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Cornwall Butterfly Observer



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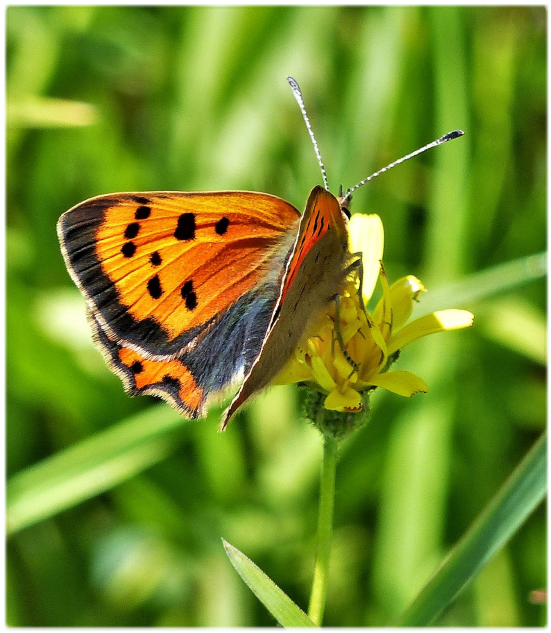
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Butterfly Conservation
Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Cornwall Branch

www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk





Photos:

Front cover: Six-spot Burnet Moths on Field Scabious, Penlee Point, July 2017 (Tristram Besterman)
Back cover: Green-veined White (Philip Hambly)
This page: Volunteer Laura Fox identifies an orchid; Small Copper (both Tristram Besterman, taken at Polcrebo Downs, May 2017)
Background photo of Meadow Browns (Philip Hambly)

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Chairman's report

Hello everyone, and in particular to all those members who have joined in the last few months. Thank you for supporting Cornwall Butterfly Conservation – I hope you enjoy browsing our recently refreshed newsletter, which is published twice yearly. I am delighted to report that our membership figures continue to soar, with the latest update showing that over 650 of you have committed to helping CBC in continuing our work throughout the County to safeguard our Lepidoptera for future generations.

Let us now hope that the outcomes of the Brexit negotiations really do lead to a positive and successful result for all of our country's wildlife. There seems to be a very positive response from the general public, who I believe are much more sympathetic to our environment, and to the issues associated with protecting and saving wildlife, than has been the case for some considerable time. The media are certainly playing their part in concentrating minds on the difficulties facing the natural world: there appears to be a wildlife-focussed documentary on our television screens most days.



Field trip to Penlee Point, July 2017 (Photo: Tristram Besterman)

Our fieldtrips for the summer have been very well attended, and are a great way for all members and non-members to learn so much about our Cornish wildlife. Novice or expert, you will always be warmly welcomed to enjoy these fieldtrips in the company of friendly and helpful enthusiasts.

Our Annual General Meeting in April at Trispen, near Truro, was again extremely well supported: we were all thoroughly entertained both by our

various speakers, and the usual superb refreshments. We are now organising our agenda for the 2018 AGM on 28th April, which you will definitely want to attend – watch this space!



Open Day at Lethytep (Photo: Philip Hambly)

The Open Day at Lethytep on July 1st was undoubtedly the best supported and most successful event ever promoted by Cornwall Butterfly Conservation. A huge crowd of nearly 200, both members and the general public, came in glorious weather to enjoy refreshments, a moth display, stalls, and a tombola, plus there were all the walks and wildlife over 52 acres that Lethytep offers. With match funding, courtesy of Barclays Bank at Liskeard, the huge sum of £2700 was raised for our important work in Cornwall to enhance and encourage our Lepidoptera throughout the County. This provides a huge fillip to our fundraising efforts, with many many thanks to all who came along to support us, and a special vote of thanks to our Committee and helpers on the day. Make a note in your diary for next year's event on Saturday June 30th!

The conservation work provided by our volunteers continues apace, with our main focus on the *All the Moor Butterflies* project centred on Bodmin Moor, working in tandem with Butterfly Conservation Head Office. There is more news about this on page 6 of this newsletter.

Best wishes, and hopes for more sun and less rain!

Philip Hambly, CBC Chairman

All the Moor Butterflies

CBC is a partner in this three-year landscape-scale project, funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund, which aims to conserve some of the UK's most threatened butterfly and moth species across Bodmin Moor, Dartmoor and Exmoor. Megan Lowe, Community Engagement Officer for the project at Head Office, brings us up to speed on progress.

After a positive start to the project, with winter habitat management and site visits being the focus, the project really got going in the spring and summer. All of the target species emerged during this period, signalling the start of the frenetic monitoring period. Several volunteer training events were held, teaching people how to identify and survey for the species. We attended public events and gave talks, all aimed at encouraging people to get out and see these beautiful species whilst they are on the wing.

Species surveys and monitoring

By early July, surveys had been completed by the project team and volunteers for Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth, Marsh, Pearl-bordered, Small Pearl-bordered and Heath Fritillary, with surveys for the High Brown Fritillary almost completed. Provisional results and comparisons with last year present a mixed picture.



Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Aish Tor, Dartmoor (Photo: ATMB Project Team)

The Pearl-bordered Fritillary appeared to have a good year, helped by the warm spring weather, with numbers on many sites matching or exceeding the previous year. All of the priority sites for this species on Bodmin Moor were visited and valuable baseline data gathered.

Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth numbers appeared stable on Dartmoor at known sites; it was recorded at one new site. Searches were made on Bodmin Moor, where this species was last recorded in

2008, but unfortunately none were found. We will definitely be back next year to search for this elusive and enigmatic species.

The Marsh Fritillary had a mixed year on Dartmoor, doing well at some sites but struggling at others. This may be due to the cyclical nature of its population numbers or variations in habitat quality. The weather hindered surveys on Bodmin Moor, but some impressive counts were made and new sites discovered, which is a great start to our survey work here. Web counts will reveal more about how populations are doing.

The Heath Fritillary also exhibited a mixed response in surveys this year. It was recorded in reasonable numbers at many sites, but seemed to be struggling at others. Work is therefore needed on many sites to ensure it is not lost.

Early results for the High Brown Fritillary are the same as the Heath, with it doing well in some areas but seeming to struggle in others. It faces the same issues as the Heath Fritillary in terms of occupying a precise and sensitive habitat type that makes it vulnerable to changes in vegetation conditions.

The next phase of surveying work was Marsh Fritillary larval web surveys, in August on Dartmoor and in September on Bodmin Moor.

Habitat management

Summer bracken management was arranged for the Holnicote Estate and Heddon Valley on Exmoor, and the De Lank Quarry/South Penquite site on Bodmin Moor, with the help of volunteer working parties. The aim was to create tracks through the bracken or reduce its density, therefore enabling food plants to grow and thrive.

“By working closely with landowners and partner organisations we hope to reconnect, restore and celebrate vital breeding habitats for these species”

Management advice for all the target species has been given to landowners for 40 sites across each of the three moors. The advice has covered topics such as bracken management, grazing, scrub control and

burning. Several of the sites are new to the project, and it has been encouraging to meet new landowners who are keen to engage and make a difference.

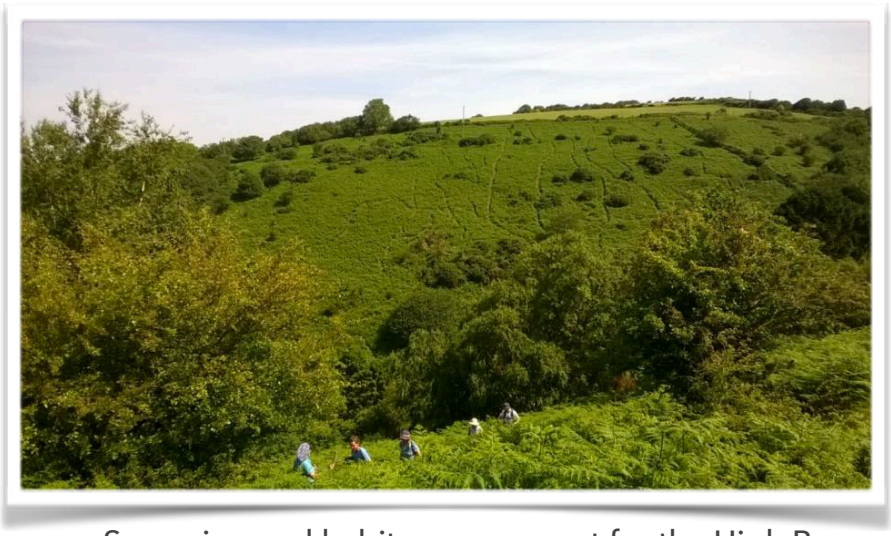
Volunteer engagement

Volunteer training events have been delivered focussing on survey and monitoring methods, with a total of 100 participants. The events included six butterfly search days on Bodmin Moor. Despite some less than fortunate weather conditions, these days yielded great results, finding new and rediscovering existing colonies. Other training included survey workshops.

The training events have resulted in new volunteers coming forward to help us with our wider surveys, particularly on Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor. We are offering them support to carry out surveys on their own, and they have been gathering valuable data and helping with the high survey workload. To have found new, dedicated volunteers so early on in the project is a great success and something we are hoping to build on as the project moves forward, developing our Moor Butterfly Champions.

Community engagement

A diverse programme of wider community engagement events has taken place. These include talks, attending public events, two moth nights, and also three guided walks, one on each Moor at our demonstration sites (De Lank Quarry, Holnicote Estate and Langaford Farm). Two workshops with Cornwall College were delivered on Bodmin Moor, with the help of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation, teaching the students how to identify and survey for butterflies and assess habitat condition.



Surveying and habit management for the High Brown Fritillary on Exmoor (Photo: ATMB Project Team)

We'll be keeping CBC members up to speed on future progress through this newsletter and on our website.

Thanking our volunteers in style

Jo Poland, our Volunteer Coordinator, reports on a 'thank you' event held for our volunteers.

As a special thank you to our wonderful volunteers, we held a Volunteer Celebration and Training Day at beautiful Lanhydrock, near Bodmin, in partnership with the National Trust.

We were delighted that Matthew Oates of the National Trust accepted our invitation to join us. Matthew, a renowned lepidopterist, is the Trust's Specialist for Nature, and the author of a recently published book, *In Pursuit of Butterflies*: *A Fifty-year Affair*.

Forty-six volunteers attended the day, and were treated to a wonderfully funny and informative talk by Matthew, who also bravely joined in a very testing butterfly and moth team quiz!

Attendees also learned from experienced recorders in the beautiful Lanhydrock grounds how to carry out a butterfly transect. They also heard from Dick Goodere, the County Butterfly Recorder, about all the different ways to help in recording butterflies in Cornwall. The whole day was in fact an amazing success, with some of the new recorders feeling so inspired that they started sending butterfly records to Dick that very same day.

We would like to give a big thank you to Bill Makin, General Manager for the National Trust in South and Mid Cornwall, for giving us such a lovely place to meet and for providing a truly delicious lunch.



Comparing notes at the Volunteer Day. Matthew Oates is on the left (Photo: Malcolm Pinch)

Turn to page 25 if you'd like to find out how to record butterflies in Cornwall.

Up-country butterfly adventures

Two of our members crossed not only the Tamar, but also the sea, in search of two enigmatic butterfly species. Dick Ashford went looking for the Cryptic Wood White in Northern Ireland, while CBC Press Officer Roger Hooper headed to the Isle of Wight to find Glanville Fritillaries, and to Hampshire and Surrey hunting for the Duke of Burgundy and Wood White.

In search of the real deal

Dick Ashford

So this was it. A real challenge, the real deal, the Real Madrid of butterflies. First described as a separate species in 2001, it was initially thought to be the Pyrenean Real's Wood White. In 2011 it was finally classified as a third species and was renamed the Cryptic Wood White.



Cryptic Wood White male, showing the characteristic white-tipped antennae (Photo: Dick Ashford)

The important anatomical differences from the mainland species were comically described by Patrick Barkham in his book *The Butterfly Isles*. In addition, there are subtle differences in the distinctive courtship, as it is only the mainland male that beats his wings. Beginning the year with only eight of the 59 UK species left to see, this seemed the biggest challenge, and videoing the courtship would be the real deal.

As, for reasons unknown, the Cryptic Wood White is not found on the British mainland, a trip to Northern Ireland was required, using Barkham's description as my map. Luckily, there was a conference in Belfast that coincided with its flight time. I could also visit my wife's family and have a chance to quickly pop in to Craigavon Lakes. Barkham described the site as 'lying between two lakes where hard-core had been laid in preparation for a

motorway'. He had walked along a rough track, where the ground was stony and the soil poor. As the paths were clearly marked on the map, finding the butterfly shouldn't take long.

We popped in for a quick recce on our way from the airport. To my surprise the site was much bigger and greener, this being Ireland. There was a small, rather tatty, leisure complex adjacent to a car park and beyond this, on one side of the lake, a sizeable housing estate. This was nothing like my imaginings. Two days later I returned with my wife and sister-in-law on a dull overcast day with intermittent drizzle. This was Ireland. A long walk round the lake, past the housing estate, led to a grassy area on its edge. And there was a white butterfly. To the girls' amusement I took off after it, as it flew vigorously over a bank of scrub and out of sight. Almost certainly a Green-veined White. None of this seemed anything like Barkham's description.

Walking back I decided to take a right turn at the edge of the housing estate and walked towards a railway line. At an underpass I noticed a rough path leading into a more wooded, flower-rich, sheltered area. Then I remembered that Barkham had seen the butterfly by the railway line. Indeed it had been given the name *Railway White* by Henry Heal, owing to it favouring the relatively open country typically provided by railway embankments. About a mile away I found the back entrance to the lakes, which led more easily to the other end of the path. Again, I had run out of time, but at least this looked like a better bet for seeing it.

I had wasted two visits without even getting close to seeing my quarry, so it is important to emphasise the importance of local knowledge when visiting a site. Butterfly Conservation Event Leaders have this local knowledge, greatly increasing the chance of success when looking for rarities. It is notable that Butterfly Conservation Cornwall is one of the few with detailed handouts on specific sites for rare species. Indeed, I have personally used the Heath Fritillary guide successfully this year.

"I began to see small white butterflies loping and lolloping along at waist height"

I had one last chance on my way back to Belfast for my meeting. This time the weather was good

with long sunny intervals. Finding the path, I immediately saw a vigorous white butterfly flying past to land on some bramble. The camera confirmed that it was another Green-veined White. Was I to be frustrated again? Soon, however, I began to see small white butterflies loping and lolloping along at waist height. My white socks were also provoking interest. Here, at last, was the Cryptic Wood White. When the sun went in, I was able to follow one into the grass, where it settled and allowed me to photograph it at close range.



Three in a tangle: two males with one female (Photo: Dick Ashford)

Thereafter, I saw between 10 and 20, and was thinking about turning back. Then one settled on some vetch. I suddenly saw there were two! The male uncoiled his proboscis and began rocking his head, his proboscis stroking the female in a metronomic delicate dance, releasing his cocktail of volatiles. But the female wasn't flicking her wings. Was something wrong? Then I saw another pair in the grass not far away. Soon another male joined in and both males started stroking the female in a threesome and she responded. I got excellent videos of both displays.

I was then joined by an inquisitive passer-by. It was good to be able to tell her that there was a rare butterfly on her estate, and also to show her young daughter this example of how life goes on, unseen, right beside us.

After she had left I went back to my man, who was still rocking to the beat, with no evidence of success. Thomas and Lewington describe in *The Butterflies of Britain and Ireland* how females can take up to ten minutes to decide whether or not mate. And so I left him to his dance, knowing that nature's heart was still beating….

Thankfully!

Off to Butterfly Island

Roger Hooper



Seeking butterflies on the Thrift-covered clifftops of the Isle of Wight (Photo: Roger Hooper)

Back in May, my partner Lynn and I left for a butterfly and flower break, taking in both the Isle of Wight (IoW) and the Hampshire and Surrey areas, an area I know well.

Having since read Matthew Oates' wonderful book *In Pursuit of Butterflies*, I'm glad we took the Lymington to Yarmouth car ferry, 'the only way any naturalist should use', as Oates says. The omens were all good. Waiting in the Lymington ferry terminal café it felt like Spain: blue sky, warm sunshine and the prospect of a great trip.

After a lovely crossing to the island, we headed straight for the little town of Freshwater for breakfast. On the café wall was a panoramic photograph entitled *The Last Great Festival*, looking down from East Afton Downs on an August afternoon in 1970. My sixteen-year-old self was in it somewhere: it was the last proper Isle of Wight pop festival, with the likes of Jimi Hendrix, The Who and The Doors. Now, 47 years later, my interest was on the other side of those downs, where the chalk slopes are the jewel in the island's butterfly crown.

The IoW's south-western coastal slope is the only place in the UK to see the beautiful Glanville Fritillary and that day, May 25th, was the date of a Hampshire and IoW BC branch field meeting to see them. This had been postponed by a day because, amazingly, the weather forecast for the following day was set to be even better. It was, too, but first we explored the far western tip of the island, where the cliffs are pure white vertical chalk, ending in the famous Needles, the last vestige of the link that once joined the island to the Dorset coast.

"Special moments like these come along and etch themselves into your memory forever"

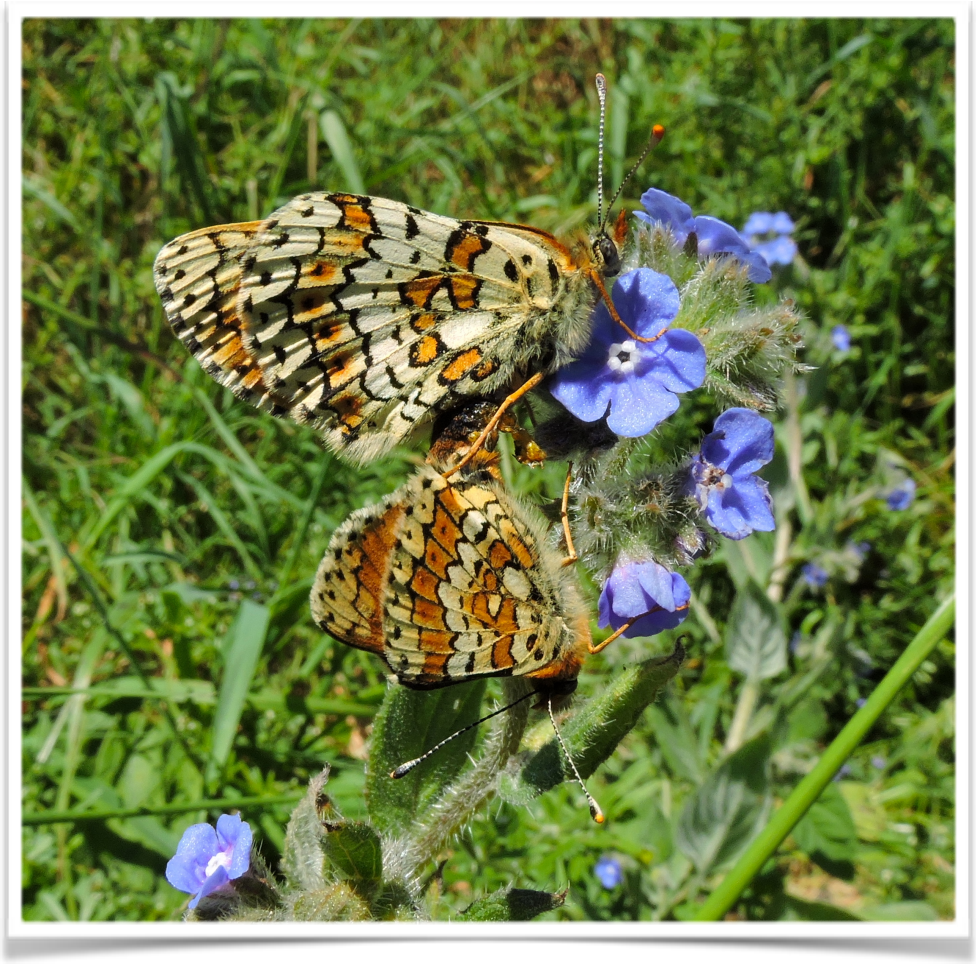
The walk from the tourist nightmare that is Alum Bay to the Needles was gorgeous. Green Hairstreaks were out in numbers, and quite a few Painted Ladies, Large Skippers and Small Coppers graced the rough grassland of the clifftops. Freshly emerged and dazzling, Common Blues were having a party and we sat down surrounded by butterflies. Special moments like these come along and etch themselves into your memory forever.

East of the Needles is a rather surprising and huge concrete installation used in the past to test rocket fire engines, surrounded by steep banks of poor stony soil. Common Bird's-foot Trefoil and Horseshoe Vetch abound here and, right on cue, up popped the first of half-a-dozen Dingy Skippers. We search old mining sites for them in Cornwall, but here on the IoW lepidopterists search rocket-testing sites. There's not much difference if you are a Dingy Skipper, as both habitats have the required warm bare ground and larval food plants.

The next day we arrived at the field trip meeting point and met the leader, Sue Davis, who I had previously contacted to check the Glanvilles were out. They certainly were, as they were on show in the car park! Like all fritillaries, the upperwing pattern is lovely, but this species is in a class of its own when it comes to the underwing. It is simply stunning.

This little spot, about a mile east of Freshwater on the old military coastal road, was phenomenal. The far side of the car park, with its white chalk surface, is a south-facing bank set at about 45 degrees. From there, the ground rises up and up until it forms the chalk hill of Afton Downs. On that bank, in a space of no more than 25 to 30 yards, we found Glanville Fritillary, Large, Grizzled and Dingy Skippers, Green Hairstreak, Wall, Small and Common Blue, and Painted Lady. Nine species, almost all in view at the same time. What a place! What a car park! Sue recommended coming back in July when the hilltop is home to a large Adonis Blue colony.

We tore ourselves away to walk the clifftops eastward. These cliffs, an extension of Dorset's Jurassic Coast, are very unstable and subject to landslips. This,



Mating Glanville Fritillaries (Photo: Roger Hooper)

though, is why the Glanville Fritillary is here. Its food plant, Ribwort Plantain, is very common, but the butterfly only lays its eggs on isolated plants, not on plants growing in grassy areas. Landslips expose new bare patches of ground and, if a plantain seeds itself there, the Glanvilles will use the fresh new growth. They need this ever-changing habitat, and numbers drop in periods of no or few landslips. They really are therefore dependent on the sea eroding the fragile cliffs.

The Glanvilles were enjoying nectaring on the swathes of pink Thrift and, with a backdrop of white cliffs stretching up and over Tennyson Downs to the Needles edging a blue sea, it was a fantastic sight.

Leaving the island on the car ferry back to Lymington, the ship was followed by Common Terns plunging into the churning water off the stern almost the whole way across, which made the time whizz by. It was still warm and sunny as we drove through the New Forest on our way to the second part of our trip.

We drove to the little village of Hawkley, to the north of Petersfield in Hampshire. Nestled amongst tiny lanes

(even on a Cornish scale) it is outrageously pretty, and ridiculously expensive. Everyone works in The City! The pub though, The Hawkley Inn, was wonderful, easily the best B&B I've ever stayed in and just two miles from the hallowed butterfly ground that is Noar Hill, a chalk downland reserve owned by Hampshire and IoW Wildlife Trust, and one of the best places to see the Duke of Burgundy. We were a bit late as its foodplants, Cowslip and Primrose, were all fading, but I did see a few, albeit pale, specimens, but Dukes all the same.

That day brought two unexpected bonuses, in the form of two couples who we got chatting to about an hour apart. The first couple consisted of a chap and his wife, who had a good field magnifying glass and was kneeling studying something intently: clearly the 'real deal' as a botanist. Well, in the next half-hour she showed us five orchids growing in the reserve: Musk, Fragrant, Twayblade, Common-spotted and the very rare Fly Orchid.

Then, a man from the second couple asked if I had found any Dukes. I was looking at one at the time and showed him, and we got talking. "I've just come from this place", he said, handing me a map of Chiddingfold Forest in Surrey. "Lots of Wood Whites"!

The map was marked 'clearing good for Wood Whites', and we were on our way. Thirty minutes later we duly arrived at the entrance called, for some reason, Botany Bay. The forest was a cracker, and the songs of nightingales soon surrounded us. Unusually for nightingales they were quite viewable: with young to feed they, like all parent birds, throw caution to the wind somewhat in the endless search for food.

The temperature was climbing and very hot when we found the clearing. Surrounded by a high green wall of trees, it felt like being in a hidden world. Male and female Broad-bodied Chasers were numerous, as were the Wood Whites – my first ones.

Everything I had read or been told about Wood Whites was true. They are so delicate, with tiny little thin bodies, a weak, almost aimless flight that takes them no higher than waist-height, and a wing shape, when closed, like no other. I have no idea how long we were in that magical place, but the nightingales sang us all the way out and back to the car.

It was the end of the last day on a wonderful journey into a butterfly heartland.

Recording

On the following pages, you can find out more about how butterflies and moths in Cornwall are faring, and how you can help by providing records.

County Butterfly Recorder's report

Dick Goodere, County Butterfly Recorder

In 2016 we received 18,627 records, and counted an impressive 67,120 butterflies. This is before adding in records from the BTO (British Trust for Ornithology), which contributed over 2,500 records in 2015. The Gatekeeper was top of the list this year for the number of butterflies seen (over 9,000), closely followed by the Silver-studded Blue.

Comparing records and abundance with 2015, the following butterflies showed a decline of 50% or more: Small Tortoiseshell, Brown Argus, Small Skipper, Comma, Holly Blue, Marbled White and Small Copper. Others showed an improvement, including Silver-studded Blue, Marsh Fritillary (adults) and Heath Fritillary, all of which are UK Biodiversity Action Plan Species. Other Action Plan species showed a decline (Grizzled and Dingy Skipper, Small Heath, Wall and Grayling), while numbers for the Small Pearl-bordered and Pearl-bordered Fritillary were about the same.

What about our rarer butterflies? Two butterflies that are the focus of the *All the Moor Butterflies* (ATMB) project (see page 6) are of particular interest: the Marsh and Pearl-bordered Fritillaries.



The Comma showed a decline in Cornwall in 2016 compared to 2015 (Photo: Philip Hambly)

Marsh Fritillary adult numbers were up this year – 470 compared with 254 in 2015 – and very similar to the numbers for 2014. However, webs recorded in 2016, particularly on Bodmin Moor, were sharply down from 2015 when there was a concerted effort to search for them at different sites. This does show how important it is to

make the effort to monitor and survey regularly, and to explore potential areas.

Last year, I expressed concern about the decline of the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, which not long ago seemed to be doing so well in Cornwall. This year, the number of records received was slightly down, although the number of butterflies seen was almost the same as last year.



Silver-studded Blue resting on Bramble at Upton Towans (Photo: Tristram Besterman)

Similarly, the Dingy Skipper again showed a decline in records and numbers in 2016, against the national trend. Grizzled Skipper numbers were also down on its one remaining site in the Penhale region.

Silver-studded Blues continue to be Cornwall's great success story, with numbers increasing year on year. This may partly be due to Sally Foster's special interest in this butterfly and her encouragement of timed counts by members, but the range of this butterfly also appears to be expanding, particularly on the coast. Upton Towans is one of the four top UK sites for this species.

On a positive note, Heath Fritillary continues to increase at Greenscombe Wood.

You can find more detailed figures in Appendix 1 to the Minutes of our last AGM meeting: http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk/AGM2017Minutes.pdf

I would like to offer a big thanks to everyone who provides records. It is so important to identify where there are concerns related to changes in numbers, records and distribution, so that we can focus our conservation and monitoring work and contribute to the national picture. Please send your records directly to me. All I need is date, species, location, six-figure grid reference and numbers (see page 25).

Dick Goodere

records@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Moth report, summer 2017

Leon Truscott, County Moth Recorder

The most remarkable records this year were of resident species not recorded in Cornwall for many years. On 2nd June, Pete Bousfield, during a survey of Bodmin Moor, found and photographed a mating pair of Wood Tiger (*Parasemia plantaginis*). This species has not been recorded in Cornwall since the Victoria County History (VCH) in 1906, with a reference to Trebartha, so it's still here after over 100 years!



Mating Wood Tigers (Photo: Pete Bousfield)

In a similar vein, John Cook trapped a Small Argent and Sable (*Epirrhoe tristata*) at Calstock on 19th June. The only previous Cornish record was reported from Altarnun in 1900.



Short-cloaked Moth (Photo: Martin Love)

There were two records of Short-cloaked Moth (*Nola cucullatella*). On 24th June, Martin Love trapped one near Landrake, followed by one from Graham Gordon at nearby Trematon on 15th July, only the fifth and sixth Cornish records, and the first since 1992. John Nicholls found a Small China-mark (*Cataclysta lemnata*) near Causeland on 29th July. The only records since VCH have been one at Trelissick in 2008 and a series in the past five years from Mary Atkinson's garden at Higher Downgate, which has a pond containing the foodplant, Duckweed.

At the time of writing (i.e. with the autumn still to come!), 2017 had turned out to be an unremarkable year for migrants.

As well as the regular migrants, there a few records for European Corn-borer (*Ostrinia nubilalis*), Jersey Mocha (*Cyclophora ruficiliaria*), Small Marbled (*Eublemma parva*), Scarce Bordered Straw (*Helicoverpa armigera*), Bordered Straw (*Heliothis peltigera*), Small Mottled Willow (*Spodoptera exigua*) and White-point (*Mythimna albipuncta*). A rare migrant/adventive record from late 2016 was *Duponchelia fovealis*. One was found on The Lizard by Anthony Blunden on 30th November 2016, the fourth Cornish record.



Roeslerstammia erxlebella (Photo: Leon Truscott)

There was a selection of nationally or locally scarce species reported. *Roeslerstammia erxlebella* came to light at my Torpoint garden on 17th July, the eighth Cornish record. *Pseudotelphusa paripunctella* was recorded at Largin Wood on 28th May by Marilyn Edyvean, only the seventh record for Cornwall. The recently-established *Acleris umbrana* showed an improvement on 2016 (when there were only two records), with five records from John Nicholls at Downderry and Great Trethew. *Cochylis nana* is a common species nationally, but a rarity in Cornwall. Two came to light at Luckett on 25th May (Mary and Tony Atkinson), only the fifth Cornish record and the first since 2008. *Celypha aurofasciana* is a nationally scarce species that normally does well in Cornwall. Marilyn Edyvean recorded singles at Cabilla Wood on 14th and St Blazey on 20th June. *Calamotropha paludella* is nationally local to areas containing the foodplant, *Typha*, but is rare in Cornwall. Until recently, the only Cornish record was from Frank Johns at Cury in 2006. Martin Love has now recorded it three times near Landrake: first in 2014 and then on 17th July and 3rd August 2017.

Portland Ribbon Wave (*Idaea degeneraria*) was once considered a very rare migrant to Cornwall, but since 2004 it has been recorded almost annually, suggesting it is a now scarce resident. In 2017 it was recorded at St Austell on 26th May (Rob Davey), St Blazey on 28th May (Marilyn Edyvean) and Torpoint on 30th May (Dave Allan). Netted Pug (*Eupithecia venosata*) was once a widespread species in Cornwall, but there have been very few records in



Haworth's Minor (Photo: Marilyn Edyvean)

recent years. One came to light at Veryan on 23rd May (Graham Webb). Marbled Pug (*Eupithecia irriguata*) is scarce, both nationally and locally. Martin Love recorded one on 20th April at Landrake, as did Mary and Tony Atkinson on 29th April at Merryhue.

It looks as though Little Thorn (*Cepphis advenaria*) might be establishing itself as a resident in Cornwall. From its advent to the county in 2006 to 2016 there were twelve records, and another five have been added in 2017, nearly all by Mary Atkinson: two at Lower Downgate on 16th May were followed by three records from Luckett, 22nd May (1), 25th May (21 – an amazing total, suggesting the emergence of a breeding population?) and 16th June (3). This was followed by one I found at Penlee Battery Reserve – at the exact spot where I recorded one in 2015! Beautiful Hook-tip (*Laspeyria flexula*) is another erstwhile Cornish rarity that has increased in recent years, but is still a scarce moth here, recorded twice from Landrake, on 24th June and 3rd July (Martin Love). Haworth's Minor (*Celaena haworthii*) is a local, mainly northern, species in Britain and rare in Cornwall. Until last year, there were only two Cornish records. Marilyn Edyvean recorded two at Penhale Sands on 5th September 2016, then Nick Waddington reported one from Par on 26th July.

Leon Truscott



Small Argent and Sable (Photo: John Cook)

The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey: what's it all about?

Kelly Uren, WCBS Champion

The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) forms part of an integrated approach to monitoring butterflies through the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme. Launched in 2009, the WCBS involves the sampling of randomly selected 1km^2 survey locations across the UK. It complements conventional transect recording through gathering additional butterfly population data from the wider countryside, allowing population trends to be observed, and crucially helping to identify species in decline or that are present in only low numbers.

Transect recording routes are typically chosen because they are known to contain a variety of butterflies and/or suitable butterfly habitat. These records are incredibly useful but there remain vast areas for which there are very few or no records. Without data for these areas, it is not possible to tell whether butterflies are either not present or unrecorded.

Are you interested in finding out more about butterfly recording, but feel that commitment to monitoring a transect route over 26 weeks of the year is too great a task? Well, if so, the WCBS recording scheme might be just the right starter project for you. Unlike transects, a WCBS square only needs visiting a minimum of two occasions between May and August.

The WCBS provides the opportunity to collect records from areas currently not being monitored. The squares are randomly selected, therefore removing any location bias. We have 25 squares identified in Cornwall, but under 40% are currently being monitored. Cornwall is one of the most under-recorded counties in the WCBS and we need help to change this.

The project provides an opportunity to explore our beautiful County, to get to know somewhere you have not visited before during one of the most beautiful periods of the year, and to discover which butterfly species are present. You may even discover a species in a location it was thought to be lost from. We have had very exciting news that White-letter Hairstreak has been confirmed within the County, a species that was believed to no longer be present in Cornwall. Many more could be present in one of our unmonitored squares, just waiting to be discovered!

If you would like to find out more about the WCBS and how you can help, please contact me at ktherese@hotmail.co.uk



White-letter Hairstreak, near Saltash, 2017
(Photo: Graham Gordon)

The joys of transect walking: notes from a new recorder

Kelly Uren

I became involved with CBC in 2012, joining as a member the following year. Over the next couple of years I greatly enjoyed attending field trips, all of them incredibly informative, which helped me to identify butterflies I had never heard of before (Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Gatekeeper and Grayling to name just a few!). With my new-found confidence, I was inspired to set up my own transect to discover which butterflies were present within my local area.

Managing a transect route is a thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding experience. It is something to look forward to during the cold, wet days of winter, when wandering through the countryside, bathed in glorious sun with butterflies fluttering past, is just a distant memory. But soon the clocks change and April arrives, a very important time in the butterfly calendar: the start of annual transect recording!

How welcome it is to see our Lepidoptera friends emerging to brighten up our countryside, urban spaces and gardens. Many species – such as the Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Comma and Peacock – brave the cold winter months as adults by hibernating, possibly in a garden shed or a tree crevice. These are the earliest to emerge. Others have spent the winter in the safety of a chrysalis, emerging in the warming weather of spring: Orange-tip, Large White and Holly Blue. Still others, such as the beautiful Marsh Fritillary, spend the winter months as a caterpillar, not pupating until as late as May.

Transect routes are monitored for 26 weeks in the year, finishing typically at the end of September, although sightings can still be made into October if the weather is favourable.

"It is so exciting to be working towards identifying butterfly population patterns in my local area"

My transect route encompasses a meadow close to the north coast. It can be very windy here, given the close proximity to the steep cliffs and rough Atlantic sea. As a result, I have found that butterflies tend not to be present in exposed areas during April but, come May, numbers start slowly to increase as the early flowering plants emerge. Then, in the warmer days of June and July, my transect route is aflutter with species, including Common Blue, Painted Lady, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper and Ringlet.

During 2016, I recorded 18 butterfly species; the most numerous were Meadow Brown (1st: 494 sightings) with Ringlet (2nd: 86 sightings) and Gatekeeper (3rd: 85 sightings). This year I have at the time of writing recorded 16 species; again Meadow Brown have been the most numerous (531 sightings to date), but this time with Gatekeeper in 2nd place and Ringlet (3rd).

Highlights of 2017 have included my first ever Wall Brown sighting in this area; a very welcomed spotting of a handful of Small Tortoiseshells in mid-August, a species which has really struggled this year; and several Painted Lady sightings.

As summer comes to a close and the temperature drops, so too do butterfly numbers, but the next generation will be busy during the winter months preparing themselves for their time to take flight come next year.

It is so exciting to be working towards identifying butterfly population patterns in my local area, and the beauty of butterfly spotting is you just never know what you might see next!



Small Tortoiseshell nectaring on Perennial Sow-thistle (Photo: Tristram Besterman)

How to record butterflies in Cornwall

Records are essential to inform our conservation work: the more we have, the better our understanding of each species, its population, range, and the effects of human activity and climate change.

Any records can be submitted using the instructions below: once you start, you will find it quite easy and you will be contributing invaluable data.

Information needed for records

- Date
- Species name (common or scientific name)
- Number (assumed to be adults unless qualified)
- Location (a place/area name e.g. Cardinham Woods)
- Grid reference (GB OS grid reference is preferred with 6 or more figures)
- Recorder's name

You can include any comments or observations that you see fit may help to understand the data, such as strange behaviour or high winds accounting for fewer sightings.

Send in records

There are two easy way to record butterflies in Cornwall:

1. Fill in the recording form on our website at http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk/form.html. When submitted, this will automatically be sent to the County Recorder.
2. Send the information by email or post to the County Recorder:

   Dick Goodere, 3 Churchtown Road, Gwithian, Hayle TR27 5BX
   Phone:01736753077 email: records@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

The County Recorder is then able to check for any anomalies and significant records, and we are able to maintain an up-to-date picture of what's happening in Cornwall at any one time.

What else?

That's it! Photos are always handy if there is doubt about a sighting, as even common species can appear outside their normal locations, or very late/early in the year. Photos also create a personal record you can refer to in the future which, along with your own records, will form a history of your butterfly experiences.



Would you like to join a team and help to shape the future of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation? Then there is a place on Committee for YOU!

There are three communities on which butterfly conservation in Cornwall depends: our members, our volunteers and our committee. Each of these groups of people is indispensable to helping butterflies and moths to flourish in the County.

As members of Butterfly Conservation, you give your support in many ways and we depend on you to keep our head above water. Our volunteers do a huge amount of work in the field, observing, recording, clearing scrub and improving habitat for our most endangered species, as well as fund-raising and helping the public to engage with butterfly conservation.

So what does the committee do? It consists of about ten people, each of whom has a voluntary job to help CBC to deliver on its promise to conserve and record species in Cornwall and to engage the public with our work. That all takes a great deal of organisation, deciding on priorities, setting up projects and managing our resources. You'll find us a friendly and informal bunch and we have a lot of fun in the process. This is what the Committee does – and we welcome new talent, ideas and energy.

If you think you might be able to help and can spare an evening four times a year for the meetings, then please get in touch to have a chat about what's involved. Contact: Tristram Besterman on 01579 349146 or 07796 660057, or t.besterman@btinternet.com

Finally, a message from Kathy Wood, our Membership Secretary

Have you changed your email address and forgotten to tell CBC?

Emails are by far the quickest, easiest and cheapest way for the CBC Committee to contact members and keep them informed of our news and activities.

After a lot of campaigning, I now have up-to-date email addresses for 70% of our members, but would like to have them for all members that use email. Several members have changed email addresses but forgotten to let us or Head Office know. Of course, I appreciate that some of you don't use email, and that's fine - it's the others I'm after.

If you use email, but did not receive an email from me in June with an invitation from our Chairman Philip Hambly to the Lethytep Open Day, then that means I don't have your address, and you will be missing other news and information. You can send me an updated address by emailing me at membership@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk. If unsure, please contact me anyway - I'd rather have the information twice than not at all.

Thank you.

Committee and contacts

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