

CORNWALL BRANCH

The Butterfly Observer

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**Butterfly
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk



Marsh Fritillary egg-laying on a trip to the Upper Fowey Valley – see p.18
(Photo: Roger Hooper)



Mating Small Skippers taken on a CBC field trip
(Photo: Shaun Poland)

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Cover photo: Pearl-bordered Fritillary: a target species of the All the Moors Butterfly Project (see p 14). (Photo: Philip Hambly).

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Chair's Report

Hello everyone,

As I write this, the sun is shining and has been, for around a week now - is this a record I wonder? Butterfly numbers here in East Cornwall have been relatively low so far, but I have seen a good number of species so we will hope that this is the start of a better summer for our fluttering friends. Recent reports for two of our most threatened species, the Pearl Bordered Fritillary and the Marsh Fritillary have been very encouraging - the hard work by our volunteers is certainly paying off !

Our AGM seems a long time ago now, but what a really successful event! Nearly ninety members attended to hear and see the adventures of our young speaker Ben Porter who captivated the audience with his wildlife photography. He was followed by a wonderful talk from one of our most respected Lepidopterists, Jeremy Thomas, who explained the intricate relationships between ants and butterflies. Masses of pasties and other culinary delights, together with musical entertainment from Malcolm Pinch, rounded off a thoroughly enjoyable day. Our AGM for 2017 changes to April and will be held in the same venue at Trispen on Saturday 22nd April.

During early May we held a very successful social evening at Chacewater Village Hall where we were entertained by another young speaker, Will Hawkes who talked us through the life cycles of some of our

native bumblebees. Yet another very well supported and enjoyable event.

Our volunteers, under the supervision of Jo Poland, have again been busy improving habitat for our butterflies on various sites in the County, please volunteer if you like the outdoor life and can manage to clear scrub, working as a team.

We have recently recruited a new member to our Committee. Jim Cooper lives near Truro and is an experienced fund-raiser and project developer. He and his family are also very interested in our County's wildlife, particularly our butterflies. Welcome Jim.

Butterfly Conservation's Chief Executive, Martin Warren, is due to stand down at the end of this year, although he is intending to continue his support for Lepidoptera both at home and abroad in the future. Martin has given myself and our Cornwall Branch enormous support over the last few years, and I am sure you will join me in thanking him for his friendship and kindness over that time, as well as for all that he has achieved for the benefit of Lepidoptera throughout the country. As our next issue of the Observer will not be produced until after Xmas, we wish you and your family good health and prosperity in the coming years. Many thanks from Cornwall, Martin!

Best wishes to all

Philip Hambly

How You Can Help Cornwall Butterfly Conservation

By Kathy Wood, CBC Membership Secretary

Membership of CBC is nearing 500, which represents a new high, far exceeding any previous figures. The more members we have, the more we can help butterflies and moths in Cornwall. We were hoping to go through the 500 barrier prior to our AGM and Members' Day on March 12th but narrowly missed that target. Now we are hoping to reach 600 by the end of 2016. This is how you can help:

- If you like what we do but are not a member, please join!
- If you have a single membership but could qualify for a joint or family membership, please upgrade!
- If you have a friend or relative in Cornwall who is interested in wildlife and not a member, please invite them to join, or give them a gift membership!
- If you are a member of another branch of Butterfly Conservation, please join Cornwall Branch too, for only an extra £6 per person per year!
- If the last idea doesn't apply to you, ask your friends and relatives upcountry!
- If you are a member of a gardening club, allotment association, W.I. etc, please ask if they would like a talk about butterflies and CBC!
- If you have visitors, please show them our events programme and invite them to attend an event! If you are coming to any of our events, please bring a friend!
- If you have somewhere to display them to people likely to be interested, please ask me for some of our information postcards!
- If you have finished with your copy of *Butterfly* or *The Butterfly Observer*, please, with permission, leave it in your local school or public library, hair salon, or doctor's, dentist's or tyre/exhaust fitter's waiting room, or anywhere where non-members might read it and find out about us!

If you have any more ideas, please contact me!

Thank you,

Kathy



CBC members enjoying a field visit to Predannack. Photo: Jo Poland

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation AGM 2016 - Report

By Jo Poland, CBC Fundraising & Publicity Officer

Our AGM in March at St Erme Community Centre was a fantastic day, thoroughly enjoyed by the 83 people that attended, many who were from other Cornish wildlife groups. This year, we made it a priority to invite our friends from other conservation groups, many of whom are too small to have the resources to hold their own event.

This year, the Cornwall Branch was eager to celebrate the support given by all of our friends, old and new. Our members, volunteers and supporters were treated to a day to remember, with two fabulous illustrated talks, legendary pasties & cakes, and excellent company! Our main speaker was butterfly expert Professor Jeremy Thomas, who has been a valued friend to us for many years. He launched CBC in June 1993 surrounded by hundreds of Heath Fritillary butterflies at the Duchy of Cornwall's Nature Reserve at Lockett.

Jeremy's talk "Blue butterflies, ants and parasitoids" was completely fascinating and helped us all to gain an insight into the interrelationship between these creatures.

Our second speaker, Ben Porter, is one of our newest friends, since he became actively involved as a volunteer in our successful practical conservation programme earlier this year. Ben's talk "A young photographer's adventures in the world of natural history" was very well received and his photography was agreed by all to be superb. Certainly a talent to watch for the future.

A unique musical performance from Malcolm Pinch who sang a couple of songs that he has written about his experiences as a regular CBC volunteer, added a new flavour to the day. Bambi's revenge was especially memorable - I am sure that none of us will forget to check for deer ticks now!



Jo Poland with a surprised looking Chair, Phillip Hambly, at the AGM.



Malcolm Pinch providing the musical entertainment at the AGM.

Of course, the best judges of the day were our audience. Here are some comments from those that attended:

"the best things were seeing young enthusiasm for wildlife and the fascinating talk from Jeremy Thomas"

"I most enjoyed Ben Porter's talk"

"loved Malcolm's songs"

"nice mix of speakers"

"the overall attendance from different groups was nice"

"plenty of opportunity for networking"

"good grub, thanks for supplying gluten free"

"an inspiring day, thank you very much!"

"the day couldn't be bettered!"

Because of savings this year on the cost of speakers, we made a profit of around £350. As usual, this will all be spent in Cornwall on habitat improvement and education. As we all know, it's not all about money: three people joined Butterfly Conservation and six new people offered to volunteer!

We would like to thank everyone that attended and also thank all those that helped us to make this day such a huge success.



Almost 90 people attended the AGM to hear speakers including world famous Lepidopterist, Prof Jeremy Thomas.



Ben Porter gives his presentation on From Bardsey to Cornwall, Birds to Butterflies.

Butterfly Report for 2015

By Dick Goodere, County Butterfly Recorder

2015 was another good year although the records and number were slightly down from 2014 which is not surprising as the weather was less favourable. Thirty-seven species were recorded which included 10 out of the 20 UK BAP species. 19,492 records were submitted and 68,072 butterflies were seen. The records come from a number of sources which include those sent directly to the County Recorder, records entered by other recorders who have direct access to ERICA (our data base), records from the Transects and records sent from Head Office which increase every year.

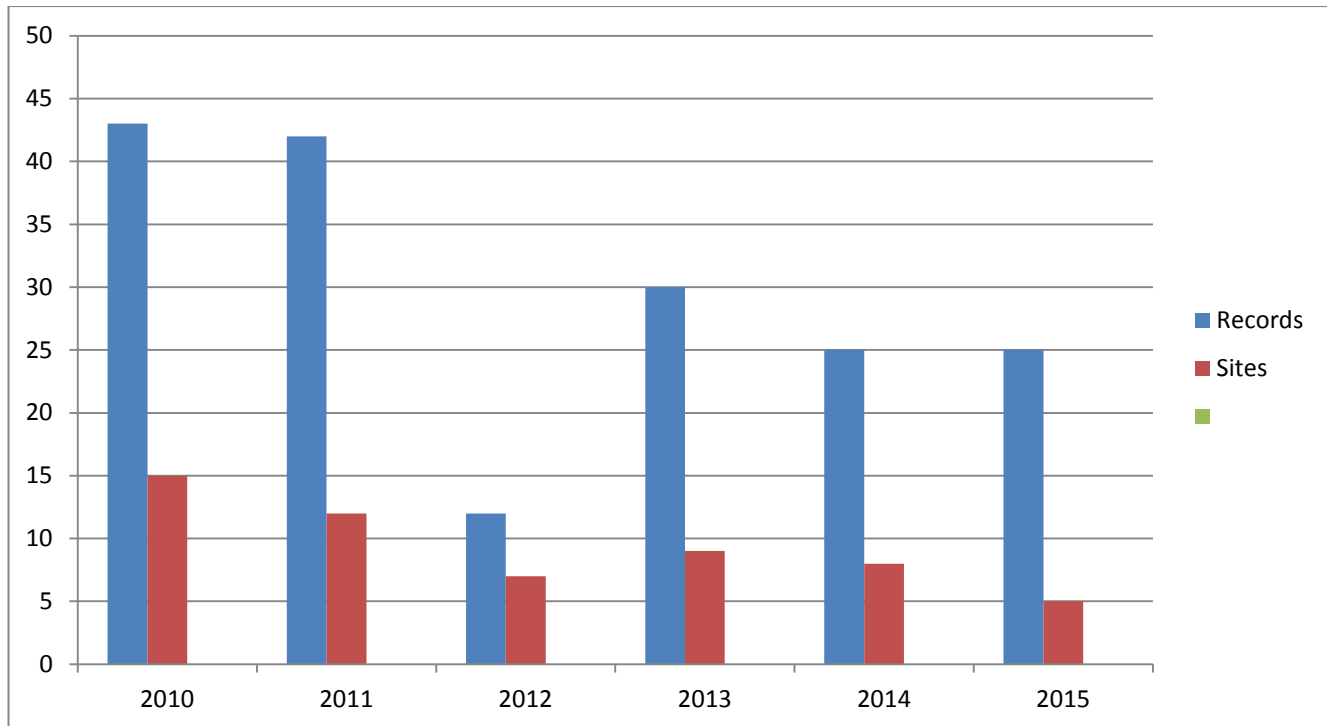
There have been no significant changes regarding the more common species although **Small Tortoiseshell** records were down by 50% from the previous year. **Painted Ladies** had their best year out of the last five, whilst **Clouded Yellows** had their lowest number in five years (apart from 2012 when only 13 records were received). There were 91 Clouded Yellow records sent to me this year and a total of 107 butterflies seen. Last year 759 Clouded Yellows were counted.

Brown Argus has been a concern in the past. This year the Penhale records boosted the numbers to a

staggering 597. **Purple Hairstreak** abundance was slightly up on last year while **Green Hairstreak** was down. **Dark Green Fritillary** records were up slightly and **Silver-washed** records were very similar to the previous year.

There is a mixed picture for our Priority species which are listed below.

Dingy Skipper. The graph opposite shows that both the number of records submitted and the number of sites where this butterfly was seen have diminished over the last 5 years which is against the national trend showing Dingy Skippers making somewhat of a recovery nationally. The Dingy Skipper fortunately still thrives on Penhale and Perran Sands. In fact 260 out of 277 of Dingy Skippers recorded in 2015 are from that area and these reasonable numbers perhaps mask the bigger picture of a very substantial fall in distribution. The flight period was already over last year before the Mining Project was given the go ahead so we are glad that some early monitoring will take place this year in the hope that additional sites for this butterfly will be found on old mining sites.



The **Grizzled Skipper** is still doing reasonably well also on Penhale and Perran sands, which is its only site in Cornwall. Forty-nine were counted this year. **Silver-studded Blues** continue to be a success story for Cornwall and appear to be expanding their range as well as numbers increasing year on year. The **Wall** is a butterfly which is of national concern. Records in Cornwall have fluctuated considerably over the last five years. It did particularly well in 2014 but abundance in 2015 was down to less than a third of the previous year.

Small Heath is another butterfly which causes national concern but pleasingly both records and numbers of butterflies counted have gone up this year. Sixteen records and 163 butterflies in 2014 and in 2015 there were 28 records and 288 butterflies counted. **Grayling** is also in decline nationally. Over the last few years in Cornwall, records and numbers have varied. This year although the number

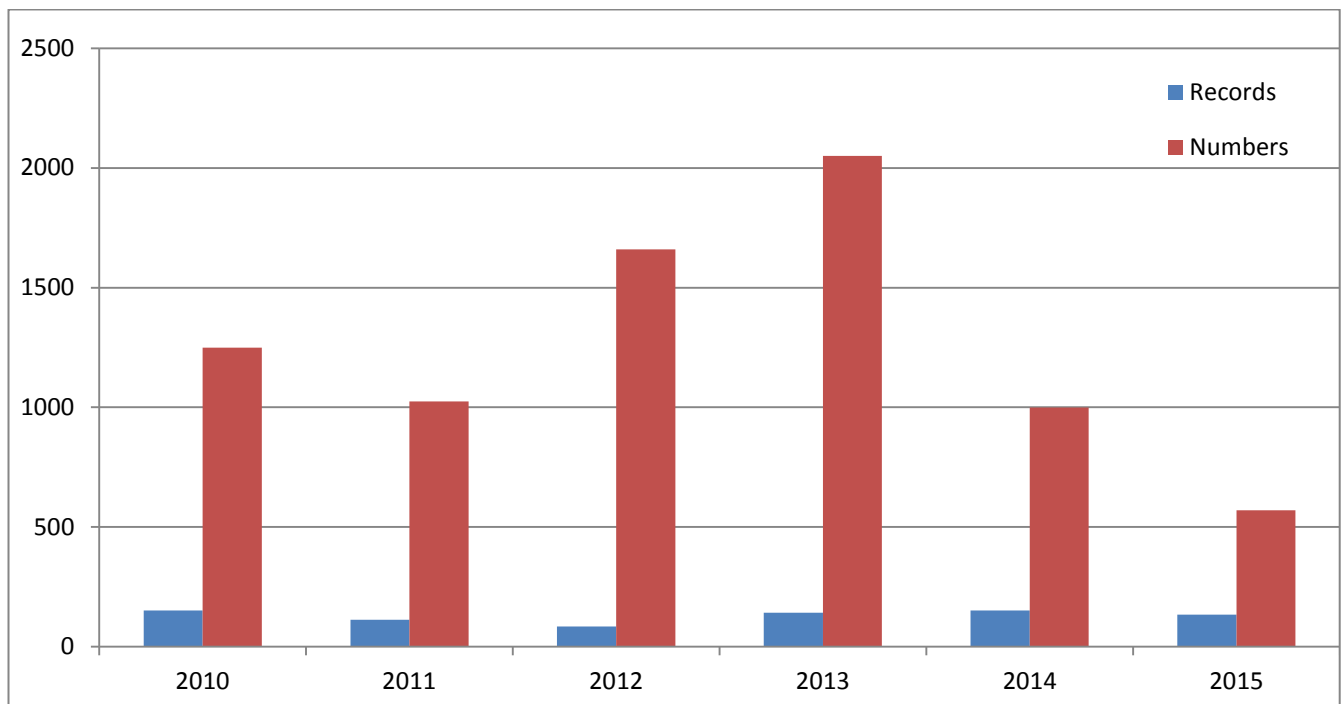
of records was similar to last year, abundance had increased. We were particularly pleased to hear about those recorded on mining sites.

Pearl-bordered Fritillary records and numbers were both down in 2015 although total numbers still appear quite respectable thanks to the counts from the Marsland reserve. There were few records from the Murrayton area and only three records from three sites in the Bodmin area where a total of 23 butterflies were seen. Cornwall Butterfly Conservation has concentrated much of its efforts and funds this year on supporting conservation work for this butterfly, particularly in the De lank area which had been allowed to deteriorate, suffering inappropriate burns and uncontrolled scrub growth. There are already indications that this work has borne fruits.

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Numbers of this butterfly do go up and

down from year to year but I am rather concerned that the last couple of years have seen quite a downward trend. In 2015, although the number of records submitted for this butterfly was roughly the same as for the previous 2 years, abundance was down on 2014 by almost half and by almost a quarter of the 2013 numbers (see graph below). We have always

been a bit complacent about this butterfly in Cornwall because for a long time it seemed to be doing so well, but these figures have alerted us to take note of any habitat deterioration which may have contributed and to keep a closer eye on its progress.



Marsh Fritillary records have really benefitted from the recent concentration of effort on Bodmin Moor, thanks to Sally Foster, Jo Poland and her volunteers. When the Marsh Fritillary is really searched for in a systematic way, more sites come to light. Fifty-one records were submitted from a total of 30 sites in 2015. Unfortunately, the Marsh fritillary does not appear to be present any longer in mid Cornwall apart from a reduced number at Breney.

Heath Fritillary has done well this year at its site near Lockett with 287 butterflies counted this year compared with 163 last year. However, I'm afraid the **White-letter Hairstreak** has not been seen again after the excitement of last year but there was a very credible sighting of a **Small Blue** on the coast near Bude (its origin a total mystery!) and a sighting of a **Long-tailed Blue** near Bodmin. I think this is the extent of our exotic butterflies this year unless you know otherwise!

Transect report (UKBMS) 2015

By Jim Barker Transect co-ordinator for Cornwall.

Cornwall transects now span the county from St Martins in the SW to Watch House & Battery in the far SE; Kilkhampston in the NW and Lockett in the NE. Altogether 26 transects were walked and entered, 19,381 butterflies were counted and 32 species seen. Peacock, Speckled Wood and Meadow Brown were seen on all 26, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell and Gatekeeper on 25. Meadow Brown came top in numbers at 5,007 followed by Gatekeeper with 3,282 and Silver-studded Blue with 3,130 on five sites. Low numbers were: Purple Hairstreak where two were seen on one site, Brown Argus we had four on two sites and Green Hairstreak just nine on three sites.

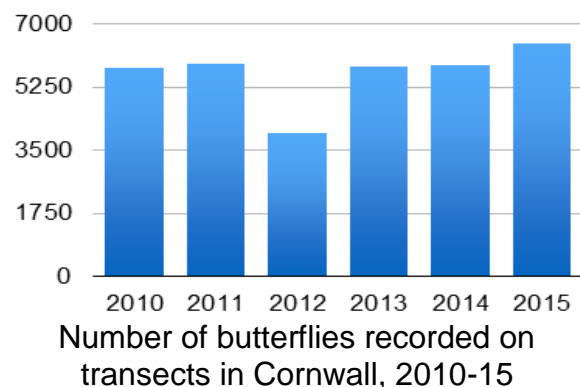
Missing species were Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper, Pearl-bordered and Marsh Fritillaries with High Brown Fritillary & Brown Hairstreak reported in single figures to our county recorder from Marsland reserve on the very northern tip of Cornwall. This reserve is not a transect however. The Wood White hasn't been recorded at all since 2006, Essex Skippers and White-letter Hairstreak only very occasionally recorded.

Looking at the results from 2010 to 2015 & using only those transects walked in all six years shows an increase in 2011, a big dip in 2012, back up again in 2013, roughly equal to 2011 in 2014 and up in 2015 to over 6000. This is extremely good news for Cornwall and shows the

value of the volunteer transect walkers, so many thanks to all of them. Many of our transects are organised with the National Trust, so a vote of thanks also to their volunteers and rangers.

There will be several new transects for 2016, Stithians Lake, Tehidy Woods and Tidna Valley (Morwenstow) among them. We also have some probable starters for 2017 when suitable routes have been worked out. We will lose two very good transects on the Lizard unfortunately but should still see an overall increase in numbers.

There is another scheme run by Butterfly Conservation where 20 random grid squares of one square kilometre are selected by BC and the volunteers are asked to walk a route across the square at least twice a year. This year we have five volunteers for these squares which is great news. We still have some squares vacant if anyone would like to join in. Please contact me on tel: 01736 794134 or jimfrances@talktalk.net



Moth report: Late 2015 – Early 2016

By Leon Truscott, County Moth Recorder

The moth report in Butterfly Observer 59 (Winter) reported that 2015 had been a relatively quiet year for moths in Cornwall. Since that report, further records have been received, boosting the number of species reported to 877, so 2015 ended up as an above-average year.

Some additional species of interest from 2015 were as follows:

Syncopacma polychromella was recorded at Duloe by Andy & Shirley Park on 18th December (and on 25th & 27th December, thought to be different individuals). This rare immigrant was also reported in some southern English counties at the same time and is a new species to Cornwall.

A *Coleophora* sp. recorded by Frank Johns at Mt Edgcumbe on 13th June was investigated further by Frank and found to be *C. limosipennella*, the first

record for Cornwall. *Cornifrons ulceratalis* was recorded at Callestick by Tony Wilson on 27th December. A very rare immigrant, it was part of an influx into other southern counties that month (the first, thought to be on 19th December in Dorset, new to Britain). Tony's specimen was, of course, the first Cornish record.

A Tunbridge Wells Gem *Chrysodeixis acuta* was recorded on St Agnes, IOS on 5th October (K. Button). Also on St Agnes, an Eastern Bordered Straw *Heliothis nubigera* was found on 21st December (G. Gordon, confirmed by M. Hicks). St Agnes also came up with a Porter's Rustic *Athetis hospes*, recorded by M. Sedgman on 31st October. Back on the mainland, an Oak Rustic *Dryobota labecula* came to light at Church Cove, Lizard on 25th October (P. Patrick, verified D. Brown), new to Cornwall.



Syncopacma polychromella – a rare immigrant and new species for Cornwall
(Photo: A. & S. Park)



The leaf mine of *Pryas oleae* found on Olive leaves near Saltash by Bob Heckfod, the first Cornish record
(Photo: R J Heckford)

At the time of writing, some early **2016** records have been received, but the cold early spring weather has kept numbers down. There have been several reports of nationally scarce or notable species, including *Coleophora lutarea* and *Aethes williana*, both of which have been recorded annually in Cornwall in recent years, and a Dotted Chestnut *Conistra rubiginea* near Wadebridge on 15th March (D. Julian). There was some evidence of early migrant activity with a few records of *Plutella xylostella*, Silver Y *Autographa gamma*, *Udea ferrugalis* (one in January) and several reports of Dark Sword-grass *Agrotis ipsilon* from February onwards.

On 13th April, Bob Heckford found several vacated mines of *Prays oleae* on olive leaves at a garden centre near Saltash, the first Cornish record. The first British record was from Kent in 2008, since when it has been recorded in several south-eastern English counties as leaf mines or adult moths. Bob Heckford and Stella

Beavan have found mines and pupae in Devon since the Saltash record, so it's always worth checking olive bushes in Cornish garden centres. On 8th May Tony Wilson recorded *Pammene giganteana* at Callestick. Tony posted a picture of the moth on Facebook, prompting a suggestion of *P. giganteana* by Rob Davey. The moth was subsequently checked by Frank Johns, who confirmed the identification, the first documented record for Cornwall.

Grass Eggar *Lasiocampa trifolii* is a nationally scarce species. In Cornwall, it can be found in some western coastal areas, mainly the Lizard Peninsula, the far west (e.g. St Just, Sennen), The Isles of Scilly and the Penhale Sands area. 2015 was a successful year with a dozen records of both larvae and adult moths from these areas. This success was continued in early 2016, with several records of larvae from the far west and from St Mary's, Gugh and Bryher on Scilly (Bob Heckford).



Coleophora lutarea: a nationally scarce micro-moth (Photo: Leon Truscott)



Pammene giganteana was another first for Cornwall (Photo: Tony Wilson)

‘All the Moor Butterflies’ project update

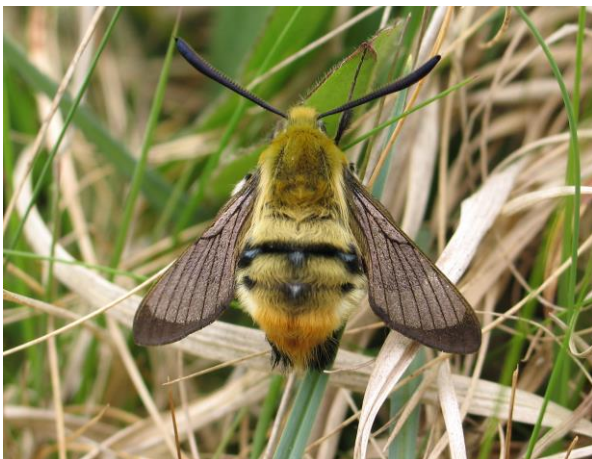
By Jenny Plackett, BC Senior Regional Officer for South West England

Plans are moving apace in the development of Butterfly Conservation's project to improve the fortunes of some of Cornwall's most rapidly declining butterfly and moth species.

Cornwall supports some of our rarest butterflies, including the Marsh Fritillary, the Pearl-bordered and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, as well as the beautiful Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth. These butterflies continue to decline, and there is a real need to ensure a sustained supply of suitable, well connected patches of breeding habitat to maintain strong populations in the longer term. To this end, Butterfly Conservation has been working with partners in the Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), Dartmoor and Exmoor National Park Authorities and Natural England, to develop plans for a

landscape scale project operating across Bodmin Moor, as well as Dartmoor and Exmoor, focusing on conserving our threatened fritillary butterflies and the Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth.

The project is called 'All the Moor Butterflies', and the development phase has been supported by a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), together with contributions from the Cornwall AONB and the other partner organisations. Plans for the project are now completed, and the application is with the Heritage Lottery Board for final assessment, with a decision expected in September. All being well, HLF funding will be confirmed and the project will be up and running with new staff operating across the three landscape areas from January.



Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth:
one of the Project's target species
(Photo: Mark Parsons)



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary; a target
species on Bodmin Moor
(Photo: Martin Warren)

The project will work across the three moorland areas over three years, focusing on conserving these threatened butterfly and moth species and providing opportunities for people to see and learn more about them. As part of the development work, considerable effort has been put into gaining more information about the fritillary species in Bodmin. A comprehensive survey of potential Marsh Fritillary sites was carried out last summer, which resulted in several new colonies being found. This summer, these sites are being re-visited by Cornwall Butterfly Conservation branch volunteers to monitor the population size and distribution, and this will provide valuable baseline information.

Once the project is underway, the project staff will aim to work closely with the landowners, many of whom are aware of (and rather proud of) their populations of these stunning butterflies! Some of the landowners are keen to be involved with the project, and have offered to allow the public to enjoy the rare butterflies on

their land. South Penquite farm, which holds an important population of Pearl-bordered Fritillary, will be working with the project and hosting events and walks during the delivery phase. Local community groups and schools operating around the Bodmin area have been consulted to find out what they would like to see offered by the project, and many of the ideas suggested by these groups have been incorporated into the project plan. Engagement activities will include a range of events from general interest guided walks to in depth training in butterfly surveying, and opportunities to get involved with practical habitat management.

The new project is due to start in January, however if you would like to get involved with events or volunteering opportunities in Cornwall before then, please contact the Cornwall Branch by emailing Jo Poland, Publicity & Fundraising Officer publicity@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk or visit <http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk/>



White butterflies hold a solar secret

By Roger Hooper, CBC Press Officer

Two of our most familiar butterflies, the Large and the Small White, may soon be helping to increase the efficiency of solar panels, one of the main providers of renewable energy!

You are no doubt aware that, on a cloudy day, the white species are often the first to be seen, sometimes by quite a margin of time. This ability to be first to warm-up and fly gives them first access to nectar in nearby flowers, well ahead of any rivals. What is it about white species that allows them to do this?

This was the question a team of researchers from Exeter University asked themselves. The answer was in the way the butterfly holds its wings when basking. The 'V' shaped posture adopted by both 'cabbage whites' on cloudy days (known as reflectance basking) reflects more solar energy to the butterfly's thorax, allowing it to warm up the flight muscles much faster.

Their discoveries clearly had potential in the solar energy field. Researchers replicated the butterfly's posture in a solar panel and found that the overall power to weight ratio of the solar structure was increased 17 fold, thus making it vastly more efficient.

Lead researcher Professor Tapas Malick explains: "Biomimicry in engineering is not new. However, this multi-disciplinary research shows pathways to develop low-cost solar

power that have not been done before".

The scientists then investigated how to replicate the wings to develop a new, lightweight reflective material that could be used in solar energy production. The team found that the optimal angle at which the butterfly should hold its wings was 17 degrees. This angle increased the temperature of the panel material by 7.3°C compared to when the wings were flat. They also found that by replicating the simple mono-layer of scale cells found in the butterfly wings in solar energy producers they could vastly improve the power-to-weight ratio of future solar concentrators, making them much more efficient.

So, the lowly 'cabbage whites' could go from villain to hero in one step. From agricultural pest to a solar saviour that could play a part in fighting global warming, the single biggest threat to biodiversity on earth.



The 'V' shaped posture adopted by the Small White, maximises the concentration of solar energy onto the thorax.

Photo: Tim Melling

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation Social Evenings

By Jo Poland, CBC Fundraising & Publicity Officer

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation now has more members, volunteers and supporters than at any time ever before. Everyone has been asking us to put on some social events. Knowing that people are eager to meet, chat and exchange wildlife & conservation ideas, we are keen to help this to happen.

Our first event was held in May in Chacewater Village Hall. Will Hawkes, one of our own volunteers, who also volunteers his time for the Bumblebee Conservation Trust, gave us a fascinating illustrated talk. 'Bee talks with Will Hawkes!' really showed the depth of Will's knowledge and passion for bees. Everyone who attended learned a great deal about this threatened group of pollinators.

The whole evening was a great success, with nearly £200 being raised for our conservation work in Cornwall. To add to this positive outcome, Kathy Wood our hard-working Membership Secretary signed up 6 new members, we recruited two new volunteers and also Niki from ERCCIS sold a good number of the new atlas 'Bumblebees of Cornwall and Scilly' by Patrick Saunders:

<https://erccis.org.uk/News/BumblebeeAtlas>

CBC is very committed to supporting

younger people to develop the skills they need to protect our precious wildlife in the future and we are hoping that more young people would like to host a talk evening for us. If this opportunity is of interest to you, or someone that you know, please get in touch – we will give you all the support you need and even pay you a small fee in exchange for your time and energy.

Please keep your eye on the events section of our website for notices about more social evenings – we are planning some for the Autumn months.



Show Your Support
For Pollinators!
Join Us For a
Fund Raising Evening!



Bee Talks with Will Hawkes!
Friday 6th May @ 7.00pm
Chacewater Village Hall
Church Hill, TR4 8PZ

*Talented young wildlife photographer and
Bumblebee Conservation Trust Volunteer
Will Hawkes promises us a fascinating
insight into life in a bumblebee colony*

Refreshments, Q&A session, sales table and a raffle!
Pay on entry £5, £2.50 for students, children free
Entry price includes tea, coffee and cake!

*Purchase your copy of the new atlas 'Bumblebees of
Cornwall and Scilly' by Patrick Saunders,
County Bumblebee Recorder, at this event*
www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk

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A fantastic day with fritillaries!

By Roger Hooper, CBC Press Officer

When all the good things come together in the field the memories will last forever. A section of Jo Poland's volunteer army enjoyed such a day on June 9th when we searched for Marsh Fritillaries at a beautiful moorland site in the Upper Fowey valley.

The weather before had been lovely and as it turned out we had the last full day of sun and warmth. The site itself, a huge damp depression between rolling hills, had been surveyed for webs last autumn and many were found, so hopes were high to find the gorgeous adults. It turned out we were in for a treat!

Jo wanted us to do a 'timed count', which was a new procedure to all of us but we pulled it off. Splitting into teams of 3 or 4, we crossed the site counting the butterflies as we went. Counting isn't difficult. However, concentrating on the task when all around you are the most fantastic bog plants, flowers, moths, passing birds such as reed buntings and butterflies, other than Marsh Fritillaries, was very difficult. What a wonderful site, you could almost feel the energy in the ground below your feet.

I think the total count was around 35 butterflies seen in the timed counts and we retired to the warmth of an ancient stone wall to sit on and have lunch, watched by distant pairs of wheatears that were nesting nearby.

We probably saw even numbers of males and females at the site. The food plant of the larvae, Devil's Bit Scabious, was very common, even abundant in places. We were lucky enough to find a female egg-laying on the underside of a leaf, while a Marsh Fritillary was lucky enough to be freed from a sticky end on a Lesser Sundew!

To top all this, the landowner and farmer, Bill, impressed all of us with his love of nature and his commitment to this jewel of a patch on his land. When Jo showed him a photo of just what he had living there he was really keen to help in the future. Indeed he has already helped massively as he told us that when he bought the land the site we were surveying was overgrown and dead. He and his father burnt it off and the regenerated vegetation which he carefully grazes has resulted in a perfect site for an endangered butterfly.



Mating Marsh Fritillaries
(Photo: Roger Hooper)

De Lank Field Trip report: Sunday 15th May

By Sally Foster

We had a lovely day on Sunday 15th May at De Lank on Bodmin Moor. Eighteen keen people were thrilled to see 17-25 Pearl-bordered Fritillaries at De Lank and Pendrift. We started our walk by searching the quarry area with kind prior permission from De Lank Quarry. During the winter the volunteers led by Jo Poland have carried out extensive conservation management work.

Very soon we spotted our first Pearl-bordered Fritillaries- a mating pair no less. A good sign for the future! Very soon afterwards we spotted two or three more on the area where we had worked in the winter. The Pearl-bordered, which is an endangered species, was the target for conservation work last winter and, in addition, CBC has made a 13 year commitment to work with De Lank Quarry to enhance the habitat for this beautiful butterfly. I did note our Chairman was pointing out plenty more places for us to work next winter! I think we will have plenty to do but how fortunate are we that we can further improve the habitat for this butterfly. The decline of this butterfly over the years has been drastic in the UK and all I can say is that without the amazing work of the volunteers we might be looking at extinctions on the few remaining sites on Bodmin Moor.

Several other species were spotted such as Speckled Wood and Green-veined White. We also had the thrill of seeing the Brimstone, which is absent

from the west part of Cornwall due to the lack of the larval food-plant Alder Buckthorn. On the lovely Alder Buckthorn close to the De Lank River, Brimstone eggs were spotted.

After lunch by the river, we saw at least 17 Pearl-bordered Fritillaries at Pendrift. This area suffered from an extensive fire last year in April. Bodmin Fire Brigade was on site for two days before this fire was extinguished. The fire must have knocked out 90% of the population so it is very reassuring that the Pearls from the quarry have recolonized Pendrift, or had a helping hand from the small triangle of land which didn't get burnt. All being well, numbers will be much better next year.

During the afternoon walk we were joined by the renowned botanist, Ian Bennallick. We diligently found plenty of the rare fern, Adders Tongue, for him. It's always great to have a botanist on a walk. In conclusion all I can say is that the work done by the volunteers over the winter has been amazing and it was good to see how well the habitat is looking. On the previous Friday the volunteers had carried out timed counts on the other sites we have worked on and all was looking very good. In addition to this, we have the most supportive landowners, NE advisors and BC staff. With all this collaboration at least we can do our best to save this butterfly.

An urgent plea from the Membership Secretary, Kathy Wood

Dear Members,

If since you joined Cornwall Butterfly Conservation you have acquired, or changed, an email address at which you would be happy for us to contact you, and not notified the Membership Secretary, please do so as soon as possible by emailing me at: membership@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk.

At the moment I have current addresses for only about half the members, so the other half are missing out on a lot of branch activities and news. Many of the messages I send out are returned undelivered, which means members have changed their email addresses and not told me.

If you did not receive an email in April about the "**Bee Talks With Will Hawkes**" social and fundraising evening, I haven't a current email

address for you. If you are not sure, please notify me anyway, I would rather receive notification twice than not at all. Please make sure that your security settings are allowing messages from membership@cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk into your inbox.

Please note that Butterfly Conservation keeps all personal information on an encrypted database and will never pass on your details to any other person or organisation. If at any time you wish to opt out of receiving emails from Butterfly Conservation, please let me know and I will remove your email address from the database.

Thank you

Kathy



CBC volunteers with Natural England on Criggan Moor
(Photo: Max Thompson)

FIELD TRIPS AND EVENTS – 2016

Welcome to Cornwall Butterfly Conservation's programme of field trips for late 2016. You'll find some of our ever-favourite sites to visit but also some new ones to explore. We have organised a few trips in partnership with other local conservation organisations. We'll continue to place a big emphasis on recording on each of our field trips, so that we can build an even better picture of Lepidoptera distribution across Cornwall.

Our field trips are fun and friendly – all (including children) are welcome, whether or not you're a member of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation, and whatever level of experience you have. 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.

Tuesday 5 July: UPTON TOWANS

11.00 am Near Hayle

Join us on a walk through this extensive sand dune complex situated between Gwithian and Hayle, a Cornwall Wildlife Trust reserve and SSSI. Target species will be Dark Green Fritillaries and Silver-studded Blues. Meet by the gate, in front of the large chimney at the entrance to the CWT reserve (SW 579396). Please bring a packed lunch.

Leader and contact: Dick Goodere (01736) 753077.

Saturday 9 July: PENLEE RESERVE AND PENLEE POINT

11.00am Near Rame Head

We will be led by moth expert and Cornwall Moth Recorder Leon Truscott in looking for Marbled White butterflies, as well as Small Heaths and Dark Green Fritillaries. Six-belted Clearwing and Thrift Clearwing moths can also be found here with the help of pheromone lures. Meet in Penlee Battery car park (SX436491).

Leader and contact: Leon Truscott (01752) 812023.

Sunday 10 July: LUXULYAN VALLEY

11.00 am - 3.00 pm

Joint picnic & walk with the Friends of Luxulyan Valley & Friends of Fowey Estuary. Walk in the Valley and picnic in the paddocks. We hope to see wild flowers and butterflies in the recently cleared paddocks, including the largest and most spectacular Fritillary butterfly that occurs in Cornwall - the Silver-washed Fritillary. Bring some food to share. Meet 11am at Black Hill car park near the viaduct. Grid reference: SX 059 573

Leaders: Jo & Shaun Poland (01872 540371/07800548832 jogreenp@gmail.com)

Saturday 23 July: WILD FLOWERS AND BUTTERFLIES OF PENHALE

10.30 am Near Cubert

Join us for a closer look at the wild flowers, butterflies and moths to be found on Penhale Sands Army Training Camp, not normally open to the public. We should find orchids and many species of Lepidoptera on this unique marsh and dune area. Jointly organised with the Cornwall Botanical Group, the trip will be led by botanist Ian Bennallick, accompanied by Dave Thomas. Please bring a packed lunch. Meet by the South Gate near Treworthen Farm, Cubert (SW783567).

Booking is essential. Leaders: Ian Bennallick and Dave Thomas.

Contact: Dave Thomas (01726) 861093 or davecarp86@hotmail.com.

Sunday 24 July: NEWLYN DOWNS

1.00 pm Near St Newlyn East

Join us in exploring this SSSI and Special Area of Conservation. We'll be searching for Grayling butterflies, Bog Bush-crickets and Scarce Blue-tailed Damselflies, and much more. Meet in the layby opposite the entrance at SW83683 55209.

Leader and contact: Carly Hoskin (01637) 498462.

Sunday 31 July: GODOLPHIN WOODS

1.30 pm Near Godolphin

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, you turn left at Townshend, then at Godolphin Bridge the road swings to the left; some distance along this section there is a parking area on the left where a track runs down to the river. It is possible to park here, but it is better to drive down the short track and park in the larger car park at the bottom (on the right) at SW60023243.

Leader and contact: Carly Hoskin (01637) 498462.

Sunday 7 August: KYNANCE COVE

11.00 am Near Lizard

Join us on this wonderfully scenic coastal walk on the Lizard as we look for Clouded Yellow, Grayling, Common Blue and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterflies, and many more species. Meet in the National Trust Kynance Cove car park (SW688132). Parking free to National Trust members.

Leader and contact: Jim Barker (01736) 794134.

Sunday 14 August: GWENNAP HEAD AND PORTHWARRA

10.30 am Near Land's End

This beautiful location boasts an abundance of butterflies, including Graylings, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, Clouded Yellows, Small Heaths and many more. You might also spot a Chough! Meet in the Porthgwarra car park (SW372218): charges apply. Café.

Leader and contact: Jim Barker (01736) 794134.

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation Committee and Contacts

If you would like to volunteer or just get more involved with the Branch, please don't hesitate to contact a member of the Committee:

Chairman:

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philip@lethyp.co.uk

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Kathy Hicks

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Facebook

www.facebook.com/pages/Butterfly-Conservation-Cornwall/787896031272272



Fox Moth found during surveys of Cornwall mining sites
(Photo: Ben Porter)



Painted Ladies had their best year for five years during 2015
(Photo: Phillip Hambly)