ISSUE 67 | SPRING 2020

Cornwall Butterfly Observer



NEW BUTTERFLY ATLAS



Our fully updated atlas of butterflies in Cornwall will launch next year, on 24 April 2021. Look inside for the chance to sponsor a species and see your name in print in the new Atlas.

Butterflies *of* Cornwall

Atlas for the Twenty-first Century

Countdown to launch date (24 April 2021)

BUTTERFLY FAIR AND AGM

Do join us on Saturday 25 April, 10 am to 4.30 pm, at St. Erme Community Centre, where our lead speaker is Peter Eeles.
(page 5)



2020 FIELD TRIP PROGRAMME

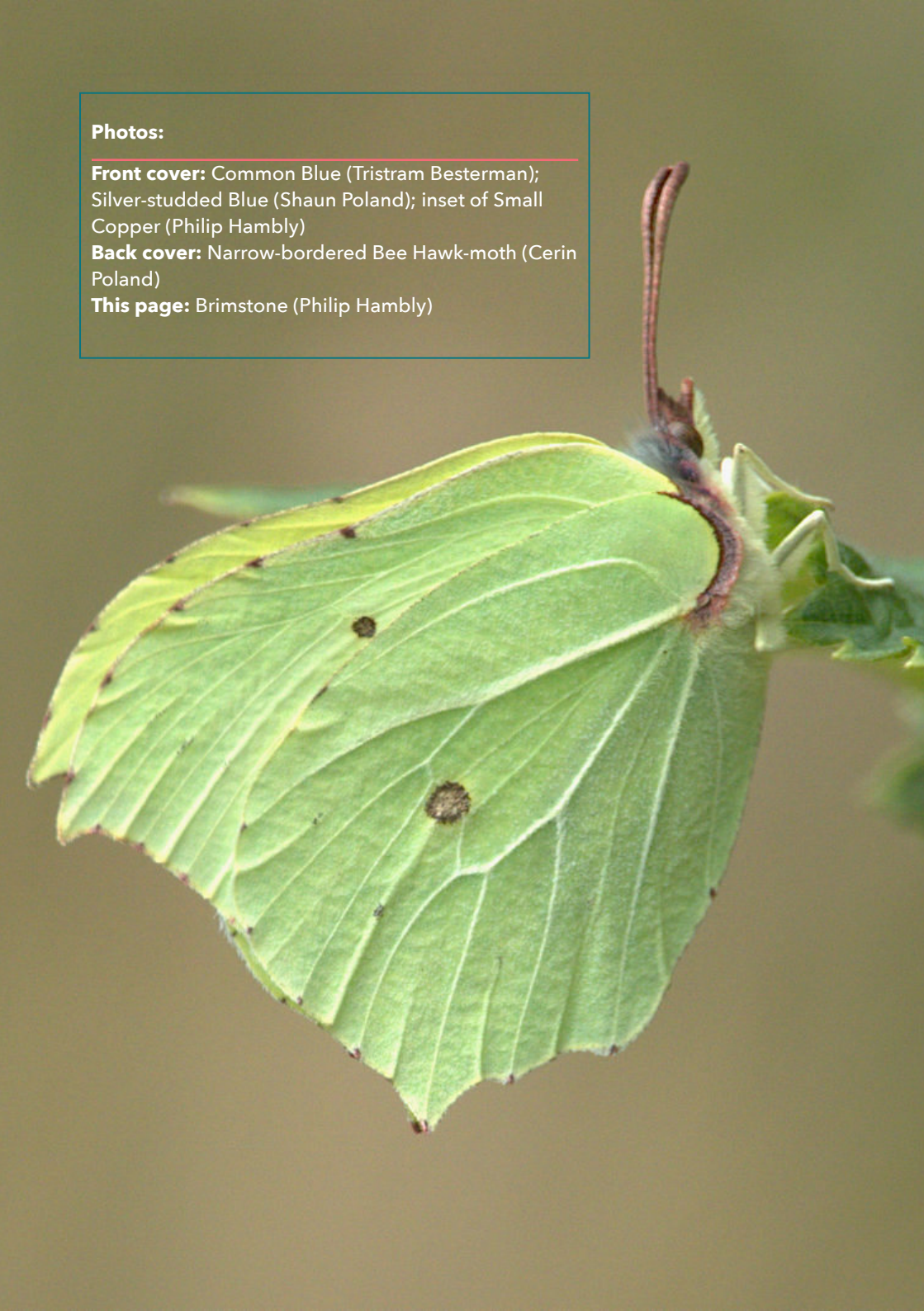
There's plenty on offer in this year's field trip programme. We'd love to see you: members and non-members are all equally welcome
(page 16)

Butterfly Conservation
Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

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

Photos:

Front cover: Common Blue (Tristram Besterman); Silver-studded Blue (Shaun Poland); inset of Small Copper (Philip Hambly)
Back cover: Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth (Cerin Poland)
This page: Brimstone (Philip Hambly)



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Chairman's report

Hello everyone. My report this time is necessarily very short, as we have much to cover in the newsletter, telling you of our ongoing projects. This includes information on our new publication *Butterflies of Cornwall*: *Atlas for the Twenty-first Century* (page 11). The branch website is regularly updated and is useful for finding information and events scheduled following publication of this newsletter.

Finally, we are looking at ways of ensuring this magazine delivers what you enjoy and remains as inclusive as possible. If you have any ideas for future editions please let me – or any committee member – know. Perhaps something for the younger generation – they are our seedcorn! – possibly puzzles focussed on Lepidotera/nature. It's your magazine: help us to deliver what you would like to see. We will do our best to accommodate your wishes. Or perhaps you would like to submit an article of your own – all contributions welcome, as long as they are conservation-focussed and topical. Go on – surprise us!

With very best wishes

Philip Hambly
CBC Chairman



Members of the Butterfly Atlas Working Group hard at work on the new Atlas (photo: Beth Harper).

See page 11 to find out more, and how you can become a species sponsor in the new Atlas

Butterfly Fair and Annual General Meeting 2020

Our Butterfly Fair (aka the Annual General Meeting of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation!) will be held this year on **Saturday 25 April** from 10 am to 4.30 pm at St Erme Community Centre, Castle Field,Trispen,Truro, Cornwall TR4 9BD.

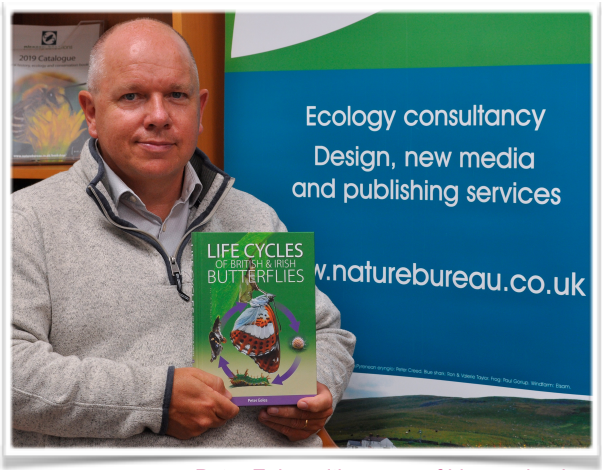
We are back at our regular venue, which is accessible for all. The location is super-convenient and directions can be found here: http://www.stermecommunitycentre.co.uk/stermecc/how_to_find_us-7312.aspx

The entry price on the door remains £7 (students £3.50), which includes a pasty lunch, savouries, cakes, tea, coffee and squash. Regular attenders continue to tell us what good value this is and that the food is 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, Transect Coordinators and Species Champions. There will also be an opportunity to ask any questions you may have.

Again, there will be many stalls promoting our work and that of some of our valued partner wildlife organisations in Cornwall. There will be useful things to buy, and Jen Bousfield has kindly offered to run a plant stall for us again, as this was really well supported last year. So, if you have any spare plants, they would be welcomed on the day. We will be holding our usual fund-raising raffle, with prizes that have all been generously donated.

This year, we are delighted to welcome **Peter Eeles** as our headline speaker. Pete's wonderful book ***Life Cycles of British and Irish Butterflies*** is a must-have best seller and will also be the title of his talk. His photographs of every stage of the life cycle of all of the regularly breeding British butterflies are stunning and informative.



Peter Eeles with a copy of his new book

Pete has had a lifelong interest in nature, and butterflies in particular, fostered by a childhood spent in rural Gloucestershire. He became a member of Butterfly Conservation in 2002 and immediately became very

active. He took over the running of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight branch website in 2004, and was branch Chairman from 2010 to 2013. Winner of national awards and developer of the amazing UK Butterflies website (https://www.ukbutterflies.co.uk/index.php), Pete's generosity and contribution to the UK Lepidoptera community is unparalleled. We are so pleased that he has agreed to visit us in Cornwall so that we can thank him in person for everything that he does for us.



Tylan on one of his spider hunts

Tylan Berry's love of the natural world was set at a young age, and it was the spiders that caught his fascination. Spiders have been a huge part of his life: from turning a stone to find them as a three year old, to hauling a sweep net up a cliff as a thirty year old, he has always been obsessed with finding and studying them! Tylan is Cornwall's Area Organiser for the Spider Recording Scheme (http://srs.britishspiders.org.uk) run by the British Arachnological Society, and over the last few years has dedicated lots of time to raising awareness of the incredible spider fauna that Cornwall has to offer. He recently left his retail career of fifteen years to aid in the recording effort for spiders in the county, and he has just begun a degree in Conservation and Ecology with Cornwall College, Newquay. On his free days he will be found outside somewhere in the county, happily grubbing through the undergrowth, come rain or shine! The title of his talk for us will be ***Bringing Cornwall's Spiders to Life***.



Tylan Berry

Our third speaker is **Paul Freestone**, who is a Patrol Sergeant for Devon and Cornwall Police based in Penzance, and has been a Wildlife Crime Officer for the last 15 years. Paul says,



Sgt Paul Freestone

"*I have a personal interest (obsession really!) with birds and am a keen birder, ringer and photographer. I also own and run Cornwall Birdwatching Tours. My other interest is moths!*"

Paul will talk on the types of wildlife crimes encountered in Devon and Cornwall, how the police deal with them and why ***Wildlife Matters***, which is the title of his talk.

There will also be another 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. This year there will be a special song composed by Malcolm in memory of our wonderful friend and ex-CBC secretary, Alison Norris, who very sadly passed away last year and is much missed by all who knew her.

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!

Please note this friendly request: we had some problems with our audio last year due to feedback caused by people having their mobile phones switched on while in the hall. This interfered with the smooth running of the event and everyone's enjoyment, so this year we are making a strict ruling and putting up signs to remind everyone. By all means bring your phone but please keep it turned off while you are in the main hall!

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

Christmas Lepidoptera at Bodmin Folk Club

An event that was a night to remember

We were honoured to be the chosen charity for Bodmin Folk Club's Christmas party in December last year. All the folk club members dressed as Lepidoptera! CBC committee members Sue Allen and Jo Poland had the joyful task of judging the best butterfly or moth. There were some amazing interpretations, including a couple of talented Red Admirals and a surprise appearance from a Drinker Moth. Jo and Sue struggled with their decision because they were all so good, but eventually awarded the top prize to Delphine, who flew onto the stage with her antennae quivering and delivered a heart-jerking version of the traditional carol *The Holly & the Ivy*. Her verses were changed to lament what we are doing to our wonderful world.

"The holly bears a blossom
As white as polar snow
And we must protect the ice caps
Any melting must be slow"

Unfortunately, we did not get a photo of Delphine but she was a very worthy winner.

CBC Volunteers Malcolm Pinch and Hilary Roberts boosted the money raised by producing and selling lots of copies of their new and unique Christmas CD *Mistletoe & Whining*! Our grateful thanks go to both of them for making this happen: they are both shining stars. A whopping £305 was raised for Cornwall Butterfly Conservation and we were made so welcome, thank you to all the generous Bodmin Folk Club members. It was a truly a night to remember!



A folk-singing Red Admiral!

Simon's "Bike for Butterflies"

Simon Saville is taking on a mammoth cycling challenge for Lepidoptera. Here he tells us why.



In June and July I will be cycling 1,200 miles across the length of the UK from Land's End to John O'Groats. I'm doing this challenge to highlight the decline of butterflies and moths, the importance of connecting with our natural world and, importantly, to raise funds for Butterfly Conservation.

I have been Chair of the Surrey and SW London Branch of BC, and a Trustee for the last year or so. Cycling has always been an interest of mine, and I have long held a fascination with the Land's End to John O'Groats ride. Having retired early, I wanted to take on something that would challenge me – something that I wasn't sure that I could accomplish. This seemed the ideal opportunity: being 61 years old, it feels like "now or never"!.

I aim to raise awareness of the crisis that faces our wildlife, to promote Butterfly Conservation and the fantastic work it does with its volunteers, and to get people to engage with nature – especially near where they live and work. The point is that everyone can do something to help in protecting the UK's nature: every small action or donation counts.

My ride uses the National Cycle Network set up by Sustrans, and I am visiting as many BC reserves as I can. On my first day in Cornwall, I plan to visit Upton Towans Nature Reserve at around lunchtime, where I hope to see Silver-studded Blues. I'll drop in on Bissoe Bike Hire at around tea time and spend the night in Truro. Then it's through Newquay and Padstow on the way to a stopover on Bodmin. I'm still looking for good sites to visit on this leg of the journey. On day 3, I'll be skirting Bodmin Moor on the way to Bude. I hope to pause in St Breward to talk



Simon Saville

about the *All the Moors* project that's just finished.

I hope to meet as many local volunteers as possible, and I welcome folks to join me on their bicycles, whether for a couple of miles or longer. Planning of detailed events is still being finalised, so look out for more information. Feel free to get in touch with me at simon.saville@gmail.com.

Butterfly Conservation is promoting the ride and it has appeared in the Spring 2020 edition of *Butterfly* magazine, and at https://butterfly-conservation.org/bikeforbutterflies.

Of course we want to raise money, and I have set up a JustGiving page: https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/bikeforbutterflies. We will be promoting the ride with the hashtag #BikeForButterflies.

Membership news

Branch Membership Secretary Kathy Wood brings us the latest Branch membership information

Membership has continued to grow slowly during the winter; the report sent to me in the third week of February shows that it now stands at 840 individuals in 580 households. This is slightly more than the target in the Branch's business plan, but we will of course continue to aim to recruit even more members. The more members we have, the more we will all be able to do together for butterflies and moths in Cornwall.

We now have a larger proportion of relatively new members who have not yet attended our AGM and Butterfly Fair, and I would strongly encourage them to try this one. The business part of the day only lasts about thirty minutes and the rest of the day is always full of interest. Details can be found elsewhere in this edition of *Cornwall Butterfly Observer* (pages 5 to 7)

We will repeat last year's plant stall, many thanks to Jen Bousfield for leading on this once again. If you can grow any plants which are attractive to butterflies or moths, please bring some along. If not, do please support the stall on the day. We need both caterpillar food plants and nectar plants. For ideas, please see the *Gardening for Butterflies* leaflet on BC's website, or the more detailed *Gardening for Butterflies and Moths* booklet which newer members will have received in their membership pack.

We will also have an interesting collection of butterfly-related items for sale. This includes CDs of songs by member Malcolm Pinch, with Hilary Roberts, on a Lepidoptera theme, some of which have been performed to great acclaim at previous AGMs (and the national AGM), and others of which will be new to you. As before, they are an interesting mixture of the comic and the thoughtful. Many thanks to Malcolm and his able assistant Hilary Roberts for their fundraising efforts.

I look forward to meeting you at the AGM and Butterfly Fair or on one of the many wonderful events in our new summer programme. Please bring any friends or relatives who are interested in nature, everyone is welcome.



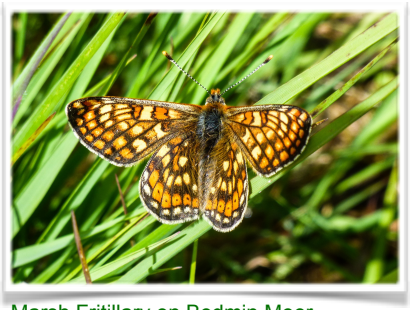
A new way to explore Cornwall's butterflies

In the spring of 2021, Cornwall Butterfly Conservation will publish a new atlas on the state and status of the county's butterflies. Lavishly illustrated, *Butterflies of Cornwall* will be the go-to book on butterfly population trends and distribution from Bude to Tresco. Following the runaway success of *A Cornwall Butterfly Atlas*, published in 2003 and now out of print, the new *Butterflies of Cornwall* brings together the latest information with stunning images.

The cover of the new *Atlas* shown here is a mock-up: it will be designed by the publisher, Pisces.



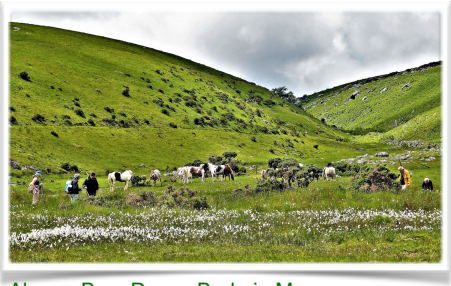
What you'll get

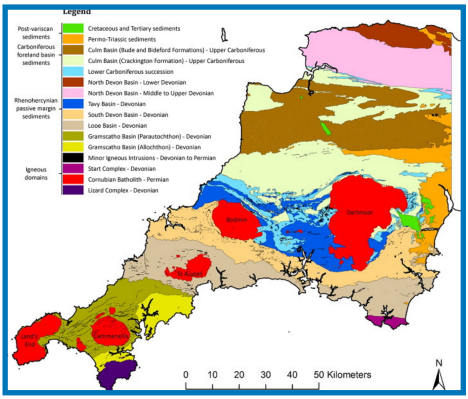


Marsh Fritillary on Bodmin Moor

Butterflies of Cornwall will describe the diversity of habitats in the county and celebrate the common, rare and endangered species that you can see here. There are good news stories on some national rarities that we are helping in Cornwall, like the Marsh Fritillary and Silver-studded Blue, as well as warning lights flashing over species like the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Small Tortoiseshell butterflies, which are nationally in decline.

Environmental setting





Above: Bray Down, Bodmin Moor
Right: Geological map of Cornwall

Cornwall's unique environment will be described: its geology, Atlantic climate and diversity of habitats, from coastal dunes and heath to inland marsh and moor. These are some of the important factors that control the distribution of Cornwall's butterflies, which are sensitive indicators of climate change and environmental stress.

Recording and conserving butterflies

A chapter will explain the scientific evidence for what is happening to Cornwall's butterflies and the habitat management that helps them to flourish.

Analysing the data from tens of thousands of records of butterflies seen in Cornwall, submitted over the years by an army of knowledgeable volunteers, enables us to understand seasonal fluctuations and long-term trends in butterfly populations.

During autumn and winter, teams of volunteers clear scrub to encourage the larval food plants of target species of rare butterflies, such as the Marsh Fritillary and Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Improving habitats in the right places and at the right time is the best way to help our struggling butterflies.



Above: Scrub clearance, De Lank Quarry
Below: Pearl-bordered Fritillary, coast path, south east Cornwall



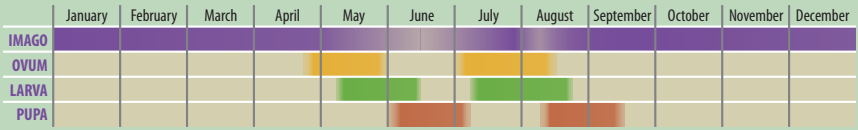
Butterfly species

For each species seen in Cornwall, there will be a description of the adult butterfly, its ecology, life cycle and flight periods in Cornwall, all beautifully illustrated with new photographs. Population trends and geographical distribution over two periods, 1976-2008 and 2009-2018, will be compared with national statistics.

This chapter forms the core of the Atlas, with the 37 species of Cornwall's resident and frequent migrant butterflies organised in taxonomic families. Take, for example, some extracts for the Small Tortoiseshell butterfly, in the family Nymphalidae:



Small Tortoiseshell on Perennial Sow-thistle, Lundy Bay



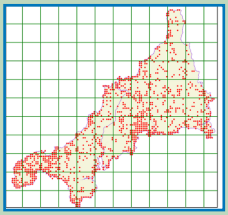
Small Tortoiseshell *Aglais urticae*

Status in Cornwall: resident and migrant

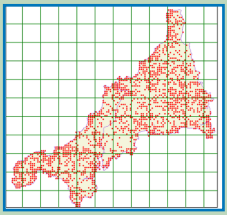
Change in abundance in UK 1976–2018: 78% decrease

"The Small Tortoiseshell is widespread throughout most of Cornwall, although given to periodic fluctuations in populations… records confirm a fall in abundance… The decline is a particular puzzle because the caterpillar's food plant, the nettle, is certainly more widespread than at any point in its history as it thrives in nitrate-rich land from vehicle emissions and fertilisers."

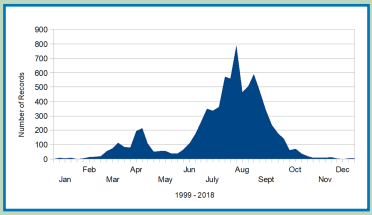
Distribution map 1976–2008



Distribution map 2009–2018



Flight records 1999–2018



Small Tortoiseshell maps and charts prepared by Dick Goodere from County butterfly records held in the ERICA database

How to get involved

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation invites you to participate in publishing *Butterflies of Cornwall* in 2021. Publishing the book depends on your support, so here are some ways in which you can be involved:

- **Species Sponsor:** your name with your favourite butterfly



Silver-studded Blue, Poldice Valley

Do you have a favourite butterfly? Whether it's a national rarity that's special to Cornwall, like the Silver-studded Blue or one of nature's more widespread beauties like the Painted Lady, you can choose any Cornish species to 'adopt'.

For a donation of **£40**, your name will be credited alongside your chosen species. You can sponsor up to two species. There will be a maximum of three named sponsors for each species.

If you'd like to check out Cornwall's butterfly species, why not visit the CBC web page at http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk/butterflies.html



Painted Lady on Verbena, Liskeard

You can choose your species now: please complete and send us the tear-off form in this issue of the *Cornwall Butterfly Observer*. Later, there will be an online form on the Cornwall Butterfly Conservation website, available to the public as well as to members of Butterfly Conservation.

- **Major supporter**

If you would like to support the publication with a major donation, whether linked to a species or not, your name will be listed as a major sponsor in the publication. Depending on the size of your gift, you will receive a signed, complimentary copy of *Butterflies of Cornwall*. **Please contact Jo Poland on 01872 540371 to discuss details.**

- **Pre-publication subscriber:** watch this space!

  We plan to keep the price of *Butterflies of Cornwall* as low as possible. Paid orders received before 15 February 2021 will attract a **25% discount**. Our publisher, Pisces, will welcome pre-publication orders from October 2020. **Full details will be published in the 2020 autumn edition of *Cornwall Butterfly Observer*.**

Launch event: save the date!

The public launch of *Butterflies of Cornwall* will be on **Saturday 24 April 2021**, as the main event of the CBC AGM at Trispen. All are welcome. Details will be announced nearer the time.



Above: Cliffs in north Cornwall, Trevose Head in the distance
Left: Green Hairstreak on Thrift at Mawgan Porth

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Geological map of Cornwall, page 12: reproduced from Kirkwood et al., 2016, Journal of Geochemical Exploration 163, 28–40; https://doi.org/10.1016/j.gexplo.2016.01.010); https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/
Small Tortoiseshell lifecycle, page 13: reproduced with permission from Peter Eeles, 2019, Lifecycles of British & Irish Butterflies. Pisces Publications.

Field trips and events 2020

Welcome to CBC's 2020 field trip programme

Welcome to Cornwall Butterfly Conservation's programme of field trips for 2020; an exciting mix of new sites and old favourites. We have also 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 and 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 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 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 and the postcode covers a larger than usual area, so you may find the following link useful – grab a grid: https://www.bnhs.co.uk/2019/technology/grabagridref/gagr.php#map. Please check our website prior to each field trip in case of cancellation due to weather or other complications. You can check our website events page http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk/events.html for details of field trips and upcoming events.

Thursday 14 May: DE LANK QUARRY

Near St Breward, 11 am

This is a beautiful walk down to the De Lank River, with the chance 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 a chance 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 (SX099753) PL30 4NQ on the right before the entrance to the Quarry, which should not be entered. Parking is very limited so car share is essential. *Leader and contact*: Sue Allen (01872 240246).

Monday 18 May: BUTTERFLIES OF PENHALE

Near Cubert, 10 am

This is a joint walk with Cornwall Wildlife Trust. 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 (SW783566). Postcode for Treworthen Farm: TR8 5PZ. Please bring a packed lunch. Places are limited so **booking is essential** for this one. *Leader and contact for booking*: Cerin Poland (01872 540371 or 07814 790250).

Sunday 31 May: PREDANNACK, THE LIZARD

Near Mullion, 11 am

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

Thursday 4 June: CHAPEL PORTH

Near St Agnes, 12 noon

Join us looking for Green Hairstreak butterflies along this beautiful cliff walk. The terrain can be steep and rough in places, so we advise a walking pole and sturdy footwear, but the views are spectacular. Meet at Wheal Coates NT cliff top car park (**not the beach car park**) (SW702500) TR5 0NT. Please note that there are parking charges for non-NT members. Please bring a packed lunch.
Leader and contact: Sue Allen (01872 240246).

Sunday 7 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 that can be slippery, so we advise a walking pole and sturdy footwear. Local expert on the species, Richard Vulliamy will be leading the trip. Meet in Luckett Village car park, (SX389737) PL17 8NJ. Please bring a packed lunch.
Leader: Richard Vulliamy. *Contact*: Tristram Besterman (01579 349146).

Tuesday 16 June: CUBERT COMMON

Near.Crantock, 11 am

Cubert Common, a gently undulating SSSI-designated area of sandy grassland owned by the NT, is one of the few enclosed commons in England. We will look for a wide variety of butterflies (including Brown Argus, Dark Green Fritillary, Silver-studded Blue and Small Heath), moths, other invertebrates and rare plants. Meeting point is the NT car park near Polly Joke beach (SW776599) TR8 5QS, which is relatively small so car sharing is advised. Directions: Drive through Crantock village and shortly afterwards turn left onto the road to Treago Farm. Drive through the farm, follow the track and park in the NT car park (at Treago Farm there is a gate crossing the track which you will need to open and close). Please bring a packed lunch.
Leader and contact: Cerin Poland (01872 540371 or 07814 790250).

Saturday 27 June: POLDICE

Near St Day, 11 am

This valley landscape 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 find butterflies but, even in this barren, polluted landscape plants have become established and butterflies have found a niche, including 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, so we advise a walking pole and sturdy footwear. Meet by the lay-by (SW737430) TR16 5PZ, opposite Truro Auction Centre; there is more parking a little further along the road towards Crofthandy on the left (SW737428). Please bring a packed lunch.
Leaders and contacts: Sue Allen (01872 240246) and Roger Hooper (01209 820610).

Thursday 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 (CWT) reserve and an SSSI. The main target species will be Dark Green Fritillary and Silver-studded Blue, but there will be many other Lepidoptera species and 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 4 July: CORNWALL BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION OPEN DAY
Near Looe, from 11 am

Philip (Chairman of CBC) and Faith Hambly invite you to their farm at Lethytep, with its wonderful wildlife area with walks, lakes and wildflower meadows. Visitors are welcome to explore Lethytep for themselves, following the signposted route. There should be many mid-summer butterflies flying and much more besides! Food, including pasties, is provided, and as this event is also one of our major fundraising days there will be a tombola and a bric a brac shed! 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 the right signposted Penadlake: the event will be signposted from here. Park in the field next to the house (space for 100+ cars).
Leader: Jo Poland. *Contact*: Philip Hambly (01503 220385).

Sunday 12 July: PENLEE RESERVE AND PENLEE POINT
Near Rame Head, 11 am

We expect to see Marbled White butterflies, as well as Small Heath and Dark Green Fritillary, on this walk. There are spectacular views from this south coast meadow that is buzzing with life! Please bring a packed lunch. Meet in Penlee Battery car park (SX436491) PL10 1LG.
Leaders and contacts: Roger Hooper and Tristram Besterman (01579 349146).

Thursday 16 July: CABILLA WOODS
Glynn Valley, 3 miles east of Bodmin, 12 noon

Join us for this walk through the CWT 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 aberration f. valezina. There should also be other butterflies, including Comma, Ringlet and Gatekeeper. 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 some limited places for parking (SX129652) PL30 4BE, but these are limited so car sharing is advised.
Leader and contact: Roger Hooper (01209 820610).

Thursday 23 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, which was visited regularly for our *Mining for Butterflies* project. This gentle walk uses the Coast to Coast cycle/walking track from Carnon Valley Car Park to Bissoe Cycle Hire (where there are toilets) and back. We hope to see plenty of common butterflies

and, near the pools on the way, dragonflies, maybe even the Scarce Blue-tail damselfly. We will explore the CWT Bissoe Valley Nature Reserve and Arsenic Works where the Silver-studded Blue has been recorded. 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 (SW783408) TR37LN.
Leader and contact: Sue Allen (01872 240246).

Sunday 26 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. Please bring a packed lunch. 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 (SW600324) TR13 9RE.
Leaders and contact: Perry Smale and Judi Swift (01736 448304 or 07412 262184) and Roger Hooper.

Wednesday 5 August: LUNDY BAY

Near Polzeath, 1.30 pm

Join us for a beautiful walk along one of our butterfly transects walked by the National Trust. 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, PL27 6QZ (SW952795). Overflow car park available. Please bring a packed lunch.
Leader and contact: Cerin Poland (01872 540371 or 07814 790250).

Tuesday 11 August: GWENNAP HEAD AND PORTHGWARRA

Near Land's End, 10.30 am

This beautiful location boasts an abundance of butterflies, including Grayling, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Clouded Yellow, Small Heath and many more. Meet in the Porthgwarra car park (SW370217) where charges apply, TR19 6JR (café). Please bring a packed lunch.
Leaders and contact: Jerry Dennis (07956 041263) and Jim Cooper (01872 560710).

Sunday 16 August: WINDMILL FARM NATURE RESERVE

Near The Lizard, 11 am

Windmill Farm was purchased jointly by the Cornwall Bird Watching and Preservation Society and Cornwall Wildlife Trust in 2001. This 85-ha (210-acre) farm is home to an array of habitats, including wet and dry heaths, hay meadows, wetland, ponds and arable land. The mix of habitats means the site is home to a huge variety of plant, bird and invertebrate species. We will join the volunteer ranger and hope to see late summer butterflies, including the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Grayling, and, around the pools, dragonflies and damselflies. There is also the chance of seeing Marsh Fritillary larval webs. Meet at the car park by the windmill which is down a lane off the A3083 (SW693152) TR12 7LH. Please note dogs are not allowed anywhere on this site. Please bring a packed lunch.
Leader and contact: Sue Allen (01872 240246).

And finally…see the next page for details of our **2020 Community Moth Event**, coinciding with the national *Moth Night 2020*.

Friday 28 and Saturday 29 August: COMMUNITY MOTH EVENT

Goss Moor, venue to be confirmed: more details will be released later in the year.

This event will be held over two days during *Moth Night 2020*, a national event. We will be running this event in partnership with Natural England who provided funding for it as part of their *Growing Goss* project. On the Friday evening, you will be able to see the moth traps being set up and then, if you return on Saturday morning, you can see what has flown in during the night! This event will be suitable for all ages and we want to show the local community the importance of moths as significant pollinators in the nature reserve. *Leader and contact*: Jo Poland (07800 548832).

Recording

Read on for updates on moth and transect recording (reporting on butterflies will be included in the autumn edition of the Observer)

Moth report, spring 2020

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

Since the publication of the Autumn Butterfly Observer, further records have (of course) been received, ranging from recorders' year lists to targeted areas such as the *All the Moors* project and results of recording immigration, mostly from the coast and from the Isles of Scilly. The following are the highlights from the above, as at the end of January:

Glyphipterix haworthiana: Jack Oughton found one near Kynance Cove on 27 May, only the second record for VC1 and Cornwall.

Oxyptilus laetus, or Scarce Light Plume, a scarce migrant: Tony Wilson trapped one at Callestick on 30 June, the eleventh county record and the first since 2015.

Orache Moth *Trachea atriplicis*, a rare migrant to Cornwall: Mike Hicks recorded one on St Agnes, Scilly on 7 July. Although there are only two Cornish mainland records, this is the second for St Agnes and the fifth for Scilly.

Sitochroa palealis: Frances Watts found, and photographed, one at Predannack Wollas on 16 July. This is only the sixth Cornish mainland record, although there are twelve records from Scilly.

Hypsopygia glaucinalis: Anita Payne trapped one at Brackenfield, Drakewalls on 20 July, new to VC2 and only the eleventh for Cornwall.

George Davis recorded a Latin *Callopistria juvenina* at Maenporth on 2 August, a species **new to Cornwall**.

Dialectica scalariella: A very rare migrant to Britain. Mick Scott (MS) recorded one on St Mary's, Scilly on 24 August. This was only the second British record, and **new to Cornwall & Scilly**. It was followed by another at the same site on 28 August.

Also on 24 August, MS trapped a Great Dart *Agrotis bigramma*, only the third for the county, following records from St Agnes, Scilly in 1997 and Cury in 1999.

Another national rarity is The Passenger *Dysgonia algira*. Mark Tunmore recorded one at Church Cove on 11 September, **new to Cornwall** and probably the first British record since 2006.

Clifden Nonpareil *Catacala fraxina* is a much-appreciated rarity. Mark Fursman found one in Liskeard on 12 September, the twelfth Cornish record. Ten of the twelve records have come in the last ten years, probably as a result of some recolonization in parts of southeast England.

Beautiful Marbled *Eublemma purpurina*: David Price trapped one on St Agnes, Scilly on 21 September. All 16 records of this species (11 from Scilly, 5 mainland) have occurred since 2003.

Dark Mottled Willow *Spodoptera cilium*: another rare migrant only recorded in recent years (i.e. since 1990). Ralph Parks recorded two on St Mary's on 27 September and 4 October.

Slender Burnished Brass *Thysanoplusia orichalcea*: a still scare, but almost annual migrant in recent years. Dave Grundy (DG) recorded one on St Agnes on 1 October.

DG also recorded a Scar Bank Gem *Ctenoplusia limbirena* on St Agnes on 4 October, the tenth Cornish record, but only the third for Scilly.

Erratum to Cornwall Butterfly Observer, Autumn 2019: On page 18 of the Autumn Edition, I reported that a Saxon *Hyppa rectilinea* had been recorded by George Davis on 2 August 2019 at Maenporth. This is not the case. My error!



They may not be among the rarities Leon Truscott is reporting on, but who doesn't love a gang of Cinnabar moth caterpillars feasting on the much-maligned Ragwort (photo: Amanda Scott)

Transect report, 2019

Kelly Uren, CBC's Transect Coordinator, reports the latest on the transect scheme

Excitingly, 2019 saw the number of transect sites across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly increase to **48**; we are now well on the way to reaching a groundbreaking total for the county of 50 transects. New transects were started at Boswednack Mire, Lower and Upper Portmellon Valley, Marazion Marsh, Rosewall Hill and Trebant, and a previously walked route was re-established at Respryn. Sadly, two long-term transects (Steeple Wood and Mexico Towans) were not walked due to the passing of two of our dedicated walkers; their contributions will be greatly missed. There was an overall net gain over 2018 of four additional transects.

A total of **46,253** butterflies were recorded (1,300 fewer than 2018), comprising **34** different species (1 fewer than the previous transect season). Roskestal West Cliff (Porthgwarra) yielded the highest species numbers (26) and Upton Towans the greatest number of butterflies (4,574), an astonishing 2,860 of which were Silver-studded Blues.

Just **3** species were recorded on all 48 transects, **Meadow Brown**, **Red Admiral** and **Painted Lady**, collectively accounting for 36% of total butterflies seen. **Meadow Brown** held onto first

place as the most abundant species (12,599), but it is the **Painted Lady** that deserves a special mention. Vast numbers of this migratory species were seen across the UK during this *Painted Lady Year*, and Cornwall was no exception, with a ten-fold increase on transects within the county compared with 2018: 2,322 butterflies were seen, and the species rose from 20th in our county rankings to 7th.

Collectively, the **Browns** had a good year, accounting for four of the five most abundant species. Numbers of **Meadow Brown** and **Gatekeeper** were only slightly down from 2018 results (-3% and -4% respectively). **Ringlet** increased (29%), but **Speckled Wood** decreased (-22%). **Silver-studded Blue** also decreased (-15%); the absence of data from Mexico Towans, a valuable site for the species, will have contributed towards this.

Conversely, **Dingy Skipper** and **Marsh Fritillary** were both the least abundant and least widespread species, with just one specimen of each recorded on single transects. These are amongst the rarest butterfly species found within our county, and it is possible that the Dingy Skipper is being mistaken for one of the similar-looking day-flying moths with the same flight period. Marsh Fritillary was a species new to the transect list in 2018, and so it is great to see it featuring again. Interestingly, the site upon which it was recorded differed to last year, but they are in relatively close proximity on The Lizard.

A total of **13** butterfly species showed an increased abundance from 2018, with five at 50% or more. Painted Lady showed the greatest percentage change, with sightings rising by 941%. By comparison, 23 species had showed an increase in abundance the previous year when comparing 2018 and 2017 data.

A total of **22** species decreased in abundance, with six decreasing by 50% or more. The **White-letter Hairstreak** showed the greatest decline (-100%) compared with 2018, and in fact did not feature in this year's sightings. The **Whites** did not fare as well this year as in previous years, and indeed in 2018 this pattern was similarly observed within the countrywide data collected during Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count. The three common white butterflies, **Large White**, **Small White** and **Green-veined White**, which all featured within our county transect top 10 in 2018, recorded a decrease in numbers of -35%, -33% and -63% respectively, with Green-veined White failing to make it into this year's top 10, falling seven places to 16th. The **Blues** also saw overall declines in numbers: **Common Blue** (-25%), **Silver-studded Blue** (-15%), and **Holly Blue** a marginal increase of 0.8%.

Here's looking to 2020…

There are currently four new transects being planned for the coming season, which is fantastic news and a testament to growing public concerns regarding the state of the natural world. It is only through the monitoring of wildlife populations that it is possible to observe when any devastating changes take place, and that is why projects such as this are so beneficial not only at a local level, but because the data collected contributes to statistics highlighting ever-growing concerns at governmental level regarding the state of nature. It has never been a more crucial time to become involved. If you would like to find out more about how you could help, please contact Kelly at transect@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk.

On behalf of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation, Jim and Kelly would like to thank all of our transect walkers for their continued support, dedication and hard work: it is gratefully appreciated.

MOST abundant species				
		Butterflies recorded	**Ranking change from 2018**	**Number of transects**
1st	Meadow Brown	12,599	Non-mover	48
2nd	Gatekeeper	6,545	Non-mover	46
3rd	Ringlet	4,039	Up 3	44
4th	Speckled Wood	3,413	Down 1	44
5th	Silver-studded Blue	3,296	Down 1	8

LEAST abundant species				
		Butterflies recorded	**Ranking change from 2018 (%)**	**Number of transects**
Equal 1st	Dingy Skipper	1	Down 75%	1
Equal 1st	Marsh Fritillary	1	Down 67%	1
2nd	Purple Hairstreak	2	Down 71%	1
3rd	Marbled White	19	Down 37%	6
4th	Heath Fritillary	24	Down 68%	2
5th	Clouded Yellow	45	Up 96%	18

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