

## Better late than never – Turvey Butterflies 2013

So far we have had at least 23 species of butterfly species emerging or passing through locally with some notable absences from previous years and at least one welcome addition.

The cold weather at the beginning of the year meant that the only butterfly seen before April was a male Brimstone on 5<sup>th</sup> March. Not until 14<sup>th</sup> April was it warm enough again to encourage another one out together with two Peacock butterflies and a Comma. In most other years several other species are flying by this time including Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Speckled Wood, Holly Blue and Small and Green-veined Whites.

The first Small Tortoiseshells didn't appear this year until 20<sup>th</sup> April but have had a better showing since than for several years albeit still in very small numbers. The first White was seen on 22<sup>nd</sup> April and the first identified Green-veined White on 29<sup>th</sup> followed by five male Orange Tips on 1<sup>st</sup> May and a Small White on 18<sup>th</sup>. Orange Tips showed well throughout the rest of the Spring and both Small and Green-veined Whites have done very well in July and August. This was also true of the Large White, the first of which wasn't seen until 25<sup>th</sup> May. Fortunately, both Small and Large Whites were too late to do too much damage to the cabbages!

Speckled Wood also emerged much later than usual on 25<sup>th</sup> May. Holly Blue have been scarce this year with the first possibly on 2<sup>nd</sup> May and the only other so far on 27<sup>th</sup>. But this is a butterfly regularly subject to peaks and troughs.

Things really began to take off on 29<sup>th</sup> June when the first Large Skippers and Meadow Browns appeared. On the next day at least eight species were flying including the first Ringlet and Common Blue. Numbers and variety steadily increased as the weather warmed throughout July with an especially good showing of the browns, the whites and Peacocks. Red Admirals and Painted Ladies were surprisingly scarce with only two sightings of the former and one of the latter. Gatekeeper and Small Skipper appeared on cue on 11<sup>th</sup> July.

By late July, as the temperature hit 92 degrees Fahrenheit in Bedford and the Marjoram came into flower we were regularly getting between ten and fourteen species in the garden including the first Small Coppers and a Brown Argus, and even a Clouded Yellow on 1<sup>st</sup>

August, the first for over twenty years. Things slowed down in August with only Small Heath as an additional species on 15th. The place to be was on the site of the old silos at Station End where dozens of Common Blue were to be seen as well as another Clouded Yellow on 22<sup>nd</sup> and a good range of other species.

So, we are at the tail end of the season now which began slowly but has seen some of the best numbers of butterflies for several years. Sadly, there is no room for complacency as the general trend is still downwards.

Br. John