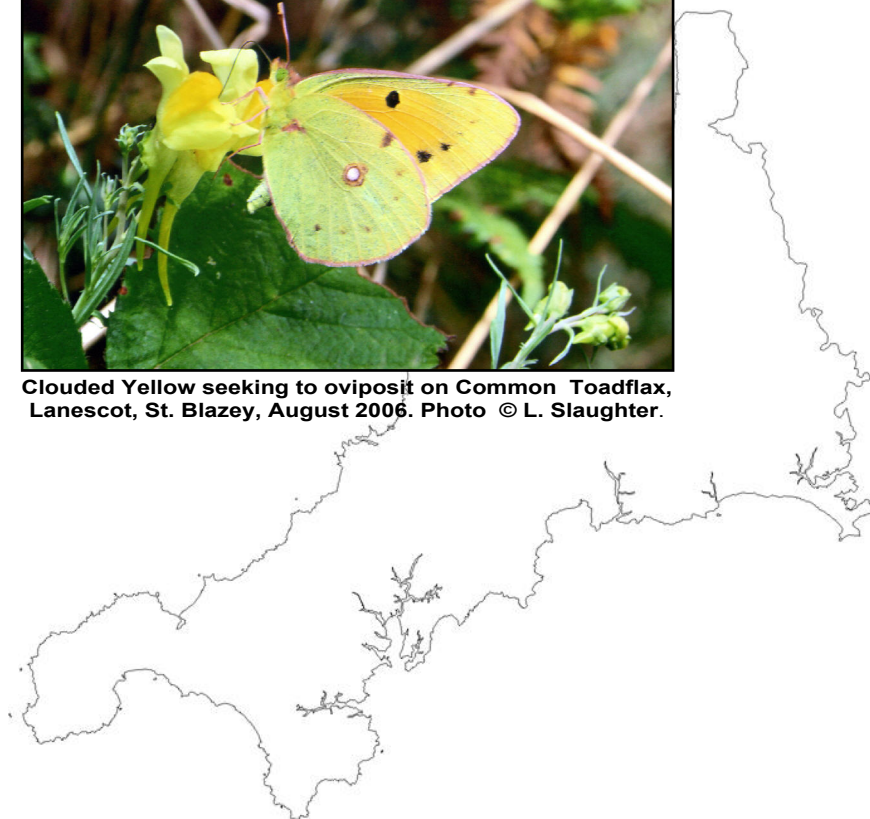


The Butterfly Observer

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation Newsletter No. 35



Clouded Yellow seeking to oviposit on Common Toadflax, Lanescot, St. Blazey, August 2006. Photo © L. Slaughter.



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Autumn 2006

Editorial

My apologies for not including, in the last issue, a report on the occurrence of the **Six-belted Clearwing** (*Bembecia Ichneumoniformis*) which was promised in the winter edition (see this issue, page 6).

Also included is an article on the visit to Luckett Reserve (Greenscoombe Wood) during a period when approximately 1600 **Heath Fritillaries** were re-introduced. There are some photographs of Barry Ofield, along with BC headquarters' staff, being interviewed for ITV South West during a planned release of the butterfly.

At the time of going to press, an Open Day at Carbis Moor (The new reserve managed by English Nature - now called Natural England), has been organised. The latest news is that nearly 70 attended the function on a beautiful sunny day. Pasties and drinks, provided by the organisers, were enjoyed by all - more in the next issue.

There is an article about the field trip to Kynance Cove along with news regarding the Atlantic Coast and Valleys Project and its special relationship with the **Large Blue** - see page 12.

The new Bodmin to Indian Queens A30 dual carriageway has attracted much attention over the past few years and an article which appeared in the Cornish Guardian is also included.

So far, I hope that a balance has been struck between moth and butterfly interests in this newsletter. As your new editor, I would welcome feedback from you all in this matter and any suggestions are most welcome. **Finally, please note the details of our forthcoming AGM on page 2 opposite.**

~ Ed.

Chairman's Report - Autumn 2006

Yo! What a year, not quite a drought but almost constant unbroken sunshine. It's now winding down slowly but still lots of bright weather and butterflies around including **Clouded Yellows** and **Graylings** etc. I think some of the hibernators have already gone to their sleeping quarters as I haven't seen any **Commas** or **Peacocks** for a couple of days.

It was back in the spring when we enjoyed ideal weather for our rarer species. All did well with maximum sunshine and lots of chances to do their business. As usual they all came at once, but everybody spread themselves out well this year, and most sites were checked by at least one person. This is good, since it's impossible to be in five places at once; we've all tried and it doesn't work.

Early summer successes go something like this: **Pearl Bordered Fritillaries** generally did well, Tim Dingle saw 20 to 30 flying at his site in the Vallancy Valley. Maybe the big flood helped up there as numbers looked poor the previous year. **Grizzled Skippers** also did well at Penhale and Goss Moor.

Dingy Skippers were 'loving it' in the hot temperatures around my local site at Camborne, although none at Bunny's Hill again. **Marsh Fritillaries** were found at Bodmin Moor in a new area and a lot of recording was done by Sally Foster and BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers).

After breeding was successfully completed, Barry Ofield and Tom Sleep released **Heath Fritillaries** in good weather at Greenscoombe Wood, Luckett. Deer Park Wood was looking perfect where good numbers were seen on our annual field trip, Betsy Villiamy did the recording and she will tell us later of her transect numbers.

Our **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** survey in west Cornwall had amazing successes when Paul Browning counted 180 of this species in a one-mile walk along the south coast from Rinsey to Gunwalloe (for sites please see following article by Phil - Ed.). Camborne Cliffs surprised me, where active cutting of gorse and heather with a forage harvester by Bill Makin of the National Trust, has been ongoing for several years. It has produced two brand new flight areas with about twenty flying in each. Now that is something new; a breeding area where none was seen before. This proves that activity on site is the way forward.

I've just heard that Eastern European **Camberwell Beauties** are in England and who knows maybe we'll get a chance to chase American **Monarchs** at Land's End, later. All this goes to show that active members are held in the highest regard. You don't have to be an expert, just be willing to lend a hand.

I guess it's a product of ageing that time passes so quickly in the summer. Six months has passed! Does anyone know a way to re-capture the slow metronome of childhood? See you all at the AGM.

~ Phil Harris, September 2006

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation AGM

Venue: Cornwall Wildlife Trust Headquarters, Allet near Truro.

Date & Time: Thursday 9th November 2006 at 7.30pm.

Guest Speaker: Paul Browning.

His illustrated talk is entitled:

'Butterflies of Spain'

See page 18 for directions on how to get to Allet

Please note the change of venue.

Small-Pearl -bordered Fritillary - known colonies present in south west Cornwall.

This is a rough draft of extant colonies seen in the past 10 years and an interim gathering of known sites in west Cornwall and what to expect this season and next.

Land's End reservoir near Porth Gwarra. First seen in 1996. Max. counts around 15 flying. Strong colony last seen in 2003. No habitat change. Expect 15 to 20 in 2006/7.

Near the Coast Guard Lookout. 2 flying during 1999/2000/2001- in mid June - Linton Proctor.

Land's End Hotel - on cliff path leading to Trevescan Cliff. Not much known about this colony. No habitat change.

Above Sennen Cove on the coast path seen by Paddy Saunders in 2000 - not sure how many.

Cape Cornwall 21/5/97 - 8 seen by P. Browning. Not visited since.

Kenidjack Valley - 5 seen 2001 and 2003 by Linton Proctor around the cottage in the middle of the valley. Some habitat changes but where breeding unknown.

Above Porth Chapel beach at St. Levan in 1998. 2 seen flying - Linton Proctor - July/1998.

Nanquidno Valley near the sea - 2 flying in 2003 by Linton Proctor.

Pendeen Watch. First seen in 1999. Around 10 flying and last seen in 2004 - 4 flying. No habitat change.

Zennor Valley above the beach. 2 flying on 10th June 2000 and 2004 - Linton Proctor.

Trevail Mill (Treveal Cliff), SW474 402. The owners of the N/T land saw them in 1997. Last seen in 2005. Max. seen - 12 flying. No habitat change. Expect 12 flying 2006/7

Trengwainton Carn. First seen by Steve Hoskin in 1997 - 10 to 20 flying. No habitat change. Expect 10+ flying in 2006.

Mousehole to Lamorna Cove. Footpath approx. a mile. First seen in 2002 by Tom and Ann Polglase - 5 to 10. Unknown number in 2005 but no change in habitat. Expect no change in 2006/7.

Cudden Point to Prussia Cove. First seen in 1995 by P. Harris - around 10 flying. Last seen in 2003 - around 5 flying. Encroaching scrub is a problem as grazing ceased in 1998. Expect less than 10 flying in 2006/7.

Rinsey, SW 589271. 21/8/05 less than 14 seen. Recorded since 1991 by P. Browning. No habitat change.

Porkellis Moor, SW 6832, 6833, 6932. First discovered in 1996. Still in good numbers and strong. Max. seen in this time - around 20 flying. No change in habitat. Expect 20 in 2006/7.

Porthleven, SW 638 246. 9/6/00 - 3 seen.

Gunwalloe, SW 6532, 6423, 6522. 12/6 05 - 22 seen then 13/8/05 -74 seen by P. Browning?

Carnpessack, SW 744 175 (near Kennack Sands), 21/8/00 - 3 seen. Mullion Golf Course cliff, 7/8/00 - 3 seen. Site not visited since - P. Browning.

Kynance, SW 688 131, 7/8/05 - 1 seen by P. Browning.

Kynance, Wind Mill Farm - 2 flying 2002? - Linton Proctor.

Lizard, SW 701 192, 3/6/04 - 2 seen.

Lizard, SW 701 192 20/6/05 - 1 seen.

Lizard SW 731 193 - 2 seen (none seen in 2005).

Traboe cross roads. First seen by Steve Hoskin in 2000. Max. - 5 flying. Private land, no permission to access.

Poltesco and Gwendreath - 3rd of August 2002. 2 flying -Linton Proctor.

Croft Pascoe, 2005 - 2 seen inside the Gate by Linton Proctor.

Carnpessack (near Kennack Sands), SW 744175, 8/7/05 - 1 or 2 seen by P. Browning?

Gwithian Towans. First seen 1990 although the sand dune area is large the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary does not fly everywhere but in quite distinct areas, maybe in 6 unconnected areas. If all sites were checked in 2006/7, maybe 50 flying.

Budder Down at North Cliffs. First seen in 1994 in low numbers but in 1997 over 100 were counted by Steve Hoskin and Phil Harris this was a very good year, for some unknown reason, at many other colonies in Cornwall - now being pony grazed by National Trust.

Jericho Valley. First seen in 2002 and then 2005. Max. seen - 5 flying. No habitat change but scrub encroachment. Expect 5 flying in 2006/7.

Coverack crossroads - first seen by Steve Hoskin in 2000. Max. - 5 flying. Private land - no permission to access.

Coverack to Lowland Point - 2 miles. First seen by P. Harris in low numbers. Max. 3 flying in 1999. Expect 3 flying in 2006/7

Some of these dates show a great range of emergence, for instance, 28/4/2003 at Kenijack Valley. 02/7/2003 at Nanqidno Valley - a great difference.

This makes it hard to monitor these sites in their peak emergence. On the Lizard, early Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries are not normally seen; however, they are commonly seen from June right through to August. Are they not just a protracted first generation due to local climatic conditions? One for further study. (I have called them second generation in my article on page 18 for want of further knowledge -Ed.).

Can anybody think of any more in south west Cornwall?

Sites now lost in south west Cornwall:

- **Basset Cove** - seen by D. Weeks in 1997 but not seen since by the writer, although looked for. This could have been a transitional site that died out naturally. Expect none in 2006/7.
- **Porteath/Bridge village**. First seen in 1989 by Tom Polglase and P. Harris for a couple of years but not seen since. Expect none in 2006/7.

This is a list of sites that could possibly be checked this year and next because there has been some concern, that in the past, they have not been monitored so closely as more threatened species such as the Marsh and Pearl-bordered Fritillary.

~ Compiled by Phil Harris, June 2006

COMMON OR YELLOW TOADFLAX (*Linaria vulgaris*) -
A possible alternative food plant for Clouded Yellow (*Colias*
***croceus*).**

Whilst on a Sunday afternoon countryside walk with my wife and two small sons on 20th August 2006, I was delighted to be able to observe at very close quarters, a female Clouded Yellow (*Colias croceus*) avidly nectaring on *Linaria vulgaris* — Common or Yellow Toadflax. It could be approached up to 12 inches or less which is unusual for this strong and powerful flying species. I was even more amazed to see her several times attempt to oviposit on the plant/flower itself.

The photo I took (see cover photo – Ed.) shows her a split second after bending her abdomen almost double attempting to lay an egg on the pale yellow flower itself whilst nectaring. Upon checking many books on British Butterflies at home, I could not find any reference to this plant being used as an egg-laying or host plant for this species in any stage of its lifecycle. My little boy Robert aged 2, also enjoyed close views of the butterfly whilst standing on the side of the country lane. I invite any suggestions from readers who may have seen anything similar recently to contact me.

I have been delighted to see many Clouded Yellows (*Colias croceus*) near my home this summer and hope that the weather during the autumn remains favourable for a further home bred brood to flourish.

~ Lee Slaughter, 21st August 2006

Sending in your Records by e-mail.

Butterfly records to John Worth at jowan@tiscali.co.uk

Moth records (Caradon, Restormel and N. Cornwall) to Leon Truscott at Leon.Truscott@btinternet.com.

Carrick, Kerrier & Penwith to Tony James at cmg.comms@btinternet.com

Cornwall Moth Group

Incidence of the Six-belted Clearwing – *Bembecia ichneumoniformis* (D. & S.) in Cornwall.

Perhaps it is true to say that the occurrence of this **Nb** moth in Cornwall was thought to be “widespread but local on grassy slopes.” (*The Moths & Butterflies of Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly* - Smith 1997). This observation was taken from records of the moth seen at Penzance and extracted from the Victoria County History records. No specific date was given but they were probably from the early part of the last century or sometime in the late 1800's. No moths have ever been recorded since as far as I know, except an isolated one taken at Tregantle (VC2) on the 20th August 1974 by R. J. Heckford and one at Kynance Cove (VC1) on the 9th July 1997 by Mark Tunmore.

Barry Henwood (Devon Moth Group) was kind enough to send me his summer 2003 records from Chapel Porth and reported the incidence of one adult *Bembecia ichneumoniformis* to pheromone lure on the 6th July 2003. He suggested that this moth is probably far more widespread and common than records indicate and that members of the Cornwall Moth Group may care to use the pheromone lure 'API' to survey this moth during the forthcoming season. It was with great interest that a number of us took up his suggestion last summer and again this year with surprising results that will surely modify our understanding of the distribution and abundance of this moth in Cornwall.

A complete record of all incidences of this moth to be found in Cornwall to date follows on the next page.

The Butterfly Observer - Autumn 2006

Site	Gridref	Quantity	Date	Recorders
Tregantle	SX384529	1	20/08/1974	R. J. Heckford
Kynance Cove	SW6813	1	09/07/1997	Mark Tunmore
Chapel Porth	SW698495	1	06/07/2003	Barry Henwood
Gear Sands	SW773553	3	09/07/2005	Justin Evans
Penlee Reserve	SX437493	4	09/07/2005	Leon Truscott
Penlee Reserve	SX437493	5	10/07/2005	Leon Truscott
Nanterrow Farm, Gwithian	SW592414	1	11/07/2005	Chris Haes
Hayle, Towans	SW578398	4	16/07/2005	Justin Evans
Spit Beach - Par	SX073524	2	21/07/2005	Phil Boggis
Penlee Reserve	SX437493	3	01/08/2005	Leon Truscott
Penlee Reserve	SX437493	1	07/08/2005	Leon Truscott
Tregantle	SX385528	2	08/08/2005	Leon Truscott
Penlee Reserve	SX437493	2	10/08/2005	Leon Truscott
Penlee - Watchhouse field	SX439489	1	28/06/2006	Leon Truscott
Penlee Reserve	SX437493	3	28/06/2006	Leon Truscott
Penlee Reserve	SX437493	12	07/07/2006	Leon Truscott
Tregantle	SX385528	1	15/07/2006	Leon Truscott
Withnoe Cliff	SX403517	1	15/07/2006	Leon Truscott
Penlee Reserve	SX4349	20+	16-Jul-2005	Dave Allan
Seaton	SX307542	15	17/07/2006	Leon Truscott
Spit Beach - Par	SX072524	5	18/07/2006	P. Boggis & L. Slaughter
Polhawn Cove	SX422495	9	21/07/2006	Leon Truscott
Southdown Quarry - Millbrook	SX437528	5	22/07/2006	Leon Truscott
Talland Bay	SX227516	5	25/07/2006	Leon Truscott
Tregantle	SX378533	1	30/07/2006	Leon Truscott
Tregantle	SX385533	2	30/07/2006	Leon Truscott
Lansallos - Lantivet Bay	SX165513	1	04/08/2006	Leon Truscott
Penlee Reserve	SX437493	1	12/08/2006	Leon Truscott
Penlee Reserve	SX437493	1	13/08/2006	Leon Truscott

Justin Evans writes in conclusion to his 2005 records as follows:

"From my own observations this year, it appears that there may be a correlation between food-plant abundance and the presence of Six-belted Clearwing. However, it's not the correlation I would have suspected! i.e. the sites with the smaller amounts of food-plants are where I found them. Hayle Towans, in particular, has very 'scrappy' looking areas of Bird's-foot Trefoil but proved to be quite successful. Whereas Bassett's Cove has large slopes of both Bird's-foot Trefoil and Kidney Vetch but proved unsuccessful. This is the total opposite food-plant/species presence correlation that I found with Thrift Clearwing. Although I located this at a number of sites around the coast this year, I found it more often at sites with large amounts of Thrift. As for Yellow-legged Clearwing, I tried at seven different locations in/around oaks and Sweet Chestnuts within Tehidy Country Park but all proved negative - one to work on next year!"

Leon Truscott writes concerning his Talland Bay record:

"I arrived at Talland Bay (SX2251) on Tuesday 25th July at 11am to look for Six-belted Clearwings. I walked eastwards along the coast path, but found very little Bird's-foot Trefoil. After about 300 metres I

realised I had left the pheromone lure in the car! I decided to return to the car, not to collect the lure, but to give up and move on as the site was rather unpromising.

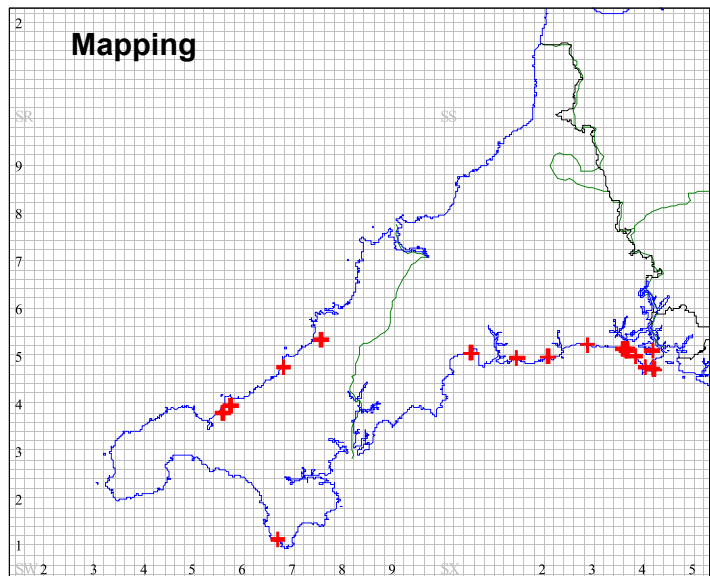
As I got to about 50 metres from the car park, I happened to look down and saw about four Six-belted Clearwings flying around a tiny clump of Bird's-foot Trefoil. On closer inspection I saw another, brighter individual at rest in the grass and Trefoil. This looked like a female, and sure enough, one of the males was soon in cop. with her.

I managed to take a couple of record shots, one of the female and one of the pair, but they soon disappeared from the scene. It was the first time I had managed to find this species without the use of a pheromone lure."



Six-belted Clearwing
(*Bembecia ichneumoniformis*)
in cop. Talland Bay, 25th July
2006. Photo © L. Truscott

0382 Six-belted Clearwing (*Bembecia ichneumoniformis*)



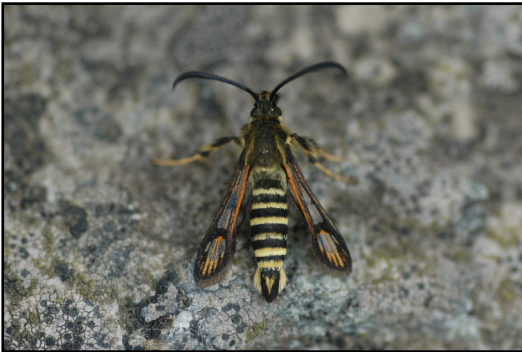
Conclusions

As suspected, *Bembecia ichneumoniformis* has been found all around the coastal fringes of Cornwall and even in those areas so far surveyed with negative results, there is every reason to suppose that with further searches, this moth will yet be found. These results from scattered localities over two seasons bode well for future success and I welcome renewed efforts in the coming years especially from inland localities. The pheromone lures which when mixed in various ways will attract most if not all of the British *Sesiidae* can be obtained from information contained at the following Internetlink:

http://www.bioquip.net/BIOTA_PHEROMONESV2.pdf The pheromones are by no means cheap but will last several seasons if kept sealed and stored in a freezer immediately after use.

My thanks go to J. Evans, L. Truscott, M. Tunmore, Barry Henwood, R. J. Heckford, Chris Haes and Dave Allan for their records.

Finally, I include some photographs taken by myself, Leon Truscott and Justin Evans.



Six-belted Clearwing - *Bembecia ichneumoniformis* (D&S) Penlee Battery, Cornwall - 6th July 2005. Photo © L. Truscott.

Six-belted Clearwing - *Bembecia ichneumoniformis* (D&S) Spit Beach, Par, Cornwall - 21st July 2005. Photo © P.H. Boggis.





Six-belted Clearwing - *Bembecia ichneumoniformis* (D&S) Gear Sands, Perranporth, Cornwall - 9th July 2005. Photo © J. Evans.

This report was first published in a different format during April 2006 at the Cornwall Moth Group's website:

<http://www.cornwallmothgroup.org.uk/reports/index.htm>

Phil Boggis – revised August 2006

EXTREME ABERRATION AT PENHALE (14th June 2006)

At Mounts Pond, Penhale (private, non-MOD land) I was recording butterflies and dragonflies on a sunny but windy Wednesday afternoon. A little disappointed due to the wind-chill, my attention was 'perked-up' by a distinctly 'black & white' moth or butterfly. In those first few seconds, which is all that one often gets, I could only think of 'Magpie Moth'! But fortunately it landed not far away, and was seen to be nothing like the moth above. In fact, was it a moth or a butterfly? It seemed weak, like a day-flying moth might be, yet was indeed a butterfly. As I got closer, about 1 metre at the nearest, I could see that it was a large Grizzled Skipper! This was shown more by the outline than the colouring, which was entirely 'wrong' for that species.

The upper forewings were (virtually) all white (95%), with 'panels' of white joined into a complete block of white (except for c.5% on the outer tips of the forewings, which were brown/black). In stark contrast, the upper hind-wings were (virtually) all brown/black in colour (except for c.5%) in the form of 2-spots, symmetrically placed on the outer hind-wing, together with two thin white 'commas' toward the centre of the hind-wing. Effectively, to an observer such as myself, it was a large Grizzled Skipper with white fore-wings and

black hind-wings! Fortunately I had seen many this year (a good year for the species), perhaps 20 to 30 in all. I was also quite familiar with the aberration 'taras' which is quite plentiful at Penhale in general. This was a VERY extreme form of 'taras', and larger than normal (therefore probably a female), and although it deserved a name of its own, it being quite remarkable, it will probably be recorded as ab. 'taras' extreme. Over 20 years I have never seen a Grizzled Skipper even approaching this extreme two-part colouration.

I could not photograph it, since I had no camera with me, I could have caught it easily, but decided that such a magnificent creature should be allowed to live longer in the wild (although late enough already, on 14th June '06!) Other Grizzled Skippers, including 'taras' were seen that day, but only served to exemplify the extreme nature of the large one observed at Mounts Pond.

P.S: Since writing the above I was fortunate enough to see an even later Grizzled Skipper (at the same site, Mounts Pond), on Sat.25th June '06. The latter was a small, 'standard' male of the ab. 'taras', and really bore no resemblance to the extreme, female(?) aberration of 14th June '06 !

**Roger Lane, 25, Warwick Drive, Bucklers Village, Holmbush,
ST. AUSTELL, Cornwall, PL25 3JJ.**

Sammy Godolphin. 1950-2006

It is with a great sense of sadness that we report the death of Sammy Godolphin on the 21st April 2006. Sammy was one of Butterfly Conservation's intrepid explorers on foot, always on the look out for new sites. He often led his team of four on expeditions up hill and down dale in search of Marsh Fritillary webs. We frequently found ourselves up to our ankles in mud in the valley bottoms.

Sammy was one of the world's energetic people, full of life, just like the butterflies he went in search of on a warm summer's day. Sammy will be greatly missed by everyone who knew and loved him.

~ Tom Polglase

More News about the Atlantic Coast and Valleys Project.....

Reprint from the Cornish Guardian - Bodmin Edition, 23rd August 2006

Return to the Wild is North Coast Aim

Wildflower seeds are being harvested along the North Cornwall coastline with the aim of using them to extend and recreate similar conditions and habitats that will benefit wildlife. The Atlantic Coast and Valleys Project involves some 45 acres of maritime grassland being harvested for its seeds, in an attempt to regenerate the landscape and wildlife of the area. North Cornwall district councillor, Neil Burden, said: "This very exciting, visionary project is one of only a few selected national enhancement schemes."



The project aims to restore the plants and wildlife that flourished in the area more than 50 years ago but has now become isolated to a few pockets along the coast. It covers a 15 km stretch of coast from Welcombe Mouth to Sandy Mouth in the north and Trebarwith Strand to Delabole Point in the south. The redevelopment work will also provide the ideal conditions for the Large Blue butterfly which died out in the area around 30 years ago. The seeds, harvested by specialist contractors Heritage Seeds, will now be stored and cleaned so that they can be used in project over the next three years.

Please note deadlines for contributions are as follows:

- ♦ Winter issue: 1st. February
- ♦ Spring issue: 1st. May
- ♦ Autumn issue: 1st. September

Many thanks for your co-operation.

~ Ed.

Field Trip to Deer Park Wood, 10th June 2006

It was a beautiful sunny day for the field trip to see the last natural surviving colony of **Heath Fritillaries** in Cornwall. Just after 1pm ten of us left Luckett car park and made our way to Deer Park in two vehicles. At the site we met up with a few more people who were already

there. Immediately on arrival we saw **Heath Fritillaries** gliding down from the main slope and fluttering along the track at the bottom. This was something that has rarely been seen in the last few years and was largely the result of scrub clearance at the bottom of the slope undertaken by volunteers last winter. It was also good to see an abundance of ribwort plantain (one of the main larval food-plants here) along the track as well as on the hillside and along the top track – the result of planting and seeding in the winter.



Thirsty work - observing the fortunes of the Heath Fritillary at Deer Park.

The slope itself was looking good, with plenty of Ox-eyed Daises on which the Fritillaries were nectaring. About 25 **Fritillaries** were seen in all, as well as a **Speckled Wood** a **Large White** and a **Green - veined White** or two. The fine weather and good

turn out of both people and butterflies made for a very enjoyable afternoon.

After Deer Park we made our way back to Luckett, and after bidding farewell to two of our group we made our way up to the meadows at Greenscoombe Wood, where approximately 15 **Heath Fritillaries** were seen – some of the 1500 or so butterflies bred and released by Barry Ofield and Tom Sleep as part of a re-introduction program carried out under the auspices of Butterfly Conservation, English Nature and the Duchy of Cornwall. As leader of the field trip I would like to thank all those who came along and made the day such a pleasant occasion.

~ Paul Browning, July 2006

ITV South West Covers Heath Fritillary Release...

Dr. Caroline Bulman, Butterfly Conservation's Senior Species Ecologist, and Barry Ofield, who is pictured being interviewed by ITV's Paul Brennan, on the occasion of the final phase of the release at Greenscoombe Wood, Luckett, of what eventually amounted to nearly 1600 Heath Fritillaries. They were released between a period from the 28th May and the 22nd June 2006 and already, small larvae have been observed prior to over-wintering. The main breeding program was carried out by Devon's Tom Sleep who was also responsible for the butterflies breeding and successful introduction at BC's Lydford Gorge Reserve, Devon in 1994 - butterflies; incidentally, that were at the time taken from Greenscoombe! Tom has been ably assisted by Barry, our former Branch Chairman,



who said, "To see them on a site where they've been extinct since 2002 - it's wonderful to see them back - and we have released in excess of 1500, which is brilliant and hopefully they will breed on." Barry will be continuing the breeding program into next year. Dr. Caroline Bulman stressed the importance of the Heath Fritillary since it is one of our most threatened species. She said, "During the last ten years alone we've measured a fifty per cent decline in this butterfly. So as you can see, it's really

**Heath Fritillaries ready for release at
Greenscoombe Wood - 10th June 2006**

important that we start reversing that decline and get the butterfly back into sites where it used to occur.”

Local volunteer groups from Cornwall Butterfly Conservation and individuals have been monitoring the butterflies' fortunes for some years but the decline took a sudden dip from about 2001 onwards, both at Greenscoombe Wood and Deer Park, due mainly to the overgrowth of adjacent conifers. Duchy foresters under the watchful eye of Head Forester, Geraint Richards, have conducted felling operations which have again opened up the ground, hopefully making it suitable for the butterfly in the years to come. Volunteers from our local branch have scattered plantain seed - one of its food plants, along with scrub clearance, primarily at Deer Park. This, and other work by the Duchy has greatly benefited the butterfly, thus preventing a total extinction in Cornwall. (See article on page 13 about its fortunes at Deer Park this summer and other articles in recent issues).

~ Phil Boggis, September 2006

Reprint from the Cornish Guardian - Wednesday August 23rd 2006

Wildlife protected as major bottleneck work continues

By COLIN GREGORY

cgregory@c-dm.co.uk

A MAJOR new road in Cornwall is progressing ahead of schedule, and the wildlife surrounding it is being protected in a way which is attracting national interest. The new A30 Bodmin to Indian Queens dual carriage-way across Goss Moor, a Special Area of Conservation and home to the rare Marsh Fritillary butterfly, is a massive £93m construction project. However, despite the huge earth-moving vehicles and the need to keep

building the road, which stretches for 11.7 kilometres or seven miles, up to speed, great care has been taken to protect the wildlife in the area. Work on the bottleneck, which has frustrated many of the



Highways engineers study the **Butterfly Handbook** as they work on the Goss Moor dual carriageway.

25,000 drivers who use it daily for many years, began in July last year and is due to be completed next July. Project liaison officer Alun Jones is confident the road will be completed before that date.



The Marsh Fritillary butterfly which is being protected as the Goss Moor works continue.

The new A30 road will skirt around the edge of the moor and part of the old road will be turned into a cycle-way and footpath, encouraging butterflies and other wildlife.

There are 250 workers on site for a road which will include three over-bridges, four under-passes, six lay-bys and two major junctions.

Care has been taken not to harm the wildlife on the nature reserve which adjoins the road, and, as well as crossing underpasses being built for animals such as badgers and otters, more than 360 adders, grass snakes and slow worms have been moved.

The survival of butterflies on Goss Moor has received particular attention, so much so that the scheme is included in a new guide to help road designers on future schemes.

The new Butterfly Handbook has been jointly funded by the Highways Agency and English Nature to provide a valuable reference manual for conservationists and highways engineers around the world.

The guide shows engineers how to approach road design from an ecological point of view, and suggests how special features such as habitat design and planting can be incorporated into road schemes to protect and attract butterflies.

The handbook gives case studies which show where butterfly-friendly measures have been incorporated.

It includes a study by Adrian Spalding, of Spalding Associates of Truro, with advice on mitigating the impact for the Marsh Fritillary butterfly.

Dr Martin Warren, chief executive of the Butterfly Conservation charity, said: "Butterflies have probably never been as endangered as they are today following decades of loss of key semi-natural habitats such as flower-rich grasslands.

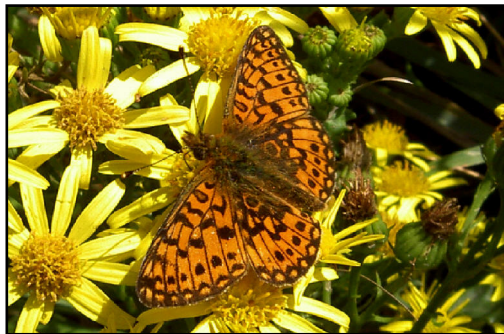
“With a little planning, road verges can be made even better places to conserve butterflies and other wildlife as they can provide suitable breeding habitats for many species and provide crucial links between the patches of habitat that remain.”

The Butterfly Handbook contains examples of how habitats can be created, managed and monitored along the road network. Features include wide verges and central reservations planted with suitable scrub and hedges which create additional shelter and habitat for the butterflies.

English Nature's Chief Scientist, Dr Keith Duff, said: “Road construction has had a massive impact on the English landscape, both positive and negative. This joint publication, the first between English Nature and the Highways Agency, brings together a huge body of research which examines how butterflies can benefit or be disadvantaged by road construction.”

Field Trip to Kynance Cove – 12th August 2006

The weather again was kind to us in what has turned out to be a fine and very warm summer. We all met up at the National Trust car park and were wondering how we would recognise the butterfly enthusiasts from all the other summer visitors thronging the car park. Someone, who introduced herself



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary.
Photo © S. Haseman

as Sally, approached with a net in her hand after seeing Lee Slaughter with his, and kindly asked whether this was in order. Lee and I soon put her mind at rest as, speaking personally, it is at times difficult to be sure of some of the species we are observing. The careful use of a net is, I believe, a must for accurate reporting and identification. This

proved to be the case later in the day when, what looked at a cursory glance to be a Large White,

turned out to be a **Clouded Yellow f. helice**. Netting it was the sure way of proving once and for all what it actually was! I know all do not agree with this, but on many occasions, in Cornwall during certain seasons, it has for me, proved essential.

After introducing ourselves, we moved off towards the cliffs, primarily in search of the **Grayling** and were soon met with a number of these cryptic species flying up in front of us. A female **Wall Brown** was netted and then carefully released for photographs on some bare ground – she was most obliging and sat for long moments in the warm sunshine. My experience of the males is that they are most ‘flighty’ and never seem to settle in one spot for very

long. Eventually we arrived at a secluded and sheltered cove formed from land slippage and serpentine quarrying. Here we found upwards of 25 second



Grayling, Kynance Cove, 12th August
2006 Photo © P. Boggis

generation **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries** along with some late summer migrant moths such as the **Silver Y**, **Rush Veneer**, **Rusty-dot Pearl** and **Bordered Straw**. In this small area alone we counted upwards of 11 species including the **Peacock**, **Small Tortoiseshell**, **Common Blue**, **Small Skipper** – rather worn, **Small Copper**, **Wall Brown**, **Small Pearl - bordered Fritillary**, **Painted Lady**, **Large White**, **Grayling** and **Clouded Yellow**. After some had left the main group to catch up

with visiting relatives, we sat down in a sheltered spot to enjoy a late lunch whereupon we encountered Phil Harris who, per-chance, had stumbled across us. We showed him our 'find' of **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries** before sauntering back to our cars.
~ Phil Boggis, August 2006.

HOW TO GET TO CWT HEADQUARTERS, ALLET



The opinions expressed in the articles of this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Cornwall Branch or Butterfly Conservation.

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