

# *Fragments of Flight*

Creature Conserve Mentorship Showcase  
March 2025  
Meg Gorman

*Capturing* lives of British butterflies in their specific ecosystems

*Transforming* historical lepidoptera drawers into modern artworks

*Reflecting* 21st-century ecological challenges, including habitat decline and climate change

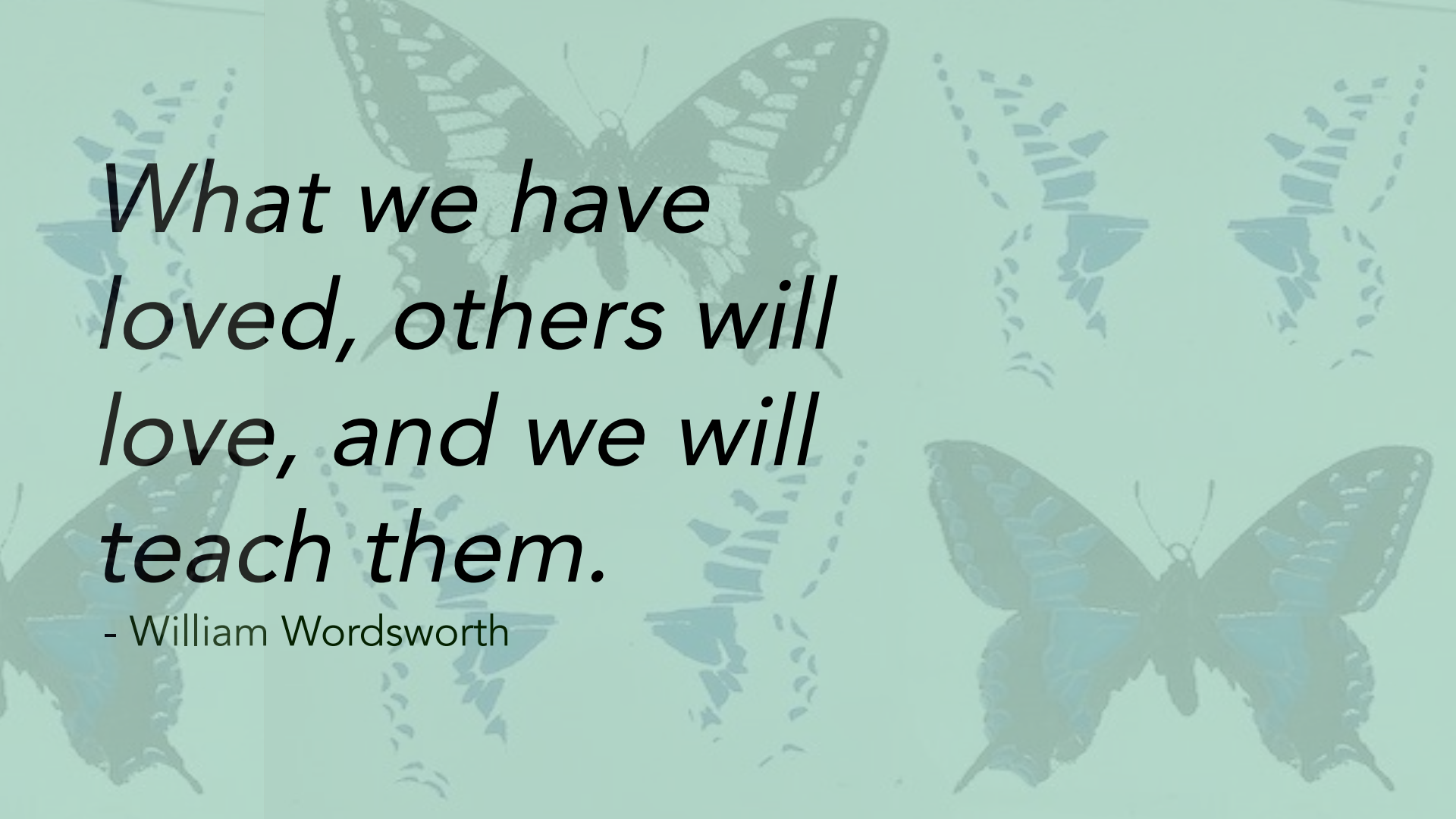
*Combining* layered printmaking techniques with data-driven narratives

*Describing* how their ecosystems need to provide butterflies with support across all four parts of the insects' life

*Inviting* audiences to see butterflies not merely as aesthetic wonders but as vital indicators of environmental health

*Inspiring* curiosity, action, and a renewed appreciation for the fragile ecosystems butterflies call home

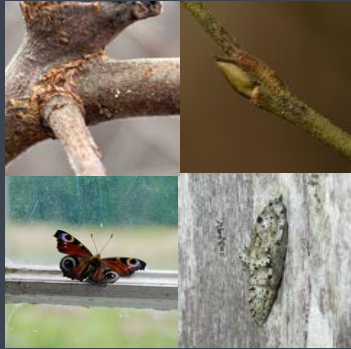




*What we have  
loved, others will  
love, and we will  
teach them.*

- William Wordsworth

## Winter



1. Brown Hairstreak eggs
2. Purple Emperor caterpillars
3. Peacock adults
4. Large white chrysalis
5. Disruptor: Large Copper (extinct)

## Spring



6. Green Hairstreak adult
7. Duke of Burgundy adult
8. Small Tortoiseshell adult
9. Common Blue adults
10. Disruptor: Foreign collections

## Autumn



18. Disruptor: Painted Lady (migrant)
19. Small Copper adults & eggs
20. Brimstone adults
21. Holly Blue adults

## Summer



11. Common Swallowtail adult
12. Disruptor: Large Blue adult (reintroduction)
13. Disruptor: Adonis Blue adult (variations)
14. Purple Emperor adult
15. Chalk Hill Blue adult
16. Gatekeeper adult
17. Disruptor: Fakes (not in historical drawer)

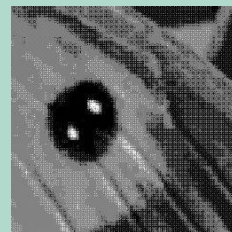
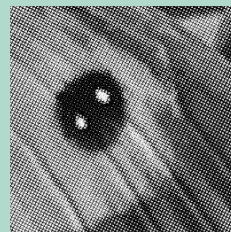


# Showing the data story

Historical specimens have both historical and modern data tags.



Hidden data layer in the print process



Declining

Stable

Increasing

# Tags and labels add data depth and context



Inside: scientific and ecological, including QR codes to reference Butterfly Conservation

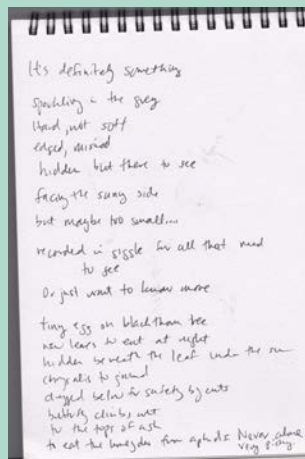
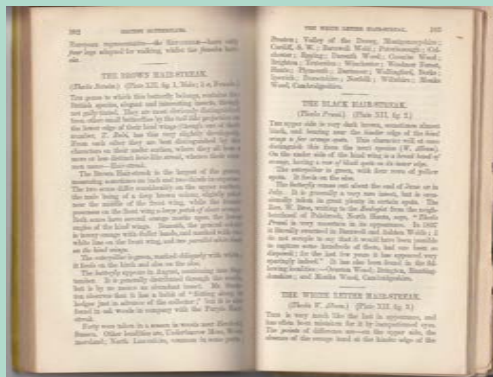


Outside front: story of the objects, such as date purchased the drawer, etc.

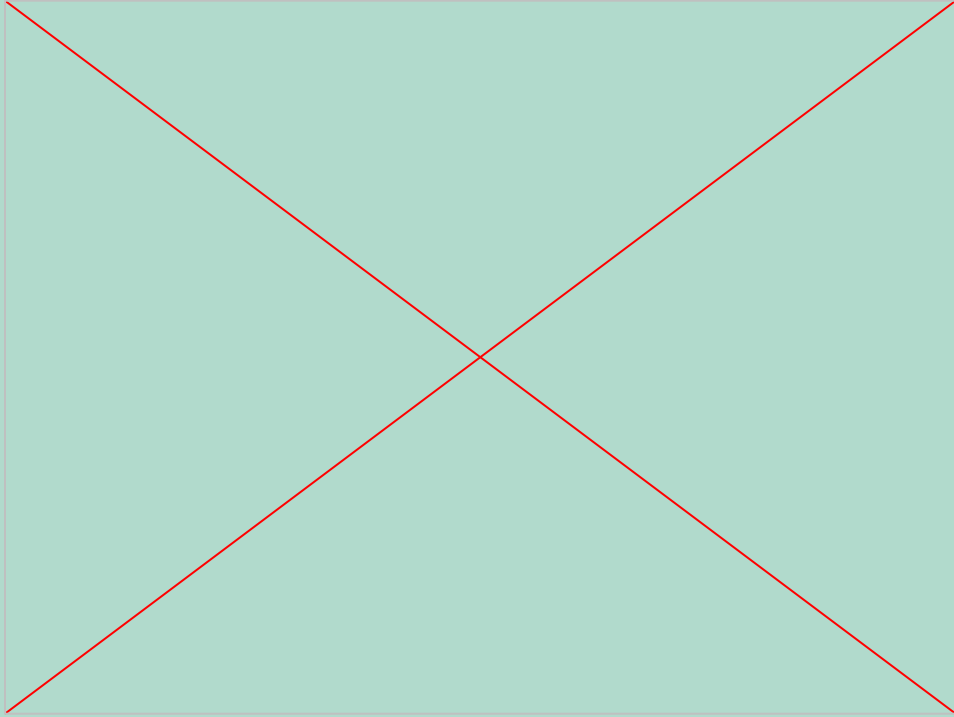


Gallery Label on the wall: using writings to incorporate my voice and perspective through field observations or works of fiction

## Definitely, maybe something - Brown Hairstreak egg hunt



# Collaging sources digitally to develop for printing



Considerations for print development

- Color
- Opacity
- Arrangement
- Texture and clarity



# *Thecla betulae*, 51.5313° N, 0.1570° W





# Egg spotting & rare hibernation sightings

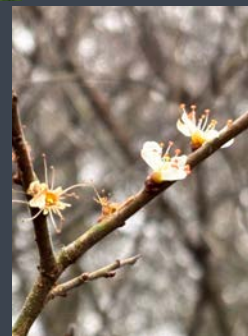
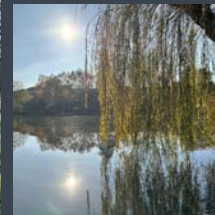
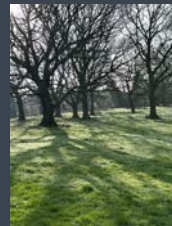
## Woodland & Hedgerows

Brimstone hibernating adults in ivy thickets

Peacock hibernating adults in woodlands

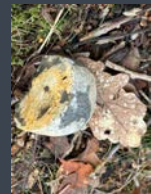
Brown Hairstreak egg spotting in blackthorn hedgerows

Purple Emperor caterpillars on willow



## Wetlands & Fens

Common Swallowtail chrysalis on reeds (even under water)



## Urban Parklands & Gardens

Brimstone hibernating adults in ivy thickets

Peacock hibernating adults in sheds

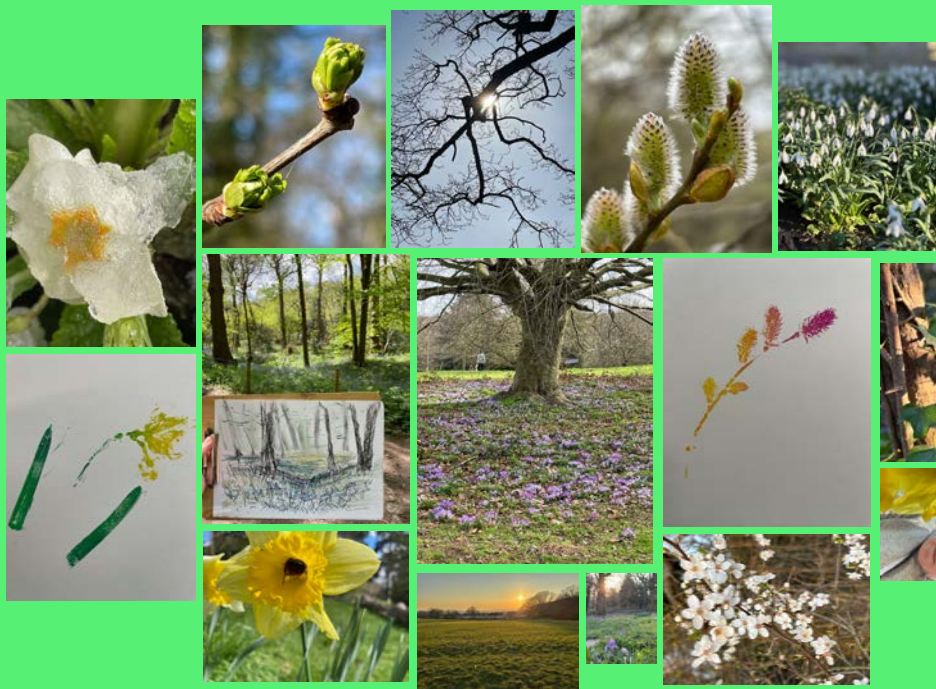
Red Admiral may be seen feeding on ivy flowers in warm spells

Holly Blue chrysalis in ivy

# Hibernators wake up, first broods emerge, egg-laying begins

## Woodland & Hedgerows

Brimstone adult  
Peacock adult  
Comma adult  
Orange-tip adult & egg-laying on  
cuckooflower & garlic mustard  
Holly Blue adult & egg-laying on holly buds  
Purple Emperor caterpillar to chrysalis



## Grasslands & Chalk Downs

Duke of Burgundy adult &  
egg-laying on cowslip leaves  
Grizzled Skipper adult, egg-laying &  
caterpillar feeding on agrimony &  
wild strawberry  
Dingy Skipper adult & egg-laying on  
bird's-foot trefoil  
Common Blue adults

## Wetlands & Fens

Green Hairstreak adult  
Small Copper first brood adults  
& egg-laying on sorrel

## Urban Parklands & Gardens

Brimstone adult  
Peacock adult  
Comma adult  
Small Tortoiseshell adult  
Orange-tip adult & egg-laying on  
cuckooflower & garlic mustard  
Holly Blue adult & egg-laying on holly  
buds

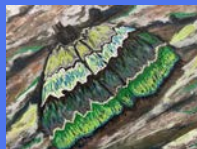
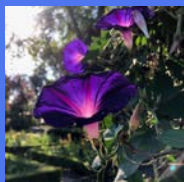
# Peak butterfly season with the long hours of sunshine

## Woodland & Hedgerows

Purple Emperor adult & egg-laying on  
sallow leaves

White Admiral adult & egg-laying on  
honeysuckle

Brown Hairstreak adult & egg-laying on  
blackthorn



## Grasslands & Chalk Downs

Chalk Hill Blue adult & egg-laying on  
horseshoe vetch

Silver-spotted Skipper adult & egg-laying  
on sheep's fescue grass

Adonis Blue adults



## Wetlands & Fens

Common Swallowtail adults & egg-laying  
on milk parsley



## Coastal & Migrant Butterflies

Clouded Yellow migrant adults  
arriving & egg-laying on clover &  
lucerne

Painted Lady migrant adults &  
egg-laying on thistles

## Urban Parklands & Gardens

Holly Blue second brood adults on  
wing

Speckled Wood adults

Red Admiral adults

Meadow Brown adults

Gatekeeper adults

## Healthland

Greyling adults

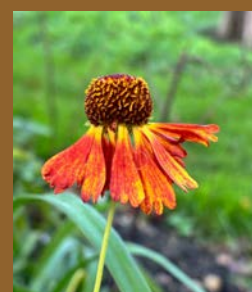
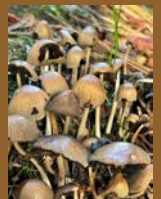
Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary  
adults



# Last bursts with some second broods, final egg-laying, migration, and hibernation prep

## Woodland & Hedgerows

Brown Hairstreak eggs on blackthorn  
Red Admiral with some adults  
overwintering instead of migrating



## Grasslands & Chalk Downs

Small Copper third generation  
adults & eggs  
Wall Brown last brood adults flying  
Meadow Brown adult



## Coastal & Migrant Butterflies

Clouded Yellow last migrants before  
winter  
Painted Lady final generation before  
migration

## Urban Parklands & Gardens

Red Admiral adults feeding on ivy  
flowers before hibernation  
Speckled Wood last generation still  
flying in warm areas  
Small Copper third generation adults  
& eggs overwintering  
Small Tortoiseshell adults laying  
eggs in nettles

# Six disruptor stories broaden time horizon



## Extinction

With the decline of wetland habitat (the fens), the Large Copper disappeared from the UK in 1851



## Variations

Victorian collectors were obsessed with the variations of butterflies like the Adonis Blue and would compete to search them out

## Foreign Collections

Collectors charged explorers to bring back specimens from their explorations of the natural world and these collections helped shape natural history



## Fakes

The obsession to have comprehensive collections led to people faking butterflies or variations and some examples survive into collections today



## Reintroduction

Large Blue adults were successfully reintroduced once the importance of the ant species to the caterpillar stage was understood



## Migrants

Species like Painted Ladies commonly make their way to and through the British Isles.

# Low light on the winter wall with only two adults



*Thecla betulae*,  
51.5313° N, 0.1570° W



*Disruptor: Extinction of  
the Large Copper*



*Purple Emperor caterpillar*



*Peacock adult*



*Large White chrysalis*



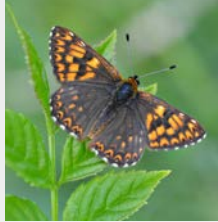
# Spring's bounty in the details of the habitats inside the drawers



*Green hairstreak  
adult*



*Small Tortoiseshell  
adult*



*Duke of Burgundy  
adult*



*Common Blue  
adult*

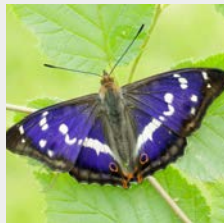


*Disruptor: Foreign  
collection*

# Bountiful butterflies of British summer time (as long as the weather holds!)



Common  
Swallowtail adult



Purple Emperor  
adult



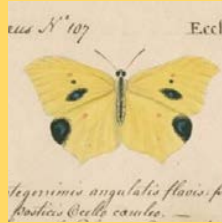
Chalk Hill Blue  
adult



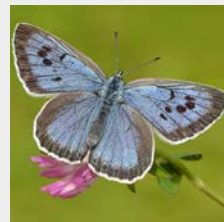
Disruptor: Adonis  
Blue adults  
(variations)



Gatekeeper adult



Disruptor:  
Historical Fake



Disruptor: Large  
Blue adult  
(reintroduction)

# Last adults linger, preparing to survive the winter



*Disruptor: Painted  
Lady adult  
(migrants)*



*Small Copper adult  
& eggs*



*Brimstone adult*

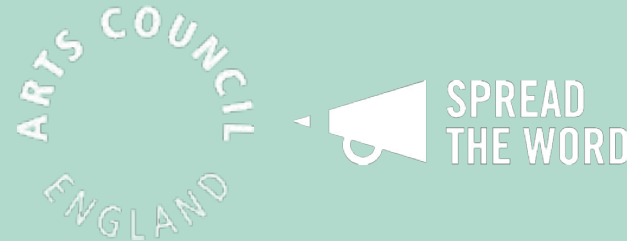


*Holly Blue adult  
and eggs*



# Outcomes so far...

- Success!
  - Article & artwork accepted by *Innately Science*  
(<https://www.innatelystscience.com/store/p/issue4digital>)
- Learning opportunities
  - Grant application
  - Residency application
  - Workshop application



# Planning butterfly adventures in the landscape

[Interactive map](#) created to track all the potential butterflying locations for my target species, seasons ordered from light (yellow) to dark (black) with local spots in purple



# Project plan & next steps

- Butterfly adventures across the UK to inform the final version of the drawers
- Apply for project funding

April - May	June - August	September - October	November - December
<p>Spring butterfly adventures (yellow and green stars)</p> <p>Update project plan and submit for grant funding as a project</p>	<p>High summer butterfly adventures (orange and red stars)</p> <p>Approach researchers for archival visits in the fall</p>	<p>Autumnal butterfly adventures (dark red stars)</p> <p>Add in archival visits</p>	<p>Rare winter butterflying (black stars)</p> <p>Start drawer development and refinement</p>



# Thank you!

Creature Conserve  
Big City Butterflies & Butterfly  
Conservation

My mentor Alex Gaidis & all my friends  
and family here today

## Acknowledgments & References

### Websites

<https://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/taxonomy.php>

<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=784876317011673&set=a.380067744159201>

<https://butterfly-conservation.org/uk-butterflies/a-to-z>

<https://morethanadodo.com/2021/04/01/fake-butterfly-papilio-eclipsis/>

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/our-science/services/collections/entomology/lepidoptera.html>

### Photo credits

Purple Emperor © Ben Greenaway

Peacock © Johannes Weckström

Large White © Vince Massimo

Large Copper, Green Hairstreak, Brimstone © Tamás Nestor

Painted Lady, Small Tortoiseshell, Swallowtail, Purple Emperor, Chalk Hill Blue,

Holly Blue © Iain H Leach

Duke of Burgundy © Andrew Cooper

Small Copper © Bob Eade

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