

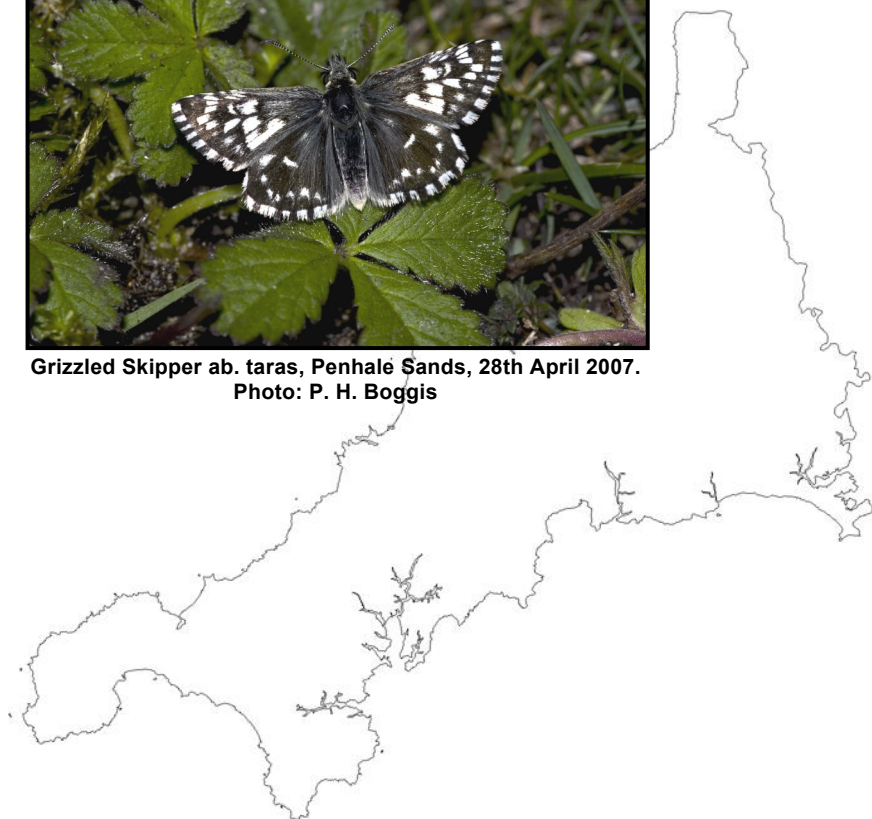
The Butterfly Observer

Cornwall Butterfly Conservation Newsletter No. 37



Grizzled Skipper ab. taras, Penhale Sands, 28th April 2007.

Photo: P. H. Boggis



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Spring 2007

Editorial

This issue continues our environmental theme by including an article from the Western Morning News about pony grazing on Penhale Sands (see page 5). More about the Grizzled Skipper, aberration taras on page 3. There have been some very early records of various species sent in by one or two of our members. Indeed this spring has proved to be advanced by at least three weeks. An article by Sally Foster, our transect co-ordinator about the site at Church Hay Down appears on page 6.

Many thanks to Tim Dingle for again providing us with the minutes of the latest meeting of the Cornwall Fritillary Action Group (see p.12). I feel this to be an important item, therefore, space permitting, all CFAG minutes will be included in the Butterfly Observer unless I hear from members to the contrary. An in depth analysis of separating the Pearl-bordered from the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary appears on page 16.

On the 'mothing' front there is an article on page 11 about *Pyrausta cingulata* which has been mentioned briefly before on page 9 of issue 26, Autumn 2003. Roger Lane again joins in the reports with one about the Orange Underwing on page 10. A question about lekking appears on page 17. Some good news from Mary Ellen Ryall, editor of 'Happy Tonics' appears on the following page.

Finally, please find details of Tim & Sandy Dingle's Garden Open Day on page 18.

Chairman's thoughts - Spring 2007

As I sit and scribble a few words down for our newsletter, things have turned very wet! We were at least a fortnight in advance on the season but now we are promised nine days of rain. Yes, it's true, I did mention to several people last week, that we could do with a drop of rain (big mistake). You see I didn't really mean this much. I'm sure you thought the same and are now regretting it just like me. The problem is that the Pearl-bordered Fritillaries are now coming out at Bodmin. I was there three days ago and saw fresh butterflies mating and enjoying perfect temperatures, so what are these brave breeders doing in this wet cold weather? We can only guess that they will wait for a chance to do their thing when it clears up.

The Monkey Sanctuary at Looe enjoyed perfect weather and had maximum sunshine for three weeks. No problem there as I went up to meet Paddy Saunders and Leon Truscott on 21st April to count individuals on this very difficult and sometimes dangerous cliff where Paddy took me to the Struddicks cliff end. This site is not for the faint hearted as it's very steep, full of thorns etc., including wild goats that live there all the year round, quietly keeping the place in good shape with a little help with cutting and management in the winter from Paddy and the National Trust. Paddy was delighted with the 10 Pearl-bordered Fritillaries we saw, on the day, at this end of the site since they never get into big numbers anywhere along this stretch of coast, but simply spread themselves out in the multitude of clearings. Leon recorded his first Pearl-bordered here on the 11th of April which must be close to a record for

Cornwall, although I did hear that 'up in England' one was seen on the 9th of April, again this is really early. The Bodmin sites are famous for being late as they are not at sea level but up at 600 feet, and for a heat seeking butterfly that means it's usually worth waiting a bit before emergence. Unfortunately, several times in the last few years, it has been noticed that they emerge into a wet spell whilst other colonies have finished completing their life-cycle and it looks like this will happen again this year. Bunny's Hill is looking in great shape after lots of management this year from all at BTCV and NCDC who have created new clearings and cut back plenty of gorse to allow a bit of space for the butterflies to fly around in. I saw about 20 there in three hours on Saturday 5th of May. The day before, I went to the Fell Over site at St. Breward and with the help of Jacque, Tom and Ann Polglase, counted about 10 flying with two fresh mating pairs. The next day I went to Treslea Downs and carefully watched about 10 fritillaries flying non-stop and wished I had brought my net as they all looked like Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries(?) Maybe Pearl-bordered Fritillaries don't exist here any more. I shall go back with a net at the first opportunity and check. (See later reports – Ed.)

Anyway, this is the time of year to put off everything else and get out and about recording as many butterflies as possible. I have just realised I haven't sent in all my records for last year. Sorry John, down there in Penzance, bear with me I will catch up later.

~ Phil Harris, May 2007.

I received a letter from Mary Ellen Ryall, Editor of 'Happy Tonics' - see issue 34, Spring 2006, page 5.

~ Ed.

She writes the following:

'I wanted to let you know that Happy Tonics was granted approval to plant a native wildflower and butterfly garden on a half acre of city land in Shell Lake. I can't tell you how pleased I am. A multi-purpose trail is right next to the site and the long view is of the lake. It is an ideal location for butterfly conservation. Our Web site and newsletter (<http://happytonics.wordpress.com/about/>) will promote the project. We are distributing milkweed seed all around the USA. Home gardeners and landowners in 15 states (from January to May) have come to us for milkweed seed, which is the host plant of the monarch butterfly. These individuals are growing a butterfly habitat in their own patchwork gardens around the country. It is thrilling.

I am inspired by your organization and what your members are accomplishing on behalf of moths and butterflies in Cornwall.

The Monarch is under severe environmental challenges in three countries: Canada, USA and Mexico. I can't help but feel a sense of hope when I realise that we are making a footmark in our own Great North Woods of Wisconsin. I am grateful to the community of Shell Lake for being receptive to this cause.'

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.

Occurrence of the Grizzled Skipper *ab. taras* - Bergsträsser on Penhale Sands, Cornwall.

As mentioned later in this article, it is quite surprising and I believe unexplained, why approximately 40% of the scattered populations of the Grizzled Skipper found on Penhale Sands and Perransands are of the form *ab. taras* – Bergsträsser. This is an apparent increase over observations taken during a period of 8 years from 1992 to 2002 in which the aberration was estimated to be 17.5% of the population. (*Browning, pers. comm., issue 23, Autumn 2002*). The colonies are mainly found in sheltered damp hollows where at least three of their foodplants, Silverweed (*Potentilla anserina*), Tormantil (*Potentilla erecta*) and Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), are found. Reliable information indicates that many of these hollows are flooded to form quite large lakes during normal wet winters, but recently, at least three in a row have been abnormally dry; consequently the hollows have dried out completely



Recent Grizzled Skipper site on Penhale dunes now flooded again and consequently 'reverting to type'

to leave just dampness underfoot, ideal for the spread of Tormantil and Silverweed which does not occur on the higher sandy slopes. Added to this, the butterfly prefers the sheltered hollows when emerged, and consequently quite large populations (40+) have built up around these very localised areas during the last three seasons or so.

It appears that this year all this has changed.

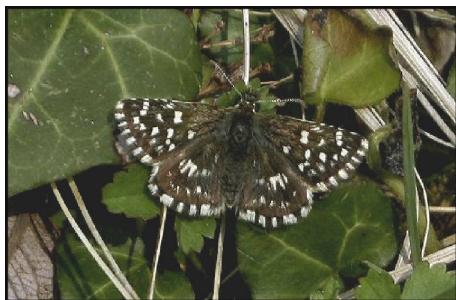
With a wetter winter, the habitat has reverted to type. The butterfly, having previously bred in these dried-out hollows, must surely have suffered a setback with the areas now underwater again. Fortunately, scrub clearance and pony grazing nearby, have made the cleared ground suitable for the butterfly, especially along the margins of the dunes near to a bordering stream where all the Grizzled Skippers were seen during a visit by Lee Slaughter and me on the 28th April 2007. There will always be small areas where changing habitat is going to make it unsuitable for this butterfly; however, the dunes are so large that the few small scattered colonies soon move on to more suitable areas nearby thus ensuring the butterflies' survival, provided that encroachments from commercial holiday concerns are kept to a minimum. Thankfully the northern section of the dunes is owned by the MOD and is a restricted area. Conservation groups along with Cornwall County Council's Countryside Officer, Sarah Taylor have been responsible for much valuable site management which I believe, in one

area, has much benefited this butterfly, one of Britain's smallest. (See article on the following page).

Lee Slaughter, much to his delight, stumbled across this colony of Grizzled Skippers in the 1980's. He has written the following account of last year's visit to Penhale, an area which incidentally, is close to his heart:

'I was fortunate enough to chance upon a healthy colony of Grizzled Skippers on the 6th May 2006 on an isolated area of Penhale Sands. Even more exciting was realising that from approximately 40+ adults seen in about 90 minutes, about 40% of them were of the aberration 'taras' – Bergsträsser. Some were not as extreme as others having varying degrees of confluent white banding on the forewings in place of the usual 'pinprick' sized white dots. I was delighted to obtain several photographs of the different aberrant adults. (See photographs below).

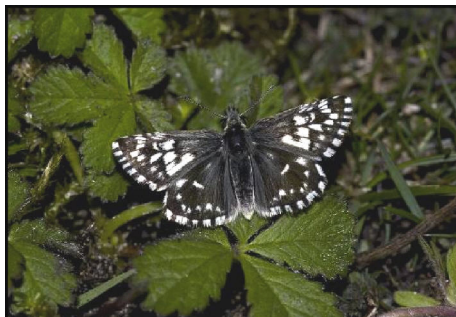
It is indeed most curious that this aberration occurs in varying frequency amongst the colonies thinly scattered over the Penhale Sands area but has not to my knowledge, ever been recorded from the only other colony in our county at Goss Moor.'



Grizzled Skipper – normal form. Penhale Sands, 28th April 2007. Photo P. H. Boggis



Grizzled Skipper – slight ab. taras. Penhale Sands, 28th April 2007. Photo P. H. Boggis



Grizzled Skipper – 'normal' ab. taras. Penhale Sands, 28th April 2007. Photo P. H. Boggis.



Grizzled Skipper – extreme ab. taras. Penhale Sands, May 6th 2006. Photo © L. Slaughter.
over...

Continued from page 4.



Grizzled Skipper – more extreme ab. taras. Penhale Sands, May 6th 2006. Photo © L. Slaughter.

Phil Boggis & Lee Slaughter, May 2007.

Extract from the Western Morning News:

Ponies graze on dunes during the winter



- **WINTER FUEL:** Five Shetland ponies seen here grazing on the dunes at Penhale as part of the continuing management.

The windswept dunes of a Westcountry beach were home to a group of Shetland ponies this winter. The five ponies grazed the dunes at Penhale, near Perranporth, on Cornwall's north coast.

Over the last two winters, ponies have been brought in for trial grazing periods and have had a beneficial effect on the habitats and wildlife in the dunes.

They help to control taller grasses and scrub which allows smaller and rarer dune flowers to flourish.

The animals have been kept in place by an electric fence.

Sarah Taylor, the countryside officer for Cornwall County Council, said that signs

were displayed on the fence warning of the electric current. People were also advised to take care not to touch the electric fence and were asked to keep dogs under control in the area being grazed as they could have run under the fencing.

Visitors to the dunes were also asked not to feed the ponies as they may bite. Shetland ponies are famous for their stature and hardiness and have a special protective winter coat which guards against the harsh sea winds.

The animals are thought to have originated from a cross between the native horses from the Shetland Isles and ponies imported by Norse settlers.

The ponies grazed the area of inland dunes near to the village of Rose.

The lure of a Cornish pasty!

Another successful management day was carried out on Bodmin Moor last winter. This time the Marsh Fritillary was the target species. Jess Tatton-Brown from BTCV (the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers) organised the day and brought with her 32 volunteers, mainly students, to clear encroaching gorse at Church Hay Down on Bodmin Moor. The Sustainable Development Fund has funded Jessica's work on the Moor. Joining her were members of the Cornwall Branch of BC, George Brew (Natural England advisor) and local naturalists.

In addition, the help of local landowners and commoners Steve and Richard Nankivell and their sons was very much appreciated. They removed a large amount of the cut gorse with tractor and trailer, which contributed



Members of BTCV posing for a picture and no doubt looking for a well-earned rest after clearance work at Church Hay Down, Bodmin Moor.

to the local Cub's Bonfire Night at St. Breward. They were interested to hear from Steve Hoskin and Paul Browning about the life cycle of the Marsh Fritillary and the demanding requirements of this species. Despite some short sharp showers volunteers remained in good spirits and all their hard work was rewarded with a delicious hot pasty.

To have so many volunteers was a major achievement and makes a real

difference to this colony of Marsh Fritillaries. This is an important colony on the moor and it has declined in the last 3 years and urgently needed gorse clearance. Natural England is working with the commoners to gently increase the cattle grazing.

Jessica has been working in conjunction with members of the Cornwall Fritillary Action Group (CFAG) on selected sites to improve the status of the Marsh and Pearl-bordered Fritillary. The Bodmin Moor ecosystem is one of the most important in Cornwall and is the source of the River Fowey, Camel and Inny. Improving the status of the Marsh Fritillary helps protect the lovely mires and wetlands, which are home to fascinating plants, such as, Butterwort and Sundew, rare invertebrates, varied bird life and much more! It is also very important that numerous different habitats that come under the heading of 'wetlands' remain wet and undamaged thereby ensuring the large amount of carbon locked into these habitats (such as the peat bogs etc) is not released into the atmosphere. These areas also absorb large amounts of carbon dioxide. The wetlands help to minimise the damaging affects of drought and excessive rain on the river systems. Looking after these habitats also protects the whole landscape with the very valuable bonus that this work requires traditional farming practices and provides excellent opportunities to work with local communities. The SW facing bracken-covered slopes that the Pearl-bordered Fritillary inhabits is another important habitat, which also is a very valuable carbon sump. As our chairman so well stated in the last Observer 'where have the politicians been for the last 30 years' – the importance of looking after our wildlife and their habitats is the key to a healthy planet.

Jessica has worked well at contributing to on-going projects with the local landowners. Further to this the Environment Agency, Natural England, North Cornwall District Council and BC (all of whom are members of CFAG) are working to develop a sustainable management plan for the fritillaries on Bodmin Moor. The officers from these agencies are doing a great job and members of the local branch that have been involved with the Moor are really grateful for the progress that has been made in the past few years and the involvement of the local landowners.

A big thank you to BTCV and the Sustainable Development Fund.

Sally Foster, April 2007.



The following pages contain a number of reports, chiefly from Roger Lane, our Migrant Officer and Leon Truscott who have, as usual, been out and about this spring to report early arrivals of the Clouded Yellow - or are they a resident species; you will have to be the judge!

Early Clouded Yellow Sightings for 2007 & Other Reports by Leon Truscott.

Sightings:

1. 21st February 2007 at Seaton (SX307541) - **Tony Aston** (AECA).
2. 28th March 2007 at Seaton Valley (SX303552). Chased off a Brimstone then flew south down the valley toward Seaton - **John Nicholls** and **Leon Truscott**.
3. 2nd April 2007 at Seaton (SX307541) - **Leon Truscott** and **John Beswetherick**.

Other information:

1. The Seaton site (SX307541) is a south-facing slope above the sea wall eastwards from Seaton.
2. This is the site where Angela Williams recorded a Clouded Yellow on 16th March 2004.
3. At the same site, I recorded large numbers in late 2006 (referring to the site as a 'colony'). From 26th October 2006 (three, including 1 x helice), numbers increased regularly to a maximum of 47 (including 4 helice) on 8th November 2006.
4. I visited the site regularly throughout November (and beyond). Numbers gradually dropped through November until the last (two) on 29th November 2006.

Updates as at 21st April 2007:

a) Clouded Yellows at Seaton:

1. 5th April 2007, at least 8
2. 6th & 7th April 2007, 10, including a pair in cop. on 7th.
3. 10th April 2007, 9 including another pair in cop.
4. 11th April 2007, 5
5. 12th April 2007, 9.
6. 18th April 2007, 4 (one possible helice). John Nicholls reports a possible helice also.
7. 20th April 2007, 2
8. 21st April 2007, 8

b) Other early species:

1. Dingy Skipper at the Clouded Yellow site at Seaton (SX3054) - two on 10th April 2007, three on 11th April 2007 & nine on 21st April.
2. Pearl-bordered Fritillary on 11th April 2007. Two seen on the Murrayton-Struddicks coast path. One, unusually at the eastern (Struddicks) end of the stretch of coast path, the other at the traditional Murrayton site.

Over...

3. Wall Brown. One on the coast path at Struddicks (SX2954) on 11th April 2007 - my first since finding two very early ones near Penlee Point on 16th March 2007.

Leon also writes:

'Also on 21st April, at least 8 Pearl-bordered Fritillaries at Murrayton and (at last!) 3 Green Hairstreaks along that path plus, back at the Seaton Clouded Yellow site, a very early Burnet Companion - being chased by a Dingy Skipper! A good day. Of course there are lots of early dates for moths this year. I was absolutely delighted with a Cream-spot Tiger, at Downterry yesterday (23rd April 2007), my first record for 5 years!'

Roger Lane has also had many early sightings including Red Admiral and Clouded Yellow migrations. May I recommend, if you have a computer and are 'on line', that you visit our discussion group at: <http://uk.groups.yahoo.com/group/cornwall-butterfly-conservation/> where Roger is a regular and most informative contributor both regarding early sightings and migrant activity? He is probably one of the foremost observers in the county regarding the recording and observation of all butterfly activity. He mentions 'sundry things' which reminds me of one of his reports of a very good moth record (the **Orange Underwing**). He sent the details to our Assistant County Moth Recorder, Tony James which is detailed on the following page. An extract from one of his numerous field days and sent in to the Cornwall Butterfly Conservation Discussion Group follows: ~ Ed.

*'Having gone up for May Day at Padstow, I decided to record Rock Dunes first and then visit Padstow 'later'. Butterflies being so intriguing, I eventually left for the 6 pm dance at Padstow! Oh yes, I visited Treskillings Downs, where I saw 10+ **Small Heaths** (my first), and then on to Breney Common, where I saw 4 **Small Heaths** - BUT NO FRITILLARIES.*

*Onward to Rock Dunes (basically 2 x 1Km. squares added together for simplicity). I was disappointed by the chill NE wind which was grounding many small butterflies, but I was pleased with the ones which braved it in the dune hollows! Not much to do in Rock's dune-land, but while there I not only saw c.15+ **Clouded Yellow** immigrants, heading due north, in migration mode, using the lee of the dunes to maintain that incredible speed! But every now and then, looking up from ground fauna, I saw at least 20+ **Red Admirals** on flowering (wild?) apple blossom and Blackthorn, These are rather unusual plants for Red Admirals, unless they were immigrants, which of course, they were. Every so often one or two flew straight overhead into the NE wind. Otherwise the approximate resident fauna was recorded as follows: 6 **Dingy Skippers**; (The Grizzled Skipper now 'extinct' here); 4 **Large Whites**; 6 **Green-veined Whites**; 10+ **Orange-Tips** (very low due to wind); 10+ **Small Coppers**; only 20+ **Brown Argus**, but 30+ **Common Blues**; 12+ **Holly Blues**; 5+ **Wall Browns**; 4 **Speckled Woods**; 15+ **Small Heaths** and assorted small day-flying moths including 6 **Speckled Yellows**; 1 **Mother Ship-ton**; 1 **Burnet Companion**; 4 **Cinnabar Moths**; 2 **Silver Y** moths and sundry*

*'things'. (Forgot one or two over-wintered e.g. 10+ **Peacocks** and 2+ **Small Tortoiseshells**). Nice to see all the little fellows again, but the Clouded Yellow immigration made my day! Last Red Admiral seen was still flying NE at 7.30 pm, Padstow !'*

~ Roger Lane 5th May 2007.

Roger also says that his earliest British brood for the Painted Lady was late July 2005 then 15th June 2006 and now the 4th May 2007! ~ Ed.

The following is an extract of an E-mail sent to Tony James - County Recorder for Moths regarding the **Orange Underwing moth**:

Orange Underwing Report - by Roger Lane

I am NOT a moth-er, other than day-flying moths, which of course these are. Yet until mid-March I had never even HEARD of the species. It was Les, from UK-Leps who happened to say he was going out to look for them, in Dorset. I deleted the E-mail, and made a mental note, with still no idea what they looked like.

On 26th March 2007 I was in a Cornish woodland, and counting the Peacocks and Commas 'nectaring' from a 'Pussy Willow', at ref: SX058569 (near Luxulyan), when I noted a smaller lepidoptera species amongst them and managed to briefly get my binoculars focused on it; the plaintive upper side being completely 'foreign' to me. When it flew, moments later it descended toward me, when the only colour seen was orange (undercarriage). I did not think it could be the same moth but saw dark, back again as it gained height. I went home that day with not a CLUE as to its identity, but for once it was positively the 'first in the book', fitting my observations exactly and since its unique day-time flight date. The only problem was possibly it being the Light Orange Underwing,



Orange Underwing, Dorset. Photo © Paul Harris by kind permission.

but we have no Aspen, nor is it recorded in Cornwall. Indeed there were only c.5 other records (Butterflies & Moths of Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, 1997, Frank Smith, page 223, c.5) - may be more since.

I saw the same, or another on same bush briefly, on 31st March 2007, thinking never to see the same again! My interests are entirely butterflies,

dragonflies and birds). On the 7th April 2007 I was at a local spot c.300 metres from my home, known as the Boscundle Stream at map ref: SX048528 (near St. Austell), looking for early damselflies. Like the few butterflies that day, the damsels were at ground level due to a stiff NE wind. But my attention was captured by a 'strange' moth which I put up from ground level, but saw enough to know it was yet another Orange Underwing, this time, pristine, perfect colour pattern and initially spread-eagled on the ground. There it was dark, apart from colour pattern, but in flight showed orange in abundance. I hopefully set my camera (since reading about it a week before, to clinch its identity), and indeed put up one more in that 1 Kilometre square (also from ground) and then a third in the next 1 Km. Square (SX0552). All had been spread-eagled to shelter from the wind, but each flew up to Silver Birch and other shrubs bordering the stream. The total was definitely THREE (on the way back I saw one, or perhaps two, in flight only).

Having learned by now that it was 'scarce', I returned next day (8th April 2007) in an attempt to take a photo or two, but saw just ONE specimen in flight (the NE wind having dropped, there was presumably no need for grounding/sheltering). No doubt there is a colony here, and each one I saw (3 at ground level) were pristine however; they were very 'quick-off-the-mark' and camera shy with it !

Summary: 1 x Orange Underwing, near Luxulyan, Ref: SX058569, date 26th March 2007, 1 x Orange Underwing 31st March 2007 (Although this NEED not have been a colony, there were old, ivy-clad Silver Birches nearby, and a new Silver Birch plantation within 200 metres). The sites are c.10 miles apart.

2nd Site: 3 x Orange Underwings, near St. Austell, Map ref: SX048528, date 7th April 2007. 1 x Orange Underwing, date 8th April 2007.

This second site is definitely a colony and extends over two 1 Kilometre squares, SX0452 and SX0552. The three sightings at ground level (due to wind) at 11am left not a shadow of doubt as to the identity. Total: c. FIVE (2 sites).

Roger Lane, 25th April 2007.

Observations of *Pyrausta cingulata* at Penhale Sands, April 2007

The tiny Pyralid moth *Pyrausta cingulata* (it does not have a common English name) is amongst the seven rather pretty species in this family that are on the British list. It is widespread but local in Cornwall, preferring coastal habitats where Wild Thyme (*Thymus polytrichus*) is found. It is double brooded occurring in May and June and then from July through August. It is diurnal, flying actively in warm sunshine about its food-plant and is very hard to spot. Towards evening, in cooler temperatures, the moth is much less active and can be found resting in its roosting position and at such times it is much easier to observe. During a visit to Penhale at the end of April 2007, many hundreds,

indeed perhaps thousands were seen across the dunes whereas in previous years the first generation was somewhat scattered and sparse. However this year, with the exceptional dry spring we have been experiencing, there seems



***Pyrausta cingulata*, Penhale Sands, 28th April**

2007. Photo © P. H. Boggis

to have been a population explosion of this rather small and rarely seen moth which having a wingspan of only 14 to 17mm is as hard to follow in flight as the Grizzled Skipper! According to Goater's *British Pyralid Moths* it is not known whether the larva of this moth has been reared in Britain. Certainly an Internet search yielded nothing. Goater in his Identification Guide suggests that the larvae should be found in June and again in the

autumn 'within a silken web down amongst the food-plant near ground level'. With the many hundreds seen at Penhale recently, it might be well worth looking amongst the Thyme in the next few weeks.

Phil Boggis, May 2007.



Cornwall Fritillary Action Group

Minutes of meeting held 22nd March 2007

NE (Natural England) – formerly English Nature, BC (Butterfly Conservation), BTCV (British Trust for Conservation Volunteers), EA (Environment Agency), NCDC (North Cornwall District Council)

Present: George Brew (NE), Justin Gillet (NE), Dave Hazelhurst (NE), Paddy Saunders, Morag McCracken (BC), Jess Tatton-Brown (BTCV), James Burke (EA), Sally Foster (BC Cornwall & Transect co-ordinator), Tim Dingle (NCDC)

Apologies: Wes Smyth (NE), Mark Beard (NE), Pete Burgess (Re-connecting the Culm Project), Phil Harris (BC Cornwall), Barry Ofield (BC Cornwall)

Heath Fritillary.

Research on site at Greenscoombe by Caroline Kelly & Betsy Vulliamy has shown that the reintroduced butterflies (caterpillars) mainly fed on cow wheat, not plantain as had appeared to be the previously preferred food plant. A student is writing a management report.

Marsh Fritillary.

Bodmin Moor Project: £6000 has been obtained to allow further work to be done to help identify the need for a project officer and therefore put a bid together for that purpose.

Morag McCracken showed distribution maps of the species (both Marsh & Pearl-bordered) that she has prepared. These indicated the **need to ensure all records of sightings on Bodmin Moor are submitted to the county recorder**. It was agreed that members of the group (and others) could help the process by doing (designated) site audits. Example sheets are available that were completed by Coralie Barrow.

Mid-Cornwall Moors Project: There has been a lot of grazing done, more animals having been obtained. There has also been some burning done. Need for monitoring to be done now.

BTCV volunteer group have done work on many sites, amounting to 36 days on Bodmin Moor, involving many people and so hitting their funding targets. More importantly, many sites are now looking in better condition than for several years (see PBF reports). They have now been successful in obtaining funding for another year.

Site Reports

Church Hay (part of Hamatethy Common stewardship agreement) had been 'scrubbing up' due to lack of grazing but is now a good habitat thanks to a special agreement with Natural England for more robust management, including winter grazing.

Wimelford (Draynes Valley) benefits from Natural England's Wildlife Enhancement Scheme (WES) agreement – and so is properly grazed (& burnt). Possible site visit. Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth seen.

Potential new Marsh Fritillary sites are at Pendrift and Davidstow which are under Stewardship agreements. Grazing by cattle rather than sheep is being encouraged.

All of this positive news is down to the work of Natural England in the more adaptable agreements that are being made and the hard work of Jess and the BTCV team. This effort should be recognised and advertised!

Re-connecting the Culm (Tabled report from Pete Burgess)

Several SSSI and even Marsh Fritillary site Higher Level Stewardship applica-

tions had failed. This is an example of the serious situation with the funding of this scheme that had looked so promising. There has been so much take-up of Entry Level Schemes by farmers, whereby they are paid for virtually no environmental benefit, that the funding available for Higher Level has been dramatically cut. Hopefully things will level out and more worthwhile schemes can get funding in the coming years. It illustrates the importance of the work being done by BTCV.

Pearl-bordered Fritillary.

BTCV report: Glades and rides cut on all sites. Bracken crushing trialled at Bunny's Hill (to reduce vigour of the bracken to allow violets to grow between) Various bits of press coverage have been obtained. The group congratulated Jess on the work that she has put in place.

Fellover Break: extra areas have been cleared by a contractor. Negotiations continue to encourage the owner to undertake grazing on the site.

South Penquite (part De Lank): BTCV opened up areas on the slopes which has encouraged the cattle to explore and open further areas. Dominic Firman is to be thanked for his co-operation and enthusiasm.

De Lank quarry: BTCV opened up a ride and cut out some of the old railway route. Despite the quarry owner's general co-operation, some dumping of boulders in sensitive areas has taken place.

Murrayton: Paddy Saunders asked about the possibility of doing some marking for monitoring purposes on this difficult site. This would require a license. Suggested that Paddy endeavours to get volunteers to help cover the length of cliff on a single count. National Trust offered to help with this. Some clearing work has been done on Mr Robertson's adjoining land.

National Trust land and area around Polruan, Polperro, and Rame Head: Matthew Oates (NT ecologist and national butterfly expert) had visited and it was felt that some of these areas are suitable for Pearl-bordered Fritillaries

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary.

Phil Harris has submitted a report of coastal colonies in west Cornwall.

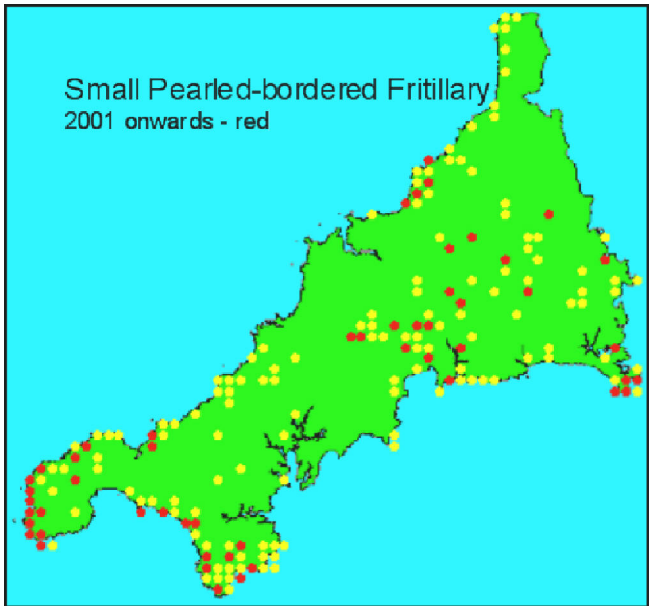
John Worth, County Recorder, has prepared maps of Pearl-bordered Fritillaries & Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary records, which the group were very pleased with. (Sally Foster to send to those who don't have). The maps are only as good as the records submitted! It was suggested that the Caradon Field & Natural History Club reports are checked for historic and current records.

Dates for your Diary:

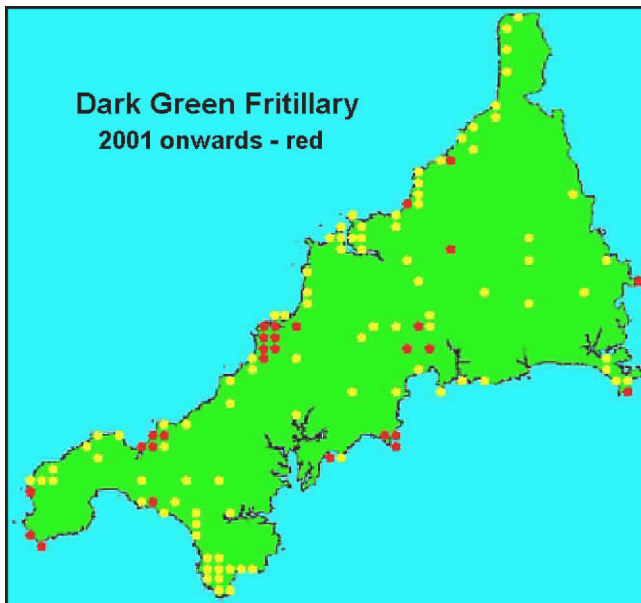


SAVE OUR BUTTERFLIES WEEK 21 – 29 JULY 2007.
NATIONAL MOTH NIGHT, SAT. 11th AUGUST - 9pm at Treilissick Gardens, nr. Truro. Hosted by Head Gardiner, Barry Champion. Please bring a torch, some warm clothing and a flask of coffee. Finish approx. 11.15pm. Organised by Cornwall Moth Group.
Further details: Phil Boggis ☎ 01726 66124

At last week's meeting of the Cornwall Fritillary Action Group (see the minutes reported on the previous page - Ed.), the distribution of the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary was discussed again. Awhile back I sent out a distribution map prepared by John Worth (Recorder for Cornwall Butterfly Conservation). The idea is for us all to make a sustained effort to get an accurate picture of the distribution of this butterfly along with the Dark Green Fritillary. The Group would be most grateful if everyone would



look at the map and make sure records are going to John from their area or wherever they go recording. John will then be able to give us an up to date picture. Of course he would be appreciative of all butterfly records. He sends them on to BC and ERCCIS (Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of

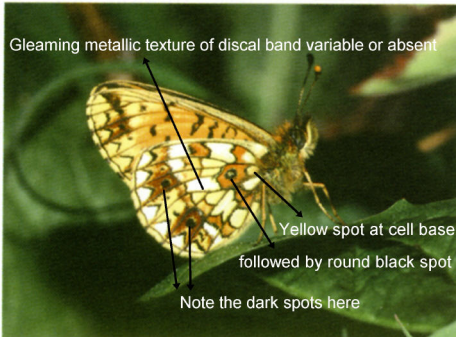


Scilly). Cornwall is a very important stronghold for the Small Pearl-bordered and is a candidate for Priority BAP status. Coastal sites are extremely important nationally. However, inland sites are also very important from a local perspective and appear to be quite scarce and have suffered more than coastal sites. Please could you pass on this request (from the Cornwall Fritillary Action Group) to any other contacts within your organisation that are out in the field and likely to see these important species.

Many thanks ~ Sally Foster.

Separating the Pearl and the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, underside.



Pearl-bordered Fritillary, underside.



Pictures taken from 'A Cornwall Butterfly Atlas' © L. Slaughter by kind permission.

For some the subject of this article may be familiar territory, but perhaps for others, not so familiar. The two butterflies are much the same on the uppers. Perhaps the Pearl-bordered Fritillary gives the impression of being lighter in colour - more 'ginger' than the Small Pearl-bordered and it is said that it generally flies at knee height rather than waist height. The upper-side of the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary has the outer black wedge-shaped marks more joined towards the edge.

A description of the two is taken from Butterfly Conservation's Headquarters website:

Pearl-bordered Fritillary

'Wingspan 44 - 47mm. The Pearl-bordered Fritillary is a tawny brown butterfly with black veins and numerous black spots which get smaller towards the edge of the wings. The underwings are an orange and yellow mosaic with seven silver 'pearls' along the margin and two nearer the body.'

It is very similar to the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary which has 6 or 7 silver 'pearls' near the body and more contrasting markings. The Pearl-bordered Fritillary is about the same size as the Small White butterfly.'

Small Pearl-Bordered Fritillary

'Wingspan 41 - 44mm. The Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary is a tawny brown butterfly with black vein's, numerous black spots, and a dark band around the margins. The undersides are an orange and yellow mosaic with seven silver 'pearls' along the margin and six or seven 'pearls' near the body.'

It is very similar to the Pearl-bordered Fritillary, which has only two 'pearls' near the body and less contrasting markings.

The Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary is about the same size as a Small White butterfly.'

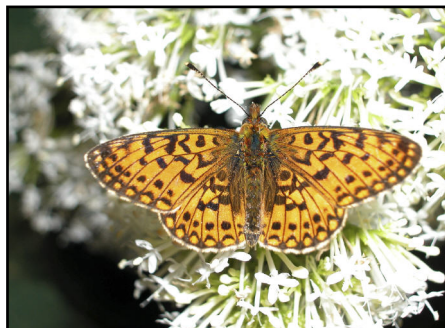
over...

The problem for me has been the fact that the **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary underside sometimes does not exhibit the gleaming metallic texture in the discal band. It can be variable or sometimes absent.** (*Butterflies of Britain and Europe* by L. G. Higgins and N. D. Riley, pages 112 and 113). Hence this normally bright silver central band could look like the Pearl-bordered Fritillary which has the discal band yellow apart from the central metallic spot. **Perhaps the best guide is the Pearl-bordered Fritillary has the basal spot always bright silver - but the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary has a yellow basal mark.** (See photos on previous page).

I'm sure Phil Harris won't mind me mentioning the fact that after a visit to Bunny's Hill early in May, he went over to Treslea, N.E. of Bunny's Hill where Pearl-bordered Fritillaries have been seen in the past. He observed what looked



Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Note how the chevrons on the outer border do not join to the edge hence giving a less 'dense' appearance.
Photo © P. H Boggis



The Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary clearly shows the black chevron marks joining to the edge forming a black, 'denser' margin. Photo © P. H. Boggis

like Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, but wasn't quite sure so he intended to go back the next week with a net to make certain, as mentioned in his Chairman's Report.

~ Phil Boggis, 8th May 2007.

What is a Lek? - A Question from the Editor.

Answer:

A lek is a gathering of males, of certain animal species, for the purposes of a competitive mating display.

The term derives from the Swedish lek, a noun which typically denotes pleasurable and less rule-bound games and activities ("play", as by children). Specifically, the etymology of the word "lek" is from 1871 and means to engage in courtship displays (of certain animals); probably from the Swedish leka "to play". ~ Taken from Wikipedia definitions.

What has this to do with lepidoptera? Well it is known that male Ghost Moths (one pictured opposite, the female is yellow marked with orange), are often seen hovering over the same patch of ground, sometimes in numbers, in

order to attract a mate. I believe other moths may do the same and wondered whether the Scarlet Tiger exhibited this trait. This is because for several years now, a certain relatively small area on Penhale Sands has been favoured by quite a few of this species - perhaps up to 15 were present at one time. Was it just because the food plant was nearby or do these moths use it as a 'lek'? - An interesting question.

Ghost Moth, male. Littleborough, Lancashire. Photo © Ian Kimber by kind permission.



Better for Butterflies



**GARDEN OPEN
PENHOLT BARN
HOUSE**

(ON THE MILLOOK RD FROM WIDMOUTH BAY)

SUNDAY 3RD JUNE

10 AM - 5 PM

Tim and Sandy Dingle will be opening their garden and valley walk on behalf of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation. There should be a good variety of butterflies in the valley at this time.

Entrance £2.50

Cream Teas available

There is just enough room to squeeze in here, Tim & Sandy Dingle's 'Garden Open' Day at their home, Penholt Barn House. I hope this copy of Butterfly Observer reaches some of you in time for this event which is in aid of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation. The Observer's publication has been brought forward a week, hopefully to give enough notice for some to pop along.
~Ed.

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

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