

The Butterfly Observer

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation Newsletter No.50



Pyrausta aurata. (See page 4.)



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Autumn 2011



Scarlet Tiger. (See page 8.)

Rare Butterflies Show Signs of Recovery

New data shows that some of Britain's most threatened butterflies showed encouraging signs of recovery last year.

The charity Butterfly Conservation says that while overall butterfly numbers continue to decline, the indications are that recent conservation efforts have had a positive effect on some of the most threatened species.

Last year's weather also played a vital role in boosting some butterfly species.

The biggest winner of 2010 was *The highly threatened Wood White was the biggest winner* the Wood White which bounced back with a six-fold increase over 2009, having suffered a massive 96 per cent decline since the 1970s.

Another winner was the Marsh Fritillary which more than doubled its numbers in 2010 compared with 2009, confirming that its overall trend is now upwards, reversing a serious long-term decline that has been going on since the 1950s.

It is not all good news. The data shows it was the worst year on record for two species. One of the UK's commonest butterflies, the Meadow Brown had its worst ever year, with numbers down by a fifth compared with 2009. One of our rarest butterflies the Lulworth Skipper also had its worst year – its numbers are down a frightening 93 per cent over the last decade. The reasons for these losses are still not fully understood and are the subject of current research.

It was also a bad year for migrants - numbers dropped by 90 per cent and there was no repeat of the Painted Lady immigration, which was a spectacular feature of the 2009 season.

The new data comes from the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme, the largest and longest running scheme of its kind anywhere in the



world. It is run by Butterfly Conservation and the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology and involves thousands of volunteers across the UK.

The data shows that three-quarters of threatened butterfly species increased from 2009 levels although most remain in long-term decline.

Over three-quarters of the UK's butterflies have declined over recent decades and almost half are seriously threatened, so the results for threatened species come as welcome news.

Dr Tom Brereton, Head of Monitoring at Butterfly Conservation said: "Over the last decade, Butterfly Conservation has developed a large number of landscape scale projects with a wide range of statutory and non-statutory partners to improve and restore habitats for threatened butterflies. This has particularly helped the Marsh Fritillary and more recently the Wood White and some other species too are beginning to recover. It shows these projects are working, given time. This is extremely welcome news and shows that we can reverse butterfly losses if the effort can be maintained. There's no doubt that other wildlife is benefiting too."

Rare Butterflies Show Signs of Recovery

Dr Marc Botham, Butterfly Ecologist at the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology said: "The continued dedication of thousands of volunteers enables us to analyse both short and long-term trends in the abundance of butterflies. Butterflies are highly sensitive to how our countryside is changing and the UKBMS data has revealed how butterflies are already being impacted by climate change as well as whether our conservation measures are working."

The five biggest winners of 2010 were:

1. Wood White (up 600% since 2009 after major decline)
2. Marsh Fritillary (up 134% after major decline. Third best year in scheme)
3. Common Blue (up 146%, with second best ever year in scheme)
4. Brown Argus (up 85%, with third best year in scheme)

5. Silver-spotted Skipper (up 78%, with eighth best year in scheme)

The five biggest losers of 2010 were:

1. Lulworth Skipper (down 40%, worst year in scheme after major decline. Species confined to south coast of Dorset.
2. Meadow Brown (down 20%, worst year in scheme for one of our commonest species)
3. Essex Skipper (down 33%, second worst year in scheme)
4. Small skipper (down 17%, third worst year in scheme)
5. Wall (down 20%, third worst year in scheme after major decline.

Butterfly Conservation Press Release

English—Cornish Wildlife Dictionary (Gerlyver bewnans gwls Sowsnek – Kernewek)

Cornwall has its own language, still spoken today. The Cornish for butterfly is 'tykky-dew' and for moth is 'tykky-dew nos' (butterfly of the night). Adrian Spalding tells us in his 1992 publication 'Cornwall's Butterfly and Moth Heritage' that there appear to be no Cornish names for any of the individual butterfly species in old texts. But, interestingly, the Cornish dialect word 'piskey' was used for small white moths!

We are pleased to provide a few basic words below, so that any of us can begin to describe some of Cornwall's wealth of insects in the Cornish Language this summer. Please give the words a try on a field trip!

Ant—Moryonen

Beetle—Hwil

Bumble Bee—Genenen wyls

Butterfly—Tykki-Dew

Cricket—Gryll

Dragonfly—Nader-margh

Fly—Kelyonen

Glow worm—Pryv golow

Grasshopper—Kulyek-reden

Honey Bee—Gwenenen

Midge—Gwibesen

Moth—Tykki-Dew nos

Wasp—Gahien

Jo Poland

The Big Butterfly Count

In response to Butterfly Conservation's national launch of the Big Butterfly Count initiative (see www.bigbutterflycount.org/about), Cornwall Butterfly Conservation were invited to set up two information stands to promote this and also help the public identify plants that are conducive to bees and butterflies for both nectaring and pollen gathering. The Garden Centre Group's nurseries at Par Moor, St Austell and Lelant were host to our butterfly stands over the two weeks commencing the 16th July. The Big Butterfly count aimed at encouraging the general public to download an identification butterfly and moth chart and see how many butterfly and moths they could identify in a 15 minute period. Records were welcome from anywhere: parks, school grounds, gardens, fields and forests etc.

At Par Moor Garden Centre, Susi Vague, our host was most enthusiastic in promoting



Pyrausta aurata. Par Moor Garden Centre, 30th July 2011. This moth is only found locally in the east of the county but appears to be spreading as this specimen confirms

our children's butterfly colouring competition, organised by CBC Committee member and Publicity Officer Jo Poland ably assisted by Madeline Lowe, Cornwall Moth Group member. Madeline promoted the competition in her local school (Biscovey Infants where she is a part-time teacher and Governor) also some entrants came from Sandy Hill Primary. The winners will be judged by the general public sometime after the 7th August.



Susi Vague and Phil Boggis pictured here at the Par Moor Garden Centre with Cornwall Butterfly Conservation's information stand.

Susi had been busy placing butterfly and bee signs over certain plants at the Garden Centre which attract bees, butterflies and moths for nectar and gathering pollen and whilst she was doing the daily watering, she came across a moth which she described to me as small, brown, with spots on its forewing. She then led me to the place where it had landed in the hopes that it hadn't flown off. Sure enough it was still

The Big Butterfly Count

there, adjacent to some mint and marjoram plants. These were a giveaway as to what the moth was – *Pyrausta aurata*. This beautiful moth with a purple forewing with yellow spots and a black hind wing with a yellow bar is quite rare in Cornwall and as far as I know, only recorded from the east of the county where it can be found in gardens on mint and marjoram. Susi and I were both very pleased that we had seen this rare Cornish moth. I went home at lunchtime to retrieve my camera and the moth is illustrated opposite along with a photo of Susi and myself by our Cornwall Butterfly Conservation stand.

Incidentally several other moths in this family have been featured in the Butterfly Observer – no.44, pages 17-18 and downloadable from here: www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk/butterfly_observer44.pdf

Lastly, I must mention Lynda Evans' supporting stand representing the Cornwall Beekeeper's Association and the very inter-

esting literature about how important bees are in the pollination of fruit crops and for food production across the world as well as honey production. She kindly supplied a very interesting miniature WBC hive – minus the bees because she felt that the temperature under the glass roof of the garden centre would be too hot for the bees which have to maintain certain temperature limits for the bee larvae and egg laying of the queen and of course no one would want to see the comb melt! Bees maintain these temperature limits by taking in water and evaporating it through fanning their wings, and taking in honey and exercise to raise the temperature. Nectar must be evaporated to reduce its water content and this is accomplished by the fanning bees – this also absorbs large quantities of heat.

Finally, many thanks to the Wyevale Lelant Garden Centre and the Par Garden Centre for hosting this event – we are very grateful.

Phil Boggis, August 2011

Children's Butterfly Colouring Competition



Master Robert Slaughter won first prize in the Children's Butterfly Colouring Competition (6 years old and over class) held as part of the Big Butterfly Count, held at Par Moor Garden Centre. Here we see Robert and his winning drawing and receiving his prize from Susi Vague and Phil Boggis.

The photographs were taken by Robert's proud Dad, Lee.



Butterfly and Moth Field Trip Reports, 2011

Breney Common Field Trip Report – 4th June 2011

Thankfully, the weather was much better than last year and I was looking forward to an enjoyable field trip. About 12 of us gathered opposite the little chapel where there is a small lay-by - a much better meeting point than within the reserve itself. I was wondering if there would be any Marsh Fritillaries still flying after such an advanced spring.

I soon found myself caught up in the wonder of the memory of seeing my first Marsh Fritillary when Dave Spencer, who was carefully winding his way through a bed of rushes in one of the many dips and depressions, suddenly exclaimed, "Cor look, there goes one, just over there in front of you!" However, if my memory serves me correctly, it was a Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, one of the very many that had been seen on the sight the previous week. As soon as it had flitted out of view, we saw another butterfly and this was indeed the first Marsh Fritillary of the

day and one of about six that I recorded, but I believe quite a few more were seen by other members of our group.



Mother Shipton, Breney Common, 4th June 2011. Photo © P. H. Boggis. This day flying moth is familiar to those who are out and about visiting our Cornish reserves during June.

A number of us took some time out to photograph a cluster of first instar Emperor moth caterpillars nonchalantly feeding on a patch of rather ragged looking bramble. They are not voracious eaters unlike some hawk-moth caterpillars. They always seem to do well on bramble and indeed later on in the day at the 'upper meadow' we found some more, also on bramble. A few of these I have bred up in the hopes of getting a pairing when they emerge next spring. They are easy to do and I recommend the beginner starting with this species. The caterpillars, if they are in their first instar are less likely to have been parasitized.



Emperor Moth – 20th March 2011, Ex larva, Kynance Cove, 7th Aug 2010. The larvae from Breney have all pupated and hopefully they will all emerge next spring with some females amongst them. Featured here is a male from Kynance Cove. The male has golden coloured hind wings which the female lacks. Photo © P. H. Boggis

A few hundred yards along the path and over the fence into the adjacent field, much excitement was generated by the sight of a Green Hair-

Butterfly and Moth Field Trip Reports, 2011



*Marsh Fritillary, Breney Common 4th June 2011.
Photo © P. H. Boggis. This fresh specimen caught my eye but gave me the run-around when I tried to photograph it!*

was struck by the interest and inquisitiveness shown, marked by the many interesting questions.

The butterflies seen included Green-veined White, Speckled Wood, Brimstone, Large White, Orange-tip, Marsh Fritillary, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Small Heath, Common Blue, Red Admiral, Small Copper, Green Hairstreak, Large Skipper, Holly Blue. Amongst the moths seen were: Straw Dot, *Pseudargyrotoza conwagana*, *Micopterix aruncella*, Brown Silverline, Five-spot Burnet, *Cydia ulicetana*, *Glyphipterix thasonella*, Common Heath, Speckled Yellow, Barred Straw, *Phylonorhycter harrisella*, Engrailed, Lead Belle, *Bactra lancealana*, *Celypha lacunana*, Brimstone Moth, *Nemophora*

streak perched on the branch of a Hawthorn bush. I seem to remember this was the spot where we had seen them before on several occasions and this has left me wondering exactly why this is so.

An Alder Buckthorn was examined as we reached the 'upper meadow' and it was thought that an egg of the Brimstone was on one of the leaves which was quickly followed by the sight of another. They looked like empty egg cases and just as we were pondering this, a caterpillar was spotted nearby which indeed turned out to be that of the Brimstone!



Brimstone Butterfly caterpillar, Breney Common,

The weather began to get overcast as the afternoon drew on, however this did not dampen the enthusiasm of our party and I

degeerella, Mother Shipton. The larvae of the following species included: Common Quaker, Clouded Drab, (to be confirmed) Drinker and the Brimstone butterfly.

Finally, I would like to thank all who attended and made this a most enjoyable day.

Phil Boggis

Opposite—1st Instar Emperor Moth Larvae,
On Bramble, Breney Common, 4th June 2011.
Photo © P. H. Boggis



Butterfly and Moth Field Trip Reports, 2011

Penhale Sands Field Trip Report – 18th June 2011

The bright edge of cloud indicating the sunshine beyond as I travelled through the spine of the county towards Perranporth told me that the weather at Penhale Sands – a dune complex second to none for species richness and unspoilt habitat, was going to be reasonable. As I arrived several people had already arrived and were having a quiet ‘natter’ to each other. I knew that some had high expectations of seeing their very first Silver-studded Blues.

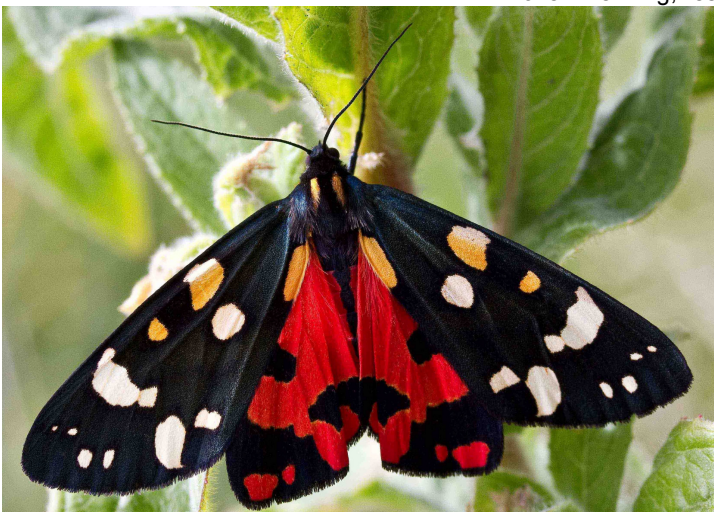
As usual we proceeded to wind our way down the path leading to the open dune complex with a view of St. Piran’s cross beyond – a good rendezvous point if anyone should get lost. The first species to be seen was a Large Skipper (male) and then a female. We always seem to see this butterfly at the side of the path, resting on bramble, at the beginning of our trip. Our first glimpse of a Silver-studded Blue soon followed and I noted that it was rather unusual to see them so soon as it was still quite some distance away from their usual



*Silver-studded Blue, photo © P. H. Boggis
Penhale Sands, 18th June 2011. Note the silver-blue ‘studs’ clearly seen at the outer margins of the hindwing unders. These studs often wear away or may just be very faint but will be readily seen with a x10 hand lens*

colony site which is near the St. Piran’s cross. One or two of us felt that the prevailing wind had driven them up towards us.

This site never disappoints when it comes to numbers seen which in some years is quite overwhelming, especially for the first-time



Scarlet Tiger, Penhale Sands, 18th June 2011. Photo © P. H. Boggis. This particular specimen was very obliging when its hindwing was teased open to reveal the bright scarlet colouring.

visitor however, my interest lay in whether there would be any Scarlet Tigers. Some years have seen quite a number along the stream running below the St. Piran’s cross monument. As we all ventured further along the stream, someone called out, “Scarlet Tigers” but I was rather slow in getting to the spot, being somewhat preoccupied in photographing the silver ‘studs’ on a female Silver-studded Blue. I was also ‘racking my brains’ as to the name of a small moth someone

Butterfly and Moth Field Trip Reports, 2011



Grass Eggar caterpillar, Penhale Sands, 18th June 2011. Photo © P. H. Boggis. The Grass Eggar is designated a Nationally Scarce 'A' moth occurring in less than 30 10 Km squares. The caterpillars feed on a number of food plants such as Bramble, Creeping Willow, Kidney Vetch, Bird's-foot trefoil, Purple Clover, Thrift and including several species of grass including Maram and False Oat Grass depending on habitat.

had potted and showed me earlier. I had forgotten to pack '*British Pyralid Moths – A Guide to their Identification*' by Barry Goater where this moth is described. Then the penny dropped as my senior moment departed – *Pyrausta despicata*, formally known as *Pyrausta cespitalis*. Moth-ing people have to contend with these constant changes in the taxon – most off putting!

When I caught up with the others, camera at the ready, Lee Slaughter and Adam Jones had already manoeuvred into position to take a few shots of this beautiful moth – perhaps one of the most striking on the British list. It is the scarlet hind wing that impresses, unfortunately the moth prefers to put them away a few seconds after alighting. The bright flash of colour acts to startle predators as it flies off, giving the moth a split second advantage. The same ploy is used by the Red Underwing – my particular favourite. The moth is very rare in Cornwall but more numerous from Somerset eastwards to central southern and eastern England. It is my belief that most of the *Catocalinae* family of moths are probably thermo-

philic (requiring higher temperatures for development). Getting back to the Scarlet Tigers, I was intent on a photograph with the hind wings open and I spent a long time, assisted by Lynn Jones accomplishing this task. We were eventually successful as the photo below shows. However, as others manoeuvred into position for a shot, the moth obliged by tucking its wings back in!

As the afternoon drew on, several of our company doubled back to a favourable spot, sheltered from the wind where Dark Green Fritillaries have been seen and sure enough one turned up to order and was duly photographed. Butterflies seen included Large Skipper, Meadow Brown, Common Blue, Silver-studded Blue, Small Heath, Speckled Wood and Dark Green Fritillary. Moths included *Pyrausta despicata*, *Crysoteuchia culmella*, *Yellow Shell*, *Scarlet Tiger*, *Pterophorus pentadactyla*, *Humming-bird Hawk-moth*, *Bryotropha terrella* and a *Ghost Moth* (male). Caterpillars included *Red Admiral*, *The Drinker*, *Grass Eggar* and *Ebulea crocealis* – on Plantain. Feeding places of *Mompha epilobiella* in the shoots of Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*).

Once again I am indebted to all of you who kindly supported us and I trust you found the experience as rewarding as I did.

Phil Boggis

Porthgwarra butterfly walk – Sunday, 7th August 2011

It seemed like a good idea at the time; memories of a beautiful August Sunday at Porthgwarra in 2010, why not lead another walk in 2011? As the week progressed the forecast for the 7th got more and more pessimistic, but we always turn up. Around 10.30am I was sat by the pay & display machine with my butterfly conservation identification badge awaiting custom. David for Porthtowan and Essex introduced himself as a bird watcher and occasional butterfly spot-

Butterfly and Moth Field Trip Reports, 2011



Pyrauthra Cingulata
Pyrauthra Despicata

12 Gannets flying in formation about 12 inches above the waves into the wind
Stonechat

Perennial Centaurea

Jim Barker

Trelusback Open Day—Saturday, 6th August 2011

Another excellent open day for CBC! It was also another tour de force from Jo. Poland on the fund- raising front and Janet, Carol and Michael at the BBQ catering so well for all the gannets that eagerly circled the feeding station!

Dave Spencer and Carly Hoskin also did a sterling job in the background supported by other Committee members Shaun Poland, Paul Brewer, Paul Browning, Steve Hoskin, Phil. Harris and Philip and Faith Hambly. On the second walk (through the wild flower meadows) there were some very fresh & bright looking Small Coppers which were the aberration with the blue spots.

It was an inspiring move by Laurie & Helen Oakes to bring along a Moth trap to show us the contents from the previous night's trapping which had everyone crowding around to see the amazing assortment of moths & beetles hiding amongst the egg boxes. A really great idea, as was the *Samia cynthia* caterpillar auction by John Gregory & his lovely assistant. (They were seen the previous week standing together in a Stannah lift "looking for Purple Hairstreaks" at Lethytep). One member bought five caterpillars which have since multiplied. He now spends his evenings raiding neighbour's hedges for privet to feed several hundred hungry mouths!

The Open Day at Trelusback was successful like our open day at Lethytep held a week earlier due largely to two things. Firstly we had a lot of help. I am sure that

ter. We were just getting ready to leave when Laurie & Helen Oake turned up. The party, of four, set off up the coastal path.

The first hour of the walk was pleasant enough with plenty of sunshine and even more wind. The advantage of the site is that you can see the rain coming at you so plenty of warning, the disadvantage is that there is no shelter. Not quite true because as we approached the Gwennap Head coastguard a large rainstorm was expanding on the horizon. "We can shelter in the coastguard pavilion" said Laurie from experience and we just made it. Unfortunately the rain didn't abate for some time so we ate our lunch. Finally the weather brightened and we decided to make a break for it. Ten minutes later yet another storm broke around us with masses of hail soaking us to the skin despite some protection from waterproofs. We then gave up and made for home. The tea and date slice from the little cafe were incomparable!

This was our species list for the day:

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Gatekeepers | 8 |
| Wall Brown | 2 |
| Meadow Brown | 5 |
| Grayling | 10 |
| Large White | 1 |
| Small Copper | 1 |
| Common Blue | 4 |
| Small Pearls | 2 |
| Speckled Wood | 1 |

6 Spot Burnett

Butterfly and Moth Field Trip Reports, 2011

Committee members won't mind me singling out Carol, Janet and Michael who aren't members but spent a long time cooking the BBQ at this event and even provided some of the food. All free of charge to help our charity. We also had a junior member Lucy who kindly helped Jo with the tombola.

Secondly the members and guests who attended were lovely people who will be very welcome to visit again. The atmosphere was very enjoyable for me despite the difficulty of trying to give a personal welcome to so many people. We had visitors from Cornwall Smallholders, Cornwall Wildlife Trust, CBWPS, RSPB, RBST and members of the public.



Small Copper (Lycaena phlaeas) ab: caeruleo-punctata. This is its official name and is described as a Blue-spotted aberrant form of the Small Copper. Photo: Steve Jones

My Mum was there to ensure that I was on my best behaviour. If you meet her again

please don't let on that it was free to attend! If there is sufficient demand next year I will be pleased to share my home again with such nice people.

Thanks and best wishes to you all,

Keith Wilson



Jo Poland and John Gregory at Trelusback

Three Days at Lelant

"We can have one stall at Par garden centre and one at Lelant", Maggie (Gwithian) & I (St Ives) just looked at each other! The scene was a BC committee meeting about 6 months ago. Jo Poland was explaining the national scheme to launch Butterfly fortnight and the Big Butterfly Count. We, Maggie & I, eventually agreed to man the stall for a day on July 16th at our local Wyevale garden centre, not being at all sure about our role. At a later committee meeting Jo loaded a couple of display boards with photos and notices, a box of various leaflets and a bag of miscellaneous goods into my car. Maggie had since resigned from the committee, she tells me it wasn't the prospect of manning the stall; I am easily convinced. Meanwhile my wife Frances had found the idea of me advising people on plants as the best joke of 2011 and wanted to organize an awkward squad to ask a lot of technical questions. Bless her.

I received a 'phone call from Tony James, the Cornwall Moth Recorder, offering to bring some moths along for our stall at Lelant. Wonderful idea, so I agreed immediately and he went off to set up his moth trap. Saturday morning found us at Lelant on a rainy morning with the display boards up as customers came from the outside plant displays into the main building.

Our table we placed around the corner covered in leaflets, booklets, ID charts and various application forms to join BC. We put Tony and his brilliant keep net at the end of the table with around 20 live moths; a disappointing catch he said! There was also a



display box of moths so that he could demonstrate the variety to the public. The net with moths moving about fascinated the punters and Tony was soon immersed in conversations with an admiring crowd. Maggie and I started up conversations with the queue. Luckily I had run pharmacies in St Ives for 30 years so many of the customers knew me "So this is what you do when retired" they all said; (I haven't completely

retired) this helped to start many conversations. The ID charts proved popular and many of the free leaflets from BC were given away as well.

The weather was better on Sunday morning as I got to the garden centre, but there were far fewer people

around. Jack Keeping had agreed to help man the stall for the morning; what happened to one day in July? We managed to hold some conversations, sell a few of our ID charts and give away some of the BBC counting forms. These have to be entered on line but I thought it would help if we had at least a few for people to see what it was



Three Days at Lelant

all about. Some people also took forms about joining BC! However without the moths we were definitely not the attraction we had been on the Saturday. One customer remarked that they didn't get any butterflies in their garden so I asked if there was a reason for this, perhaps my printed list of useful plants was going to come in handy? "Global warming" she announced and swept into the main building.

Gazumped by the Beekeepers.

Steve Hosking had offered to come along for part of the following Saturday with his partner Hilary so once again I rolled up and found Bernard from the West Cornwall bee keepers in my spot. However we could still put up the display boards to get people in the mood and I managed to line up our table alongside Bernard staring straight at a display of "Ultimate bug kill". The notices for bee & butterfly friendly plants were now prominently on show around the plant displays. Steve & Hilary turned up with an old display box of butterflies (Steve had been given this some years ago when it was still in vogue to kill and mount specimens). Dead or alive they proved to be a winner though and Steve & Hilary soon had plenty of people round them. The Beekeepers meanwhile were asking people "would you like to see inside a beehive? Of course we couldn't match that. As I was clearing up a lady came up to the



table and asked "What do you do?" A short pause; "We conserve butterflies!" a straight look; "Yes but what do you do?" I thought for a bit; "We run guided walks, do some conservation workdays on selected sites & produce a local magazine." Pause; "and take photographs" indicating some samples of my photography on the table. "I think I can do better than that" she said.

Three days at Lelant, certainly interesting and worthwhile, and we would like to thank the team there for being so helpful and welcoming. Thanks also go to Tony James, Jack, Steve & Hillary. Perhaps we can do similar events in future; if you do get asked to help I can recommend the experience. In future we could possibly plan for caterpillars, butterflies and moths to take with us?

Jim Barker

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation

Annual General Meeting

Saturday 28th January 2012

See overleaf for more details

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING/CONFERENCE

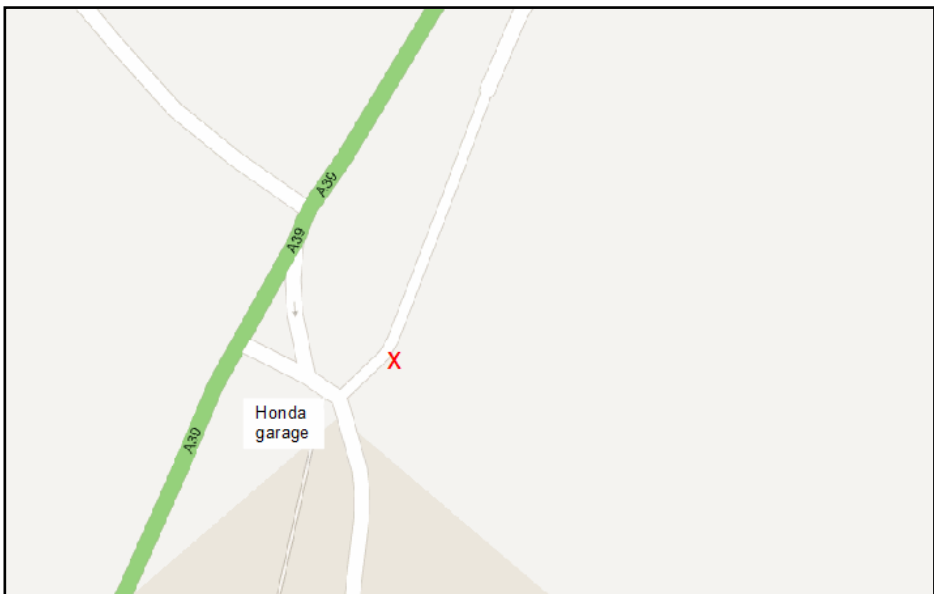
Saturday 28th January 2012

It doesn't seem long since our excellent AGM of 2011 when we were packed like pilchards in the meeting room at Allet listening to Adrian Spalding's fascinating talk about the successful re-introduction of Large Blue butterflies at a site in Somerset.

For comfort and health & safety reasons we are holding our 2012 AGM at a new and larger venue which will seat 150 people, has full disabled access and ample free parking.

The venue we have chosen is St Erme Community Centre, situated at Castle Field, Trispen, Truro, TR4 9BD near the A39 about halfway between the A30 and Truro (take the Trispen turn off). The red X on the map below marks the location. Official business will begin at 11.00am but we would welcome you to arrive earlier to help organise the room or to chat to other members.

MAP



PROGRAMME FOR THE DAY

10-00 am Tea and coffee, chatting and catching up with other members

11-00 Cornwall Butterfly Conservation AGM

12-00 **'The Ramblings of an Old Entomologist'**. Talk by Barry Ofield

12-45 Lunch (pasties/packed lunch, tea/coffee)

13-15 Raffle

13-30 **'The Rare Moths of Cornwall-The Need for Conservation'**. Talk by Adrian Spalding

14-15 Comfort break

14-30 **'The Butterflies of Spain'**. Talk by Paul Browning (whose book 'The Butterflies of the Iberian Peninsula' will be on sale for £20)

15-15 Closing remarks by Philip Hambly

15-30 Tea, coffee and 'mingling'

Pasties, tea and coffee will be provided in return for a small donation of £3.00. Alternatively, you are welcome to bring a packed lunch if you prefer. Please bring friends because non-members are very welcome to attend (although of course they won't be able to vote at our AGM).

Donations of prizes for our raffle will be gratefully received to enable us to raise funds for our conservation work at Bunny's Hill, Cardinham and other sites.

Photographs of butterflies, moths, birds, dragonflies or indeed any Cornish wildlife subjects will be very welcome for our displays. We are currently looking for images taken by our members that would be suitable for producing a range of greeting cards, again for essential fund-raising.

Lee Slaughter will have books for sale at a stand and we will have our own CBC fund-raising stand with many delights, including opportunities to purchase our 'Cornwall Butterfly Atlas' at half the list price (£15) and also Steve Jones' book 'Insects of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly' (£1 donation to CBC for every copy sold). Other conservation groups will be exhibiting in our conference hall giving us all a chance to get to know about the valuable work that is being done for wildlife in Cornwall.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - AGENDA

1. Chairman's Report
2. Minutes of Previous AGM and Matters Arising *
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Election of Officers
5. Transect Co-ordinator's Report – Jim Barker

The minutes of our last meeting were sent out in our 'Observer' newsletter no. 48 also available on line: http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk/butterfly_observer_48.pdf

Election of Officers

Maggie Goodere who has worked hard as our Branch Secretary for many years has resigned. (I am currently carrying out the role until a new Secretary can be elected)

Phil Harris and Paul Browning our Chairman and Treasurer respectively are standing down at the AGM but wish to remain on the Committee. We will therefore need to elect a Chairman, Treasurer and Secretary which is a dramatic change in our leadership.

Branch Rules require one third of our Committee members to retire by seniority rotation and this means that Jo Poland, Shaun Poland, Phil Harris, Paul Browning and Paul Brewer will need to stand for re-election.

If you want to stand for election to the Committee or wish to propose another member please let me know in writing by the 7th January 2012. We welcome proposals for all vacant positions on the Committee and also need members to serve on fund raising and conservation work sub-committees. Don't be shy – we would encourage you to come forward!

Items that you wish to discuss under Matters Arising or Any Other Business also be notified to me in writing by 7th January 2012 to enable us to allocate sufficient time for proper discussion. Such items are welcome but we will be mindful of the impact upon our scheduling of the Conference. We want to ensure that you have plenty of time to enjoy our speakers and also maximise the opportunity for audience questions.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST-HELP PLEASE!

The AGM and Conference will rely heavily upon a few members of the Committee doing a lot of work arranging the room, serving teas, coffees, pasties, washing up, welcoming members and guests, selling raffle tickets, arranging seating, tidying up etc. and we have no paid staff!

Therefore, **PLEASE** help by volunteering. A few volunteers to sell raffle tickets or make cups of tea would be greatly appreciated.

If **YOU** can help please let me know. Thanks and I look forward to meeting you on the 28th January 2012.

Keith Wilson, Acting Secretary & Membership Secretary; 01209 – 860298, tre-lusback_farm@hotmail.co.uk

Painted Ladies

During the winter months, painted lady butterfly (*Vanessa cardui*) lives in North Africa, where it breeds year-round. From there, this colourful butterfly spreads northwards throughout Europe during summer. Some migrate directly to Britain, while others will go to countries in mainland Europe, their progeny continuing the northwards migration.

Painted ladies are large butterflies, with wingspans 53mm (2ins), and primarily chequered orange and brown, with darker wing tips spotted white. They are strong flyers, and have been recorded throughout Britain, including Orkney and Shetland.

The caterpillars feed mainly on wild flowers, especially thistles – *Carduus* and *Cirsium* species – and stinging nettle. They feed on a wide range of species in the aster family (*Asteraceae*), including those cultivated in gardens such as giant thistles (*Onopordum* species), *Helianthus* and *Artemisia*, and on plants such as runner beans. Larvae rarely occur in such numbers to cause any significant damage to foliage and adult butterflies are useful pollinators.

Eggs are laid singly on the upper leaf surface. Caterpillars feed on the underside of leaves, making silk tents over their feeding areas. Each larva sheds its outer skin four times as it grows. When fully fed, caterpillars are about 30mm (1¼ins) long and have black, spiny bodies with white dashes down the sides.

The pupa or chrysalis stage is attached by its rear end to a mat of silk threads which the caterpillar spins on the plant or other surface. The life cycle can be completed in about a month, so butterflies arriving in April can produce several generations over a summer.



Photo courtesy the BC website

Painted lady numbers fluctuate widely from year to year but this butterfly is likely to be seen in the greatest numbers in late summer. Good migration years tend to coincide with prolonged spells of weather when winds are consistently from the south in late spring / summer. There is no evidence of a southward migration at the end of summer: butterflies are simply killed by winter cold. .

Painted Lady Facts

1. Painted lady cannot survive winter in northern Europe – it is dependent on fresh migrations of over-wintered adults from further south every year.
2. When migrating, painted ladies can travel as much as 90 miles in 24 hours.
3. This butterfly can be confused with small tortoiseshells and several species of fritillary, but painted lady's dark wing tips with white spots are distinctive.
4. The most spectacular recent painted-lady migration to Britain was in 2010; when many millions bred here.

Andrew Halstead
RHS Principal Entomologist

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A Beautiful Flight of Nature's Fancy

Her entrance quite unheralded, her fragile charms unsung,
She suddenly appears without a sound
Alighting boldly, confident, to take a moment's rest,
A butterfly before me, on the ground.

On balmy days of summer's haze, or in the dappled shade,
What sight can lift the spirit quite as she?
As, lost in courtship's merry dance, she whirls without a care;
The butterfly, which flutters by so free.

Reflect upon her symmetry, in shades of every hue,
A work of art, to nature's own design.
What measure of her charity, to ever contemplate,
And then create a creature so benign?

No fearful jaws, or claws to tear, no sting of poison there;
Her only need, a sip of nectar sweet.
So magical a creature should belong in fairy tale,
Without her though, would summer be complete?

For now, upon my reverie, a sombre thought intrudes;
How infinitely poorer life would be.....
How sad would be the dawning, and how tragic then, the day,
If never more a butterfly we see.

David Vickers

Goss Moor Conservation Workdays

There will be a conservation work-day at Goss Moor on the Grizzled Skipper site on Saturday 25th February 2012. You should wear stout boots and bring along tough work gloves if possible, as the work is likely to involve some clearing of bramble.

We will meet at 10.00am in the layby before the bridge over the Newquay

train line (SW 933598). If late head for the railway bridge and go through gate on right just before it.

Pasties will be provided for those that want them at lunchtime. Work will finish between 3.00 and 4.00pm.

Contact details: Paul Browning, Tel 01736 763677. If heavy rain is forecasted for the day please ring Paul to find out if work is to be cancelled.

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Heligan Team Help Protect Pearl Bordered Fritillary Butterfly

On Tuesday 19th October, the team used to maintaining the habitats and walks around the Heligan Estate were off to a site near Cardinham, Bodmin for a change. The site is managed by the Cornwall branch of Butterfly Conservation group for a number of important plant and animal species. The Heligan team went with our specialist mower / flailing equipment to help make conditions suitable for the rare and declining Pearl-bordered Fritillary (*Boloria euphrosyne*) which has one of its few remaining strong-holds in the county there.

The Pearl-bordered Fritillary is the earliest fritillary to emerge and can be found as early as April in woodland clearings or rough hill-sides with Bracken. It flies low to the ground, stopping regularly to feed on spring flowers such as Bugle or violets. The butterfly was once very widespread but has undergone a rapid decline of over two-thirds in the last two decades and is now a national Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority species. It was almost certainly present at Heligan at one time, especially when the practice of coppicing was more common-place in the woodlands, but has not been recorded here in recent years, if at all.

The exercise was mutually beneficial to us and the guys from Cornwall Butterfly Conservation (not to mention the butterflies!) as we got to learn about the kind of habitat and work needed to maintain the Pearl-bordered Fritillary population, whilst they got some welcomed help from our skilled staff and equipment that they do not normally have access to. The work was done in order to



Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Photograph by Jim Briggs

prevent scrub encroachment and open up sunny, sheltered patches which the Pearl-bordered Fritillary can use as new breeding habitat.

Although we too have limited resources, and tend to pour all of our efforts into improving and maintaining our own plot, it is only by considering and supporting other local sites of conservation importance that species such as the Pearl-bordered Fritillary will have any chance of building up its population to stay stable, never-mind increase and spread – effectively – we're in it together.

Monitoring of butterflies has been ongoing for some years on the Heligan Estate, and whilst we have not yet spotted anything really unusual here, we have had sightings of Brimstone, Small and Large Skipper, Clouded Yellow and Silver-washed Fritillary to name but a few.

During the summer visitors have enjoyed the chance to go on butterfly tours with one of the estate team staff to learn about the habitats and habits of these beautiful and impor-

Heligan Team Help Protect Pearl Bordered Fritillary Butterfly

tant creatures. For us, one of the most important habitats is our traditional hay meadows – an all too rare habitat nowadays due to modern farming.

With dropping temperatures, the butterfly spotting season has all-but passed bar a few species like Red Admirals which can still be seen on odd days right through the winter. We are looking forward to being invited back to Cardinham in the spring to see the Pearl-bordered Fritillary in it's improved habitat. I hope you will look out for the 2012 Heligan Events Diary and join us on future butterfly events here – who knows, there may be Pearl-bordered Fritillaries here again one day?



Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Photograph by Jim Briggs

**Jim Briggs
Heligan**

