



Butterfly Conservation Cambridgeshire & Essex

BRANCH
NEWSLETTER



Photograph by Matt Stead

Butterfly Conservation Cambridgeshire & Essex Newsletter – Autumn 2021

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Editor: Bryan Russell
newsletter@cambs-essex-butterflies.org.uk

Designed by MFP – mfpmarketing.co.uk

C&E 2021 AGM

**Zoom meeting on Tuesday
16 November 2021 at 7pm**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88065302305?pwd=MURYaUdqV3BReHEvZkxrRnIPcjFVZz09>

Meeting ID: **880 6530 2305**
Passcode: **893329**

Fund Raising for Butterfly Conservation

If you shop on-line using Amazon, they have introduced an option where you can access Amazon.com through this link.

<https://smile.amazon.co.uk/about>

You then have an option to ask Amazon to make a contribution to the charity of your choice. They are giving Butterfly Conservation a percentage of the sale, not you. Please have a look, and if you choose Butterfly Conservation...

Thank you very much.

If you would prefer to receive this newsletter in ‘electronic format’ then please let us know.

newsletter@cambs-essex-butterflies.org.uk

Editor's notes... Welcome

Welcome to the Autumn edition of Cambridgeshire and Essex Butterfly Conservation newsletter.



Firstly. We only have email addresses of about 75% of our members, but we would like to have everyone's for ease (and cost) of communication re-things like AGM, field trips and work parties.

Mostly, it's the longest established members who joined in the pre-email era and who have never been asked or volunteered their addresses. If you are aware we don't have your email, please send it to **social@cambs-essex-butterflies.org.uk** so we can update our records. Many thanks.

Assistant Essex Recorder

Rob Smith, our Essex Recorder, has been doing the job for many years and luckily he enjoys it, and wants to continue. However, his role has slowly been expanding, and he has been appointed to several committees and roles beyond his original remit which are very time consuming. In view of this, he would like to have someone to assist him, sharing some of the 'monitoring and identifying' jobs he currently does.

This is an opportunity to learn an awful lot very quickly!

Please contact Rob at:
recorder@cambs-essex-butterflies.org.uk

New Committee members

We are pleased to welcome Sarah Von Blumenthal as our new Treasurer and also Andrea Maclure who has agreed to be our new minute Secretary.

Thank you very much for volunteering.

Contact details have been added to the committee details on our page at the rear of the newsletter.

I would have liked to have announced that the committee was 'complete' but our chairman pointed out that 'we don't do anything on publicity'.

So here's the challenge.

If anyone would like to do any publicity work for the branch, we'd love to hear from you. It would be good to have a presence at Town or County shows, and that kind of thing.

It would be as much or little as suited, and its definitely a role that can be shared, so if anyone feels they would like to be involved but on a 'shared' basis, then please contact the Chairman **mrmikegittos@hotmail.com**

Even doing one show would be an infinity improvement on what we currently do ... 😊

Sadly, our membership secretary is leaving us and we'd like to replace her, so if anyone would take up the job of maintaining and updating our lists, then we'd be very grateful. Please contact **mrmikegittos@hotmail.com**

Omissions, Corrections, Mistakes and Apologies: 'Searching for Hairstreak no 5'

I wrote that only one Branch had all five hairstreaks ... not so. Sussex, Kent and Surrey also do, with the Black Hairstreak popping up in all sorts of places. There might well be others which I don't know about.

Apology... to all those who complained about the lack of consistency in the use of capital letters for the Latin family names on the photographs

If you think my editing is bad, have a look at this article from *The Daily Express*.



 **EXPRESS**

NATURE

'Extinct' butterfly back from dead after disappearing in the 1960s

A GIANT butterfly presumed extinct for more than 50 years since Dutch elm disease tore across the nation is breeding again in Britain.

A good season for the Vanessids - our most colourful butterfly family

I hope everyone noticed the marked increase in numbers of Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Red Admiral and Painted Lady butterflies this summer. This has added colour and, for our older members, perhaps a feeling of nostalgia seeing so many butterflies while walking around the garden. The warm wet weather has kept nettles in an unusually luscious state, which will probably have contributed to the increase in their numbers.

A poor year for the Common Blue

Many transect reporters noted a sharp drop in the numbers of this species, in both broods, which might either be the weather or an increase in parasites for some other unknown reason.

A full report on the summer's butterfly records will be given in the next issue, written by the Essex and Cambridgeshire recorders.

Grizzled Skipper

The 'hanging on' status of the Grizzled Skipper in Essex continues. About a dozen separate individuals were seen in their last location in the county at Langdon Hills.

In Cambridgeshire, although it is found in various places towards the north of the county, one location near Over reported the probable loss of the colony, with not a single adult being seen flying.



Dark Green Fritillary in Essex

Following the spread of this butterfly across much of Cambridgeshire in the last few years we are pleased that several individuals have been spotted in different locations in Essex. We're obviously hoping that this species will be

seen more often and will become a 'native' again.

Adonis Blue **(*Polyommatus bellargus*)**

This iconic and rare butterfly can now be seen flying on the Devil's Dyke. A quick glance at two relatively recent distribution maps show that this location is some distance from its normal geographic range and it is a species which is known to rarely fly more than a few hundred meters.

By the 1970's this butterfly was found in a mere 2% of its formerly known colonies outside Dorset, mostly as a result of habitat change, caused by evolving farming practices, and the lack of grazing by rabbits, which had been reduced in number by myxomatosis.

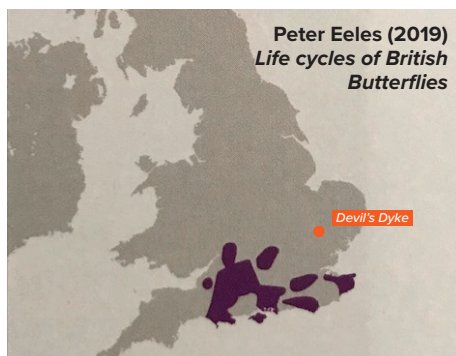
Our increased knowledge of the butterflies requirements has halted the decline – at one point it was thought it could be a species that would disappear from our shores – and many landowners have specifically encouraged the habitat for the benefit of the species.

It has very demanding requirements for survival.

The caterpillar food plant is horseshoe vetch and the eggs are laid very specifically, in the first of its two broods, on plants between one and seven centimetres from the ground, and in the second brood, the eggs are laid on plants no further than three centimetres from the ground. These second brood caterpillars are nearer the ground to gain more heat in the microclimate that exists there, as the shorter days towards the autumn are cooler. The south of Britain is very much at the northern end of its international distribution.

Ants

Much of the research into this species was done by Jeremy Thomas in the 1970's. The butterfly has a close relationship with ants, either red or black. The



caterpillars have a 'honey gland' which secretes honey and are 'milked', with ants becoming 'obsessive in their attention'. In return, the caterpillars receive protection by the ants from parasites and predators, which continues in the evening, after the caterpillar drops down after the day's feeding is complete. The ants have even been seen to bury the

caterpillar or several caterpillars together, as a way of protecting them overnight. This active protection continues throughout the chrysalis stage, and at least half of the chrysalis found by Jeremy Thomas during his research, were in the warm, top part of ants nests. It is thought that the butterfly would not survive without the ant's protection.

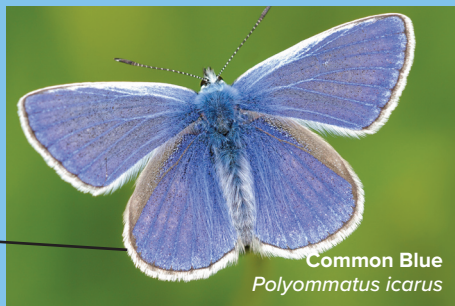
There is a certain irony, relating to the colony on Devil's Dyke, that was noted in Jeremy Thomas's book – 'it is amazing how many of the colonies were living in ancient defensive works and structures'.

We should hurry to see them, as there is no guarantee that this colony will survive for very long.

The butterfly is easily confused with the Common Blue. The big difference is the black veins on the Adonis Blue go all the way to the edge of the wing.



Adonis Blue
Polyommatus bellargus



Common Blue
Polyommatus icarus



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We now have social media groups for members to visit and share observations and photographs. Please have a look and contribute – anything butterflies and moths. This isn't replacing our 'sightings' page, but is intended as a vehicle for members to share pictures and to be 'interactive' with other members.

Releases

The difference between ‘Butterfly re-introductions’ and ‘Butterfly releases’ overlaps and blurs into the same thing. On one hand is the Chequered Skipper project, backed by its share of the £4.6million lottery grant (split with 19 other rare wildlife projects, although not necessarily equally) and on the other are ‘releasers’ – people who unilaterally release butterflies wherever they feel like.

It’s ‘illegal’ only if specific laws have been contravened, such as releasing butterflies onto a SSSI or taking any of the six UK species which are on the protected Red List. Most of the legislation was set

up to combat ‘collectors’, with the emphasis on ‘buying or offering for sale’, and is easy enough to navigate around.

Across the country, BC Branches have been responsible for the spread of many rare species. As our knowledge increases, mostly regarding butterfly habitats, then conservation work becomes more effective. The majority of the work is creating the right habitat and encouraging the natural spread from meta populations. The Marsh Fritillary in the Lakes and Hampshire are examples, and the Duke of Burgundy in Middlesex and Kent are others. In Essex, providing the right habitat for the Heath Fritillary to ‘move onto’ is on going – and will always be.

The ‘releasers’ come at it from a different perspective. They identify a site and then release butterflies on it and hope for the best. That might read as a bit dismissive, but often it’s as crude as that, and inevitably is a ‘waste’ of butterflies and also, generally, many hours of people’s time, never mind distorting local



Chequered Skipper
Limenitis camilla

records, which in turn questions the validity of all our long term records.

Some species are naturally spreading successfully as a result of habitat and climate change. When something new turns up we can't be sure if it's natural or artificially induced. The natural spread is much more likely to be successful over the long term.

This year, in Essex, several Large Copper, one of the six species on the protected 'red list', were sighted on one of our transects. These were clearly released and had no chance of breeding or surviving as a colony. A brief search of this butterfly's requirements on the www shows that they will only survive in large areas of a specific habitat – which is no longer available here in Britain. Maybe they were released for other reasons, at a wedding or other celebration and flew until they were eventually spotted – whatever the reason – it's a fairly extreme example of illegal activity.

Such releases aren't always so clumsy.

In October 2020 a man named Martin White died from cancer. In one obituary he is described as a '*great naturalist*' but

many people in conservation circles knew of him as '*an attention seeking interloper doing more harm than good*'... his own words.

He had spent his life breeding and introducing butterflies to likely habitat, with some degree of success. He kept precise records (for his own use) and claims to have been entirely responsible for the spread of the Marbled White and Dingy Skipper across Nottinghamshire, especially the slag heaps, railway tracks and brownfield areas abandoned after mining ceased, and the county records show the butterflies have indeed spread across the county.... but the Marbled White, anyway, has also spread across Essex and Cambs without his help. He identified likely habitat through county plant records and Google Earth type maps.



His biggest success, he reveals, was his release of Marsh Fritillary in Lincs, 100 miles from the nearest natural site. The colony is still going (30 years on), but the local BC Branch has to manage the site, including picking up larva webs before mowing the meadows, which keeps the habitat suitable.

In his life time, Martin White bred and released 40 species onto what he believed to be suitable landscape, some more speculative than others. His



Marsh Fritillary
Euphydryas aurinia

“It (Marsh Fritillary) has only survived with that level of intensive care. No one is telling you that putting it into two small fields in Lincolnshire and gardening that for thirty years is a success story, because it isn’t. It’s a distraction from the real work of saving the Marsh Fritillary with habitat management where it’s still found” These are the words from Nigel Bourn, Butterfly Conservation’s director of science and policy.

solo attempt to reintroduce the Mazarine Blue last year failed.

Martin White was one of many ‘releasers or introductionists’. It’s difficult to learn very much from them when no records are published, even if they are kept, since so many of their activities are bordering on the illegal.

Their justification is, that it is sometimes very effective. The Adonis Blue is now to be found along Devil’s Dyke and we can only make an educated guess how it arrived there,

but ‘from a car window’ would most likely get top marks among a team of naturalists playing Family Fortunes. And therein lies the problem. Devil’s Dyke may well have been a suitable location for the butterfly since management work has been done along the banks, but it there was never a realistic possibility that this butterfly would find it ‘naturally’, and the argument clearly would be ‘What is the difference between a gravid female finding the site



Adonis Blue
Polyommatus bellargus

having randomly flown x no of miles and one taken there by car?’ Having settled there, many people are visiting and enjoying seeing this iconic species flying within our Branch area.

A species completely ripe for ‘introductions’ is the Black Hairstreak. It has been trapped in its geographic range across the East Midlands in no more than forty different

woods, partly as a result of its habitat being isolated, but more importantly, because it is known, even in large areas of appropriate habitat, to disperse at a speed of no more than about 100m

per year. The habitat is not just found in its historic range but is reasonably common across other areas of England, but impossible to find by such a sedentary species. A



Black Hairstreak
Satyrium pruni

Blackthorn, habitat of the Black Hairstreak



successful introduction by a school master in the 1950's in Surrey led Richard Lewington to observe that colonies there (in the 1970's) 'Held more Black Hairstreak than any other wood in Britain'. It was also 'found' near Brighton in Sussex in 2017, 'discovered' in Ditchling Common Country Park, where by all accounts, large numbers can be seen.

The Purple Emperor is also caught up in the discussion. According to an article published in the Guardian by Patrick Barkham (13th October 2020), two breeders released this species into numerous locations in the East of England, and this may have been a contributory factor in the spread of this butterfly across our two counties. Our own records don't necessarily tally with this, as we have definitely witnessed a 'West to East' spread, rather than the other way round. There are no clues where or how many releases were alleged to have taken place but the controversial aspect is that the butterflies came from Germany, rather than elsewhere in the UK.

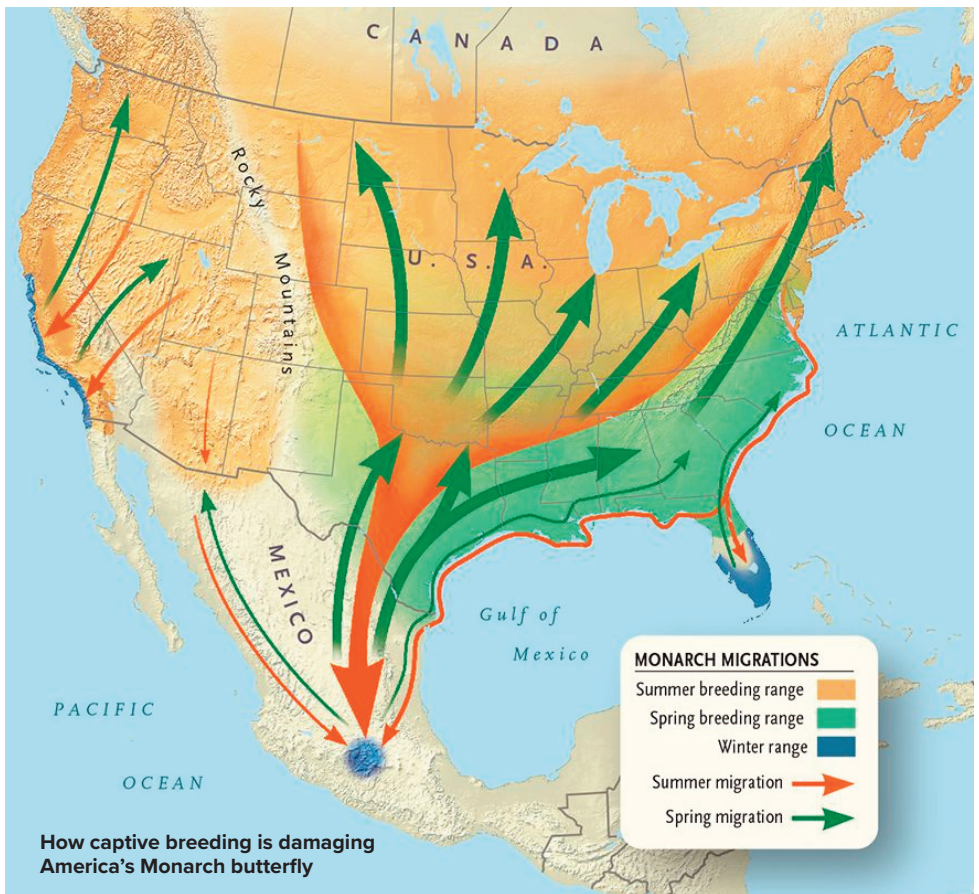


As a result, Butterfly Conservation's Nigel Bourne argues, ***"We can never be sure whether or not the Purple Emperor is responding to climate change, changing woodland management practices or whether people have been shoving them out the back of cars"***.

Bourne points out that ***"bringing in the species from abroad increases the possibility of pathogen spread, and breeding in captivity can change the genetics of the captives, adapting very quickly to life in a cage."***

In the US the Monarch butterfly migrates up both the east and west coasts of the country from Mexico every year, and many thousands of school children take part in captive breeding projects to boost the fast dwindling population.

However... studies show that, through continual breeding, and breeding different populations together, the commercial population has begun to lose its urge to migrate. The serious impact of this is that, should released butterflies breed with natural migrating butterflies, after they have been released, it may



well be that the offspring will not have the urge to migrate down to Mexico. The number of Monarch have fallen by 80% in the last 40 years.

(Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences in the United States of America. PNAS.)

Contemporary loss of migration in Monarch butterflies (16/7/2019).



Purple Emperors don't migrate, but the point is, commercial cage breeding can alter butterfly habits.

Some butterflies don't lend themselves to 'introductions' at all. The Grayling, in the UK as an example, is actually six sub-species, with some being quite different. The North Wales (Great Orme) colonies, for instance, fly two weeks earlier than others, and it could be very damaging for them if there was inappropriate captive breeding and releasing. This butterfly can make its own way around the country, and, indeed, even some of our smaller species have abilities to find suitable land as a result of high-flying. A fact that we well have underestimated over the years.



Following on from the high profile success of the 'Re-wilding' in Knepp, Sussex, (and by consequence, the very successful wildlife tourism business) which is being copied in many, many areas across the country, illegal or 'unofficial' releases are increasing, and its not just butterflies. Beavers were officially released into Devon rivers by Derek Gow, but by the time he did this there were already large breeding populations in Devon and in Scotland, all from unofficial releases. Add to this, the hundreds of Polecats released unofficially, glowworms, lizards, moths and all sorts of other fauna by 're-wilders', too impatient to wait for natural population movements to occur, or believing that this might never happen at all, but always in the full knowledge that once established, no one will remove an unexpected rarity. It has become a big business.

One of the founding aims of *Butterfly Conservation* was to 'to breed rare butterflies in captivity and where practicable, introduce them into the wild'. By the 1980's this had evolved into 'save species through habitat management'. Clearly, both sides of the argument have a point.

Field Trips 2021

Almost all our planned summer field trips took place, unlike the previous year which were all cancelled by Covid restrictions. Limits were set (at the start of the season at least) by the government on 'out-door events' at 30 people and I'm pleased to point out that almost all of them were full or almost so.

However, non of them had great weather, but despite this, plenty of butterflies were seen.

On a distinctly cold morning in May, Ian Watts led a group on **Roding Valley Nature Reserve** hoping to spot Green Hairstreak, which has been seen there 'occasionally' over the last few years. Although non were seen this year, several spring butterflies were spotted and Ian was quite relieved that it was considered 'a success' despite the reduced numbers of insects flying as a result of the poor weather.

Only a few days later on **Devil's Dyke**, Ian again led a group, hoping to see the Adonis Blue, at the same location which two broods had been seen the previous year. He arrived a little early, in perfect weather only to see the sun disappear for the rest of the day. A good and interesting day was enjoyed by everyone and Sharon Hearle, whose transect is Devil's Dyke, gave a short talk. Although no Adonis were seen there were a good number of Dingy Skipper and many other different grassland species. Ian went back several days later and saw 20+ Adonis Blue and as a 'by the way', he returned in August and saw several second brood Adonis, so maybe something can be rearranged and we'll be luckier with the weather – and butterfly 'timings', next season.

Epping Forest

All the woodland species were seen, that we might have expected ... except one. The Purple Emperor. The event was thrown into confusion by massive traffic chaos caused by the M11 being temporarily closed, but despite this, almost everyone got there sometime before the end. A 'follow up' the next week was arranged for those who could make it, and a dozen or so returned with Ian, but still no PE were seen. Ian says he'll try and find an alternative place next year, since we don't seem to be very lucky here.

Trumpington Meadow

Another full attendance was led around the reserve by Cambridgeshire

Recorder Ed Pollard. Small Blue and Marbled White were seen, the main 'quarry' for the day, along with many other grassland species. I received an email from one of the 'attenders' who commented that it had been a 'really enjoyable experience, informative and a pleasure to have been part of it'.



Ickenham Meadows, Middlesex

Ian was intending to lead a group to find the Brown Hairstreak (which we are convinced will shortly spread onto our Branch area), but days of poor weather caused him to cancel.

However, he did tell me that he did go there several days later and saw seven adults, so will aim to try and do the trip in 2022.

Canvey Island

Dave Chandler led a party around his transect, hoping to see, amongst other things, Clouded Yellow and Wall butterfly. Plenty of other wildlife was seen, as well as many of the grass species one might expect, but not the two 'targets'. We'll try this one again next year.

A big thank you to those who organised and led the walks, and to those members who come along.

Bryan Russell

Work Parties

We do not have dates for all our Work Parties this winter.

Ideally... one at **Brampton Wood** on 5th December (19th Reserve date) – at least two on **Devil's Dyke** organised by Vince Lea, vincelea@btinternet.com
We will email full details to everyone when we know them.

Two at **Hadleigh Wood** will be sometime in **November** and **January 2022**.
If you can help out on these, please contact Rob Smith, recorder@cambs-essex-Butterflies.org.uk

Please let Vince and Rob know if you are available.

Tales from the Dark Side

Nothing without moth traps



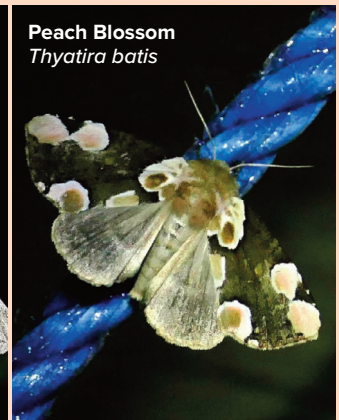
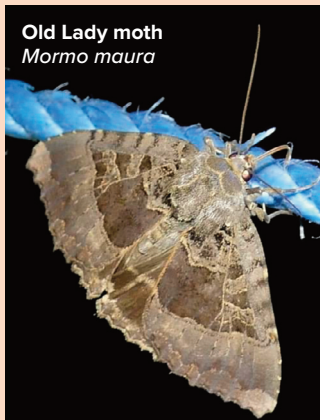
If you are interested in Moths, and start a list, you will initially have a year or two of ticking off the larger macro moths and you could create a graph of 'different species per week' that will look fairly vertical. This line will continue up if you start to tackle the 'micros' but quite quickly the majority of your catch will be from your 'lifetime' or garden list and the graph line will flatten off.

A second light trap, or brighter bulb may be useful, but for a bigger jump it might be well worth employing some of the different methods to find moths, which don't employ lights.

There are day flying moths of course (many more than there are butterflies) which will rarely be seen near a moth trap and a good number of moths are actually quite resistant to the distractions (or attraction) of bright lights.

The equivalent before 'light traps' was 'Sugaring' or 'wine-roping'. This was when large amounts of sugar was dissolved to create a liquid with the viscosity similar to treacle and painted on trees, walls or whatever other surface seemed to be in the right place. Moths are attracted to this, especially more Autumnal moths such as those in the 'Underwing' family, which might naturally be drawn to fruit rather than flowers for their food. A modern twist to this method would be to add wine ... so the attracted moths don't fly off.

This method has mostly gone out of fashion these days but it must be remembered that before moth traps, this was one of the primary methods of catching moths. My piece of practical advice is to make sure you do the



Vincent Oates described how it's done: '*I soak the rope in a wine and sugar solution and then string it between a post and a tree ... don't wear your best clothes for this job*'. '*First up*', he says, '*not surprisingly, was an Old Lady, followed by a Red Underwing, then a Peach Blossom. I love it when a plan comes together*'.

Thank you for your photographs, Vincent.

'painting' at a comfortable height ... eye level, not just above the ground. One method that is far more recent is the use of Pheromones and pheromone traps. The scent of the female moth is recreated and this attracts males, often from considerable distances.

It was first developed commercially as a way of targeting pest species in a very specific way, but has found its way into the arsenal of hobbyists because it allows so many extra species to be caught. Although they were developed as 'species specific' many are known to attract a greater number of moths than the ones which they were designed for, and when purchased, have an extended list of moths which they might attract – for example, the **Plumbfruit Tortrix** (*Graphalita funebrlla*), **Plum Fruit Moth** (*Grapholita funebrana*) pheromone will may attract up to ten other species.

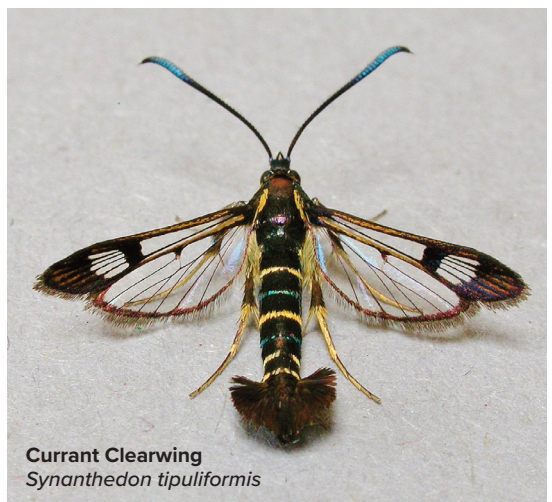
Last year, one keen moth trapper in my parish added 40 species to his extensive list (900+) of garden moths through their use, the majority being micros and a handful of these are recorded as the only/first Essex sighting. This underlines the fact that there may be many more moths, not attracted to light traps which are 'hiding in plain sight' or are far more widespread than the 'light trap' records might indicate.

Pheromone traps for Clearwing and other moths



Pheromones might well create the same increase in ‘distribution knowledge’ as happened when Mercury Vapour bulbs became more widespread many years ago.

The day-flying Clearwing family are easily drawn to these lures, the Currant and Raspberry Clearwings – pests in some locations – were thought to be rare in Essex, but use of pheromones indicate they are in fact widespread moths. A ‘spin-off’ from these traps is the fact that flight times can be more accurately examined and it is interesting that many moths have very distinct flight periods of only a few hours. The Hornet



Currant Clearwing
Synanthedon tipuliformis

Clearwing is rarely seen after 10am – unless disturbed – the Raspberry Clearwing is flying only for a few hours in late afternoon, while the Red-belted is between 11am and 2pm.

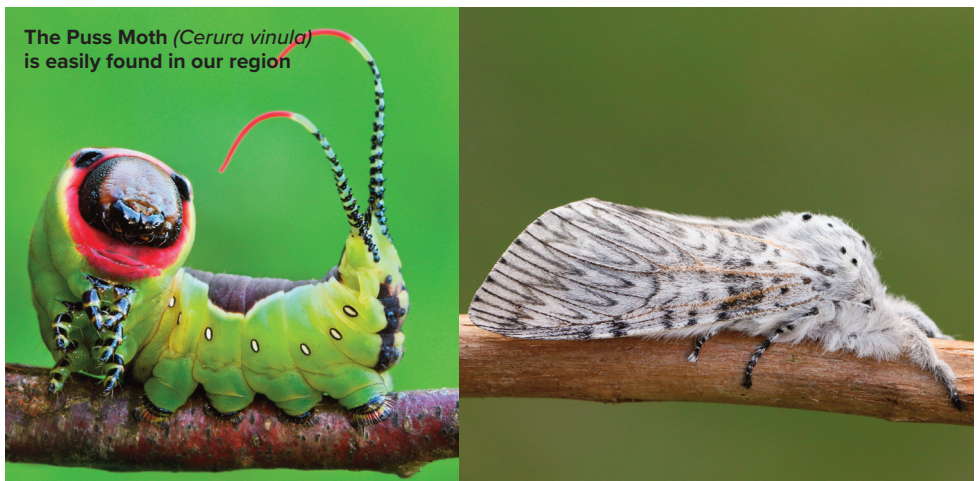
Many 'County firsts' are being reported through pheromone lures, and many moths are being found to be more common than previously believed.

Pheromone trapping has no limit – apart from human enthusiasm.

The effectiveness of pheromones has caused controversy...

There have been accusations, made publicly, that the use of pheromones attracts insects from many miles away and this is distorting the natural order and breeding activities of some species. Of course the largest moths are more vulnerable to this, as they can fly further in the first place but in an unscientific trial, one moth-trapper caught around 30 Emperor moths (by pheromone lure) this year, between April and the first week in June. He carefully marked them in a distinct way and took them to a release site less than one kilometre away, east from his house, so the prevailing wind might carry the pheromone scent ... not a single moth returned. It seems that the negative impact of this hobby might well be exaggerated.

Other successful methods include visiting areas of high attraction to moths. In the spring this might mean visiting large areas of flowering Sallow bushes, and in the autumn Ivy is known as a powerful attractor. Of course, a walk around the garden with a bright torch and net will do the same, and in fact a long



country walk in the dark with a torch is likely to net more moths than leaving the moth trap light on for 8 hours.

There are many species where the female is flightless ... they merely climb a short distance up the nearest tree and attract males to them. Many hundreds are sometimes seen to be applying for the same job! (Winter Moth, Pale Brindled Beauty, Mottled Umber, Spring Usher as a starter).

‘Early Stage’ – ie finding eggs, caterpillars or pupae - is another way that the species count can be accelerated. The Puss moth is very much a ‘refusnik’

when it comes to going into moth traps. Most are discovered in the morning at least a couple of meters away from the bulb, but they are a widespread moth and their eggs are laid singly on the outer twigs of Sallow bushes. It doesn’t take long to find them by physically looking under branches. They are large and conspicuous.

Carefully examining the leaves of bushes, trees and shrubs will often reveal the distinctive shape left by hungry caterpillars and with a bit of careful looking, it doesn’t take very long to find what is eating them.

‘Beating’ was an old fashioned, if significantly cruder, method of collecting specimens and caterpillars – giving the branch of a tree a good



‘shove’ or bashing them so caterpillars fall onto a sheet spread on the ground. I remember finding White Letter Hairstreak caterpillars 40 odd years ago on the branches of Wych Elm trees, using this method.

Taking an interest in ‘leaf-miners’ will add a hundred, if not more, to your score as there are three main families of ‘mining’ moth, with over 200-300 species between them.



Some caterpillars live under bark, some eat tree/flower buds or catkins (the majority of Pugs), moths that eat forest ‘litter’ (Longhorns), Bee moths, Wax moths, moths that eat animal hair and waste (commonly found in old birds nests), sub-aqua (China Marks), plant stems, and there are many specialising in reed bed plants. Tortrix and Plumes are found in thistle and woundwort and dead wood, where the giant caterpillars of the Goat moth can chew away inside trees for up to six years. Checking under old fungi for signs of frass and taking samples will add a few more overlooked moths, but of course, it doesn’t matter how hard you look, there will always be a six year old who asks “what’s this?” before opening his hands to show you some rarity he found randomly in the least expected place.

Details of AGM

Only an email reminder will be sent

Join our Zoom AGM – 16th November 2021 ... 7pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88065302305?pwd=MURYaUdqV3BReHEvZkxrRnlPcjFVZz09>
Meeting ID **88065302305** Passcode. **893329**

Details will be on our Facebook page (for easier cut and paste purposes) 😊

Talks by Fiona Bell on Grizzled Skipper – and why it is apparently ‘stuck’ in the south, despite climate changes which should have allowed northern expansion.

An update on the Re-introduction attempt of the English Chequered Skipper.

Branch Committee

Chairman:	Mike Gittos	Tel 01223 833345	mrmikeygittos@hotmail.com
Treasurer:	Sarah Von Blumenthal	sarah.vonblumenthal@gmail.com	
Secretary:	Andrea Maclure	ajmaclure19@gmail.com	
Committee:	David Chandler	david@mvirtual.net	
	Ian Watts	ian@ianwatts.co.uk	
	Guy Manners	guy@grmanners.com	
Conservation Officer:	Vince Lea	vincelea@btinternet.com Tel 01223 263962	
Recorders –			
Essex:	Rob Smith	Tel 01277 262460	recorder@cambs-essex-butterflies.org.uk
Cambs:	Ed Pollard	recorder@cambs-essex-butterflies.org.uk	
Membership Secretary:	social@cambs-essex-butterflies.org.uk		
Editor:	Bryan Russell	newsletter@cambs-essex-butterflies.org.uk	
Branch email:	info@cambs-essex-butterflies.org.uk		
Website:	www.cambs-essex-butterflies.org.uk		

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Butterfly Conservation is a national charity with over 40,000 members and clear aims.

- 1) Recover threatened butterflies and moths
- 2) Increase the numbers of widespread species
- 3) Inspire people to understand and deliver species conservation
- 4) Promote international conservation actions.

In addition to this, it manages 30 separate sites around the country, home to some of our rarest species. All the actions and activities of Butterfly Conservation ultimately support the delivery of these core aims.

www.butterfly-conservation.org

Butterfly Conservation

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VAT No 565 9070 16



Garden Tiger Moths

These iconic moths are our largest aposematic species, but their bold warning colours are only one line of defence against predators. Eggs are laid on a variety of host plants that produce pyrrolizidine alkaloids which are retained in the body of the caterpillar, making them, effectively, poisonous. The caterpillars, known by many people as ‘Woolly Bears’ have long hairs which also act as a deterrent to almost all predators with one notable exception being cuckoos, who are known to seek out the caterpillars, coping with both their toxins and the hairs.

Tiger Moths are part of a large world wide family and researchers in the US have established that they not only have the effective defences described above, but they are the only family of moths to have developed a defence to Bats exceptionally sophisticated auditory systems. They can detect bat echolocation calls at a distance greater than the bats can ‘see’ them and initiate defensive flight manoeuvres. They can also emit a series of ultrasonic clicks which further confuse bats.

They also confuse Moth trappers by flying very late (or early in the morning, depending how you look at it).

This was once one of our most common larger moths but is now found mostly towards the coast and along the Thames estuary. With the very fast spread of Jersey Tiger moths across the country I suspect that there is every chance that Garden Tiger moths might well recover their geographic spread, if not quite the numbers from previous years.