



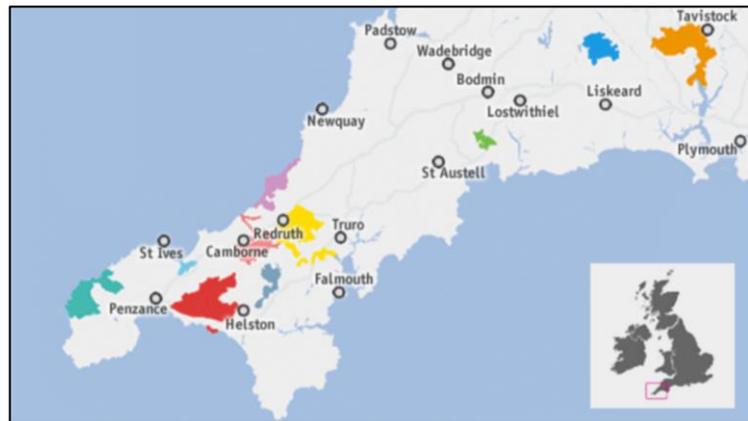
Mining for Butterflies

A surprising legacy

People have extracted useful metals – mainly copper, tin and lead – in Cornwall for over 4,000 years. From the early Bronze Age until the late twentieth century, miners left their imprint on the Cornish landscape. From moorland hummocks and hollows to the spoil heaps of rocky debris alongside derelict mine buildings, on these disused sites, scattered across the county, we are discovering a new, vibrant and significant legacy.

Why so special?

Residual traces of metal in the scree-like mine dumps combine to create an ecology not found elsewhere in the county. These specialist habitats, often with their own micro-climate, suit certain organisms very well, including species of butterfly that have declined in Cornwall.



Finding out what's there

The metalliferous mining areas of Cornwall

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation began to assess disused mining sites in Cornwall in 2015, in a project supported by Butterfly Conservation. In 2018, with generous grants from Cornish Mining World Heritage and Postcode Local Trust, 37 mining sites were visited by 20 CBC volunteers, who recorded 26 butterfly species, including six UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species: **Dingy Skipper**, **Silver-studded Blue**, **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary**, **Wall**, **Grayling** and **Small Heath**, as well as several day-flying moth species.



Dingy Skipper, South Crofty Mine, May 2018
Photo Tristram Besterman



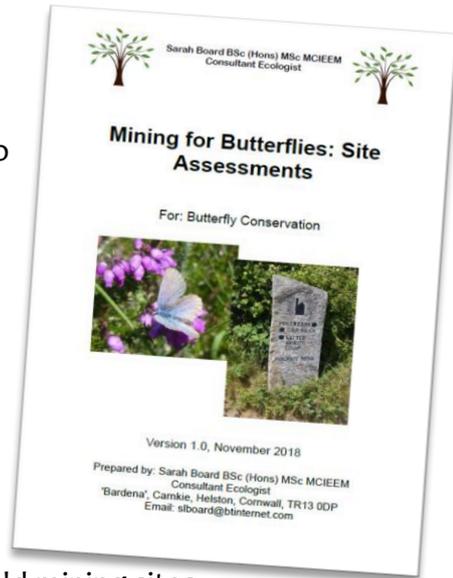
Grayling, Newlyn Downs, July 2013
Photo Shaun Poland

Professional assessment

The grants from our funding partners enabled CBC to engage Sarah Board, an experienced field ecologist, to assess 20 further sites, owned by Cornwall Council. Between July and September 2018, Sarah recorded the butterflies and habitats at each site, and for the six BAP priority species listed above noted the presence of larval foodplants and other factors on which these species depend.

What next?

Sarah’s report has helped CBC to decide its priorities for improving habitats for butterflies on Cornwall’s old mining sites and where we need to do more fieldwork to find out what’s there over the next two years (2019-2021). She also assessed access to each site for its suitability for further work by CBC volunteers. And perhaps most important of all, Sarah has provided independent scientific evidence for just how important these derelict mines are for wildlife and the importance of looking after them as part of Cornwall’s World Heritage Site.



↑ South Crofty Mine, where CBC volunteers recorded Dingy Skipper in May 2018 Photo Tristram Besterman

↓ Silver-studded Blue, Poldice Valley, June 2011 Photo Shaun Poland



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary
Breney Common
June 2014
Photo Tristram Besterman

Fundraising

CBC needs to raise funds to complete the *Mining for Butterflies* project. £7,000 is our target and will match-fund our grant from the Postcode Local Trust.

Our project partners

CBC is very grateful for the support of the following organisations and individuals, who have made *Mining for Butterflies* both possible and fruitful:

- Cornish Mining World Heritage**
- Postcode Local Trust**
- Cornwall Council**
- Crofty Developments Ltd**
- Sarah Board**
- Pam Leppitt**
- Butterfly Conservation**
- CBC volunteers**

