

Butterfly Conservation Cumbria Branch
Newsletter 42 Spring 2021



Photographic Quiz – Lepidoptera Larvae

Compiled by Rob Petley-Jones

Test your identification skills on these larvae of butterflies and moths. You can use the wonderful new BWP book or UKMoths website to help you. I have tried to avoid those ubiquitous green 'tubes' so most are reasonably easy to identify! No prizes as ever – just a good feeling if you score well. Good luck! More on inside back cover and answers on p14



MESSAGE FROM THE BRANCH CHAIRMAN.....

Welcome to the Spring 2021 newsletter. These are exceptional times.....I never thought that after giving a 'Coronavirus Newsflash' 12 months ago I would start by detailing just how much coronavirus has hit us all and how it continues to impact on our lives and on Butterfly Conservation. Many of our members have suffered personal loss and have faced prolonged difficult times.... this pandemic has brought home just how much we must all look after each other. Yet it has also revealed just how important our wonderful countryside is with so many lovely walks close by to help provide physical and mental well-being.

As I write this in early March 2021 it does seem that after a long winter lockdown and a successful start to the vaccine roll-out there are reasons for optimism. Unfortunately this has come too late to save most of our 2020/21 work party programme and even too late to save some of our spring guided walks. We do hope to run several of our popular walks after 17th May by following the guidance given by the government and BC. Only brief details of some of the walks are provided in this newsletter and even these are subject to change or cancellation.....for an up to date view of what is likely please open the 'new style' dot-mailer electronic newsletter updates David Eastlick sends out and of course our Cumbria Butterfly Conservation website.

We hope that the covid situation will improve sufficiently by summer for us to hold our 'flagship' Members Day and AGM at a venue suitable for illustrated talks and an



outdoor guided walk. Again it is not possible to give details now as we usually do but as soon as we know just what is safe and possible within the set guidance we will put these details out by 'dot-mailer' and on our website. Hopefully it will be at the amazing

Haybridge private nature reserve in the Rusland valley where it was due in 2020 before being re-scheduled as a 'zoom' meeting.

With safer conditions and better weather we know that our growing band of recorders will be keen to re-start transects, 'wider-countryside' recording and site monitoring. Most of all members will be looking forward more than ever to

countryside walks where they are likely to find butterflies and day-flying moths. We are also very grateful to those who find an amazing variety of Lepidoptera in gardens and urban settings. It is remarkable what can be seen in built up areas!

Please continue to enter your sightings on our website 'sightings' page. Our web-master, Mark Eastlick, has been busy upgrading this facility so you can now enter all those egg, caterpillar and pupae sightings without wondering if you should leave them out or count as adult butterflies! As you will see Mark has also written an article on how it is possible to process our growing record of Cumbrian sightings data to produce a striking and informative series of maps and graphs.

I am also delighted to report that committee member Rob Petley-Jones [who has provided us with yet another of his brilliantly photographed quizzes] has set up a Facebook site for branch members to report and read their latest news. This is already up and running and is just waiting for your contributions. Please contact Rob on robpetleyjones@gmail.com who will be delighted to hear from you and enter your news.

And now some wonderful news! Martin Wain and his BC colleagues have recently heard that their bid for nearly £250,000 of 'Green Recovery Fund' money for conservation projects in the Morecambe Bay area has been successful.

Congratulations to Martin and all who put this outstanding bid together. This really is



great news: for 14 months he will be able to employ part-time project managers and contractors to carry out conservation work in 17 sites across North Lancashire and South Cumbria for butterflies and moths, for healthy habitats and for local communities. This is very much a partnership with our friends in Lancashire BC and would not have been possible without both branches making a financial contribution: a contribution we could only make with money from your support. Martin has provided more details later in this issue and there will be further updates by 'dot-mailer' and in the autumn newsletter.

Since the last newsletter we have experienced a poor autumn and a long and cold winter. [Few butterflies were seen on the wing after September] With more cold nights than normal.....including some well below freezing.....it might seem that butterflies and moths will suffer however it is more likely to be the opposite! Our species are well adapted to cold winter weather: the bigger threat is from climate change. With a cold winter auguring well for 2021 we now need a warm and sunny spring and summer....preferably with rain only at nighttimes!

Best wishes, **Chris Winnick**

CUMBRIA FIELD TRIPS.....tentative arrangements.

There is likely to be a reduced list of guided walks this year as we open this up with caution and following 'Covid' guidance. Further and updated details will be issued by dotmaile and on our website as the picture clarifies. Also numbers attending will be limited so booking with the party leader in advance is essential.....preferably by telephone. All attendees will be expected to maintain prevailing social distancing rules and precautions including having their own hand sanitizer. Attendees are also advised to check our Cumbria BC website the evening before the event for any changes or updates.

WARTON CRAG Sat. 29th May. **Target species:** Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Dingy Skipper, Common Blue and other spring species. 10.00-14.00 Packed lunch recommended.

ORMSGILL SLAG BANKS Thurs. 3rd June. **Target species:** Small Blue, Dingy Skipper, Common Blue and other spring species. 10.30-13.00

HOLME PARK FELL Sun. 4th July. **Target species:** High Brown and Dark Green Fritillaries and other summer species. 10.00-14.00 Packed lunch recommended.

BRIGSTEER PARK WOOD/FLASH BANK Mon.12th July. **Target species:** Silver-washed and Dark Green fritillaries and summer species. 10.00-`14.30 Packed lunch recommended.

WITHERSLACK & HOWE RIDDING WOODS Sun. 18th July. **Target species:** Large fritillaries, Common Blue and possible late NBA. 10.30-14.30. Packed lunch recommended.

KENDAL FELL Tues. 27th July. **Target species:** Wild flowers, Scotch Argus, WLH and other late summer species. 10.30-14.30 Packed lunch recommended.

SMARDALE GILL [Late July/early August. Scotch Argus and other late summer species. Details to be arranged.]

NOTE: WE HOPE TO RUN OTHER GUIDED WALKS IF POSSIBLE. ALL ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE/CANCELLATION DUE TO COVID. For the trips listed above please contact chriswinnick@tiscali.co.uk for booking and further details.

ED: I thought that this lovely poem by member Avril Chadwick was best seen in its original lovely handwritten form!

JATTERBARROW RESERVE 2020

"UTTERLY-FLUTTERY"



MY HEART SINGS TO SEE
THE FIRST BRASSIONE
EITHER MID-YELLOW OR GREENISH-WHITE
IN FLIGHT, FROM MARCH, APRIL, MAY, ON
A SUNNY DAY, IS AN ABSOLUTE DELIGHT,
OTHERS UTTERLY-FLUTTERY APPEAR IN
BRIGHT ARRAY, MY MOOD SOARS UPWARDS
AND AWAY.

PEACOCK, RED ADMIRAL, SMALL TORTOISESHELL
GOMMA HAVE EMERGED, WITH THE URGE TO
NECTAR ON... PRIMROSES, DANDELIONS,
COWSLIPS AS THEY OPEN IN THE SUN,
DURING JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST THE
RESERVE IS CARPETED WITH CAMY RYAD HUES
SPRAWLING ME AWAY FROM "LOCKDOWN BLUES",
SUMMER UTTERLY-FLUTTERY SOUGHT AFTER
AS SMALL PEARL BORDERED BRILLIANT SPECIES
NORTHERN BROWN ARGUS EMERGE
AND MUCH TRAVELLED AND LOCAL ENTHUSIASTS
SURGE.

A PLEASING PALETTE OF COLOUR FROM
COLUMBINE, GERANY AND WINTER WOOD
PROVIDE NECTAR FOR THE FLIGHT OF THE

SUMMER TELEVEN,
SLIPPER RED ADMIRAL, PEACOCK, COMMON BLUE,
THE WHITES, NEWMAN BROWN, RINGLET, GOMMA,
SPECKLED WOOD

AN UTTERLY-FLUTTERY BUTTERFLY HEAVEN
Avril Chadwick August 2020

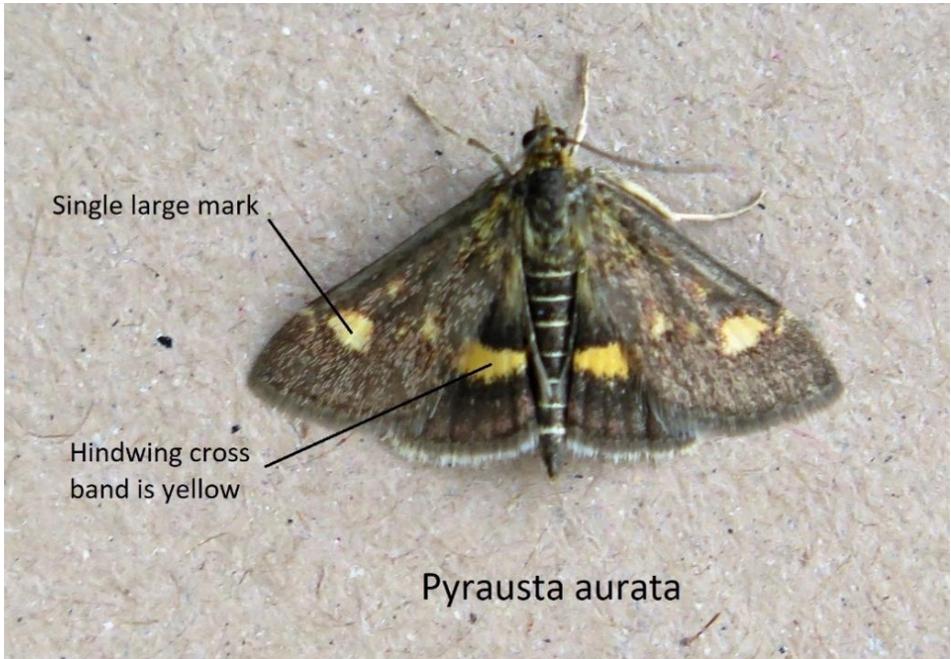
Seven pretty little day flying moths

for Morecambe Bay Limestone transect walkers

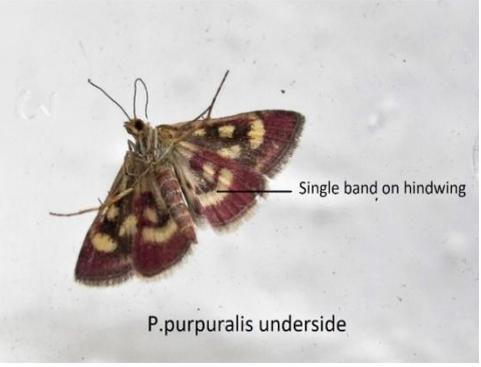
The first four are micro moths belonging to the genus *Pyrausta*, whose larval food plant are members of the Mint family. They are small (2cm wingspan) and fly in sunshine close to the ground.

All four have two generations, late April/May and August. They are easy to overlook being so small, but with a good view and preferably with a photograph they can be identified. It helps if you are young with sharp eyesight. At peak emergence they can be locally very abundant. All four can be found on the Morecambe Bay limestone grassland, the south sloping aspect of Warton Crag is a very good local hotspot.

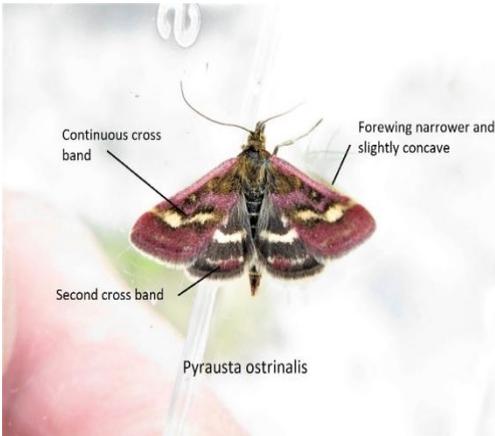
The distinguishing features are shown on the following photos.



P. aurata is the most widespread in our area, sometimes recorded in gardens and occasionally in light traps.



Pyrausta purpuralis is also widespread and occurs in gardens and occasionally light traps. It closely resembles *P.ostrinalis* which is distinctly local and confined to limestone pavement areas, but can be very abundant. Netting a specimen is a great help to view the underside. I find it is the most abundant of the four on Warton Crag and Gait Barrows and is probably just found where Wild Thyme grows.



Pyrausta cingulata is easy to recognise with a gently curving continuous cross band on both forewing and hindwing. It is local and probably also dependant on Thyme but can be very abundant at the right spot.



P.cingulata pair at Cote stones, Warton

The fifth micro is the iconic *Anania funebris* (White-spotted Sable moth), a nationally rare moth. It is dependent on its larval foodplant Goldenrod (*Solidago virgaurea*) which is found on Gait Barrows and other limestone areas. Gait Barrows is the best local hotspot for this moth flying in May and early June. It's also been recorded on Warton Crag, Yealand Hall Allotment, Arnside Knott, Whitbarrow and Latterbarrow. Though unmistakable it is tiny and flies close to the ground so easily overlooked. When disturbed it flies a short distance and is difficult to see clearly, as it usually settles on the underside of vegetation.



A rare frontal shot of *A.funebris*



A more usual view

The final two are small macro moths. Small Yellow Underwing and Marsh Pug are both out from mid-May to mid-June with Marsh Pug having a small second brood in August. They both share the same larval foodplant Mouse ear (*cerastrum sp.*) which is found commonly in unimproved grassland. Despite an abundant foodplant, they are rarely recorded. Both have been found in the bottom meadow at Gait Barrows and a new site for the Small Yellow Underwing was a flowery meadow by Leighton Beck in 2018. Mine was the only record from Warton Crag some years ago and in Cumbria recent records are from a Meadow nr Halecat and Watchtree reserve in the north. It must surely be in other areas of unimproved grassland. Two new sites for the Marsh Pug in 2019 were Arnside Knott and a grass verge above Clawthorpe, so both are currently in our area. Our few remaining areas of unimproved meadow should be actively searched for these two species as there must be some undiscovered sites.



Small Yellow Underwing



Marsh Pug

Records for the last three species would be very welcome either to me hancockb410@gmail.com or the appropriate county moth recorder .

Brian Hancock

References:

An Atlas and Guide to Day flying moths of the Arnside and Silverdale AONB, Bittern countryside publication. £2.50 from the café at Leighton Moss or the AONB office, Station road Arnside.

Butterflies and Day flying moths of Lancashire. Lancashire & Cheshire Fauna society publication. £12 from the Lancashire butterfly conservation website.

Marsh Fritillary Project time to step back

After being involved with Marsh Fritillaries in Cumbria for over 20 years and particularly in the last 17 years of the captive breeding and reintroduction part of it, I'm stepping back and handing over to a younger generation.



The 2020 season was undoubtedly a disappointing one for Marsh Fritillaries. There was a very significant downturn in the numbers of larval webs counted in 2020, over 50% in fact but that does not tell the full story. The effects of Covid-19/lockdown meant that I was unable to have the usual groups of volunteers out helping me doing the count on well over 20 colonies we have now. As a result several colonies were not counted in 2020 and the rest I had to do on my own and all during the month of August. At my advancing age I found it too physically demanding – so I won't be doing it in 2021. I have handed over the control to Dave Wainwright our Regional Officer for him to decide which sites are done in future and by who. I've offered to do two of the sites and the hope is that others will volunteer to 'adopt' the other sites at least as far as web counting is concerned but also to keep a watchful eye on their 'adopted' sites at all times of the year.

That watchful eye will involve visits to the site at say, monthly intervals to look at the emergence of Spring larvae from hibernation and then do a rough adult butterfly count in flight season. Also review habitat condition and flag up any issues that arise, such as lack of agreed grazing in the absence of 'policing' of Stewardship Agreements by Natural England staff who are these days extremely stretched to carry out such tasks it seems.

THE END OF AN ERA.

So the end of an era for me in terms of full-on management of the project but at as age advances the head just had to rule the heart on this occasion. The demands of the 2020 web count I can just not risk repeating personally and in August I really need to spend more time with my grandchildren during school holidays.

WHAT AM I HANDING OVER?

This has been an amazing story for Cumbria because the success of our metapopulation reintroduction project was a first nationwide for this species and our strategy is now being used by others elsewhere in the UK as the model for their own similar project.

In terms of how our own success is right now it could be said that I'm handing over a sinking ship as web count numbers are in decline. That's fair comment as they are it seems at present in decline. However I don't see it like that at all. We have established a robust captive breeding and release strategy over the last 17 years and as a result we now have five metapopulations of Marsh Fritillaries in Cumbria. There are several colonies on the Solway Plain, several in Ennerdale, several in the central lakes, two in the east of Cumbria and now another group of colonies in Westmorland. They will need correct habitat management to thrive and therein may lie the problem. Most habitat is under a Stewardship Scheme but despite that several are simply not being managed appropriately. Our flagship site in Ennerdale for instance had 1,705 larval webs in 2016 but in 2020 it had only 125 because of habitat deterioration and neither the landowners or Natural England will agree to adopt a more suitable management system. As a result decline has set in rapidly and there is not a lot we can do about it.

So, not a particularly happy year for Marsh Fritillaries in Cumbria but we must still be optimistic. We still have well over 20 colonies spread over five metapopulation areas and as such they have enough numbers to once again thrive given favourable climatic conditions and correct habitat conditions on most of our sites. We will no doubt lose some through poor habitat management but equally we can be pleased that self-colonisation of other suitable habitat within our metapopulations is taking place to the extent that self-colonised colonies now outnumber those we deliberately introduced to begin with. We gave them a start and hopefully they will continue just getting on with it themselves – with just a little bit less nannying by us humans. BUT we must religiously monitor the situation and take action if needs be.



Parents of the 2021 generation

So from me it's the end of an era but the start of another one and I might even see more of my grandchildren during August now.

Steve Doyle

Small Blues in Dunnet Forest

As always, I enjoyed and was interested in Steve Doyle's article about Cumbrian Small Blues in Newsletter 41 of Cumbria Butterfly Conservation. It took me back to early June 1990 when my wife and I arrived at Dunnet Head, the most northerly point of the British mainland, with our caravan. It was raining. There was a small information room and I was surprised to read that there were supposed to be Small Blues in Dunnet Forest, immediately inland. My prayers for a dry day were not



answered, but nothing daunted I paid a visit to a clearing in the forest, and sure enough there were Kidney Vetches. Not only were the food plants there, but to my surprise Small Blue eggs were easily seen among the flower heads (June 12th) and one had just

hatched, which means that females must at least have been on the wing by about June 4th. Two days later the sun came out, and with it plentiful Small Blue adults. On June 15th one pair were copulating, so there were eggs yet to be laid.

The average rainfall at Dunnet is very much the same as at Maryport, as are summer and winter temperatures. Looking at photographs taken at the time, I see that the Kidney Vetch there shares the location with Northern Marsh Orchids, Mountain Everlasting



and Butterwort - what a contrast with the Cumbrian coastal sites. The presence of

Butterwort in particular leads me to presume that the ground will often be waterlogged, at least through the winter months and yet the Small Blue colony appeared to be thriving. I wonder whether the butterfly is not too fussy about the soil conditions so long as its food plant is there.

Among the Kidney Vetch flower heads black ants, *Lasius niger*, were roaming. Although I am not aware of these ants having a protective relationship with Small Blues as they do with some related butterflies, it did make me wonder. Have any readers observed interactions?



John Mounsey



Countdown to Moth Night 2021



Butterfly Conservation's Cumbria branch is excited to announce the dates and theme for this year's Moth Night (really three nights), to take place on 8th, 9th and 10th July. This year's theme is reedbeds and wetlands, and Cumbria has no shortage of such sites. This event will not only provide a wonderful opportunity to showcase the importance of these habitats for insects at the height of

the summer, but also a chance to gather some useful records in the process.

At the time of writing we don't know whether we'll be able to host public Moth Night events out on site, though this may be possible remotely via Zoom or similar technology. But whether or not we're able to run on-site events by July, there should be nothing to stop you visiting wetland sites close to where you live and recording any day-flying moth and, of course, butterfly species you spot. And if you run moth traps you could consider leaving them on site overnight, subject to the usual permissions, or just go out "dusking" with a net and head torch as darkness falls. We'll advise you nearer the time on how to submit your records online.

Suitable sites to visit across the county include, among many, Cumbria Wildlife Trust reserves in the south of the county at Meathop and Foulshaw Mosses, Burns Beck Moss, Hale Moss, Next Ness, South Walney, Tarn Sike, or further north at Drumburgh, Orton or other Mosses. Many of these sites have been well recorded in the past, though some have a shortage of recent records and you can be almost certain some new species will turn up on your visit. But these are just examples and there are likely to be wild and neglected patches of wetland much nearer home and we'd encourage you in the meantime to be looking out for suitable locations.



So, we'll keep you posted nearer the time by: emails to BC members; notices on our branch website <http://www.cumbria-butterflies.org.uk>; notices on our Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/BCCumbria>. Watch these spaces, as they say, and cross your fingers for three fine, warm, humid and overcast days and nights!

Martin Tordoff

Answers to Photographic Quiz

- | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Fox Moth | 9. Netted Carpet |
| 2. Duke of Burgundy | 10. Dot Moth |
| 3. Spindle Ermine | 11. Light Knot Grass |
| 4. Elephant Hawkmoth | 12. Beautiful Yellow Underwing |
| 5. Rosy Marsh Moth | 13. Iron Prominent |
| 6. Grey Dagger | 14. <i>Psyche casta</i> |
| 7. Mother Shipton | 15. High Brown Fritillary |
| 8. Yellow Tail | |

MORECAMBE BAY 2007

Although this article describes a time some 14 years ago it was 'like yesterday' when I reviewed my old trip report recently. Chris Winnick had asked me if I'd be prepared to write something for the Cumbria BC Newsletter and this account of my first visit to Morecambe Bay with BC ex-Chair David Dennis feels appropriate. I have edited-out most references to the various pubs, pints, cafés and B&B tales considering them to be of marginal interest to you! So, here we go:

Friday 27 July 2007, first visit to Arnside Knott

In a brisk north-westerly and in patchy sun we left the car park at the Knott and almost at once were greeted by a High Brown Fritillary nectaring at ground level on Bramble blossom. Another appeared close by sitting on Bracken. Almost immediately David saw a male Scotch Argus that gave us some photo opportunities as it rested on Bramble leaves. We spent another three hours on site never completely escaping the wind and found a solitary Grayling on the south-facing crag, and added Dark Green Fritillary, Common Blue male, Speckled Wood, Red Admiral, Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Small White, and Small Skipper to the day's tally.



High Brown Fritillary



Scotch Argus

Saturday 28 July: Meathop Moss and Whitbarrow

Today dawned sunny, though still breezy. With the imposing limestone outcrop of Whitbarrow on our right we quickly arrived at the narrow lane on the left signposted to Ulpha down which lies Meathop Moss. Over the noisy cattle grid and less than a mile down the lane is the entrance to the Moss and I tucked the car into the hedge as parking was limited. A Peacock was basking on the track and there were several very dark Speckled Woods flying with the occasional Green-veined White. The marshy area at the end of the track looked 'interesting' but only contained the species we'd

already seen. The path through the woods was lovely and quickly gave way to the boardwalk constructed across the first part of the Moss. With our wellies on we began to quarter the area military-style keeping 12 feet apart and looking ahead by the same distance as we knew that Large Heaths are spooked early. We did this for 45 minutes without seeing anything other than the occasional moth, probably Latticed Heaths. After all, it was late in the season for *tullia*...and then it happened: a Large Heath flew to our left and quickly settled – and posed - and flew a few more feet away, and posed again, nectaring on Cross-leaved Heath. We even shifted it a few times to get it into a better photographing position. With many good shots of this new ‘lifer’ in the camera, and with wet knees and happy hearts, we finally left this insect to get on with the rest of its life and went looking for other things at the woodland edge. Small Copper was the only new species. And there were no other Large Heaths seen. We took our time to photograph Speckled Woods that were abundant at the eastern – sheltered – edge of the wood on our way back to the car.



Large Heath, form *davus*

Speckled Wood

As Whitbarrow’s presence was too great to ignore we decided to pay it a visit and thought the south-east facing corner looked good as it would be sheltered from the wind and would catch the best of the afternoon sunshine. We tucked the car off the road near the farm at Low Fell end to avoid hindering the milk tanker that turned up just as we were parking and to give the cows plenty of passing space. Our route took us through the woods until it emerged at the foot of a long and high limestone scar dotted with buddleia and a bushy hypericum. The area was busy with butterflies and on our stroll below the scarp we noted Grayling nectaring on Marjoram – Small

Tortoiseshell, Comma, Peacock, Red Admiral, all three big fritillaries, Small Heath, Large White, and Meadow Brown, many of them feeding on the Buddleia. The best of the sunny weather now seemed to be over as we made our way back to Milnthorpe en route to Gait Barrows. We made a short stop at Milnthorpe to record 'Grisleymires Lane', a name that had particularly tickled us.

Gait Burrows NNR sits in the middle of the natural area known locally as 'Bittern' and boasts limestone pavement and rich woodland. A Comma flew near the gate and several dragonflies buzzed about but the cloud cover reduced insect activity to near zero. We followed the 'Limestone Route' across the heavily shrubbed pavement and donned our kagools as rain spots began to fall, but fortunately for no more than a minute. A Gatekeeper was the only other species to reveal itself in this lovely habitat.

Sunday 29 July: Smardale

Couldn't believe our luck in this miserable summer to be greeted by a lovely sunny morning, but I was not too happy about the four ticks discovered in pairs above each hip!

After a good breakfast, we headed for junction 38 of the M6 that would lead us east to Smardale and hopefully, Northern Brown Argus. The 50-minute drive up the M6 through Cumbria was spectacular and we reached the Cumbrian Naturalist Trust car park by the disused railway in good weather. The first part of the walk leads north/south through wooded habitat and we did not see a single butterfly until the vista opened out at the second viaduct, the Smardale Gill Viaduct, where we were met by a female Dark Green Fritillary on thyme and a possible Northern Brown Argus, but challenging to identify with certainty given its battered condition. The air temperature was still cool (10.30'ish) and the breeze remained with us. We decided to cross the viaduct so that our return leg would have the sun at our backs. The south end of the viaduct is a sun trap and contained Scotch Argus (we had now found this species in both of its remaining English sites) Dark Green Fritillary, Common Blue, a definite though worn Northern Brown Argus with white forewing discoidal spot, Small Skipper, and Ringlet. We continued to walk along the track past the disused lime kilns until the packhorse bridge came into view in the valley to our left. This became our turning point and I photographed the wonderful banks covered in Betony, Fragrant Orchid, Melancholy Thistle, Devil's-bit Scabious, Rockrose, Bloody and Meadow Cranesbills, Knapweeds, and Salad Burnet – nectar heaven! Flies had been a nuisance all day and continued to be so.

Close to this morning's 'sun trap' we found a female Northern Brown Argus in excellent condition that allowed us many photographs and a lovely female Dark Green Fritillary with white spotted outer margins was also co-operative. There were

many walkers treading this route today and we chatted to several of them, particularly those that were curious about what we were doing!

Back at our B&B, the sky was clear tonight and a chilly wind blew up the estuary as a curlew and other distant waders called.



Dark Green Fritillary, female



Northern Brown Argus

Monday 30 July: Arnside Knott and Gait Barrows

Dobshall Wood Pasture was our first stop, in effect a low-lying part of the Arnside complex. It was still early for much to be on the wing but we did see Red Admiral, Meadow Brown, Green-veined White, High Brown Fritillary, and Small Copper in the flowery meadows. The weather was not turning out as forecast being quite overcast and cool as we disembarked at Arnside Knott car park at 10.30. More photos of Scotch Argus and Dark Green Fritillary were taken and a female High Brown offered good upper and underside. We were later to have a very good photo session with a female Scotch Argus, moribund now that the sun had gone. A single Grayling and a male Gatekeeper completed the morning's work

David suggested that we should enter Gait Burrows from the southern end by Hawes Water so we parked by Challon Hall Hotel and crossed the field and damp meadows into the wood. Peacocks were abundant and in mint condition. The small triangular plot at the north-west corner of the lake was now to produce the highlight of the trip, spotted by David – an albino Small Copper, the rare form *alba*, nectaring on hemp agrimony. Wow! And wow again!! We pursued it for countless shots as if it was about to disappear from our lives for ever. Simply stunning! The Peacocks around the top end of the lake, although beautiful, were something of an anticlimax now.

We used the car to re-enter Gait Barrows in the formal car park and set-off at 4.30pm down the track turning right after passing between two large oaks. Small Skipper, more High Brown Fritillaries, many dragonflies and a Large White were seen as we entered the damp meadow at the bottom of the track. Horse flies found me here, and didn't seem to like David very much either, and we became impatient to escape them.



Small Copper, form *alba*

Tuesday 31 July: Whitbarrow

Another sunny start! We spoke to Matthew Oates of the NT (who was staying at the same B&B as us) to do some Duke of Burgundy/habitat work with Sam Ellis on Arnside Knott and told them where to find *alba*.

They suggested a visit to North-East Whitbarrow and on arrival we were greeted by a pair of Silver-washed Fritillaries feeding on Thistle. As the track reached the open grassland at the woodland edge a number of Grayling were seen on Thyme 'humps' along with Common Blues, some of them initially confusing because the first impression they gave was of Chalk-hill Blues. Neither of us could get a decent photograph as they were continuously on the go.

The moor top was open and breezy so we struck across to the north-east corner of the distant wood. A boggy depression on the way revealed several Dark Green Fritillaries both nectaring and egg-laying, the latter at ground level around the stems of Bracken in unexpectedly shaded sites. We used the high stile to cross the wall into the reserve and took time out to take in the fantastic panorama north to the Lake District. David pointed-out to me the large Common Goldenring dragonfly perched

on a gate which I duly snapped. On the top of Whitbarrow there were many Graylings and the occasional Small Tortoiseshell. Lunch was taken with our backs to the wind at the summit known as Lord's Seat from where the 360° vista is hard to beat.

On the way back to the stile a couple of old Northern Brown Argus got blown along by the wind and in the lee the Graylings reached superabundance level. Some unusual and beautiful, very blue female Common Blues were noted just before the stile and further examples were photographed further on. In the boggy dip three smooth newts hung in the water of a small pond, dug-out for the benefit of sheep.



Grayling



Small Tortoiseshell

More time was spent in the Thyme 'hump' clearing tracking and photographing these stunning blue female Common Blues.



Common Blue, female



Silver-washed Fritillary, male

Back into the wood and once again to the small clearing there were now four Silver-washed Fritillaries including a pair 'in cop'. A Dark Green Fritillary kept buzzing the pair for reasons best known to itself.

We got back to the car at 5.30pm and stopped at The Ship at Storth fronting the estuary and enjoyed a pint of Theakston's sitting outside with the evening sun warm on our backs, arriving at the B&B at 6.15pm. At 7.10 we left for the Wheatsheaf at Beetham for our last night's dinner and very fine it was too, both the quality of the old building and the food. After dinner we walked in the dusk down a quiet country lane where an 'old boy' walking his dog said 'ow do', an expression I hadn't heard for a long time since moving 'down south' from my Northern roots. The day came to a close as we spent a while gazing across the estuary in fast fading light realising that we would miss it in the days ahead.

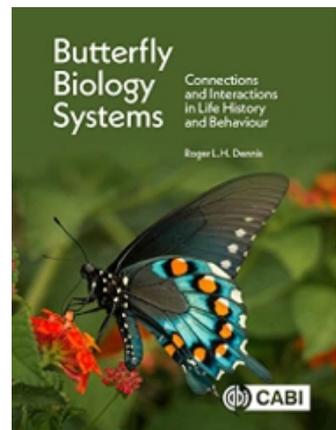
My abiding memories of this trip, in no particular order, are the special landscapes, the concealed jewel that is 'Bittern', the straightforwardness and plain values of everybody we encountered, the culture surrounding walking boots, and of course, some wonderful butterflies.

Peter Bygate

ED NOTE: Peter has very kindly agreed to invite Cumbrian readers to look at his superb website, which has a vast collection of stunning photos of butterflies and moths from the UK and numerous world-wide locations...I particularly love his tropical moths! Please click on www.lepidigi.net

Two Book Reviews

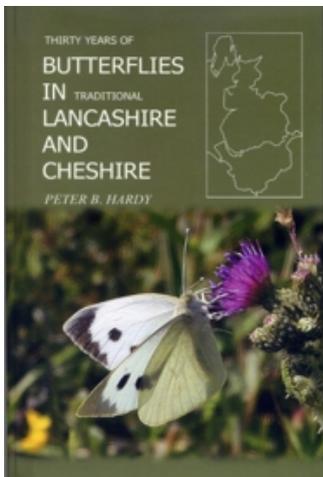
BUTTERFLY BIOLOGY SYSTEMS – CONNECTIONS AND INTERACTIONS IN LIFE HISTORY AND BEHAVIOUR by Roger L.H. Dennis, published by CABI ISBN 9781789243574 This monumental work, consisting of 500 pages, 10" X 7½" is the culmination of a lifetime of butterfly study. The author, a well-known expert on butterfly biology, has aimed to bring together in one volume all the main points of the nigh-innumerable papers in scientific journals on



this subject, giving due acknowledgement to every one of the sources. Thus, unlike his previous books, which have centred on the British butterflies, this one relates to butterflies worldwide – a vast field of knowledge.

The main text covers 'language and concepts of systems', butterfly biology', butterfly life history' and 'butterfly behaviour'. The book is lavishly illustrated with coloured flow diagrams and photographs mostly of live butterflies. At £150.00 the book is not cheap but for the specialist reader it is a 'tour de force'.

THIRTY YEARS OF BUTTERFLIES IN TRADITIONAL LANCASHIRE' by Peter Hardy published by Upfront Publishing. Currently for sale on Amazon, the Great British Bookshop and <https://www.fast-print.net/bookshop> ISBN: 9781784567071. The last few years has seen a number of butterfly county atlases produced, some of which have broken new ground and are excellent, e.g. Butterflies of Sussex by Blencowe and Hulme.



This new book takes a very different approach from that of the typical atlas. Taking three ten-year periods (the last decade of the 20th century and the first two decades of the 21st), the book documents the changes in distribution and abundance of all the butterfly species which occur or have occurred within vice-counties 58, 59, 60 and the Furness portion of 69, which equate to the true historic or traditional English counties of Cheshire and Lancashire. There is an extensive section listing sites across the region which, although far from being exhaustive, is useful. The species accounts themselves are generally concise and pay particular attention to changes in distribution during the period covered within the book, including maps that depict the changes, and these are particularly useful. However, the small size and quality of photographic images throughout makes some difficult to see: fewer larger and better quality images would have been beneficial. As intended, it is not a traditional atlas and what it does differently will not appeal to all. But if you want data, analysis and argument alongside up to date information there's nothing else available for the counties of Cheshire and Lancashire at present; so if you want detail I would recommend it.

Summarised from a review by **Rupert Adams**

MOTHS IN A KENDAL GARDEN – NEW SPECIES STILL TURNING UP

One might expect that after fifteen consecutive years' moth recording on a single garden site new species would rarely be encountered. Fortunately this has not been the case here almost in the centre of Kendal, and 2020 saw ten new moth species added to my cumulative garden tally of around 525. Similarly, in 2019 there were six new ones, and ten in 2018. Diminishing returns had set in with a vengeance years ago, so there's always a frisson of excitement when a new species shows its face. These could be common enough species which have somehow failed to make it until now, others which have marched inexorably northwards over the years, or other freak observations of something way out of its normal range.



Most of the recorded species have been at my garden trap, run for around 250 to 275 nights in a typical year. I used a Skinner 125w MV trap for the first five years, followed by a Robinson 125w MV for the past ten. I didn't really spot much difference between moth retention rates between the two trap types despite the claims of the Robinson's general

superiority. But my tally also includes some daytime records along with a few species identified by larval leaf-mines. For many of the micro species I've been grateful for expert identification help, especially in the earlier years. Of the 525 or so species recorded, around 320 have been the generally larger macro moths, and around 205 of the smaller micros (a quite artificial distinction with considerable size overlap). I'll deal here with the macro species and leave the micros perhaps for another time.

Six of my new 2020 Kendal species – all caught in the Robinson trap - were macro moths, perhaps the most exciting of these being **Bordered Pug** on 31st July, recorded to date at only a handful of Cumbrian sites. The others were: **Mullein**, a moth of normally calcareous habitats and at the northern end of its range, on 25th April; **Brown-tail**, a formerly south-eastern species now rapidly expanding its range, on 23rd June: **Scalloped Hook-tip** on 1st August, not so rare in Cumbria but had hitherto carefully avoided our garden; on 5th and 8th August the curiously named and large Noctuid **Old Lady**. Finally among the newcomers was **Brindled Green**, a primarily woodland species thinly spread across Cumbria, on 8th September.



Well, that's just the tally for a single year and I expect to continue seeing new species from time to time, and this makes garden moth recording still worthwhile even if abundance of many species has tailed off over the years. Perhaps still my most



exciting garden record was of the Noctuid **Waved Black** in July 2011, and this probably remains the only Cumbrian record, though the species has been spotted a few times on the walls of Carnforth Station subway – this just in Lancashire however. Has this predominantly south-eastern species been hitching train rides? There's often a temptation on a cool wet and windy night to think "why bother?" but sometimes a rarity

sneaks in even in these conditions, and I try not to let the weather deter me. What will 2021 bring, I wonder?

If you're interested in moths but have never run a garden trap why not give it a go? You can get good results even in a semi-urban setting as mine is, and there are trap types to suit all pockets, as they say. There are excellent field guides and websites to help beginners with identification, and it's a good idea to start off in early spring when there are fewer species round, thus giving a better chance of identifying most of them. Finally, I'd urge all Cumbria's moth recorders to submit their records annually to Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre for inclusion in both local and national databases - records stuck in a notebook at the back of a drawer aren't much use to anybody! So, good luck with your garden moth recording.

Martin Tordoff

Introduction to Branch Sightings Webpages

The sightings pages of Cumbria branch allow users of the website to submit their reports of butterfly and day-flying moths and the records will appear immediately for others to see. Inputting a sighting involves filling out some limited personal information, the location of the sighting, the species seen, and supplying any extra information such as a comment or an image. The grid reference of the sighting can be specified via locating a cursor on an interactive map. A new feature for 2021 is the inclusion of the life-stage of the sighting, this defaults to adult but other stages can be chosen to allow reports to be supplied all year around. The sightings pages are intended to be simple to use and various steps have been taken to streamline the process, such as remembering previously inputted data by the user and providing auto-complete lists of locations which have been reported before. The branch

welcomes your sightings reports and these can be supplied here:

<https://www.cumbria-butterflies.org.uk/report/>.

The sightings pages include various ways of presenting the data which have evolved since the system was introduced in 2014. The default view is a basic table of the current month's sightings, this provides a simple idea of which species are currently on-the-wing and where. Data for previous months and years can also be selected. A more advanced table can be chosen which includes more in depth information and allows the data to be filtered by matching column values in the table, such as by species or town. A geographic location, such as the name of a town or a grid reference, can be specified along with a radius to provide sightings within that particular locality. In addition, the opposite corners of a rectangle can be specified via grid references to present the sightings in that region. The basic and advanced views of the sightings pages also contain different ways to present the data, such as any images that were provided with reports or the location of the currently selected sightings as cursors on an interactive map. The current sightings data can be seen here: <https://www.cumbria-butterflies.org.uk/sightings/>.

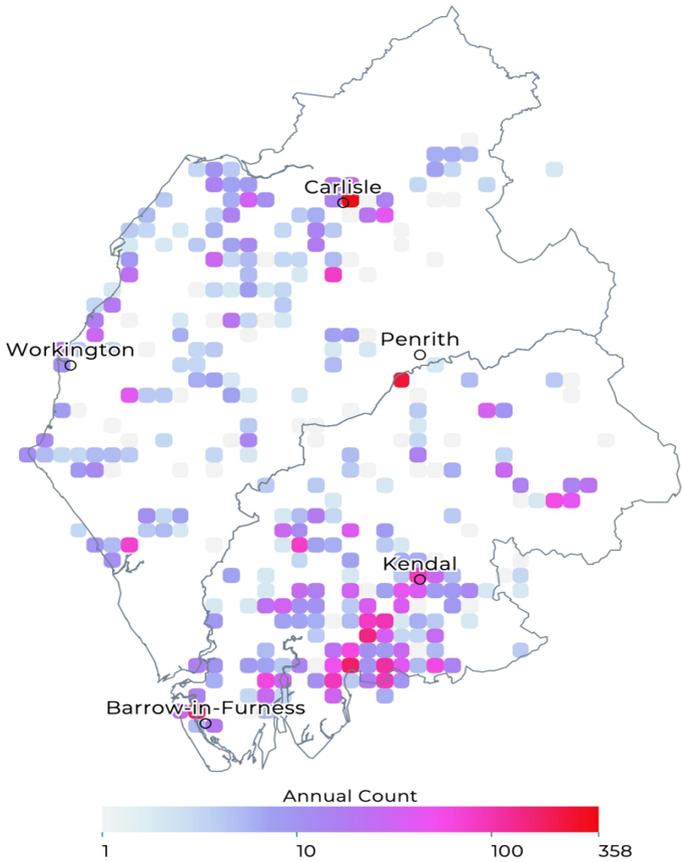
The sightings pages have collected over 25 thousand individual reports in the seven years it has been running. The records are provided to the county recorder at Tullie House in Carlisle at the end of each year. The sightings data help to inform conservation work in Cumbria by providing a record of the distribution and abundance of species and how this changes over time.

More recently, work has been done to extend the graphical capabilities of the sightings pages to present the data in various visual ways. Like the existing table views, these methods draw on the current sightings data and evolve automatically over time without human intervention. The visualisations can be seen by clicking the link on the sightings page or following this link:

<https://www.cumbria-butterflies.org.uk/sightings/visual>. These include a variety of different types of graphics which can be selected via the Mode dropdown, such as histograms, bar-charts, pie-charts and more elaborate examples such as streamgraphs, ridgeline plots and frequency distributions on a map. The intention is that further ways to visualise the data will be added in the future so check back later in the year to see the latest developments..!

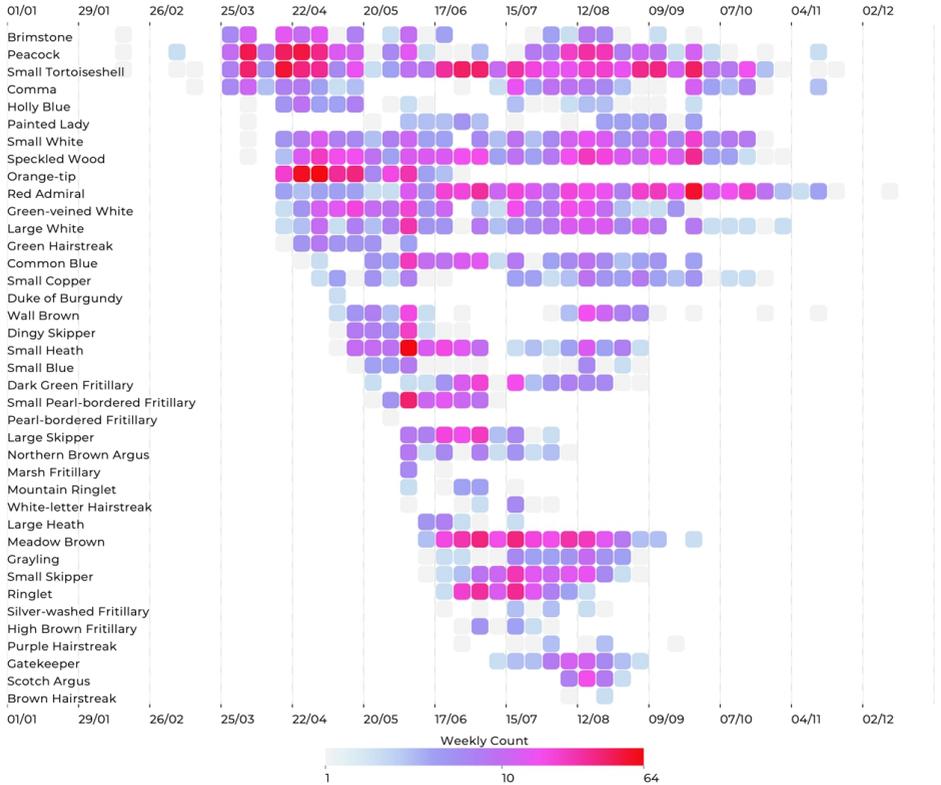
Some examples of the type of images that can be produced are provided here with comments from Chris Winnick.

Cumbria Sightings Distribution 2020: Butterfly: All Species: 4541 Reports.



Although this shows where butterflies were found it also highlights where most people record! If it did not reflect human population density as much as butterfly distribution then central Carlisle would be the butterfly hotspot of Cumbria! That said there is a clear concentration of sightings in the relatively sparsely populated areas west of both Kendal and Carlisle: the former is the best limestone upland to visit for rare butterflies and the latter includes the highly regarded Solway Plain and Coast.

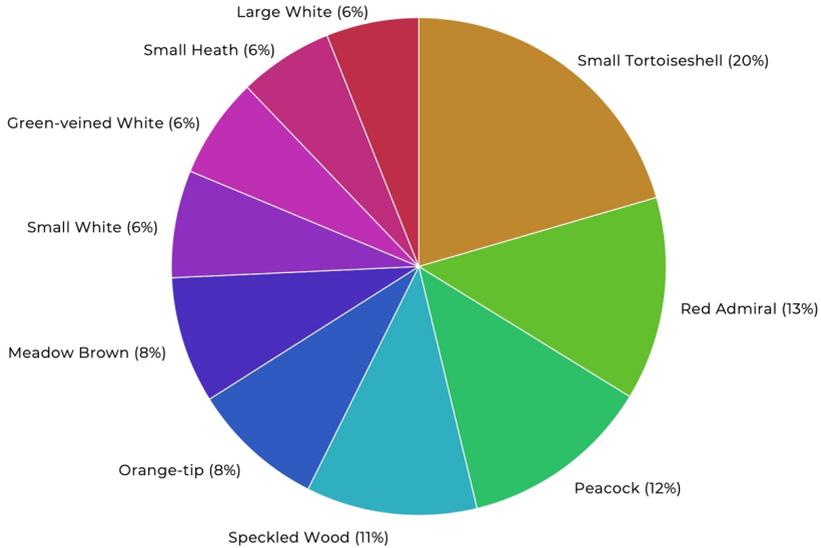
Cumbria Flight Times 2020: Butterfly: 4538 Reports.



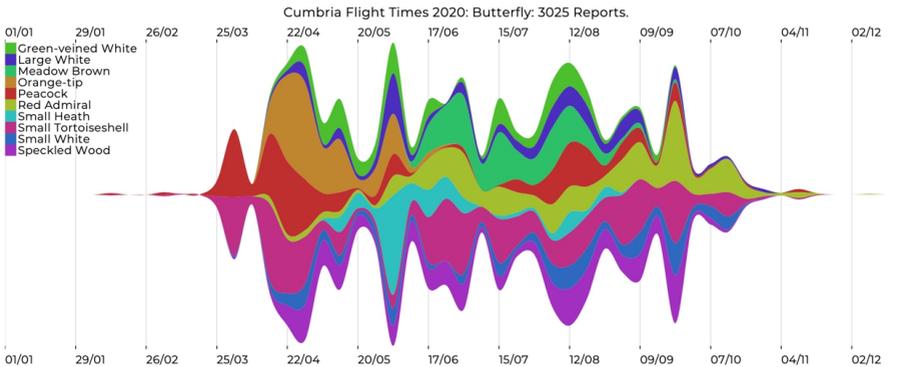
Here the species flight times have been arranged in order of emergence. Hibernating adults of Brimstone, Peacock and Small Tortoiseshell emerge first but although Red Admiral appeared a little later they continue to be recorded right through until December! Some species are bi-voltine and have two broods giving a 'double peak' appearance. Older reference books still say the Common Blue is uni-voltine in Cumbria however with climate change it would otherwise be impossible to explain why they are on the wing from April to September if this species was not bi-voltine.

Note: in 2020 some rare species were under-recorded. For example HBF emerged almost at the same time as DGF and due to very warm spring weather both emerged nearly two weeks earlier than usual.

Cumbria Top 10 Species: 2020: 3025 Reports.



It is interesting that Vanessids [ST,RA and P] make up nearly half of all the top ten most recorded species. Of the 4 'whites' that make up 24% of the top ten it is the Orange Tip that is most reported however the Speckled Wood has been the most successful as although registering 11% it did not exist in Cumbria before the new millennium!



This shows how the relative dominance of the 'top ten' varies through their flight period. In April OT, P and ST dominated. By mid June MB, RA, SH and SW were dominant but by mid September Vanessids returned [RD and ST] together with SW and SW.

M Eastlick

Green Recovery of Morecambe Bay's Woodland Project

In November 2020 Butterfly Conservation was successful in its bid to the Green Recovery Challenge Fund in Morecambe Bay. This will enable us to target woodland management to benefit a range of butterfly and moth species. Green Recovery was set up to provide funding for environmental charities and their partners to start work on projects to protect species, to find nature-based solutions to tackle climate change, to connect people with nature and to secure jobs.

The Green Recovery of Morecambe Bay Woodlands project enables us to create a new team to develop sustainable methods of management for butterflies whilst encouraging long term volunteer and community engagement. We have already begun developing links with teenagers and vulnerable people.

For the next 12 months we will be targeting management on seventeen sites. We will clear woodland rides and glades to benefit High Brown Fritillary, Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Duke of Burgundy butterflies. This will open up areas of limestone grassland for species such as the Dingy Skipper, Northern Brown Argus, Least Minor Moths and White Spotted Sable Moth. We will create woodland edge habitat for Brown Hairstreak and Barred Tooth-striped moths.

Alongside Project Manager Martin Wain, we have taken on Eve Grayson as an Engagement Officer. The funding has also allowed us to provide work for a number of local contractors including Lee Bassett as Woodland Assistant, Claire Harris as Wellbeing and Woodbank Officer, Megan Oversby as a Social Media Assistant, Justine Patton as Moth Delivery Officer and a Wood Pasture Grazing Advisor.

The project includes some exciting aims: we are striving to reach out to mental health and wellbeing groups, train young people in woodland tasks, encourage more people to record butterfly and moth species, develop sustainable grazing management of sites and discover new and sustainable markets for wood products.

We can also fund two small post-graduate projects, the planting of 2,000 trees, 50 wild privet plants for the Barred-Tooth Striped Moth and 500 cowslips. Furthermore, we will employ two artists to work with us on moth engagement.

Woodland management has already started this winter with contractors working on a number of woodlands, carrying out ride and scrub clearance and coppice work to create habitats for butterflies. In the summer, if all goes well, we would like to encourage people to survey and record butterflies and to see the work we have done

on guided walks. We want to engage the public with woodland and wood pasture management for our rare and threatened Morecambe Bay butterflies. Here are a few members of the new team...

Eve Grayson



Hi, I'm Eve, the new engagement officer for the Green Recovery for Morecambe Bay's Woodlands project. I just wanted to introduce myself and to share a bit about me and what I'm looking forward to over the next year of the project. Looking back, most of my job roles have incorporated both people and wildlife, from reindeer herding in the Cairngorms to leading

Forest Schools sessions.

In my new role for Butterfly Conservation, I'm thrilled to be embarking on another great project back in the area in which I grew up. From a young age, I have been involved with cattle grazing carried out in the area and know many of the sites well. I have seen adjacent areas transform and flourish over the years with increasing invertebrate biodiversity, such as the re-establishment of yellow meadow ant hills on Whitbarrow Scar. These in turn have provided micro-habitats supporting a wealth of wildflowers, butterflies and moths. It is very exciting to be involved with linking up these sites, and, being a social butterfly myself, I can't wait to meet the rest of the team, branch members and volunteers, both current and future.

Lee Bassett

My name is Lee Bassett and I'm a woodsman with a passion for butterflies. When I heard about the new Green Recovery Fund Project in Morecambe Bay, I was keen to find out more and get involved. I'm fascinated in the connection between woodland management and butterfly conservation and using traditional landscape management techniques for the restoration and promotion of butterfly habitats. So many of our once widespread species have had long associations with coppice woodlands - the Pearl-bordered Fritillary was once known as the 'Woodsman's Friend'.

Through the project, I hope to conduct and facilitate woodland management with a range of groups including volunteers, partner organisations and contractors. I'm also hoping to work on coppice craft volunteer work party days, whereby we can process



the coppiced materials into woodland products for sale in the local area. If we're able to identify a market for the products then I hope this is something that could continue into the future, with the money raised being used to fund essential habitat management.

I'm really looking forward to getting started in these amazing limestone woodlands, creating and restoring many acres of habitat for the incredible diversity of lepidoptera species found in this area.

Claire Harris We are mindful of the difficulties that some people and their families are going through at the moment. We are keen to find ways to engage communities and vulnerable people that are mutually beneficial for their wellbeing and our habitat management. For example, a coup has been cut on Whitbarrow creating excellent early successional habitat

for High Brown Fritillary butterflies; we processed some of the wood from this clearance work into small logs using a local contractor's branch logger. These were distributed through a local volunteer to people who are struggling with the cost of heating their home. The remainder of the log bags



will be distributed through The Well (a local charity working with struggling families in the Morecambe area) and some will be going to Help The Aged. We are very grateful to Lynn Peck for her assistance with this.

I am looking forward to setting up partnership events where we combine NHS based projects such as Social Green Prescribing with volunteer work parties for butterflies. This will provide people with an opportunity to get out into the woods and hopefully better their mental, social and physical health. A number of us will be attending training events being run by the National Academy of Social Prescribing to help us to provide a better service to the people who are prescribed a 'green prescription' by their doctor.

We already formed links with the Morecambe Bay Integrated Care Commission (ICC) and attended one of their monthly meetings. We are in discussions with three local groups who are keen to get out into the woodlands as soon as the restrictions allow them to.

Dallam High School in Milnthorpe are planning to bring some of their international boarding pupils into the woodlands, and we hope to work closely with Lancaster and Morecambe College when and if restrictions get easier.

Woodbanks are a great vehicle for getting people out, and volunteers undertaking conservation management tasks take a fair share of the fire wood home with them. The Dalton Woodbank Group is ready to start work as soon as the Covid restrictions allow it. We have also been working with South Lakes District Council and have agreed on a program of works in Yew Barrow Wood, Grange-over-Sands.

My name is **Megan Oversby** and I'm the social media assistant for the Green Recovery project. I graduated in 2020 with a BSc in Zoology and wanted to become more involved in the conservation going on in my local area. I've been very fortunate that most of the fieldwork experiences I've had have been abroad, however since graduating and with local lockdowns I've taken a great interest in the wildlife and habitats that the North West has to offer. I've always had an interest in butterflies and look forward to spotting the first of our beautiful species each year, so I am delighted to be working more closely with Butterfly Conservation. I am also very keen to strike up a passion for getting hands-on in nature amongst vulnerable groups within the community. I believe one of the simplest ways to work towards good mental health is a connection to nature.

Through my role within social media, I hope to create engagement with projects such as social prescribing and promote the goals of the Green Recovery. Creating community engagement with the project is vital to its success and sustainability. We have an Instagram account - @morecambebaynature



and will soon be adding both a facebook page and website in order to have the widest community reach. In my role, I hope to encourage those who would benefit from directly engaging in the projects by sharing feedback from our wood bank groups and volunteers and tracking the progress of each of our projects.

Martin Wain

Demoiselles: a diversion for butterfly-devotees?

'What are the black butterflies'? That was a question a friend of mine was once asked on the streets of Ambleside - in a year of superabundance. She was able to explain politely that they weren't butterflies at all but damselflies. And not just any damselflies but demoiselles. In some parts of the world these are known, rather prosaically, as 'Broad-winged Damselflies' but the alternative of 'Jewel-wing' is much



Beautiful Demoiselle, male

more fitting. We only have two species - which is true of much of Europe - but they make up for it by being two of the most exotic-looking insects you could hope to see away from the tropics.

It is true, they *are* rather butterfly-like, with broad, coloured wings, more leisurely in flight and a good deal larger than more typical damselflies. We are lucky in Cumbria to have both species, the Banded Demoiselle and the

Beautiful Demoiselle. Seen close-up, they are anything but black. Both have metallic, iridescent blue-green bodies that shimmer and sparkle in the sun and vary in colour according to how the light is

reflected. Their wings carry more of the same colour, though only in the males. In the male Beautiful Demoiselle, the colour almost fills the wings - hence the 'black butterfly' comment. The Banded has large blue-green blotches, with clear areas at the bases and tips of the wings. The females of both species are much less showy, having either a greenish or brownish tinge to their transparent net-veined wings.



Banded Demoiselles, mating

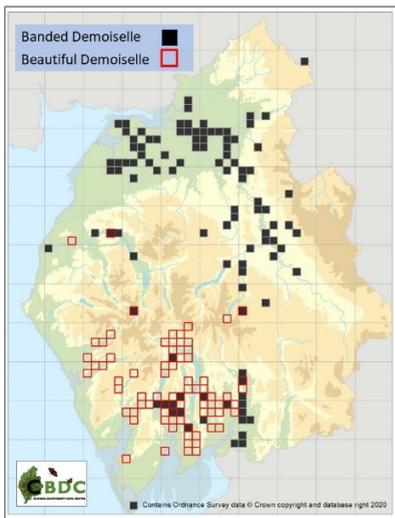
Interestingly, the demoiselle family are unusual amongst dragonflies to show true courtship behaviour. Males take up waterside positions, and from there launch display flights at any passing female. This process often consists of elaborate acrobatics, especially wing-fanning, in front of a female, trying to get her to mate near a site chosen because of its suitability for egg-laying. Both species need

unpolluted flowing water, though differ subtly in their needs, the Banded preferring slower flow rates. Both also need well-vegetated watersides where males can perch immediately above the water. Occasionally, both species can even occur at the same site, but usually where there are small differences in water speed to suit them both. Egg-laying females can totally submerge to lay eggs into aquatic plants.



Not that long ago, Bandeds in Cumbria could only be seen on the lower reaches of a few rivers flowing into the Solway Firth – then an isolated outpost. Since about 1990, the species has shown a marked range expansion. At the same time, it seems to have achieved a ‘pincer movement’ with colonisation in south Cumbria presumed to have come from

Lancashire. In 2019 it was even found near Ambleside at a site where only Beautiful Demoiselles had been known. Beautiful Demoiselles are mainly in the south and western Lake District (see map) though once used to occur near Carlisle. They have so far shown less propensity for change, though recent sightings in the eastern Lake District are encouraging.



Perhaps in the future, the ‘black butterflies’ and their advancing relative will be increasing seen together? Reports of either species will be welcomed.

David Clarke (British Dragonfly Society County Recorder):

davidclarke6970@gmail.com

Butterflies of the Wider Countryside

I know that many of us look forward to the annual Big Butterfly Count in mid-summer. This is not only because we enjoy watching such beautiful insects but also feeling pride in gathering data in a scientific structured way that benefits conservation. Why not, this year, try to record and report on your butterfly sightings throughout the spring and summer? Population monitoring of our generalist, more widespread species such as Red Admiral, Peacock, Common Blue and Meadow Brown is increasingly important. Understandably conservationists tend to target the obviously vulnerable habitat specialists but of course environmental changes are affecting all insects. The less studied species can suffer significant declines before it is apparent that something needs to be done. Citizen scientists can have a huge impact on monitoring our common (often becoming less common) butterflies. Cumbria Butterfly Conservation sightings page on our web site is the obvious place to begin. If you have a favourite walk, why not count the butterflies on a timed section, note the weather conditions and

then enter the results on the Sightings page as a separate entry for each species. It is easy to enter several records for one location and you will find that your notes in the Comments box, for example *30 minutes observation in full sun, temperature 20C, light wind, get carried*

forward to the next entry along with all the other details. All you need to change is the species and number. Don't forget the day-flying moths if you are confident about identification. Repeat records like this from one site are of far more value than the occasional one-off observation. Everything you enter on our Sightings page is submitted to the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre that gathers and collates all data on the county's natural history, wildlife sites and habitats. This enhances the value of your observations by putting it into context with other observations. It is then available to planners and developers enabling sustainable management of land resources.

Required fields are denoted by *.

Contact Details	
Recorder:	*
Email:	*
Telephone:	
Sighting Date and Location	
Date:	5 Mar 2021 *
Site:	*
Town:	*
Grid Ref.:	*
Sighting Species	
Group:	Butterfly CMoth *
Species:	*
Number:	*
Life Stage:	Adult *
Extra Details	
Comment:	



Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey Square Details Form

Please mark your route and numbered sections on the colour map, take a copy for future surveys and return the original to WCBS, Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5QP by 31 September 30th. Please use pen that will show well when copied, e.g. black felt-tip. Please do not return a photocopy.



Square	NY4830	Branch	Cumbria	Recorder name: (please enter)	
--------	--------	--------	---------	----------------------------------	--

Additional information for any future volunteers (landowner contact details, where to park etc.)

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map with the permission of the controller of HMSO.
©Crown Copyright. All rights reserved. NERC Licence Number: 100017897.

The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey is a national and more sophisticated version of this simple transect.

Cumbria has been allocated about 40 randomly generated 1-km squares. Volunteers are asked to walk slowly along two routes across the square, recording butterflies and day-flying moths that are encountered within an imaginary 5 metre box surrounding them. Ideally this is done once each month in spring and summer, but July and August are the key dates. Our designated locations range from urban areas on Walney Island to fell tops like Branstree. Coverage was understandably reduced last year but even so we managed twenty out of

thirty seven squares. The random and arbitrary distribution of our designated squares means that it is often difficult for me as WCBS coordinator to match butterfly enthusiast keen to participate, to a convenient vacant square. Driving half way across the county is not to be encouraged. And you would probably find the sun had disappeared, and hence the butterflies, when you got there! Among areas needing coverage are rural walks near Penrith and at Thursgill in the Howgills. So if you live not too far away and can tell a Peacock from a Small Tortoiseshell please get in touch. I am happy to advise anyone who wishes to set up their own little transect route and would be delighted to welcome volunteers to join my dedicated band of WCBS surveyors.

Martin Chadwick

From Lapsed Lepidopterist to Butterfly Collector

Oh dear – I lapsed again! Too late with my article for the autumn newsletter, I now have that déjà vu feeling, writing again in the “cruellest month” for lepidopterists. However on the upside I have the whole of 2020 to relate....if you can call that an upside!

Lepidopterally, it started well and the first trap night of the year at Beech Cottage, 22 Jan, yielded a new species for the garden – Spring Usher (4); two more then recorded the following night at Dubwath Silver Meadows. On 10 April, after two months of un-mothy nights, another newcomer appeared in the BC trap – a Blossom Underwing.

For years I have tried to persuade myself that a particularly light sandy-coloured Common Quaker might be this species, but as soon as I set eyes on this one specimen, I knew how foolish my past pretences had been. Quite different and very lovely – in a light sandy-coloured kind of way.



Blossom Underwing

Glaucous Shears appeared at both BC and DSM, not a regular attendee and two Ochreous Pugs added to the garden list on 26 May. The welcome spring heat persuaded Hummingbird Hawks over from the continent into our garden in early June and as shorts became everyday wear, we waded through Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries at DSM as they revelled in the sunshine and the nectar of Marsh Cinquefoil flowers. It really was their year up our way and we rejoiced in finding five other nearby colonies, including one within walking distance up the Coledale valley.



Manchester Treble Bar

After a routine wet July(!), the heat built again giving rise to tremendous thunderstorms on the night of 10 August.....I put the trap out at DSM (don't tell the Health & Safety branch)! 47 species came through unscathed including Square-spotted Clay, Lemke's Gold Spot and a first for me up here – Manchester Treble-bar, without a scale out of place. How do they do that?! The following night, with temperatures

not having subsided that much, 684 individuals of 64 species came to light at the other Braithwaite garden, including five Garden Dart, a species I became belatedly excited about, thanks to MT, in last spring's newsletter. A garden of treasures that one.

The last trap night of the year was on 9 November, in the same garden. It was a warm night and 133 suitably camouflaged seasonal moths turned up: Umbers, Quakers, Chestnuts and others all attired in tones of russet, tawny, ochre, red/green and orange/yellow. Beautiful. A good autumn collection for November, but in



general numbers were down in 2020. A warm July night in 2019 at this location drew in nearly 2,000 moths: in 2020, 400 turned up and not even thunderously humid nights saw half the previous year's record. This fluctuation in numbers is presumably down to some 'boom and bust' cyclical pattern that can happen with all creatures. But in the nine years I have been recording in Cumbria there is definitely a general downward trend in the numbers I am getting.

2020 then – how best to remember it? I shall avoid the obvious and simply recall it as my 'Small Pearl-bordered Year'. Also the year in which, without any work in live theatre happening, I pointed my camera at myself and came up with 'The Butterfly Collector'. Parts 1 & 2 are there to witness on my website and part three may become a live show near you – when it's allowed. Let's hope it's soon! Safe recording in 2021. www.pmacproductions.co.uk

Peter Macqueen

***Cupido minimus* – we still love you to bits!**

It has a lovely name doesn't it, and that's not a coincidence because the Small Blue is simply a lovely little butterfly. It is only the size of your little finger nail when it has its wings closed. So why is its very existence continually under threat? The answer to that is fairly easy and that is because its larval and egg laying foodplant Kidney Vetch grows best on poor substrate soils such as brownfield former industrial sites.



Those sites are almost always under threat of development to create jobs or housing needs and it is a very difficult job for Local Authorities who have to balance those needs with their responsibilities to conserve nature. Recent history indicates that wildlife sites have come off worst and almost all of our best sites have been lost in full or to a great extent. Indeed our two best breeding colonies for Small Blues north of the river in Workington were under threat of severe damage or complete destruction as recently as February 2021 but fortunately Butterfly Conservation Cumbria with the aid of other objectors managed to negotiate a suitable alternative plan which resulted in a win/win situation whereby both colonies avoided development damage.

That was a relief in the extreme but I have to say, if B.C. Cumbria did not monitor such planning matters and act appropriately it bothers me to think who else would in the future. In saying that I do not wish to blame the local authority planning people because they have a difficult job to do and in Allerdale they do help to fund the Workington Nature Partnership and without them and their fantastic volunteer groups we would be unable to manage all the habitat ourselves. I do think it would



be a constructive thing for the local authority to do however if they had a stated strategy for conserving key wildlife and their key breeding habitats. There are stated strategies for housing and job creation but no strategy for wildlife conservation which in reality means that all sites might be and often are under threat. 'Soap box' thing apart, just how are

we doing at present to conserve our lovely little Small Blues? As I mentioned above we are managing as best we can with the help of the Workington Nature Partnership's Raegan and Susan plus their dedicated volunteers such as Midge, Hughie, Greg, Deano and Shaun to mention just a few.

I must also give a mention to Cumbria Wildlife Trust who have given tremendous support via their Get Cumbria Buzzing Project. Funding from that project has helped us greatly to create and restore much additional suitable habitat along the coastline. Many more patches of wildflower habitat have been created and seeded in Maryport and Workington and I'm not the only one who can't wait to see the results of our efforts this coming Spring. All being well there should be a riot of colour in the areas we have created both as Small Blue butterfly breeding habitat and just as importantly as nectaring sites for the much wider pollinators such as bees and similar invertebrate species including other species of butterflies. As we have done our work there has been a great deal of interest from passers by so it was good that we could explain what we were doing and why. Almost without exception we had total support, the exception being one person who thought we were wasting our time. He is entitled to his opinion but hopefully the results will prove otherwise.

Many of our newly created patches will take a bit longer to mature as nature works in its own time but the helping hand we have given it should at least give us cause for optimism that many of our newly created and seeded patches will indeed



provide that desired riot of colour and be enjoyed by a good number of pollinating insects.

Hopefully more and more people will come to realise just how important pollinating insects are. Raegan, Susan, Midge, Hughie, Greg, Deano, Shaun and me at least already do!

Please respect government guidelines but enjoy the best of 2021 if you can by enjoying what nature has to offer in our wonderfully diverse habits in Cumbria.

Steve Doyle

Photographic Quiz cont. Answers on p14





CUMBRIA BRANCH OFFICERS



Branch Chairman

Chris Winnick
The Old Vicarage,
Queens Road,
Kendal, LA9 4PL
01539 728254
chriswinnick@tiscali.co.uk

Conservation Officer Done jointly by the Branch Committee.

Treasurer David Eastlick, 16, Highfield Road, Grange over Sands,
LA11 7JA, 015395 32076 dt.eastlick@gmail.com

Moth Officer Martin Tordoff, 1 Fletcher Drive, Kendal, LA9 7DL
01539 735935 mtordoff42@gmail.com

Membership Secretary Jennifer Rae, 01524 762193, jennifer.rae68@btinternet.com

Committee Members Peter Boardman Wendy Nelson
Martin Chadwick Rob Petley-Jones Lynne Farrell

Newsletter Editor Karen McLellan, Collin Ford, Great Corby, Carlisle, CA4 8NH
karenm371@outlook.com

Webmaster Mark Eastlick

Nationally Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth,
Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5QP, Reg. in England 2206468
Charity Reg. 254937 (England & Wales), SCO392268 (Scotland)

Regional Officer Dave Wainwright, Butterfly Conservation
Regional Office.

and assistant Low Barns, Witton le Wear, Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham
DL14 0AG, 01388 488428
dwainwright@butterfly-conservation.org

Assisted in N. Lancs and Cumbria by Martin Wain

Martin Chadwick (WCBS co-ordinator for Cumbria) martin_chadwick@hotmail.com

