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Cornwall Butterfly Observer



2019 FIELD TRIP PROGRAMME

There's plenty on offer in this year's field trip programme. We'd love to see you - members and non-members are all equally welcome (page 13)

BUTTERFLY FAIR AND AGM

Please join us on Saturday 27th April, from 10 am to 4.30 pm, at St. Erme Community Centre. Dr Dan Hoare, of Butterfly Conservation is our headline speaker this year. (page 6)

RECORDING OUR LEPIDOPTERA

Find out how our butterflies and moths have been faring from our Butterfly and Moth County Recorders, and Transect Coordinator (page 18)

Butterfly Conservation
Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

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



Photos:

Front cover: Green-veined White (Cerin Poland)
Back cover: Painted Lady (Tristram Besterman)
This page: Wall Brown (Philip Hambly)

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Chairman's report

As I write this report in February 2019, the weather is cold, with sleet and rain forecast for the next few days. I have always believed we need a traditionally cold winter to "reset" the seasons, particularly in recent years, as we are experiencing the ongoing effects of global warming. In the last decade or so, we have indeed seen a number of winters without any meaningful frost. I, and most of my contemporaries also believed a hard winter was beneficial to our health as it killed off germs and other undesirables. Whether there is any scientific evidence to validate this theory or not is another matter. But, if you are a supporter of this principle, the psychosomatic effect should keep you healthy!



And now, some good news! Around a year ago, Tesco announced a scheme entitled Bags of Help. Similar to other supermarkets, this idea arose from the need to cut down on plastic waste, with the idea that money raised by selling plastic shopping bags to customers, as set in the Government's edict, would be directed to supporting local charities and organisations. From the considerable number of worthy causes applying to join the scheme, just three are chosen to participate in-store. The three supported applications are represented by a postbox type bin, located near the checkout, in which customers may select their favoured charity by depositing tokens given to them at the checkout. Each charity applying for the privilege of being represented in-store is required to submit an in- depth application form, and await the supermarket's decision as to which charities are chosen. This process is quite an arduous task, and not for the faint-hearted. Fortunately, CBC has an experienced committee member in the guise of Jim Cooper who came up trumps with his comprehensive, and successful, application. We received overwhelming support from our membership in Cornwall, some of whom travelled many miles to go to the Camborne store. Now, that's dedication!

And, yes! – we were absolutely delighted to be told that we were successful in winning the first prize of £4000. We will be using this to continue our work to save and enhance our Cornish Butterflies through our ongoing Mining for Butterflies project. A huge thank you from myself and the Committee to all of you that supported CBC's application by shopping at Tesco Camborne (and further afield!).

Finally, I need to remind you of one of our major events, which is just around the corner. This is our annual Butterfly Fair on Saturday April 27th at our usual St. Erme venue. The day also includes the Annual General Meeting, a legal requirement which usually occupies less than half an hour around mid morning. Refreshments are available all day. Please come and support all who do so much for our cause throughout the year. Find out more on page 6 of this newsletter.



The herald of summer: a Clouded Yellow on Knapweed (photo: Philip Hambly)

I wish you all a fine butterfly summer and thank you for your continuing support.

With best wishes

Philip Hambly
CBC Chairman

Butterfly Fair and Annual General Meeting 2019

Our Butterfly Fair (aka the Annual General meeting of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation) will be held this year on **Saturday 27th April** from 10 am to 4.30 pm at St. Erme Community Centre, Castle Field, Trispen, Truro, Cornwall, TR4 9BD.



Dr. Dan Hoare of Butterfly Conservation is the headline speaker

We are back at our regular venue because it suits us so perfectly, being accessible for all. The location is super-convenient; directions can be found here: https://bit.ly/2UE6qGc

The entry price on the door remains £7 (students £3.50) and this includes pasty lunch, savouries, cakes, tea, coffee and squash. Regular attenders have told us what good value this is, and the food is always absolutely delicious. The day begins with a short AGM covering all aspects of our work in the last twelve months, with informative reports from our Treasurer, County Butterfly Recorder, and Transect Coordinator. There will also be an opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

There will be many stalls promoting our work and that of some of our valued partner wildlife organisations in Cornwall. We will have lots of new insect-related goodies for you to purchase, as well as our usual fund-raising raffle with prizes that have all been generously donated.

This year, we are delighted to welcome **Dr Dan Hoare** as our headline speaker.

Dan has always been bewitched by the natural world, from a childhood rearing Garden Tiger 'woolly bear' caterpillars in a jam jar on his windowsill, to an academic career studying behavioural ecology. He first joined Butterfly Conservation on a three-month contract in 2002, and still hasn't escaped! He has taken roles in the moth conservation team, as South East Regional Officer, and as Head of England Conservation, leading work for species including the Duke of

Burgundy and Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Dan recently gained a well deserved promotion, and will become Director of UK Operations for Butterfly Conservation on 1st April. Dan is a very active supporter of all of our conservation work in Cornwall, taking a 'hands on' approach and guiding us in all that we do. His talk for us will be: **Saving Species: Landscape-scale Conservation, Reintroductions, and Bringing Species Back from the Brink**. He will explain our approach to saving threatened species, how we work at a landscape scale, cover the thorny topic of reintroductions, and review some of the evidence for the impact we are making.



Roger Hooper (above) and Thomas Auld (below)



Roger Hooper, long term dedicated CBC and RSPB volunteer will give us a talk called **Aspects of the Haut-Pyrenees**. He will combine his love of natural history of all forms with a lifelong following of elite continental cycle racing. Watching birds, butterflies and finding gorgeous alpine flowers on the most famous mountains in Tour de France history was too good for him to do just once, so two years later he went back!

Thomas Auld is a Conservation Biology and Ecology student based at the University of Exeter Penryn Campus, and will give us a talk on a very topical and concerning subject called **Sail Against Plastic: A Message from the Arctic**. Tom's passion for the natural world came very early, and large part to natural history films and spending time outside. He is interested not only in understanding the wonderful world



Malcolm Pinch and Hilary Roberts will entertain us (photo: John Martin)

we live in but communicating that to everyone through film and photography. He is currently working on his dissertation on gannet distribution in relation to ocean variables. He was a film-maker and scientist onboard the Sail Against Plastics expedition to Svalbard in 2018.

There will also be a not-to-be-missed musical interlude from regular CBC volunteers Malcolm Pinch and Hilary Roberts who will be performing songs that have been inspired by their work with Butterfly Conservation.

Everyone is welcome to our Butterfly Fair: you don't have to be a member. If you have never been before, please come along and bring your nature-loving friends or family: you will meet many like minded and fascinating people. We look forward to seeing you there!

Any questions about the Butterfly Fair/AGM should go to the organiser Jo Poland at publicity@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk or 01872 540371.

Prospective new committee members should contact the Branch Secretary at least 21 days before the Butterfly Fair/AGM: Alison Norris at secretary@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk or 01209831116.

Membership news

Branch Membership Secretary Kathy Wood updates us on membership, and encourages you to think about taking part in a Lepidoptera-friendly open garden scheme

At 17th February 2019, Branch membership was 523 households and 746 individuals, an increase of 11 households and 29 individuals since this time last year. Butterfly Conservation's annual membership statistics, published in November 2018, showed that we had not managed to retain our position as the fastest growing Branch (measured as a percentage increase in the number of households) for a third consecutive year. We had however recruited 96 new households, plus several more who turned out to live in Devon so became members of the Devon Branch. Considering how busy we have been with our real aim, conservation, this is still quite a good result.

We all know, but need to keep on telling the general public, that gardens are an important habitat for the commoner, less specialist countryside butterflies and moths. Butterfly Conservation gives new members a booklet showing what they can do to make their gardens even better for Lepidoptera. We give out BC's Gardening for Butterflies leaflets on our stalls at public events. Many of our newer members have been recruited through Shaun Poland's talks to gardening societies. There is a natural connection between a love of gardens and a love of butterflies.

An excellent way to encourage members of the public to make their gardens into a good habitat is to show them a garden where this is already being done. It is also a good way to find like-minded people who might consider joining Butterfly Conservation, and is another way for a wider group of members to support the local Branch. It could also be an enjoyable social occasion.

"There is a natural connection between a love of gardens and a love of butterflies"

Not everyone who would like their garden to attract butterflies has the skill and knowledge required to raise plants themselves, or the time and patience to go looking for them at garden centres. However, we think some people would be happy to buy and grow the right plants if it is made really easy for them.

So, for all these reasons, your Committee decided to ask members if anyone would consider opening their garden one day to their friends and neighbours and/or raising some extra butterfly-friendly plants and selling them in aid of our funds. Head Office have produced a



Just a few of the visitors to a Lepidoptera- and wildlife-friendly Cornwall garden. Clockwise from top left: Ringlet butterfly, Elephant Hawk-moth caterpillar, Large Whites on *Verbena bonariensis*, shield bug sp. (photos: Amanda Scott)

document with lots of advice from someone who is very experienced at both these activities. If you would like to have a look at it and see what is involved, with no pressure to go ahead, please let me know at membership@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk or 01872 864344. and I will be happy to send it to you.

I can supply blank posters for advertising, and also CBC publicity postcards and BC's leaflets in case any of your garden visitors or plant stall customers are interested. I must emphasise that your garden does not have to be very large or perfect, just somewhere that other people might enjoy spending an hour or two and be prepared to pay for the privilege.

Thank you, I look forward to hearing from you.

Volunteering news

Read on to find out about our volunteering activities from CBC committee member Jim Cooper

Volunteer Coordinator: The CBC committee has made the decision to continue the successful Volunteer Coordinator (VC) role that has gone from strength to strength in the last few years, and continues to underpin a large amount of the work of our branch. The VC role is supervised by a separate CBC sub-committee, headed until 31st December 2018 by Dick Goodere, and which I have taken over this year.

Jo Poland was successful with her quotation for our new two-year contract, so she continues to be our Volunteer Coordinator from 1st January 2019 to 31st December 2020.

Jo produced a report for us that covered the last two years of her work as Volunteer Coordinator. This detailed all her activities on behalf of the branch and addressed the targets of the role that we had set. Below is an extract from Jo's report highlighting some of the volunteer contributions that she has enabled.

VC's report (extract): The volunteer list remains full of people: I am currently mailing out all our opportunities to a total of 322 individuals. I have recruited 58 new volunteers to this list in the last year and many of these have subsequently become members of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation. Out of the total of 322, an impressive number of 100 different people have volunteered for at least one event in Cornwall in the last year ('All the Moor Butterflies' events have been included in this total as the 'pool' of volunteers is similar). Other individuals may not have helped us at an event but have contributed in other important ways towards our work. For example, in the last year we know that our volunteers have:



A sunny caterpillar search day on Bodmin Moor (photo: Jo Poland)

- made generous donations of money, including one to our new Cornwall Butterfly Atlas project
- become regular butterfly recorders, or Transect Recorders/Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey Recorders
- become butterfly species champions

- found new sites for BAP species
- written and published articles about our work
- made films about our work
- supplied us with photographs and contributed to our publicity on social media
- mentored and taught others in their own networks
- represented us at external events
- donated goods for us to sell/raffle
- considered ways in which our work can be incorporated with the priorities of their own organisations



Our new hi vis vests, courtesy of the Postcode Local Trust grant (photo: Jo Poland)

All events that I have organised have been, without exception, very well attended. However, it should be noted that for some events I have been asked to restrict attendance because of site sensitivity or access issues. Key volunteers have been actively involved in all the workshop events. The considerable skills of our Grizzled Skipper and Silver-studded Blue species champions were utilised in the delivery of relevant ID workshops. With my support, they both gave lots of time designing and creating presentations that we will be able to use again if it is decided that we want to repeat the workshops in coming years. The material our volunteers produced was of an exceptionally high standard and has been requested by other wildlife groups in Cornwall to teach their members. I have placed a high emphasis on this area of my work as I believe empowerment of others will put CBC in a strong future position.

Two other key volunteers were instrumental to the huge success of our two-day moth event. Again, with my support and direction, they both gave lots of time and achieved high levels of public engagement and gave other volunteers an exceptional start in this complex area.

I was able to attract a high proportion of younger people to participate in our workshops; these included a fifteen-year-old student who successfully completed his Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award hours by volunteering over the summer.

Find out more: If you are interested in volunteering for us, in any aspect of our work, Jo would love to hear from you. You can contact her at jogreenp@gmail.com. Our website is always kept up to date with exciting opportunities and they can be found at http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk/vols.html.

Field trips and events 2019

Welcome to CBC's 2019 field trip programme; an exciting mix of new sites and old favourites

As before, we have organised a few trips in partnership with other local conservation organisations. Increasingly, the importance of recording is recognised so we will be encouraging everyone to note what they find on these field trips so that we can continue to build a better picture of Lepidoptera distribution across Cornwall. Our field trips are fun, friendly and open to all - including accompanied children - whatever level of experience you have and whether or not you're a member of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation. Please always come prepared for Cornwall's changeable weather and mixed terrain – waterproofs, good walking shoes or boots, sun tan cream etc. as well as water and lunch/snacks. Please be aware that we would prefer dogs not to be brought because we are in wildlife sensitive areas.

Postcodes have now been included; however, please bear in mind that they may not be as accurate as grid references in pinpointing meeting places, particularly on the coastal walks where there are no obvious landmarks. The postcode covers a larger than usual area so you may find the following link useful: Grab a grid http://www.bnhs.co.uk/focuson/grabagridref/html/php. Please check our website prior to each field trip in case of cancellation due to weather or other complications. You can also check our website Events page: http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk/events.html.

Sunday 15 May: DE LANK QUARRY

Near St Breward, 11 am to 3 pm

This is a beautiful walk down to the De Lank River where there is the opportunity to see the rare Pearl-bordered Fritillary and other spring butterflies such as the Brimstone. Much conservation work has been undertaken by volunteers on this site and this will be an opportunity to see the impact of this valuable work. Please bring a packed lunch and tough walking shoes. Long trousers and long-sleeved shirts are also advised. Meet at the small car park, PL30 4NQ (SX 099753), 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).

Thursday 23 May: WILDFLOWERS AND BUTTERFLIES OF PENHALE

Near Cubert, 10 am

This is a joint Cornwall Wildlife Trust and Cornwall Butterfly Conservation walk. In addition to seeing a variety of spring wild flowers, we should find Brown Argus, Dingy Skipper, and the Grizzled Skipper which is now only located on this site in Cornwall. Please meet by the M.O.D. South Gate near Treworthen Farm, Cubert (SW783567). The postcode for Treworthen Farm is TR8 5PZ. Please bring a packed lunch. Places are limited so **booking is essential**.
Leaders: Cerin Poland, Ian Bennallick (CBG) and Jon Cripps (CWT).
Contact for booking: Cerin Poland (01872 540371 or 07814 790250).

Wednesday 29 and Thursday 30 May: COMMUNITY MOTH EVENT

Bodmin, Wednesday evening (set up), and Thursday morning. Exact times to be announced - please check our website for details.

We will be working with the University of Exeter to provide a two day moth event in Bodmin. Our friends at the One for All Community Garden will enable us to give the local community an insight into the amazing wildlife that can be found at night-time! This will be half-term week and we are aiming to attract as many families with children as possible, as it will be fun, awe-inspiring and educational. We are hoping that any of our volunteers/members/supporters who want to develop their moth knowledge will also come and enjoy this too. This event is suitable for all ages and abilities, with plenty of knowledgeable enthusiasts there to help everyone develop a fascination with moths. There will be refreshments and a children's photo competition. To be held in the One for All Community Garden, The Community Hub, 111 Kinsman Estate, Bodmin PL31 1PQ (SX062663). *Leader and contact*: Jo Poland (01872 540371 or 07800 548832).

Sunday 2 June: PREDANNACK, THE LIZARD

Near Mullion, 11am

We have organised this trip in partnership with the Natural England team on the Lizard and we will be looking for newly-emerged Marsh Fritillaries. Meet at the NT car park at Higher Predannack Wollas Farm, TR12 7EZ (SW669162). Please bring a packed lunch. *Leaders*: Duncan Lyne (Lizard NE team) and Sarah Board
Contact: Dick Goodere (01736 753077).

Monday 3 June: CHAPEL PORTH

Near St Agnes, 12 noon

Join us in partnership with the National Trust's Lead Ranger for this section of the north coast looking for Green Hairstreak butterflies along this beautiful cliff walk. The terrain can be steep and rough in places but the views are spectacular. Meet at Wheal Coates National Trust car park, TR5 0NT (SW702500). Please note new meeting place. Parking charges apply for non-NT members. Please bring a packed lunch. *Leaders*: Steve Sudworth (National Trust Ranger) and Kathy Wood (01872 864344).

Saturday 8 June: GREENSCOMBE WOODS

Near Luckett, 12 noon

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. This walk has several steep inclines. Local expert on the species, Richard Vulliamy, will be leading the trip. Meet in Luckett Village car park, PL17 8NJ (SX389737). Please bring a packed lunch. *Leader*: Richard Vulliamy. *Contact*: Tristram Besterman (01579 349146).

Saturday 15 June: CUBERT COMMON

Near.Crantock, 11 am to 3 pm

Cubert Common is one of the few enclosed commons in England. It is an undulating area of sandy grassland owned by the National Trust and designated as an SSSI. We will be looking out 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, TR8 5QS (SW776599). 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).

Saturday 29 June: POLDICE

Near St Day, 11 am

The landscape in this valley bears witness to the concentrated mining activities that took place in this World Heritage Site. The area, at first, looks to be the last place to search for butterflies but even in this barren, polluted landscape plants have become established and butterflies have found a niche. These include Silver Studded Blue, Small Heath and, later in the season, Grayling. This large site has many ruined mine buildings and uneven/steep tracks which are shared by cyclists. Meet by the lay-by opposite Truro Auction Centre, (SW737430) TR16 5PZ. There is more parking a little further along the road towards Crofthandy on the left (SW737428). Please bring a packed lunch. *Leaders and contacts*: Roger Hooper (01209 820610) and Sue Allen (01872 240246).

Tuesday 2 July: UPTON TOWANS

Near Hayle, 11 am

Join us on a walk through this extensive sand dune complex situated between Gwithian and Hayle: a Cornwall Wildlife Trust reserve and an 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 TR27 5BJ (SW579396). Please bring a packed lunch. *Leader and contact*: Dick Goodere (01736 753077).

Saturday 6 July: CORNWALL BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION OPEN DAY

Near Looe, 10.30 am

Philip (Chairman of CBC) and Faith Hambly invite you to their farm at Lethytep, with its wonderful wildlife area with walks and lakes. There should be many mid-summer butterflies flying, and much more besides! Food, including pasties, is provided and there will be a tombola and raffle. We ask for a £5 donation to help cover food costs. To get to Lethytep, PL13 2PG (SX175588), turn south off the A390 Liskeard to Lostwithiel road at East Taphouse, taking the B3359 to Looe and Polperro. After 3.3 miles, take the road to right signposted Penadlake: the event will be signposted from here. Park in field next to house (space for 100+ cars). *Leader*: Helen Barlow (07305 052297);
Contact: Philip Hambly (01503 220385).

Saturday 13 July: PENLEE RESERVE AND PENLEE POINT

Near Rame Head, 11 am

We will be led by moth expert and Cornwall Moth Recorder, Leon Truscott, looking for Small Heath, Marbled White and Dark Green Fritillary butterflies. Six-belted Clearwing and Thrift Clearwing moths can also be found here with the help of pheromone lures. Please bring a packed lunch. Meet at Penlee Battery car park, PL10 1LG (SX436491). *Leader*: Leon Truscott. *Contact*: Tristram Besterman (01579 349146).



Cubert Common 2018 - what have they found? (photo: Tristram Besterman)

Thursday 18 July: CABILLA WOODS

Glynn Valley, 3 miles east of Bodmin, 12 noon

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 f. valezina. There should also be many other butterflies, including Commas, Ringlets and Gatekeepers. Please bring a packed lunch. 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, PL30 4BE (SX128653). *Leader*: Roger Hooper. *Contact*: Kelly Uren (07429 354011).

Thursday 25 July: CARNON VALLEY

Near Devoran, 11 am

Join us for a walk along the Carnon Valley in a landscape still dominated by the mining industry. The area has been visited regularly for our Mining for Butterflies project. This gentle return walk uses the Coast to Coast cycle/ walking track from Carnon Valley Car Park to Bissoe Cycle Hire (toilets available here). We hope to see plenty of common butterflies and dragonflies near the pools along the way: maybe even the Scarce Blue-tail Damselfly. We will explore Cornwall Wildlife Trust's Bissoe Valley Nature Reserve and the Arsenic Works where Silver-studded Blues have been recorded. Care needs to be taken with children near the fast flowing river. Please bring a packed lunch. Directions: From the A39 at the Devoran roundabout take the road heading towards Bissoe. Go

straight over the first cross roads, under the viaduct then take the next left and the car park is on your right, TR37LN (SW783409). *Leaders and contact*: Sue Allen (01872 240246) and Kathy Wood.

Sunday 28 July: GODOLPHIN WOODS

Near Godolphin, 1.30 pm

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 follow the road over Godolphin Bridge where the road then 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 TR13 9RE (SW60023243). *Leaders and contact*: Perry Smale and Judi Swift (01736 448304 or 07412 262184).

Sunday 4 August: LUNDY BAY

Near Polzeath, 1.30 pm

This is a beautiful walk along one of our National Trust transects. We hope to see a selection of butterfly species including Silver Washed Fritillary, Brown Argus, Common Blue and Clouded Yellow. Meet in the NT Car Park, (SW958798) PL27. An overflow car park is available.
Leaders and contact: Kelly Uren (07429 354011) and Jim Barker.

Tuesday 6 August: GWENNAP HEAD AND PORTHGWARRA

Near Land's End, 10.30 am

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, TR19 6JR, (SW370217): charges apply (café). Please bring a packed lunch. *Leaders and contact*: Jerry Dennis (07956 041263) and Jim Cooper (01872 560710).

Tuesday 13 August: COVERACK TO BEAGLES HOLE

The Lizard, 11 am

Please join us for this new circular walk along the coastal footpath from Coverack village heading south to Chynalls and then to Beagles Hole, returning via Trewillis back to the village. We should see many different species of butterflies including the Dark Green Fritillary, Small Pearl-bordered fritillary and even Grayling, all of which have been recorded here in the past. Be prepared for a longish but enjoyable walk with great views. Please bring a packed lunch. Meet at the car parks which are on your right as you enter the village, TR12 6TQ (SW781187). Leaders: *Duncan Lyne* (Lizard Natural England Team) and Sarah Board. *Contact*: Sue Allen (01872 240246).



Grizzled Skipper (photo: Cerin Poland)

Recording

Read on for updates on moth, butterfly and transect recording

Moth report, spring 2019

Leon Truscott, County Moth Recorder, brings us his latest report

Since the autumn edition of the Butterfly Observer, more moth records have been received. At the time of writing (late January 2019), these consist mostly of migrants recorded towards the end of 2018, but also one or two interesting records from earlier in the year. All dates are from 2018 unless stated otherwise.



Dichomeris acuminatus (photo: Dave Grundy)

Dave Grundy recorded the gelechiid *Dichomeris acuminatus* on St Martins, Scilly, on 21 September. This is thought to be the second record for Britain, and naturally new to Cornwall and Scilly. In June, Mike Hicks recorded *Epiblema foenella* on St Agnes, Scilly. This is new to Scilly and only the second record for Cornwall, following one from Torpoint in 2006. The nationally rare (Red Data Book species; RDB3) species, Portland Ribbon Wave *Idaea degeneraria* has turned up regularly (but not quite annually) in recent years. Mary and Tony Atkinson trapped one at Millbrook on 2 September.



Olive Crescent (photo: Leon Truscott)

Alan Pease trapped an Olive Crescent *Trisateles emortualis* in Torpoint on 10 July. An RDB3 species, it is new to Cornwall and previous British records are normally confined to southeast England. On 2 October, John Nicholls found a Clifden Nonpareil *Catocala fraxini* by day at Polbathic, only the eleventh Cornish record. Dave Grundy trapped a Golden Twin-spot *Chrysodeixis chalcites* on St Agnes, Scilly, on 1 October, probably the third record for Scilly. The previous 16 Cornish records are mostly from over 20 years ago. Also on St Agnes, Dave recorded a Wedgeling *Galgula partita* on 14 October. This is only the third British record, following one at Marazion in 2008 and one from Somerset in 2016.



Clifden Nonpareil (photo: Leon Truscott)

Porter's Rustic *Athetis hospes* is a rare migrant which has turned up occasionally on Scilly and also The Lizard in recent years. Ralph Parks trapped one at St Mary's on 16 October.

A Sword-grass *Xylena exsoleta* was found aboard the tripper boat Meridian en route from Bryher to St Mary's on 1 January 2019, found by Ian Monk and identified and reported by Bob Dawson. I believe this is new to Scilly and only the sixth record for Cornwall.



Sword-grass (photo: Bob Dawson)



Radford's Flame Shoulder (photo: Leon Truscott)



Sombre Brocade (photo: Leon Truscott)

A Sombre Brocade *Dichonioxa tenebrosa* was trapped by Alan Pease in Torpoint on 9 October, only the fourth Cornish record. Radford's Flame Shoulder *Ochropleura leucogaster* has become a regular migrant on Scilly and The Lizard in recent years (especially 2016, with 27 records). Clive Ireland recorded one on St Agnes on 18 October, but interestingly, Andy Trout trapped one at Penlee Battery CWT Reserve on 17 October, only the second record for East Cornwall (VC2).

Transect report, 2018

Kelly Uren, CBC's Transect Coordinator, reports on a bumper year for the transect scheme

We were delighted to have a record number of 44 sites being monitored across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly in 2018.

We currently have transects spanning the length and breadth of the county. In the far southwest, a transect is being monitored on St. Martins in the Isles of Scilly, along with 11 more in West Penwith. At the opposite end of Cornwall, in the far northeast, there is a transect located at Tidna Valley, near Morwenstow. Further transects are located alongside the Devon border at Greenscombe and Luckett Woods, Cotehele and Antony House, near Torpoint. A further 27 sites are being monitored across the remainder of the county.

2018 saw the re-starting of a transect at Roskestal Cliff (Porthgwarra); this transect yielded a total of 25 butterfly species. This is a significant site for Grayling (yielding the second highest count for the year) and also provided 57% of the Green Hairstreak transect sightings for 2018. New transects were started at Chapel Porth, Kynance, Teacoombe, Trecarne-Delabole, Trythall School and Wilsey Woods, all providing a valuable range of new data sets, which will contribute to local and national data relating to butterfly populations.

Now for some figures…

A total of **45,472** butterflies were recorded by our team of dedicated transect walkers last year (18,139 more than in 2017), and a total of **35** different species were seen (3 more

than in the previous transect season). New species making it onto our list for 2018 were Dingy Skipper, Marsh Fritillary and White-letter Hairstreak. The most widespread species were Meadow Brown, Common Blue and Large White which were seen on 98% of our transects, and collectively accounted for 36.9% of the total butterflies seen. Conversely, Marsh Fritillary and White-letter Hairstreak were the least widespread species each being recorded on just 1 transect. Meadow Brown remained the most abundant species with 12,741 butterflies being counted; whilst White-letter Hairstreak was the least abundant with just a single butterfly being recorded.

MOST abundant species			
			Transects
1st	**Meadow Brown**	**12,741**	**43**
2nd	Gatekeeper	6,348	36
3rd	Speckled Wood	4,177	42
4th	Silver-studded Blue	3,855	11
5th	Small White	3,501	41
LEAST abundant species			
1st	**White-letter Hairstreak**	**1**	**1**
2nd	Marsh Fritillary	3	1
3rd	Dingy Skipper	4	2
4th	Purple Hairstreak	7	3
5th	Clouded Yellow	23	12

Eight of the 10 UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) priority species found in Cornwall were recorded last year on a number of our transect routes: the absentees were Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Grizzled Skipper. A total of 34 transects saw at least one UK BAP species, and four of these recorded five BAP species.

The peak week for butterfly sightings was the second week of July (8th-14th) when 6,125 butterflies [encompassing 30 species] were seen. The most abundant species was Meadow Brown with a count of 2,146. The least abundant butterflies seen during this week were Clouded Yellow, Heath Fritillary and White-

letter Hairstreak; only 1 of each of these species were recorded.

A total of 23 butterflies showed an increase in abundance over 2017. Grayling showed the greatest percentage change in abundance, with sightings rising by 436%, whilst being recorded on the same number of transects (2) in both years. Erisey Barton alone saw an increase in Grayling sightings of 470%. Small White followed with a percentage change in abundance of 262%, followed by Wall Brown (245%), Small Heath (181%) and Common Blue (162%). Seven butterflies showed a decrease in abundance: these were Red Admiral (-51%), Peacock (-47%), Small Skipper (-29%), Heath Fritillary (-24%), Holly Blue (-11%), Marbled White (-6%) and Ringlet (-2%). Orange-tip and Green Hairstreak interestingly showed no change in abundance when looking at the 37 comparable transects.

Here's looking to 2019…

Three new transects are being planned for the coming year, which is wonderful news, and will hopefully bring our transect total to 47. It would be absolutely incredible if we could increase this further. If you would like to find out more about how to set up a transect or would like to get involved with a transect already set up, then please contact me at ktherese@hotmail.co.uk.

On behalf of the committee (and Butterfly Conservation nationally) I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to all of our transect walkers for your hard work and dedication which has helped make 2018 our most successful year to date.



Mating Silver-studded Blues (photo: Steve Sudworth, National Trust Lead Ranger, Godrevy)

Butterfly report 2018

Dick Goodere, County Butterfly Recorder, reports interim results from 2018

A huge thank you to everyone who has sent me records! I haven't yet received all the information from Butterfly Conservation that I need for my final analysis of 2018, but I can report that so far I have had over 28,000 records and over 121,000 butterflies counted. In 2017 there were 20,910 records and 65,226 butterflies seen. The Big Butterfly Count alone generated 700 new recorders who produced nearly double the number of records. That just shows what a fantastic summer can do!

Our numbers were also swelled by the work of 20 volunteers who did a fantastic job of visiting 37 mining sites throughout Cornwall as part of our Mining for Butterflies project in 2018. Nearly 1900 butterflies were counted; 29 species were recorded including six UK high priority species. We do hope that even more mines will be visited in 2019.

The Blues seem to have done exceptionally well this year, with Common Blues abundant and Silver-studded Blues doing extremely well, with many thousands being recorded at Upton Towans and Penhale Sands. There have been a few exceptional sightings from experienced recorders of priority species in people's gardens where they have never been seen before. Notable amongst these are Graylings reported by several different recorders, a Pearl-bordered Fritillary in West Looe and a Silver-studded Blue in Penzance. Possibly, the drought led them to seek nectar a bit further afield than usual! On the negative side, and bucking the overall trend of 2018, the Small Tortoiseshell continues the downward movement of the last few years with records and numbers reduced again.

Lastly, Gary Pilkington reported in his online diary the very exciting news that he had a definite sighting of a Brown Hairstreak on the Marsland Reserve in North Cornwall. He had suspected that they were present for a while but this year he managed to get definite confirmation.

I hope to give a more detailed breakdown of the Butterfly winners and losers from last year in the next edition of this magazine. I have already received an unusual number of records from the mild February of 2019, but do please keep them coming!



Comma (photo: Philip Hambly)

Latest news

Marsh Fritillary success!

Due to the regular, sustained and careful practical conservation work of our volunteers at Church Hay Down in St. Breward, we are delighted that the Marsh Fritillary butterfly has returned after an absence of over 12 years! Caterpillars were recently discovered by our dedicated Marsh Fritillary species champion Alan Stapleton. As many of you will be aware, Alan and his wife Jonquil live on this site and he says:

"I am still in shock having realised my dreams so unexpectedly soon – going out of my back gate is stepping into a more wonderful world than ever now, thanks in large part to encouragement from the All the Moor Butterflies staff and the work of the whole volunteer team."

"Going out of my back gate is stepping into a more wonderful world than ever"

Thank you, too, Alan from us all for your perseverance over the last two years: this is a fantastic result.

An ERICA record

The four-millionth record has just been added to ERICA - the recording database that all our Lepidoptera records are entered into, supporting



Marsh Fritillary caterpillars (photo: Alan Stapleton)

the Cornwall Biodiversity Network… and guess what? The record is for a butterfly! This four-millionth record is a Green-veined White, and was recorded on the Gwithian Green butterfly transect. This site is part of the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme and is the longest running transect in Cornwall. Butterflies have been monitored on the Green for 21 years, and the transect walkers are volunteers Maggie Goodere and Sally Foster. Well done to them both.

And even more news from St. Breward…

Thanks to the All the Moor Butterflies project, CBC now has a permanent home at the Village Hall in St Breward. We have our very own storage cupboard! We are delighted to join with this lovely and active

community and plan to have our own Butterfly Bric a Brac stall at as many of their hall events as we can manage.

If you can support us in any way with this we would be very grateful. Please consider donating anything you no longer need for us to sell to raise vital funds for our work. This stall will also raise our profile and we hope it will inspire more local people to come out and try a practical conservation day with us.
Some of our dedicated St Breward based volunteers also have ambitious plans to start a local conservation group to assist in continuing the task of protecting the rare fritillaries of the area when the All the Moor Butterflies project ends in December this year. If you live locally and could help in any way, Alan Stapleton (alanstapleton52@gmail.com) would love to hear from you. All talents needed, particularly organisational skills! The first meeting will be held at St. Breward Village Hall PL30 4PP on 6th April 2019, from 2 pm to 5pm.



Members of St. Breward Village Hall committee officially welcome butterflies to their community!

Small Blues at Magdalen Hill Downs

In the last edition of this newsletter, Roger Hooper told us about his Hampshire trip in 2018 in search of Chalkhill Blues. He completed his trip with some lovely Small Blues

At the end of my Hampshire explorations, I headed for Magdalen Hill Downs but not before a visit to Old Winchester Hill National Nature Reserve. Many books rate it as holding the largest Chalkhill Blue colony in the country but it is also a magnificent reserve complete with Bronze Age hill-fort. I'm rather proud of the photo I took there of two male Chalkhill Blues on sheep dung (Ed.: see the Autumn 2018 Butterfly Observer for this wonderful photo). The butterflies were looking perfect there.

I had checked out Magdalen Hill Downs (a Butterfly Conservation flagship reserve near Winchester) on the wonderfully useful Google Maps. Alan Thornbury, who you may recall I unexpectedly met earlier in the trip, recommended this reserve as a good site for Small Blues. He had mentioned the chalk-pit and there it was, a small kidney-shaped white patch in a very big reserve. The satellite image enabled me to walk straight to it.

Alan was right, too. There on a leaf was a Small Blue female. It was my first one and I was astonished how small she was. The photo I took shows me holding a twenty pence piece next to her, and it is bigger than she is and yet she was perfect, her brown wings looking like velvet and delicately edged with white.

I left for home from Magdalen Hill Downs, dropping down to join the southbound M3 and going through the notorious cutting of Twyford Downs, a highly controversial decision of the Thatcher years that destroyed pristine downland to build a motorway. I almost felt guilty just using it.

It was, though, the way home and I love coming home to Cornwall no matter where I've been.



A Small Blue at Magdalen Hill Downs (photo: Roger Hooper)

Join the CBC Committee!

We have a vacancy for a Health and Safety Officer on our friendly committee. Do contact Philip Hambly (CBC Chairman) or Alison Norris (CBC Secretary) if you're interested.

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