildlife friendly habitats and to record butterflies is an important part of the work of the Branch. Please give this some serious thought.

A Very Preliminary Look at the 2014 Transect Season

By Alan Dawson, Transect Coordinator.

Because of the new online data entry system for transect data, I have managed to have a very quick and preliminary look at this year's results. I will be doing a much fuller analysis as usual for the Spring Newsletter, but I thought that Norfolk BC members might be interested in the crude, overall picture from the data that I have so far. There are about six transects at the time of writing where data entry is incomplete so I do not want to get too involved in detail – things may change. However, I have heard various people expressing the view that they thought that butterfly numbers in 2014 had started off very well but that they had then more or less vanished (the butterflies, not the people) by early August. I have taken the total number of butterflies seen on the 26 transects for which I have complete data in 2014 and compared that with the total number of butterflies seen on the 29 completed transects in 2013. The results are shown in the graph and it seems very clear that personal impressions were absolutely right. Week 1 for both years started on April 1st. You may remember that the spring of 2013 was very cold, and sightings in the early part of 2014 were consistently higher than in 2013. The 2014 numbers then built rapidly to a peak at about Week 15 (July 8th) but then rapidly declined and by Week 20 (Aug. 12th) things had got very quiet. Overall, 2014 was shifted about 3-4 weeks earlier than 2013. This is an interesting observation, but of course gives no information about why this has happened. It also raises a question about what the impact of the early disappearance of butterflies will have on next year's numbers. All I can say is watch this space. Finally, as always, my thanks to all the transect recorders for all their hard work and dedication.



Silver-studded Blue 2014 Season

By Mandy Gluth

This year turned out to be a very early season for the Silver-studded Blue, with the first ones being seen on 6th June. Not surprisingly, they finished early too with the last sightings on 17th July.

Kelling Heath – This year's highest count was 324 compared with 562 last year. The field trip to Kelling Heath, having been arranged back in January, turned out to be almost too late on 13th July. The poor weather put most people off but the small group which did turn up fortunately was also interested in botany – Kelling Heath is also famed for its range of plants. John Wagstaff, the recorder and Kevin Jones, the contractor, are still doing a splendid job on the creation of the mosaic habitat which is encouraging the butterflies to expand their range. John also hosted a spring visit from some of our colleagues in the Suffolk Branch who are interested in heathland management. Thanks are due to the Kelling Heath Trustees and Ed Stocker of Norfolk County Council for their support.

Buxton Heath – Overall numbers were down on Buxton Heath, and the flight season was rather short. As previously, Alan Dawson walked a weekly transect there during the flight season and then a posse was assembled to do a peak count on the whole site. Numbers on the Heath itself held up reasonably well but were substantially down in the Forestry Commission section where a lot of very necessary management of the main East-West ride had had to be done during the winter. This should lead to improved habitat in that area over the next few years. Thank you to NWT, Forestry Commission and the Buxton Heath Wildlife Group who between them manage the heath and the adjoining forestry ride to the north.

East Ruston Common – Agent 76 is still patrolling the Common and has counted 160 SSBs this year compared with 204 last year. Despite annual scrub clearance at this site the butterflies seem to be contracting their range. We must remain hopeful for the future. Thank you to Natural England for the management.

Cawston Heath and Reversion Field – This year I received the excited phone call again from Mike Wright when he found a singleton male SSB in the Cawston reversion field. Four of us searched the area the very next day and found one female but no male. So again, we must keep our fingers crossed for the continuity of the population there. Thank you to the NWT for managing this site, the ponies seem very happy there.

Summary

Site	2014	2013	2012
Kelling Heath	324	562	163
Buxton Heath	249	422	214
East Ruston Common	160	204	47
Cawston Heath Reversion Field	2	5	NIL

Keep Up-to-date With Butterfly Conservation Norfolk

Did you know that your branch has a website, facebook page and a twitter account? The website address is <http://butterfly-conservation.org/291/norfolk-branch.html> where you can find out about the branch events and latest news as well as local information. The website is still being developed so remember to revisit it.

The branch facebook page is Butterfly Conservation Norfolk. The page is designed to provide information from various local, national and international sources about butterflies and moths in general and our local key species. The page is a public page so people are permitted to post on the page related information and photos.

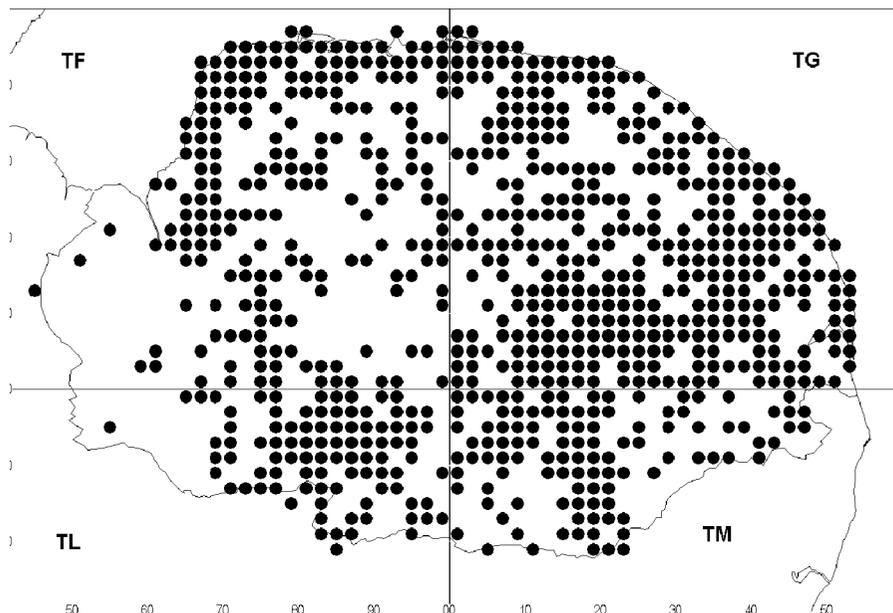
The twitter account is @BC_Norfolk. The feed from this account is also shown on the website and tweets are added on a regular basis. The feed includes local information and fantastic photos.

Please 'like' our facebook page and follow the twitter feed. You can help spread the work of the Norfolk Branch and help increase our membership via sharing facebook postings and re-tweeting the twitter feed.

Tetrad Records

By Andy Brazil

This map shows the tetrads (2×2km squares) from which we have records during the current recording period 2011–2019. Some of these have only a single species recorded, so more records are still needed from these squares, but if you are out and about and happen to be passing a blank square, any sightings are particularly useful. I've marked in the corners the Ordnance Survey grid letters that cover Norfolk. An interactive version of this map will be on the recording website (www.norfolkbutterflies.co.uk) in the new year, once I've included 2014 records.



Moths Matter

By Greg Bond and Roland Rogers

Norfolk Moth Survey's April Newsletter included one late addition to the county list from 2013. This was *Ectoedemia turbidella*, a leaf miner of grey poplar. It may be spreading from sites in south and east England.

The mild winter followed by generally benign weather throughout spring and summer meant that, in common with butterflies, 2014 has been a very good year for moths so far in Norfolk. One example early on was the appearance of Dotted Chestnut, a new record for East Norfolk. Also there was an early influx of Blossom Underwing in the spring, a very local species in the county.

Later in the year field trips by Butterfly Conservation members identified some interesting species, with several Lace Borders at their main East Anglian site, tragically in danger of being overgrown, the rare Tawny Wave at a brand new site in the Brecks and the micro-like Small Purple-barred in north Norfolk.

The continuing generally good weather saw lots of species recorded and often in unusual numbers. Found with them, either in traps or in the field, have been a number of interesting or rare species which should be more thoroughly covered in the Norfolk Moth Survey (NMS) newsletter due later this year. These include Dotted Rustic and Marbled Green amongst the macro-moths, and rarest of all, the UK's second ever Silvery Gem which came to light in Weybourne the night before one in Suffolk. This was at about the same time as several other odd moths along the east coast and the arrival from central and northern Europe of the Scarce/Yellow-legged Tortoiseshells which made the national press. Happily for many, news of this extraordinary rarity was released and many people came to see it on display at NWT Cley visitors centre.

With more interest being shown generally in micro moths it is inevitable that new discoveries are made each year and 2014 has been no exception, some of the most notable being first Norfolk records of *Metalampra italica*, *Stigmella magdalenae* (leaf mine) and *Bryotropha basaltinella* as well as first 21st century records of *Phyllonorycter quinqueguttella* (leaf mine) and *Scyrthis inspersella*. The last seemed to be restricted in the United Kingdom to one site in Norfolk but has since been found in Yorkshire and Suffolk, so not so unique then!

Another feature of the year has been some slightly bizarre combinations of species emerging early, such as Mottled Umber and Pink-barred Sallow in our own garden, with presumably second generations (or more?) of species which are usually only about in summer, such as White and Buff Ermines, Heart and Dart and Poplar, Elephant, Eyed and Lime Hawkmoths to name a few.

Turning to events, we have been particularly pleased with the numbers attending the opening of moth traps early on in the morning at our public events. As this should enable everyone to have a good look at what is on the egg boxes or in the pots it's a formula we think works well, increasing interest in creatures otherwise rarely on show. Butterfly Conservation clearly recognises moths as being of considerable conservation, and thus education, value but this practical purpose shouldn't overshadow the fascination of seeing traps opened. The look on children's faces when they see their first hawkmoth is a joy, so if you've never been, do come along.

Butterfly Conservation has been steadily collating records for inclusion in the National Moth Recording Scheme and so far this year 1.4 million records have been received via county recorders, bringing the total on the database to an impressive 17 million! These will be used to produce an Atlas of Macro moths for some time in 2018, with as much as possible of the intervening period being used to fill in gaps in recorded areas. Though Norfolk generally is well recorded there are still plenty of blanks on the map which appears on the front page of the Norfolk Moths website, so please help if you can.

The commonest species in the survey was Large Yellow Underwing, followed by Heart and Dart, while the most widespread was Large Yellow Underwing (again), then Brimstone, Dark Arches, Green Carpet and the migrant Silver Y. It's not all good news though, with a number of species becoming rarer, often for reasons which are not obvious, though habitat degradation and climate change must be playing a part. Butterfly Conservation produce a very informative newsletter, Moths Count, containing more details of much of the above

The latest Transactions of the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society has a short but fascinating paper by Andrew Bloomfield on a survey undertaken of Hornet Clearwing moths at Holkham in 2012. This large, day emerging moth is thought to be common generally but is hard to see as it emerges from holes in Poplar trees in summer and almost immediately heads upwards for the tops. Have a look at the base of Poplars and if you see holes about the thickness of a pencil about 15cm above the ground, keep an eye open next summer for the spectacular adults.

All the records at our events are sent to the county moth recorder, Jim Wheeler, and we would encourage you to do so as well. These can be sent in easily via the Norfolk Moth Survey website (www.norfolkmoths.co.uk) which also details all their activities as well as their two Newsletters, in April and November. Alternatively, printed versions are available for a subscription of £3 to Dave Hipperson, Summerfield House, Main Road, Filby, Great Yarmouth, NR29 3HN.

Fig.1: Tawny Wave

Fig. 2: Silvery Gem

Silver-studded Blue Emergence

Roger Fay

My particular aim this year was to capture the Silver-studded Blue (SSB) on its emergence from an ants' nest. Its host being the black ant (*Lasius niger*) I knew of a colony of SSB's in Suffolk (Westleton Common). I set off when weather permitted to look for the host's nests amongst the Bell Heather and I found about a dozen, which I marked. On most fine mornings I sat by each nest in turn for approximately ten minutes hoping for some movement. On one particular morning, I was thrilled to note the emergence of a SSB from one of the ants' nest; it turned out to be a male (noted when fully developed). Excited I dropped to my knees and started to photograph the proceedings.

Fig. 3: Emergence of SSB from nest with it's attendant.

Fig. 4: The same SSB half developed with two attendants.

Fig. 5: Much more developed still with two attendants.

Fig. 6: Fully developed on another clump of Bell Heather, having flown about 1.25m





Field Trips 2014

By Ann Carpenter

Long's Wood on 24th May

Relentless driving rain during the morning of 24th May made this event unlikely. However, the rain stopped at lunchtime, the sun came out, so Bob and I set forth to see if anyone would join us. Four stalwarts turned up, together with Rachael Long, the daughter of Dennis Long, who founded the wood twenty years ago.

Dennis wanted to be an organic farmer, but his land was so poor and heavy that it needed a lot of fertilisers and herbicides to control the black grass. When the opportunity arose he turned the land over to set aside and the result is a very fine young woodland covering 70 acres.

We saw Orange-tip, Green-veined White and Speckled Wood along the rides, but on the outskirts of the wood, along the edges of the meadow, there were many Small Heath, indicating good supplies of narrow blade grasses, fescues and bents. There were also good numbers of Common Blue and Small Copper reflecting the wild flower content and we also had a Small Tortoiseshell to finish off a very interesting afternoon with a total of seven species.

Pigney's Wood on 28th June

In spite of the weather twelve of us arrived at Pigney's Wood, a 58 acre community woodland south of Knapton. We were met by volunteer Mike Wright and Brian Abbs trustee/director. As Mike was telling us about the founding of the wood in 1993, on what had been mainly farmland, it started to rain. This however soon eased off and we decided to go ahead. The main butterfly of the day was the Ringlet, dozens of them in the long grass, attracted by the lush vegetation and coarse grasses including Cock's-Foot, False Brome and Tufted Hair Grass. We had several damselflies, including a Banded Demoiselle. There were lots of woodland birds and the reed beds were full of reed warblers and we saw a kingfisher. There were also several orchids. All three Skippers were found, the Large and Essex also favouring Cock's-foot grass, and we saw nine species in total. Considering the weather this was better than expected.

After lunch Mike showed us two short films on his laptop about the butterflies and mammals seen in the woods. Some of us then moved on to Knapton Gap. The site is rather overgrown, but has lots of potential with its south facing banks. We had Ringlets and Skippers again and our final treat a very nice Comma. A very pleasant walk in a great site with good company and my grateful thanks to both Mike and Brian for their time and the information they shared with us.

Photographs of Field Trips and Events 2014

Fig. 1: Painted Lady by Ann Carpenter

Fig. 2: Common Blue by Ann Carpenter

Fig. 3: Silver-washed Fritillary by Ann Carpenter

Fig. 4: Small Copper by Ann Carpenter

Fig. 5: Large Skipper by Ann Carpenter

Fig. 6: Privet Hawkmoth from Wiveton by Peter Colston

Fig. 7: Identifying moths at Wiveton by Peter Colston

Fig. 8: Gazebo at Wiveton by Peter Colston

Holt Country Park on 22nd July

True to form the day broke, cloudy, cool and looking as though it could rain. In spite of the weather thirteen people gathered in the car park at Holt Country Park. It was very overcast and cool, the conditions not at all propitious for our quest. We were soon out on to Holt Lowes, having seen very little apart from some moths. I thought we might have more luck with the keeled skimmer, but even that was not about.

Lunch was suggested and then everything changed, the cloud lifted a little and it warmed up and someone came up to me and said "I have just taken this picture what is it"? It was a keeled skimmer, and there were several within yards of where we had our lunch. Cameras were busy and the party enlivened. Then the butterflies emerged. Firstly the Graylings on the Lowes were seen.

We then decided to return to the wood and were delighted to find Silver-washed Fritillaries and White Admirals on the buddleia in the car park as well as Red Admirals and Gatekeepers. We had twelve different species of butterfly and found all our target species. Triumph was plucked from impending disaster and a most enjoyable day in the end.

Hickling Reserve on 29th July

The sun was shining and it was a warm sunny day for our trip to Hickling; unbelievable, but true. Twenty of us gathered for the walk and boat trips and we set off to explore the new paths and trails on the reserve ably led by Roger and Jenny who act as volunteers for this site. We almost immediately found a Purple Hairstreak in the oaks as you follow one of the new paths, but it was very skittish. Still a good start. The re-routing of the pathways and the raising of the banks give an excellent view of the reserve.

The Gatekeepers were everywhere and so were all three of our usual skippers and we also found several Peacocks and Red Admirals. After lunch we divided into two groups, one for the boats and the other to go to the Bittern Hide and then round to the second boat trip. The Purple Hairstreaks were seen from the tower so we had many satisfied customers. An excellent day with a total of sixteen butterflies including my first Painted Lady of the year.

Winterton Dunes on 7th August

What started as a lovely summer's day soon clouded up and true to form by the time thirteen people had met and introduced themselves it had started raining. Fortunately this did not last too long and we began to find Small Tortoiseshell and Grayling butterflies. The Graylings were particularly numerous in this perfect habitat with well drained soil baked by the sand. This butterfly thrives on acidic heaths, chalk and limestone downs, cliffs and old quarries and thinly wooded heaths. The eggs are laid singly on blades of various grasses such as Sheeps-fescue, Bristle bent and Tufted Hairgrass. We also found Wall Brown, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Small Copper, Common Blue, Small Heath and Dark Green Fritillary. In total we had thirteen different species and although it was a butterfly walk a scarce emerald damselfly was a nice treat to finish with.

More Field Trips 2014

By Judy Dunmore

Moth Morning At Wiveton on 5th July

On a dull and wet morning over 30 people came along to see what we had managed to trap overnight in Barbara and Martin Woodcock's wonderful wildlife-friendly garden. The four traps yielded 890 macro moths from 89 species with a further 60+ micro species being identified afterwards. The highlights for most people were probably Antler Moth, Blackneck, Lesser-spotted Pinion, Mere Wainscott, Slender Brindle and Tawny-barred

Angle; their large gazebo being extremely useful for shelter from the intermittent rain. An open invitation to walk around the garden was thoroughly enjoyed by those who had the time and lots of good advice about planting for wildlife was passed on by Barbara. An extremely successful morning despite the weather – our grateful thanks to Martin and Barbara for making it possible and for donating the proceeds from the welcome refreshments to BC funds.

Chambers Farm Wood, Lincolnshire on 7th September

Field Trip dates have to be decided upon before the Spring Newsletter is published and this often results in target species either not yet having emerged (as with Silver-studded Blues in 2013) or almost over. The date chosen for this joint trip with the Lincolnshire Branch to see Brown Hairstreaks was suggested as the optimum time for good views and photographic opportunities. However, 10 days before the visit we were informed that males had emerged as early as 24th July this year and it was unlikely any hairstreaks would still be around by September 7th. As this was an out-of-county trip, the decision was made to contact all members who have supplied Karen with their e-mail address to let them know the latest situation.

My sister lives less than 30 minutes drive south of Chambers Farm Wood so Giles and I had prearranged to spend the weekend with her. We therefore went along and met up with some 20 other enthusiasts, mainly from Lincolnshire. We had left a sunny morning but as we drove north we encountered overcast skies and it was only around 12°C. No Brown Hairstreaks had been seen for a few days so we set off with little or no hope of finding any. Gradually the sun came out and after about an hour the temperature was around 20°C and common butterflies were in evidence. Eventually we saw frantic hand waving some distance further on and someone had found a female basking. Eureka – we had cracked it! The butterfly was somewhat worn but sat with its wings open, then moved around giving excellent views of the underside as well. Of course, once you have found one butterfly others follow – in all five insects were seen – quite a result! Unusually for hairstreaks, all gave excellent photographic opportunities and one was egg-laying this late in the season.

For those who had intended to go, but were deterred by the pessimistic advice, we will arrange another trip (possibly next year). However, you can always visit on your own; it is easy to find from the map reference we gave; there are toilet facilities and plenty of parking. Pick up a leaflet and take the ‘red’ walk – the best place to look is around ‘five-ways’ and then to the right for the next 400 yards. There is also an amazing wildflower garden by the Information Centre where we ate our lunch and saw 14 Red Admirals on just one area of Michaelmas Daisy. I hope you are as lucky as we were.

Events 2014

By Angela Woodrow

Wild about the Wensum at Pensthorpe, our first event of the year and was held a little earlier than in the past, at the end of April. It turned out to be a dull, cold day so the butterfly walks around this lovely venue proved fruitless. Visitors were glad to enter the comparative warmth of the marquee where they could anticipate a butterfly-filled summer by viewing our photographic display and promotional material.

By the time of our jointly-hosted Swallowtail Day at The Ted Ellis Nature Reserve at Wheatfen in mid-June, the weather had at least warmed up but it started off dull and overcast. This well supported event draws visitors from across the UK and this year was no exception. We welcomed people from Scotland, Hampshire, Yorkshire and Cumbria as well as “locals” and their eager anticipation was rewarded by one very fresh Swallowtail

which sat on a reed stem all day, enabling excellent photo opportunities. Norfolk Hawker dragonflies were also flying, as well as Marsh Harriers and one group who walked to the banks of the River Yare were rewarded with views of an Osprey.

By the end of June the weather was hot and sunny, giving us two very pleasant days at the Royal Norfolk Show. This year we were included on the schedule for a royal visit which meant we were able to talk to HRH The Earl of Wessex about the current state of our butterflies. Moving with the times, we had on display our Branch QR code. This enables smartphone owners to scan the code, giving immediate access to our website which is regularly updated with current information.

Another change in the weather in early July meant we set up our stand at the Annual Open Day at Abbey Farm, Flitcham in the rain. Visitors had the chance to view the contents of several moth traps which had been set the previous night and by early afternoon the sun came out, just in time for our butterfly walk. A tractor and trailer ride eased the climb to the furthest point on this lovely chalk grassland site and as we meandered back down to the farm, the temperature gradually rose, making a tally of 13 species seen, including Brown Argus and Common Blue. I was pleased to see some of the Garlic Mustard plants I had grown and planted out for Edward Cross in the Sainfoin Field on the farm were thriving. The aim is to help Orange-tips colonise this part of the farm.

We opened five moth traps at our Hillfield Nursery event on a hot sunny day in late July with a total count of 100 species, including macro moths identified by the experts. Two butterfly walks followed, the first through the fields where bee and butterfly nectar plants had been sown and the second through the orchard. There were good views of several Wall butterflies and if we include a fast flying Grayling and Purple Hairstreak around the top of the ash tree at the Nursery entrance, we counted a marvellous 21 species.

We promoted the Big Butterfly Count at our Eaton Park event in early August where again good weather meant we had a lovely day. Several visitors had looked at our website and seen the event listed and others told us of seeing it on Street View – good to know we can rely on many new methods of reaching out to those who share our interest. We equalled our highest tally of 13 species seen in the Park which again included Brown Argus and Common Blue – if only a Comma had appeared, we would have achieved a new record!

Still to come is Wild about Norfolk which always proves to be a busy and enjoyable event and brings to a close our programme for the year. Many thanks to all who have helped at events and a special mention to our member Paul King who has helped me every year with the marquee at the Royal Norfolk Show, setting up and dismantling it all. Also to Margaret Allen who kindly got in touch to offer to store the marquee following my request in the Spring newsletter.

Photographs of Field Trips and Events 2014

Fig. 1: Abbey Farm open day by Derek Longe

Fig. 2: Cut-Off Channel by Derek Longe

Fig. 3: Holt Counry Park field trip by Derek Longe

Fig. 4: Swallowtail Day at Wheatfen by Derek Longe

Fig. 5: Dingy Skipper at Foulden Common by Derek Longe

Fig. 6: Grizzled Skipper at Foulden Common by Derek Longe

Fig. 7: Swallowtail at the Ted Ellis Reserve by Derek Longe

Fig. 8: Brown Hairstreak at Chambers Wood by Lawrie Poole



Moth Pollination of Greater Butterfly-orchids

By Mike Gasson

My interest in butterflies and moths coincides with a long standing affection for wild orchids. I have included this small piece as we had space to fill in the newsletter and because it illustrates how these two interests can sometimes come together. I do a fair amount of voluntary work with Norfolk Wildlife Trust and for several years have done what I can to preserve a small and vulnerable population of Greater Butterfly-orchids in Foxley Wood. This year they featured in a corporate event and rather than have people just look at the flowers I tried to demonstrate something of the remarkable way that this orchid species exploits moths to achieve pollination. It proved to be a successful venture, providing an



active pollinator specimen for the visitors and some decent photographs, a few of which are shared here.

The orchid flowers are white and become especially conspicuous as the light fades. This visual attractant is accompanied by the production of a scent that acts as a potent moth lure. Furthermore, the flowers feature a very long spur that contains a large amount of nectar, thereby providing a reward to visiting lepidoptera. The length of the spur with its nectar at the end restricts this reward to insects that are equipped with a suitable length of tongue/proboscis. The flower's lip provides a convenient support for the moth's body and it can hang on to the lateral sepals as if they were designed as handle bars!



Orchid pollen is unusual in that, whilst produced in great quantity, it is held together in the form of pollen bundles and incorporated in sophisticated structures known as pollinia. In the case of orchid species that are insect pollinated various mechanisms have evolved to attach the pollinia to a visiting insect. The Greater Butterfly-orchid has pollinia with sticky pads that are strategically placed on each side of the entrance to the nectar carrying spur. In order for these to become attached to a visiting insect they need to make contact such that they adhere and allow the pollinia to be taken away to pollinate another flower. In moth terms this is where it gets rather interesting.



Moths are almost completely covered in hairs or scales that would break off the insect rather than facilitate carriage of an attached orchid pollinia. For this reason the only places that the pollinia will effectively stick to a moth is on the eyes or the proboscis. The Greater Butterfly-orchid has evolved to target the former, whereas the related Lesser Butterfly-orchid targets the latter. One of the simplest ways of differentiating these very similar looking orchid species is to look at the distance between the two pollinia: they are close together when the proboscis is targeted (Lesser) and wider apart when aimed at the eyes (Greater).

In order to be effective as a pollinator the moth morphology needs to meet two criteria. First, the proboscis length needs to match the spur length. Too long and the moth gets the nectar whilst its eyes stay clear of the sticky pads! Second, the eyes need to be the right distance apart to make contact with the sticky pads.

This mechanism was first proposed by Charles Darwin but the most comprehensive practical work on moths as pollinators of Greater Butterfly-orchids was undertaken in Sweden during the 1970s by Andres Nilsson. One of my orchid friends, Roy Sexton, has done similar work in Scotland, trapping moths in a meadow habitat rich in Greater Butterfly-orchids and then looking to see what species had acquired pollinia. His work confirmed that Noctuids of the Plusiinae sub-group are especially effective orchid pollinators.

Going back to the Norfolk event, I ran some moth traps at the time the orchids were in flower and found several species of this group to be active in the habitat. Silver Y (*Autographa gamma*), Beautiful Golden Y (*Autographa pulchrina*) and Burnished Brass (*Diachrysis chrysitis*) were all present. As you can see in the photographs opposite, I found that our local orchids were able to deliver pollinia to the Burnished Brass (lower image) and scored a bull's eye with the Beautiful Golden Y (top image).

One additional feature of this mechanism, also occurring in some other orchid species, is that once adhered to the moth the pollinia bend such that they protrude to be in line with the orchid stigma. This ensures that the insect presents the orchid pollen perfectly so as to pollinate another flower when it moves on. It is easy to use a pencil or similar object as an artificial pollinator – the pollinia stick on and you can watch them bend. What is even more sophisticated is the fact that the bend time tends to be matched to the time that an insect typically stays on an individual flower thereby promoting cross pollination.

Moths that are attracted to feed on the orchid nectar can pay a high price and may acquire large numbers of pollinia such that they are effectively blinded. Despite this the strong scent still provides them with a guide and they will continue to feed. Two of my other orchid friends, Jean Claessens and Jacques Kleynen, specialise in studying and photographing orchid pollination. The black and white image is derived from one of their photographs and if you are interested some articles and epic video clips can be accessed via the home page of the Hardy Orchid Society website:

www.hardyorchidsociety.org.uk



BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION NORFOLK BRANCH

Income and Expenditure Accounts for the Year Ended 31st March 2014

<u>INCOME</u>	2013/14		2012/13	
	£	£	£	£
Subscriptions	3,155		3,338	
Donations	1,015		1,113	
Interest	375		263	
Catfield Fen Reserve				
ESA Grant	-		3,453	
Conservation Plan Grant	-		-	
Donation	-		20	
Open Day	-		-	
Sales at Events	414		703	
VAT Refund	78		30	
Fundraising	495		325	
Refreshments	-		6	
North Norfolk Group	<u>-</u>	5,532	<u>117</u>	9,368

EXPENDITURE

Catfield Fen Management	874		6,247	
Newsletter	2,090		1,724	
Cost of Sales Goods	262		62	
VAT Paid	300		111	
Office Expenses	312		136	
Publicity	448		456	
Travel Expenses -Conservation	18		65	
-Events	304		228	
-Surveys	285		241	
Insurance	8		10	
Equipment	1,130		-	
AGM Lecturer's Fee	164		-	
Transfer of Funds to Head Office	7,000*		-	
North Norfolk Group	<u>-</u>	<u>13,195</u>	<u>152</u>	<u>9,432</u>

SURPLUS(DEFICIT FOR YEAR)

(7,663)

(64)

* DEFRA has decided that the Special Payments Scheme (SPS) grants made to Butterfly Conservation, against applications made under guidance and in good faith, should be disallowed. They have required the full amount to be repaid. The Committee has decided that £7,000 of our surplus funds should be returned to Head Office as we were in receipt of SPS payments amounting to £10,100. This discharges our liability.

A more detailed version of these accounts is available from the Treasurer on request.

These accounts have been independently examined and approved.

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION NORFOLK BRANCH

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2014

<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>	2013/14		2012/13	
	£	£	£	£
Stock for Sale	577		605	
Debtors	60		90	
Prepayments	625		-	
Current Account at Bank	4,817		6,109	
Deposit Account	8,000		15,000	
Cash Float	<u>40</u>	14,199	<u>40</u>	21,844
<u>CURRENT LIABILITIES</u>				
Creditors		<u>nil</u>		<u>nil</u>
<u>TOTAL NET ASSETS</u>		<u>14,119</u>		<u>21,844</u>

ACCUMULATED FUND

Balance brought forward 1 st April 2013	21,782	21,846
Surplus(Deficit) for year	<u>(7,663)</u>	<u>(64)</u>
Balance carried forward 31st March 2014	<u>14,119</u>	<u>21,782</u>

FINANCIAL RESERVES POLICY

The Committee has determined that most of the Accumulated Fund will be allocated as follows:-

	£	£
Reserve against reduction in income (6 months' estimated expenditure)		2,645
Restricted Reserves:		
Unspent maintenance grants for Catfield Fen Reserve		1,201
Designated Reserves:		
Estimated Deficits next three years	3,300	
Cut-off Channel Project	3,311	
Purchase of Projector	700	
Repair of Machinery at Kelling Heath	600	
Replacement Outboard Motor for Workboat	<u>2,000</u>	<u>9,911</u>
		<u>13,757</u>

Roland Rogers
Treasurer

E-mail contact

A further plea to all members who have not yet supplied Karen with e-mail details. Please consider giving us the ‘thumbs up’ to be able to contact you electronically. Karen sends out occasional reminders and any urgent changes to Events or Field Trips and includes other useful information at the time. You will not be inundated with e-mails and can always opt out at any time. Contact Karen on husbandkaren@gmail.com

First and Last Sightings – 2013

By Andy Brazil

2013 Records were received from:

A Adams, B & Y Anderson(BYA), P Bacon, G Baldock, A Banwell, P Barkham, J Barrett(JB), S Bashforth, R Beevor, N Belfield-Smith, S Berry, A Birkin, A I Bloomfield (ABI), D Boulton, L Bovey, D Bradley, A Brazil, K Brett, D Brice (DB), A Brown (AB), M Brown, S Bryan, D Bryant, J Bull, J Burton, T Butler-Stoney, N Calbrade, I Carle, A & B Carpenter, M Casey (MC), P Cawley, D Cheyne, P Childs, P Clarke, M Clements, J Clifton, B Cobb, M Cocker, R Cole, P Colston, A Culshaw, C Davies, C Davison, A Dawson, B Dawson, P Dolton, T Doncaster, C Donner, J Dossetor, P Douch (PD), M Duddy, G & J Dunmore, R Edmunds, N Edwards, B Ellis, N Elsey (NE), J Emerson, D Fairhead, C Falvey, F Farrow (FF), C Faulkner, S Fenner, F. Ferre, S Fishwick, G Fletcher, K Flowerday, B Ford, J & K Fox, P Freakes, N Furtek, Mr & Mrs Gambrill (CG), M Gasson, K Gay, J & J Geeson, E George, M Ghullam, P & M Gluth (PMG), E Goodyear, T Green, M Greenland, L Griffiths, S Grime, R Grindrod, A Haines, A Hale, E Hammler, M Harcup (MH), J Harris, M Harvey, D Hastings, D Hatton, T Hayter, P Heath (PH), A Henderson, H Hepburn, J & D Hewitt, R Hoe, J Hogg, R Holt, D Howdon, A W Humphrey(AH), K Husband, T Irwin, C Jacobs, F Jolliffe, D Jones, R & J Jones, R Jones, B Keiller, G Kelly, J Kelly, A Kerr, A Kerridge, P Kirby, P Kitchener (PK), D Knight, W Langdon, N Lawton (NL), D Leech, S Lenane, P Leppert, S Levene, B Lewis, Dr J Lines, C Littlewood, D W Longden (DLo), D Longdon, D Longe (DL), P Lorber (PL), D Ludgate, B Madden, A Maguire, C Manion, J Matthews, J McCallum, J Metcalf, C Miller (CM), A Millard, P Millard, F Mitchell, T Money, D & K Moss, A Musgrove(AM), T Needham, P Nichols(PN), L Nicholson, G & P Ninham, D Nobbs, D Noble, P Norfolk, B Osborne, N Owens, B Palmer(BP), P Parker, J Parry, T Peach (TP), S Pennell (SP), R Porter, D Powell, D Power, P Proctor, B & B Pummell, C Rand, M Riches, A M Riley, K Risely, B Roberts, R Rogers, M Rooney, M Rowe, A Russell, K Saul (KS), E Shilland, J Shutes, B Smith, R Smith, R Southwood, T Stevens, CR Stevenson, R Stewart, W Stewart, A Stoddart (AS), M Stolworthy, E Stone, K Stuart-Clarke(KSC), I Tart, P Taylor, A Tegala (AT), M Twydell, G Upton, J Wagstaff, C Ward, J Warham, J Wells, I West, A Whittaker, M Williams, B Wilson, M Woodcock (MW), S Woodcock, K Woodhouse, A Woodrow, P Woolnough, S Wright, K Yates, E Yeomans

Records were also received from Blofield & District Conservation Group, Norfolk Biological Information Service, Norfolk Flora Group and Reffley Wood Volunteers, as well as from a number of internet sites and from emails received by the wildlife information service of the NWT and the Norfolk Wildlife Yahoo group.

My thanks to all the above for their efforts.

Species	First Sighting	Recorder	2012	Last Sighting	Recorder	2012
Brimstone	1 March	KSC	18 Feb.	17 Dec.	AB	15 Nov.
Brown Argus	19 May	Many	12 May	5 Nov.	MC & AB	16 Oct.
Chalkhill Blue	18 July	PH	24 July	2 Sept.	CG	1 Sept.
Clouded Yellow	20 June	NL	7 Aug.	4 Nov.	MC & AB	30 Sept.
Comma	5 March	Many	8 Jan.	15 Nov.	PMG	13 Nov.
Common Blue	14 May	MC	15 May	27 Sept.	MC & AB	1 Oct.
Dark-green Fritillary	10 June	ABI	5 July	23 Aug.	PH	19 Aug.
Dingy Skipper	16 May	MC & AB	12 May	8 June	DLo	29 May
Essex Skipper	17 June	MC	12 June	1 Sept.	MC	9 Sept.
Gatekeeper	17 June	MC	2 July	1 Oct.	BP	18 Sept.
Grayling	13 July	AM	12 July	30 Sept.	PD	19 Sept.
Green Hairstreak	16 April	CG	5 April	19 July	SP	26 June
Green-veined White	19 April	MC	23 March	8 Oct.	MC & AB	11 Oct.
Grizzled Skipper	3 May	TP	11 May	8 June	DLo	29 May
Holly Blue	21 April	BP	25 March	13 Sept.	MC & AB	10 Oct.
Large Skipper	14 May	MC	17 May	29 Aug.	FF	25 Aug.
Large White	21 March	AB	24 March	1 Nov.	MC & AB	17 Oct.
Meadow Brown	29 May	PH	6 June	21 Sept.	MC & AB	20 Sept.
Orange-tip	24 March	CM	23 March	19 Aug.	BYA	15 Aug.
Painted Lady	20 May	NE	8 Jan.	26 Oct.	AT	11 Oct.
Peacock	6 Jan.	KS	8 Jan.	30 Dec.	MC	8 Dec.
Purple Hairstreak	19 June	MC	19 June	8 Sept.	PK	14 Sept.
Red Admiral	24 Jan.	MC & AB	5 Jan.	19 Dec.	CG	26 Nov.
Ringlet	30 May	PH	6 June	3 Sept.	AH	23 Aug.
Silver-studded Blue	27 May	PH	17 June	4 Aug.	DB	23 Aug.
Silver-washed Fritillary	6 July	AS	7 July	2 Sept.	MW	19 Sept.
Small Copper	5 March	MC	27 March	4 Nov.	MC & AB	3 Nov.
Small Heath	23 May	DL	22 May	30 Sept.	PD	9 Sept.
Small Skipper	17 June	MC	8 June	1 Sept.	MC	1 Oct.
Small Tortoiseshell	17 Feb.	DB	23 Feb.	28 Dec.	AB	15 Nov.
Small White	29 Mar.	PL	20 Feb.	24 Oct.	Many	26 Oct.
Speckled Wood	20 April	FF	18 Feb.	4 Nov.	MC & AB	29 Oct.
Swallowtail	16 May	PH	22 May	20 Sept.	PH	10 Aug.
Wall Brown	27 May	BYA, PN	2 May	4 Sept.	DL	8 Sept.
White Admiral	19 June	MC	5 July	28 Aug.	MC & AB	4 Sept.
White-letter Hairstreak	26 June	MC	20 June	19 Aug.	MC & AB	20 Aug.

Chalkhill Blue Surveys 2014

By Alan Dawson

Following on from previous years we continued the timed-count survey of the Chalkhill Blue colony at Warham Camp. You will remember, I'm sure, that this colony is the result of an unofficial introduction back in about 2007 and last year there were overwhelming numbers of butterflies flying. This year we were quite constrained in terms of the time available for doing the count and went to the site slightly earlier than last year on 28th July. However, given the warmth of July and that most other species were on the wing rather early, we hoped that this would be close to the peak flight time. In the event, the ratio of males to females (about 9 to 1) suggests that we were not too far off. The weather was not ideal. It was warm (19°C) but cloudy and breezy. However, the numbers of Chalkhills were still extremely impressive, if rather less than in 2013. I did the scribing, we had 4 spotters shouting numbers at me and particularly in the NE sector of the ring we were all kept very busy.

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Males	22	220	853	1382	6133	2422
Females	2	20	71	94	892	341
Total	24	240	926	1476	7025	2763

As you see, the numbers are quite a lot down on last year's bumper crop and time will tell what this means. The word on the streets is that numbers of Chalkhill Blues are lower than last year elsewhere in the country. However, given the confined nature of the site and the huge numbers last year, it is possible that the food plant (Horseshoe Vetch) is being nibbled to destruction, so we intend to go and have a look at the site next year during the flowering season – something we have not done since 2009.

Meanwhile, Chalkhill Blues have been popping up elsewhere in the County. Last year they were seen on the transect at Cranwich Heath, where they have been seen again in 2014. This year they have been seen on the transect at Ringstead Down and additionally have been reported from East Wretham and East Harling Heaths. The numbers seen are very small on all these sites and they may be a hangover from the great explosion in numbers in 2013 but it is going to be very interesting to see what happens in 2015.

Dingy and Grizzled Skippers and More

By Judy Dunmore

Following the dreadful spring weather in 2013, there was some concern as to what the 2014 season would produce. Early spring species seem much more susceptible to the variants of the weather, and each year we face different problems trying to work out the best time to start any surveys, and then finding a good day. This apart, we also have to try and pick an optimum date for a Field Trip. Skippers came out earlier this year and in the end we only managed one full day of surveying along the Cut-Off Channel. A team of five covered a long stretch north of Methwold, last surveyed in 2009. This is a very varied stretch, quite open in parts whilst very scrubbed over elsewhere. Access was not easy in parts but we counted 5 Grizzled and 13 Dingies, well spread out along the length. There were Burnet Companion, Lattice Heath and Mother Shipton moths to confuse us but we also saw two Small Yellow Underwings and a Treble Bar, moths which also like the chalky environment.

Although we undertook a small amount of conservation work at Leziat Country Park during the winter, I didn't actually manage to visit this year. Following a fatality last year, the main car park is closed. However Mike Wright reported seeing a total of 8 Grizzled and 6 Dingies the day after we had been at Methwold. That same day, whilst a group of us were looking for Lace Border moths at Narborough Railway Line, up to 7 Dingies were found; the Grizzled having now died out at this site.

This was a busy week and the following day, 21st May, was the Field Trip to Foulden Common. This year the weather was much better, the temperature 18°C-20°C with very little wind. The group wandered over a wide area, with plenty of Burnet Companion and Lattice Heath moths to keep everyone on their toes. A minimum of 11 Grizzled and 10 Dingies were counted and with patience, there were good photographic opportunities for both species. Everyone agreed it had been a successful trip, particularly after the disappointing one in 2013.

In the afternoon a group moved on to Lynford Lakes to check out a report of Dingy Skippers being seen there. No previous records had been submitted from this site but on arrival it was clear that the area was eminently suitable for this species. With 8 people present we were able to spread out and sweep the area thoroughly, resulting in us recording 46 Dingies – an excellent result. We had not arrived until after 2pm so time was running short and when a small unusual moth was disturbed, Trevor Stevens photographed it for later identification. It turned out to be a Tawny Wave, a Brecks speciality and quite rare (unfortunately only 3 of the group actually saw it!). Some of us returned to this site again after the Cranwich Heath Field Trip and found a good number of Grayling. This makes this a very important site, holding 4 BAP species (Dingy Skipper and Grayling; Tawny Wave and Lunar Yellow Underwing moths) and one which we will be keeping our eye on.

Catfield Fen Open Day 8th June 2014

By Mandy Gluth

Our annual Open Day is the only day in the year when members of BC and the public have the opportunity to see what the inside of the reserve is like. Guided walks through the alder carr woodland and into the fen meadow are a taste of the exceptional habitat which supports so many Red Data Book species. It can also be a dangerous habitat for a stranger, which is why access has to be with a guide.

For the second year running BC's Norfolk Branch Chair, Judy Dunmore and Moth Officer, Greg Bond, together this year with Mick A'Court from the RSPB, set up some moth traps around the site the night before. All but one of these worked well and although the night was moonlit and clear it was warm and still enough for a good number of moths to be flying. Highlights included specialist species such as Reed Leopard and Flame Wainscot, as well as Dotted Footman, found at Catfield and only a few other Broadland sites, as well as big and attractive species such as Elephant and Poplar Hawkmoths.

After opening the moth traps, guided walks were conducted around the reserve while BC's Bernard Watts and Alan Dawson took visitors out in the boat to see the reserve from a different perspective around the dykes.

Unlike 2013, the weather was warm and sunny on the day with plenty of Swallowtails for visitors to admire and photograph, as well as local Norfolk Hawker dragonflies. Both were easily seen from the Rond and even the temporary car park. Other butterflies seen included Brimstones, Small Tortoiseshells and Red Admirals while a pheromone lure in the car park attracted a male White-banded Clearwing, a stunning day flying moth which frequents alder.

As usual, members of the BC Norfolk Branch committee were on hand to chat to visitors, but little encouragement was needed with the weather ensuring everyone had a great day, at least as far as all the feedback received is concerned. Even the mosquitoes seemed less bothersome this year!

We are very grateful to Dr and Mrs Sandy Holburn for allowing the use of their field as a car park, without which the Open Day would not be able to take place, as well as the RSPB and their volunteers for the work they did both before and on the day to ready the reserve for visitors.

New Members

A warm welcome to all these new members who recently joined the Branch. We hope that you will enjoy your membership, and we would be delighted if you are able to come along to one of our indoor meetings in the winter, or field trips in the summer – please make yourself known to a member of the committee.

Mr Stephen Harris (Bungay)	Mr Harry White (Norwich)
Mr Mark Dumbleton (Norwich)	Mr Cucksey (Blakeney)
Mrs Danielle Nundy (Norwich)	Mr Stewart (Brundall)
Mrs Susan Blanchard (Norwich)	Nr Hancox (Reedham)
Mr & Mrs Turner & family (N Walsham)	Mr & Mrs Southon (Norwich)
Miss Danielle Gilroy (Norwich)	Ms Balmer (Thetford)
Mr & Mrs Blackburn & Family (Thetford)	Ms Gagen (King's Lynn)
Mr Philip Strachan (Brooke)	Ms Ashton (Norwich)
Mr & Mrs Yallop & family (Norwich)	Ms Rowlinson (Roughton)
Mrs Janet Lake (King's Lynn)	Mr & Mrs Dockree & family (Dereham)
Mr Sanville (Sheringham)	Dr O'Neill (Windsor)
Mr Bennett (Holt)	Mr Vazquez (Norwich)
Miss Shurmer (Norwich)	Mr Soar – Norwich,
Mr Sharpe (Attleborough)	Mrs Plant (Norwich)
Mr & Mrs Finney & family (Kings Lynn)	Mr Barker (Horsford)
Mr Jones (Stoke Holy Cross)	Mr Aggersburg (Norwich)
Miss Bruce (King's Lynn)	Mrs Neale (North Walsham)
Mr & Mrs Hatton (Gt Yarmouth)	Ms Bridgeman (Harleston)
Mr Rudd & family (North Walsham)	Mr Ford (King's Lynn)
Mr & Mrs Kidd & family (Spixworth)	Mr & Mrs Hubbard & family (Dereham)
Mr Rix (Norwich)	Miss Morgan (Fakenham)
Mr & Mrs Lefeuvre (King's Lynn)	Mr & Mrs Taylor (Attleborough)
Miss Prior (Aylsham)	Mr Carter (Norwich)
Mrs Tubby (Norwich)	Mrs Yau (Melton Constable)
Ms Sifontes (Melton Constable)	Mr Fitch (Happisburgh)
Mr Whittle (Swaffham)	Ms Fosse (Coltishall)
Mr & Mrs Bateman (Cromer)	Ms Atkinson (King's Lynn)
Mr & Mrs Bateman-Harlow & family (Cromer)	Ms Rutherford (Norwich)

Catfield Fen Reserve

By John Davis, Head of Reserves

Our Catfield Fen reserve is a long studied part of the extensive Broads and marshes of the River Ant Valley – some of the best unpolluted valley fen habitats in Western Europe – but the site is now showing signs of worrying threats.

The RSPB manage our reserve in conjunction with their nearby and much larger Sutton Fen reserve. These inaccessible reed beds, riddled with ditches, old peat diggings and floating mats of vegetation are difficult to manage and their very wetness is the key factor shaping the vegetation. Together these two reserves support over 99% of the fenland population of the nationally rare and endangered Fen Orchid *Liparis loeselii*. These rich fen communities are a complex mix of sedges, rushes, ferns and special wetland plants, dependant on the right levels of water in and above the peaty soil, and the chemistry of that water.

Our reserve is an unusual part of this very large valley system – it is isolated from the river and broad by the Commissioners Rond – an enclosing bank constructed centuries ago. This traps cleaner water in the ditches of our reserve where the input of both rainfall and groundwater create a complicated set of conditions and habitat to match. A top national site for water beetles, it also supports rare moths and the iconic wetland birds like bittern and marsh harrier. Plantlife are also keenly involved – studying the management needed to sustain the rare crested buckler fern. Few of BC's reserves draw so much attention from fellow conservation bodies.

But those conditions have been changing with signs of drying out mixed with the spread of bog mosses (*Sphagnum* spp) not seen elsewhere in these wetlands. Careful monitoring by the RSPB's warden Richard Mason, and comparison of the vegetation with past studies and other sites, reveals changes that are affecting the conditions needed by the Fen Orchids. These are also the conditions that suit key plants like the Milk Parsley on which the unique British race of Swallowtail butterfly breeds. Similar changes have been noted on the privately owned part of Catfield Fen adjoining the BC reserve.

As Catfield Fen is enclosed from the rest of the valley fen system in the River Ant Broads & Marshes SSSI it will be very vulnerable to water abstraction in the locality. Over the last few years the Environment Agency has been carefully considering the implications of applications to renew agricultural abstraction licences on farmland between Catfield Fen and the RSPB's reserve. In accordance with the European and UK legislation protecting these fragile fen habitats, to ensure that they do not suffer short-term or long-term deterioration in quality a precautionary approach must be applied.

BC shares the concerns being stated by Natural England and the RSPB that insufficient evidence has been presented on the part of the applicants to conclude that there would not be an adverse effect on these designated Broadland sites of which our reserves are valuable parts. We are awaiting the Environment Agency's consultation announcement on their intended course of action with the licences, and getting ready to strongly voice our views.

BC members can do the same: - please see the detailed information on the RSPB's web site about the case and how we can make representation that will matter:

rspb.org.uk/catfieldfen

Norfolk Branch 2013 Photographic Competition

By Peter Lindsley

This year's Norfolk branch photographic competition was well supported and, it seemed as popular as ever. I was aware though, that the display areas for the photographs was not as good as in previous years. I'm sorry about this; we will try to improve things next time.

The result of the competition is:

A: British Butterflies and Moths, including immature stages

Wining entry: by Roger Fay. Swallowtail butterfly in flight
- on the inside cover of this newsletter.

B: Overseas Butterflies and Moths, including immature stages

Wining entry: by Harry Faull. Scarce Swallowtail in Greece.
- on the front cover.

As our guest speaker had to dash off elsewhere, he was unable to stay to judge the two winning photos, I had the unenviable task of doing so. I thought Harry's entry was the better of the two, but it was a difficult choice. He was presented with a prize by Judy Dunmore. Very well done to the winners of each category. I should just mention that the winning entry in each category was determined by voting by the members on the day.

As previously, we have reproduced some of the entries in the newsletter, but could only use those that were submitted by post. This gave me the time to scan the photos before taking them to Norwich for the competition. This meant that many lovely photos could not appear in these pages, which is a great shame.

Next year, please do post your entries to me if at all possible. Then more of your photos could appear in these pages. You would still be able to collect your photos at the meeting in Norwich if you wished of course, in which case there would be no need to enclose a stamped & addressed return envelope.

May I take this opportunity to thank Greg Bond for helping me with the competition this year, I certainly appreciated the help. It was all very worthwhile and clearly popular, with people crowded round the photos during breaks. We look forward to another good crop of entries next year.

Entries from the 2014 Photographic Competition

- Fig. 1: Green Hairstreak, Narborough Railway line, by Matthew Mckie
- Fig. 2: Langs-short-tailed Blue, Menorca, by Karen Husband
- Fig. 3: Elephant Hawkmoth caterpillar, by Helen Burrell
- Fig. 4: Southern Speckled Wood, Menorca, by Karen Husband
- Fig. 5: Grey Dagger caterpillar, Rye, by Karen Husband
- Fig. 6: Large Skippers, Foulshaw Moss, Cumbria, by Mrs Shirley White
- Fig. 7: Silver-washed Fritillary, Holt Country Park by Angela Woodrow
- Fig. 8: Mazarine Blues, Bulgaria, by Helen Burrell

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Our Catfield Fen Nature Reserve

Please read the report on water abstraction threats to Catfield Fen from John Davis, Head of Reserves at Butterfly Conservation (page 29). John's photographs show one of the rich and attractive boundary dykes (top), the results of maintenance mowing of the sedge beds (bottom left) and the development of dense Sphagnum mats that are the cause of concern (bottom right).