

The Butterfly Observer

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation Newsletter No.49



Small Skipper



Purple Hairstreak—

For an opportunity to view this difficult to see butterfly close-up, please go to page 2



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Summer 2011

It's Time to Count Butterflies!!!

The nationwide 'Big Butterfly Count' survey begins on Saturday 16th July and lasts for two weeks until 31st July.

Everyone can help. It's easy and fun! All you have to do is get onto your computer and download one of our beautiful ID charts at www.bigbutterflycount.org. Then, go out into your garden or a place nearby and record every butterfly that you see for 15 minutes.

The results of this giant survey will really help scientists determine exactly what is happening to Britain's most threatened wildlife group. The decline of butterflies means bad news for all sorts of other wildlife too, as their loss alerts us to an increasingly unhealthy environment.

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation have also joined forces with the Garden

Centre Group at its branches at Lelant and Par over the whole fortnight to promote the importance of butterflies, moths and bees in gardens. Call into either branch over the two weeks of the Big Butterfly Count and enter simple competitions to win great prizes, including a year's free membership of Butterfly Conservation.

We will be ending this fortnight on a real high. One of our members has arranged an "**up close**" facility so that we can see the Purple Hairstreak, an elusive and rarely seen Cornish butterfly. This is a unique opportunity where we will be lifting people above the tree canopy on a raised platform so that they will be able to look down on this stunning butterfly that hides itself in the tops of oak trees! See below for further details.

Jo Poland

Butterfly Open Days

Saturday 30th July 2011, 12noon to 1.30pm

'Tropic Days Butterfly House'

at entrance to Porfell Animal Land, Lanreath

To get to Porfell (SX175588) turn south just before or just after Middle Tap-house on the A390 Liskeard – Lostwithiel road. Look out for the brown sign to Animal Land and follow this.

Followed by a visit to:

Lethytep, Penadlake, Lanreath, PL13 2PG at 2pm

Where you can enjoy a cream tea, try your luck at tombola and hopefully view the Purple Hairstreak Butterflies.

Saturday 6th August 2011, 11am

Trelusback Farm, Penhalvean, Redruth, TR16 6TQ

A great locality, which contains wildflower meadows, woodland, wetland and a lake. Meet at 11am at Trelusback Farm (shown on the OS map as 'Trelusback' at map reference SW712384).

What do we talk about at Committee?

Our Committee meetings are legendary in respect of their duration (we are often not home till approaching midnight) but, until recently, we did not meet very frequently so there was a lot of business to cover when we did!

This year, however, we seem to have met more often and have even longer meetings. This may be partly due to the fact that we now have a bigger committee than ever before. There are advantages to this in that responsibilities can be shared out more evenly and our new members have brought energy and new ideas to a Committee that was beginning to flag a little. The downside is that there are now more agenda items and more time needed for everyone to have their say! It is great that people feel so strongly about things but it also means we do not always agree and debates can get quite heated. This is mostly a good sign, I think, as there is nothing worse than apathy!

So what do we talk about on those long nights? Here are some of the key topics we have covered this year:-

Concerns about looking after Bodmin Moor. BTCV has been doing much of the management of the Moor in recent years but several grant applications for the continued funding of this work have been rejected leading to concerns that some crucial areas will be neglected. There is also less involvement from our own members now, partly because it is such a long distance to travel for those people like Sally Foster who has spent years working with the farmers on Bod-

min but cannot continue this commitment. Also, the Fritillary Action Group which was largely focused on Bodmin has not been as active as previously and this has not been helped by the cuts to the previously involved National and LA organisations resulting in other priorities. There is a Vision for Bodmin which has perhaps raised more concerns than solutions as it seems to be led more by archaeological considerations than concern for invertebrates which were barely mentioned in the proposal. Paul Brewer has undertaken to coordinate work on Bodmin Moor, encouraging volunteers to identify new, and check out former, Marsh Fritillary sites so at least we know where the Butterfly still exists and may be better protected.

Big changes have occurred to The Butterfly Observer as the result of Phil Boggis retiring as our magazine editor. We took the opportunity to review how it was delivered when Gillian Thompson and Paul Brewer took over the editorship. As all of you should now be aware, we are trying to persuade members to give us their email addresses so that they can be informed when the magazine appears online. This helps us to reduce costs and time spent printing and posting as from now on we will only send copies to those who let us know they do not have online facilities, apart from a once a year printed copy sent to everyone. These changes have caused much heart searching and it has been a difficult transitional time. On the whole the system seems to be working well now with relatively few members unable to access our

What do we talk about at Committee?

website but we do still need more email addresses if people want to be alerted when new editions are available.

CBC's website has also evolved into something quite different. Shaun Poland has taken over from Jayne Herbert and the newly designed website now has a forum facility. The changes have again been difficult to negotiate as people were happy with the original website but I think most of you would agree that the work Shaun has done is very exciting and the site deserves to be visited.

We were fortunate enough to welcome Jo Poland to the new post of Publicity and Fundraising and she has certainly made her mark. She has been involved, with others, in writing grant applications and at last was given permission by the Committee to spend money on promotional resources so that we now look more professional with proper display boards which can be easily transported to different venues. The media is being used to advertise events and more people recruited.

We attempt to prioritise our Conservation work which this year has mainly focused on the land owned by Keith Wilson near Stithians where it is hoped to create a site suitable for Marsh Fritillaries (a web has already been found) and also, through the introduction of disease resistant elms, raise the possibility of the White-letter Hairstreak returning to this area. The considerable work done by volunteers and students will also improve conditions generally for invertebrates. On a

more negative note we have had to abandon work on some sites (most poignantly on the Grizzled Skipper site at Goss Moor) as it was realized that all the clearance work done in the winter was to no avail as lush vegetation sprang up in the summer in place of the scrub, providing far too much shade. The Committee has been trying to figure out how to recreate the original conditions provided by this industrial site. Paul Browning is liaising with Natural England about this. A Conservation sub-committee has recently been formed so that conservation can be given more priority generally.

In relation to the White-letter Hairstreak Paul Brewer and Keith Wilson have been leading the search to find any remaining butterflies of this species which may be hiding away somewhere in Cornwall and would like more volunteers to help. This year there has been one unconfirmed sighting which will obviously be followed up in the years to come.

Jim Barker continues to update us at each meeting with the statistics from the various Monitoring Schemes which are thriving and indeed has a new proposal to cover 10Km squares where previously there was no recording, (see the *Butterfly Observer* issue number 48 for more details).

Because of the size of the Committee, sub-committees have been formed to focus on the Butterfly Audit and Training and we have reports back from these. Training is planned on Grassland species for NE by Adrian Spalding and Paul Browning which will be tried out on CBC members. The Audit

What do we talk about at Committee?

of Cornish butterflies will continue on an annual basis and will be reported back to members

Because we have been concerned at the imbalance of Committee members (there is under-representation from the north and east of the County) we did have a debate about whether to consider forming two Committees representing different geographical areas. At the moment we have put this suggestion to one side, especially as we have just been joined by a few new members who are not from the West of Cornwall.

A code of conduct for Committee members was drawn up and agreed.

Events such as the AGM, Open Days,

Field-trips and workdays are suggested, planned and co-ordinated.

Issues of Concern raised by HQ or by individual members are discussed and followed up in writing, if appropriate. Also, priorities for spending are debated following the Treasurer's report. We also debate what to do about vacant posts and I predict will be much exercised in the coming months by John Worth's departure from the County Recorder's post. (Any volunteers please!)

I'm sure I haven't covered everything but hope this gives a flavour of how your Committee spends its time!

Maggie Goodere
Former Secretary

Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS)

We are delighted to inform you that we have decided to continue the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) again in 2011. Once again this will be a collaborative project with BTO and CEH.

We would like to thank everyone who took part last year and especially the WCBS Champions who helped promote the survey within the Branches. The survey had another successful year with nearly 700 squares sampled. We hope you will continue to survey the same squares in the same way as last year.

Our priority is to re-survey these squares for at least the next 2 years so that we can determine trends in the

wider countryside and see whether they differ from transect trends. We also welcome new participants either to help re-survey old squares, or to survey new ones for the first time.

New surveyors will be allocated randomly selected 1-km squares in their Branch area. The squares need to be surveyed in July and August by two visits at least ten days apart. Anyone interested in taking part in the WCBS in Cornwall in the coming season should contact Jim Barker (the Branch Champion for Cornwall) for further information.

Dr Zoë Randle
Surveys Officer
Butterfly Conservation

Results of the 2010 Survey

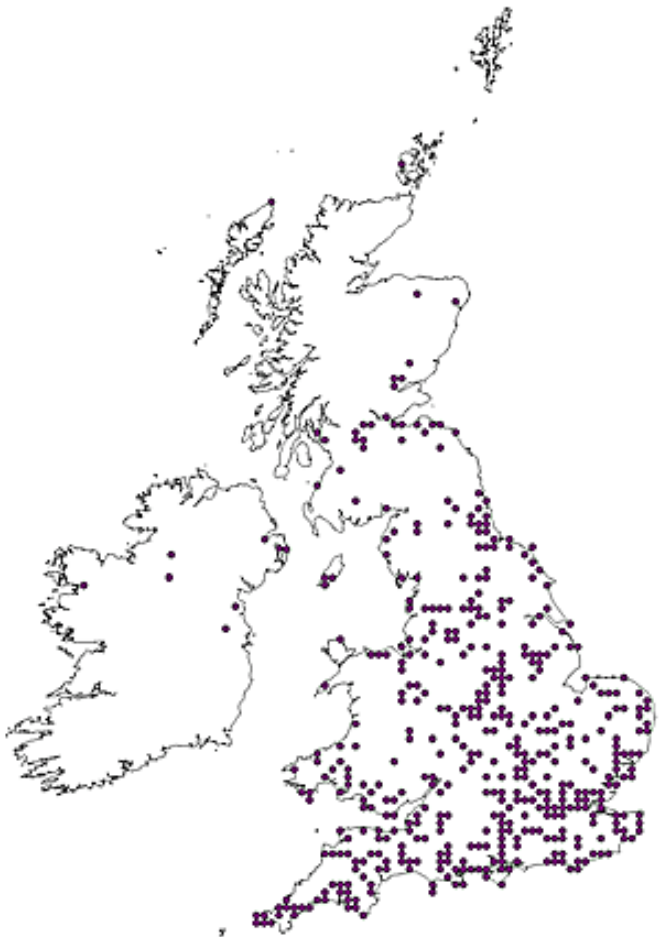
2010 was a relatively poor year for the migration of moths and butterflies into the UK. Nevertheless, thousands of people continued to support our online survey of the Humming-bird Hawk-moth and Painted Lady butterfly during the year, helping to gather useful information.

Just under 4,000 reports were received in total during 2010 - a big drop on the 15,000 in 2009 but substantially better than the 1,000 sightings logged in 2008. Many thanks to everyone who sent in a sighting in 2010!

The Painted Lady had another dramatic year. Having invaded the UK in spectacular numbers during 2009, it was equally notable by its scarcity in 2010. Only 630 sightings were submitted during the year by 528 people and most people reported just a single Painted Lady butterfly. Contrast this with over 12,700 records in 2009.

This is a natural phenomenon typical of the Painted Lady. Painted Ladies do not survive in the UK during the winter as a rule and therefore the number seen here each summer is dependent on immigration from abroad. Although the reasons are not entirely clear, it

has long been recognised that the



number of migrant Painted Ladies arriving in Britain fluctuates wildly from year to year.

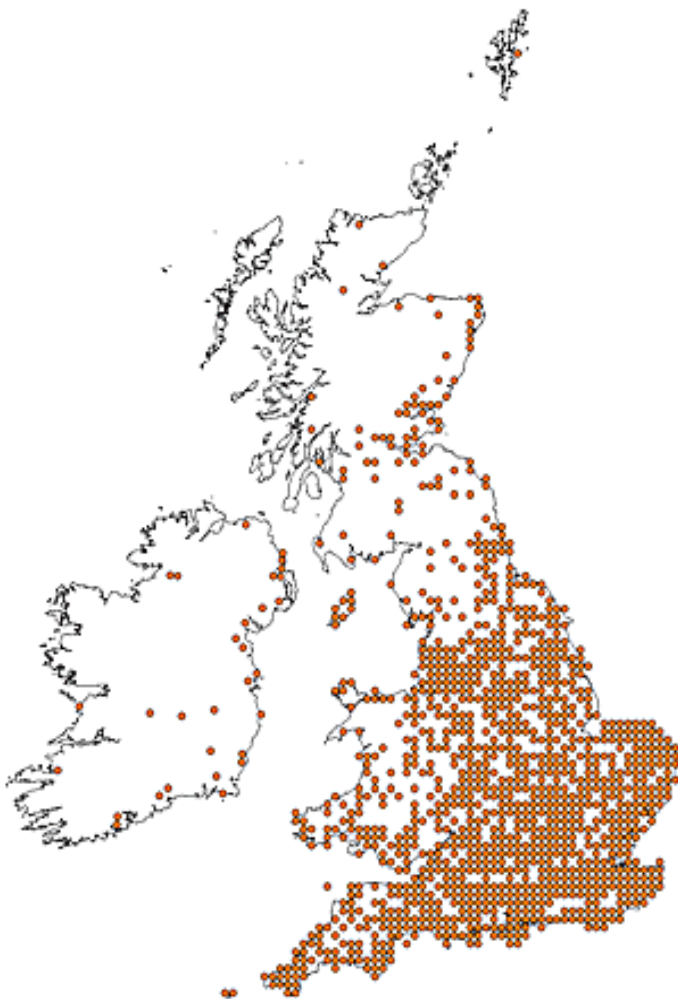
The map (above) shows the distribution of Painted Ladies recorded by the online survey during 2010. Each dot represents the presence of one or more Painted Ladies in a 10km x 10km grid square of the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Most sightings were in

Results of the 2010 Survey

August, with July the second best month. This contrasts with 2009, when May and October were the peak periods.

In comparison, we received an impressive 3,304 reports of Humming-bird Hawk-moths from 3,028 participants. This is a substantial increase on both 2009 and 2008.

The distribution of 2010 records is shown on the map (right) at 10km grid square resolution. The moth was seen widely across the whole of England and Wales, although it was rarely numerous. In Scotland and Ireland, the moth was mainly encountered close to eastern coasts, reflecting immigration from continental Europe.



'Hummers' were seen in every month of the year, though the peak of sightings was in July this year, slightly earlier than in 2009. 85% of all the Humming-bird Hawk-moth sightings took place in July, August and September. There were very few sightings after the first week of November, as the frost and then heavy snow set in across most of Britain and Ireland.

Thanks again to everyone who took part in the 2010 survey. The survey continues during 2011 - will the Humming-bird Hawk-moth continue to increase and will it be boom or bust for the Painted Lady? Please continue to log all your sightings of both these incredible, inter-continental insects.

Butterfly Conservation

Message from the Chairman

I am writing to inform you that Maggie Goodere has sadly resigned from her position as Branch Secretary. Maggie has given me considerable support in my role as Chairman and has also worked very hard for the Cornwall Branch of Butterfly Conservation over many years despite family commitments.

Keith Wilson our Membership Secretary has kindly agreed to take on the role of Branch Secretary on a temporary basis. Keith has been co-opted by the Committee until our AGM in January 2012 and he has indicated that he is prepared to offer himself for election at that time.

Paul Browning our Treasurer has given many years of valuable service to the Branch but has indicated his desire to resign from the position at our next AGM.

I am sure that you will join me in thanking Maggie and Paul for their tremendous contribution towards the success of the Cornwall Branch.

If any member would like to be considered for election to either position please let me know as soon as possible before our next AGM.

Phil Harris
Chairman

Bunny's Hill

Many thanks to all those who reported sightings of Pearl Bordered Fritillaries at this site this year.

The best number seen in one day was 30 plus recorded between 3.30 and 5.00 pm on 24th April. These were seen flying from the small triangle field in the SE corner by the owners of the site and it appeared that they were freshly emerging. Others reported varying numbers up to 24 seen on 28th April when 3 surveyed the site together, walking line abreast

The earliest record was on 19th April which is the same date as a previous 'earliest'. It seems that this year by 14th May most individuals had 'had their day'. (See the field trip report on p.18).

We now know that there are several fairly rare plants on the site and we hope to have more surveys to establish what exactly is living on the site.

Plans are afoot to arrange 'working days' on site starting late October. Volunteers are invited to contact Paddy Saunders or Paul Brewer to indicate ability to use handsaw or loppers or just to pull small branches to a pile, also anyone who is registered for chainsaw or brush cutter operations. The purpose will be to open up more areas because research seems to indicate that freshly cut areas that replicate coppicing helps to keep the species viable.

Paul Brewer

Why do we count? Do we count? Yes please!

What is all this re-
cording?
Too much
Butterfly Bureaucracy? If
you're not out in the gar-
den you could be walk-
ing a *transect* or a
WCBS square; mean-
while your wife is send-
ing off miscellaneous
sightings to the *County
recorder* and trying to
make sense of some-
thing called *OwnaSq*.



Then the *BBC* arrives .. no not the
broadcasting corporation but the M&S
sponsored Big Butterfly count. What
do they all mean? Let me try to ex-
plain.

The County Recorder is the original
official county method. The name al-
ways conjures up for me a picture of a
very venerable man with a long white
beard & a quill pen writing on parch-
ment; no the records don't go back
that far. The records do go back a
long way in the last century.

Advantages:

- Open to all and covers the whole county
- Able to give a long history of sightings

Disadvantages:

- Unconfirmed (dubious?) reports difficult to confirm
- Only a small number of total sightings are reported
- Is it a record of recorders rather than sightings?

John Worth (the recent recorder) tells us that unconfirmed reports caused him the biggest headaches. Attempts to find out a bit more from recorders usually met with a total lack of response and therefore quite a few records were not entered.

On the other hand if everyone in Corn-
wall recorded every sighting of a but-
terfly the system would explode and
the County recorder disappear in a
puff of smoke.

Advantages:

- Experienced recorders, or they would become so
- Scientific parameters
- Official BC method
- Results used by DEFRA & CHE to measure biodiversity

A length of land is walked every week
between April 1st & September 30th
each year. The recording has to be
done when the weather is appropriate:
14^C or above, wind at force 3 or below
and 70% or more sun. This allows the
records to be compared scientifically.

Why do we count? Do we count? Yes please!

Disadvantages:

- Only certain areas covered
- Favoured sites chosen
- Records might be too good to be true

Who wants to do a walk with few butterflies on it? Also convenience is a great motivation so a nearby transect will always get better results (more weeks per year) than one twenty miles away. Since these are likely to be favoured sites eg: nature reserves, the results are likely to be better than the wider countryside average. So we come to: WCBs

If transect figures might be too good to be true then the Wider Countryside Butterfly Scheme was designed to avoid this problem. These are random 1kilometre squares from the OS map walked north to south then south to north at least 200metres apart recording species and numbers as on a transect. The walks are just twice a year and the BC computer makes a random selection to avoid favouritism.

Advantages:

- No favouritism
- Less commitment from the walker
- Declines likely to be more accurate when taken over the country

Disadvantages:

- Only walked twice a year
- Often difficult to find a route
- Some species will be missed altogether e.g.: Orange tip, PBF

One walker also had a problem with a farmer not being keen to co-operate. The take-up for this official BC scheme has been very poor in Cornwall.

So what about our very own Ow-naSq(uare) method? This is not a national scheme but is designed to give us, the local Cornish branch of BC, distribution maps for all the species regularly seen in Cornwall. Those of you with a Cornwall Butterfly Atlas will already have these but we are now ten years on and butterfly distributions may well have changed.

The scheme is open to any volunteers and all you have to do is select a convenient 10 kilometre OR square and tick off the butterfly species as you see them. We hope that by choosing a fairly small number of squares we can find at least one recorder for all of them. It would be great if we had enough volunteers to do 2k squares but let us be practical! Forms and instructions are on the website or you can contact me by phone, email or post and I will send you a form. Once you have recorded a species you don't have to record any other sightings of it, so a simple task we hope. To answer a question, no you don't have to cover the whole 100 square kilometres... If you just record the butterflies in your garden and surroundings in a square this will be a good start.

Sometimes the best way to record a single species is a Timed Count. If you know that a particular species has only a few colonies in the county then BC provide a Timed Count form whereby you zig-zag over an area for an exact period of time. This will be done once or twice in the flying period if possible. This is based on the transect method but aimed at a single species. Forms and advice are available from Sally Foster: Tel: 01736753259 The results

Why do we count? Do we count? Yes please!

of any counts you may care to do should be returned to Sally. This scheme is mentioned on the website as **Audit**. Definitely the most accurate system for one species in a small area; examples are the Pearl Bordered Fritillary at De Lank quarry and the Heath Fritillaries at Greenscombe Woods, Lockett.



Finally we have the Garden butterfly count, the Big Butterfly count and your own personal records. With the first BC magazine Butterfly in a year there is an accompanying form to count butterflies seen in your garden. This is returned to Dr Margaret Vickery. Dr Vickery collates the figures then writes an article for early spring giving the details of species and quantities seen in the previous year.

The Big Butterfly Count started in 2010 and is a call to all amateur butterfly enthusiasts and potential enthusiasts. A friend of mine's grandchildren did one and Natalie (aged 5) was heard to complain "Not another Small white".

The results for Cornwall were sent to me and I have had a good look but there are some incorrect ones as you might expect. Chalkhill Blues, Small

Blues (it's small, it's blue, it's a Small Blue) and Large Heath were all reported more than once and there are good reasons why these records are incorrect. Chalkhill Blues need limestone, Small Blues do occur in Devon but nowhere near Newquay where it was recorded and the Large Heath is a northern butterfly. We even had a Purple Emperor reported.

A good enthusiast scheme but a nightmare for the County Recorder.

Some of us also keep a personal record of butterflies seen, well I do, and so far my total is 22 species out of the 36 regulars. The first was a Holly Blue in the garden in March and the most recent (6th June) was a Heath Fritillary at Greenscombe Woods.

Jim Barker
Transect Co-ordinator

Butterfly and Moth Field Trip Reports, 2011

Cadsonbury Moth Evening – 22nd April 2011

I was very much looking forward to the evening's moth trapping which was well attended by members of the Cornwall Moth Group who travelled all the way from west Cornwall and included our County Recorder, Tony James. We also met several who had joined us on holiday from outside the county namely Wendy and Trevor Brownsell and Alastair Stevenson.

Our interest centred around a small pug moth, the 'notable B' Marbled Pug which only occurs in the east and more recently, the central part of the county. I believe one was discovered at Bodmin Road Station (*Marilyn Edyvean pers comm*). The Marbled Pug larva feeds on oak and there are plenty of Sessile Oaks to be found along this stretch of the beautiful Lynher valley.

There were 5 mercury vapour light traps set up along a ride next to the

river where the moth has been seen in the past. I last recorded it here in 1993 with Adrian Spalding and Bill Kittle so I was pleased when Tony James sauntered up to see what was in my light and casually produced a pot from his pocket and asked what the white moth with black markings was (knowing full well it was our target species – the Marbled Pug). The other specimen was at Geoff and Pam Littler's light.

I had a reasonable number of species – 37 including a Poplar Grey which was fully a month early. It usually appears from late May to August. I put this down to the exceptionally warm weather in March and April. This species can readily be distinguished from the very similar looking Knot Grass by its bright white hindwing.

Below are a few of the moths seen at Cadsonbury.

Phil Boggis
Cornwall Moth Group

Adela reaumurella.
(Wingspan 14-18mm).
The forewings of this
moth are a shining
bronzy green and the
male has antennae
about 2 ¾ times the
length of the forewing.
The males can be seen
swarming around the
tops and margins of
oaks and other trees
and shrubs on warm
sunny days. It is a com-
mon species often seen
in the spring.



Butterfly and Moth Field Trip Reports, 2011

Right—*Esperia sulphurella*. (Wingspan 12-15mm). The larvae feed between the bark and wood of decaying deciduous trees and shrubs, decaying fence posts, stacked wood and dead gorse but never near the ground where it is too wet. Found in the hard fungus *Daldinia concentrica*. This specimen shows the central yellow streak of the female.



Left—Grey Birch. As the name implies, the caterpillars of this species feed on Birch and occasionally Alder. It is less frequent in South-west England than in the southern- central counties.

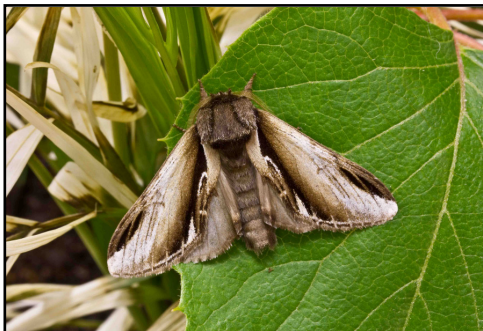


Above—Marbled Pug. A 'notable B' moth found in approximately 31 to 100 10km squares. It frequents ancient oak woodland.



Above—*Phyllonorycter harrisella*. The caterpillars of this small moth (wingspan only 7-9mm) mine the leaves of oak.

Butterfly and Moth Field Trip Reports, 2011



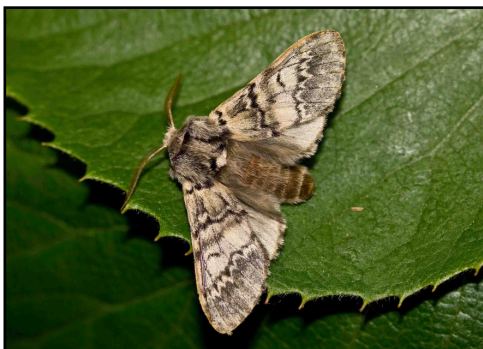
Left—Lesser Pebble Prominent. This species can be distinguished from Pebble Prominent by the wide wedge mark in the bottom outer edge of the forewing (Tornus). Sometimes known as the tornal streak.

Right—A particularly well marked Clouded Drab. (Most, as the name implies, look dull and drab).



Left—Scalloped Hook-tip. If this moth were resting amongst dry leaves it would look very cryptic indeed!

Right—The Hebrew Character gets its name from the black marking in the middle of the forewing. It is one of our more common spring moths.



Left—Lunar Marbled Brown. A pretty moth which always appears about a month earlier than the Marbled Brown which does not exhibit the lunar crescent mark in the centre of the forewing. Both species frequent oak woodland.

Butterfly and Moth Field Trip Reports, 2011

Monkey Sanctuary, Murrayton—30th April 2011

Paddy took us on a magical mystery tour (SX292543). We headed steeply downhill into a wood with a wild lower carpet of bluebells, campions, buttercups and wild garlic. We emerged onto a warm, sunny and very steep spot on the coast path. What a stunning location for many of us to see our first ever Pearl Bordered Fritillaries - we stood with the blue ocean behind us and everyone had their cameras and binoculars out! We saw three, possibly four of these rare and beautiful creatures.

We were also lucky enough to have the priceless John Gregory to give us moth tuition. Highlights were many Speckled Yellows (20 plus), Cream Waves, a Silver Ground Carpet and many other gems with long latin names and John's unique numbers that I am trying to learn!

It then started to rain (quite weird, we had all quite forgotten what the wet stuff felt like!) and loads of slugs and snails magically appeared.

We headed back to the Monkey Sanctuary and then the sun came out again while we were looking at a fantastic flower meadow.

Paddy gave us a tour of the lovely wild garden which I found inspiring because of its very natural state. Other butterflies we saw were Orange Tip (10 plus), Large White x 2, Red Admiral x 1, Speckled Wood x 1, Small Copper x 1 and Green-veined White x 2.

We also spotted a stunning Broad Bodied Chaser dragonfly on a red campion and then an Azure Damselfly. Paddy got VERY excited when Shaun spotted an unusual bee - not confirmed, but Paddy thought it may be a *Bombus Hypnorum* (The Tree Bumblebee). It was described to those of us that did not see it as 'looking like Neapolitan ice cream'!

Great company as usual - Paddy, Shaun, Anne from Tregony, Philip & Faith Hambly, John & Joyce Gregory, John Nicholls, the photographer who took a great shot of the underside of a Pearl Bordered (really sorry I can't recall your name but it was a great shot!) and Mark Bunch from Essex (who is a regular viewer of our Forum, loves it and uses it to plan where he goes butterfly spotting when he is in Cornwall). Interesting that he is not currently subscribed to the new Forum on our website but uses it very regularly. There are probably many people like Mark, and it was good of him to give us this positive feedback (and share his considerable knowledge of wildlife, especially flowers). It was his idea that we should write reports on the Forum of our trips, so this was the first one I have ever written and I hope that you will find it informative.

Jo and Shaun Poland

Postscript: Mark Bunch is now a regular contributor to the Forum – I can't possibly divulge his forum name but I can tell you that his favourite butterfly is the Orange Tip! Please consider joining our forum yourself – it's a lovely way to keep in touch with events and any 'Butterfly Action' in Cornwall.

Butterfly and Moth Field Trip Reports, 2011

Rinsey Head to Trewavas Head—28th May 2011

Not ideal weather for our coastal field trip, so the car park was not exactly heaving with lepidoptera lovers! However, we were a small but enthusiastic group led by 'our leader in leathers' - the inspirational Paul Browning.

Paul can always be relied upon to deliver a good health & safety talk but this one was particularly memorable. (Any squeamish males please do not read on ...) Fred, from Gloucestershire but currently residing in Port Isaac, interrupted Paul's briefing with a timely warning. He told us that he was recently enjoying a solo wild life excursion in North Cornwall that unfortunately ended up at Newquay Hospital. The poor man had to endure having a tick removed from his scrotum!

Paul assured us that the coast path was not high risk for ticks, but a lot of places we do visit are, particularly if deer are resident. So, here's the information on what to do if you have a tick incident: http://www.lymedisea_seaction.org.uk. We all need to take this seriously, and I am certainly going to carry a tick removing device in future.

First stop on our walk was a Kittiwake nesting site, high on the cliff. We also saw Shags nesting there and Fulmers. This spot is to be recommended as a good viewing place for spotting sea birds in their natural environment – they were just getting on with their lives and ignored us completely.

We saw more caterpillars on the walk than anything else – three Grass Eggar in various instars and also some

Drinker Moths. The first small Grass Eggar caterpillar was much admired by half of the group and then I put it into a 'safe haven' in the grass. We walked on and then the other half of our group wanted to have a look at it as well. I was not hopeful that I would be able to find it on the cliff-edge again but I had not counted on the amazing 're-location' skills of Lynn Jones who stated confidently 'I remember the stick it was next to!' Amazingly, she did and went straight to it, so everyone got a look!

Steve Jones found a Six-Spot Burnet and then we spotted a second one nearby. This is a most beautiful moth that we perhaps don't look closely enough at, as it is reasonably common. Shaun Poland then discovered two White Ermine moths 'in cop' in a wet area of the cliff; they were completely ignoring the inclement weather!

Steve found the shedded skin of an adder. The wild flowers were stunning. We all said that, although we did not see as much lepidoptera as we had hoped to, it gave us more time to look at nature's other beauties. We saw Common Dodder – a parasitic plant from the Convolvulaceae family. Many of its popular and local names testify to the bad reputation it had among farmers, such as Beggarweed, Hellweed, Strangle Tare, and Scaldweed. The name 'Devil's Guts' shows how much its strangling threads were detested!

And last, but not least, we saw two butterflies! Two Large Skippers sheltering from the elements; It was a 'first for the year' for us.

Jo and Shaun Poland

Butterfly and Moth Field Trip Reports, 2011

Greenscombe Woods, Luckett—19th June 2011

When we arrived at the site, the sun had come out and the temperature was up. The village car park was heaving with many sensibly-clad binocular wielding folk. Richard Vulliamy gave us a very interesting introduction that covered the history of the Heath Fritillary in Cornwall. We then set off up the sunny lane to the woods in a heightened state of expectancy. (Quick Moan - there was sooooo much dog poo on the route. Why do people not clear up after their animals? My grateful thanks to Adam Jones, who scraped some disgustingness off of my walking boots with a stick!)

It was not long after entering the woods that we saw our first Heath Fritillary. What struck me most was how small they are! Small but most perfectly formed!

A real high spot of our trip was seeing a good number of Lesser and Greater Butterfly Orchids. I have never seen these beautiful flowers in Cornwall until today. My last sighting of one was on a road verge on the Sussex Downs about 8 years ago. When I was a child I knew of one special place where they grew, and checked it every year!

And another amazing experience was getting very close to a Heath Fritillary; I

had one sitting on my finger for quite a while. This allowed us all to look at the underside of the butterfly, which was intricate and amazing.



Heath Fritillary

Our sightings for the day were:

Butterflies: Large Skipper 8; Large White 1; Common Blue 2; Red Admiral 2; Peacock 1; Heath Fritillary 35+ Speckled Wood 10; Meadow Brown 13; Ringlet 7

Moths: Brown Silver Lines 8; Large Yellow Underwing 3; Marbled White Spot 10+; Humming Bird Hawk Moth 3; Cranbus Lathoniellus 1

Dragonflies & Damselflies: Golden Ringed 2; Common Blue Damselfly (female); Southern Hawker 1

I found this interesting piece about the Heath Fritillary on BC website: *The butterfly has historically been linked with the traditional practice of woodland coppicing, giving it the local name*

Butterfly and Moth Field Trip Reports, 2011



of the 'Woodman's Follower' as it follows the cycle of cutting around a wood. Sadly it is now one of our rarest butterflies but has been saved from the brink of extinction by the concerted action of conservationists. So, our grateful thanks to Richard for leading us in this lovely habitat and for all his hard work, over many years, counting and conserving the Heath Fritillary.

Jo and Shaun Poland

Bunny's Hill—14th May 2011

Twenty-two people attended this field trip, led by Lee Slaughter. It was a breezy and mainly sunny afternoon. 1 x Painted Lady, 3 + Small Coppers, 4 + Common Blues, 2 x Speckled Woods, 2 or 3 Pearl-Bordered Fritillaries (both male & female) and a spectacular 110+ Small Pearl-Bordered Fritillaries virtually all beautifully fresh and pristine!!!

Thank you to all who attended, including those from afar who had never seen the Pearl-Bordered Fritillary before. A great 13th anniversary field trip on the exact day when the Pearl-Bordered Fritillary was discovered here by Lee. What a surprise that was on a really hot 14th May 1998 at 5.15pm.

Dodman—22nd May 2011

Eight Members and friends turned out on what initially was a very wild day but the sun came out and in the sheltered places we saw 20+ Speckled Wood; 30+ Common Blue; 3 Wall Brown; 5 Small Copper; 3 Green Veined White; 2 Red Admiral; 2 Large Skipper. Also several day flying moths and moth colonies plus caterpillars which nobody was sure of the species.

Paul Brewer

Marsh Fritillaries

The Bodmin Moor sites appear to have either been hit badly by weather or parasites. However, we have been notified of three or four new sites that are in the West of Cornwall and one in the North East. It is intended to check as many sites as possible during September for caterpillar webs. Anybody with a few hours spare time is invited to contact Paul Brewer on 07990881052 who is volunteering to co-ordinate searches.

Push for Tax on Peat

Peat bogs are full of rare wildlife including threatened butterflies. Butterfly Conservation and other leading wildlife organisations are joining forces to call for a tax of at least £1 to be put on each bag of high quality peat based compost.

Peat bogs are being dug up for compost to spread on gardens, but are full of rare wildlife including threatened butterflies like the Large Heath. They also suck up carbon, helping to tackle climate change.

The compost is considered so environmentally damaging that the Government has asked garden centres to phase out selling the compost over the next 20 years.

But so far the voluntary agreement is failing to cut the amount of peat used. From 2007 to 2009, total UK peat use fell by just over one per cent as gardeners continue to buy the cheap material to make plants grow faster.

Butterfly Conservation, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Plantlife, Buglife and the Wildlife Trusts are warning that gardeners are now destroying wildlife in Continental Europe and Ireland after using up our own resources.

In a new report the groups suggest that the only way to stop the trend is to put a tax on peat so consumers are attracted to buy alternatives like coir made from coconut husks.



Large Heath

Dr Martin Warren, Chief Executive of Butterfly Conservation said “The use of peat in gardens is a crucial issue for wildlife and climate change. Peat costs society £32M every year because of rising carbon emissions and loss of wildlife. We do not believe that the levy would harm the industry as most companies are already making alternatives, but it would raise money to conserve our dwindling wildlife and encourage consumers into more environmentally friendly behaviour.”

Butterfly Conservation is establishing a new nature reserve at Wester Moss near Stirling, a lowland raised bog and home to the Large Heath butterfly, Wood Tiger and Grass Wave moths and Bog Rosemary. Management will include removing rhododendron and other scrub and blocking drains to encourage bog formation, which will improve the habitat whilst also helping to lock up carbon.

BC Press Release

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