

# Scarlet malachite beetle translocation trial



Ian Hughes

Lifeforms

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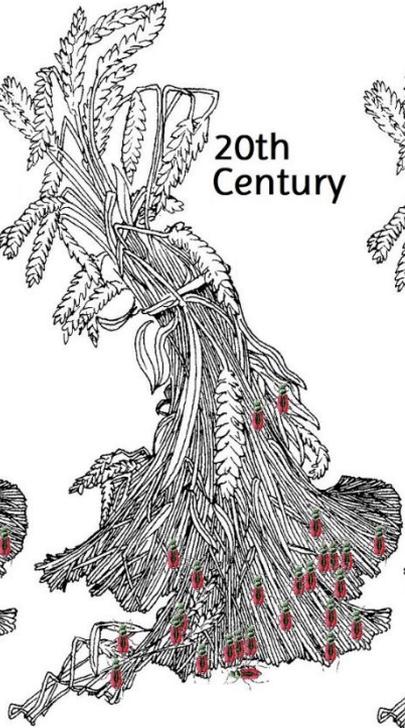
Pre-1900

20th  
Century

1999

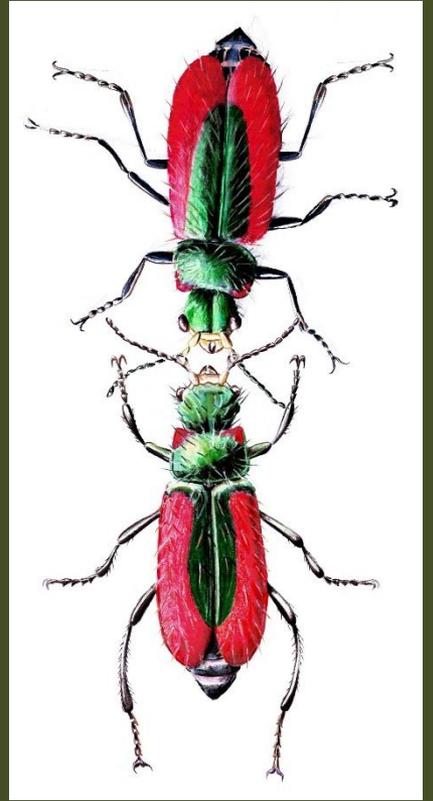
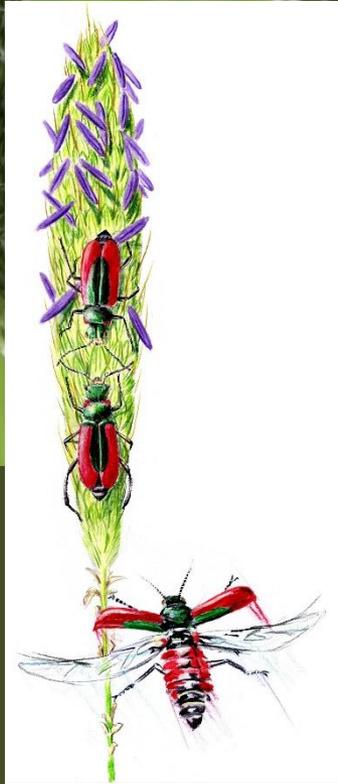
2013

2022



2024

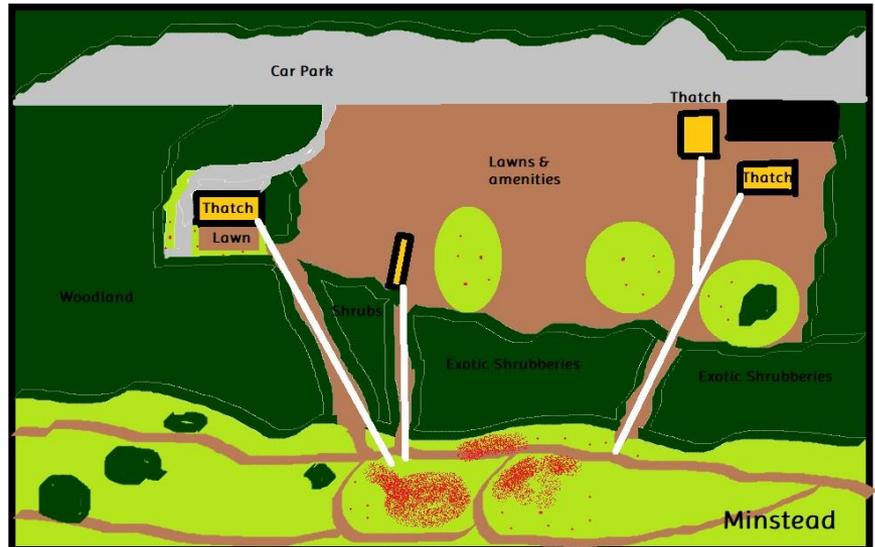
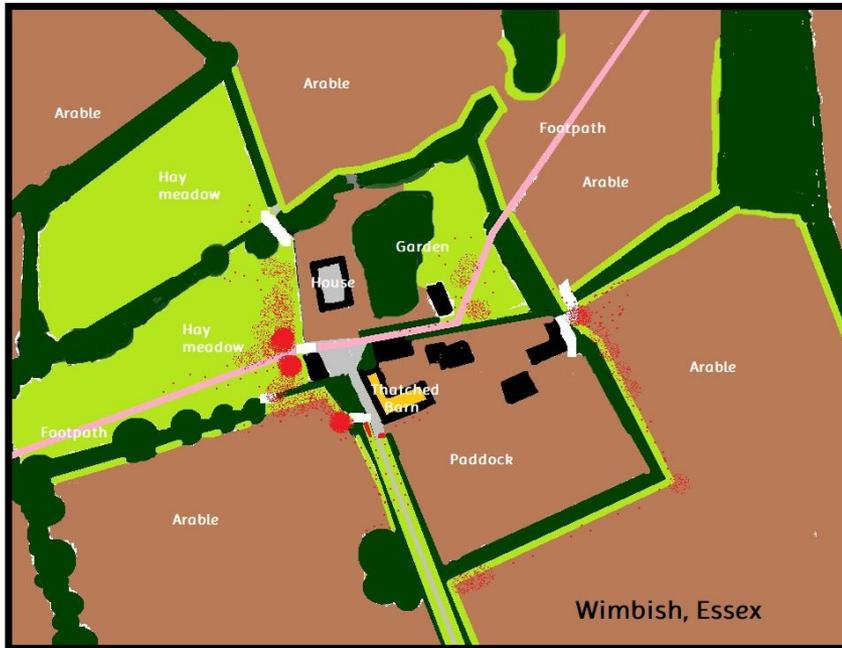








# Congregations



Stylised maps of scarlet malachite beetle sites showing how the beetles congregate at the end of convenient flight paths as close to the larval thatch, from which they emerged, as possible.

- Suitable courtship meadow or verge
- Sub-optimal or unsuitable
- Hedges trees or shrubs creating shade barriers
- Scarlet malachite beetle occurrence
- Thatched roof

# Scarlet malachite beetle 'Nursery Cottages' 2014



All seems calm after a hilarious attempt at self-taught thatching!



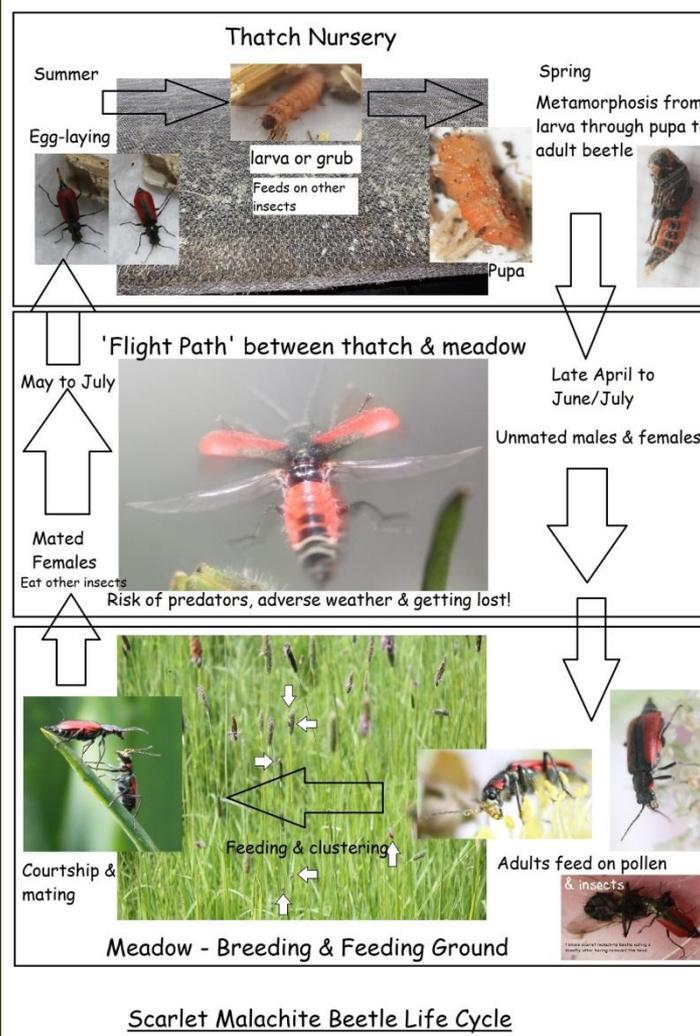
In April 2015 examination of the cottages revealed 2 scarlet malachite beetle larvae.

# Discoveries

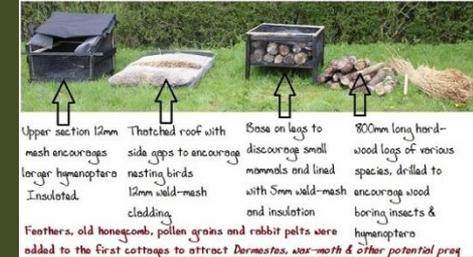
## Life - Cycle revealed in 'Nursery Cottages'



Adult beetle found in hay meadows, tall grass verges & cereal fields from May to July



## A 2015 Nursery Cottage which produced SMB larvae within 3 months of construction



The third experimental scarlet malachite beetle 'nursery cottage' at Howlett End, Essex. The structure dismantles like a beehive and has logs in both sections as well as both on-treated thatching straw and *Phragmites* reeds. The front is open to the elements but the sides and separate layers are insulated. Block is used to increase temperature. Scarlet malachite beetle larvae have been found in these structures and reared to maturity.

# Captive Breeding



Female scarlet malachite beetle eating a crane fly

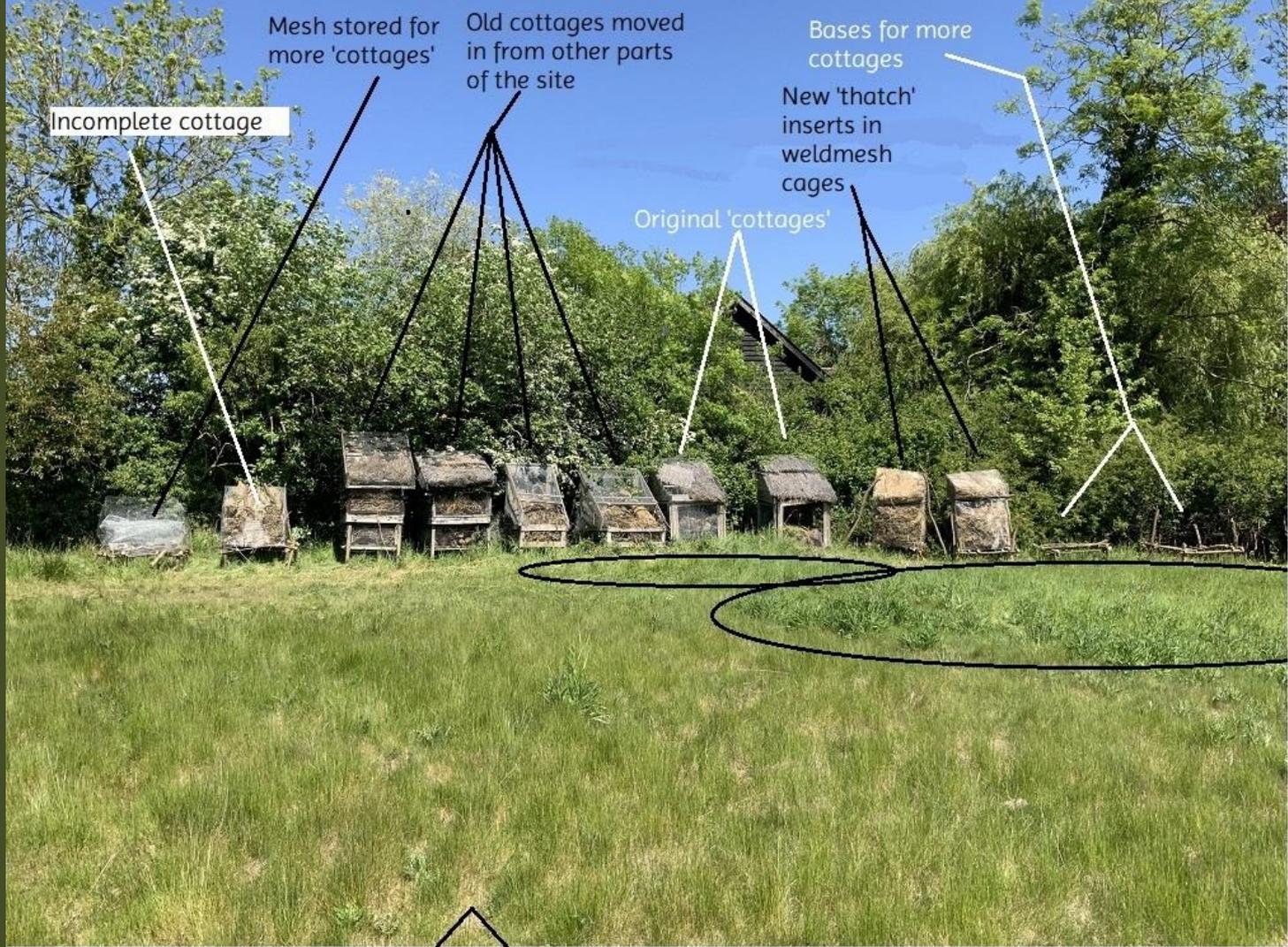


An adult female scarlet malachite beetle exploring thatching straw





Scarlet malachite beetle on meadow foxtail with a 'nursery cottage' behind. The combination of these larval nurseries and conversion of the arable field corner into bespoke beetle meadow has had the desired effect, increasing beetle numbers in this area, closer to the thatched building.

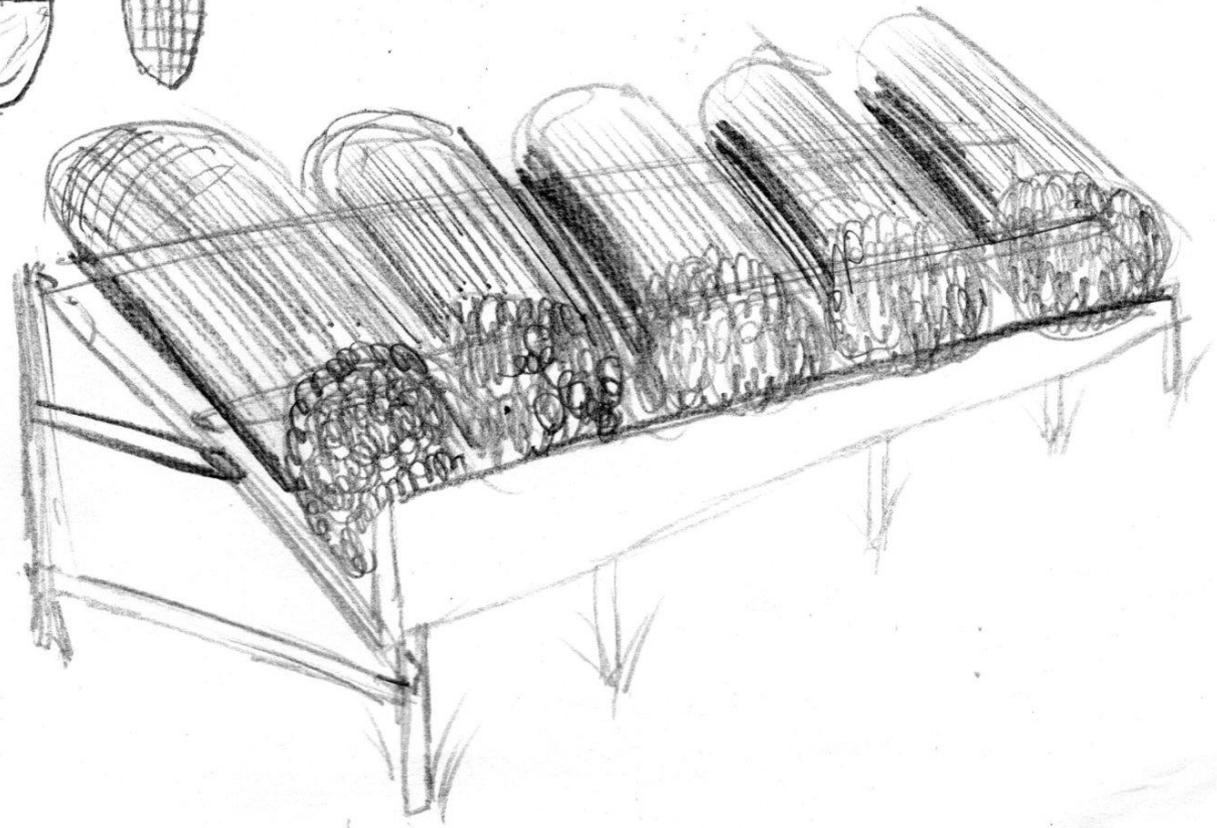
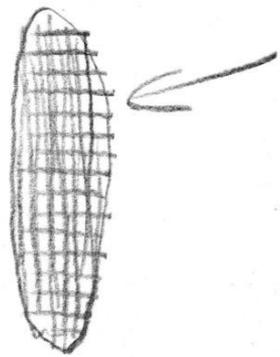
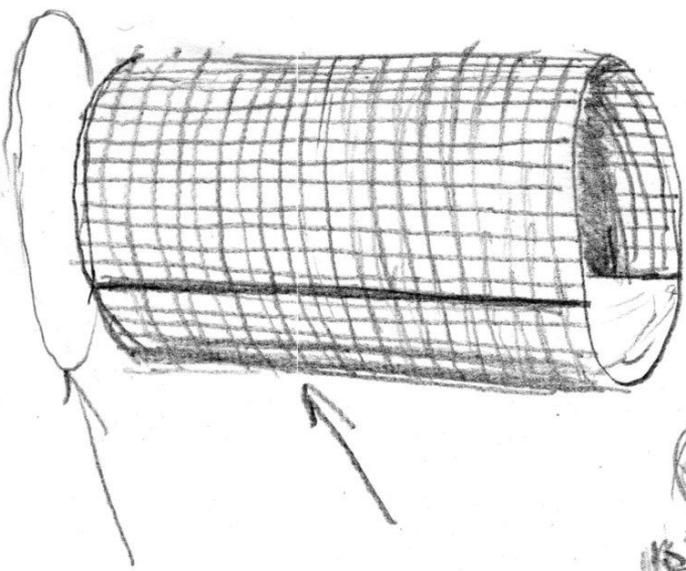


The circled areas are rich in meadow

foxtail and cocksfoot grasses (as well as ribwort plantain) seeded by us in 2015 when it was left un-ploughed. On 11th May 2025 at 6.30am 21 females SMBs were counted on meadow foxtail flowers + 4 on knapweed leaves as well as 2 males (on on meadow foxtail and one on the flower bud of ox-eye daisy. At 10.30am the previous day the beetles had warmed up and were flighty and difficult to count. Behind the cottages and hedge (to the north) is the meadow where SMBs were first recorded. 12 were counted there on 11th May.

6 of the units above (or their contents) are intended to be moved to The New Forest in Autumn 2025 or Spring 2026





# Thanks for listening



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# QUESTIONS...Why just thatch?

**Natural thatch:** Raven nests, stork nests, crane nests, corn crake nests etc. Beaver lodges, bat roosts (with rich guano deposits), heaped up reed along valleys and water bodies, English elm and other stand alone and hedgerow trees, dead mammoths and other large decaying organisms including trees and large branches...

