Main Work Party Reports

May 12 - Jary's Meadow - Bramble area in east meadow and the path network raked and cleared to fire sites and spoil heaps.

May 19 - Walsham Fen - Brush cutter used to cut further into pond and vegetation close to boardwalk not cut by mower, also a pathway to a spoil heap in middle of fen. All cut vegetation raked and cleared to fire sites and spoil heaps.

Jun 02 - Buckenham Woods - Area around steps mown also both sides of the main path. Steep slope by fire site - sycamore saplings cut using brush cutter. Cleared vegetation around newly planted trees beside east path, using hand hook. Some cut vegetation raked and cleared to fire site and spoil heaps.

Jun 16 - Lingwood Church - Conservation area raked and cleared. Cut vegetation taken in trailer to Mrs Dickinsons in Lingwood for horses.

Additional Work

May 04 - Howes Meadow - East boundary - cut and cleared path along side newly planted trees into corner and around spoil heap. North boundary path into NW corner and short section along N side of dyke/ stream from the bridge to E boundary end.

May 10 - Jary's Meadow - East meadow bramble area and path network mown.

May 18 - Walsham Fen - Both sides of boardwalk and area around pond mown.

Jary's Meadow - West meadow both fire sites burnt.

May 24/25/26 - Howes Meadow - Cutting north & south of stream/ dyke from E boundary to fire site on N side

May 31 - Howes Meadow - Cleared vegetation cut on 24/25/26th

Jun 11 - Lingwood Church - conservation area mown. Plus **Howes Meadow** - Main N area and path at N & W side mown. Strimmed around newly planted shrubs.

Jun 19 - Howes Meadow - Main N area 80% of cut vegetation cleared to W fire site area. This was carried out by Great Yarmouth Green Gym.

Jun 21 - Buckenham Woods - Area by steps - raked and cleared cut vegetation not completed on Jun 02 to fire site. All vegetation at fire site burnt.

Jun 23 - Howes Meadow - Continued raking and clearing cut vegetation to pile on N side by path fire site end.

Jun 25 - Hemblington Church - Conservation area mown.

BADCOG NEWS.

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President: Richard Hobbs

Chairman: Ernest Hoyos, Sunny Cottage,
Buckenham Woods, Lingwood
Norwich NR13 4HG.
Tel 01603 712913

Make Room for Nettles (Urtica dioica)

Francis Milliken

A small isolated patch of nettles regularly warmed by the sun is ideal for when peacock and small tortoiseshell butterflies become active on a warm March day. Their eggs are laid in batches on the underside of leaves whilst red admiral and comma butterflies lay their eggs singly on the upper surface of the leaf. The nettle patch can be controlled by pulling /forking out the travelling underground rhizomes and by pulling out any nettles which have grown from seed. The nettle produces separate male and female plants; hence the species name dioica which comes from the Greek meaning two houses.

Several species of moth lay their eggs only on nettle and its close relatives – the snout moth, the nettle tap, the burnished brass and two species of spectacle moth. Various others include the woolly bear caterpillar of the garden tiger moth can often be seen on nettles.

Amongst the insect life are leaf hoppers, froghoppers, aphids, flies and beetles. Some suck the sap whilst others devour the plant tissues from within, creating tunnels in between the upper and lower leaf surfaces. The froghopper larvae produce the familiar cuckoo-spit whilst the nettle midge makes small glossy brown galls on the veins of the leaf and sometimes on the flower stems. Various small birds including warblers nest within the nettle bed, no doubt benefitting from the abundance of insect life to feed upon.

Nettles have and have had many uses – different cloths have been made from the nettle stems and Bonze Age bones have been found wrapped within them. Continues over page.....

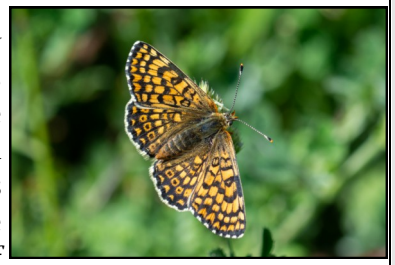
The whole plant is eaten in hay by cattle, the seeds fatten poultry and boiled nettles are fed to pigs. Herbally the leaves and seeds are used mainly as infusions in the treatment of asthma and drunk as a tea or beer to relieve rheumatic pains. Finally, young nettle tops can be boiled and eaten like spinach, for example in soups and quiches.

Plenty of reasons, therefore, to love your nettles.

South coast butterflies

Matthew McKie

Between the months of September and May, I spend most of my time living and studying at the University of Portsmouth. Being located on the south coast of England, it is superbly situated within striking distance of the Isle of Wight, New Forest and the South Downs. Unfortunately, I have little time available to explore the surrounding countryside during my studies. It isn't until late-May, after finishing my exams, that I am free to explore the area. This year, with my parents, we made the most of the warm, sunny weather to try and see some of the UK's lesser known and rarer butterfly species over three days.



The first location was in the New Forest, at a site called Pignal Inclosure. This Forestry Commission owned area of pine woodland is a hotspot for the Pearl-bordered Fritillary, a butterfly whose distribution has declined massively since WWII due to the reduction in management and coppicing of woodlands. The butterfly requires large clearings within the woodland where its foodplant, common dog-violets, can grow. The long, wide rides within Pignal Inclosure are an ideal habitat for them, with lush vegetation and patches of bracken providing nectar sources and places to bask in the hot sunshine. We came across a small area of open scrubland with a population of about 20 individuals, many of which were mating and laying eggs on the leaf litter below the bracken, next to the dog violets. The butterflies are an unmistakable bright orange when resting, with a cryptic orange and white underside. It is a huge shame that these butterflies are now so restricted in their range, as they are such a wonderful small insect. This year's cold spring has had a bad impact on their numbers, with counts from the New Forest well down on last year.

Work Party Dates

All work parties start at 10:30am, finishing at 1.00pm.

14th July—Blofield Church

17th July—Blofield Church (G. Yarmouth Green Gym)

28th - July Walsham Fen

11th - August Howes Meadow

1st September - Jary's Meadow

15th September - Walsham Fen

29th September— Buckenham woods

A good turnout at our two CWS is requested as there is always plenty to do!

You are welcome to help out on days above with the Green Gym which start at 13.30.

Annual Orchid Counts.

Preliminary Report.

The orchid count at Howes Meadow took place on Monday 25th June with a good turn out of 10 members. Here, to try and get on top of the management, we have already cut and cleared the north side of the meadow before the orchid count, so this should be taken in consideration when looking at the numbers. The total numbers this year were 1388 (compared to 2556 in 2017). Looking at the areas individually, the SW section of the meadow numbers were 1270 (1822) and the SE section 118 (609). This indicates the difference in the vegetation in these sections, with the SE section becoming more like the north side, with thick, 6' high reeds with bindweed. This makes any counting of orchids almost impossible. However, on a positive note, we did find 6 marsh helleborine!

At Walsham Fen, on Friday 29th, we had a turnout of 7. Here the vegetation was more dense and higher than any previous count making it difficult to see some of the orchids low down in the vegetation. Also, many had already 'gone over' and could easily be missed. Despite this, numbers were healthier this year with 605 compared to 326 last year. We also counted 27 in Jarys Meadow again a year on year increase. Tony Mc

Lingwood Pond & Frogs
Tony McKie

For a number of years now I have been doing my bit to help the population of frogs at Lingwood Pond. As you will be aware, the pond is surrounded by roads. This makes the annual frog migration for spawning from the surrounding gardens to the pond a perilous journey. On a bad night, many would be killed by passing cars and I would see the carnage the next morning. Therefore I decided to do something about this and in 2013 started doing a frog patrol. I would normal do a patrol on a damp, mild evening, just as it got dark by picking up any frogs in, or attempting to cross the road, and placing them in a bucket. Once I had completed a circuit of the pond, I would carefully empty the bucket into the pond. This year, over 3 evenings, I rescued 62 frogs and recorded 17 fatalities. It was very rewarding to see much more frog spawn in the pond this year than we have even seen before, with much of it surviving the 'Beast from the East'. Interestingly, the decline in the frog population was recently making the news reports on TV!

A footnote to the item on sparrows in the previous newsletter.

In Blofield the churchwarden's accounts for 1820 showed that William Ellis was paid 14/9d for catching 56 dozen sparrows. In 1824 he caught 80 dozen sparrows and was paid £1. By 1824 the number increased to 124.5 dozen @ 4d each which earned him £2 1s 6d.

Why were the churchwardens of Blofield paying someone to catch sparrows in the early 19th century? It may be they were supporting the efforts of local farmers to control what was seen as a common pest.

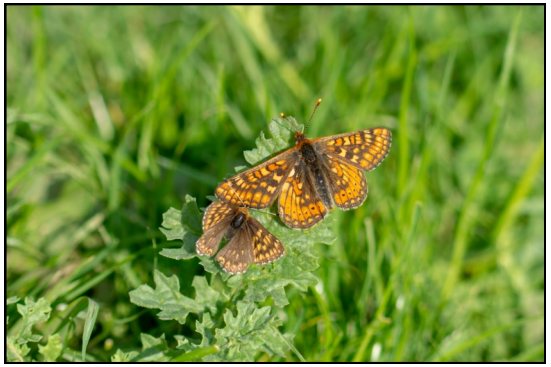
A sparrow club for farmers in Blofield, Hemblington, South Walsham, Ranworth, Woodbastick, Salhouse and Little Plumstead used to meet at the Brick Kilns pub in Plumstead. In the early 20th century the farming member paid people fourpence for a dozen dead sparrows. Unfledged sparrows and eggs commanded tuppence a dozen.

Before modern pesticides and fertilisers there were far more sparrows than there are now and they nibbled at the crops!

The following day we headed over to the Isle of Wight, first visiting the RSPB reserve at Brading marshes. It was here, along a small shaded footpath that I witnessed a chase between a stoat and a rabbit. The stoat ran straight towards me, seeming oblivious of my presence, and then suddenly stopped about 5 meters in front of me dropping a baby rabbit from its mouth. Surprisingly the stoat didn't return for its meal, am I really that scary? From here we drove down to the south-east coast of the island to the famous landslip that occurred during the 19th century. This is now a SSSI, with the undercliffs providing a habitat for one of the UK's rarest butterflies, the Glanville Fritillary. Although common on the continent, this attractive butterfly literally hangs on to the south of the Isle of Wight. The stretch of cliff-face between the village of Bonchurch and town of Ventnor is one of the only sites in the country for this species. The caterpillar needs large amounts of fresh growth of plantain, which is only found where landslides and erosion regularly occur. Even though this species is very rare and heavily protected, it can be found in large numbers where conditions are right. We found over 100 individuals feeding and basking along the base of this hot, south-facing cliff. They were feeding on the large patches of Pink Valerian along with numerous Dingy Skippers, hundreds of Common Blues and our first Painted Lady of the year.

We spent our final day on the south downs, at Butser Hill SSSI. The large horse-shoe shaped 'bowl' to the west of the hill is one of the best sites for butterflies I've visited in the UK. It is sheltered from the wind and a good sun trap. Species such as Dingy and Grizzled Skippers, which are rare in Norfolk, are found in their hundreds here, along with a large population of Small Heath and Green Hairstreak. The star attraction though is the rapidly declining Duke of Burgundy. This is a beautiful, small butterfly, similar in appearance to a fritillary. It is however, Europe's only example of the Metalmark family. It is a very fussy butterfly, needing short calcareous grassland on north or west facing slopes, which isn't overgrazed so its foodplant cowslips can grow tall. This fussiness has lead to the butterfly becoming a very rare sight in this country.

At Butser Hill, the colony is thriving, and we saw at least 100 individuals. The biggest surprise of the day was the discovery of a freshly emerged Marsh Fritillary. Again, this is another rare species in the UK which has suffered a massive decline. It is thought our sighting is a first for this location. I think the Marsh Fritillary is the most attractive butterfly found in the UK, and it was a real pleasure to see it gliding around amongst the Duke of Burgundy's. One Duke of Burgundy even attempted to mate with the Marsh Fritillary, a sight that few have probably ever witnessed.



Global Warming - The Reality

At the March meeting of Broadland tree wardens we watched a remarkable film called "Chasing Ice". It was about the vision of an American, James Balog, to demonstrate the effects of global warming using his profession of photography. After becoming convinced of the reality of climate change and its threat to the earth's ecosystem he decided to set up a programme to demonstrate and categorize it by recording the behaviour of glaciers.

He calls ice, the canary in the global coal mine. It is accepted that 95% of glaciers outside Antarctica are retreating. As these ancient ice sheets melt their waters swell the oceans.

To monitor this he installed 33 time lapse cameras in various locations, powered by solar panels and recording every 5 to 60 minutes. These cameras were on 16 glaciers in Greenland, Iceland, Alaska, The Rockies. In addition periodic surveys totalling 1000days were carried out in British Columbia, The Alps and Bolivia.

The 5 year project employed 30 people and took 32 expeditions to monitor the sites. Cameras were mounted on fixtures bored into rock or ice. The first batch of cameras were unreliable and the whole system had to be redesigned and rebuilt to be robust enough for the extreme conditions.

When presented in 2009 the resulting pictures revealed a dramatic situation on a vast scale. Glaciers were retreating and shrinking at a rapid rate. In one case in 3 years 295 London buses could be lined up in the distance from the previous to the current end. The landscape changed as new vistas appeared that were previously under ice. Perhaps the most dramatic pictures were those of the Greenland ice sheet calving huge icebergs which stretched down 2000 feet below the sea. One massive calving that was witnessed and filmed revealed a block a mile deep and 3 miles wide into which you could fit 3,000 Capitol buildings. It is the scale of change that is most astonishing.
He says the earth is having a fever.

The temperature has risen on average 0.75C in the past 100 years and continues to rise. Carbon dioxide levels at 385ppm are higher than they have been in the past 400,000 years where the maximum from ice cores has been measured at 280ppm.
James Balog's mission is to present this information and change peoples perception to this being an urgent problem which must be tackled before it spirals out of control.
He presented these findings at Oxford and a I would recommend a 20 minute film of this which can be viewed at:-

www.ted.com/talks/james.balog_time_lapse_proof_of_extreme_ice_loss

Postscript:- An article in the journal Nature Geoscience reveals that between 2010 and 2016 1,463 sq km of underwater ice was melted by warm currents from the base of the Antarctic ice sheet. This corresponds to the size of Greater London.