ISSUE 63 | SPRING 2018

Cornwall Butterfly Observer



BUTTERFLY FAIR AND AGM

Hold the date for this exciting event on 28 April, with Matthew Oates as our headline speaker (page 6)

FRITILLARIES GALORE!

Find out about a successful first year for the *All the Moor Butterflies* project (page 8), and a sun-filled trip to find High Brown Fritillaries on Dartmoor (page 19)

FIELD TRIPS

We would love to see our members and friends on our field trips planned for 2018. Everyone welcome! (page 13)

Butterfly Conservation
Saving butterflies, moths and our environment
50th Anniversary

Cornwall Branch
www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk





Photos:

Front cover: Marsh Fritillary (Shaun Poland)
Back cover: Silver-studded Blue (Shaun Poland)
This page: Large Whites on *Verbena bonariensis* near Porkellis (Amanda Scott); Silver-studded Blue on Bramble, Upton Towans (Tristram Besterman)

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Chairman's report

Hello all. In the last edition of this rag, I commented on what I hoped the outcome of the Brexit negotiations might hold for our wildlife in the future. The recent proposals by Mr Gove provide sufficient reasons for all of us to be optimistic. However, I am sure that any good intentions will surely be diluted or compromised when the farming, chemical fertilizer and pesticide lobbyists have had their two penn'orth! Fingers crossed then!

Jim Barker has recently stood down from our committee, although he is still working for the Branch behind the scenes. Jim has spent many years as Transect Coordinator and we are indebted to him for his devotion to Lepidoptera in Cornwall. He continues to assist his replacement, Kelly, and remains actively involved in the management of transects and records etc. Many thanks, Jim.



Scrub bashing on a cold January day at Church Hay Down (Tristram Besterman)

We have recently secured the services of two more very capable committee members. Sue Allen has been volunteering for CBC for some time, but has now accepted our invitation to join the committee. Jerry Dennis has also been helping with our work parties, and has now agreed to be at the sharp end of CBC, by fulfilling the role of Health and Safety Officer. Welcome to Sue and Jerry: we look forward to enjoying the expertise that you bring to the Branch.

Around 12 months ago, CBC released its video *Cornwall's Butterflies: Back from the Brink* which is available on our website. This has resulted, as anticipated, in an enormous uplift to our membership numbers, rising to 717 in February 2017, the highest percentage of all 32 branches throughout the country for the second consecutive year. They do say it pays to advertise!

Our grants officer, Jim Cooper, has been in full swing bringing in funds over the last few months, managing to source a new grant to support our ABC (*Awesome Butterflies in Cornwall*) project focussing on providing Lepidoptera education to schools in Kenwyn parish, and more recently extra funding to continue our *Mining for Butterflies* project, which had temporarily been delayed due to insufficient finance. Maryanne Thomas, a local CBC member, has been busy preparing and organising the delivery of the ABC programme: a huge thanks to Maryanne for volunteering to do this.

And finally, my annual plea to you all to attend our AGM on Saturday April 28th in St Erme Community Centre, near Truro (see page 6 for more details). We are particularly pleased this year to secure the services of Matthew Oates as our headline speaker. Matthew got hooked on British butterflies at the age of nine. He works as a nature conservation advisor for the National Trust, has made several appearances on TV and radio, and published a number of studies and articles on butterflies and other aspects of wildlife conservation. He is also very entertaining - do not miss this opportunity to see and hear Matthew in full flow!

There will be other speakers to entertain you, along with great refreshments in a superb modern hall with all facilities. We usually have around 100 people attending, with room for lots more. Please come along to support those who work so hard for our butterflies and moths throughout the year, and bring along any of your friends who might be interested: they do not need to be members, though we can readily accommodate them on the day if they wish! The AGM itself is a small formality, usually occupying around 25 minutes in the morning. The rest of the day is for you to be entertained and enjoy, and is purely informal. I look forward to meeting you all on the day.

With best wishes

Philip Hambly
CBC Chairman

Butterfly Fair and Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation will be held on **Saturday 28 April** from 10am to 4.30pm at St Erme Community Centre, Castle Field, Trispen, Truro, Cornwall TR4 9BD. We have renamed the event *The Butterfly Fair* because, over the years, this brilliant day has turned into so much more than just an AGM!

We stay at our usual venue because it is wonderful and perfect for everyone's needs. The location is very convenient, and you can find it opposite the large Honda garage, just off the A39 main road. We have held the price for another year and you have told us that we give excellent value for money. So, entry price on the door remains £7 (students £3.50), including pasty lunch, savouries, cakes, tea, coffee and squash. If you have been before, you will know that the food is unrivalled! There will be many stalls promoting our own work and that of many of our partner wildlife organisations in Cornwall. There will be lots of tempting things to purchase and our usual mega fund-raising raffle.


Matthew Oates

This year, we are delighted to welcome the legendary **Matthew Oates** as our headline speaker. Matthew has led a butterflying life. Naturalist, conservationist and passionate lover of poetry, he has devoted himself to butterflies: to their observation, to singing their praises, and to ensuring their survival. Based on fifty years of detailed diaries, his book, 'In Pursuit of Butterflies' is the chronicle of this life. Matthew retires from his post as 'National Specialist on Nature' for National Trust two weeks before our Butterfly Fair. He says “I’m retiring to, rather than from. I plan to write, dream and muse. My best hours lie ahead.” So we are expecting wonderful things from his talk: *His Imperial Majesty, the natural history of the Purple Emperor*.

Jenny Plackett is Butterfly Conservation's Senior Regional Officer for South West England and a great support to our branch. She will talk on the progress

of *All the Moor Butterflies*. This Heritage Lottery funded project has just begun its second year and covers Bodmin Moor, Exmoor and Dartmoor, all of which hold nationally important populations of some of our most threatened butterfly and moth species.

Shaun Poland, CBC volunteer and moth & butterfly enthusiast, will give us a talk named *Butterflies and Moths - a historical flight*. This will be a wander through the wider human relationship with lepidoptera and how it has changed through time.



Jack Barton in Costa Rica, with an Io moth

Jack Barton, a young naturalist and 3rd year Zoology student at the University of Exeter, is passionate about all wildlife, from seabirds to butterflies to wild flowers. Jack is a keen conservation volunteer and has endless enthusiasm and dedication for engaging and educating people about nature, and hopes to leave the world a richer place for wildlife and people. He will take us on *A whistle-stop tour of Costa Rican Wildlife*.

There will be a not-to-be-missed musical interlude from regular volunteer and Chairman of Bodmin Folk Club, **Malcolm Pinch**. He will be performing his latest hits, inspired by his work with CBC!

Everyone is welcome to our Butterfly Fair, you don't have to be a member. We look forward to seeing you all there! Any questions about the Butterfly Fair should go to the organiser: Jo Poland (publicity@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk; 01872 540371).

Prospective new committee members should contact the Branch Secretary at least 21 days before the AGM: Alison Norris (secretary@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk; 01209 831116).

All the Moor Butterflies: how the first year went

Simon Phelps and Megan Lowe from Butterfly Conservation, and Jo Poland from our own branch, report on a productive first year.

The first year of *All the Moor Butterflies* has flown by in a whizz of butterfly surveys, events and practical habitat management. The project has exceeded its targets, reaching over 1000 people and delivering over 60 events across the three moorland areas: Exmoor, Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor. It has been wonderful to see the support for these threatened species from partners, landowners and the public, all helping us to deliver work to conserve and celebrate these special butterflies.

The project focused on surveying and monitoring six target species during the spring and summer months of 2017: the Marsh, High Brown, Pearl-bordered, Heath and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, and Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth. From April to September 2017, 148 sites were surveyed across the three moorland areas. A total of 3398 individual butterflies were recorded by 31 volunteer surveyors, as well as project staff and partner organisations. Overall the species had a mixed response in 2017; some did well, whereas others struggled.

Marsh Fritillary was recorded on 36 Dartmoor sites; many fared worse than in 2016. Two metapopulation networks (Tavy and Tor Valleys) saw low numbers, whilst in the other two networks (Long Lane and Postbridge West Webburn) numbers were strong at core but low at more peripheral sites. Results for Bodmin Moor were more encouraging, with the species being found on 18 sites. Six new colonies were discovered and good numbers recorded on known sites. These early results are extremely encouraging, suggesting that Bodmin Moor is a key regional stronghold for this threatened species. Sadly, none were recorded on Exmoor, where it is now feared to be extinct.





Adult Marsh Fritillaries (Simon Phelps) and pupa (Cerin Poland)



Pearl-bordered Fritillary (Simon Phelps)

Across Exmoor and Dartmoor, the **High Brown Fritillary** did worse than in 2016. However, when looking at the data in greater detail, a more mixed result emerges. On Exmoor, in the Heddon Valley, the species was recorded on seven sites. It remained stable on one, increased on two and decreased on two. Habitat conditions vary across sites, meaning that the species is doing well in some sections of the valley but struggling a little in others. The High Brown Fritillary appeared to fare worse on Dartmoor; however, this could be due to survey difficulties. This species is one of the hardest to identify in flight, making accurate identification difficult and impacting on the data. Low numbers were recorded on most Dartmoor sites (five sites in total), although at some of the core sites the species increased or remained stable.

The **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** had a good year on Dartmoor, and was recorded on 40 sites. Numbers were higher than in 2016 across many sites and the species seems to be remaining relatively stable on Dartmoor. Particular highlights were 119 being seen in Haldon Forest, 73 seen at Hembury and 40 at Aish Tor. Bodmin Moor also fared well, with the species being recorded on six of the seven sites surveyed. Numbers appeared stable and a high count of 44 at Fellover was particularly encouraging. It is heartening to see the species on sites that Cornwall Branch volunteers have worked so

hard on in the past, showing that their work has made a difference for this special butterfly.

In 2017, 14 **Heath Fritillary** sites were surveyed on Exmoor, finding a total of 11 occupied (12 colonies) and three unoccupied sites. The 12 recorded colonies consisted of seven large, one medium and two small estimated peak population sizes; only individuals were recorded at two sites, and population size could not be calculated. In terms of a five-year trend (since 2012) of the 14 surveyed sites, colony size remains stable at five, whilst seven sites are declining, and two are possibly extinct. Core sites on the Holnicote Estate and Grabbist Ridge recorded good counts; however, some of the peripheral sites struggled. Hawkcombe Woods and Haddon Hill both did well, rising from last year.

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary was recorded on a number of sites across all three moorland areas. However, at the time of writing the data has not been analysed.

The **Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth** was recorded on a handful of known sites on Dartmoor, with good numbers being seen at its core site. The species has not been seen on Bodmin Moor since 2008, and searches were made by staff and volunteers. Unfortunately, none were seen, but further surveys are planned for 2018 to try to find this elusive species. We plan to search for its larvae, which can sometimes be easier to find than the moth itself. If you want to help us with this, please do get in touch!

"We are lucky to have a tremendous group of volunteers"

The support we receive from farmers and landowners has been fantastic: we are extremely grateful to them. We are also lucky to have a tremendous group of volunteers who have worked hard surveying for these species and carrying out habitat management work. It has been encouraging to see new volunteers joining in and learning from others. There are plenty of opportunities for you to join in during 2018: find out how on the Cornwall Branch website: http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk/vols.html.

There have been many highlights of a successful year. Volunteers have discovered new Marsh Fritillary colonies on Bodmin Moor, which is really exciting. Work has begun on engaging with new audiences, working with the Moor to Enjoy project on Exmoor. We have also delivered events for young people and families, such as at Dartmoor National Park Authority events and with groups like Cornwall College. We have also delivered several volunteer work parties, carrying out vital habitat management work to benefit the target species.

None of this would be possible without the support of our funders: Heritage Lottery Fund, Natural England, Environment Agency, Cornwall AONB, Exmoor National Park Authority, Dartmoor National Park Authority, Dartmoor Preservation Association, and the Somerset, Devon and Cornwall Butterfly Conservation Branches.



Volunteers in June at Bodmin Moor (top; Tristram Besterman) and in October at Sunnybanks Farm (bottom; Tim Hutton)

Work is now beginning on planning events for next year. We are looking forward to what 2018 will bring and hope to continue reaching new audiences and offering opportunities for people to join in with the project. To find out more, please visit the Butterfly Conservation website, or contact Megan on mlowe@butterfly-conservation.org / 07827 460767.

In brief

A round up of news items

Butterfly Conservation: 50 years of saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Butterfly Conservation was first registered as a charity on 10th March 1968, so 2018 is its 50th birthday!

Moth Night: 14th to 16th June 2018

Organised by Atropos and Butterfly Conservation, Moth Night is the annual celebration of moth recording throughout Britain and Northern Ireland, with local events aimed at raising public awareness of moths. Participants are encouraged to see what moths are flying in their gardens and wider countryside, and to send in their records via the website: www.mothnight.info.

The first Lepidoptera: older than we thought

In case you didn't catch it on the news a few weeks ago, recently discovered fossil remains push the first appearance of what we would recognise as moths and butterflies back by 70 million years, to the start of the Triassic - the dawn of the dinosaurs - rather than in the earlier Cretaceous period, as originally thought. You can find the full scientific paper at: http://advances.sciencemag.org/content/4/1/e1701568.full.

Membership news

Kathy Wood reports that, thanks to all our new members, the Cornwall Branch is still top of the league!

At the time of writing (mid February), Cornwall Branch membership comprises a record 512 households and 717 individuals. Each November, Head Office produces statistics showing the number of member households in each of the 32 branches (this determines how much Head Office pay to each Branch the following April), and a series of impressive graphs showing every possible variation on this theme and how each has changed since the previous year.

I am pleased to be able to tell you that, after being second behind Devon in 2015 and top in 2016, for the second consecutive year Cornwall had the highest percentage rate of increase (19.2%) of all the Branches, in November 2017. In second place was Lancashire with 16.9%. The increase in household membership nationally was 10.4%.

Cornwall Branch has been very active lately and done a great deal for the benefit of butterflies and moths in Cornwall (see articles in this magazine), and we feel that this is reflected in the excellent membership result as more people get to hear about our work and want to support it. This is where you come in! Please do whatever you can to help us continue this excellent progress. Talk about Butterfly Conservation to everyone you know. Share our posts on social media. Bring a couple of friends or neighbours to our AGM, Open Day and field trips. When you have finished with your magazines, pass them on to someone who might be interested, or leave them in a waiting room where lots of others can enjoy them. If you have somewhere to display them, ask Jo Poland or me for some of our publicity postcards. Ask your WI, garden club, U3A or other organisation to book a talk about butterflies and moths.

The more members we have, the more we can do for butterflies and moths in Cornwall.



CBC supporters on a trip to Upton Towans in July 2017 (Tristram Besterman)

Field trips and events 2018

Welcome to CBC's 2018 field trip programme; an exciting mix of new sites and old favourites.

Our field trips are friendly and open to all, including accompanied children, whatever your level of experience and whether or not you're a CBC member. Please come prepared for Cornwall's changeable weather and mixed terrain – waterproofs, good walking shoes/boots, sun tan cream, as well as water and lunch/snacks. Please bear in mind that postcodes may not be as accurate as grid references in pinpointing meeting places, particularly on coastal walks with no obvious landmarks and where postcodes cover a larger than usual area. You may find the following Grab a Grid useful: http://www.bnhs.co.uk/focuson/grabagridref/html/index.htm.

We have organised some trips in partnership with other local conservation organisations. Increasingly, the importance of recording is recognised, so we encourage everyone to note what they find on the trips so we can continue to build a better picture of Lepidoptera distribution across Cornwall. Details of the field trips can also be viewed online on our website: http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk/events.html.

Sunday 13 May: DE LANK QUARRY

Near St Breward, 11am-3pm

This is a beautiful walk down to the De Lank River, with the opportunity to see the rare Pearl-bordered Fritillary and other spring butterflies such as the Brimstone. Much volunteer conservation work has been undertaken on this site, and this will be an opportunity to see the impact of this valuable work. Please bring a packed lunch. Long trousers and long sleeved shirts are advised. Meet at the small car park (SX 099753) PL30 4NQ, on the right before the entrance to the Quarry, which should not be entered. Parking is limited so car share is preferable. *Leaders and contacts*: Sally Foster (01736 753259) and Jo Poland (01872 540371).



Grizzled Skipper (Shaun Poland)

Thursday 17 May: WILD FLOWERS AND BUTTERFLIES OF PENHALE

Near Cubert, 10am

Booking is essential. This is a joint MOD Conservation Group/CBC walk. In addition to seeing a variety of spring wild flowers, we should find the Grizzled Skipper, which is now only located on this site in Cornwall. Please meet by the South Gate near Treworthen Farm, Cubert (SW783567) TR8 5PZ. Please bring a packed lunch. Places are limited. *Leaders*: Ian Bennallick (Cornwall Botany Group) and Jon Cripps (Cornwall WildlifeTrust). *Contact for booking*: Dick Goodere (01736 753077).

Sunday 27 May: PREDANNACK, THE LIZARD Near Mullion, 11am
We have organised this trip in partnership with the Natural England team on the Lizard, and will be looking for newly-emerged Marsh Fritillaries. Meet at the NT car park at Higher Predannack Wollas (SW669162) TR12 7EZ. Please bring a packed lunch. *Leaders*: Steve Townsend (Lizard NE team) and Dick Goodere (CBC). *Contact*: Dick Goodere (01736 753077).

Saturday 2 June: CHAPEL PORTH Near St Agnes, 1pm
Join us in looking for Green Hairstreaks along this beautiful cliff walk. The terrain can be steep and rough but the views are spectacular. Meet at Chapel Porth National Trust beach -car parking charge for non-NT members- (SW697495) TR5 0NS.The car park fills up quickly, so car sharing is advised. *Leader and contact*: Kathy Wood (01872 864344).

Saturday 9 June: GREENSCOMBE WOODS Near Luckett, 1pm
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) PL17 8NJ. *Leader*: Richard Vulliamy. *Contact*: Tristram Besterman (01579 349146).

Saturday 16 June: CUBERT COMMON Near Crantock, 11am-3pm
Cubert Common, an undulating area of sandy, SSSI-designated grassland owned by the National Trust, is one of the few enclosed commons in England. We will be looking for a wide variety of butterflies (including Brown Argus, Dark Green Fritillary, Silver-studded Blue and Small Heath); moths; other invertebrates; and also rare plants. Meeting point is the National Trust Car Park near Polly Joke beach (SW776599) TR8 5QS. This is a relatively small car park so car sharing is advised. Directions: Drive through Crantock village and, shortly after Crantock, turn left onto the road to Treago Farm. Drive through the farm and follow the track, and park in the National Trust car park (note that at Treago Farm there is a gate crossing the track which you will need to open & close).
Please bring a packed lunch.
Leaders and contact: Jo and Shaun Poland (01872 540371) jogreenp@gmail.com.

Saturday 30 June: CBC OPEN DAY Near Looe, 11am
Philip (CBC Chairman) 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, is provided, plus tombola and raffle. We ask for a £5 donation to help cover food costs. To get to Lethytep (SX175588) PL13 2PG, turn south off the A390 Liskeard to Lostwithiel road at East Taphouse, taking the B3359 to Looe and Polperro. After 3.3 miles, take the 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).

Tuesday 3 July: UPTON TOWANS Near Hayle, 11am
Join us on a walk through this extensive sand dune complex situated between Gwithian and Hayle: a Cornwall Wildlife Trust reserve and SSSI. The main target species will be Dark Green Fritillaries and Silver-studded Blues but there will be many other lepidoptera and other wildlife to see. Meet by the gate, in front of the large chimney at the entrance to the CWT reserve (SW 579396) TR27 5BJ Please bring a packed lunch. *Leader and contact*: Dick Goodere (01736 753077).

Saturday 7 July: PENLEE RESERVE AND PENLEE POINT Near Rame Head, 11am
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. Please bring a packed lunch. Meet in Penlee Battery car park (SX436491) PL10 1LG. *Leader*: Leon Truscott. *Contact*: Tristram Besterman (01579 349146).

Saturday 14 July: CABILLA WOODS Glyn Valley, 3 miles east of Bodmin, 1pm
Join us for this walk through the Cornwall Wildlife Trust reserve described as "one of the largest and possibly finest ancient woodland in Cornwall" Our target species is the Silver-washed Fritillary with a chance of seeing the f. *valezina*. There should also be many other butterflies including Commas, Ringlets and Gatekeepers. Directions: proceed along the A38 from the A30 heading towards Liskeard. About a mile past the Bodmin Parkway junction, turn left down Le Ball Hill. Cross over a small bridge and immediately turn right. There are places for parking (SX128653) PL30 4BE. *Leader*: Roger Hooper. *Contact*: Kelly Uren (01209 715288).

Saturday 21/Sunday 22 July: MOTH EVENT, LANILEY HOUSE, TRURO Near St Erme, 6pm (21/7) and 9am (22/7)
We are grateful to David and Sue Stone (CBC) for providing this exciting opportunity to set moth traps in their beautiful grounds. The great variety of flora that they have planted promises to attract many different moths. Come and join us on the evening of the 21st for the launch of this event, which will include a talk by moth enthusiast Shaun Poland (CBC), amongst other activities for all ages and fundraising activities - further details to follow. You can watch the traps being set up, then stay to see the first moth arrivals and/or come to see the traps being opened on Sunday morning. Directions: coming from Truro, take the right turning off the A39 (signposted Trehane) about 1.5 miles after the Crematorium. There is a white bungalow on the corner of this lane. Go down the lane for 400 yards to the driveway entrance on the left which is after an extreme left hand bend (SW842484) TR4 9AU Please note that the post code will not take you to the house. *Leader and contact*: Jo Poland (01872 540371) jogreenp@gmail.com.

Thursday 26 July: NEWLYN DOWNS Near St Newlyn East, 1pm
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 SW8368355209 (TR8 5LQ) (East Wheal Rose Farm). *Leader and contact*: Carly Riley (01637 498462).



National Trust Ranger Sarah Stevens (second from left) leading the 2017 field trip to Lundy Bay. Join her and CBC this year on Sunday 5 August for this wonderful walk along a National Trust butterfly transect (photo: Tristram Besterman)

Sunday 29 July: GODOLPHIN WOODS Near Godolphin, 1.30pm
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, 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 (TR13 9RE). *Leaders and contact*: Perry Smale and Judi Swift (01736 0448304 or 07412 262184).

Sunday 5 August: LUNDY BAY Near Polzeath, 1.30pm
Join us for a beautiful walk along one of our National Trust transects. There will be a selection of butterfly species and the Ranger, Sarah Stevens, will be leading the walk. Meet in the NT car park, PL27 6QZ (SW952795). *Leader and contact*: Sarah Stevens (01208 863821).

Sunday 12 August: KYNANCE COVE Near The Lizard, 11am
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 (SW688131) TR12 7PJ. Parking free to National Trust members. A stick is recommended as there are areas of very steep and uneven ground. Please bring a packed lunch. *Leaders and contacts*: Kelly Uren (01209 715288) and Sue Allen (01872 240246).

Sunday 19 August: GWENNAP HEAD AND PORTHGWARRA Near Land's End, 10.30am
This beautiful location boasts an abundance of butterflies, including Graylings, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, Clouded Yellows, Small Heaths and many more. Meet in the Porthgwarra car park (SW370217) TR19 6JR: charges apply (café). Please bring a packed lunch. *Leader and contact*: Jim Barker (01736 794134).

Moth report, spring 2018

Leon Truscott, County Moth Recorder, brings us up-to-date.

This report is mostly an update of records added or received since the last one (see the Autumn Newsletter, Issue 62), mainly of migrants recorded in the last quarter of 2017, but also one or two earlier records not mentioned previously.

2016: *Pediasia contaminella* has an interesting distribution in Cornwall. It is commonly recorded on the Isles of Scilly but, until recently, there were only two unconfirmed records from the mainland. On 27 July 2016, Frank Johns recorded one at Cury – the first confirmed record for the Cornish mainland.



Argyrotaenia ljungiana (Jen Bousfield)

2017: On 12 May, Jen Bousfield recorded two *Argyrotaenia ljungiana* at Middlewood. This is only the eleventh record for Cornwall, but a species new to VC2. On 28 October, Mary and Tony Atkinson recorded *Acleris hyemana* at Luckett. Although it is occasionally recorded in the west of the county (VC1), this is the first record for VC2 since the nineteenth century. *Grapholita molesta* is an adventive species which has been found as a larva in imported peaches. One was found as an adult moth indoors by Jen Bousfield at Middlewood on 9 November, the second record for Cornwall. *Grapholita lobarzewskii* is a nationally scarce species. One was trapped by George Davis at Maenporth on 18 June, the first Cornish record. The nationally rare (RDB3) Triangle (*Heterogenea asella*) was recorded by Marilyn Edyvean at Cardinham Woods on 2 July. This is the fourth Cornish record, the last being Marilyn's record from Cabilla Wood in 2013.



Acleris hyemana (Mary Atkinson)

Antigastra catalaunalis was recorded at Coverack on 18 (3) and 20 October by David Brown (DCGB), the Macro-moth Recorder for Warwickshire. David had a successful stay at Coverack, with some more

interesting migrant records to follow. There were two records for *Herpetogramma licarsisalis* (Grass Webworm), both on 18 October. One at Trussel, near Liskeard from Andy Adams, is the first for VC2; the other is from DCGB at Coverack. Another from Coverack was *Hellula undalis* (Old World Webworm). Two were trapped by DCGB on 18 October, followed by another on 19 October. A Striped Hawk-Moth *Hyles livornica* came to light at Maenporth on 22 May (George Davis).

Three records for the Crimson Speckled (*Utetheisa pulchella*) were received, all daytime observations: on 18 October, one at Porth Hellick Down on St Mary's (Andy Sumnall) and one on the coast path at Predannack (T.C. Beaumont and A.O. Beaumont). On 29 October, one was found by Mark Bickerdike near Tregrehan Mills. Two Purple Marbled (*Eublemma ostrina*) came to light at Coverack on 18 October (DCGB). DCGB also recorded a Scar Bank Gem (*Ctenoplusia limbirena*) at Coverack on 27 October, the ninth Cornish record. A Dark Mottled Willow (*Spodoptera cilium*) came to light at Maenporth on 22 October (George Davis). George also recorded a Splendid Brocade (*Lacanobia splendens*) at Maenporth on 16 July. Although there are 14 records from Scilly, this is only the sixth record for mainland Cornwall and the third from Maenporth! Don Rogers recorded a Flame Brocade (*Trigonophora flammea*) at Lerryn on 18 October, only the fourth Cornish record and the first for VC2. It was a good year for Radford's Flame Shoulder (*Ochropleura leucogaster*), with six records received: St Agnes, Scilly on 14 October (Les Finch), St Mary's, Scilly on 18 October (Ralph Parks) and four records from Coverack between 18 and 27 October (DCGB).



Crimson Speckled (*Utetheisa pulchella*) at Predannack (Andy Beaumont)

All the more fritillaries!

Inspired by *All the Moor Butterflies* (see page 8), Roger Hooper went off to Dartmoor last July in search of the rare High Brown Fritillary.

I am the world's biggest fan of retirement. The feeling of freedom is intoxicating. However, I am also one of life's 'do-ers', always with something to go to, pick-up, help with or whatever, and still don't have many days entirely to myself. In mid-summer last year, July 5 to be precise, I had one of those 'me' days. On BBC Spotlight the evening before, the weather forecast for the following day was simply hot, hot, and then hotter. I made my mind up in a second that I was going to try and see Britain's rarest butterfly, the High Brown Fritillary, on its favoured location of Aish Tor, near Poundsgate in the south of Dartmoor.

In birdwatching terms this was a bit of a 'twitch', with the exception that this butterfly breeds at the location rather than being a storm-driven avian vagrant. The High Brown needs a bit of researching before you go charging off, or you may find you are not looking at one at all, but its nearest relative, the Dark Green Fritillary. One problem with Aish Tor is that there are lots of Dark Greens there too, plus gorgeous Silver-washed Fritillaries, just to add to the confusion.

Being a 'new boy' on the site, I parked on a gravel area just off the road and walked down to what looked the likeliest place to see something. It was really hot and sunny. Great weather for butterflies, yes. For identifying them, well, definitely no. Big brown butterflies were whizzing around like hooligans and, although I could pick out the Silver-washed, the other two were impossible. The odds were a High Brown Fritillary had flown past me several times, but I just couldn't tell.

> **"Big brown butterflies were whizzing around like hooligans"**

In a small clearing on the bracken-covered hillside I saw a couple of cars parked up, clearly belonging to butterfly enthusiasts who had been here before. I went over to them to see if they had had better luck, and one turned out to be Dave Conway, who I had known for years in birding. We soon discovered that two pairs of eyes can be as quickly deceived as one, as fritillaries darted between us, behind us, or even landed in front of us for a split second before taking flight again before we had a chance to identify them properly. For all the frustration this presented it was still really exciting to be among so many fritillaries and in such fantastic weather.

I couldn't help thinking how many hillsides in Cornwall, especially down in the district of Penwith, are just like Aish Tor in all but one respect. They don't have woodland, or even biggish trees at the bottom of them. Otherwise they all share acres of bracken with clearings and rides, and they are warm because they face south. This one was certainly warm, and Dave and I were nearly melting as we watched as a couple of female Dark-green Fritillaries laid eggs in the vegetation at the foot of bracken stems. It was wonderful to watch them climbing around the stems of small plants and broken dead bracken from last year, searching for violets to lay on.

By now, it was nearly lunch time and I was more thirsty than hungry. Unlike Dave, who was one of the owners of a car close to the site, I had parked back up near the road so off I went to get a drink and come back down to the butterfly action. When I came back Dave had seen a High Brown land on bramble flowers….and I hadn't.

As the hectic fritillary activity seemed to be ceaseless I decided to visit a different butterfly site, the River Bovey valley, for a species I had only seen there for the first time the year before,: the White Admiral. Triumphantly, I did find two White Admirals, although I have to admit they were in the exact same clearing as the year before and probably within a couple of feet of the same spot! It just shows the value of building up local knowledge of different areas, something books just can't teach you. It wasn't long before Dave turned up too, and we sat and watched the two White Admirals before taking a stroll into a grassy clearing and finding a Brimstone, Comma and Large Skipper.

Dave was heading back to Cornwall from here but I had plans to return to Aish Tor at around 6pm to see if the temperature had dropped a little and maybe calmed the butterflies down. I don't know why, but I was confident I would see one. As I left River Bovey, I heard on the radio that the A38 was temporarily closed. I couldn't get home if I wanted to. Was fate sending me back to Aish Tor? When I got back there, the temperature had gone down into the seventies and the early evening was just exquisite. The sky was azure blue, the breeze just a pleasant breath every now and then and, best of all, the butterflies were still very visible but markedly less active.

Some local butterfly enthusiasts were now on the hillside and we joined forces to find the rare High-Brown. A Marbled White came flying down past us, which really surprised me as I am used to seeing them on the chalk hillsides of the South Downs. Where is chalk or limestone on the granite hills of Dartmoor? The locals didn't take much notice of it and said they regularly saw them there. Local knowledge again!



High Brown Fritillary male (© Peter Eeles, used with permission; http://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/)

Anyway, just minutes later a call goes up and arms wave me over to a patch of bramble flowers. There, without doubt, is a High Brown Fritillary. Its wings were closed and the diagnostic row of brown spots, each with a white dot inside, was clearly visible. Better still, two more out of a group of fritillaries on the same flowers also showed themselves as High-Browns. This one patch of bramble flowers held three specimens of Britain's rarest butterfly and, better still, I was looking at them! For me, it was much more important to look at the butterflies than photograph them. Others do that expertly and I leave it to them if I am experiencing something new. Therefore the photo of the High Brown with this piece is by Pete Eeles, who runs the fantastic 'UK Butterflies' website and is used with permission.

I was so happy as I left for home I didn't care if the A38 was opened again or not: I wanted to drive across wonderful Dartmoor on this dreamy summer evening. I went up to Dartmeet, and then left past Two Bridges and across the moor to Yelverton. All the way Wheatears and Meadow Pipits flew across the road, and a Hobby flashed over, chasing Swallows, near Dartmeet.

Usually, after a long day out in the countryside, you want to click your fingers and be magically home, because it can be tiring. I just didn't want that moorland drive to end: it was so stunning in that perfect evening light.

That drive and that day will stay with me forever.

Volunteering report

Jo Poland, CBC Volunteer Coordinator, reports on a very successful year.

Until recently, CBC had only a few people with the knowledge and confidence to carry out conservation and education work for the county's Lepidoptera. The situation now is very different. The committee's decision to reappoint me as Volunteer Coordinator for 30 days annually both last year and this year is continuing to support many more volunteers in gaining the skills they need to help our butterflies and moths. Currently, the branch has an impressive list of 270 volunteers, and I have recruited 91 new people in the last year alone!

Cornwall is the only Butterfly Conservation branch nationwide to have invested its resources in this way, and the committee's wise decision continues to pay dividends. In supporting such a large pool of people and making sure that knowledge and skills are shared, my role as Volunteer Coordinator is now playing a crucial part towards ensuring the sustainable future of the branch. Managed and directed by an extremely supportive CBC sub-committee, I have arranged many opportunities all over Cornwall for our volunteers to learn new things about butterflies in the last year:



CBC and Friends of the Towans Volunteers at Gwithian

- Survey and monitoring days for the Dingy Skipper, Marsh Fritillary, Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Silver-studded Blue.
- Practical conservation days to improve habitat for Marsh Fritillary, Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Silver-studded Blue.
- A training event with Matthew Oates and the National Trust on recording and transects.

Our volunteers are really generous, sharing what they have learned through partnership working on projects with other organisations, including Cornwall Wildlife Trust, Friends of the Towans Group, National Trust, Natural England and the Gaia Trust. These organisations have told me how much they value the expertise and experience of our volunteers, and are impressed with how professionally we run things.

Last year, the number of hours of time that volunteers contributed under the Volunteer Coordinator project totalled almost 1300. Calculating the worth of this, using the Real Living Wage of £8.75 per hour, shows the financial value of this

work to be over £11,000. This is all extra to the usual volunteering work of the committee, and does not include the large contribution to Cornwall's Lepidoptera from the Heritage Lottery-funded *All the Moor Butterflies* (ATMB) project that is currently running.

Another amazing success is that, working with the ATMB project, I have supervised our volunteers in finding five brand new sites for the Marsh Fritillary butterfly in the last year! This has proved what the branch has always thought: we can't assume that because there are no records for a site that the butterflies and moths are not there. It's simply because no one has been looking and also, crucially, that volunteers may not have previously possessed the survey skills and knowledge needed. Our records are now showing an increase in Lepidoptera numbers because our volunteers, in partnership with farmers and landowners, know what they are doing and are working together to create more good habitat.

My annual report to the committee this year identified what I felt were the key elements of effectively supporting volunteers. Among the things I feel important are: good and timely communication, responsiveness to varying needs and abilities, respecting diversity and being fair to all, motivation and support, TLC and listening, ensuring health and safety, identifying training needs, record keeping and appropriately challenging volunteers with new ideas like 'Why not consider becoming an Independent Butterfly Surveyor or a Transect Recorder for us in your own time?" The top priority is always to thank people for giving us their time so freely, again and again. All these elements are crucial parts of my role and I strive hard to deliver them. As Kathy Wood, Membership Secretary, reports on page 12, we are seeing a high increase in branch membership. The committee feels the investment in supporting volunteers has been crucial in facilitating this success through getting out there, talking to people and doing things!

"People give us their time so freely, again and again"

We value our volunteers and want to keep them, and consequently are listening carefully to their ideas and requests. One thing they have asked for is more detailed training on rare butterflies, so the sub-committee have decided that part of my work in summer 2018 will be to organise workshops for two BAP species: the Grizzled Skipper and Silver-studded Blue. Our volunteers have also requested that they can continue the important work they started in 2015 surveying Cornwall's mining sites for Lepidoptera. The branch have recently secured funding for this and are working on a detailed plan so that our volunteers can deliver the

second phase of this very exciting project. If you would like to join our happy team, you would be very welcome. There are opportunities for everyone! You can see everything on offer at: http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk/vols.html and there will be lots more added in the second part of this year.





Philip Hambly receives a cheque from Saltash staff (top); and (left) Cerin Poland, CBC volunteer, receiving a cheque from Lorna at Truro

Fundraising news

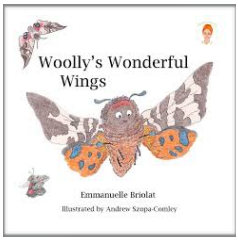
Customers choose butterflies and moths!

By placing their tokens in the Waitrose Community Matters boxes at both the Saltash and Truro branches of the store, many customers recently showed their strong support for butterflies and moths in the county. CBC was lucky enough to receive cheques totalling £619 from these donations. This is a fantastic sum for us and will be used as match funding for the education project that we are currently developing for primary schools in Cornwall.

We would like to thank the staff and customers at Waitrose for their generous support.

Thank you to Woolly!

A big thank you to Emmanuelle Briolat, a researcher at Exeter University and the author of *Woolly's Wonderful Wings*, a children's book starring Woolly, the Garden Tiger Moth. Together with four colleagues, Emmanuelle and her partner Andy (the book's illustrator) gave a generous £336 donation to CBC, raised from book sales at an event in Falmouth. Thanks are also due to Sally Luker, who wrote another book in the series and suggested CBC as a worthy cause. Thanks to this, and donations from book sales at a subsequent event at Restronguet Creek Society, we are are now the proud owners of two portable Compact 20w Skinner moth traps.



Cornwall's hidden hairstreak

Jamie Burston has been surveying for White-letter Hairstreaks in Sussex for some years. Now he's involved in a new Cornwall initiative, and invites you to take part.



Jamie Burston

I joined Butterfly Conservation Sussex Branch at the end of 2009, aged 16. I casually recorded White-letter Hairstreaks for the branch until 2015, by which time I had gained the skills to identify Elm, and that year I started to systematically search local Elm trees in Brighton, at the time not realising I was living amongst the National Elm Collection, with over 17,000 Elm trees. My surveys started to reveal a high occurrence rate: between 2015 - 2017 my survey work located 79 individual Elm trees containing White-letter Hairstreak colonies. At the end of 2015, I was invited to be White-letter Hairstreak Species Champion for the Sussex Branch.

Between 2016-2017, I observed and studied each stage of the White-letter Hairstreak life-cycle in the wild, seeing it unravel on a residential roadside Huntingdon Elm, in Brighton. At the same time as conducting two years of research into (Dutch) Elm Disease-resistant Elm cultivars, this has fed into current and upcoming projects. This winter (2017-2018), I managed an order of 55 disease-resistant elm trees, including 'LUTECE' and 'Ademuz' cultivars, for Sussex Branch conservation work and local volunteer groups, leading to a new role within the Branch as Elm Manager. I share my work with the other Branch White-letter Hairstreak Species Champions across the UK: we are linked into an email group, to share knowledge and stay informed. Should you be interested in becoming the White-letter Hairstreak Species Champion for the Cornwall Branch, please contact Jo Poland jogreenp@gmail.com who will pass on your contact details to me.

Why Cornwall? Through the White-letter Hairstreak Species Champion emailing group, I was sent an article which linked Cornwall and Elm, and I had to reach out. I contacted Jo Poland, a friend and Cornwall Branch committee member to discuss the matter, and as a result I've produced this article, setting out a new and exciting initiative, all to be explained below.

A new initiative: how and why you should get involved. Starting in 2018, this initiative is calling for volunteers to search for and record the locations of mature Elm within Cornwall, to establish an up-to-date distribution map of the White-letter Hairstreak butterfly, a Section 41 species under the NERC Act 2006. Its sole food plant is Elm, hence its disastrous decline following Elm Disease, one of the most serious tree diseases in the world; it has killed over 60 million British Elms in two epidemics and continues to spread today. The butterfly

has declined by 53% in its UK distribution since the 1970s. By collecting valuable data on where the White-letter Hairstreak occurs, we will have a better understanding of where to implement important survey and conservation work, helping to ensure their longevity in the Cornwall landscape.

Elms of Cornwall. Most Elm in Cornwall is believed to derive from *Ulmus minor* (Field Elm) clones, found in different forms; this includes Cornish Elm (*Ulmus minor* 'Stricta'), which sadly exhibits very poor levels of resistance to Elm disease.

Davey Elm (*Ulmus* × *hollandica* 'Daveyi'), an English hybrid cultivar of Dutch Elm, with potential ancestry of Wych Elm and Cornish Elm, is generally restricted to the valleys of Cornwall in its UK distribution. Other notable Elms include the following.

European White Elm (*Ulmus leavis*) can be found in Cornwall; it is an interesting variety of Elm known to be distasteful to *Scolytus*, Elm Bark Beetles, the carrier of Elm Disease, due to the presence of a compound in the tree, Alnulin. The variety although distasteful, has little resistance to Elm Disease if infected; however if this variety stands alongside other types of Elm, it has been recorded that the tree remains untouched by the beetles, only being used when there is no alternative Elm material for the Elm Bark Beetles to breed and infect. This unique occurrence may provide the opportunity for White-letter Hairstreak colonies to persist within Cornwall, on healthy, mature specimens.

Wych Elm (*Ulmus Glabra*) is also to be found in Cornwall. This is the variety most widely associated with the White-letter Hairstreak, believed to be favoured by the butterfly, and this could relate to Wych Elm's widespread distribution across the UK. Wych Elm has a natural level of disease resistance; however if infected, it rapidly gets ravaged by Elm Disease. Wych Elms readily produce suckers (younger growth from the roots) from infected trees, allowing it to persist in the landscape.

Location of Elms in Cornwall. During my initial research I have found the following areas to be of immediate interest to search: Calstock, Perranarworthal, Boscastle, St Kew, Newquay, The Roseland, Tintagel, Gulval, Torpoint, Truro, Penhalvean, Tregoose near Helston, and The Lizard peninsula.

The most typical habitat where you find Elm today in Cornwall is farmland, typically forming hedgerows and field margins along country lanes and roads. Elm may also be found around towns, where it has been historically planted. Coastal areas are also ideal places for Elms, which are well-suited to salt winds. European White Elm (*Ulmus leavis*) is particularly well-suited to river banks, owing to its preferred damp growing conditions, but cannot tolerate salty water. Elm may also be found within or at the edge of woodland.

I am contacting individuals who have greater knowledge of Cornwall's Elm distribution, who can assist in pin-pointing the exact locations of mature Elm, helping to aid our search for the White-letter Hairstreak. All findings will be shared with Jo Poland, and these locations will then be posted onto the Cornwall Branch website and social media where, should you be interested, you can survey their locations, reporting back your findings.

Identifying Elm: finding White-letter Hairstreak colonies. The Elm's own life-cycle does allow for unequivocal identification; no other tree species produces similar flowers or seeds. Flowers and seed are only produced on mature Elm trees; these should be searched for between early March and April. Immature Elm goes straight into leaf. I have produced a webpage on the Butterfly Conservation - Sussex Branch website, for the White-letter Hairstreak butterfly, where I give a more general overview, summarising and illustrating the Elm lifecycle and characteristic traits to aid in identification: https://www.sussex-butterflies.org.uk/species/white-letter-hairstreak.php.

Elm leaves can be difficult to identify, and I would encourage you to read and take note of available photos for each Elm variety/cultivar mentioned, to familiarise yourselves with each of their characteristics. European White Elm (*Ulmus leavis*) for example has very distinctive flowers. Wikipedia is the perfect resource, as the profiles of each Elm have been written by experts.

White-letter Hairstreaks and their colonies can be very elusive; I will be producing text to be published for the above-mentioned Sussex Branch webpage, in time for their flight period, which is from mid-late June to early August.



The lifecycle of the White-letter Hairstreak (Jamie Burston)

Committee members

Chairman:
Philip Hambly
01503 220385
philip@lethytep.co.uk

Membership Secretary:
Kathy Wood
membership@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Secretary and Branch Contact:
Alison Norris
01209 831116
secretary@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Treasurer:
Helen Barlow
treasurer@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Butterfly Recorder:
Dick Goodere
01736 753077
records@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Press Officer:
Roger Hooper
press@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Publicity and Fundraising Officer:
Jo Poland
01872 540371
publicity@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

Chairman, Finance Subcommittee:
Tristram Besterman
t.besterman@btinternet.com

Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey Contact:
Kelly Uren
ktherese@hotmail.co.uk

Health and Safety Officer:
Jerry Dennis
07956 041263
jerrypdennis@aol.com

Committee Member:
Jim Cooper
01872 560710
jim.cooper57@btinternet.com

Committee Member:
Sue Allen
01872 240246
susanallen1953@yahoo.co.uk

Other contacts

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

Newsletter Editor: Amanda Scott
ascott9618@gmail.com

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

Like us on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Butterfly-Conservation-Cornwall-787896031272272/

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