

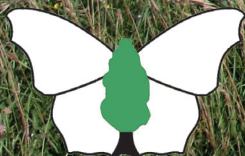
The Sussex **Butterfly** Magazine



2024

Sussex Butterfly Magazine 2024 - Issue 1
An Annual Review by Sussex Butterfly Conservation
Edited by John Heys and Sue Peters

Designed by Bob Foreman: bob@littlesnails.com



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

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Front cover: **Speckled Wood** photo by Bob Foreman

Back cover: **Silver-studded Blue** photo by Dave Brown

This page: **Windover Hill** photo by Dave Brown

Erratum: The back cover photo by Bob Eade on the 2023 magazine showed a pair of Chalkhill Blues, not Adonis Blues as stated in the magazine.

Butterfly Conservation Sussex Branch

Members' Day

Saturday 30th November
1.30 - 4.30 pm

Presentations:

'Saving Butterflies and Moths in South East England' - Steven Lofting, BC's Regional Conservation Officer

'The Lifecycle of the Wall Brown'
- Bob Eade

'Some of my Special Sightings'
- Lisa Saw

Raffle & Pre-Loved Book Stall

Photo Competition results to be announced,
& the top images submitted projected

Tea, Coffee & Cakes

Cyprus Hall, Cyprus Road,
Burgess Hill,
RH15 8DX

Chair's Introduction to 2024 Sussex Butterfly Magazine

Welcome to the 2024 Magazine. As for the previous two issues it is a consolidated one, combining the Spring Report and Autumn Newsletter into a single publication, making it more efficient to produce and distribute. It has again been edited by Sue Peters, who is also our primary Branch Contact, and John Heys, and formatted by Bob Foreman. Along with the other Committee members they are dedicated volunteers without whom the Sussex Branch could not function.

The Committee has been further strengthened over the past year with three new members. Martin Kalaher will be very familiar to you as the editor of the Sightings page of the Branch's website, his inimitable comments enhancing the reports sent in by Branch members and others. He has, however, only recently formally joined the Committee. Over the summer he and Paul Shepherd have completely updated the Branch Website, which, while innovative when first launched many years ago, was showing its age. This revamp, which took Martin and Paul hundreds of hours, gives the website a clean, modern look, with better functionality – we hope you enjoy it!

We now also have a Branch Secretary, Pat Randall, who, as well as ably handling administrative matters, has a professional background in planning, a very useful skill to have represented within the Committee, given how planning issues may impact on habitats important for lepidoptera.

Last, but certainly not least, we are delighted to have a new Treasurer, Roger Chisholm-Batten, who is expertly overseeing the Branch's finances.

Branch activities stepped up significantly in 2024 with our new Events Coordinator, Roy Broad, having organised an interesting and varied programme for this year. Thanks to those who led the individual events, including Martin Kalaher, who hosted visits to his own wonderful wildlife garden and the neighbouring downland. We will be offering a further programme of events for 2025. Details will be on the website.

Committee members have represented the Branch at events organised by other organisations. Andrea Gibbs and Julia Lowson-Smith set up and welcomed visitors to stalls at events run by the Sussex Ornithological Society and Ashdown Forest Commissioners. Our Vice Chair, James Milton, also represented the Branch at a number of events, as he describes later in the Magazine.

Non-committee volunteers are also fundamental to the Branch in being able to deliver practical on-the-ground-conservation action. We greatly appreciate the efforts of all those who participated in conservation work parties, often undertaken on cold winter days.

Turning to the butterflies themselves, when the 2023 season started the primary concern was whether there would be a serious knock-on effect of the 2022 drought and heatwave. After

an unseasonably cold spring and slow start, it picked up and a surprisingly good season unfolded for many species, both habitat specialists and those of the wider countryside. The summer of 2023 was hot at times, but there was not a repeat of the extremes of 2022.

A consequence of our changing climate is the increased frequency of extreme events. While climate models can predict a general direction of change (increasing sea level and temperature and changes in rainfall), they cannot with any precision determine exactly how a particular year in the UK will shape up. So we could not really know what to expect of 2024 as winter edged towards spring. Encouragingly a few warm days in March saw overwintered butterflies emerge from hibernation and on the wing in reasonable numbers. On a very memorable late March day I was delighted to see all six of our overwintering species, Large Tortoiseshell included, along a short section of a Sussex valley which enjoys a particularly warm microclimate.

However, a repeat of the weather of 2023 then set in: a cool, overcast and wet spring and a summer that never really seemed to get going, with much cloud cover and often heavy downpours. Amongst the early spring butterflies, Orange Tips and Holly Blues emerged late and in low numbers. As we edged towards summer Common Blues remained conspicuous by their absence. While the summer progressed the anticipated species appeared, but often late and in reduced numbers. As John Heys notes in his report, it was not a particularly poor summer in strict

meteorological terms, but it was a very poor one for many of our butterfly species.

A Buddleia visible from the room in which I am in now writing this introduction normally hosts a procession of visiting butterflies as soon as its first flowers appear until the last ones finish in October, with butterfly numbers peaking in July and August. This year, by the end of August, I had seen just three butterflies on it: a Red Admiral and two Large Whites. Things picked up a little in September, with increasing, but still modest numbers of Red Admirals and Large Whites and a single Comma. However, I did not see a garden Peacock all year and sightings of Holly Blues patrolling along the edges of the garden must have been down 90% on 2023. It was not just the butterflies which were absent: insects in general were very scarce.

Rainfall grabbed the headlines as summer gave way to Autumn. While there was very heavy rain in the SE of England, this paled into insignificance compared to events on the Continent. During October, an extraordinary 60cm plus of rain fell in 48 hours in parts of France and 49cm – a normal year's worth of rain – in 8 hours in the Valencia area in Spain causing disastrous flooding and many deaths. Events like these really bring home the reality of how climate change can result in extreme weather. There are regional meteorological conditions (presence of mountains and atmospheric circulation patterns) which make these areas inherently prone to such events, although climate change will increase their severity. The SE of England may not see such devastating events, but

we can expect extreme weather, be it droughts and heatwaves, or intense storms and torrential downpours, with increasing frequency.

Butterflies are resilient and successful insects. They have evolved strategies to cope with extreme weather (to which hard winters, with sub-zero temperatures, invariably expose their overwintering life stages) and can tolerate rain with the scales on their wings able shrug off water like the overlapping tiles on a roof. However, there are limits. Persistent rain, wind and prolonged overcast weather make it hard for them to complete their life cycles and, even if they have emerged in good numbers, a sudden deterioration in conditions can curtail their reproducing successfully. What happened to the Purple Emperors at the Knepp Wildland, which supports the most prolific population of this magnificent butterfly in the Country, was well documented by Mathew Oates in his informative and entertaining website "The Purple Empire." He describes them as being "systematically blasted away by spells of foul and abusive weather after Week 2" (of their emergence). While not as intensively documented as the Knepp Purple Emperors, many other species can be assumed to have been affected similarly.

Both casual and experienced observers were reporting reduced numbers of a range of species and the Big Butterfly Count showed a very significant decline in numbers. Such was the extent of butterfly population reductions, that Butterfly Conservation declared a "Butterfly Emergency" in September. The overall decline this year was recognised as being linked to the unfavourable

weather, but in the context of multiple additional pressures on butterfly populations, including pesticide use and the loss and fragmentation of habitats. However, trying to determine exactly why a particular species has done badly in a given year, when multiple factors are potentially contributing, is very difficult.

Delving beyond the headline figures of decline, there are differences in how individual species coped this year. Some habitat specialists, in specifically managed and protected habitats, have done surprising well, while other, wider countryside species, have shown significant declines. In the former category, Silver-studded Blues have generally had a good year. On most of the Sussex sites where they occur (including the Ashdown Forest), transects this year have demonstrated good populations. This is not just restricted to Sussex. They have done very well elsewhere, particularly at the relatively nearby Studland and Godlingston Heath National Nature Reserve in Dorset, where the highest ever count of the species was recorded. They have also thrived further afield on The Great Orme by Llandudno in North Wales, and on Prees Heath Common in Shropshire.

There are other examples of habitat specialists doing well in protected sites, which illustrates how effective targeted conservation work, much undertaken by volunteers, can be. We have an excellent local example of this in the form of our own adjoining Sussex Reserves at Park Corner Heath and Rowland Wood where Pearl-bordered and particularly Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries fared relatively well. Huge thanks are again due

to the volunteers who participate in the programme of work parties to manage and enhance the Reserves, expertly planned and led by Neil Hulme. Neil continues to provide an essential role, bringing his enthusiasm and expertise on all things related to butterflies and their habitats.

Other Sussex habitat specialists fared moderately well, although some were late emergers. Chalkhill Blues at a couple of downland sites were very late appearing and, for the first week or two of their emergence, were present in very low numbers. Fortunately, these did build to a reasonable level, although below that of recent years.

However, sadly, not all habitat specialists in Sussex did as well. Grayling numbers dipped very sharply, Silver-spotted Skippers were scarce and, reflecting the national pattern, there was a discernible decline in numbers of wider-countryside species throughout Sussex. Gatekeepers, for example, were much fewer on the ground than in the past few years in a number of locations I regularly visit. Even the ubiquitous Meadow Browns were not as common. In general, those species with several broods of adults each year did rather better overall, as stronger second (and in some cases third broods) capitalised on slightly better weather. First brood Common Blues were very scarce indeed, but to a degree made up for lost time with a stronger second brood, while Speckled Woods had a very strong second and, particularly, third brood.

Sussex is good for Hairstreaks, with all five species present (including the, albeit introduced, Black Hairstreak). They did not seem to do as well as last year

overall, but there were some exceptions. Good numbers of Brown Hairstreak were seen at the Steyning Downland, after fewer reports of them there in recent years, and during a couple of summer weeks, when there was reasonably consistent sunshine, the tops of tall oaks around Sussex burst into life with late afternoon and evening Purple Hairstreak activity.

Sussex butterfly numbers are bolstered each year by migrants from the Continent. When one thinks of migrant butterflies, thoughts turn to the more exotic (Long-tailed Blues) or colourful species (Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Clouded Yellow) which join us from across the Channel each year, but some of our familiar resident species have their numbers augmented by migration, including both Large and Small Whites.

This year the exotics were few. Long-tailed Blues were seldom reported, although undoubtedly more arrived than were seen and recorded. A trickle of Continental Swallowtails reached Sussex as usual. Clouded Yellow were very scarce though. For the first time in 20 years I did not see one.

Painted Ladies were few this year, and Red Admirals relatively scarce until larger numbers arrived late in the season. However, what was lacking in terms of numbers of the more exotic and colourful migrants (the weather on the Continent suppressing populations there was likely a factor) was compensated for by very large numbers of Large and Small Whites later in the Summer. Nevertheless, while Large Whites were a common sight along the Sussex coast, further north in the county they were noticeably scarce, and nationally

have been scarcer than usual. Some seemed to have hardly moved inland at all. Many were observed egg laying on Sea Kale on shingle beaches and the Kale in places looked unusually ragged this year due to Large White caterpillar damage.

As to what to expect in 2025, we will again be subject to whatever weather our changing climate brings, but it is increasingly apparent that what we considered “normal” weather only a decade or two ago is now in the past and that further, and much greater changes lie ahead. A recent report from the World Meteorological Organization, WMO Greenhouse Gas Bulletin No.20, confirmed Greenhouse Gas levels reached a new record in 2023, with carbon dioxide accumulating in the atmosphere at a faster rate faster than at any previous time during human existence, having increased by 11% in just two decades. The inevitable consequence is that, even if emissions are reduced, rising temperatures are locked in for well into the future. The Greenhouse Gas Bulletin is released yearly to inform the United Nations Climate Change negotiations, the annual Conference of the Parties (COP), this year held in Azerbaijan. The WMO report was preceded by a report from the UN Environment Programme setting out how, on current trends, the world is heading towards warming by 3°C by the end of the century. The likelihood of meeting the target set by world leaders (as a key part of “The Paris Agreement”) of preventing heating by more than 1.5°C, while technically, with intense focused effort, still possible, is rapidly slipping away.

While climate change features prominently in the news, an equally

important threat to the natural world locally, nationally and globally, is biodiversity loss, driven by habitat loss, fragmentation and degradation. While, as noted above, butterfly habitat specialists in protected sites had a reasonably good year, many of our Sites of Special Scientific Interest have had not their condition assessed in recent years. Only a minority are in favourable condition. So, even in our most protected sites, there is work to be done. The future for butterflies of the wider countryside will be linked to agricultural practices and subsidies targeted at environmental enhancement. These will reflect agricultural policies and market forces, such as in relation to the extension of the temporary use of the neonicotinoid pesticide thiamethoxam on sugar beet crops. Such substances are extraordinarily toxic and their presence in the environment is at odds with the restoration of insect populations, butterflies included.

There are now numerous studies demonstrating the health benefits (physical and mental) of engaging with the natural world. This can be by simply spending time with our butterfly species and the often beautiful and fascinating landscapes they inhabit. Some of the hilltop archaeological sites on the Downs, mostly Neolithic to Iron Age in date, are not only amazing view-points with fascinating histories but also are superb butterfly habitats. Furthermore, many enthusiasts enjoy photographing butterflies and I include myself in this category. As well as being personally satisfying, butterfly photography can be a valuable educational and conservation activity. The insects are of course beautiful

and highly photogenic and photographs of them can generate interest about their life cycles, threats to them and measures to conserve them and their habitats.

In recent years photographic equipment has become increasingly sophisticated and, with increasingly capable smartphone cameras, which can take excellent photos of butterflies, much more accessible. In recognition of this, the Branch has established a photographic competition - entry details have been publicised via the website. The results will be announced at the Members Day on November 30th and winning entries posted on the website. We intend to run the competition on an annual basis and encourage members to participate in future years. Please do, however, respect butterflies and their habitat when you are photographing them. The website has on it a very useful article on butterfly photography by Neil Hulme which gives some useful tips.

In addition to enjoying our butterflies by seeing them, learning about them and perhaps photographing them, there is the opportunity to be actively involved in practical work to conserve and enhance their habitats. Members are most welcome to join the previously mentioned conservation winter work parties at Park Corner Heath and Rowland Wood led by



Neil Hulme, commencing in November and running through to February next year. Anyone who has visited the Reserves recently will have noticed further enhancements to these still evolving sites, managed to provide optimal habitat for a range of species, particularly Pearl-bordered and Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries. Full details are on the Branch website and later in this Magazine.

Best Wishes

Dave Brown

Chair, Butterfly Conservation- Sussex Branch

2024 First Sightings

Martin Kalaher's table expanded by John Heys

Some years back the Sussex Branch was able to produce its magazine twice a year. The spring edition was the "Sussex Butterfly Report" and the autumn edition, prior to the Members' Meeting, was the "Autumn Newsletter."

The Sussex Butterfly Report contained a detailed review of butterfly activity in Sussex looking back at the previous year. Martin Kalaher's Reports have been very sightings focused, based on Members' contributions to the Sightings pages on the Sussex Butterfly website, but concluding with a few personal observations. Colin Pratt, the County Recorder for butterflies and moths, has supplied Moth highlights.

Sadly, by 2022 we were no longer able to sustain two publications a year – more an issue of human resources than finances. The two became one in 2022 and 2023, appearing in the autumn. The obvious problem with this has been that both the excellent articles on the butterflies and moths of the previous year, appear in the magazine after the current year's flight season has ended rather than just before it starts. Thus they are rather old news and can be confusing.

However, the butterfly report and the moth report are actually written as soon as each year ends and appear on-line at the start of the new year in "Adastra". This is published by The Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre which is a partnership project, hosted by Sussex Wildlife Trust. Their partners include local planning authorities, government agencies, conservation bodies and other organisations which need access to up-to-date biodiversity information.

So this year we are adopting a different approach in our magazine. Readers can find Martin's 2023 Butterfly report and Colin Pratt's 2023 Moth report on line at this location:-

- Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre : <https://sxbrc.org.uk>
- Find the drop-downs under "Projects & Publications" on the top line
- Click on Publications
- Adastra is at the top of the publications – click on it or just scroll down
- All the Adastras are there, the most recent first & going back to 2001
- 2023 Butterflies are on page 23 and Moths on page 22
- There are lots of other reports too, eg fungi, dragonflies, sea mammals.
- Early in 2025, reports for the year 2024 will be available at the same location.

A second and even easier way to find Martin's Butterfly reports is through our own refreshed Sussex Branch website <https://www.sussex-butterflies.org.uk> – in the black line Index at the top, as well as "Sightings" there is a heading "Archives" which contains the Annual Reports for 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. Year 2024 will be there shortly. There are less butterfly pictures here than in Adastra.

Although 2024 is not over, we can be reasonably sure that we have all the "first sightings" for 2024. The table below acknowledges all the hard work put in by the unsung heroes who keep the sightings page so well up to date and the members who contribute to it.

So how was 2024? Nationally, in September, Butterfly Conservation declared a 'Butterfly Emergency': Results of this summer's Big Butterfly Count had shown a "marked and hugely concerning decline in numbers." The public's counts returned on average 7 butterflies per 15

January			
1 st	Red Admiral *	Sidlesham Ferry Pool	Matt Eade
24 th	Small Tortoiseshell	Shoreham (presumed)	SOS Website
26 th	Brimstone	Burpham Ashdown Forest	Paul Atkin Christian Moss
	Comma	Ashdown Forest Brighton garden	Christian Moss Paul Morris
	Peacock	Arlington Church	Chris Hooker
February			
1 st	Painted Lady	Church Norton Cemetery	Arthur Norton
16 th	Speckled Wood	Eastbourne	Douglas Neve
March			
8 th	Large Tortoiseshell	West Chiltington	Mike & Jacky via Neil Hulme
20 th	Small White	Hailsham Country Park	Chris Hooker
	Green-veined White	Amberley Wildbrooks	Martin Kalaher
	Holly Blue	Hailsham Garden	Polly Mair
	Orange-tip	Knepp Castle Estate	Tom Burns & Penny Green both via Neil Hulme
	Large White	Goring	Val & John Heys
April			
6 th	Green Hairstreak	Steyping Downland Scheme	Paul Day
13 th	Small Copper	Hailsham Country Park	Chris Hooker
14 th	Grizzled Skipper *	Mill Hill	Charlie Crump
20 th	Wall	Overflow Church Cemetery, North Lancing	Lindsay Morris
24 th	Small Heath	Mill Hill	Jason Read
29 th	Dingy Skipper	Mill Hill Devil's Dyke	Paul Atkin Anon via Martin Kalaher
	Duke of Burgundy	Kithurst Hill	Sherie New
30 th	Clouded Yellow	Mill Hill	Alec MacIntyre
May			
4 th	Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Rewell Wood	Charlie Crump
7 th	Common Blue	East Sussex Downs	Anon via Martin Kalaher
10 th	Small Blue	Castle Hill, Woodingdean Belle Tout area	Lindsay Morris Debbie Alston
11 th	Brown Argus	Rewell Wood & Fairmile Bottom	Lindsay Morris

May			
17 th	Adonis Blue	Amberley Area	Patrick Moore
24 th	Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Rowlands Wood & Park Corner Heath	Chris Hooker
25 th	Meadow Brown	Kithurst Meadow	Chris Hooker
26 th	Large Skipper	East Sussex	Anon via Martin Kalaher
29 th	Wood White	North-west Sussex border	Graham Hubbard
June			
4 th	Black Hairstreak	Ditchling Common	Harvey Osler
8 th	Marbled White	Steyning Downland Scheme	Paul Day
9 th	Ringlet	Steyning Coombe	Cornelia Gutjahr
11 th	Silver-studded Blue	Iping Common	Tony Hill
16 th	Gatekeeper	Berwick Station	Chris Bird
	Purple Hairstreak	Knepp	Jason Read
18 th	White Admiral	Knowlands Wood	John Williams
20 th	Small Skipper	Lancing Ring Chalk Pit	Lindsay Morris
	White-letter Hairstreak	Hollingbury	Kirsty Gibbs
21 st	Dark Green Fritillary	Steyning Downs	Simon Buck
23 rd	Silver-washed Fritillary	Rowland Wood	Douglas Neve
	Purple Emperor	Knepp Rewilding	Kirsty Gibbs
27 th	Essex Skipper	North Lancing	Lindsay Morris
July			
10 th	Chalk Hill Blue	Kithurst Hill flower meadow	John Williams
18 th	Brown Hairstreak	Crawley	Vince Massimo
21 st	Grayling	Deep Dean	Patrick Moore
23 rd	Silver-spotted Skipper	Cradle Valley	Bob Eade
28 th	Swallowtail	Near Fiveways, Brighton [Also 10 th August Hollingdean & 14 th August Mount Caburn]	Gary Fuller [no photo] [10 th , Peter Whitcombe, photo by Beccy Day / 14 th Gary Fuller who notched his 2 nd Swallowtail of the year & this time did get a photo.]
August			
5 th	Long-tailed Blue	East of Bognor	Brian Birch



Male Chalkhill Blue on Autumn Gentian, Birling Gap

Photo: Dave Brown

minutes compared with 12 per 15 minutes in 2023. The results produced the lowest overall count in the 14-year history of the Big Butterfly Count.

The good element of the Big Butterfly Count is that people, especially children, get involved and, hopefully, remain interested in butterflies. Better still they may become Butterfly Conservation members. The results of the survey can also be used, as they have this year, to press the Government for change.

On the down side, it is not scientifically rigorous and only gives a snapshot of 3 weeks. It does not take into account winter or spring weather, both of which will have an effect on the whole season. In particular, a warm spring and emergence may be 2 weeks early for many species. A cold spring and emergence may be 2 weeks later than in an average year.

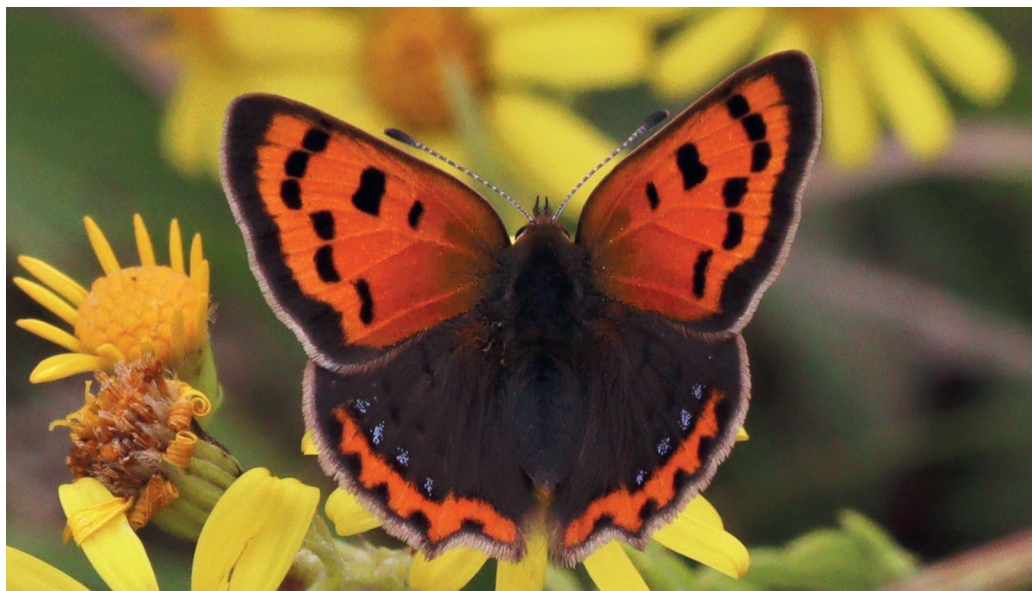
Certainly 2024 has been a difficult year in Sussex for some species, but not so bad for others. Interesting migrants were fewer – eg Painted Lady, Long-tailed Blue and Clouded Yellow. Eventually Red Admirals, Large Whites and Small Whites were sufficiently supplemented from the continent that they had a good end of season.

The national picture from the Big Butterfly Count was that some natives - eg Common Blue, Holly Blue, Green-veined White, Small White and Small Tortoiseshell - had done worse than in any previous Big Butterfly Count. In Sussex, along with the Grayling, they were all doing poorly, although some, along with other less challenged species like the Speckled Wood, flourished better than might have been expected in September and into October

Butterfly Conservation is campaigning strongly to ban “butterfly-killing neonicotinoid pesticides once and for all, with no exceptions, before it is too late.” A ban will not affect the weather, so how much is weather to blame in 2024?

Listening to Radio Sussex a few weeks ago, I heard a local wine maker say that over the past 12 months they have had too much rain and too little sun, resulting in harvests down by 50% or more.

The Met Office website bears this out. In the winter of 2023/24, if you were turning



Small Copper *caeruleo-punctata* (the blue spotted variety), Birling Gap

Photo: Dave Brown

down your heating to save money, you may find it hard to believe that Sussex was quite a bit warmer than average. On the other hand, Sussex was wetter than average and there was less than average sunshine, particularly in East Sussex. Spring in Sussex was similar: above average temperatures, but above average rainfall and less than the usual average of sunshine.

Was it actually a bad summer in Sussex? The Met Office's website suggest it was not. Comparing summers since 1991, the temperature in Sussex was average, the rainfall a bit below average, the sunshine average in West Sussex but below average in East Sussex and the temperature in August somewhat above average.

Cloudy skies and rain could have been the big influences in Sussex. Cloud tends to keep the temperature higher than average at night but lower than average during the day.

Martin Kalaher's experience this year in his butterfly garden at Storrington was of a very cold spring, which was followed by too much rain and strong winds. There were very few sunny days until the end of July - not enough sunshine for our native insects. Then we had some decent weather and August / September were not so bad.

My wife Val & I have done a Wider Butterfly Transect survey twice a year along the same routes in Balcombe in July and August. Did our surveys this year reflect the same picture? They tended to. The July count this year was the lowest since we started in 2017 - 48 as against a best of 386 in 2019, which that was by far the highest count. However, the July 2024 count was done on a day which unfortunately turned cooler and cloudy as we arrived in Balcombe. The August 2024 count was on a sunny day. Although the total number of butterflies seen was less than a third of the best year (29 as against 93 in 2023) it was better than 2 of the other 6 years and not far behind a further 2.

It certainly looks like we had too much cloud and rain in winter 2023/24 and spring 2024. Will this pattern continue into 2025? If it does, even if average temperatures are higher than in the past, it will not be great news for our butterflies.

Gardening for Butterflies

Martin Kalaher

I am approaching this article about “gardening for butterflies” from a slightly different angle to my usual scribblings. The remit was to choose six plant species, three of which offer nectar for adult butterflies, whilst the remaining three must be larval foodplants. The further “editorial twist” was that the plants should be suitable for gardens of all sizes. Well, this was a challenge I could not refuse.

The three nectar-providing wildflowers I have chosen are Field Scabious, Betony and Buttercups. A curious choice, perhaps, but let me provide some background to this eclectic mix. The first part of the story involves a photographic study which I undertook, to determine which of my garden plants were the most useful to my local butterflies. In other words, which wildflowers provided nectar to the greatest number of butterfly species. I began the study seven years ago and it is still on-going. Every time I have spotted a butterfly feeding on a flowerhead I have tried to take a photograph. That is easier said than done, as the feeding time can vary from 4 seconds to 4 hours (I once had a male Brown Hairstreak feed on the same Hemp Agrimony for 4 hours, I kid you not!). The ease of the photography varies enormously, with some plants very conveniently situated 3 feet off the ground, whilst others are just 3 inches off the ground (and then a stiff neck is all but guaranteed). The other main problem is they are often out of reach, in the middle of the meadows, and not conveniently situated by a path. So, it has not always been straightforward, but I have done my best.

The results of my studies, to date, are as follows: Field Scabious (22 butterfly species),

Green-veined White on Field Scabious





Above: **Small Skipper on Field Scabious**

Right: **Pantaloen Bee on Field Scabious (sharing the flowerhead with Swollen-thighed Beetles)**

Devil's-bit scabious (16), Verbena Bonariensis (16), Hemp Agrimony (15), Bird's-foot-trefoil (11), Buddleia (11), Greater Knapweed (11), Ox-eye Daisy (11), Betony (9), Dame's-violet (9), Marjoram (9), Yarrow (9), Common Fleabane (6), Meadow Vetchling (6) and Red Campion (6).

This list is an interesting one and throws up some surprises. The biggest surprise, perhaps, is the relative positions of Field Scabious (way ahead of the chasing pack) and Buddleia, which many authors promote as the “best butterfly plant” for your garden (it isn’t). Simple observation tells me that if my garden butterflies have a choice between Field Scabious and Buddleia, then they almost always choose the scabious species. Don’t misunderstand me, I do like Buddleia, and I wouldn’t want to be without it (I have five mature “butterfly bushes” in the back garden) but it doesn’t quite deserve the legendary status it is usually given. I could write a lot more about this list but as it is outside my current brief, I will refrain from further analysis. Just one last comment, if you are thinking of adding some native species to your garden, this is the list I would strongly recommend, and I will give you my personal guarantee of success!

Nectar-providing plants

Field Scabious

This is one of my favourite wildflowers, as it has a beautiful flowerhead and the butterflies in my garden just love it. I view it a temptress for conventional gardeners, as it wouldn’t look out of place in the most formal of gardens. When I have visitors to my Open Days I invite them to convert just two square metres of their gardens to our native wildflowers, and plant my “big five”, which are Field Scabious, Devil's-bit scabious, Betony, Greater Knapweed and Bird's-foot-trefoil. These five wildflower species will act as a magnet and attract all your local butterflies for miles around.

In my photographic study of my garden butterflies, Field Scabious is clearly the stand-out performer with 22 butterfly species nectaring on the flowerhead (not just perched, I am very strict about that). This native plant can be grown on any soil, but if your garden is on chalk, you might like to consider growing Small Scabious, which is the downland equivalent of Field



Male Dark Green Fritillary on Betony

Scabious. Order from a reputable specialist nursery and for the cheapest option, buy plugs and then grow them on in pots before planting them out. You can try planting plugs, but the survival rate might be rather low. Once you have mature clumps of Field Scabious, these can be lifted and divided in the autumn. The alternative is to collect the seed and disperse it on some prepared bare soil.

As well as butterflies, an extraordinary range of hoverflies and bees nectar on Field Scabious, including the exotic and uncommon Pantaloone Bee (*Dasypoda hirtipes*), as shown below.

Betony

I first came across Betony in a downland wood, in West Sussex, when I was doing a bird survey. I liked what I saw and many years later when I was creating a wildflower meadow I decided to introduce this species to my garden. I had “discovered” this native plant on chalky soil and so I didn’t know if it would do well on Wealden Greensand. Not only did betony survive on sandy soil, it flourished, and now I have hundreds of plants as they have self-seeded, everywhere. The orchid-like spikes of flowers are very attractive and for optimum effect, I would advise planting them in groups of 5-6 plants.

It’s not quite in the same league as Field Scabious when it comes to attracting butterflies but none-the less, I have photographed nine butterfly species nectaring on this plant. The photography is slightly more awkward as many of the flowerheads are just 8-9 inches off the ground, and often in the middle of my trample-free meadows. Betony mostly attracts the smaller species such as Small Skipper, Essex Skipper, Large Skipper, Brown Argus, Green Hairstreak and Small Copper but also larger species like Brimstone and Dark Green Fritillary (which visit my Storrington garden a few times every summer). Wool Carder Bees find the nectar of Betony completely irresistible. Plant some Betony and they will come visiting!



Brimstone on Betony

pristine, uniform green lawn, will regard Creeping Buttercup as a nuisance, for it does have a habit of taking over. But for those who may be unaware, there is also Bulbous Buttercup and Meadow Buttercup, which have the same attractive yellow flowerheads but are not invasive. They both flower early in the spring and provide much-needed nectar, for a very wide range of insects, at a time of the year when nectar can be in very short supply. I have recorded just four butterfly species nectaring on buttercups: Brown Argus, Small Heath, Small Copper and Common Blue. But it is not just about butterflies, and if you keep an eye on your local buttercups in early spring, you will appreciate the multitude of flower beetles, hoverflies and small solitary bees that feed on their flowerheads.

The easiest way to establish Bulbous Buttercup and Meadow Buttercup is to ensure they are in the seed mix when you create your meadow. And they will be.

**Male Brown Argus on Meadow
Buttercup**



As for most of our wildflowers, buy your Betony plugs from a specialist supplier, and pot them on, or alternatively borrow a few from an established wildlife garden!

Buttercups

At the beginning of this article, I mentioned the “first part of the story” and so by rights there ought to be “a second part”, otherwise I would be misleading you. The “first part” was all about promoting the plants that should be considered for any wildlife garden but this “second part” is about recognising the value of those plants that tend to be overlooked, or even sometimes described as “weeds”. Buttercups might well come into the category of “unwanted plants” as any gardener who likes a

Larval Foodplants

Moving on to larval foodplants, I have been asked to choose a bush, a wildflower and a grass species. So, my choices will be Alder Buckthorn, Bird's-foot-trefoil and Yorkshire-fog.

Alder Buckthorn

The larval foodplants of Brimstone are Purging Buckthorn and Alder Buckthorn, and it is the latter which can be easily accommodated in more-or-less any garden, large or small. A mature specimen is around 8-10 feet high and 8-10 feet wide, and so it's a decent-size shrub but not huge. Once planted you are guaranteed to have the joy of watching Brimstones to your hearts content. It is not uncommon for a female to visit and stay for a couple of hours, laying egg after egg. The flowers of Alder Buckthorn are small and unassuming, but the nectar is clearly very attractive to Honeybees and dozens at a time will come in and feed.

The eggs are very easy to find, as are the caterpillars. If I can find the caterpillars without any difficulty, then I'm sure that any member of the tit family or warbler family will find it easier, still. At a guess, I should think a female Brimstone will lay one hundred eggs or so, in her lifetime, and therefore some can afford to be lost.

Alder buckthorn grows best in wet soils and open woods, within scrub, hedgerows, and the banks of rivers. It prefers acidic soils, but it can grow on neutral soils as well. Storrington is located on Wealden Greensand and despite the fact that my garden is sandy and dry, the Alder Buckthorn grows well enough. As a plant species it appears to be adaptable, preferring wet conditions but surviving in drier areas, helped with some watering in the first year or two, after planting.

Below: **Brimstone egg-laying on Alder Buckthorn**

Right: **Brimstone caterpillar masquerading as a "Robin run-the-hedge leaf"**





Above: Green Hairstreak egg-laying on Bird's-foot-trefoil

Right: Common Blue egg-laying on Bird's-foot-trefoil

Bird's-foot-trefoil

I would argue that Bird's-foot-trefoil is the most important plant to get established in any wildflower meadow. When creating a wildflower meadow, it is essential to obtain a meadow seed mix from a specialist nursery. No two mixes are the same, and I have found that the percentage of Bird's-foot-trefoil seed offered can vary considerably from 0.5% to 7%, and I think it's worth choosing one with the higher percentage. It's worth checking the small print.

This highly attractive yellow pea flower provides nectar for many butterflies and moths and in my garden the following species have been photographed feeding on the flowerheads: Small Skipper, Essex Skipper, Large Skipper, Grizzled Skipper, Dingy Skipper, Green Hairstreak, Small Blue, Brown Argus, Common Blue, Chalk Hill Blue, Ringlet, and Mother Shipton moth.

As well as providing nectar, it is also the larval foodplant for Common Blue, Dingy Skipper, Green Hairstreak, Five-spot Burnet and Six-spot Burnet.

Yorkshire-fog

This coarse grass species is the preferred larval foodplant of Small Skipper. Many butterfly species lay their eggs on grasses and if we want butterflies to breed and do well, we need to learn to love grasses. That may not be easy for many gardeners, and coarse grasses may be a step too far for some of our members. In my garden I have breeding Small Skipper, Essex Skipper, Large Skipper, Speckled Wood, Marbled White,

Small Skipper egg-laying on Yorkshire-fog





Mating pair of Small Skippers

Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Ringlet and Small Heath. Without various grass species they would not be there.

We don't have to worry too much about establishing Yorkshire-fog, for according to the Flora of Sussex, between 2000-2015 it was recorded in 98.4% of tetrads. It's everywhere and that means Small Skippers are widely distributed throughout the county and are fairly common.

Summary

When creating a wildlife garden, we need to consider what it is that our native insects require. The simple answer is that they need native plants. A native Oak tree supports 800+ different insect species, whereas the

introduced Horse-chestnut (it was brought in from Turkey in the late 16th century) about 3 insect species. Okay, I might be exaggerating slightly but you get the basic idea. Over many thousands of years our insects and native plants evolved together. They need each other.

In my Storrington garden I have around 150 species of native plants and as a result I have recorded 38 butterfly species, around 80 species of bees and around 80 species of hoverflies. Living close to the South Downs does help boost the variety of insects, but then many of us are lucky enough to live close to the South Downs, as it forms a large part of the Sussex countryside.

And finally, do please re-read (and preferably jot down) the list of nectar-providing wildflowers in my photographic study. It took me 3 minutes to type the list (I am a slow typist) but somewhere in the region of 3-400 hours of study. All of which was well worth it and great fun!

Butterfly (and Moth) People

By themselves, adapted by John Heys

The Sussex Branch is one of 32 Butterfly Conservation Branches in the United Kingdom. At the last count the Sussex Branch had 2,095 members, a fair proportion of the approximately 40,000 members nationally. In November 2023 we heard from one of our older members, **Bob Cowen**, well into his 80s, while one of our younger members, **James Milton** our Vice Chair, received the David Streeter Wildlife Champions award for young people. Somewhere between their ages is **Michael Blencowe**, who has given many years of enthusiastic service to nature in Sussex.

Bob Cowen gave us some of his early memories of butterflies:

"I have always loved butterflies. I have been a member of Butterfly Conservation for many years, as while I am not technically competent, I love to see them in my garden.

"One memory is visiting a private field where there was a large pear tree. Many pears littered the ground most of which were rotten. Upon these pears there were maybe 150 Red Admiral butterflies, which had been drinking the juices - now alcoholic - and they were all quite drunk! You could pick them up as they were too intoxicated to fly away.

"About this time, at the end of the war, I was in Arundel Great Park where I spotted a butterfly which had one wing blue, and the other side brown. Sadly I didn't have my net with me, so failed to catch it. As a bored little boy at this time, I would sweep my net over a buddleia bush with my eyes shut to see how many I had caught! Caterpillars were easy to find in those days. Now I am lucky to see Cabbage White caterpillars eating my nasturtiums!

"One day I found the amazing looking Vapourer moth caterpillar in my garden. It eventually pupated, then emerged as a wingless female. I was advised to put this moth in the garden under a drinking glass. After four hours I lifted the glass, and within twenty minutes two (male) Vapourer moths appeared - absolute magic!"

Thanking Bob for his contribution, our Chair Dave Brown said it was interesting that Bob had seen so many Red Admirals in one place around the end of the war. While in 2023 they had been very numerous, 1945 was recognised as an exceptional year when there was a huge influx of Red Admirals into the country from the Continent and Bob's observation seems to confirm that.

Colin Pratt in "A History of the Butterflies and Moths of Sussex" (1981) records that there were significant sightings around this time of species which have been less common or very seldom seen since.

In that period, the continental Swallowtail may have briefly been established in the Eastbourne & Hastings areas. Several Berger's Clouded Yellow were observed in Rustington in 1945, while two Queen of Spain Fritillaries turned up in Eastbourne & Hastings. Clouded and Pale Clouded Yellows had a particularly good season in 1947, when a Black-veined White was also noted in Hove. In 1945 nearly 40 Bath Whites were counted in Sussex. The Long-tailed Blue, first seen in the UK in Brighton in 1859 and then very rarely, was recorded nationally in 1945 over 30 times and more than a tenth of those sightings were in Sussex. 1948 was an

outstanding year for Painted Ladies and between 1945 and 1949, the Large Tortoiseshell, suddenly rare since 1903, had a brief resurgence.

Some have suggested that the disruption to agriculture in Europe at the end of the war may have contributed to a profusion of migrants in the period 1945 to 1949, but it was also noted that there were unusual weather patterns at the time. Recent experience with global warming, indicates that weather is very important: Clouded Yellow & Long-tailed Blue turn up every year now and the Large Tortoiseshell may be slowly re-establishing itself as a resident.

It seems likely that Bob's half blue/half brown butterfly was a bilateral gynandromorph. Sometimes butterflies show partial, more random gynandromorphism, but fully gynandromorphic butterflies are male on one side and female on the other. This is a random and rare occurrence, possibly affecting one in 10,000 butterflies. It occurs in other insects, arachnids and birds, but has not been seen in humans and may be the result of 2 sperms entering a single egg. It is not the same as hermaphroditism, where the external characteristics are only of one gender, but both male and female reproductive organs are present.

Adonis Blue and Chalk Hill Blue gynandromorphs are illustrated in "Howarth's Colour Identification Guide to Butterflies" (1973) and Wikipedia has a brilliant photograph of a Common Blue half blue/half brown in its article on gynandromorphism.

Vapourer moth caterpillars are spectacularly punk with a Mohican set of yellow bristles, but beware the longer hairs which can cause a skin rash if you pick them up. They are common and do turn in town gardens, so keep an eye open. They feed on oak, lime, hawthorn and many other plants, even rose bushes.

As Bob says, the female is flightless, inconspicuous and initially a poor return from such a colourful caterpillar. As the males have to come to her, his drinking glass may not have been necessary. The males, small/medium in size, brown with a white spot on each wing, are day fliers. They can be mistaken for butterflies and, as their fly time is July to September, Brown Hairstreak in particular, but the Vapourer's flight is jerkier. Once mated, the females, who usually stay near the cocoon they emerged from, lay their eggs on or near the old cocoon. These hatch in spring.

Our Vice Chair, **James Milton**, is quite a few years younger than Bob and has a recent butterfly connected memory. He received the David Streeter Wildlife Champions award for young people.

He was nominated for his work in two different wildlife fields. The first was his work with the Sussex Dolphin Project. Initially he volunteered as Administrative Officer and subsequently he was employed as a Project Support Officer, in which role he was Head of Education. Amongst other things he managed a small terrestrial restoration project and orchestrated the organisation's newsletter. The second work area was his service on the Committee of Butterfly Conservation's Sussex Group as Vice-Chair. At the same time as all of this, he was undertaking his Ecology and Conservation degree at Sussex University

Sussex Wildlife Trust trustees give the award annually to a young person between the ages of 16 and 25 for an "outstanding contribution towards the wildlife and environment of



Sean Ashworth, Sussex Wildlife Trust trustee making presentation to James Milton

Photo: Graham Franks

Sussex." James was presented with the award at the Sussex Wildlife Trust's Annual General Meeting by trustee Dr. Sean Ashworth, at the Ropetackle Arts Centre in Shoreham-by-Sea on 4th November 2023.

Our congratulations go to James for this award and our thanks and admiration for managing to do so much extra-curricular while studying. You can find out more if you read this post-interview article by the Sussex Wildlife Trust:

<https://sussexwildlifetrust.org.uk/news/meet-james-milton-david-streeter-wildlife-champions-award-winner-2023>

James says it's all accurate, except the part which says "Dolphin Trust" – it should say "Sussex Dolphin Project".

Examining the light trap, Graffham Down

Photo: Michael Blencowe



Michael Blencowe is well known to Sussex Branch Members as co-author with Neil Hulme of “The Butterflies of Sussex” published in 2017. He was the Branch’s Conservation Officer for many years and until relatively recently Branch Vice Chairman and Sussex Butterfly Report Editor. He has also been voted “Lewes Personality of the Year” in either 2011 (Butterflies of Sussex”) or 2012 (his website) – quite possibly both.

Michael was in the news on 4 August 2024 (the full story can be found here - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c0jqjl2jd71o>) because he noticed there was an unusual moth – a Ringed Border Moth, *Stegania cararia* - amongst 500 or so caught in a light trap on Graffham Down. Michael told the BBC “I recognised when I turned it over as a very rare moth, but I didn't know how rare.” Some of the other moths trapped in the same session were not so very different from the rarity, but different enough that an old hand like Michael was not going to be deceived.

Ringed Border

Photo: Michael Blencowe



According to the “Atlas of Britain & Ireland’s Larger Moths” (2019) the Ringed Border Moth is a rare immigrant, first recorded on the Channel Islands in 1981. Subsequently it has turned up on mainland Britain in 2009 at Merriott Somerset, with a further 6 records since from Kent, East Sussex, Hampshire and Devon.

The moth is more often found from France east to Russia in damp forests where its larvae feed on poplar species, including aspen. Adults are on the wing from May to July. The moths’ appearance in southern England is probably another indicator of climate change. This West Sussex specimen was released after being studied and Michael is planning to do another survey of Grafham Down in 2025 to see if the species is establishing itself here permanently.

Check-in from Steven & Richard

Steven Lofting and Richard Austin

I'm Steven the Conservation Manager for South-East England. I am excited to have joined Butterfly Conservation in September 2023 having been a member for several years whilst working in my previous conservation roles for the RSPB and idverde. I have always had a keen interest in butterflies and moths alongside botany, bats, and other taxa groups.

Prior to joining Butterfly Conservation, I spent time in my last role within idverde Bromley to take steps to support lepidoptera at landscape scale across the borough. This included scrape creation, kidney vetch seeding for small blue and tracking the spread of brown hairstreak across Bromley and out into Kent following its expansion from Surrey in 2016 so that management changes could be implemented for the species. I can often be found out amongst the vegetation with my camera in search of butterflies and moths.

My role at Butterfly Conservation is to lead the conservation work across the South-East region which spans Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Hampshire/ IOW, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Oxfordshire. This includes a range of species monitoring, landowner advice, partnership projects and overseeing the five Butterfly Conservation managed nature reserves in the South-East.



In October last year I was thrilled to join Butterfly Conservation and begin my role as Surrey and Sussex Landscape Officer. I'm Richard, and my career in conservation began when I worked for the Environment Agency, followed by The Mammal Society, where I worked on a regional mammal atlas and encouraged volunteers to survey for mammals, and for the New Forest National Park.

In my role in the national park, I oversaw the volunteering for a Landscape Partnership Scheme, called Our Past, Our Future. It was a £4.4 million, five-year scheme led by the National Park Authority with ten key partners. Within this role I also worked for the New Forest Land Advice Service, an independent advice service for land managers, commoners and farmers. I ran the Rural Skills project, which delivered 100 subsidised courses





Above: Pearl Bordered Fritillary, May 2023, Rowland Wood
 Right: Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary, May 2024, Rowland Wood
 Photos: Steven Lofting

for the local community in livestock management, traditional land management, practical skills and forestry qualifications. I also worked closely on three conservation projects; Better Boundaries, Nature's Stepping Stones and Working Woodlands. These projects delivered land restoration and enhancement of boundary features, woodland, grassland and heathland habitats.

Our work is governed by the 2026 strategy goals which puts focus on reversing species declines and enhancing the most important landscapes for Lepidoptera. Arguably South-East England has one of the most diverse arrays of species and landscapes in the country and we are fortunate to be able to have crucial roles in delivering effective change to secure the future of butterfly and moths.

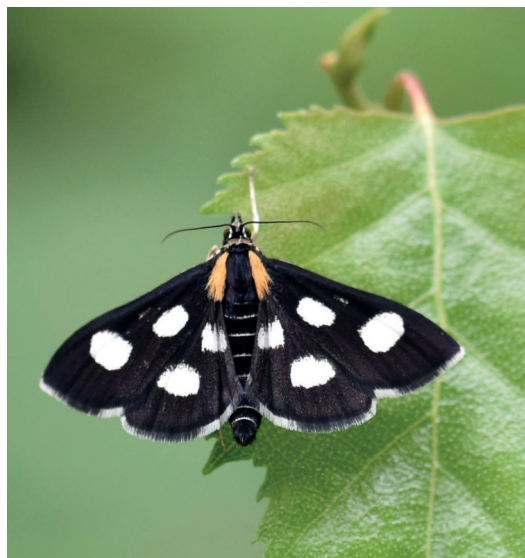
The two goals we focus on are:

- 1) Halve the number of the UK's threatened species of butterflies and moths.
- 2) Improve the condition of 100 of the most important landscapes for butterflies and moths.

Within Sussex, our work is focused on the wooded Wealden landscape centred on our reserves at Park Corner Heath and Rowland Wood. Our efforts with contractors and volunteers at the reserves are aimed at conserving the Pearl-bordered Fritillary (*Boloria euphrosyne*). There has been significant progress with our plans for management at Rowland Wood over the past 12 months. There has been felling and thinning of compartments, most notably in the western side of the woodland. In the winter we coppiced the ash that was alongside the A22. Volunteers worked tirelessly throughout the winter to clear birch from one of our central compartments, and this has allowed violets to come up in the spring.

To that end, I spent time in March and April surveying our reserves and the surrounding woodlands for violets – Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*) is the larval foodplant for both pearl-bordered and small pearl-bordered fritillaries. The efforts of our volunteers to tackle bracken in Park Corner Heath and clear brash piles in Rowland Wood have created more space for violets and a recent site visit indicated that signs are positive for the future.

This summer I have been surveying our reserves and surrounding woodlands for the



Clockwise from above: **White-spotted Sable** (*Anania funebris*) **Kent, June 2024**
White-spotted Sable caterpillar, Kent, October 2023
Grizzled Skipper, May 2024, Rowland Wood
Photos: Steven Lofting

presence of Goldenrod (*Solidago virgaurea*). This is the larval foodplant for a special and rare micro-moth – the White-spotted Sable (*Anania funebris*). The moth is approximately the size of your fingernail, with black wings and distinctive white spots. The caterpillar is yellow/green in colour and spins a silken web from the lower leaves of goldenrod, feeding from July until the autumn. The adult flies between April and August, with the peak in June and July. If you would like to help us in our search for this moth, please get in touch.

Furthermore, we have had recent infrastructure improvements at the reserve, to better secure the site and removed and replace items such as fencing and seating at our site entrance. Looking ahead, there will be felling of non-native conifer blocks to the north of Rowland Wood and thinning of two central blocks taking place this autumn, as part of ongoing management guided by Neil Hulme.

Neil will be leading our volunteer days this autumn at Rowland Wood and Park Corner Heath. Volunteers will be clearing areas of brash, coppicing birch, creating scallops and tackling the rhododendron on site. Volunteers help to ensure that their reserve is a haven for wildlife and the people who enjoy it. Working with other volunteers doing hands-on, practical work, they make sure the site is conserved for the butterflies. The volunteer days are always on Sunday and have been scheduled this winter as follows: November 3rd, 17th and 24th, December 8th and 15th, January 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th and February 2nd, 9th and 16th. If you would like to come along and volunteer with us, please get in touch: raustin@butterfly-conservation.org



Mid September: Female Long-tailed Blue, egg-laying on *Lespedeza*

When Long-tailed Blues Came Calling

Sue and Brian Birch

Sue and I became fascinated by butterflies in the summer of 2018 when we glimpsed a Speckled Wood and Comma in our garden. We explored the local village and increased our species count to twenty-two, sadly without the inclusion of any rare migrants. Following the flattening of grass around our garden perimeter during 2020 lockdown exercise walks and our first participation in No Mow May, we decided to introduce a system of four parallel paths on a NW/SE alignment, with a single cut of the interspersed vegetation each October. This mini meadow design has become the norm. We sowed Broad-leaved Everlasting-pea (BLEP) seeds during the winter, subsequently training the growths laterally to cope with troublesome south-westerlies, ease of potential egg counting and room for basal shoots to develop. What was not anticipated was the creation of the requirements the enigmatic Long-tailed Blue butterfly (*Lampides boeticus*) regards as a lek.

This article showcases how 2023 progressed, thanks to the success with this species in 2022 and our introduction to the world of Fabaceae (Legumes) as larval food plants. Trial work with non-native plants of this family, available to purchase in the UK, was seen as a means of encouraging gravid females to our outside space. All photographs were taken with a zoom lens with 1.5m focal length. It does involve sharpening and cropping of the images but avoids repeatedly spooking these very sensitive individuals.

Early afternoon on Sunday 16 July, we enjoyed our first sighting of a Long-tailed Blue, initially nectaring on Selfheal but making regular flights to the mature Wisteria trained



Above: Our first sighting of a Long-tailed Blue

Right: Long-tailed Blues on BLEP on the final day of August

around our house. This distinctive, wing-damaged female also investigated the BLEP and potted *Lespedeza thunbergii* (Bush clover) plants. No egg laying appeared to take place. She roosted on a dried grass stalk and made it safely through the night. Out of sight for most of the following day, she broke cover to egg lay on the Wisteria during the afternoon before roosting on another grass stalk. On day three, she came into view mid-afternoon when more egg laying on the Wisteria took place before she roosted overnight for the final time with us. My search for eggs safely reached by ladder amounted to twenty-five, covering a third of the total Wisteria area.

When the first of two predicted weekend storms threatened, I rescued several delicate racemes in hopes of finding eggs and was fortunate to discover a larva to captive rear in a container. I supplied it with just-fallen flowers which would have been available to scavenge on the ground. By 1 August it started to fast. Pupation followed soon after. I have since extended the Wisteria by training new growths closer to the ground, offering greater protection to eggs laid in the future.

Credit due to @hitsujihinata, a student entomologist from Japan, for posting an image on 24 September 2024 of a cluster of wilted Kudzu flowers (Japanese arrowroot – invasive!) similar in form to Wisteria. Whilst the descriptive translation may be skew, silk threads to bind the spent blooms together are shown and would appear to be attributed to *Lampides boeticus*. If correct, such binding may occur on Sussex BLEP.

Below: Long-tailed Blue, mid September

Left: Long-tailed Blue on Super Sunday



On 9 August, we found a fresh female nectaring on Bird's-foot Trefoil. She posed with partially open wings for my first sequence of photographs but disappeared from view when I changed position. Whilst there is no certainty of her origin as a newborn to Sussex, it would put her egg laying date at the end of June/early July, consistent with those laid on the Isle of Wight and Newhaven.

A week later we sighted our second immigrant female just before 2pm, probably taking sanctuary after the skirmishes she encountered en route, indicated by her tatty wings. She spent her afternoon perching on dried grasses or nectaring on BLEP before settling to roost around 5pm, where she remained. Shortly before 11.30am the following morning a male made his presence known, supercharged with enthusiasm. He took command of the arena but swift advances to the female were initially rebutted. However, mating was underway at 11.44am and they parted at 12.17. During the afternoon, the female rested on BLEP between the male's further advances. Remarkably, at 4.54pm they were mating again. Unfortunately, I was unable to mark their roosting site but both made it through the night. The female spent the next day attempting to egg lay whilst the male made a nuisance of himself. An egg count around 3pm reached a tally of fifteen. The next day I increased the count by twenty-three. Two additional males arrived late on Saturday, provenance unknown, raising the prospects of a lek.

What we termed Super Sunday, 20 August, will remain long in our minds when our lek materialised and surged into full-on mode. Another male arrived late morning, which we named Bleached Wing due to his faded streak. Frequent spiralling of three and sometimes all four males suggested they were battling for dominance over the newly released female reared on Wisteria, at that point drying her wings under an awning of *Lespedeza* stems. We lost sight of her a few seconds into her inaugural flight. During the day we caught glimpses of the female who had arrived on the 15th. Sue was excellent at first sightings and tracking flight paths whilst I concentrated on capturing images.

In my privileged position to undertake citizen science projects involving Long-tailed Blues, I started a new module with four eggs/ larvae collected from BLEP for captive rearing on *Lespedeza*. International social media research revealed *Lespedeza thunbergii* as one of the principal food plants in Japan for this species and therefore significant to demonstrate their ability to develop to adulthood on home turf. For another module, I collected three 1st/2nd instar larvae to captive rear on Kidney Vetch, White Clover and Black Medic flowers, some of the most widespread flora in the county.

The ensuing week remained active with Bleached Wing roosting in the open, enabling us to keep tabs on him. He continued to spar with our original male whilst the two from Saturday departed but were replaced by two immigrant females. One stayed to egg lay on BLEP.

I provided powdered animal feed-grade calcium carbonate on a roof tile, after seeing



Female Long-tailed Blue taking up essential minerals from concrete hardstanding

an image on social media of the species gathered on a dried river bed rich in limestone sediment. To my knowledge, my tile was not visited by Long-tailed Blues but I was able to photograph a female on our weathered concrete hardstanding. After tonal adjustment, her extended proboscis became visible as she took up what we presumed were essential minerals. Whilst I had applied a slow release fertiliser around the BLEP, I also included two winter dressings of calcium carbonate and this year have been impressed with the intensity of flower colour, enhanced propensity for seed pods to set and significantly reduced late season bud yellowing/drop.

The final day of August brought a deluge of rain but twelve hours later, indomitable spirits intact, the two males warmed themselves in weak sunshine amongst grasses festooned with droplets. By early afternoon, love interest appeared and, whilst the female basked after mating, a second female came on the scene. Sue and I spent an hour watching her flit between the stands of BLEP, egg laying on the way.

The lek's comings and goings did not stop there! On 6 September we were down to a single male, photographed just before 8am. Two hours later he searched out a luminescent blue female which we named Electra, probably garden born. They parted just after noon. I was only able to take four photographs before she headed off. An additional male arrived but was later found encased in a spider's silk.

Mid September advanced the concept of *Lespedeza* as a larval plant food for the species in Sussex. A smart female arrived early on Monday afternoon and mated almost immediately with the resident male. There was no evidence of egg laying on Tuesday. It took a break in the cloud on Wednesday to bring her out for a brief period. Three eggs were subsequently found. She roosted safely overnight and was photographed as the sun's rays dried her dew-covered wings on Thursday. Unfortunately, she was not seen again. Close plant examination increased the egg count to sixteen, some laid between the tightly packed flower buds and only visible as the buds developed. Since the season was approaching its close, we collected these eggs to captive rear indoors, feeding the resultant six larvae on freshly opened flowers.

A week later, the longstanding male made his last flight on the Sunday. He had been resident with us for over a month. Shortly after 1pm on 21 September, one male was sighted and, within minutes, a second. They flew quickly into spiralling duels. On 26 September, the first adult emerged from larvae found on yellowing BLEP buds but raised on *Lespedeza* flowers, with another the day after.

The pace in October did not slacken, with at least one individual present for some of the time during each of the first seven days, including an instance when three males appeared within an hour, probably garden newborns. The following week saw the emergence of a female from a larva reared on Kidney Vetch flower heads. Sadly, a fatal misfortune with the containers during the resting stage of larvae fed on White clover and Black Medic brought that trial to a premature end. Final photographs lead me to believe they would have progressed to pupation and adulthood.

In a totally unexpected development, we found a fourth instar larva on a raceme of *Lespedeza* brought indoors to feed the captive reared ones originating from September eggs. After all this excitement, patience for the season's finale was needed whilst waiting for the pupation of seven larvae from the *Lespedeza* eggs. The first adult emerged for release on 6 November and the final one two weeks later.

Writing this article allowed Sue and I to relive the intriguing four months that unfolded last year and to reflect on our observations. Use of the mini meadow by Long-tailed Blues is

identical to that of our established colony of Common Blue. Both species enjoy the longer grass whilst ignoring the traditionally mown and flower bed section favoured by other insects. This indicates that both grasses and BLEP are necessary for our garden lek to function.

Although we have only sighted three male Long-tailed Blues in our garden this year, two a week apart in early August and the third at the beginning of September, their respective thirty-six hour stays allows us to speculate on behaviour in these northern latitudes, namely that males remain transient until they meet with another of their kind, rather than loitering in one place in hopes of further arrivals. No males have been reported so far this year at Lancing Ring or Whitehawk Hill Brighton, suggesting the species does not invariably favour hill-topping, contrary to established thought, but males look to meet up with other males at any place where such aggregation would be beneficial.

As opportunities for sighting Long-tailed Blues in our mini meadow have passed for 2024, we hope to extend the availability of next season's larval food plants by growing on this year's acquisitions of *Apios americana* (Groundnut or Hopniss), *Glycyrrhiza glabra* (Liquorice), *Colutea arborescens* (Common Bladder Senna) and *Lablab purpureus* (Hyacinth Bean).

For those who want a no-hands-on citizen science project, my research has come up with five Fabaceae that may be found in the local urban environment with potential to entice gravid females: *Robina pseudoacacia* (Black Locust), *Styphnolobium japonicum* (Japanese Pagoda Tree), *Gleditsia triacanthos* (Honey Locust), *Gymnocladus dioicus* (Kentucky Coffee Tree), *Cladrastis sinensis* (Chinese Yellowwood). These specimen trees are erratic in flowering but when triggered must surely be prominent beacons for Long-tailed Blues in the vicinity. There appear to be no reports by our branch members on this topic. An aspect still to be explored?

Female Long-tailed Blue, nectaring on
Bird's-foot Trefoil



Sussex Branch Events 2024

Roy Broad

It must be unusual for someone to take on the role of Events Coordinator with no experience of admin, no understanding of spread sheets and definitely not a butterfly expert either. Looking to increase my knowledge of Lepidoptera and their lives I wanted to go on walks with experts but at the time, for a multitude of reasons, nothing was available.

So to fill that gap here I am one year into my new role. It has been a steep learning curve and that is before we start talking about butterfly id. I have met many of our knowledgeable members and with their time and effort we have managed to run a Programme of Events this year.

The first event, in early April, was Transect Training at Knepp. This was organised by Julia Lowson in a cooperation with Weald to Waves and Wilder Horsham District. It was so well attended that a second event was arranged for early May at Woods Mill. The total attendance for the two was over 60.

Our first walk, on May 5th, near Mayfield was led by Paul Johnson. Expectations were not high this early in a quiet year but we saw a good range of butterflies including Green Hairstreak, Dingy Skipper, Small Copper and a Green-veined White posing near an egg. A Tawny Owl watched as we passed nearby.

Martin Kalaher led members on two separate occasions over the West Combe of Chantry Hill; May 11th and June 29th. On both occasions members were educated by Martin with his

The group with Martin

Photo: Roy Broad





Forester moth
Photo: Roy Broad

before to add more interest to the experience. Finally we must mention the lure of the tea and cake (Colin the Caterpillar) we were given while chatting butterflies.

In early July David Bridges took 19 people (aged 7 to 75+) on a tour of Warnham Butterfly Fields, a now wildlife rich area near Horsham. Many butterfly species were seen with a highlight of at least 4 Purple Emperors. Other sightings included a family of Weasels, many Roesel's Bush Crickets and a Honey Buzzard circling and wing-fluttering overhead.

On the 20th of July Martin Kalaher opened up his Storrington garden for us. There were 2 sessions, morning or afternoon. It was not a great day weather wise for butterfly spotting but to hear Martin talk about the time spent and plants introduced into his garden, all for the benefit of insects in general, but particularly butterflies, was very entertaining and educational. As he explained, some of the plant species we saw just appeared once the right conditions were put in place. It was interesting to learn that Buddleia is actually not that high on the list of plants to benefit butterflies, beaten by

knowledge of Lepidoptera and the flora frequented by them. Butterfly highlights of the walks included numbers of Duke of Burgundy, Grizzled and Dingy Skipper, Green Hairstreak, Small Copper, Large Skipper, Brown Argus and Dark Green Fritillary. Commoner species were seen too along with day flying moths - Cinnabar, Forester and Five-spot Burnet - and then the usual downland birdlife and Common Lizard.

At the end of June we were treated to a tour of Dave Harris's garden, a wild life oasis in the middle of Newhaven. Again it was the knowledge and experience of our tour leader that came to the fore. The number of beneficial plants that Dave shoe-horns into his garden, hence attracting many insects, was just amazing to see. We had to be careful as we went around the site not to dislodge well hidden butterfly eggs. He also opened up his moth catches from the night

Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet
Photo: Roy Broad





Green Hairstreak, taken on Martin's first walk at Chantry Hill

Photo: Graham Hubbard

the likes of Field Scabious, Devil's Bit Scabious, Betony, Knapweeds and Vetches.

The following day Tony Gould and his volunteers hosted an open day at the Liz Williams Butterfly Haven. This mini reserve was created by Dan Danahar, Tony and others on a patch of land next to the Dorothy Stringer School in Brighton. It has been planted with trees and shrubs to attract plentiful butterflies to the area. Although the open day, as with many sites this year, did not produce the normal amount of species, visitors were able to see Small/Essex Skippers, Green-veined White, Ringlet, and Small Blue amongst others. With a good number of attendees, many went home with more interest in butterflies and some knowledge of the work needed to support them.

An event I had really hoped to attend but which clashed with other commitments was Tim Squire's Grayling walk at Deep Dean, Wilmington on the 26th of July. This was not for the faint hearted with the hilly nature of the area but was much appreciated by those that attended. Grayling were seen along with several other species including Small and Essex Skipper, Brimstone, Small Copper and Dark Green Fritillary. Sights of day flying moths, several bird species including Peregrine Falcon, Raven, Linnet and Yellowhammer and of course the glorious views of that part of the Downs were also enjoyed by all.

Our final walk of the year, was led by Dave Harris at Tides Mill, Newhaven on Friday 13th of September. Whether it was due to the date or the very cold early morning only 2 of us accompanied Dave on this. After a slow start it warmed up and we were totally surprised by the number of butterflies around, Small, Large and Green-veined White being particularly numerous. Other pleasant surprises included various grasshoppers and crickets, Swallows, Martins, Ravens, 2 Wheatear on their way south and, just before we left, a Clouded Yellow.



Members also attended various external events to help promote the cause of Lepidoptera and of course Butterfly Conservation Sussex Branch. Thank you to Andrea Gibbs and James Milton amongst others for that.

A great help was when Julia Lowson completed the St John's Ambulance course and now shares the First Aider duties with me, on top of all her other involvements this year.

Thank you to all those mentioned above, and some I may have forgotten, for their participation and advice to help me in my role this year.

From top left: Duke of Burgundy on the 1st Chantry Hill walk

Photo: Roy Broad

Grizzled Skipper

Photo: Graham Hubbard

The Mayfield walk group with the leader Paul Johnson far right

Photo: Roy Broad



Searching for Rare Migratory Butterflies on the South Coast

Dave Brown





Hilltopping Continental Swallowtail on
Greater Knapweed

A number of very familiar British butterflies are exclusively (e.g. Painted Lady) or predominately (e.g. Red Admiral) migratory species which cross the English Channel and North Sea each year, but there is a range of other species which make far less frequent appearances. Many of these, such as the Bath White are such extreme rarities, with years passing between sightings, that they are unlikely to ever be encountered even by the most dedicated of butterfly enthusiasts.

However, four species deserve particular attention, as, with luck and research, there is both a realistic prospect of encountering one or more of them, and they have a status of intermittent or more regular breeding in the UK, so there is a stronger case for considering them "official" British butterflies (or potential colonisers as our climate changes). These are the Continental Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon gorganus*), Long-tailed blue (*Lampides boeticus*), Queen of Spain Fritillary (*Issoria lathonia*) and Large Tortoiseshell (*Nymphalis polychloros*). When I set myself, in the spring of the Covid lockdown year of 2020, the target of observing, and taking acceptable photos of all the UK butterfly species and recognised sub-species, I included these four on my target list. I had anticipated that it may be many years before I could see all four, but, surprisingly, it only took around 18 months, and a small number of targeted visits, showing that with time, research and luck, it is a realistic aim. Below I provide some information about each of these species, an account of how I managed to locate them, a few of the photographs taken, and suggestions as to how others who wish to find them could maximise their chances. For anyone wanting more detail about them, and other, much rarer, migrant species, I highly recommend Peter Eeles's recently (2023) published book "British & Irish Butterfly Rarities". Pete gave an excellent talk on rare species at the 2023 Sussex

Branch Members Day.

The “British” Swallowtail, a recognised subspecies *Papilo machaon britannicus*, is, by virtue of its large size and spectacular appearance familiar even to those who have not seen it. Although having a very limited distribution (and showing worrying signs of a recent decline) in Norfolk, the key Broadland sites for it are well known and it is not a difficult species to find if these are visited in good weather at the right time of year.

However individual Swallowtails belonging to a separate subspecies, *Papilo machaon gorganus*, generally referred to as the “Continental Swallowtail” which is widely distributed, as its name implies, across Continental Europe occasionally reach the South or East coast of England. While the odds of encountering one are very small, they can be increased by visiting the coast during periods of warm settled weather, with winds from the south, from late May through to September. While the two subspecies are very similar in appearance, the Continental one is slighter larger, and paler than its British relative. It is also double brooded, so there is a longer window of opportunity for locating one compared to the British subspecies, which is essentially single brooded, but with a much diminished second brood.

Depending on where they depart the Continent and arrive in England, they will have spent at least several hours flying over the Channel. There is some observational evidence that they enter the coast at low lying locations, rather than clifftops, and they are certainly attracted to Buddleia, which is widely distributed along the South coast. If I were to look specifically for just-arrived Swallowtails it would be by checking as many Buddleia bushes as possible along the Sussex and South Kent coast during warm weather but with a southerly onshore breeze or wind. However, while one often thinks of butterflies as fair-weather creatures, some migrants seem to take advantage of strong southerly winds to effect a quick crossing of the Channel. On one occasion, during gale conditions, with regular gusts of 45mph+ I came across a Swallowtail on the shingle beach at Seaford, just above the spray zone, cowering behind a patch of Sea Kale. I assumed it had just crossed the Channel. On the same occasion there were a number of Clouded Yellows on the shingle, also presumably just arrived.

While there is anecdotal evidence that Swallowtails enter via low lying land, possibly following river mouths, once they have reached England they often exhibit “hilltopping” behaviour; a strategy used by many butterfly species to find each other by congregating at high points in the landscape. Some of the summits of the South Downs close to the Sussex coast are crowned by the ramparts of Iron Age hill forts, Cissbury Ring being the finest, and Swallowtails are occasionally seen at these. I observed a hilltopping Swallowtail for about 3 hours one June afternoon in 2023. Its territory seemed to be centred on a large, flowering, Knapweed, to which it returned regularly, typically every 10 minutes or so. In between these visits it made rapid flights, seemingly covering all directions, up to around 150m from this central point. I had seen a “British” Swallowtail in Norfolk only a few days previously, and it was noticeable that the Continental individual was much faster flying and its slightly larger size and paler colour relative to the British one were apparent. Hilltopping Continental Swallowtails, once reported, may stay in the same location for some days and make a realistic target for someone wishing to see one. I have seen five in total; two “hilltopping”; the one on a shingle beach mentioned above; one feeding on Buddleia a few hundred metres from the shore at the Tide Mills (Seaford) and another flying very fast inland at twice head height at the same site.

While essentially a migrant when seen in England, the Continental Swallowtail has

intermittently become established as a resident on Chalk downland for periods of a few years, though dying out before a substantial population has become established. Its caterpillars feed on a wider range of plants (including Wild Carrot) than the native subspecies, which feeds only on the very restricted Milk Parsley, and the widespread availability of suitable larval food is likely to be sufficient to support successful breeding of the Continental subspecies in the South East. The hilltopping Swallowtail I spent time with mentioned above was at a location where it was thought a migrant female had laid her eggs the previous year, and so could have been an English born individual. Our warming climate may increase the likelihood of the Continental Swallowtail becoming a permanent resident, although, while increasing temperature may favour this, a pattern of increasing winter and spring rainfall may counter against it. We may know in a decade whether it is becoming established. Some Swallowtails cross the Channel every year, so the potential for colonisation is always there.

The Large Tortoiseshell is a mysterious butterfly; its history in the UK being one of periodic abundance and scarcity, with a final decline to presumed extinction in the 1980's. There remains uncertainty as to whether it was ever a permanent resident, or relied on an influx of migrants for its population to be sustained, with, intermittently, substantial home bred populations becoming established for a few years, before fading away. However, over the past twenty years, records have become more frequent on the South coast from Dorset eastwards to Sussex, with, albeit limited, evidence of breeding over the past few years. Being around an hour's drive to the locations of many of the Sussex sightings, this is where I have focused my attention.

These recent Sussex records have a decidedly coastal distribution, the majority being from sites from a few hundred metre to several kilometres from the coast, and where

A post-hibernation April Large Tortoiseshell
basking on Ash branch



sightings are from further inland these are often at sites along the valleys of the larger Sussex rivers. The Large Tortoiseshell is a hibernating species, and the majority of records are of individuals emerging from hibernation. They emerge early, in a warm year in Mid-March, and from then into early April is the peak time. Very few seem to survive past mid-April. My sightings have been between 20th March and 8th April, invariably on warm, sunny days and have predominately been of butterflies basking on the ground, or on tree branches, often adopting a “tree hugging” posture, with wings flexed backwards, rarely nectaring on blossom (Wild Cherry or Blackthorn). Rather than on paths, I have found them basking on dry grass, where they can be difficult to spot. Although slightly larger, their colour is more subdued than the Small Tortoiseshell (and the two species, though similar, have different wing markings). Some of the individuals seen basking on the ground interspersed this with flying to the very tops of nearby trees, where they would flutter around for some time, before perching on the highest twigs, and then dropping almost vertically down to the ground to resume basking.

I have encountered nine Large Tortoiseshells in total, at several Sussex sites between Brighton and Eastbourne. One site is close to where breeding had been confirmed, and targeted searches there both this year and last year were successful, but the other sightings were made by visiting as many potential sites, and covering as much ground as practical, when the weather was right – which means warm, calm and sunny. Potential sites were identified in part by using the Sightings archive on the Butterfly Conservation Sussex Branch website, noting sites where Large Tortoiseshells have been reported over the past few years. I would recommend this as a very good starting point. All my sightings were either on the sheltered (usually east, given the prevailing wind direction) edges of a wood and not in the wood itself, or along tree lined lanes and paths, with frequent trees in blossom. It was particularly noticeable that sightings coincided with locations where there was a noticeable warm and sheltered local microclimate. While both archive and current sightings reports are helping in identifying where Large Tortoiseshells have been observed, newly posted reports cannot be relied upon to provide an opportunity to see a newly emerged butterfly in subsequent days. Very experienced observers in Sussex have frequently been unable to locate one the following day after it has been seen and reported. Overall, if it is considered as a now resident species, and a case can certainly be made for this, I would rate it as the hardest one to find due to its apparently very low numbers and unpredictable appearances.

However, as my own searches have shown, it is possible! I have focused on finding post-



**Post-hibernation Large Tortoiseshell
basking on dry grass**



Large Tortoiseshell basking with wings characteristically flexed backwards against branch

hibernation Large Tortoiseshells. Their offspring emerge in the summer, but are less seldom seen, although there have been recent records, including at Knepp, the flagship rewilding site, and near the coast. I have only seen one summer Sussex individual, at Broadwater Warren near Tunbridge Wells, an unexpected incidental find while looking for Purple Emperors. Large Tortoiseshell caterpillars feed on the leaves of a range of trees. Although elms are often thought of as their preferred food, they also use willows. The caterpillars occur in characteristic larval webs. Very few have been seen on elms in Sussex, and the suspicion is that they perhaps make more frequent use of willows, which are so numerous that it would be very hard to comprehensively survey them for a presumably very small number of webs, although with time and effort such a survey could prove rewarding.

Assuming that you are fortunate enough to encounter one, in the excitement of the moment remember that the Large Tortoiseshell is a particularly nervous, twitchy and hence difficult to approach butterfly. Having secured adequate photographs of the species during my first few encounters I no longer attempt to photograph any I come across, and keep my distance to minimise disturbance. I found it was one species I would invariably use the 400mm setting of my 100-400mm lens, keeping 3m or more away from the butterfly to photograph it.

Caution must be exercised in interpreting a sighting when (and if!) a Large Tortoiseshell is encountered, as there are undoubted incidents of reared butterflies (or their larvae) being released. While there is a consensus that the individuals encountered in the Sussex coastal and near-coastal sites are genuine, wild butterflies, either direct migrants or their descendants, if you move further inland the likelihood of any Large Tortoiseshell encountered being a release perhaps increases, although, given the clandestine nature of releases, reliable information is lacking.

Of the four species considered here, the Long-tailed Blue is the most numerous and

easiest to locate and, during 2022 and 2023 in particular, was a relatively straightforward butterfly to track down along, or close to, the Sussex coast. It was not always so; prior to 2013 the species was a real rarity, but in the last few years its status has changed to that of a reliable summer and autumn migrant, which breeds in a number of coastal locations. It has, however, been much scarcer in 2024. I only saw two this summer, although both were incidental sightings and I did not systematically look for the species this year.

Its increased presence can be firmly linked to a warming climate, extending its range northwards. As a permanently resident species it seems confined to the borders of the Mediterranean, although it is a highly migratory species and, from this core breeding range, spreads north each summer, a life strategy similar to the Painted Lady, another, very familiar, migrant. Like the Painted Lady the Long-tailed Blue is incapable of surviving the British winter.

My first attempt to locate one was at Whitehawk Hill on the outskirts of Brighton, in August 2022 following reported sightings, focused around the mast on the hilltop. It did not take long. Within two minutes of reaching this area, around noon, an unfamiliar, small but very fast flying butterfly was seen at a distance, which I thought had to be one. This was confirmed by waiting next to a patch of flowering Broad-leaved Everlasting Pea, the large pink flowers of which were momentarily visited by a succession of what were clearly male Long-tailed Blues,

A Sussex bred female Long-tailed Blue





Long-tailed Blue underside

but none paused long enough for a close examination or satisfactory photograph. It was noticeable that they immediately disappeared when the sun went behind a cloud, appearing again immediately when the sun came out again. However, by around 3pm as the air cooled a little, they seemed to slow down and settled both on pea flowers and the ground for long enough to be able to see and photograph them properly.

This initial encounter was sufficient to demonstrate that the Long-tailed Blue is, for much of its waking hours, a hyperactive insect, but by staking out a patch of flowering everlasting pea it can be more easily observed as it starts to slow down later in the day. Broad-leaved Everlasting Pea, which can develop into a vigorous perennial shrub up to 2m in height, and is naturalized along the Sussex coast, holds a particular attraction for the species as a larval food and source of nectar, and the local adage of "find the pea, find the butterfly" generally holds good. They do, however, use other food plants and cultivated peas on allotments also attract them.

For someone wanting to see the species, I would recommend checking the Branch Sightings page and using that as a basis to plan a trip. People throughout the UK have travelled long distances to see them, and have generally been successful, although a sunny day is important. It should be noted that the best sites vary from year to year. Whitehawk Hill in Brighton is reliable most years, whereas other sites such as the Tide Mills, between Newhaven and Seaford, with many everlasting pea plants in flower, can be good for Long-tailed Blues one year, and devoid of them the next. Where individual Long-tailed Blues make landfall in Sussex after crossing the Channel, and establish local colonies, also varies from year to year, although sightings seem to be concentrated between Littlehampton and Eastbourne.

The earliest ones seem to arrive in June, with incoming migration continuing until around September. The species has a very quick life cycle, and the primary migrants can be rapidly bolstered by English bred individuals as the summer progresses. A particularly



Long-tailed Blues, male (above left) and mating pair (above)

interesting event occurred at Worthing in the Autumn (September into October) of 2022 when a seafront tamarisk hedge (often grown as a windbreak on the South coast) was seemingly used as a staging post for Sussex bred Long-tailed Blues undertaking a reverse migration over the Channel. Neil Hulme made regular observations, and confirmed seeing individuals flying out to sea. I spent some time watching a mating pair at this location. After they had parted the female, having resting briefly, departed at great speed across the Channel.

As it has become a frequently encountered butterfly along the Sussex coast, I no longer keep records of sightings of Long-tailed Blues, and seldom photograph them now, but must have seen over 50, with a preponderance of males. This is consistent with females, once emerged and mated, making a reverse migration across the Channel, while males remain, hoping to encounter more females.

The Queen of Spain Fritillary is, like the Continental Swallowtail, a species which has very occasionally bred and established temporary small colonies in England, some of which have apparently persisted for a few years. It is a potential new permanent colonizer as the climate warms, although, as with Continental Swallowtails, increasingly wet winters and springs may hinder its establishment. One of the temporary colonies (2007-2009) was near Chichester, in the Brandy Hole Copse Local Nature Reserve, and well described in a 2010 publication by Colin Pratt and Neil Hulme. It does not seem to reach England every year, unlike the Continental Swallowtail, although it is a species which may be under-recorded.

My first encounter with one was a very brief “what on earth is that?”, when on a very hot July day in 2022 after searching for Brown Hairstreaks in the valley floor of the Steyning Downland in West Sussex, I ventured higher into Steyning Coombe. On the parched dry path I disturbed ahead of me something I initially took to be another Wall Brown. However as it flew past me I could see it was a Fritillary, but not one of the resident species. It settled on the path once more, only for a couple of seconds, but enough to recognise it as a Queen of Spain. I was surprised how small it was; comparable in size to a female Wall Brown. It departed at great



Male Queen of Spain Fritillary underside

speed, could not be re-located, and I reconciled myself to that being possibly the only glimpse of one I would ever get.

However, two months later there were further sightings in Kent and Sussex and being able to properly see (and photograph) one made it back onto my wish list as a realistic proposition. In particular, there were multiple sightings in a field at Walmer, near the seaside town of Deal, on the East Kent coast. At the end of September, a break from other commitments made a visit there possible, although the weather forecast was dubious; rain but hopefully with intermittent sunny spells. Driving to the site, there was not much sign of the latter and on arriving at Deal, the rain started, leaving no alternative but to head to a pub and consider options; admit defeat and do something else (fish and chips somewhere with a sea view becoming increasingly appealing!), or hope for a break in the weather.

The rain reducing to light drizzle was sufficient to warrant carrying on to Walmer, where the site, a large field of uncut wheat, with a path around the periphery, was quickly located. There were a few weak glimmers of sun, interspersed with showers, but nothing was seen other than a Painted Lady, until after about 40 minutes a fast, low flying fritillary was spotted. It paused momentarily, allowing open wing shots, but then disappeared amongst the wheat stems. It was re-located about an hour later, nick in the left forewing confirming it was the same individual. By this time the light was starting to fade and it settled to roost on a wheat stem, giving an excellent view of the characteristic large spots on the underwings. These were a remarkable metallic silver colour, and reflected the butterfly's surroundings, particularly the blue sky when the sun briefly appeared again.

Fortuitously I met the person who had first discovered the species at the site, who said he had seen, over several weeks, 13 individuals in total. These probably were all the offspring of a single gravid female which had crossed the Channel. The larval food (Field Pansy) was present around the field margin. No further individuals were seen there the following year,

indicating that no successful overwintering of any life stage of the butterfly had occurred, and indeed there were no reports of the species anywhere during 2023. 2022 had proved to be a particularly good year for the species, with perhaps around 30 individuals seen in total in England.

For those wishing to see the species, while a random encounter on a coastal path in Sussex or Kent is not impossible, it is highly unlikely. Monitoring websites and social media for events such as that at Walmer, and being prepared to travel, represents the best opportunity to encounter it.

It was noted above that releases of Large Tortoiseshells have made records hard to interpret, and I generally only have confidence in those from near coastal sites as being wild bred butterflies, either direct migrants or their descendants. However, the problem of releases seems to have been overemphasised in relation to other species. Many social media posts have been made, stating that publicised individuals of other species are releases – this charge has been levied against Long-tailed Blues, Swallowtails and Queen of Spain Fritillary. There seems to be a misunderstanding in that the often-sedentary nature of these species once they have reached England, which is in fact natural, is interpreted as being evidence of them being released individuals, with a tendency to stay put once released. While the possibility of releases cannot be entirely excluded, the majority of the coastal and near coastal sightings of the four species considered here can reasonably be assumed to be of individuals which have crossed the Channel, or their progeny.

In conclusion, if you decide to attempt to see any (or all!) of these four species, good luck and keep monitoring the Branch website Sightings page for alerts as to their presence. It is also definitely worth considering travelling out of the county, for the Queen of Spain Fritillary in particular, so do monitor other websites and social media too. I was probably particularly fortunate in managing to locate all four within 18 months, but this shows that it can be done!

Male Queen of Spain Fritillary

All photos: Dave Brown



My Year as Vice-Chair

James Milton

It's been an exciting year for Butterfly Conservation Sussex Branch where the Committee has been further strengthened. Since August 2023, BC Sussex has seen many new dedicated committee members including Roy Broad, as Events Officer, who joined us in September 2023, and Martin Kalaher, who joined us a short while after, although he has been active in the Branch for many years, coordinating the sightings page on our website. Roy established a fantastic set of events this year for BC Sussex members which I hope many of you took advantage of, and Martin as author (along with Paul Shepherd as creator) has been fundamental in the revamping of our website which is, excitingly, now live. There are many other fantastic individuals who have joined us over the last twelve months who have been a real asset to the branch, and I thank them for their commitment and time they have given.

As Vice-Chair, I have been getting involved with some talks here and there over the butterfly season. I ran a "Wonderful World of Butterflies" talk and subsequent walk for families who were staying at the Wowo Campsite in Uckfield in June. The aim was to inspire parents and children to take up their own national butterfly photography journey and relay just how much fun it can be to explore and adventure around the UK. A few of you may remember from my last newsletter article that I am currently on this journey too, having photographed 46 out of the 59 UK butterfly species.

Unfortunately, I did not get much of a chance this year to gain more species, only ticking the Large Blue off the list, which I managed to get a great photograph of in Somerset (see below).

I was also invited to hold a stall at the National Trust's Alfriston Clergy House towards the end of July where I got to talk to many interested individuals about the best gardening practices for butterflies and some of the threats they face, like exposure to pesticides.

Rolling back to March 2024, Dave Brown (Chair) and I attended an in-person Butterfly Conservation Branch Chairs' meeting in Nottingham where important issues surrounding the central charity's goals were discussed. As a reminder, the 2021-2026 BC goals are:

1. Halve the number of the UK's threatened species of butterflies and moths.
2. Improve the condition of 100 of the most important landscapes for butterflies and moths.
3. Transform 100,000 wild spaces in the UK for people, butterflies and moths.

Other items discussed ranged from the future of branches as well as the importance of engaging young people in conservation through social media and other online channels.

As for me personally, I was thrilled to finish my BSc in Ecology and Conservation with First-class honours at the University of Sussex in July which subsequently meant returning to Kent where I am originally from. However, it may be surprising for you to read that I am currently writing this article in the University of Glasgow's Scottish Centre for Ecology and the Natural Environment as I have been so lucky to not only have gained a place on the University of Glasgow's MRes in Ecology and Environmental Biology course, but to also be given the incredible opportunity to live and conduct research at the aforementioned field research station.

What does this mean for my role as Vice-Chair at BC Sussex? I am still 100% dedicated to



A Large Blue butterfly (likely male) in the Green Down nature reserve in Somerset, taken on the 11th of June 2024. I was very fortunate to gain this open-winged shot as Large Blues are notorious for keeping their wings closed. The weather conditions on this day were perfectly warm, but not too bright which meant the butterfly was more inclined to open its wings.

and passionate about the BC Sussex branch and very much value the connection to Sussex. I'm proud of all that we have achieved over the past 12 months and wish to remain a part of the branch remotely. However, it was only right to ask the Branch Committee to decide whether I ought to stay in the Vice-Chair position, considering I am all the way in the Scottish Highlands! I am very happy to say that they agreed that I should.

As my final word, I want to wish all our readers a fantastic Autumn and Winter. It certainly isn't my favourite time of the year, but I am excited to see what the Scottish Highlands are like in these seasons. For anyone curious, my favourite season is Spring, followed by Summer, when butterflies are aplenty! No surprises there really...



Vice-Chair, James, enjoying a calm Sunday afternoon on a boat in one of the lochs situated in the Trossachs National Park.

Wolstonbury Hill Butterfly Walk

Patrick Moore

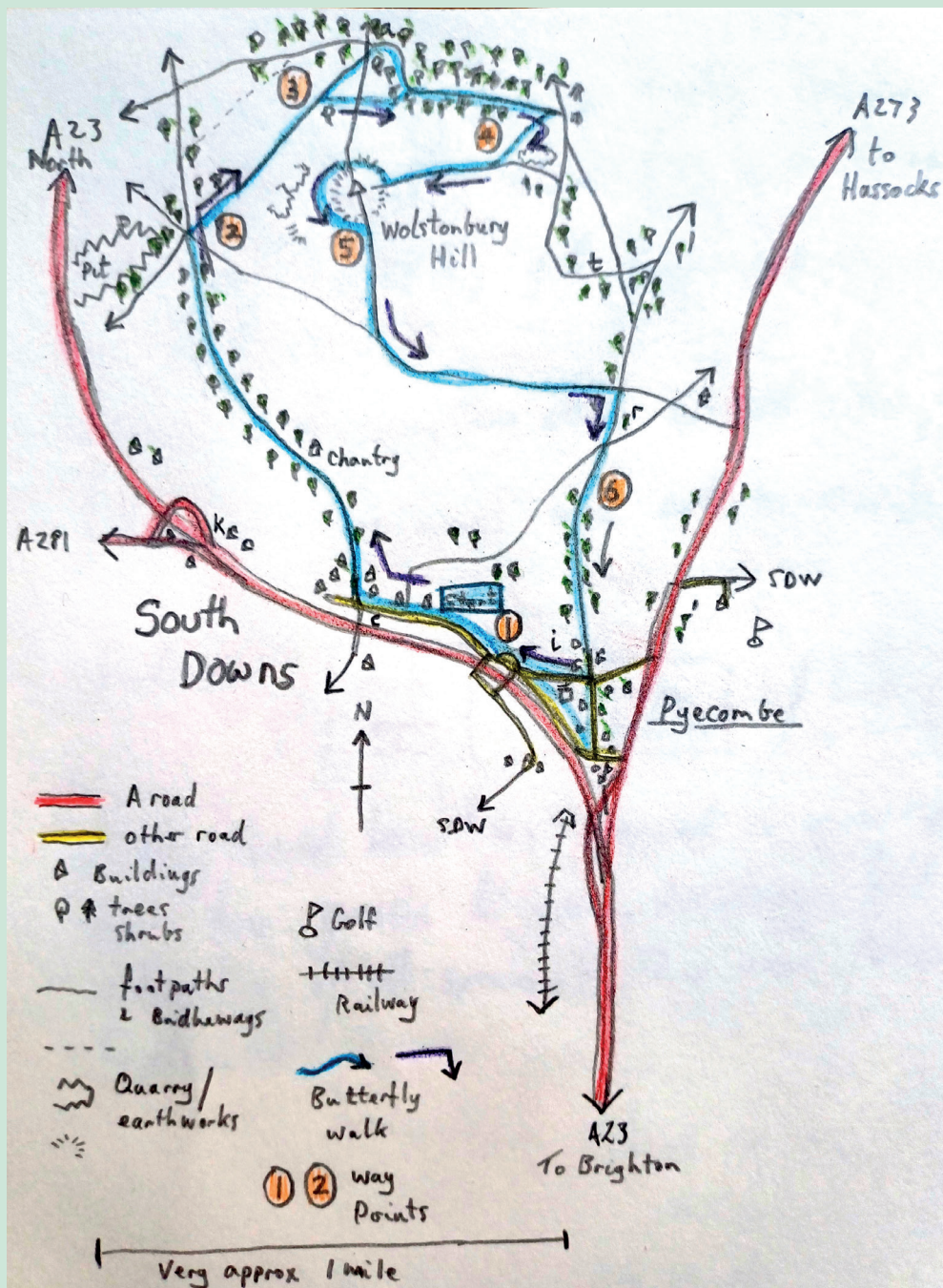
Wolstonbury Hill is managed by the National Trust. It can be superb for downland butterflies. My highest day count record was 22 species in 2017 and again in 2018, both in the middle of July. There were also overwhelming numbers of orchids on the northern flank this year.

This is the 2018 butterfly list, a nice mixing of late spring brood and early summer brood species:- Painted Lady, Small Tortoiseshell, Gatekeeper, Common Blue, Small White, Comma, Red Admiral, Ringlet, Small Copper, Green-veined White, Meadow Brown, Small Heath, Holly Blue, Speckled Wood, Brimstone, Peacock, Marbled White, Large Skipper, Small Skipper, Dark Green Fritillary, Chalk Hill Blue and Brown Argus.

For orchids, the wetter weather over this winter was not a problem and on 8th June this year I walked with a mate a similar route to the one I have prepared for this article. There were huge numbers of Common Spotted Orchid on the northern flank, 1,000s to say the least. Also we saw Butterfly Orchid, Chalk Fragrant Orchid, Pyramidal Orchid, Common Twayblade, Bee Orchid, fading Early Purple Orchid and Helleborine. It is a good site to explore. I have found Southern Marsh Orchid and there have been reports of rarer species including Man Orchid and Burnt Orchid.

This walk is approximately 4 miles. Please wear suitable clothing and stout footwear and take a 'proper' map. Also remember a camera, binoculars, a fully charged mobile phone, trail snacks and a drink. The views from the summit to the west are utterly superb - the scarp of the South Downs disappears into the far distance.

1. Park on the old cut-off A23 northwest of the village. Head west then generally north along the Old Droveaway past Chantry Farm.
2. At the 6-way junction, turn right through the gate, then straight ahead - DO NOT veer right. This path follows the flank of Wolstonbury Hill.
3. At the sycamore tree, head down to the lower path or continue along the contours to the next path down and follow that to the lower path.
4. Follow that path and at the gate, go through the gate and continue along the field boundary until the path heads uphill in the opposite direction. Follow the path uphill until you reach the summit.
5. Circle the summit following the ancient earthworks, visit the summit trig point at 676 feet (206 metres). The whole area is worth exploring. Leave the summit using the southerly path, turning left at the T-junction.
6. Head back to the start, via:
 - a. The church with its Sussex gate
 - b. The village pub
 - c. Both of the above!





Crowborough Community Orchard

Kevin Crook

Crowborough Community Orchard got off the ground in 2022, partnering with Ashdown Primary School, who were looking to use a 1.5 acre playing field for environmental purposes. Part of the site is used by the school for Forest School activities and has been planted with dozens of native tree species. The rest of the site is managed as an orchard and nature reserve.

To date we have planted over 130 fruit trees and created a Biodiversity Garden, which we are planting up with 100 different varieties of plant, all recognised as being 'plants for pollinators'. Enhancing biodiversity is a core objective for the group and we are turning what was a sterile playing field into a haven for wildlife.

Within the Conservation Management Plan, I have set out a range of actions designed to support butterflies and moths, and we hope to steadily increase the number of species breeding and visiting the site. We have recorded 10 species of butterfly over the past two years and aim to increase this to 21.

Actions include: leaving several nettle patches; planting caterpillar foodplants for a range of species; having a highly diversified



Kevin planting one of the Alder Buckthorn

Photo: Simone Crook.

grass-cutting regime; encouraging boundary hedges to thicken up; planting new hedges; and leaving areas of the site unmanaged.

During 2024, using a small grant from branch funds I planted 12 plugs of Bird's-foot-trefoil, which has established really well. This is the foodplant for Common Blue and Dingy Skipper, and with both species breeding at sites relatively close, we hope one or both may become established within the orchard.

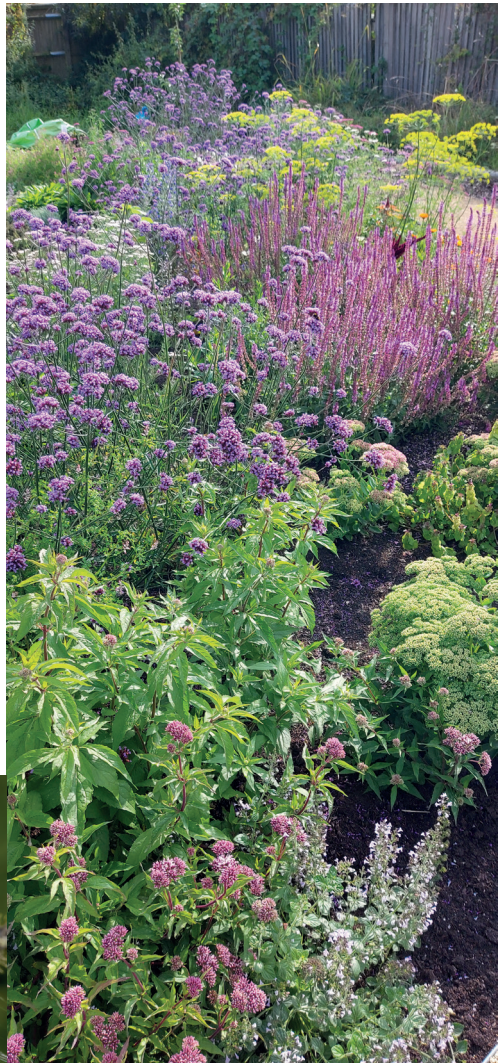
In addition, the grant also covered the planting of four Alder Buckthorn whips, which I planted in a damp corner of the site where we eventually hope to create wetland habitats. Brimstones are relatively common in Crowborough and I hope to establish these as a breeding species at the orchard.

For more information see our website: <https://crowboroughcommunityorchard.org/>.

Below: Small Tortoiseshell caterpillars on one of our nettle patches

Photo: Bill Welch

Other photos of the Community Orchard by Kevin Crook



Update on the Sussex Grayling 2024

The Grayling butterfly is found on acid grasslands and lowland heath. However, it was once also widespread on the Chalk Downland in the South East of the UK. During the course of the Twentieth Century it disappeared from the Chalk downland and is now found at only one such location in the UK which is a single south-east facing slope in a valley tucked away in the South Downs above Wilmington, East Sussex.

Our magazine has had regular updates from two contributors. For the past 6 years or so, Tim Squire, Ranger for the South Downs National Park has been involved in the active management of the site for the benefit of the butterfly. Patrick Moore, our Grayling Champion, keeps a tally of Grayling numbers by regularly visiting Deep Dean near Windover Hill during their flight season. By 2022 things were looking up – average day count 67. However, the situation deteriorated in 2023 – average day count 21. Unfortunately, 2024 has brought a further downturn in numbers. Here are the results of Patrick's Deep Dean 2024 trecks:-

"This season's highest day count was just 14 (fourteen) compared to 43 in 2023 and a huge 158 in 2022. Yes, they were later this year and numbers started off low with 4 on 21 July and 12 on 24 July, but numbers never increased from that point as they have in previous years. On my final visit, there were just 5 on 7 August. The last male that I saw was sitting on the top path waiting for a female who probably never appeared."

Over the winter, we will need to examine the Grayling's problems further and see what might be done to try to increase their numbers in 2025.

Grayling at Ewe Dene

Photo: Dave Brown



Committee Report to Members for the Year Ending 31 March 2024

Recording

Paul Johnson

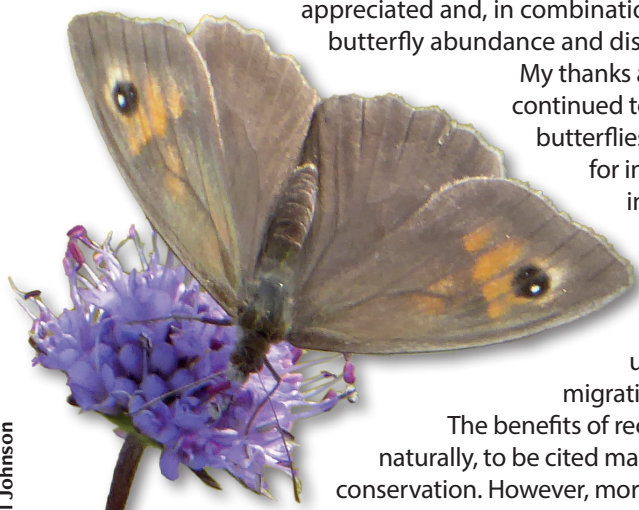
To begin, my thanks to everyone who has contributed butterfly records for Sussex since my last article in the 2023 newsletter. There are many ways to record butterflies locally, encompassing established national programmes – such as the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS), the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS), and the Garden Butterfly Survey – along with iRecord and traditional paper formats for what might be described as more freelance recording. All these records are valuable and really appreciated and, in combination, build a detailed picture of how butterfly abundance and distribution are changing.

My thanks as well to Sue Peters who has continued to collate sightings of unusual migrant butterflies from the Sussex Branch website for inclusion in the county database. This involves detailed and diligent work retrieving information from the website's sightings pages, with the resulting records generated by Sue adding greatly to our understanding of patterns of butterfly migration.

The benefits of recording butterflies tend, quite naturally, to be cited mainly in terms of informing their conservation. However, more is now being said about the benefits for recorders themselves and this aspect was described this summer in Issue 146 of Butterfly Conservation's (BC) national magazine, *Butterfly*. The article summarised the results of a new study that confirmed that "counting butterflies reduces anxiety and boosts our wellbeing." The research was based on before and after surveys of people who'd taken part in the 2022 Big Butterfly Count. This is an ongoing citizen science recording scheme run by BC in which the more widespread and commonly encountered butterfly species are counted over a short period. Multiple butterfly counts can be completed during July and August, with the research also reporting that participants had felt more connected with nature through their involvement.

I would agree that recording butterflies has benefits for wellbeing. I've found it to be engrossing and engaging but without being taxing – a really good way to switch off and something to become immersed in for a few minutes or hours, as time allows. Butterflies live in the moment and when observing them we can perhaps live like this too, even if just very briefly.

Recording butterflies along a fixed transect route divided into sections (this method forming the basis of the UKBMS and WCBS programmes) can, I feel, bring benefits too for



Meadow Brown Photo: Paul Johnson



Long-tailed Blue

Photos: Paul Johnson

mental equilibrium. The route is set out and as butterflies (even the Meadow Browns!) are counted in each section, it feels like an ordered and orderly process with a sense of completion and accomplishment at the end. Recording at a site regularly can bring a deeper connection to its butterfly fauna (and other wildlife), with insights into what can be expected when and where, and what is unusual.

If recording butterflies as part of a wider programme can help settle a mind racing with other distractions, then, equally, a spontaneous encounter can perhaps help refresh a weary mind. In Sussex, we're fortunate in having many of the UK's scarcer butterfly species and many quiet places in which to seek them. However, a butterfly doesn't have to be rare (or its setting picturesque) to surprise or captivate. One of my favourite memories of the 2023 season was on the last day of October when I unexpectedly came across three bright Holly Blues in the front garden of an apartment block. A female was feeding on the bold yellow spikes of a Mahonia whilst simultaneously trying to avoid the attentions of an amorous male. Both butterflies revealed different shades of blue – from metallic to sky to inky – as wings were opened and closed, whilst the third Holly Blue flew about overhead.

This encounter stayed with me and brightened an autumn day – in just a few brief minutes (butterfly watching in urban areas does, of course, have its challenges and limitations!), I'd had close views of male and female Holly Blues, and observed nectaring and aspects of their courtship. Three Holly Blues together so late in the season at the end of October was very interesting too from a recording perspective, although somehow it hadn't really felt like recording at all...

As mentioned at the start of this update, there are many ways to record butterflies in Sussex. This range not only reflects different recording programmes, but allows people to record butterflies even if they only have a few minutes to spare or are just starting out on butterfly identification. If you'd like to become involved in recording butterflies in Sussex, please do get in touch with me via recorder@sussex-butterflies.org.uk for more information.



Female Holly Blue
Photo: Andrew Grieve

Membership

Simone and Kevin Crook

As of September 2024, our branch had 2,095 individual members across 1,533 households, which includes members from other counties adding the Sussex branch to their core membership. This represents a very small drop of nine members compared to a year ago. Out of the 32 branch groups, Sussex has the fifth highest number of individual members, reflecting the high value of Sussex for butterflies. The two towns with the highest number of members are Brighton and Lewes.

Butterfly Conservation will be running a campaign to promote Christmas gift membership, so please do consider that for family and friends – look out for more information in the run up to December.

We are hoping to send out more information to members moving forward and this will primarily be via emails sent out from Butterfly Conservation Head Office. If you would like to receive information on events, conservation activities and other news, please check with the BC membership team (**membership@butterfly-conservation.org**) that you have opted in to receive email communication.



WANTED

MORE ARTICLES FOR OUR MAGAZINE

We're always interested in features for our annual magazine. It's the contributions from our members that fill this publication, so why not put pen to paper (or fingertips to keyboard) and write a short article or send in an idea. Perhaps you have a favourite butterfly watching spot in Sussex you'd like to write about, or some butterfly gardening tips. Maybe you've observed some unusual butterfly behaviour, or you'd like to tell the story of your first encounter with a new species. Whatever inspires you we'd like to hear about it! Send all contributions and ideas to **branch.contact@sussex-butterflies.org.uk**.

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION – SUSSEX BRANCH

Members' Day

Saturday 30th November 2024 1:30pm

The next Sussex branch Members' Day will be held at Cyprus Hall, Cyprus Road, Burgess Hill, RH15 8DX on Saturday 30th November 2024 at 1.30pm

We will have three interesting and informative presentations from:

- Steven Lofting, BC's Regional Conservation Officer on 'Saving Butterflies and Moths in South East England'

Steven will describe Butterfly Conservation's Strategy, with a particular focus on South East England, and on recent trends in butterfly populations.

- Bob Eade on 'The Lifecycle of the Wall Brown'

Bob, an expert on the Wall Brown, will explain this fascinating species' life cycle. Although it has declined nationally and its range contracted, it remains fairly common in Sussex, especially along the South Downs.

- Lisa Saw on 'Some of my Special Sightings'

Lisa will give an account, based around some of her beautiful photographs, of memorable encounters with butterflies.

Tea, coffee and cakes will be available, plus a Raffle and Pre-Loved Book Stall (cash donations would be appreciated). Photo competition results will be announced, and the top images submitted will be projected.

We'd really love for our members to be able to meet and mingle. Please do not attend if you feel unwell.

There is a large pay and display car park behind Cyprus Hall, and other (also paying) car parks around the centre of Burgess Hill. The Hall is about a 5 minute walk from Burgess Hill station.

No booking needed.

We anticipate the afternoon will finish around 4.30pm.

Winter Work Parties 2024-25

Throughout the winter the branch arranges and supports conservation work parties on its reserves and on other important reserves across Sussex, helping improve the habitat to ensure the continued success of our butterflies in 2025 and beyond.

Neil Hulme has again agreed to lead the winter work parties at Rowland Wood and Park Corner Heath this season. There will be 12 work parties this year, all on Sundays from November to February:

3, 17 and 24 November

8 and 15 December

5, 12, 19 and 26 January

2, 9 and 16 February

The work parties will start at **10am** and end around **3:30pm**, but don't feel obliged to stay all day. There is no need to inform anyone that you plan to attend - please just show up. Please bring your own work gloves and your own hand tools if you have them, particularly loppers. You will also need to bring your own food and drink as required.

We do recommend that you keep an eye on the Winter Work Parties page on our website as we will make it clear here if any of the work parties have to be cancelled due to unsafe weather - <https://www.sussex-butterflies.org.uk/otherpages/index.php?id=2>

Please contact Neil Hulme if you have any queries - neil.hulme.sussex@outlook.com

Here's a little summary of what we do on the work parties

by Jonathan Crawford

The work parties last from 10am to about 3.30pm, but we normally give up early if it's raining. Some people arrive and stay the whole day, some people just a few hours or after lunch. Everyone is welcome and every contribution is valuable. We start the day with a chat and roll call and a little bit about health and safety, and then we go into the reserves.

Most of the work is clearing scrub with loppers and saws (heavy duty gardening). There is normally something for every ability, and people can work as fast or as slow as they like. A couple of us run brush cutters, but that is usually done away from the group so as not to disturb their peace and quiet. Often, we have fantastic bonfires which are especially welcome on cold winter mornings and a great focal point.

We work for about an hour and a half and then stop for a break. Another hour and a half and it's lunchtime. After that is a couple of hours and it's time to go home, tired but happy. As you would imagine, the people who attend are very keen on birds, botany and butterflies so we can have marvellous chats during our breaks.

Butterfly Conservation Sussex Branch



Management Committee

Chair

Dave Brown

Contactable via branch.contact@sussex-butterflies.org.uk

Vice Chair

James Milton

Contactable via branch.contact@sussex-butterflies.org.uk

Secretary

Pat Randall

Contactable via branch.contact@sussex-butterflies.org.uk

Treasurer

Roger Chisholm-Batten

Contactable via branch.contact@sussex-butterflies.org.uk

Social Media Manager

Andrea Gibbs

Contactable via branch.contact@sussex-butterflies.org.uk

Recording Officer

Paul Johnson

recorder@sussex-butterflies.org.uk

Transect Co-ordinator

Julia Lowson Smith

transects@sussex-butterflies.org.uk

Park Corner Heath & Rowland Wood Reserve Manager

Bob Foreman

reserve.manager@sussex-butterflies.org.uk

Events Co-ordinator

Roy Broad

events@sussex-butterflies.org.uk

Membership Secretary

Simone and Kevin Crook

memberships@sussex-butterflies.org.uk

Branch Contact

Sue Peters

branch.contact@sussex-butterflies.org.uk

Website Editor

Martin Kalaher

Contactable via branch.contact@sussex-butterflies.org.uk

Sussex Butterfly Magazine Editors

John Heys and Sue Peters

Contactable via branch.contact@sussex-butterflies.org.uk

Officer & Non-Committee positions

Regional Conservation Manger – South East England

Steven Lofting

slofting@butterfly-conservation.org

Surrey & Sussex Landscape Officer

Richard Austin

raustin@butterfly-conservation.org

Conservation Adviser (West Sussex)

Neil Hulme

neil.hulme.sussex@outlook.com

Health and Safety Coordinator

Dave Harris

The committee would also like to thank everyone who gives their support, time and advice to Sussex Butterfly Conservation

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE
REGISTERED IN ENGLAND N^o 2206468
REGISTERED OFFICE:
MANOR YARD, EAST LULWORTH, WAREHAM, DORSET. BH20 5QP
CHARITY REGISTERED IN ENGLAND AND WALES (N^o 254937)
AND IN SCOTLAND (SCO39268)



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