

# ***The Butterfly Observer***

*Cornwall Butterfly Conservation Newsletter No. 34*



**Pearl-bordered Fritillary larva - ex ovum, Bunny's Hill,  
Bodmin, May 2005**



**Butterfly  
Conservation**

*Spring 2006*

## Editorial

Since the launch of our web-site at [www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk](http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk) last year, I have had a number of international requests to use our photographs featured on those pages especially of the Marsh Fritillary. Hence the feature later on in this issue taken by kind permission from the 'Happy Tonics' web page found at <http://happytonics.wordpress.com/about/>. There are numerous references to the Monarch which I'm sure all will find interesting.

At the time of going to press, Sally Foster our Transect Coordinator, has arranged a meeting to visit the De Lank quarry site, Bodmin Moor to see the Pearl-bordered Fritillaries found there. She is anxious that other environmental and conservation bodies respect the fact that this is a working quarry and as such there is a need to be sensitive towards the owners and co-operate fully with their wishes and in no way infer that pressure would be brought to bear to limit their operations. Good working relationships is an approach which I personally think is very wise under the circumstances. Thank you Sally for all your hard work in this area.

The release date for the Heath Fritillaries draws ever nearer and will be upon us by the time you receive this issue. We wish Barry Ofield and Tom Sleep every success and that all will go smoothly.

---

## Chairman's Report

Greetings from your new chairman - Phillip Harris. As you may know, Barry Ofield, due to changes in his workload, has stood down this year from the Chairmanship. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for all the work he has done, especially last year with his expert negotiations at a local and national level. Barry now moves on to concentrate this year on breeding and releasing Heath Fritillaries, under licence from English Nature, back into Greenscoombe woods near Luckett. Barry said that all is going well in the greenhouse at the moment (about 700 caterpillars) - so far, fingers crossed. He gave us all a marvellous talk and slide show at our Annual General Meeting.

For my sins I am honoured to take on the job of being Chairman for the next year. Paul Browning moves across to take on the Treasurer's job after Steve Bassett's brilliant 8 years leading us to a very sound financial position. Many thanks Steve and keep taking those photographs to your usual high standard. Well, with the strengths of last year's working team it will be business as usual.

Ok, so what do I see as the way forward? Well first we have many very interesting things going on this year. The first is our new reserve at Tregonhay near Roche in partnership with English Nature. We have now, as a committee, visited the reserve with Martin Davy (English Nature) which was

arranged by Paul Browning in October. Whilst viewing the reserve we were most impressed with what we saw. English Nature will set up all the infrastructure so we will bear no financial burden on this 40 acre site. This is part of the Life Project to consolidate the Marsh Fritillary in Europe as one of our most threatened Fritillaries at a National and European level. This will be our first partnership butterfly reserve. The area is about 40 acres of small damp fields with Cornish hedges, good sized oak trees and willow bushes which are already in situ - and of course Marsh Fritillaries but how many we are not sure. Marsh Fritillaries will be the main breeding species and there are also rumours that there may also be Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries on site along with Purple Hairstreaks and Brimstones to name just a few so it's going to be an interesting area for us all to survey through the season. More news update on numbers when we have a chance to survey the site through the summer and come up with some definite recording.

Another very interesting project is the North Atlantic Coast Project - Large Blue Project. This was relayed to us also at the Annual General Meeting by Adrian Spalding and involves a bid by interested parties to join the Large Blue valleys together by habitat. This is a National Lottery funded project around the North Cornwall Bude area.

Moving on, if I as Chairman could do anything this year, I would like to get to grips with more accurate recording of some of the other species of butterfly that sometimes don't get enough attention. These are not so high on the endangered species list but I think are getting very close to it. I am talking about Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, inland Dark Green Fritillaries and our very local 'brown field' Dingy Skippers. This butterfly will lose four fifths of the sites in my town area to housing in the next few years.

The committee is a strong team with lots of experience in the last 5 years. The challenge is keeping butterflies in the conservation picture with other interested parties as it has to compete in the media, for instance, with the new and very successful Cornish Chough. We are playing catch-up all the time as various species move into the threatened species picture.

Phil Harris May 2006

Please note deadlines for contributions are as follows:

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

Many thanks for your co-operation.

~ Ed.

## **Brown Fields Old and New**

Who invented the term 'brown field'? It must have taken some imagination. Any insect or plant person would have said something like, "our most precious places." Just look at our best sites in Cornwall for scarce and rare butterflies. Guess what?

They're all on old and sometimes not so old 'brown field' sites.

The most recent that I've seen is the 20 year old by-pass at Hayle which cuts right through large embankments around the back of Hayle. Within 5 years of its completion thousands of beautiful orchids sprang up, probably more than any other site in Cornwall - not bad for an ugly bit of road. Older sites now look anything but brown so let's list just one butterfly indicative of these sites - the Silver-studded Blue:

- Big areas of mining land at Penhale Sands.
- Dynamite works at Gwithian.
- Wheal Maid at St. Day.
- Breney Common.
- Bottalick mine site.
- Wheal Coates at Chapel Porth.
- Sally's Bottom mine at Portreath (not checked for 10 years).
- Wheal Busy at Chacewater.
- Penhallow at Newlyn Downs.

All these sites have fantastic diversity and yet are technically 'brown field' sites and are lucky not to have been developed in the past.

My local town will soon be given 4000 houses, apparently and guess where quite a few of them are going? - Yes you've got it, 'brown field' sites to the demise of our Dingy Skippers, Graylings, Small Heaths, Clouded Yellows etc. The Government has made its decision and we lose our best wildlife areas. ~ Phil Harris.

## **THE CLOUDED YELLOW (*Colitis Croceus*) in Cornwall, 2005**

At last I have had time to analyse my records of Clouded Yellows this year. Considered a very poor year by most, I hope to show that there were far more than 'met the eye'! Some four fifths of these records are my own sightings (Sixty one day-sightings which included only five x var. '*helice*', a lowly 8% - must have missed some!).

Another fifth are from reliable friends, but at sites elsewhere in Cornwall, also with very few sightings of var: '*helice*'.

A monthly breakdown shows:

- March to July - ZERO sightings!
- August only 13 sightings
- September only 29 sightings
- October only 38 sightings
- November only 2 sightings

One of the poorest years I can recall here in Cornwall. My interpretation of these figures is as follows:

**August:** Eight of the thirteen seen were close to the south coast, and fell between 7th and 9th August! The remaining five were also seen later close to the south coast and in potential breeding areas (south facing, clover rich, floral sites). Thus, on scanty evidence, we appear to have a small immigration in the second week of August (but not necessarily the first), which went on to breed. Take 6 weeks as development from egg to imago, in this summer's (good) hot weather, and we may have expected a 3rd week September 'brood', or at least early October, however nothing is that simple – see September.

**September:** Twenty three of the twenty nine seen were between the 1st and 7th September! Yes a sizeable immigration, heralded by Saharan dust reported on cars (in Portsmouth) on 1st Sept. 2005. My first sightings also came with two flying north on the 1st. September! Then on the 3rd Sept. 2005 I saw 10+ fly north near St. Austell and a colleague saw 8+ also on the south coast but near the Lizard. Another three, possibly five, were seen on 6th & 7th heading north. I conclude that if two people can see twenty three in only three hours watching – how many actually arrived? Well, we get some ideas in October, particularly the 15th October:

**October:** Twenty five of the thirty eight seen were within an hour – on the 15th October when I was walking a coastal path (back northward – inland) in the leeward of the Gribben Head, during a SSE wind. I stopped to watch four Clouded Yellows (including a mating pair), and noticed that Clouded Yellows were flying **southward**, into the SSE wind, to reach the Gribben Head, at the rate of approx. one every 3 minutes, thus a further twenty one were seen during the hour I watched (none flew north). These were obviously/evidently part of the British brood (mostly from early September immigrants), 'emigrating' (overland), toward the headland. (In fact in the excellent year of 2003,

I saw a 'cloud' of c.120 'emigrating' along the leeward of this headland adjacent to the same path and also during an easterly biased wind), during the month of October. Although in the right place at the right time, this year's numbers were very poor in comparison but again – just how many 'emigrated' seaward along this path during one day, or week (when I had seen twenty five in an hour!?) Whether they in fact 'make it' across the Channel in late October (200+ miles against the wind), I very much doubt!

Only eight more were seen after 15th Oct. (the weather deteriorated), and six of these were in the same fields, described above, on 27th Oct. 2005. In **November** only two SW bound individuals were seen on sunny days.

In conclusion, it is my belief that this route, to the west of the Gribben Head, is used in easterly biased winds by both immigrants in summer and emigrants in autumn, both have been seen in considerable numbers. The fields are eminently suitable, being full of yellow flowers (Hawksbit Sp.?), and 'under-sown' with red clover, beloved food-plant of the species. Thus one observer saw sixty Clouded Yellows in a very few hours of fieldwork (but with local knowledge). So are we talking tens or hundreds of the species in the West Country this year - assuming only one brood was possible, due to late immigration? Of course, we are talking of **thousands**. I am writing mostly about one tetrad, typical of many Cornish headlands, with valleys leading inland and North.

Roger Lane, 20th November

---

As promised there follows (on the opposite page) an article that appeared in April's newsletter of the 'Happy Tonics' web page in N. America and found at: [www.happytonics.org/nsletr/v2i4/v2i4p3.html](http://www.happytonics.org/nsletr/v2i4/v2i4p3.html) If you have a computer there is also an interesting article on the first page of the newsletter at: <http://www.happytonics.org/nsletr/v2i4/v2i4p1.html> which is about the Monarch butterfly. Indeed much of the site is dedicated to butterflies and healthy non GM foods. The article appeared after a request from the author - **Mary Ellen Ryall**, who comes from **Minong, Wisconsin**, to include a photograph from our web site and is reproduced by kind permission. There also follows a further article from **Rebecca Seaman, Farm Conservation Advisor, Cornwall FWAG** who also kindly requested permission to use one of Lee Slaughter's photographs. The article is also reproduced by kind permission.

## Europe's Butterflies Are Declining

England (UK) - The loss of butterflies in Europe is so dramatic that several species could be wiped out. The Cornwall moors, with their wetlands, are being threatened by modern technologies that make it possible to easily drain wet grassland habitats for agriculture or development.

Dr. Martin Warren, of Butterfly Conservation in the UK, along with colleagues in the Netherlands, has been studying the butterflies

since 1990. The researchers found serious declines in almost every country. Out of 576 butterfly species, 71 are already threatened, and a further loss of habitat could threaten many other species. Butterflies restricted to one or two habitats are especially vulnerable.

The Marsh Fritillary, of the Cornwall moors, is one of the species that is threatened. Their population has fallen by 37 percent in 25 years. When wet meadows are drained

and the host plant and nectar plants are removed, a butterfly can be lost forever. The journal *Insect Conservation* found that butterflies in wetlands and forests throughout Europe had fallen by 15 percent over the past 25 years, and grassland varieties are down 19 percent.



Marsh Fritillary  
(*Euphydryas aurinia*).  
Cornwall Butterfly  
Conservation,  
England.

Photo by Phil Boggis.

---

## Enhancing Cornwall's Biodiversity

Cornwall FWAG has been working with farmers across the county on a project aiming to enhance Cornwall's biodiversity. As part of the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) formally agreed between Cornwall County Council (CCC) and Office of Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) the aim was to deliver specific improvements to biodiversity on 98 sites of Cornwall-wide significance, these sites are known as County Wildlife Sites.

A County Wildlife Site (CWS) is an area of excellent wildlife habitat for which the Environmental Records Centre based at the Wildlife Trust holds records. They are also marked on maps referred to by planners in the county. They are the most important places for wildlife in Cornwall outside of legally protected land such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). These sites have no legal protection but are considered of great wildlife importance and should be protected and sensitively managed at all times.

Cornwall FWAG worked in conjunction with Cornwall Wildlife Trust [www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/](http://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/) and with the Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS) [www.ercis.co.uk/](http://www.ercis.co.uk/) carrying out a review of these sites, and liaising with farmers that have CWS's within or adjacent to their land. The outcomes from the project have been very positive; many different types of habitat ranging from lowland heath to deciduous woodland have been surveyed and appropriate management guidance given. Two potential sites given.



Two potential sites for the Marsh Fritillary butterfly (shown right), a species currently in decline have been discovered on CWS's, a number of bird species including Spotted Flycatchers, Song Thrush, Bullfinch and Skylark were surveyed on farm and signs of Barn Owl nesting found.



Photograph author: Lee Slaughter

Source: <http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk/butterflies.html>

It was particularly encouraging to discover that most farmers had been carrying out sensitive management of these valuable wildlife habitats already. In some cases it is best practice to carry out stock grazing on an area at selected times of the year, other types of habitat such as dense deciduous woodland thrive on management in place due to shooting; FWAG has been providing guidance on the best management practice for each different habitat and circumstance.

The findings from the surveys means good news for wildlife and good news for farmers who can gain points for enhanced habitat management under Entry Level and Higher Level stewardship schemes. Management of these sites is in the hands of landowners, by carrying out suitable protection and sensitive management they are helping to conserve some of Cornwall's most precious habitats ensuring its wildlife is protected and enhanced for years to come.

Rebecca Seaman, Farm Conservation Advisor, Cornwall FWAG.

---

### **National Moth Night 2006**

This event is being held on Saturday 23rd. September and for Cornwall the target species will be the Convolvulus Hawk-moth and Black-banded. The Black-banded is strictly coastal, local but widespread in its distribution and a West Country speciality, the larva feeding on the flowers and leaves of Thrift. Please watch this space for any organised NMN meetings in the west of the region probably around the Kynance Cove area on the Lizard. For mid Cornwall it is proposed to hold a meeting at Spit Beach, Par, near St. Austell (SX074525) at 7.00 - 7.15pm. Meet at the car park just off the main A3082 from Par Moor to Par at SX073528 (Walk through the railway tunnel footpath to the beach



along by the Imerys China Clay complex). Leader: Phil Boggis. Tel. 01726 66124.

---

## **Request From Headquarters**

### **How one woman's gift will make a world of difference.**

When Pamela Lewis was alive, she visited Butterfly Conservation's reserve at Prestbury Hill in Gloucestershire. She was inspired by that wonderful place and its profusion of butterflies. When Pamela died she remembered Butterfly Conservation in her Will with a generous gift.

In 2005 we used Pamela's legacy to create a new nature reserve at Alners Gorse so that we could conserve one of the most important areas in Dorset for the Marsh Fritillary (and countless other rare butterflies and moths). We shall be using this new reserve to show other landowners from this beautiful part of Dorset, and further afield, how to create and maintain the habitat that the Marsh Fritillary needs for it to thrive.

In time, Pamela's influence on the conservation of the Marsh Fritillary could be enormous.

We welcome legacy gifts of any size and every legacy we receive is put to work to make a lasting difference. This could be through our educational work with young people, or in the development of a landscape conservation project in an important butterfly area, or by paying for the ongoing management of our nature reserves.

Leaving a legacy to Butterfly Conservation will not cost you anything in your lifetime and could reduce the amount of inheritance tax your family may have to pay on the value of your estate, as all legacy gifts to charity are free of tax. Best of all, though, you will be making a lasting contribution to the conservation of Britain's butterflies and moths.

Butterfly Conservation relies heavily on the support of its members and friends, so please will you consider making a gift to the Society in your Will?

To talk informally, and in confidence, about helping Butterfly Conservation with a gift in your Will, please telephone me on 01403 256175, or write to me at our Lulworth offices.

David Bridges  
Head of Fundraising

Please return this slip (or a photocopy) to David Bridges at Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Dorset BH20 5QP.

- ☐ I have already remembered Butterfly Conservation with a legacy in my Will.
- ☐ I am considering remembering Butterfly Conservation with a legacy in my Will.
- ☐ Please send me a free copy of Butterfly Conservation's legacy leaflet.
- ☐ Please telephone. I would like an opportunity to discuss how I can help Butterfly Conservation through my Will.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other) \_\_\_\_\_

Address

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone no. \_\_\_\_\_

This information will be held in absolute confidence. The information you provide is not binding in anyway, but it does give us a valuable indication of your future intentions and will help us plan our future work.



### **Cornwall Fritillary Action Group**

Many thanks to Tim Dingle who has furnished the following minutes (opposite) to keep us all up to date on current happenings and an article entitled 'Helping the Habitat'.

## Cornwall Fritillaries Action Group

### Minutes of meeting 12/4/06 held at South Penquite Farm.

**Present:** Dr. Caroline Bulman (BC), Peter Burgess (Reconnecting the Culm project); Justin Gillett (RDS Ecologist); Sally Foster (BC Cornwall); Steve Hoskin (BC Cornwall); Wes Smith (EN); David Hazlehurst (EN); George Brew (RDS); Dominic Faiman (landowner); Kim Strawbridge (NT); Debbie (NT); Tim Dingle (NCDC Coast & Countryside – facilitator).

**Apols:** Mark Beard (EN); Phil Harris (BC Cornwall); Paddy Saunders; Marian Bryant (RDS Ecologist); James Burke (EA).

1. Previous minutes agreed.
2. No matters arising not dealt with elsewhere.

#### **3. Site management:**

**Bunny's Hill** (TD) – two work days had taken place at this site, one using Duchy College volunteers, another with BTCV. Thanks were expressed to EN for funding these days. New areas had been cut, as well as some old areas. Most of the work was focusing on creating access paths through the site which will also act as rides and corridors for butterflies.

**De Lank Quarry** (SF) – A very successful volunteer day had taken place, again with BTCV involved and EN funding. Again existing paths had been widened and a new area cleared of scrub. Fencing of the slopes has taken place through a grant DF received from the Aggregates Levy. Cattle had gone onto the site the day before the meeting. (A visit to the site following the meeting had shown that some affect is very quickly being achieved.)

**Fellover Break** (DH) – some burning has been done by the owner. They are now hoping to extend the grazing. They have also visited South Penquite to gain knowledge from Dominic's experience.

**Valency** – NT have cleared some more scrub from their area. Started transect recording. Sleeps land – no report at meeting. *Since; apparently no stock went in this last autumn, but a few put in mid-April.* (TD)

**Draynes Valley** (Marsh Frit. site) (DH) – WES agreement to get some fencing done.

**Dozmary Pool** (DH) – fencing done through Access grant. HLS (Higher Level Stewardship) application being developed.

**Goss Moor Project.** (WS) Management period coming to an end. There have been varying results. There will now be a period of finishing out management structure but continuing to refine it, especially the grazing side with particular reference to the micro environment. All 6 sites now have some grazing; three using private graziers and three using EN owned stock. On Goss Moor the cattle were out all winter (Belted Galloways, British White, and Dexters). There was some supplementary feeding, mostly hay and barley straw. Using ring feeders - hoping to get planning permission for a stock yard where feeding can take place. Some burning off of molinia has taken place to encourage stock into certain areas. Some areas that were previously heavily poached are now looking good. Future hopeful with 1NNR, 4CWT reserves, and one area of common.

DH reported that BTCV have obtained a grant of £30,000 from the AONB Landscape Sustainability Fund to do 35 days work on butterfly sites on Bodmin Moor over the next three years. This is using volunteers and community groups. Hopefully, this will allow some of the existing sites to be maintained, at least until a more sustainable method is found. (*See Bodmin Moor Project below*)

4. SF reported on the visit to Marsland & Welcome reserve where Gary Pilkington has one of the highest numbers of pbf in the SW. A very useful day seeing how Gary cuts and rakes the site on rotation.

5. **Bodmin Moor Project** (DH et al) This is aimed at getting a project officer in place on Bodmin Moor to help landowners with Marsh Fritillary or Pearl-bordered Fritillary sites to get them into good management, which hopefully will be reasonably sustainable. It will also identify suitable sites that might be future areas for colonisation. A working group has been progressing this, mainly through a report prepared by Dan Bloomfield for the Environment Agency which looked at the need, the potential, options for delivery, and funding opportunities. Work is now being done to identify funding sources, most likely a Charitable Trust. The BTCV funds mentioned above can be used as match funding.

6. **Connecting the Culm.** PB brought us up to date on this project\* and the work he has done on some of the Cornish culm sites. He has put two farms into HLS and given advice on several others. (The project is to try to improve or recreate the habitat for marsh fritillary, narrow-bordered bee hawk moth and double lines moth, in the Culm Grassland Natural Area)

7. **Heath Fritillary update** (CB). Following a meeting with Duchy, an agreement has been put in place for a WES agreement to clear areas of Turkey oak and red cedar. There will be some reintroduction of females of stock from Lydford (which in turn came from Greenscoombe). Barry Ofield and Tom Sleep have lots of larvae which will allow further re-introductions in June. Future management strategy is being worked on which will include some coppicing. It was recognised the importance of the work volunteers had done to keep the site 'alive' by 'gardening and clearing'.

**The Tamar Valley Project.** Following Sarah Brooks report last year, more work is being done this year. Released butterflies will be monitored in terms of movement and food preference. New (or old!) sites are being looked at across the Tamar and some clearance work is being done at suitable sites.

8. **South West Fritillaries Action Group** meeting at Dartmoor National Park Office (CB). This had once again proved to be a very useful meeting with good representation from across the region. Talks included Bracken Management for Heath Fritillaries, the Tamar Valley Heath Fritillary Project, Two Moors Threatened Butterfly Project, the Neroche Project on the Blackdown Hills. One potentially useful outcome of the day was the idea of a simple identification chart of SW fritillaries to help with recording and monitoring. There is a move to encourage more timed count monitoring rather than the restrictive transect recording. This is to encourage more monitoring, not to replace transect recording.



---

## Helping the Habitat

### You too can get involved!

As you will all be well aware, suitable habitat for butterflies is often difficult to maintain, especially for Fritillaries. Historically, areas of woodland and heathland would be coppiced on rotation or burnt. Today, woods are rarely managed and heathland abandoned. As a result, we find ourselves struggling to try to maintain a few areas to allow colonies to hang on.

This is most noticeably true for the Heath Fritillary. This butterfly had a toehold at a small site at Greenscoombe, near Luckett. I can remember going there some 33 years ago to help do some bramble cutting. My now 35 year old son accompanied us in his pushchair!

At that time there were good numbers of the butterfly to be seen. Since then the surrounding forestry plantation has grown up and nearly shaded out the bank. Prince Charles was invited to see the butterfly a few years ago (it is on his land) and he ordered the removal of some of the surrounding trees, but it was too little too late. Despite good efforts by a few in recent years, the colony was lost. Luckily another was found in a nearby small clearing, but the effort to keep it open has again relied on a few. Things are looking more hopeful now, as a long term management plan is coming into being, involving a more rigorous tree removal policy.

Most of the work this winter has been for the Pearl - bordered Fritillary. At present there are six colonies in the county. By far the largest is at the Welcome and Marsland Wildlife Trust Reserve on the county boundary near Morwenstow. The Wardens, Gary and Steve, have shown us what can be achieved with careful management.



**Volunteers at Bunny's Hill**

Most of the colonies are on the fringes of Bodmin Moor. There is a good colony at Bunny's Hill near Cardinham, on an area of abandoned common land. Here we have done a small amount of gorse clearing each year. This winter there were two work days at the site, one using the volunteer group from Duchy College, and another using the BTCV weekday volunteer group. These, with a few others from Cornwall Butterfly Conservation, cleared a big area and we hope to see the results in May. This site is good for other butterflies

such as the Dingy Skipper and for the scarce plants, Cornish bladderseed and fragrant orchid.

Another struggling colony has been at De Lank quarry, near St. Breward. Again, earlier this winter there was a Volunteer's Day to clear large areas of willow and gorse from rides and hillside. The tenant farmer managed to get an aggregates levy grant to do fencing which has allowed cattle onto the site, a much more sustainable management regime than scrub bashing!



**Cattle at De Lank Quarry**

Other work has gone on at Fellover Break near St. Breward and at the coastal colony close to the Monkey Sanctuary. All of this wouldn't be possible without the co-operation of the landowners and the volunteers who give up their time. One thing is certain; all those who take part have a great time – thanks for the hotdogs Steve! If you want to get involved, look out for dates for next winter in the newsletter, or contact me, Phil, or Sally.

Tim Dingle, Chairman Cornwall Fritillary Action Group.



## News: Press Information

### Culm grasslands scheme to prevent butterfly crisis

September 2005

**A major project has been launched to rescue some of our most threatened grasslands found in the Culm area of North Devon and North East Cornwall. The Reconnecting the Culm Project - so-called because it will be re-establishing areas of grassland to link up the existing fragmented sites - is being led by the charity Butterfly Conservation.**

Culm grassland is home to some of Europe's most beautiful and threatened species. The Marsh Fritillary butterfly and the Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth are two that you may encounter, but there is also a wealth of other wildlife for which these habitats are internationally renowned. The Marsh Fritillary has suffered a dramatic 66 per cent decline in England during the 10 years between 1990 and 2000. Only immediate action will sustain the populations of the species within the Culm.



Marsh Fritillary

## Further information:

**Interviews and photo opportunities** with Peter Burgess can be arranged. Contact:

### **Peter Burgess**

Culm Grassland Project Officer

Butterfly Conservation

Tel: 01392 889794

Mobile: 07918 073653

Email: [pburgess@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:pburgess@butterfly-conservation.org) [pburgess@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:pburgess@butterfly-conservation.org)

### **Lester Cowling**

Press Officer

Butterfly Conservation

Tel: 01929 406008

Mobile: 07976 363546

Email: [lcowling@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:lcowling@butterfly-conservation.org) [lcowling@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:lcowling@butterfly-conservation.org)

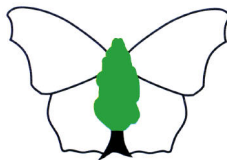
Losses of Culm grassland have been staggering. Just eight per cent of the grasslands found in 1900 survive today, much of it in poor condition. The biggest cause of loss has been agriculture - through draining, ploughing and fertilising. Now Butterfly Conservation will be working with farmers over the coming four years to try to reverse the decline - and to conserve the threatened species. Peter Burgess, Butterfly Conservation's Culm Grassland Project Officer, stresses that the support from local farmers is vital. "Without extensive cattle grazing during the summer months these grasslands will quickly lose their conservation and agricultural value," he says.

Ways in which the project will be forging links between conservation and agriculture include providing free support and advice on farming and wildlife grants and by fostering co-operative working between landowners. Without an increase in farm incomes, especially in the price paid for beef, the cattle industry and the rare wildlife that relies on these traditional systems are facing a major threat.

Butterfly Conservation is working closely with the Rural Development Service and English Nature. The project is funded by the Environment Agency and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation.

**Notes:**

Butterfly Conservation is registered in England No. 2206468 and is a registered charity No. 254937. Butterfly Conservation is the largest insect conservation charity in Europe with over 10,000 members in the UK. Its aim is the conservation of butterflies, moths and their habitats. The Society runs conservation programmes on over 60 threatened species of butterfly and moth, organises national butterfly recording and monitoring schemes, and manages over 25 nature reserves.



**Butterfly  
Conservation**

**Butterfly Conservation is registered in England  
No. 2206468 and is a registered charity No. 254937.**

**Pearl-bordered Fritillary Larvae - *Boloria euphrosyne* (Linn.)**

The larvae illustrated are from Bunny's Hill - ex ovum 29th May 2005. The photos were taken during the early afternoon at a temperature of approx. 13 deg. C. The larvae were surprisingly active despite the temperature. The food-plant is Dog Violet and the larvae trebled in size between 31st March and the 7th April, the weather being quite sunny but cool for the time of year.

They hibernate in curled up leaves and require bracken fronds and dead Oak/Beech leaves on which to bask during early spring which enables them to increase body temperature to help digest their food. It was noted that the larvae would roam for about 3 minutes, then feed for approximately the same amount of time and then bask for another 3 minutes. The larvae are mainly black in colour which helps absorb the heat from the sun's rays. They appear to soon 'overheat' whereupon they seek shelter amongst the leaf-litter and ground cover.

The land at Bunny's Hill is un-enclosed common land with casual grazing and subsequent burning of the scrub. This has had a detrimental affect in recent years despite the efforts of volunteers from Cornwall Butterfly Conservation who have helped clear the scrub. This year more land has unfortunately been burnt and it is feared that many overwintered larvae have perished. The ones illustrated, and others will therefore be released as adults into suitable habitat at Bunny's Hill in the near future.

Lee Slaughter & Phil Boggis – April 2006.

**Pearl-bordered Fritillary larva  
ex ovum, 29th May 2005,  
Bunny's Hill, Cardinham,  
Bodmin - L. Slaughter.  
Photo © P. H. Boggis.**





**Pearl-bordered Fritillary  
larva-ex ovum, 29th May  
2005, Bunny's Hill,  
Cardinham, L. Slaughter.  
Photo © P. H. Boggis.**



**Pearl-bordered Fritillary  
pupa, April 1997.  
Photo © L. Slaughter.**

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

## Cornwall Butterfly Conservation Committee and contacts

**Chairman: Phil Harris**

59 Carnarthen Street, Camborne. TR14 8UP ..... 07845 984 426 (mobile)  
[phil.harris@duchy.ac.uk](mailto:phil.harris@duchy.ac.uk)

**Secretary: Maggie Goodere**

3 Churchtown Road, Gwithian, Hayle. TR27 5BX ..... (01736) 753077

**Treasurer & Membership Secretary: Paul Browning**

Penhale Jakes Farm, Ashton, Helston. TR13 9SD ..... (01736) 763677

**Newsletter & Moth Officer: Phil Boggis**

6 Tremena Gardens, St. Austell. PL25 5QH ..... (01726) 66124  
[phil.boggis@btinternet.com](mailto:phil.boggis@btinternet.com)

**Field Trip Organiser: Lee Slaughter**

2 Trinity Street, St. Austell. PL25 5LY ..... (01726) 817505 (ex dir)  
[Leelisa1998@aol.com](mailto:Leelisa1998@aol.com)

**Conservation Officer: Adrian Spalding**

Tremayne Farm Cottage, Praze-an-Beeble, Camborne. TR14 9PH ..... (01209) 831517

**Recorder: John Worth**

20 St. Clare Flats, Penzance. TR18 2PR ..... (01736) 362438  
[jowan@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:jowan@tiscali.co.uk)

**Transect Co-ordinator: Sally Foster**

Teal Cottage, 21 Churchtown Road, Gwithian, Hayle. TR27 5BX ..... (01736) 753259

**Butterfly Migration Officer: Roger Lane**

25 Warwick Drive, Buckler's Village, Holmbush, St. Austell. PL25 3JJ ..... (01726) 67944  
[RogerLane65@aol.com](mailto:RogerLane65@aol.com)

**Steve Hoskin**

25 Coulthard Drive, Breage, Helston. TR13 9PF ..... (01326) 563462

**Barry Ofield**

Oakland Cottage, Pendoggett, St. Kew, Bodmin. PL30 3HQ ..... (01208) 880616  
[Bofie@homecall.co.uk](mailto:Bofie@homecall.co.uk)

**Steve Bassett**

36 Rectory Road, St. Stephen, St. Austell, PL26 7RJ..... (01726) 824161  
[steve.bassett@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:steve.bassett@tiscali.co.uk)

---

**Cornwall Branch Website: [www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk](http://www.cornwall-butterfly-conservation.org.uk)**

**Cornwall Butterfly Conservation Yahoo! Groups:**

**<http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/cornwall-butterfly-conservation>**

Articles may be reproduced provided due acknowledgement is given.

**Published by Cornwall Branch of Butterfly Conservation**

**Butterfly Conservation Limited by guarantee**

**Registered Office:** Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5QP Tel: (01929) 400209

Registered in England No. 2206468. Registered Charity No. 254937. VAT No. 565 9070 16