

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION
Cumbria Branch

Newsletter No. 26
Spring 2013

**Butterfly
Conservation**

DEDICATED TO SAVING WILD BUTTERFLIES
And MOTHS IN THEIR NATURAL HABITATS

13001

Message from
..... our Branch Chairman

Welcome to what has to be a better year for butterflies and moths! However the dismal weather did not stop the superb habitat restoration work that took place in 2012. Volunteer work parties and contractors have been busy coppicing and helping to create herb rich woodland clearings and grasslands to support our butterfly and moth populations. Our winter work programme will be about finished by the time you read this although we do have some bracken bashing mingled in with our summer field trips and we would be delighted if you could come on some of our summer outings which are better than ever in 2013.

Next winter's work programme will be in our Autumn newsletter.

The Morecambe Bay and South Lakes limestones are particularly blessed with nationally scarce populations of High Brown and Pearl Bordered Fritillaries and are also home to some of the UK's best sites for Duke of Burgundy, Northern Brown Argus, Dingy Skipper, Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary, Grayling, Wall, Large Heath and Scotch Argus. Other parts of Cumbria host equally rare and beautiful butterflies such as the Small Blue, Mountain Ringlet and Marsh Fritillary. These last three mentioned are all covered by articles in this newsletter and even better news --- all the above species can be seen if you attend our Summer Field Trips details of which also follow in this newsletter and can also be found on our website.

Indeed all our 40 species of butterflies feature on our updated website Butterfly Conservation Cumbria – click on 'species.'

Cumbria is also home to many species of beautiful moths and with an ever growing interest in moths you will notice that our summer programme now includes more moth events including at our AGM at Haybridge. Please make a note in your diary to attend this event if you can – it's a wonderful place. Moth trapping will be done overnight so we start our AGM by opening the traps to see what this superb Rusland Valley location brings us. The brief AGM will be followed by a look at our Branch members' survey giving you the opportunity to discuss your views on the future of Butterfly Conservation in Cumbria. Finally after lunch (bring your own please) we will walk around this unique nature reserve and look out for not only butterflies such as Large Heath but Flycatchers, Honey Buzzards and we always see snakes under the snake traps as well.

Our moth events will be greatly assisted by the recent purchase of a Branch moth trap and generator – much better than always trying to borrow and/or rely on batteries. Some of our summer events you will notice are joint with other organisations which is a good way of strengthening our already good relations with other conservation groups.

Finally, thank you for your feedback on how we could respond to Butterfly Conservation's 2020 vision document – in particular how Cumbria Branch can

build a larger and involved membership. Your committee is determined to achieve this and to greatly assist with this challenge we have included with this newsletter a separate Cumbria Branch 2020 Vision Members' Survey – please complete this survey if you possibly can and return it in the pre-addressed envelope provided. A good return would make a huge difference to how we can plan together for a future that enables us to do more to help look after and enjoy Cumbria's wonderful butterfly and moth heritage.

Best Wishes,

Chris Winnick

The Annual General Meeting

of the Cumbria Branch of Butterfly Conservation will be held at Haybridge Nature Reserve at 11 o'clock on 12th May 2013.

Before the AGM there will be an inspection of moth traps at 10 o'clock to see which moths arrived overnight (and can we add to the site's list of well over 100 species?). Come and see!

Please bring your own packed lunch, and be appropriately shod if joining the guided butterfly walk on the Reserve's mosses or woodlands from around 1 o'clock.

Directions: Turn right off the A590 just west of Haverthwaite, sign-posted Bouth. In Bouth, pass the White Hart and continue north towards Oxen Park. Where the minor road turns sharp left, take the right turn (which is in fact straight on) onto an even more minor road signed Low Hay Bridge. About a mile along that road you will see the car park on the left and Reserve buildings ahead. (Grid ref SD337876)

Contact: Sarah Bradley, 015395 52340

AGENDA

1. Introduction & apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last AGM (printed in autumn 2012 newsletter)
3. Matters arising
4. Branch Chairman's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Appointment of Officers
7. Any other business

FIELD TRIPS 2013

Sunday 12 May - Hay Bridge Nature Reserve, 11.00 hours

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Butterfly Conservation's Cumbria Branch, Preceded at 10.00 hours by opening the moth traps from the previous night

and followed by a guided walk on these lovely mosses to see Large Heath, birds and an almost 100% guarantee of seeing snakes - see above details.
Directions – see above. **Contact:** Sarah Bradley, 015395 52340.

Sunday 19 May – Butterflies in the Witherslack Area, 1100 hours

A walk through some of the sites where we have been working during the winter months, with the prospect of seeing Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Brimstone butterflies, also the scarce micro-moth *Anania funebris*.

Directions: Turn off A590 towards Witherslack, pass the Derby Arms and continue through the village to Witherslack Hall. Turn right in front of the Hall main gates onto a rough track (The Kennels) to park at grid ref: SD436859

Contact: Robin Eddleston, 015395 32217

Wednesday 22 May – Butterflies at Township Plantation, 11.00 hours

(Joint event with Arnside Natural History Society)

A visit to this very special place hopefully to see Duke of Burgundy, Pearl Bordered Fritillary and maybe *Anania funebris*.

Directions: From Gilpin Bridge on the A590 take the A5074 then 2nd left into The Howe village. Turn left in the centre at the top of the hill, then bear right on a bumpy track. Park at the first clearing in the wood. (Grid ref: SD453884)

Contact: Steve Doyle, 01228 544059

Saturday 25 May – Finglandrigg NNR, 1100 hours

Another chance to see the Marsh Fritillary, hopefully thriving again, at this wonderful site. Bring appropriate clothing, lunch and **Wellingtons**.

Directions: Take B5307 west from Carlisle and pass through Thurstonfield and Kirkbampton. After about a mile, note large Haverlands car park sign and park in the large car park on left. (Grid ref: NY283572)

Contact: Steve Doyle, 01228 544059

Sunday 26 May – Butterflies at Workington Wind Farm, 1100 hours

Target Small Blue and lots more at this super site. Should also see Wall Brown. Afterwards we can look at other sites in the area as well as some of the most interesting and diverse flora there.

Directions: In Workington get to the north side of the River Derwent. Immediately on the north side of the bridge you are at a roundabout so take the exit leading to the Port of Workington. If you come over the bridge it is the second exit, if you come under the bridge it's the first exit. Pass over the railway line and take the first right after 150 metres. Car park at the end of the surfaced track just before the steel barriers. (Grid Ref: NX995303)

Contact: Steve Doyle, 01228 544059

Friday and Saturday 31 May / 1 June – Moth trapping at CWT's Plumgarths gardens. Friday evening from 2145 hours onwards and Saturday morning from around 0830 hours.

(Joint event with Cumbria Wildlife Trust.)

Moth enthusiasts from both organisations will be running light traps around the gardens on Friday evening hoping to attract many species of attractive and interesting moths. We shall see and identify moths as they arrive, then on Saturday morning the traps will be opened to examine the night's catch prior

to the moths' release. Feel free to attend one or both events, and for the evening session please wear warm outdoor clothing and bring a torch.

Directions: The venue is the CWT HQ, Plumgarths, Kendal LA8 8 LX (Grid ref: SD494947). Around 300 metres on the right along the Crook, Hawkshead via Ferry road from Plumgarths roundabout.

Contact: Event could be cancelled if weather very wet &/or windy. If in doubt contact Martin Tordoff 01539 735935 or 07981 348148. Booking in advance required by phoning Jamie Normington on 01539 816300.

Friday night and Saturday 14/15 June- Bioblitz at Finglandrigg

For more details of this epic event, see the full article printed in this newsletter

Monday 17 June – Township Plantation, 1000 hours

Bracken-bashing – not really a field trip, more of a work party, but we usually see some butterflies too! Please bring along an old walking stick or similar implement for bashing.

Directions: As 22 May. **Contact:** Martin Tordoff, 01539 735935

Monday 24 June – Linsty Hall Wood, nr Ickenthwaite, Rusland, 1000 hours

Bracken-bashing – again, more of a work party, with added butterfly opportunities. Please bring along an old walking stick or similar implement for bashing.

Directions: As 14 July. **Contact:** Chris Winnick: 01539 728254

Saturday 6 July – Mountain Ringlets, Hartsop Dodd, 10.30 hours

(Joint event with Hartsop Village Society)

A chance to see this recently discovered Mountain Ringlet colony, starting from Kirkstone Pass car park (Grid ref: NY400080) at 1030 hours, with a walk over Caudale Moor to Hartsop Dodd (around 3 miles each way with combined total ascent of approx. 600 metres). Will be subject to cancellation if weather unfavourable. Leaders: Martin Tordoff and Sarah Bradley.

Contact if weather at all doubtful: Martin Tordoff 01539 735935.

Sunday 7 July – Mountain Ringlets, Haweswater, 10.30 hours

(Joint event with Cumbria Wildlife Trust)

This year's Mountain Ringlet walk will start from Haweswater Head car park (Grid ref: NY468107) at 1030 hours, with a walk up to Kidsty Pike / High Raise (around 4 miles each way with approx. 650 metres of ascent) to see Lakeland's possibly most thriving colony of this butterfly. Will be subject to cancellation if weather unfavourable. Leaders: Martin Tordoff and John Dunbavin.

Contact if weather at all doubtful: Martin Tordoff 01539 735935.

Monday 8 July – Butterflies at Witherslack Woods & Howe Ridding, 1400 hours (Joint event with Arnside Natural History Society)

A walk through these magnificent woodlands which are being managed for butterflies and wood fuel products. We should see High Brown and Dark Green Fritillaries – maybe just a bit early for Silver Washed but possibly and there will be other species such as Purple Hairstreak to look out for.

Directions: Turn off A590 towards Witherslack, pass the Derby Arms and continue through the village, pass Witherslack Hall gates, then a further mile to roadside parking area at grid ref: SD430870.

Contact: Chris Winnick, 01539 728254

Sunday 14 July – Butterflies at Linsty Hall Wood, near Ickenthaite, Rusland, 11.00 hours

Fritillary butterflies and other species to discover at this relatively new site.

Directions: At Haverthwaite crossroads on the A590 take the road (to right if westbound) signposted Bouth. Shortly, at a T-junction turn right, then left fork soon after and head for Rusland village. At Rusland Cross (about 3 miles) the road bears sharp left (ignore minor turning on right to Crosslands), then shortly afterwards bear sharp right by Rusland Hall. At a T-junction facing church turn left. After less than half a mile keep left, ignoring the two right turns to Satterthwaite, but soon after look for the sharp right turn uphill through woods to Ickenthaite. After less than a mile park on open grassland on left, at grid ref: SD326897.

Contact: Chris Winnick 01539 728254

Monday 15 July – Moths at Latterbarrow, 21.45 hours till late

(Joint event with Cumbria Wildlife Trust)

Using light traps we'll see what we can add to the list of almost 100 moth species on this wonderful limestone grassland and woodland site. Please wear warm outdoor clothing and bring a torch.

Directions: From A590 take minor road towards Witherslack for 100 metres, turn left at the Derby Arms and park about 300 metres along that dead end road, Grid Ref. SD440828

Contact if weather doubtful contact Martin Tordoff 07981 348148

Friday 26 July – Moths at Burns Beck Moss, 2130 hours till late

(Joint event with Cumbria Wildlife Trust)

An opportunity to see some of the moths on this upland site of raised mires and bogs. A series of light traps will be set around the site, and we hope to add to the list of over 125 moth species already recorded there. Please bring a torch and wear warm outdoor clothing and sturdy footwear - Wellingtons suggested if following recent rain.

Directions: Burns Beck Moss is located 5.5 miles east of Kendal. Access is most easily gained from the A684 Sedbergh road. From Jct 37 of the M6 head towards Sedbergh and turn right in 0.4 miles. Follow this road for 2.8 miles (passing Killington Reservoir) to reach a quarry and large parking area on left of road at grid ref: SD596880.

Contact: if weather at all doubtful, contact Martin Tordoff, 01539 735935

Monday 29 July – Butterflies at Barrow-in-Furness Slag Banks, 1330 hours at the Ormsgill site or 1300 hours at Grange-over-Sands Berners car park. (Joint event with Grange Natural History Society)

This is an excellent site for Grayling but large numbers of Common Blues and Gatekeepers were also seen on our visit two years ago.

Directions: From Lindal in Furness follow A590 through three roundabouts towards Barrow. Pass industrial buildings on both sides in 40-mph limit. Just

after passing the left sign to Ormsgill note the two reclaimed slag banks on the right. There is a red sandstone wall on the right, situated on a gentle left hand bend. Turn right to the parking area before the start of the wall. (Grid ref: SD192712) Bring appropriate clothing, lunch and stout footwear.

Contact: Martin Chadwick, 015395 32553

Sunday 11 August – Butterflies at Smardale Gill, 1030 hours

(Joint event with Cumbria Wildlife Trust)

Target Scotch Argus at this great site.

Directions: At 0.5 miles south of Kirkby Stephen station turn off A685 (Ravenstonedale to Kirkby Stephen road) by a small tree plantation onto a minor road signposted Smardale. Straight on, cross railway and turn left after about 2km. Ignore sign for Smardale Hall, bear right and cross disused railway followed by immediate left turn and left again into car park marked Cumbria Wildlife Trust. (Grid ref: NY738083)

Contact: Peter Boardman, 01768 372063

Wednesday 14 August - Moths and other nightlife at The Footprint, St Catherine's, Windermere, from 2000 hours

A National Trust Nightlife event with assistance from Butterfly Conservation Cumbria Branch. Moth traps will run from 2000 hours until late. A good venue with seating, refreshments and shelter if wet!

Directions: Take the A592 Kirkstone Pass road from the mini-roundabout just north of Windermere, after 300 metres turn right through stone gateposts, and up long drive to the Footprint, grid ref: SD409995

Contact: Sarah Bradley, 015395 52340 or Martin Tordoff 01539 735935

This should be our best ever summer of Field Trips so fingers crossed for some decent weather.

Graham Jones and the Morecambe Bay Task Force.

I joined the Morecambe Bay Limestones Project team as the Butterfly Task Force Project Officer in July of last year. As the job title suggests, my job focuses particularly on the recruitment and coordination of volunteers, and work is split between habitat management work parties through the autumn and winter, and surveying during the spring and summer. This winter we have held regular Wednesday task force work parties at Yewbarrow and Witherslack and a herculean effort has been performed by all those who have attended, resulting in a large area of scrub clearance and ride widening and creation at both sites. Let's hope the butterflies like it too.

Work parties for this season will come to end around the middle of March, but are planned to re-start again this autumn. As well as holding work parties mid-week I would also be happy to organise weekend dates if there was sufficient interest.

This spring will see the start of an exciting new survey that will attempt to map the distribution of the threatened day flying moth, *Anania funebris*, within the Morecambe Bay area. Training will be provided for all those interested in

taking part, and all the survey will entail is a few hours walk in some very beautiful woodland while the sun is shining! Volunteer surveys are also planned this year for both Pearl-bordered and High-Brown Fritillary as we attempt to get more of an idea of distribution and abundance away from transect sites, as well as seeing what impact recent management work may have had.

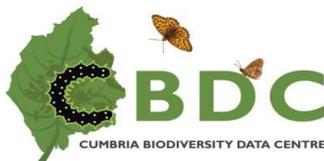
As well as working for Butterfly Conservation, I am also the Lancashire County Recorder for the macro-moths, and have been involved with the conservation of Netted Carpet in the Lake District since 2000. Despite the name the Butterfly Task Force project is also aimed at encouraging an interest in moths and moths recording, and several moth trap events will be hosted over the summer. Details of which will be advertised on the Cumbria branch website.

If you would like to join the task force, either by taking part in any of the planned surveys over the spring and summer, or if you would like to sign up for the winter work parties, please get in touch. Similarly, if you know of anywhere within the Morecambe Bay area that would be suitable for a moth event, I'd be very keen to hear from you.

Graham Jones

gjones@butterfly-conservation.org

07583 209231



YOUR LOCAL RECORDS CENTRE AND BUTTERFLY RECORDING

CUMBRIA BIODIVERSITY DATA CENTRE - Who we are and what we do?

Hosted by Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Trust in Carlisle and managed by Teresa Frost (also Lepidoptera County Co-ordinator for Butterfly Conservation), Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre (CBDC) are missioned with bringing together and making available; information on Cumbria's natural history, wildlife sites and habitats for education, research, and decision making. Important aspects within the role of CBDC are to also promote and encourage local recording, and provide technical data management expertise. The vast majority of the 700000+ wildlife records managed by CBDC have been collected by volunteers spanning the past 200 years, and Tullie House Museum itself has been keeping biological records for over 100 years. Known to be a popular and well recorded group, Butterfly records makeup a significant chunk of the county database, and due to their well-known indicative qualities (through sensitivity to habitat and climate change), the butterflies records collection is regarded as one of the most important wildlife datasets in the county. It is therefore important that this dataset continues to provide up to date knowledge of the ever changing status of butterfly species distributions and populations if we are to be in a good position to help

conserve them. We would like to encourage your long-standing, continued support of providing records for the county, and for those less familiar with casual recording, the following is a brief introduction.

YOUR BUTTERFLY SIGHTINGS – What to report and how to report it?

We are well aware that many readers are already seasoned and dedicated UKBMS weekly transect walkers, hardwired with the recording and reporting procedures required therein. But what about those brief, rapid bursts of the Mother Shipton you see on a count? What about all those other, non-transect, calm sunny days (yeah, right!) when the hedgerows are a sea of basking Gatekeepers, and the hawthorn leaves turn out to be perching Green Hairstreaks? Of course, there are many encounters with Lepidoptera off transects, and all are valuable to conservation. So how can these non-transect sightings be recorded, who should the records be reported to, and what happens to them? Here are a few handy tips.....

What information should go into a record?

There are only four essential components of a useful casual Lepidoptera record;

- DATE
- OBSERVER/S NAME,
- GRID REFERENCE (ideally 6 figures+, e.g. NY 473762)
- SPECIES NAME (common or scientific names are acceptable).

There are also many additional features that will enhance the value of your record, which include; location name and description, and abundance information (e.g. number of adults, males, females, copulating pairs, ovipositing females, pupae, larvae or eggs seen). You could even add comments about weather conditions and nectar sources used. Inaccuracies as a result of human errors in data handling and misidentifications will always be part and parcel of biological recording and this is why every record must be carefully validated and verified by experts. However, these can be minimised by careful use of I.D. guides and a basic understanding of a butterfly's ecology and distribution (viewable on the NBN gateway). For example, Dark Green Fritillaries and High Brown Fritillaries are very similarly patterned and thus very difficult to distinguish on the wing but this does not mean the two species should be counted as one and then halved to provide a figure for each. The species are very unlikely to be equally abundant on a site. Instead, where you are uncertain, a figure for Dark Green /High Brown Fritillary should be used, and a further investigation by an expert can be prompted. High quality close-up photographs are often an excellent method for keeping evidence of your less likely butterfly and moth encounters, although there are a number of notable exceptions where the wing patterns of certain moths are not species diagnostic.

What is worth recording?

We are sometimes asked whether it's worth recording every sighting of every common species. For example, 'do you want all my Hebrew Character Moth

records every year?' Well, we may be greedy and understand it's virtually impossible to record all Lepidoptera seen, but yes, we'd like as many sightings as possible reported, no matter how common the species. This is certainly more practicable with moths, where recorders have their notepad to hand, readily documenting a whole night's catch. This provides the richest, highest quality data, informing publications such as; 'the state of Britain's larger moths 2013'. Simply, the more data available, the more we will know nationally about how our Lepidoptera are changing (e.g. in abundance, distribution, and phenology).

How should you store the data?

At CBDC we understand recorders have their own systems for writing / typing up sightings or entering them into a database and we would not discourage any one of these methods. Many of you will already be aware of casual recording form templates issued by Butterfly Conservation that we would recommend the use of. As long as the data is legible and complete in terms of the essential components, it will always be gratefully received and entered into the county database. However, it is suggested that a Microsoft excel spreadsheet can be one of the easiest ways to keep and view your own records, and simple to send in via email. Additionally, there is a new way of inputting and submitted your data; via RODIS (Record Online Data Input System) computer software which provides a simple alternative to storing and easily sending data to CBDC, as well as additionally mapping your own records. Please contact us for more information about how to use this method.

Where and how should you send the records?

With the exception of UKBMS transect records, which go directly to BC, all others records should go directly to CBDC at Tullie House, Carlisle. It is important that casual records **do not** go to BC in the first instance, as they will be immediately returned to Tullie house for processing. **The same applies to all moth records.** It is sufficient to send all these directly to CBDC and they will reach the National Moth Recording Scheme (NMRS). Records can be received in the following ways;

- **Via email:** recordingofficer@cbdc.org.uk
- **Via RODIS:** <http://cbdc.rodin.co.uk/rodin.aspx>
- **By post or in person:** CBDC, Tullie House Museum & Art Gallery, Castle Street, Carlisle, Cumbria, CA3 8TP
- **Any enquires are also welcome by phone:** 01228618717

Other wildlife records

Lepidoptera may be one of your stronger wildlife watching interests, but there will always be times when your luck is in and you come across other spectacular nature on your outdoor pursuits. We would like to encourage you to submit a record of that Weasel you spotted darting across the woodland path or that striking Waxcap fungus you came across amongst the meadow

floor. All we ask for are those four essential record components and anything more you can muster, received by the same means as above.

What happens after CBDC receives your records?

All the records must first be validated before entering the database. This is a means of ensuring each record has the essential functional components, is geographically in the right area (i.e. if a Small Blue Butterfly, not in the middle of the Irish Sea!) and is realistically dated. All records must then be verified by the Cumbria Branch Committee nominated County Verifier before being sent to, and accepted by Butterfly Conservation on an annual basis. Copies of all records are also kept by CBDC at Tullie House, where they contribute to the overall picture of wildlife in the county, and are being used to inform conservation management, protect vulnerable populations and improve decision making.

A final note.....

Just a reminder that CBDC are always willing to help you achieve your recording aspirations, and we are pleased to talk about Lepidoptera and other wildlife recording with you.

If there are any personal or group recording projects you are looking to begin (e.g. improving our distributional knowledge of an under recorded Moth), we would be enthusiastic to assist and advise. Please keep up the exceptional work and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Gary Hedges, Biological Records Officer, CBDC
www.cbdc.org.uk



**Finglanddrigg 24hour Bioblitz –
Friday 15th June 7pm – Saturday 16th June 7pm**

After the success of last years Watchtree Nature Reserve 24hr Bioblitz, where over 600 species were recorded by nature enthusiasts of all abilities and experience in far from ideal weather conditions; the Solway Wetlands Partnership, Natural England, Tullie House Museum, and CBDC are joining forces to run a 24hr Bioblitz at Finglanddrigg National Nature Reserve near Kirkbampton. Kicking off at 7pm, a series of activities starts on the Friday evening and continues through Saturday to identify bats, birds, insects, mammals and wildflowers on the site. Learn how to find, identify and record wildlife with guided walks, displays, demonstrations and activities. This is a great chance for all naturalists to come together to celebrate and enjoy recording wildlife in an impressive mosaic of habitats, supporting a diverse range species, many of which are uncommon. In terms of the Butterfly

highlights, Finglandrigg should be boasting Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, Ringlets and the rare, recently reintroduced Marsh Fritillary on the wing during the event (weather permitting!). It will most likely prove too early for the Purple Hairstreak but the day flying moths such as Forester, adequately make up for this in my view!

Further details and a programme will appear soon on our webpage: <http://www.cbdc.org.uk/> so please watch this space! If you would like to help out with recording or activities on the day, please contact Naomi Hewitt, Education Officer at the Solway Wetlands Landscape Partnership on 016973 33055 or at naomi.hewitt@allderdale.gov.uk.

Gary Hedges, Biological Records Officer, CBDC www.cbdc.org.uk

Butterfly Conservation projects in Cumbria

As you are no doubt aware, 1st April 2012 marked the end of Butterfly Conservation's four year GrantScape project. This project's aim was to initiate or reinstate management at twenty-seven extant or potential High Brown Fritillary sites. This was successfully done and surveys revealed that high brown fritillary was found in almost 30% of clearings and rides managed during the project. In fact 49% of work areas were found to contain at least one UK BAP-listed species, showing that other key butterflies and moths had also benefited. Naturally there were concerns as to whether coppicing activity could be sustained when the funding period expired, so accordingly Butterfly Conservation submitted a series of funding bids in order to ensure that at least some follow-up work was possible.

In the event, all submitted bids were received favourably. Heritage Lottery Fund provided roughly £49000 to form a Butterfly Task Force of volunteers charged with practical management, surveys and monitoring; the Co-op provided a similar sum to manage sites for Pearl-bordered Fritillary and to fund a captive breeding and reintroduction project. Graham Jones, macro-moth recorder for Lancashire and formerly of Lancashire Wildlife Trust was recruited to deliver these components of our work.

A bid to the landfill tax distribution arm of waste management company SITA was also successful; the £124000 received will be spent on managing a series of extant and potential Pearl-bordered Fritillary sites and also pays for one day per week staff time for both Martin Wain and myself. We share the task of contractor management in much the same way as was done under GrantScape.

Our final avenue of funding derives from Morecambe Bay Nature Improvement area. The NIA is one of twelve regions to qualify for funding on the basis of supporting exceptional biodiversity. Within our NIA, there are three advisory posts: one member of staff, working for Cumbria Wildlife Trust, advises on grasslands; another advisor deals with wetlands and is employed by the RSPB. The third advisor provides advice on woodlands, promotes

volunteering activities, facilitates woodfuel production and encourages uptake of woodland grants by landowners. Given that this part-time advisory post is filled by none other than our own Martin Wain, it goes without saying that the bulk of the advisory work pertains to woodlands best-able to support key Lepidoptera.

Although this may sound complicated, the reality is that it's actually much worse than that. And I should know – at the end of the day it's me that has to unravel all the complexities! Only joking, my two staff are both tremendous, as indeed are the branch members who play such a vital role in all aspects of our work.

Dave Wainwright.

Your lasting legacy

Have you ever considered leaving a gift to Butterfly Conservation in your Will? An increasing number of members and friends are choosing to support Butterfly Conservation in this way. All gifts, whatever size, are welcome and make a crucial and lasting contribution to the conservation of butterflies and moths. Legacy gifts account for over one third of our voluntary income and make a real difference to the work we can undertake both 'on the ground' and by way of expertise we can harness.

So as well as leaving gifts to loved ones in your Will please consider a little something towards the valuable work done by Butterfly Conservation. In the years to come it really will help to ensure butterflies and moths survive when there are many other pressures on our income streams.

For more information about leaving a gift to Butterfly Conservation and sharing your love of butterflies and moths with future generations please contact Helen Corrigan on 01273 453313 or hcorrigan@butterfly-conservation.org or write to her at Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5QP.

Thanks for your support,

Helen Corrigan
Senior Fundraising Officer

MOUNTAIN RINGLETS – HELP!

Readers may recall that 2012 didn't have the best of summers in living memory, and as a result there were very few suitable days for Mountain Ringlet hunting – in fact there were only a handful of opportunities to see them in the species' short flight season. Both of our branch's advertised guided

walks to see these butterflies on High Raise (Haweswater) had to be cancelled due to adverse weather, so we didn't gain any new converts there. Let's hope that the butterfly's 2013 season makes up for that, with two months of unbroken warm sunny weather. Dream on.

For 2013 we plan to renew our appeal for help in either dedicated searches for these elusive butterflies or simply reporting any casual sightings in the fells. Any information is valuable, but especially so if from sites where there are no recent records. Details of early- and late-season sightings too would be particularly welcome (say anything outside the range of around 10 June to 21 July). Even nil returns are valuable to us, especially if you feel you've given a site a thorough going-over. As usual, we'll be posting on the branch website a list of target 1km squares or part-squares we'd like help in surveying. Some of these are sites of historic records but where they've apparently been absent more recently; others are areas where the habitat looks suitable (at least to human eyes – the butterflies may have other ideas!), but where the species has never been recorded. Who knows, your perseverance may pay off, with sightings in hitherto unoccupied squares – sorry no prizes for such finds, just enormous satisfaction in knowing you've helped add a bit more to our understanding of Cumbria's Mountain Ringlet populations and their whereabouts.

If you feel you may be able to help, please have a look at the branch website (link below), where by late May we'll post an updated list of target search areas, along with surveyors' instruction notes and record forms. Thanks in advance and the best of luck to anyone who can help us in this fascinating quest!

Martin Tordoff, Steve Clarke (Butterfly Conservation, Cumbria Branch)

http://www.cumbria-butterflies.org.uk/surveys/mountain_ringlet_surveyors_notes_2013.pdf

MOTH JOTTINGS – MAINLY FROM SOUTH CUMBRIA

In 2012, my seventh year of garden moth recording in semi-urban Kendal I recorded 4,422 moths of 236 species – very close indeed to 2011's 4,425 moths of 242 species, but a far cry from 2010's 8,134 of 272 species. All three years had broadly similar recording effort, so 2012 wasn't alone in producing a poor result. How did others fare around the county? With regard to new species in the year, diminishing returns are setting in now, with only 19 new to the garden in 2012, after 31 in 2011 and 33 in 2010. The garden total now stands at a fairly respectable 435 moth species, with perhaps notable additions to my list in 2012 including Brown Rustic, Common Lutestring, Grey Shoulder-knot: none of these particularly rarities for the area but perhaps not so often found in garden traps. My top ten garden moths in terms of abundance, with numbers counted in 2012 (2011 ranking in brackets) were as follows – a great boost for the attractive Burnished Brass, with 195 in 2012 following only 65 in 2011 and 91 in 2010. Note the count for Large Yellow Underwing – still Number 1 in

the list, yet only 494 specimens caught over 60 nights; not too many years ago a single night could produce almost this number!

1	Large Yellow Underwing	494	(1)
2	Dark Arches	235	(2)
3	Common Rustic agg.	213	(7)
4	Burnished Brass	195	(18)
5	Heart and Dart	163	(3)
	Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow		
6	Underwing	131	(4)
7	Buff Ermine	114	(10)
8	Common Marbled Carpet	110	(9)
9	<i>Agriphila straminella</i>	109	(6)
10	<i>Eudonia mercurella</i>	95	(19)

Further afield I made around 30 forays to sites ranging from oak woodlands at Roudsea to uplands around Blea Tarn and Thwaites Fell above the Duddon Valley, in the latter cases assisting CWT's Juniper Project Officer in searching for that plant's specialities. Squelching through morasses on two cold nights we failed to find our target species Chestnut-coloured Carpet, but did attract a few upland specialists including, Hedge Rustic, Striped Twin-spot Carpet, Large Ear and Juniper Pug. A splendid new site visited for the first time in 2012 was Lane End Plantation, part of the NT's Sizergh Estate, and now undergoing sensitive management. Five visits brought a total of 120 species, including a Brown Scallop, a distinct rarity in the area nowadays, Cream Wave, Treble Lines, Satin Beauty and the diminutive macro-moth Pinion-streaked Snout to name but a few. Two visits to nearby Brigsteer Park Wood brought this roadside site's species list to around 160. I recorded thirty new species on the site in 2012 included Red-necked Footman, Alder Moth, Coronet, and an attractive little Tortrix moth *Phtheochroa sodaliana* – possibly a first for the county. Always a pleasure to turn up something like this, but always the suspicion that's it been there all along – we're blessed nowadays with resources undreamt of by our mothing forefathers, with access to generators and MV lights, digital cameras, the internet and a wealth of excellent field and ID guides. And personal motorised transport of course. Our predecessors, on the other hand, relied much more on daytime searches for larvae, feeding signs etc and with very little helpful literature to assist them. So I continue to count my blessings – not just being able to live in such a beautiful area with its wealth of lepidoptera and varying habitats, but also in having the wherewithal to get out and about and have the means at hand to identify and interpret what I see around me.

Martin Tordoff

Small Blues

..... the ongoing struggle for survival.

As you know we have an ongoing struggle to save enough occupied breeding habitat in west Cumbria. So what have we done this last Summer/Autumn and what is the future looking like? In Workington we have :-

1. Created 10 Kidney Vetch scrapes at Oldside windfarm.
2. Created 3 Kidney Vetch scrapes at a housing development.
3. Created a huge new habitat area for Kidney Vetch in the Port of Workington.
4. We have cleared away 3 areas of encroaching scrub at Oldside windfarm.
5. Set up the Small Blue Network (Action Group) with the help of mainly the County Council and Cumbria Biodiversity Partnership.
6. Worked with local people, Allerdale Council, independent councillors, industrialists and local schools.
7. Led a total of 14 guided walks on site.

Allerdale Borough Council own the land and have been very helpful in allowing us to work with Groundwork North East and Cumbria to carry out some very overdue habitat management work there. I can't speak highly enough about the work that Groundwork have put into this project with Julian Smith and Emma Cox both very committed to it. Their contributions have been immense. **I must also stress how important it has been to have support and guidance from Judy Palmer the County Council Ecologist – her contribution has been immense and it is so, so important to have someone of that experience and ability in such a role.**

Groundwork linked to the work an initiative whereby local primary and junior schools each adopted one of our Kidney Vetch scrapes i.e. it is effectively theirs to monitor and look after although clearly we will oversee it and make sure things move in the right direction. I have to say though that working with the kids and the teachers on site, sometimes in typical iffy Cumbrian weather, has been a real down to earth pleasure. They literally loved it and so did I. This in my opinion is an important part of the work we should be trying to do..

The Port of Workington have also been fantastic with us but please do not attempt to access the Port – there is no need to anyway with the Small Blue being fairly easily seen still at Oldside just a couple of hundred metres away.

What next? We plan to carry out some more habitat management work at Oldside, Workington next autumn/winter and also plan restoration at the Maryport end. I can see a lot of work ahead in 2013 but with a positive and helpful approach we hope to achieve that win/win situation I keep talking about.

Steve Doyle

The Marsh Fritillary in Cumbria

Of our 8 colonies only 2 did well by doubling their numbers of larval webs and that is the recognised success factor. Of the other 6 we needed to think what happened as it is all too easy just to blame the weather. Without going into detail here we feel we have established that. It was not all bad news however. One site was badly affected by flood water at a critical time but we still had 87 larval webs (over 500 in 2011) so it is still a very viable colony and over a very large area of habitat so all is not lost – but, we don't want another Summer like it for a while.

CAPTIVE BREEDING

Our captive breeding programme took a major turn for the worse in 2012 with only 3 of our 12 cages doing well. Having used basically the same captive stock (progeny of) since 2004 we feel an injection of fresh stock is required so a license has been obtained to boost our captive stock by another 200 larvae. This will not have any serious effect on our wild stock as only a tiny number will be taken from a lot of webs rather than a lot of larvae from a few webs. This action is felt necessary as captive stock breeding is essential if we are to continue our programme of Marsh Fritillary releases in Cumbria.

The good news is that even though we had that 2012 reality check there should still be enough Marsh Fritillaries flying in Cumbria in 2013 so look out for our guided walks and let's get out there to enjoy them

Steve Doyle

Wart Barrow and its butterflies.

Wart Barrow is an outcrop of Urswick limestone located between Grange over Sands and Allithwaite. Just fewer than 27 hectares were notified as a SSSI in 1987 primarily because of the limestone grassland on shallow soils. At this time it was ranked, in terms of rareness and variety of plant species, only just behind the premier sites of Arnside Knott SSSI and Scout and Cunswick Scar. There was a wonderful mosaic of habitats and plant species. Small areas of scrub, woodland on pavement, bracken and limestone grassland created ideal conditions for a variety of butterflies. Duke of Burgundy, High Browns, Dark Greens, Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries and Northern Brown Argus were all present. Sadly this glorious biodiversity is no longer a feature but nevertheless it is still a fascinating site with the potential to regain some of these butterflies and lost flora. Most of the area is in private ownership and the complexities of multiple holdings plus several graziers undoubtedly contributed to the lack of management and the SSSI status now being "unfavourable and deteriorating".

To the south west of this limestone outcrop is an interesting little sheltered quarry, little known even to some of the Allithwaite village residents. Owned by the Parish Council, there is public access by the lane from the local post office that runs past the community playing field. Past the houses and over the stile the once cart-wide lane flanked with dry stonewalls is reduced to a narrow track through the Thorns. Regular quarrying ceased probably in 1939 and then during the war the area was used as a rifle range and a dump for a local sawmill and thereafter as a community tip and general dumping ground. The grassy ledges above the quarry face scrubbed up with gorse and blackthorn, ash trees thrived along the base of the cliff face and around the dilapidated boundary walls. Several large sycamores dominated the quarry floor and the access lane became a narrow tunnel through the Thorns. In 2010 Martin Wain, the BC Conservation Officer, saw the potential of the area as a local nature reserve particularly for the butterflies. He approached the parish council and with their agreement he employed a local contractor whilst Wendy Nelson recruited several local volunteers and restoration work began. Many trees have been felled, scrub removed and bramble thickets thinned to create proper paths and rides. Industrial relics included cars, bikes glass, pottery, batteries, old stoves, a rusty 7metre long band saw and the proverbial kitchen sink. The portable and unsightly has been moved. Much I suspect remains, under several decades worth of creeping flora. There are a wonderful variety of native and alien plants. So far 208 species of vascular plants and 97 bryophytes have been identified in the quarry enclosure. There are fly orchids on the upper slopes whilst the purging buckthorn, cowslips and common rockrose are particularly significant as potential food plants for butterfly larvae.

Martin Wain's strategy is to create a publicly accessible butterfly haven that has open butterfly-friendly habitat links to the Wart Barrow SSSI which with new funding (now via the Morecambe Bay NIA status) and cooperation with landowners can begin to be restored. The upper part of the quarry is in fact part of the SSSI so we are not talking great distances to link grassland fragments. After some preliminary surveys in 2011 I started a Transect Walker route in 2012 that covers the quarry floor and the Wart Barrow SSSI. Despite not yet having had the benefit of a decent summer the results have been encouraging. Naturally the quarry section of my transect route where scrub clearance has begun has proven to be the most productive. The list of twenty-three species includes a healthy population of Dingy Skippers. These springtime butterflies love to bask on the bare ground or short turf at the base of quarried slopes both within and just outside the main site. This Skipper is a conservation priority species and those in Allithwaite quarry form an important breeding colony. Already Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries are moving down from the upper slopes to be seen in the quarry and although so far all the large fritillaries seen up on the bracken areas have been Dark Greens I live in hope of re-finding High Browns.

Some of the sections at present hold little other than Speckled Woods but as restoration continues the whole route should become a butterfly haven. There are some sunny bracken covered slopes with plenty of violets sufficient for a far bigger population of fritillaries. The site first attracted me as the probable

source of some of the more unusual local rarities occasionally lured to my garden MV moth trap which is only about 300 metres from the eastern boundary of the SSSI. I occasionally turn up species such as Scorched Carpet, V Moth, Northern Rustic, Marbled Coronet and Small Eggar. I received permission to trap on the private land and over the last two years have identified 174 species, mostly coming to my actinic portable but that number also includes a few day-flying moths seen on the butterfly transect. There are undoubtedly many more species to be found.

Although about a quarter of the SSSI is access land (under the CROW act) there is no access to the private land comprising the main part of the SSSI. However the quarry is easily accessed and well worth a visit especially in sunny weather when the temperature at the cliff face can be several degrees higher than elsewhere and conditions for butterfly activity very favourable. If anyone is tempted to take a look I would appreciate your forwarding to me any interesting observations of flora or fauna. If visiting by car please park in the Allithwaite community centre car park. Come in May and you might just see one of our Dingy Skippers there.

Wendy Nelson has extensive knowledge of the flora of Wart Barrow and has played a major role in this project. I am grateful for her advice whilst writing this account.

Martin Chadwick

Pages from my Butterfly Diary **.... Journeys into Buckinghamshire**

The following is part of a series of butterfly meanderings into past favourite haunts of mine. Living on the Buckinghamshire/Bedfordshire border for nearly 25 years the woodlands of the Vale of Aylesbury and the grasslands of the Chiltern Hills proved rich butterfly territory.

On 1st June 2003 I visited the Blue Lagoon local nature reserve created out of old clay pits on the edge of Bletchley, the south western part of Milton Keynes. Largely enclosed by housing and a new waste tip this site is still a superb place for butterflies, dragonflies and all things natural history. In the managed herb rich grassland that survives between the two larger lakes I saw several Grizzled Skipper, Dingy Skipper, Brown Argus, Small Blue, Common Blue, Green Hairstreak, Speckled Wood, Brimstone and a visiting Painted Lady. In July this site is also excellent for Marbled White and one large English Elm has survived intact with its own colony of White Letter Hairstreak. If you ever visit Milton Keynes do visit this site together with a walk along the North Bucks Way to see White Admiral and Black Hairstreak. The ancient woodland remnants of Howe Wood, Shenley Wood and Linford Wood are also worth a visit. A walk along the old Oxford-Bletchley track bed westward from Sheet 165 Grid Ref 813305 looking for Wood Whites is well worth it but for the best Wood White colony head 3 to 4 miles north-west of Milton Keynes to WickenWood. Park and enter the wood at Sheet 152 GR 730413.

On 22nd June 2003 on a warm and sunny day's visit to Finemere – access Sheet 165 GR 721215 – I found Painted Lady, White Admiral, Small Skipper, Marbled White and Black Hairstreak amongst many more common species. On the same day I found similar species at nearby White Cross Greenwood – Sheet 164 GR 602146 – with Wood White though that has since disappeared from there. Brown Hairstreak however is good at White Cross Greenwood. Salcey Forest five miles north of Milton Keynes has a similar range of species just into Northamptonshire where Wood White is still seen in good numbers though not Brown Hairstreak.

Other great Berkshire/Buckinghamshire/Oxfordshire sites worth a visit are Aston Clinton Ragpits for a stunning display of orchids in June/July, College Lake for birds and butterflies, both 3 to 4 miles south of Aylesbury, and Tottenhoe Quarries just over the Bedfordshire border for Small Blue and Duke of Burgundy. Further west try Bernwood Forest for Purple Emperor, Aston Rowant just off the M40 for Silver Spotted Skipper and Larden Hill near Goring for Small, Common, Chalkhill and Adonis Blues.

Let us know where your favourite butterfly sites are and better still do an article for a future newsletter.

Chris Winnick

COLIN PARK, 9th June 1947 – 28th August 2012

We lost a dear friend when Colin sadly died in August last year. Without a doubt he was more knowledgeable about the Township areas of Whitbarrow Scar than anyone else and not just butterflies but the whole range of wildlife and the very diverse habitat itself at Township – known to most others probably simply as The Howe. Colin was for many years our contact at this wonderful wildlife site which I personally feel is Cumbria's No.1 butterfly site. I'm sure I'm not the only one who learned a lot from Colin about habitat management, such was his depth of experience and even when we had the odd difference of opinion it was the glint in his eye later on which said it all – his way proved to be right! We continue to work closely with the Landowners and the Trustees because we all owe Colin Park the duty to look after this magical place for the benefit of wildlife and human visitors alike.

Colin is being and always will be sadly missed by us all. Our condolences go to Denise and all of his family.

Steve Doyle

Membership Continues to Grow

Although we are still one of the smallest UK mainland Branches in terms of membership numbers (as opposed to geographically) our numbers continue to grow and we now have over 200 members of Cumbria Branch. Each new member is so vital to us as we strive to conserve butterfly and moth habitats in what is a very rich and diverse habitat area – and very big as well. We do therefore particularly welcome the following who have recently joined our ranks either as new members or transfers from other branches.

W T Kenmir and Ms P A Ducworth of Kendal

Rev R A and Mrs J Canham of Keswick

J Sykes of Kendal

Mrs S O'Brien of Carlisle

Andy Senior of Kendal

Gary Hedges of Carlisle

R and Mrs A Hunt of Penrith.

Cumbria Branch is delighted that you are now part of our membership and we look forward to greeting you in person at one of our forthcoming events as listed in the newsletter.

Chris Winnick
Branch Chairman

A Report from our Woodland Advisor – Martin Wain

Martin has been employed by Butterfly Conservation for several years now to assist Regional Officer Dave Wainwright so we thought it would be a good idea for him to tell us about all the valuable work he's been doing. Here's what he said:-

The role of the Woodland Advisor in the Nature Improvement Area (NIA) (which extends outside the Morecambe Bay area) has been focused into bringing landowners and managers of woodland into management

- Using grants like Woodland Improvement (WIG's) schemes
- Funded spending like Butterfly Conservation, SITA (landfill) and Co-op projects
- And our own NIA Priority Spending fund.

WIG spending from the Forestry Commission has been very useful indeed but the opportunity to use these has been becoming more restricted since last October as spending cuts start to bite. We must therefore work hard to ensure that we continue to obtain some funding from this source which could well dry up by April 2013. BC's and Co-op funding has to be spent by the end of March which has been quite a challenge but by working hard we have been able to get our work programmes up and running. The NIA pot was not huge

but still very vital to ensure that another part of our work could be done in an orderly fashion i.e properly.

WIG spending has included 9 Woodland Improvement Grants via the Forestry Commission and covering 151 hectares of directed butterfly habitat management. All WIGS have a strong element of sustainable woodfuel management. Deer management along with sympathetic management for other wildlife is also very important to us. In managing so much woodland connectivity is very much part of our overall mapping plan on a landscape scale – that woodlands have a realistic connectivity network is most important so that wildlife species can interact from location to location to maintain species diversity and strength of breeding.

Under SITA and Co-op funding we are opening up areas of scrubbed over limestone pavement for Pearl Bordered and High Brown fritillaries. Work is ongoing on both sides of the Morecambe Bay and Kent Estuaries including on Whitbarrow where connectivity routes will join up land parcels owned by different landowners. Quite exciting work is taking place at several locations in the Arnside/Beetham/Silverdale area which is so rich in habitat as well as relatively so far untapped woodland products which can be a valuable sustainability cashflow for the landowners.

Martin explains that he has arranged a community volunteering scheme in the Arnside area which brings together volunteers like local residents and others who also care and of course they can have their share of the wood fuel products as well. Local businesses are also being supported. Twelve local contractors were given woodland work in 2012 and one major landowner has agreed the purchase locally of a mobile logging machine for use throughout the Arnside area of Outstanding Beauty (AONB). In addition 4 local timber extractors were tasked to bring such products into the local woodfuel and other commercial markets.

A leaflet has been produced on the butterflies of the AONB area for visitors. Two more woodland community schemes are being developed, one at Grange over Sands where 12 landowners have signed up for an information sharing network aimed at both operational work and future sustainability. In the other scheme so far 5 landowners have signed up so that is progressing well. Several tourism businesses are also working with us. These include Time Share and Hotel industries which have or have nearby access to 'wild' habitat and/or woodland which has habitat mainly already occupied by species such as Pearl Bordered or High Browns and in one case Duke of Burgundy. Indeed one caravan park has 4 areas of woodland we are managing in partnership with them.

So although most of our work is within the Morecambe Bay limestones area we do push out the boundaries as well. The Finsthwaite and Rusland areas

were at one time rich in butterfly and wildlife habitats and parts of that area still are, so work is now pushing on to restore or create a new network of connectivity routes there which will of course be mapped into our other work nearby in other directions geographically.

Martin Wain.

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