CORNWALL BRANCH

The Butterfly Observer

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Butterfly Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk



Small Copper (Photo: Philip Hambly)



Heat Fritillary: featured in the new Butterfly Site Guides on the Branch website (Photo: Tristram Besterman)

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Cover photo: Clouded Yellow male (above) and female (below) by Philip Hambly

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Chair's Report

Hello everyone, and a prosperous New Year to you all!

Looking back at 2015 we have had an average summer's weather for Lepidoptera. Although we do not have final figures yet we know that some of our rarer species did quite well e.g. Silver Studded Blue and Heath Fritillary. Our recorder Dick Goodere will give a comprehensive report at our forthcoming AGM on March 12th.

There is much good news to report for the Butterflies and Moths of Cornwall. We have a number of projects current, and more in the pipeline. These are described as separate articles in this issue by Dick Goodere, who has been managing and over-seeing them so diligently and professionally.

Back in August we appealed to all of the Cornwall branch membership in order to secure more funding for our volunteer work projects which are in progress, and will continue for some time. Your response to that appeal was magnificent with circa £1,500 donated, which has enabled us to continue valuable habitat improvement projects in various parts of the County. My sincere thanks to all of you of you who gave so generously.

We are currently involved with field work on old mining sites near Camborne, a project on the Mid Cornwall Moors for Natural England, as well as habitat improvement at De Lank on Bodmin Moor. We are already working closely with BC's new project for SW England entitled " All the Moors Butterfly Project " which will have a strong focus on Bodmin Moor. We have also just heard that we have been included in the Penwith Landscape Partnership bid which is a new project managed by Cornwall Wildlife Trust. So - very busy times are ahead!

None of this could be achieved without the support and dedication of the huge group of volunteer workers who have been assembled by our Outreach officer Jo Poland. I cannot adequately express how grateful we are to these volunteers, they are essential to the success of improving habitat for Cornwall's Lepidoptera. Many, many thanks to you all. Jo has a wonderful ability to attract, enthuse and manage these volunteers and deserves our ongoing support and thanks. She has been ably supported by Sally Foster - many thanks Sally.

Following Jenny Evans' decision to stand down from Committee, Shaun Poland was appointed webmaster in October with Tristram Besterman as his support officer. Shaun has refreshed our website and you will find much new information there including the first " Site information guide " which details lots of useful information regarding top butterfly and moth sites in Cornwall, including species present, access, ownership, and how to get there etc. These site guides are being prepared by committee member

Tristram Besterman, and I am sure you will find them very helpful. Tristram has a report within this Newsletter detailing his project (pp xx). The refreshed website also contains lots of new items and is more user -friendly than previously - well done Shaun. Jenny Evans had stepped in at short notice some 2 years ago to keep our website live and I thank her for her diligence and support. She was a worthy winner of a BC Volunteer Award at the national AGM.

During the last few months we have been very fortunate in attracting four new Committee members. Kathy Wood who has taken on the post of Membership Secretary, Kathy Hicks has joined us as our new Secretary, and Gordon Thomas is our replacement Treasurer. Tristram Besterman as yet, has no official post, but has been talked into fulfilling numerous other roles!



Jenny Evans receives her Volunteer Award from BC Chair, Jim Asher at the 2015 AGM
(Photo: Nigel Symington)

These recruits are extremely competent and we are delighted to have them supporting the butterflies and moths of Cornwall - grateful thanks to them all.

Finally, a plea to everyone - Cornwall Butterfly Conservation has never been better placed to support our county's Lepidoptera, the Branch has been tremendously successful in forming partnerships with other conservation bodies in Cornwall, but of course, we need your continuing support. Please, please come to our AGM at Allet on Saturday March 12th and hear about our success first hand. We have Professor Jeremy Thomas, one of the biggest names in the butterfly world speaking our meeting and of course the usual complement of stalls and refreshments.

See you there !

With all good wishes

Philip Hambly

Chair

Butterfly Conservation Cornwall

Butterfly Conservation: Cornwall Branch

Annual General Meeting 2016

The Annual General Meeting of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation will be held on Saturday March 12th at St.Erme Community Centre, Trispen, Truro TR4 9BD. The venue is opposite the large Honda garage, just off the main road.



We are delighted to have as our keynote speaker, Professor Jeremy Thomas who will be giving our keynote talk on **'Blue Butterflies, Ants and Parasitoids'**. Professor Thomas is one of the most well-known entomologists in the world and author of several books on butterflies including the Butterflies and Moths of Britain and Ireland. His work on the Large Blue and its relatives in Europe has earnt him international recognition and the award of an OBE in 2011.

The meeting starts at 10 am and concludes around 4.30pm.



The Large Blue – a globally endangered butterfly that has been successfully re-established in Britain thanks to the efforts of Jeremy Thomas and partner organisations including Butterfly Conservation. (Photo: Martin Warren)

An urgent plea from the Membership Secretary, Kathy Wood

Dear members,

If since you joined Cornwall Butterfly Conservation you have acquired, or changed, an email address at which you would be happy for us to contact you, and not notified the Membership Secretary, please do so as soon as possible by emailing me at: membership@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk.

At the moment I have current addresses for only about half the members, so the other half are missing out on a lot of branch activities and news. Many of the messages I send out are returned undelivered, which means members have changed their email addresses and not told me.

If you did not receive an email about the "Banking on the Future of Butterflies" event in December 2015 which raised **£1730.40,** I haven't a current email address for you. If you are not sure, please notify me anyway, I would rather receive notification twice than not at all. Please make sure that your security settings are allowing messages from membership@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.ukinto your inbox.

Please note that Butterfly Conservation keeps all personal information on an encrypted database and will never pass on your details to any other person or organisation.

If at any time you wish to opt out of receiving emails from Butterfly Conservation, please let me know and I will remove your email address from the database.

Thank you



This Grayling was seen on our Penlee Point field meeting on July 11th and was the first sighting in east Cornwall (Caradon) for 30 years. (Photo: Roger Hooper)

Roger Lane: a tribute

We are very sad to hear of the death of Roger Lane, aged 75, a long-time member of the Cornwall committee and a stalwart of butterfly recording in Cornwall for many years. He had degrees in geology and worked for some time for what is now English Nature.

He was BC Cornwall Information and Action Plan Officer for many years and latterly Migration Officer. Butterfly migration was a special interest of his and he contributed hundreds of records and wrote articles on butterfly migrations e.g. on the great Monarch invasion of Great Britain in 1995.

He suggested that over-wintering Red Admirals flying south found Cornwall to be a satisfying northerly extension of the continent and stayed here for the winter – subsequently to breed here. He was for many years the most prolific contributor to The Butterfly Observer and submitted the vast quantity of over 58,000 records on ERICA, mostly centred around the St Austell area where he lived - not only butterflies, but dragonflies and other insects and especially birds.

He recorded at Pontsmill what we thought at the time was one of the last White-letter Hairstreaks in Cornwall (this butterfly has been recently rediscovered in east Cornwall) and a Long-Tailed Blue found at Pentewan Beach in October 2001 (the photograph is in A Cornwall Butterfly Atlas).

It was Roger who discovered the tiny colony of Silver-studded Blues at Breney Common in 1986. He contributed a great deal to our knowledge of butterfly distribution and abundance in Cornwall and will be sorely missed by his many friends and colleagues.

Adrian Spalding



Roger was the first to discover the colony of Silver-studded Blues at Breney Common (Photo: Peter Eeles)

Summer butterflies 2015

By Dick Goodere, County Butterfly Recorder

Many thanks to all those people who sent in their records for 2015. These records are vital, not only because they are valuable indicators of the health of the environment, but they also enable us to focus on threatened butterflies and where best we can direct our conservation work.

The records are still coming in so it is too early to provide a detailed summary which I will be presenting to the AGM in March 2016. Although the weather was disappointing, the overall impression is that butterflies have continued to do reasonably well this year in Cornwall.

There are a few unusual records which may be of interest. A Long-tailed Blue was spotted at Nanastallon near Bodmin, nectaring on the flowers of a pea plant. There have been only 11 sightings in Cornwall in the past 100 years, the last being in 2012 at Cotehele. There was also a sighting of a Small Blue on 10th June near Bude. The recorder was not from Cornwall but had been familiar with this species for over 50 years in Kent and Sussex.

We have two excellent photos taken by Mike Nellist. One of the *valezina* form of a Silver- washed Fritillary photographed at Cabilla Woods on 30th July and on 29th April he saw the extreme "*Taras*" form of Grizzled Skipper on the edge of Penhale Sands.



Silver-washed Fritillary valezina form
(Photo: Mike Nellist)



Grizzled Skipper “Taras” form
(Photo: Mike Nellist)

Moth report for 2015

By Leon Truscott, County Moth Recorder

2015 was a relatively quiet year for moths in Cornwall. Towards the end of the year, records for about 750 species had been received. This compares with an average of about 860 for the past five years, including over 900 in 2013. It was an unusual year for immigrant activity, with numbers peaking in early summer, rather than autumn. The following summary is mostly based on records received.

June and July produced good numbers of immigrants, with Bordered Straw *Heliothis peltigera* and Small Mottled Willow *Spodoptera exigua* appearing in good numbers. Most of the regular migrants appeared in reasonable numbers through summer and autumn. There were also records for some of the scarcer migrant species, such as *Palpita vitrealis*, Death's Head Hawk-moth *Acherontia atropos,* Striped Hawk-moth *Hyles livornica,* Cosmopolitan *Mythimna loreyi* and Scarce Bordered Straw *Helicoverpa armigera.*

Other noteworthy migrant records included *Crombrugghia laetus, Uresiphita gilvata, Hellula undalis,* Clancy's Rustic *Platyperigea kadenii* (the latter two from Scilly), Radford's Flame Shoulder *Ochropleura leucogaster* (from Scilly and Porthgwarra), Splendid Brocade *Lacanobia splendens* (from John Nicholls at Downderry on 10th July, the second record for this site) and *Tebenna micalis*. There were three records for *T. micalis,* including one found in May (Seaton by Rob Davey).

During the summer, specific checks were made on the presence of three Cornish Red Data Book (RDB) Species, *Agonopterix kuznetsovi, Prolita solutella* and *Sycopacma suecicella.* In all three species, larvae were found at known breeding sites on the Lizard, as well as adult moths in the case of *P. solutella. Scythris picaepennis* was also recorded here on this visit. Another RDB species, *Agrotera nemoralis*, had been found breeding at Mt Edgcumbe Country



Splendid Brocade
(Photo: John Nicholls)



Six-belted Clearwing
(Photo: Derek Julian)

Park, since 2011 at least. Its presence was confirmed again during a night's moth trapping in June this year. Andy Adams, in his first year of trapping at St Keyne, recorded a Scarce Merveille du Jour *Moma alpium* in June, amongst many other species.

There were records of three "nationally common" species that are scarce in Cornwall: Lunar Hornet Moth *Sesia bembeciformis* (Bruce Taggart at Millbrook on 29th June), Oak Hook-tip *Watsonalla binaria (*Anita Payne at Brackenfield) and Small Dusty Wave *Idaea seriata* (Jen Bousfield at Drakewalls).

About 30 nationally notable & scarce species were recorded. They included *Agonopterix rotundella, Aristotelis brizella,* Lead-coloured Pug *Eupithecia plumbeolata,* Marbled Pug *E. irriguata,* Blomer's Rivulet *Discoloxia blomeri* and Little Thorn *Cepphis advenaria. Micropterix mansuetella* was recorded at Breney Common by Marilyn Edyvean for the third time. *Epinotia sordidana* was found at Great Trethew by John Nicholls (the first Cornish record since the 1980s) and Marilyn Edyvean recorded *Pammene populana* at Fairy Cross on 14th August (the first in Cornwall for 10 years). Of our three regular clearwing species, only Six-belted Clearwing *Bembecia ichneumoniformis* did reasonably well, coming to pheromone lures at Penlee Battery and Seaton.

Species scarce or local in Cornwall recorded included *Micropterix aureatella, Choreutis pariana,* False Mocha *Cyclophora porata,* Seraphim *Lobophora halterata,* White Satin *Leucoma salicis,* Red-necked Footman *Atolmis rubricollis,* Four-dotted Footman *Cybosia mesomella,* Dog's Tooth *Lacanobia suasa,* Southern Wainscot *Mythimna straminea,* Obscure Wainscot *M. obsoleta,* Crescent *Celaena leucostigma* and Anomalous *Stilbia anomala.* Particularly notable were *Cedestis subfasciella* recorded at Fairy Cross on 5th June by Marilyn Edyvean (the second record for Cornwall), *Ocnerostoma friesei,* recorded at St Austell on 17th April by Rob Davey (the first confirmed record for Cornwall) and Cloaked Pug *Eupithecia abietaria* at Cabilla Wood on 27th June by Marilyn Edyvean (the third record for Cornwall and the first since 1991). A few species that were previously very rare in Cornwall and might be increasing had a good showing in 2015, including *Semioscopis steinkellneriana* (five records), Alder Kitten *Furcula bicuspis* (two records), Chocolate-tip *Clostera curtula* (nine records) and Bordered Sallow *Pyrrhia umbra* (five records).

Many thanks to those who have submitted their 2015 moth records.



Left: Radford's Flame Shoulder (Photo: M & J Lockyear)

It's all happening in Cornwall

By Dick Goodere, County Butterfly Recorder

This has been a very exciting 12 months for CBC as we have been involved with a number of projects, including our main species of concern, Marsh and Pearl -bordered Fritillaries. This article is a summary of how things started and where we are hopefully headed!

It all began with concerns about neglected Marsh Fritillary (MF) and Pearl- bordered Fritillary (PBF) sites. Coincidentally we were approached by Natural England (NE) for data on MF in West Penwith as they were considering designating new Special Sites of Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and were looking for volunteers to search for this butterfly. Cornwall Wildlife Trust (CWT) had also asked about training their volunteers involved in the Wild Penwith Project to survey for butterflies in their new reserve. In addition, CWT were fronting a major multi-agency HLF project "The Penwith Landscape Partnership Bid" with the possibility we could be involved in this project if this was successful.

At the same time, BC had our ideas about possible projects for Cornwall. Amongst suggestions from the Committee were projects involving surveying and conservation work in West Penwith and Bodmin Moor and a proposal to survey derelict mine sites for BAP species. Butterfly Conservation picked out these two projects as priorities and Bodmin Moor has now been included as part of the All Moors Project. The Mining project started in June 2015 and was described in our last newsletter.

It was agreed that working and supporting volunteers was a skilled task that needed dedicated time. As a result, the committee decided In August 2014 to use their own funds to appoint a part-time Training and Outreach Office to recruit and work with volunteers, initially in West Penwith where we had an opportunity for partnership work, but with the option of going elsewhere if needed. Jo Poland was appointed and was able to link up with volunteers from the Wild Penwith Project to run butterfly workshops and undertake survey related work. The project finished in July 2015 with over 60 volunteers on the books. There was an overlap with the Mining project which started in June 2015 and finished in September 2015. This project could not have taken off without the established group of volunteers.

While Jo and her group were looking for adult MF in Bodmin, a chance encounter with an ecologist led to contact with NE who were in the process of designating new SSSIs on the Mid-Cornwall Moors and wanted survey work undertaken involving searching for MF larval webs and also conservation work for PBF on Bodmin Moor. Having immediate access to a group of experienced volunteers enabled NE to access a grant of

£5000 from their Innovation Fund and this funding allowed the Training and Outreach project (currently a joint CBC/NE venture) to continue until March 2016.

This latest project combines the knowledge and expertise of Biological Recorder, Sally Foster, with the enthusiasm and skills of Jo and her volunteers who have now reached the amazing number of 129. Between September and October, 25 potential MF sites were visited in Mid-Cornwall, including 8 sites searching for webs with volunteers. A further 8 sites were visited in Bodmin including 2 with volunteers where webs were found. Although no webs have been seen in Mid Cornwall, the information provided on habitats has been invaluable. The work is continuing through the winter with the focus on conservation.

CBC want to continue searching after 1^{s} April 2016 for adult MF and PBF in sites previously visited and to continue conservation work. The money raised in our recent member's appeal will enable this to happen until September 2016. At this point, we hope that CBC can tender for a volunteer co-ordinator to work on Bodmin as part of the All Moors Butterfly project. If successful, this would enable the work to continue for 3 years. The other important development is our inclusion in the £2.7 million Penwith Landscape Partnership Bid. A Development Officer is being appointed by CWT and will be working with us to finalise a bid for a joint ecologist/volunteer co-ordinator working to save the most threatened butterflies in West Penwith. This is likely to start some time in 2017.

Crucial to the success of all these projects is the development and ongoing support of a network of volunteers which Jo has done so magnificently. This has opened doors to funding streams and led to closer working relationships with NE and CWT.



Surveyors at De Lank Quarry on Bodmin Moor (Photo:

Bodmin Moor butterfly project gathers pace

By Simon Phelps, All The Moor Butterflies Project Development Officer

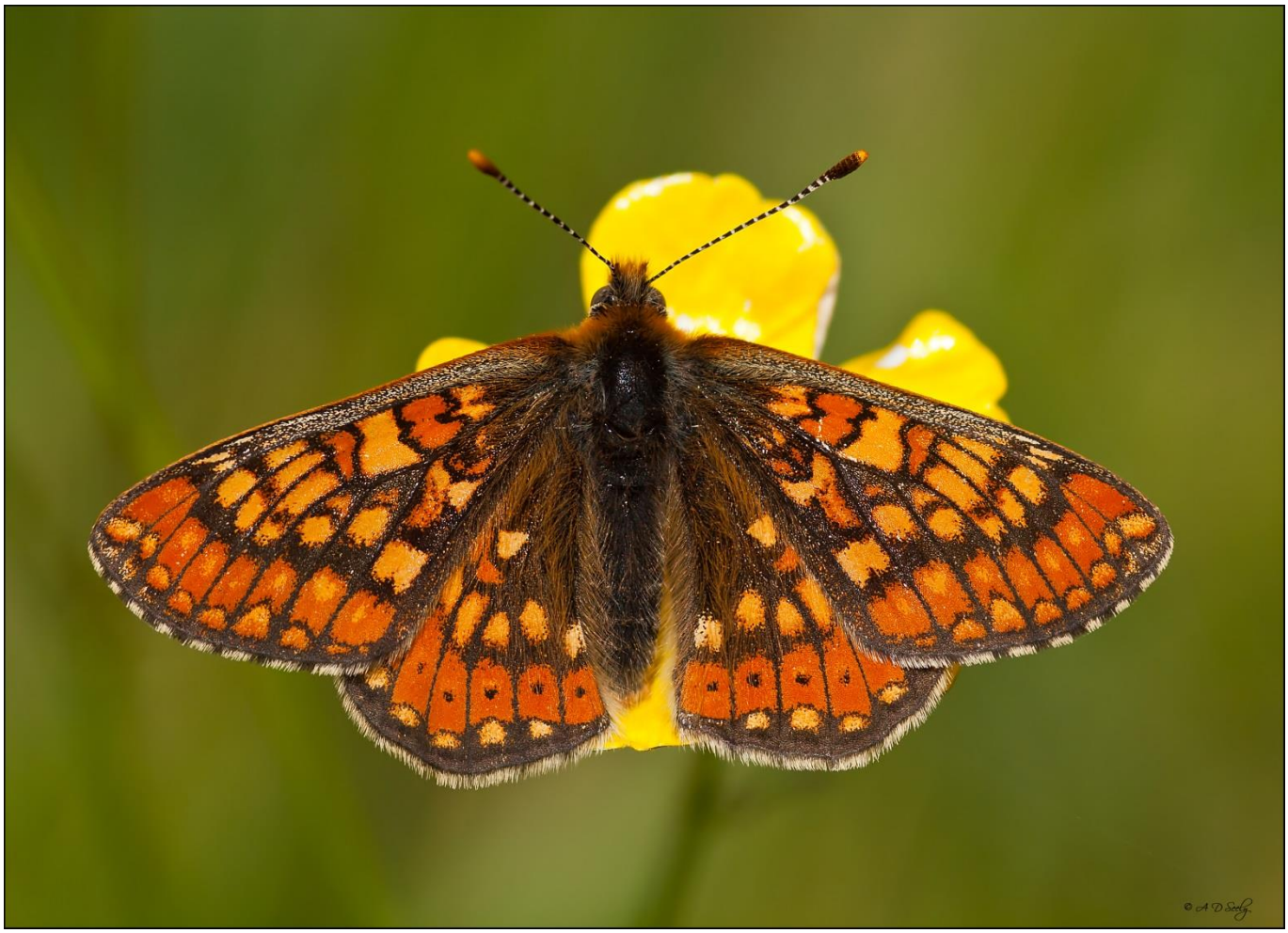
Plans for an exciting new butterfly project on Bodmin Moor are progressing well, announces the charity Butterfly Conservation. In the summer of 2015, Butterfly Conservation received a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, as well as further support from the Bodmin Moor AONB, Natural England, Dartmoor National Park Authority and Exmoor National Park Authority, to develop a new landscape scale conservation project. The *'All the Moor Butterflies'* project will work on Exmoor, Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor, focusing on conserving the threatened fritillary butterfly (plus the narrow-bordered bee hawkmoth) species that are found on these wonderful upland landscapes. Plans are currently being put together for the project, which, if successful in securing the funding it needs, will begin around September 2016 and run for 3 years.

Over the past few months lots of work has been going, carried out by both the local Cornwall branch and staff from head office, on to put together some exciting plans for the project. A large amount of surveying effort has taken place on Bodmin Moor, focusing primarily on the marsh fritillary and pearl-bordered fritillary, which are the two main target species found on the moor. These have produced really positive results, with several new colonies of marsh fritillary being discovered. This is a species that has seen its abundance fall by 64% in the last 10 years, so it is highly encouraging news to find new sites on Bodmin Moor. Butterfly Conservation are currently contacting the landowners of these sites to get their support and to begin building relationships with them. Plans are also being made with South Penquite farm, which holds an important population of pearl-bordered fritillary. A guided butterfly walk is going to be put in place and other community events run at the site. This site sits within the De Lank quarry area of Bodmin, which also hosts important colonies of the pearl-bordered fritillary.

A positive partnership has also been forged with the Gaia Trust, particularly with their mental health support groups that are based at Treraven Farm near Wadebridge. The project will be working with their groups, delivering community events at their site, as well as putting on trips for them to visit Bodmin Moor to see the target species. A highly successful pilot event took place in November on Bodmin Moor, where the Treraven Farm group joined Cornwall branch volunteers in helping to manage habitat for the pearl-bordered fritillary. Several local schools have also expressed their interest in taking part in the project, where we can work with them to run butterfly and moth educational activities.

Butterfly Conservation is keen to work in partnership with other organisations, to ensure that the project reaches as many different people as possible. They also want to work with volunteers, keen individuals who might want to get more involved with the project and help save these wonderful species. They are working in close partnership with the Cornwall Butterfly Conservation Branch, who have a fantastic group of existing dedicated volunteers. The project will provide further training and educational opportunities for volunteers, to help them learn and develop their skills. We believe that the combination of targeted conservation work and community engagement will result in positive outcomes for the target species, whilst ensuring that people are enthused and engaged with how they can help their conservation in the future.

If you want to find out more about the project or to see how you can get involved, please contact Simon Phelps sphelps@butterfly-conservation.org



Marsh Fritillary: a target for conservation at Bodmin Moor
(Photo: Andy Seely)

Setting up a new transect

By Jim Frances

We now have up to 28 transects in Cornwall. These are walked once a week from 1st April until the 30th September and sometimes into October. *Ideally once a week,* but weather, holidays and other commitments mean that once a week is often a dream rather than a reality. The conditions need to be within the UKBMS guidelines: 14C+, less than Force 6 wind, 70% sunshine. (United Kingdom Butterfly Monitoring Scheme)This year my own transect near St Ives managed to find a heavy cloud with a 30 minute plus look to it in a few weeks of August which prevented me from recording. Another problem can be that volunteers on some sites can only do a particular day of the week when the weather may not be ideal. Tegen at Treen for instance has Fridays off and the introductory walk started in heavy rain! However when I returned a few weeks later we had mostly sunshine and lots of butterflies.

In April 2014 ERCCIS (Environmental Records for County of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly) ran a Butterfly transect workshop at the WLT headquarters at Allet. It was hosted by me and we covered butterfly ID and species found in Cornwall as well as the Transect method and recording.If possible I like to visit a new transect route with the volunteer walker when they set it up. As an example of five new transects this year I will use the one at Stithians Lake near Redruth. Several volunteers at the lake had come to the ERCCIS workshop and expressed an interest and so I arranged to meet Beth Heusman and three volunteers at the lake in July. Unfortunately I had mislaid my original contact's email so we were late starting to have a full year's results.

Using my GPS we found the grid readings for the beginning of each section of the walk, discussing other important data such as management (eg: hedge-cutting, grazing, mowing) and also the Habitat of each section. (eg: Hedgerows, Small man-made woodland) Butterflies were seen so we wrote down the sightings using the Cornwall version of the UKBMS recording form. Each walk is recorded on one of these and forms a permanent written record to go with the online recording. This is particularly important when the transect is on National Trust sites as their Head Office will require details as well as Cornwall BC and the UKBMS nationally.

When the transect is done by a single person as in my case near St Ives the records can be written down in a notebook kept in the car or any other foolproof system. It is important to have your own written records as we shall see. Occasionally even the most experienced walkers can enter the figures in the wrong boxes online. I try to spot these typos by looking at the unusual species seen and have a chat with the walker (or even tell

myself off on one occasion) The written record can then be consulted and a correction made if necessary. Having completed the walk and agreed a route we returned to the cafe.

Unfortunately we didn't have WiFi at the cafe so I couldn't demonstrate the online recording site however the volunteers seemed to understand my explanation. The site has to be registered with BC and then the route has to be mapped, details of each section, Grid Ref, ecology and management, and finally you can start recording your sightings. With a final invitation to always contact me if they required any more help or advice I left them to it in glorious sunshine.

This year three transects have been re-started although the routes have been altered slightly so they have to be set up as new transects. The results won't be scientifically comparable. (Watch House Field 2015 route) There are at least four possible new sites for next year and anyone can join in.

We would love to have a transect that covers one of the rarer species: Pearl Bordered Fritillary or Marsh Fritillary for instance. You can contact me at jimfrances@talktalk.net or Tel: 01736 794134 or join another workshop on April 20th at Allet in 2016, contact me for further details.



Butterfly monitoring volunteers at Stithians Lake: Beth Heusman, Dominic Slade, Ross Dimmock, and Ashley Hugo
(Photo: Jim Frances)

NEW: information sheets on Cornwall's prime butterfly sites

By Tristram Besterman

Early in my career, I was given a useful tip by my boss just after I'd taken up a new appointment. "In your first six months with us, write down anything that strikes you as a bit odd or that you think could be improved in the way we do things. As a newcomer you'll see stuff that we take for granted. And once you've been here for more than half a year, you'll no longer notice!"

I found this such good advice that I passed it on to people whom I appointed in later years. The idea works on many levels because it not only helps the organisation to develop but also reminds the folk in charge that they don't know it all and makes the new recruit feel valued!

In retirement, a couple of years ago I accepted an invitation by the Chairman of the Cornwall branch of Butterfly Conservation, Philip Hambly, to join the Committee. A persuasive man, that Hambly. I make it a rule not to join any committee unless I can be useful and that it involves work I enjoy (otherwise what's the point of being retired?!). My wife and I had enjoyed the odd CBC field trip and had been impressed by the expertise and generosity of those involved.
From the outset I was struck by the lack of any readily available detailed briefing on the sites we visited. Sure, the calendar tells you in a couple of sentences where to assemble, the kind of site it is and what you might see. Maybe it was my background in heritage interpretation and science communication that came to the fore when I put the idea to CBC Committee for a series of well-designed information sheets, one for each of Cornwall's prime butterfly sites. I was delighted to find the idea was well received both locally and in Butterfly Conservation's head office. So it was all systems go – even if there was a catch: I was to produce them.

First up was Greenscoombe Wood, where you can see the very rare Heath Fritillary in early summer. You can download the sheet from the CBC website. Every sheet begins with an overview of the site and essential information for visitors – such as ownership, access, maps and grid reference. There is a list of butterflies and other species of note that you might see and a description of the site's ecology and history. On no more than two sides of A4, so that the information is digestible and convenient to print and take with you.

Researching Greenscoombe Wood, I discovered that I could not rely on information available on-line from sources such as Natural England and Cornwall Wildlife Trust. They report the presence of species not seen for years and omit species that are there now. So the importance of picking the brains of people who really know the site cannot be overstated. For Greenscoombe Wood, the input of local resident and honorary warden

Richard Vulliamy, as well as county recorder, Dick Goodere, was invaluable.

The aim over the next few years is to produce a sheet on each of 18 key butterfly sites from Delabole to Botallack and from Rame Head to Kynance Cove. The next one will be Upton Towans, where the Silver-studded Blue appears in good numbers every year. Provided that Mr Hambly doesn't indulge his habit of diverting me onto other assignments, Upton Towans and further site information sheets will roll off the press from 2016 onwards. Please let CBC know if you find them useful and ways to improve them.



Heath Fritillary at Greenscoombe Wood
(Photo: Tristram Besterman)

Of moths and bats: Observations of one who “does” both.

By Tony Atkinson

A lot of moths (not all) are attracted to various forms of light at night, along with flies, midges, Ichneumon Wasps, Dung Beetles, Crane Flies, Hornets, Caddis Flies, etc.

Mothers (people studying moths as distinct from Muthers, who study babies) make use of this to record moths using various techniques. Some erect a bright light over a white sheet or tent and catch and tube the moths as they come in. Others use moth traps (a container full of egg trays beneath a funnel on which the light is mounted) to do the catching for them. And some, like me and Mary use a combination of these two. Not all the moths attracted to the light actually enter the trap. So if you wish to maximise your “catch” you wait around the trap for some hours after dusk and catch as many moths as you can as they come in and tube them up until it is light in the morning and then identify them before releasing them. And then you take the lid off the trap and identify all the moths hiding in the egg trays, and then release them. You carry on at night as long as you wish. If you are only “attracting” as distinct from “trapping” then you may stay with your light until the small hours. But if you are trapping, then you’ve probably had enough some time before midnight, knowing that the trap will carry on doing some of your work for you through the rest of the night. (If you are running your trap off a generator you may have to stay up until midnight to top it up with fuel if you want it to run through to the early hours, especially as the nights get longer.)
But, and this is where the bats come in, the moths are often slow to start coming in after dusk. So I sit back from the trap, shading my eyes from the light, and watch the hordes of insects hovering over the light like moths in a shaft of sunlight. And I get out my bat detector and listen for bats.

Some moths are attracted to the light but seem to take one look at it and then spiral away up into the sky. I have often watched these disappear slowly from sight into the night, but sometimes I’ve watched them suddenly disappear as the larger, lighter form of a bat swoops past. And it’s not Long-eared Bats doing this. It’s Pipistrelles. Often Soprano Pipistrelles. (Where were all these Soprano Pipistrelles before we knew about them?)

It is quite obvious, from the repeated behaviour and the number of bats that they are deliberately feeding off the “by-catch”. Usually they are quartering up and down well up towards the canopy of the trees if we are in woodland, but at that sort of height in the open, only just within the range of the light. But then, frequently, one will dive to head height between Mary and me and take a prey item.

We, batters, usually tell people that Pipistrelles eat midges. No doubt they do. But they don't only eat midges. They eat moths as well! A couple of nights ago I was sitting back idly watching the moths dancing above the trap when I noticed blossom gently falling from the sky. I woke up with a start and leapt up and caught some in my net. It was the wings of a Brimstone Moth. Obviously the remains of a hearty meal.

Earlier on in August the Large Yellow Underwing Moths were not coming into the trap until getting on for about 11.30pm. So they are obviously later fliers. But in my barn at home and an outhouse loft Mary is picking up and recording large collections of moth wings beneath feeding roosts of two Long-eared Bats. And by far and away the predominant prey item is Large Yellow Underwings. So does this explain why Long-eared Bats are much later to emerge from their roosts? Many of the larger moths are very late to arrive at the trap. During the summer, only the Elephant Hawk of the Hawk Moths comes in well before midnight. So if these moths fly late, does this mean that the bats change their prey during the night, or do they not bother hunting until later. I have often noticed, when doing activity surveys for bats, that a "hot-spot" doesn't remain a "hot-spot" for very long. The bats are moving to find another prey source as the night progresses. I assumed the prey was moving. But it may be that the prey changes through the night as each insect changes its flight period.

Back to the moth trap. We have noticed that moths often approach in waves of activity. But it also noticeable that if there are several bats about, moth activity declines. The moths know there are bats after them!

I was hastening away from the light one night recently, after a moth spiralling away, and I made a last desperate lunge at it with my net. But a bat beat me to it. But the moth beat us both. It just dropped into the grass, like a stone.

So are mothers providing bats with easy pickings, or are they giving moths a safe haven from bats for a night?

Cornwall mining project gets underway

By Dan Hoare, BC Head of Regions

Two years ago, the Cornwall Branch Committee proposed a project on former sites of metalliferous mining, which were thought to be important to several threatened butterflies but were very little known. So with the help of Adrian Spalding and Martin Warren, a project was developed to safeguard the wildlife value of these unique habitats, especially key populations of four UK Priority Species: the Silver-studded Blue, Grayling, Dingy Skipper and Wall.

Thanks to funding from the D'Oyly Carte Charitable Trust, phase 1 of the project got underway in May 2015 with two main elements. Firstly Robin Curtis was contracted to conduct a habitat survey of 35 abandoned mining sites, focussing on the Redruth and Camborne area. Secondly Jo Poland was contracted to recruit and train volunteers in this area to conduct surveys of key butterflies during July and August.

As expected, the habitat survey found that the vast majority of these sites were badly neglected, with many containing extensive areas of scrub.

Four sites were classified as high priority, in that they contain large areas of suitable habitat, while seven sites were medium priority, with smaller amounts of suitable habitat. The volunteer surveys were highly successful and 35 keen volunteers took part and found at least one of the target species (Grayling, Silver-studded Blue or Wall) on eight sites and an additional target species, Green Tiger Beetle on one site. Many of these sites are seriously threatened either by scrub invasion or potential redevelopment.

After this successful start, we are now looking for further funds to conduct phase two of the project: a more in depth survey of the priority sites and identification of areas of scrub to be controlled. If anyone knows of potential sponsors from local businesses, we would be very keen to hear. We are also very grateful to Robin Curtis, Jo Poland and the many volunteers for making the project such a success. Keep an eye out for more details as we hope to continue this work in 2016.



Volunteers preparing to survey butterflies (Photo: Jo Poland)



Abandoned mine habitat at Polcrebo Down showing scrub invasion. (Photo: Robin Curtis)

FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS – 2016

Welcome to Cornwall Butterfly Conservation's programme of field trips for 2016. You'll find some of our ever-favourite sites to visit but also some new ones to explore. We have organised a few trips in partnership with other local conservation organisations. We'll continue to place a big emphasis on recording on each of our field trips, so that we can build an even better picture of Lepidoptera distribution across Cornwall.

Our field trips are fun and friendly – all (including children) are welcome, whether or not you're a member of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation, and whatever level of experience you have. Please always come prepared for Cornwall's changeable weather and mixed terrain – waterproofs, good walking shoes or boots, sun tan cream etc., as well as water and lunch/snacks.

Sunday 15 May DE LANK QUARRY
11.00 am -3.00 pm Near St Breward
This is a beautiful walk down to the De Lank river where there is the opportunity to see the rare Pearl-bordered Fritillary, other spring butterflies such as the Brimstone and view the recent conservation work undertaken by volunteers. Please bring a packed lunch and tough walking shoes. Long trousers and long sleeved shirts are also advised. Meet at the small car park (SX 099753) on the right before the entrance to the Quarry which should not be entered. Parking is limited so car share where possible. *Leader and contact Sally Foster (01736 753259)*

Wednesday 18 May WILD FLOWERS AND BUTTERFLIES OF PENHALE
10.00 am Near Cubert
This is a joint walk with MOD Conservation Group. In addition to seeing a variety of spring wild flowers, we should find, amongst other butterflies, the Grizzled Skipper at its last known site in Cornwall. Please meet by the South Gate near Treworthen Farm, Cubert (SW783567). Bring a packed lunch. Leaders: Ian Bennallick (CBG) and Jon Cripps(CWT). Places are limited so booking is essential. *Contact Dick Goodere (CBC) 01736 753077 or gooderes@talktalk.net.*

Thursday 26 May POLDICE
11.00 am- 3.00 pm
A walk through disused mining sites in the Poldice Valley area to search for a small, well camouflaged butterfly that loves bare ground: the Dingy Skipper. This butterfly is a conservation priority species that is becoming increasingly rare in Cornwall. The field trip will support the work we are currently carrying out with our 'Mining for Butterflies' project that started in 2015.
Meet at Grid reference: SW 737 430, the layby opposite Triplet Business Park, Poldice Valley, Nr St Day, Redruth, TR16 5PZ. Leaders: Jo & Shaun Poland
Contact details: 01872 540371/07800548832 jogreenp@gmail.com

Sunday 29 May: PREDANNACK, THE LIZARD
11.00 am Near Mullion
We have organised this trip in partnership with the Natural England team on the Lizard, and we'll be looking for newly emerged Marsh Fritillaries, as well as hearing about the habitat management work NE have been undertaking for this protected butterfly. Meet at Predannack National Trust car park (free) (SW668162). Leaders: Steve Townsend*, Lizard NE team and Dick Goodere CBC Contact: Dick Goodere (01736 753077).*

Saturday 4 June: CHAPEL PORTH
1.00 pm Near St Agnes
Join us in looking for Green Hairstreak butterflies along this beautiful cliff walk. The terrain can be steep and rough in places, but the views are spectacular. Meet at Chapel Porth National Trust beach car park (parking charge for non-NT members, and car park fills up quickly, so car sharing is advised) (SW697495).
Leader and contact: *Amanda Scott (01209) 862792 or 07747 864184.*

Saturday 11 June: GREENSCOOMBE WOODS
1.00 pm Near Luckett
Come and join us on a field trip to Cornwall's only site for the nationally rare Heath Fritillary butterfly, which is now established here after a successful reintroduction in 2006. Local expert on the species, Richard Vulliamy, will be leading the trip. Meet in Luckett Village car park (SX389737).
Leader and contact: *Richard Vulliamy (01579) 370411.*

Saturday 18 June: CORNWALL BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION OPEN DAY
2.00 pm Near Looe
Philip (Chairman of CBC) and Faith Hambly invite you to their farm at Lethytep, with its wonderful wildlife area with walks and lakes. There should be many mid-summer butterflies flying, and much more besides. Food, including pasties are provided, plus tombola and raffle. We ask for a £5 donation to help cover food costs. To get to Lethytep (SX175588), turn south off the A390 Liskeard to Lostwithiel road at East Taphouse, taking the B3359 to Looe and Polperro. After 3.3 miles take road to right signposted Penadlake: the event will be signposted from here. Park in field next to house (space for 100+ cars).
Leader and contact: *Philip Hambly (01503) 220385.*

Saturday 25 June WHEAL BUSY
9.00 pm Near Chacewater
Moth specialist Adrian Spalding will be leading this moth night and setting moth traps. Please bring hot drinks and warm clothes if the weather is chilly! Meet at Wheal Busy (SW 733485)
Contact Adrian Spalding 01872 272711

Tuesday 5 July: UPTON TOWANS
11.00 am Near Hayle
Join us on a walk through this extensive sand dune complex situated between Gwithian and Hayle, a Cornwall Wildlife Trust reserve and SSSI. Target species will be Dark Green Fritillaries and Silver-studded Blues. Meet by the gate, in front of the large chimney at the entrance to the CWT reserve (SW 579396). Please bring a packed lunch.
Leader and contact: *Dick Goodere (01736) 753077.*

Saturday 9 July: PENLEE RESERVE AND PENLEE POINT
11.00am Near Rame Head
We will be led by moth expert and Cornwall Moth Recorder Leon Truscott in looking for Marbled White butterflies, as well as Small Heaths and Dark Green Fritillaries. Six-belted Clearwing and Thrift Clearwing moths can also be found here with the help of pheromone lures. Meet in Penlee Battery car park (SX436491).
Leader and contact: *Leon Truscott* (*01752*) *812023*.

Sunday 10 July: LUXULYAN VALLEY
11.00 am - 3.00 pm
Joint picnic & walk with the Friends of Luxulyan Valley & Friends of Fowey Estuary. Walk in the Valley and picnic in the paddocks. We hope to see wild flowers and butterflies in the recently cleared paddocks, including the largest and most spectacular Fritillary butterfly that occurs in Cornwall - the Silver-washed Fritillary. Bring some food to share. Meet 11am at Black Hill car park near the viaduct. Grid reference: SX 059 573
Leaders: Jo & Shaun Poland (01872 540371/07800548832 jogreenp@gmail.com)

Saturday 23 July: WILD FLOWERS AND BUTTERFLIES OF PENHALE
10.30 am Near Cubert
Join us for a closer look at the wild flowers, butterflies and moths to be found on Penhale Sands Army Training Camp, not normally open to the public. We should find orchids and many species of Lepidoptera on this unique marsh and dune area. Jointly organised with the Cornwall Botanical Group, the trip will be led by botanist Ian Bennallick, accompanied by Dave Thomas. Please bring a packed lunch. Meet by the South Gate near Treworthen Farm, Cubert (SW783567). Booking is essential. Leaders: Ian Bennallick and Dave Thomas.
Contact: Dave Thomas (01726) 861093 or davecarp86@hotmail.com.

Sunday 24 July: NEWLYN DOWNS
1.00 pm Near St Newlyn East
Join us in exploring this SSSI and Special Area of Conservation. We'll be searching for Grayling butterflies, Bog Bush-crickets and Scarce Blue-tailed Damselflies, and much more. Meet in the layby opposite the entrance at SW83683 55209.
Leader and contact: *Carly Hoskin (01637) 498462.*

Sunday 31 July: GODOLPHIN WOODS
1.30 pm Near Godolphin
Join us for this interesting walk through Godolphin Woods. There will be a wide variety of Lepidoptera but the target species will be the Purple Hairstreak. Directions: Coming from Leedstown, you turn left at Townshend, then at Godolphin Bridge the road swings to the left; some distance along this section there is a parking area on the left where a track runs down to the river. It is possible to park here, but it is better to drive down the short track and park in the larger car park at the bottom (on the right) at SW60023243.
Leader and contact: *Carly Hoskin (01637) 498462.*

Sunday 7 August: KYNANCE COVE
11.00 am Near Lizard
Join us on this wonderfully scenic coastal walk on the Lizard as we look for Clouded Yellow, Grayling, Common Blue and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterflies, and many more species. Meet in the National Trust Kynance Cove car park (SW688132). Parking free to National Trust members.
Leader and contact: *Jim Barker (01736) 794134.*

Sunday 14 August: GWENNAP HEAD AND PORTHGWARRA
10.30 am Near Land's End
This beautiful location boasts an abundance of butterflies, including Graylings, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, Clouded Yellows, Small Heaths and many more. You might also spot a Chough! Meet in the Porthgwarra car park (SW372218): charges apply. Café.
Leader and contact: *Jim Barker (01736) 794134.*

Details of all these field trips can be found at:-

Website: http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/pages/Butterfly-Conservation-Cornwall/787896031272272

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation Committee and Contacts

If you would like to volunteer or just get more involved with the Branch, please don't hesitate to contact a member of the Committee:

Chairman:
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philip@lethytep.co.uk

Membership Secretary:
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Secretary:
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Webmaster:
Shaun Poland
cbcwebmaster@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk



Wall Brown (Photo: Philip Hambly)



Hornet Clearwing Moth (Photo: Bruce Taggart)