



DUMFRIES & GALLOWAY BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SUB-GROUP NEWSLETTER SPRING 2011

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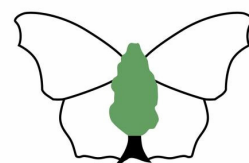
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**Butterfly
Conservation
Scotland**

Welcome



Welcome to the first issue of the Dumfries and Galloway 'Butterfly Conservation Sub-Group' Newsletter. I hope the newsletter keeps you up to date with the things you want to know about and give you some ideas for future activities you can become involved in. Any suggestions for improvements are welcome as are any articles or content you wish to contribute

towards future issues. Remember it is your group and we want to help deliver the requirements for all the membership. You will get more from your involvement with the group the more you put in to it so please do get involved in whichever ways you feel you can. We hope you have a good year observing, recording or even just enjoying watching butterflies. Remember to share your passion for butterflies with others and encourage them to get involved too. Most importantly we hope to see you at one of the organised events and activities which are planned in the coming months.

Progress

Launch of Dumfries and Galloway Sub-Group at Mersehead 26th June 2010

The Launch of the Dumfries and Galloway Sub-Group was held at the Sulwath Centre, Mersehead RSPB Reserve.

35 people attended with superb weather augmenting the day's activities. Six short informal talks were given and 2 workshops held; and moth traps set up the previous night held a promising catch (enough to keep the keen moth-ers amongst us happy).

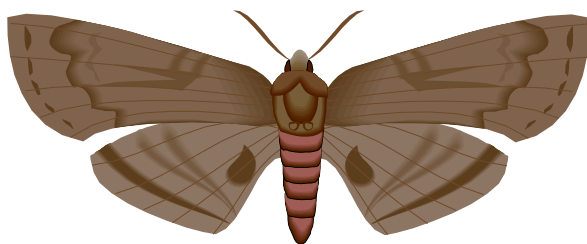
The proceedings were open by Tina Flinn, the sub-group Chairman. A review of the outcome of the inaugural meeting in April was presented by Richard Eagles. This was held to provide a focus for the group and indicate the way forward. Practical field-work based activities were considered the priority and main interest, with emphasis on encouraging and assisting people to survey and record the less well known (and under-recorded) areas. Other activities such as attending public events and general 'awareness raising' are not to be excluded but will depend on group members availability and willingness to help. What was not considered to be



appropriate was to hold regular evening talks during the winter; a couple of informal indoor meetings at beginning and end of the season, primarily for fieldwork planning and discussion would be adequate.

Richard finished with a quick round-up of species seen recently and highlighting the fact that the SW Scotland Branch had recently celebrated its 25th Anniversary.

Scott Shanks, who had travelled down from Glasgow, represented SW Branch. In his role as SW Scotland Butterfly Recorder he gave an overview of various recording schemes for Butterflies, particularly the idea of taking on a local patch which is monitored regularly. The second part of his talk dealt with the exciting and innovative Small Blue re-introduction project. This is an ambitious scheme to bring back a butterfly that has vanished from SW Scotland. The project has involved selecting and preparing a suitable site (Gailes Marsh SWT Reserve in Ayrshire) and getting people to grow the larval food plant (Kidney Vetch). And a suitable stock of small blues had to be found to provide the new population (from a Cumbrian site that is about to disappear due to development).



Alison Robertson then described the Garden Moth Scheme and encouraged people to take part. This requires regular (weekly) moth trapping in the garden and identifying the catch. (Fear

not, ready help is always at hand! And if a photograph is taken, then even 'National Experts' are willing to assist).

Andy Riches went through the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme, again encouraging people to take on regular monitoring, this time along a defined transect. As the D&G UKBMS Transect co-ordinator, Andy is very willing to provide information and assistance.

Mark Pollitt, Manager of the D&G Environmental Resource Centre, gave a light hearted talk to encourage us to send in our records. He also outlined a new D&G Moth web-site which when fully on stream will provide an impressive wealth of information about Moths and include links to the National Biological Records Centre via the NBM Gateway.

Stuart Graham, SNH Area Officer for Nithsdale, finished off the morning session. He started with a resume of the role of SNH and its links with organizations such as Butterfly Conservation. Again it was emphasized how local recording is vital for Conservation Planning.

After lunch participants were divided into 2 groups for the workshops. While one group was taken round the Mersehead Reserve Butterfly Transect, the other had a 'mothing' session examining and identifying the previous nights' catch. The groups then switched roles so everybody had the opportunity to take part in both activities.

The contents of the Moth trap are detailed further on in this newsletter in the survey section.

The day finished around 4.30pm with a summing up session and coffee.

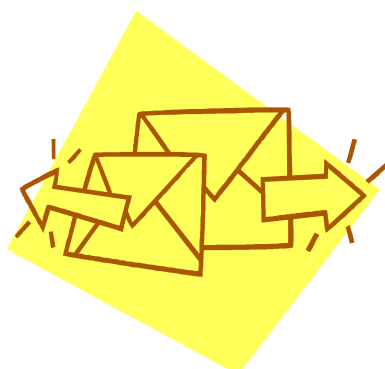
Formation of the Steering Group

A number of the attendees volunteered to join the Steering Group and an enthusiastic group of people representing a good range of background interests from species specialists and representatives of an array of local conservation organisations including the local Environmental Resource Centre, SEPA, SNH and SWT. Anyone interested in becoming involved in the Steering Group should let us know.

Roles of the Steering Group Members

Name	Position	Email
Tina Flinn	Chair	blueamber23@gmail.com
Susan Woods	Treasurer/Secretary	dumgalbutterflies@yahoo.com
Richard Eagles	Treasurer/Secretary	dumgalbutterflies@yahoo.com
Owen Figgis		owenfiggis@lineone.net
Stuart Graham	Newsletter Editor	stuart.graham@snh.gov.uk
Jackie Medicks	Minute Secretary	medicksj@live.co.uk
Mark Pollitt	Tech Guy	mpollitt@dgerc.org.uk
Anna White		annawhite43@yahoo.co.uk

The Group Chairman(Tina) can be contacted on 07780548934 and Susan and Richard on 01387 730301 although contact via email would be preferred.



Update

Use of Group Moth Trap

The Group has a Robinson moth trap which can be used by members. In addition the group has recently been gifted Vivienne Bremner's late husband's Skinner Moth Trap. The Steering Group are very grateful to Vivienne for her generosity. Please contact the Group Secretary if you would like to borrow the trap.

Members to become involved in surveying

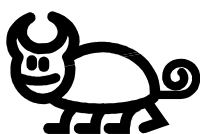
Views expressed by the attendees at the first two public meetings of the group (Castle Douglas and Mersehead) during 2010 made clear that the members wanted to play a role in surveying. The Steering Group will be in contact with the members to canvas their views on suitable sites local to them which they might wish to survey. Whilst some may wish to get involved in the "transects" approach (promoted by Andy Riches at the Mersehead Launch) others may wish to go for the "Local Patch" approach (promoted by Scott Shanks at the Mersehead launch) as an introduction to surveying. Tina Flinn (our chair) will be contacting members by email to see if anyone can get involved. The way forward is to give Tina your postcode. This can then be compared with the butterfly records for the region. If there are areas with little or no data near to where you live then you could take the lead in trying to provide additional records for this area. This way we ensure that the valuable survey time any volunteers put in is being used to best effect.



Comma Postcard Survey

This year Butterfly Conservation is planning a Comma postcard survey and on-line survey. The survey will primarily target Central Scotland where the Comma is now colonising but it is still helpful to receive Dumfries and Galloway records to monitor its spread here too.

'Bugs in Gardens' Surveys - Holly Blue and Hummingbird Hawk-moth



The "Bugs in Gardens" project which is run by Lisa Fergusson of the Local Environmental Resources Centre is promoting surveys this year of Holly Blue and Hummingbird Hawk Moth. Postcards of these species have been produced and are being distributed around the region to

engage as many people as possible in recording. Please contact the ERC if you are able to help distribute these postcards within Dumfries and Galloway. The Bugs in Gardens Project which aims to encourage wildlife friendly gardening and promote invertebrate recording in gardens also has two actinic moth-traps for loan.

Items for Butterfly Conservations Newsletter

If any members have any contributions they would like to submit to the Butterfly Conservation e-newsletter they should contact Shona Greig from the Stirling office of Butterfly Conservation Scotland at:

sgreig@butterfly-conservation.org

Plant for Butterflies Campaign

Butterfly Conservation in partnership with Marks & Spencer launched its Plant for Butterflies Campaign with a Press Release on 4 April 2011 to encourage people to plant butterfly friendly plants in their gardens in the run up to the "Big Butterfly Count". The "Big Butterfly Count" is planned for 16th-31st July 2011.

Events during 2010

During the year the group were involved in other events and raising publicity in addition to the launch at Mersehead. The group was present at the Environment Fair, the launch of the 'Butterflies of Dumfries and Galloway' Guide at Mabie Forest during the Pearl Bordered Fritillary (PBF) flight season and the Galloway Wood Festival. An SWT open event was attended at Colvend where a moth trap had been set up. Very successful and well attended field trips were organised to the Cairnmore of Fleet area and the Scour Water in Nithsdale.

Survey Reports

Dingy Skipper Survey 2008 and 2009

SNH commissioned a Research Report on the status of Dingy Skipper (DS) within SW Scotland during 2008 and 2009. The purpose was to gain an impression of the current distribution of the



species. Both surveys were completed by Jessie Mackay (Wormell). Weather during the survey season in 2008 was not particularly good hence the decision to repeat the survey again in 2009. Weather during the 2009 survey season was not optimal either and this could have affected the results to some extent.

The report concluded that DS had suffered a major decline across Dumfries and Galloway in recent years due to changes in habitat management leading to fragmentation and isolation. Coastal habitats are most affected by sub-optimal grazing patterns and forest sites are most affected by succession (spread of woodland).

DS were only recorded at 7 of the 33 sites visited during 2009. DS were recorded at 4 Wigtownshire Sites (Ringdoo Point, Garheugh - Luce Bay, Carleton Fell Coast, St Ninians Cave), 2 Kirkcudbrightshire sites (Dalbeattie Forest – Cloack, Lochaber Loch – Mabie Forest) and 1 Dumfriesshire Site (Chapelcross Power Plant)

Pearl Bordered Fritillary Survey 2010

SNH commissioned a Research Report on the status of Pearl Bordered Fritillary (PBF) within SW Scotland during 2010. The survey was completed by R Buckland, J W MacKay (Wormell) and R Mearns. Given the brief nature of the flight season it was decided to progress with three surveyors operating at the same time in suitable conditions. Fortunately the weather was good throughout the survey season and a high degree of confidence can be attributed to the accuracy of the results.

In all 25 sites were surveyed. These were selected from previous recorded sites for the species although in many cases these were from very old records. The purpose of this was to determine if under recording of the species was responsible for the apparent decline in the distribution. The PBF stronghold remains the Mabie Forest complex. However, the PBF was only recorded at four further sites in the region (Almorness, Barcloy Hill, Drumstinchall Moss, Auchenfad Hill). Fritillaries were seen at two further sites but could not be positively identified as PBF.

The survey confirmed the suspicions that the PBF is indeed declining in the region. Suitable habitat for the species is also becoming overgrown and shady. Of 7 sites surveyed where no PBF were recorded only three had habitat in a condition that could be considered suitable.

Mersehead Moth & Butterfly Records - 26/06/2010

Moths	
<p>Map-winged Swift Chequered Fruit-tree Tortrix Barred Fruit-tree Tortrix <i>Pseudargyrotoza conwagana</i> <i>Olindia schumacherana</i> <i>Celypha lacunana</i> Marbled Orchard Tortrix Bramble Shoot Moth Garden Grass-veneer Hook-streaked Grass-veneer <i>Agriphila straminella</i> <i>Agriphila tristella</i> <i>Eudonia delunella</i> Brown China-mark Beautiful China-mark Garden Pebble Small Magpie Peach Blossom Grass Emerald Satin Wave Ribband Wave Oblique Carpet Flame Carpet Silver Ground Carpet Garden Carpet July Belle Common Carpet Purple Bar Barred Straw Small Phoenix Common Marbled Carpet Spruce Carpet The Rivulet Foxglove Pug Clouded Border Latticed Heath Brimstone Moth Mottled Beauty Brussels Lace Common White Wave Common Wave Light Emerald Barred Red Poplar Hawk-moth Elephant Hawk-moth</p>	<p>Buff-tip Pebble Prominent Red-necked Footman Four-dotted Footman Common Footman Garden Tiger White Ermine Buff Ermine The Cinnabar Heart and Dart The Flame Flame Shoulder Large Yellow Underwing Small Square-spot Setaceous Hebrew Character Triple-spotted Clay Pale-shouldered Brocade Dog's Tooth Bright-line Brown-eye Broom Moth The Champion Marbled Coronet The Clay Smoky Wainscot Common Wainscot Shoulder-striped Wainscot The Shark Grey Dagger Small Angle Shades Dark Arches Clouded-bordered Brindle Dusky Brocade Marbled/Rufous/Tawny Marbled Minor sp. Middle-barred Minor Small Dotted Buff The Rustic Mottled Rustic Burnished Brass Lempke's Gold Spot Beautiful Golden Y The Spectacle Straw Dot The Snout Small Fan-foot</p>
Butterflies	
<p>Green Veined White (22) Small White (18) Large White (4) Orange Tip (15) Common Blue (7) Small Copper (1) Small Tortoiseshell (5)</p>	<p>Peacock (5) Red Admiral (4) Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary (16) Meadow Brown (8) Ringlet (13) Small Heath (17)</p>


Colvend Moth Records – 27/06/2010

<p>Map-winged Swift <i>Elachista argentella</i> <i>Agapeta zoegana</i> <i>Aethes cnicana</i> Barred Fruit-tree Tortrix <i>Celypha lacunana</i> Bramble Shoot Moth Garden Grass-veneer <i>Catoptria pinella</i> <i>Scoparia ambigualis</i> Brown China-mark The Drinker Scalloped Hook-tip Chinese Character Peach Blossom Satin Wave Riband Wave Flame Carpet Silver Ground Carpet Common Carpet Purple Bar Small Phoenix Common Marbled Carpet Spruce Carpet Green Carpet July Highflyer The Rivulet Foxglove Pug Clouded Border Tawny-barred Angle Brimstone Moth Scalloped Hazel Peppered Moth Ringed Carpet Mottled Beauty Brussels Lace Common White Wave Common Wave Clouded Silver Light Emerald</p>	<p>Barred Red Poplar Hawk-moth Elephant Hawk-moth Buff-tip Pebble Prominent Lesser Swallow Prominent Garden Tiger White Ermine Buff Ermine Heart and Dart The Flame Flame Shoulder Large Yellow Underwing Purple Clay Small Square-spot Triple-spotted Clay Double Square-spot Square-spot Rustic Pale-shouldered Brocade Bright-line Brown-eye The Clay Smoky Wainscot Shoulder-striped Wainscot Grey Dagger Knot Grass Brown Rustic Small Angle Shades Dark Arches Light Arches Dusky Brocade Marbled/Rufous/Tawny Marbled Minor sp. Middle-barred Minor The Uncertain The Rustic Burnished Brass Beautiful Golden Y Gold Spangle The Spectacle Straw Dot</p>
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Activities

Field Trips

Please put these dates in your diary. If you wish to attend please contact Tina (07780548934) or email



blueamber23@gmail.com

<i>15th May 2011. Kidney Vetch Planting Day at Gales Marsh for Small Blue re-introduction (details below)</i>
<i>Sunday 5th June 2011. Morning Auchenfad Hill (Fritillaries) , Afternoon Colvend (Dalbeattie Forest)</i>
<i>Saturday 11th June. Chapel Finian (Kirsty Griffiths)</i>
<i>Sunday 24th July. Wamphrey (Jamie Davies)</i>
<i>Saturday 6th August 2011. Knockman Woods (combined with SWT)</i>
<i>Mothing Sessions: If you are interested in joining a mothing session, please contact Susan and Richard</i>

Kidney Vetch Planting Day at Gales Marsh for Small Blue re-introduction

The date for the Kidney Vetch Planting day has been set for the 15 May 2011. Kidney Vetch is the food plant for the Small Blue and Gales Marsh is a proposed reintroduction site in Ayrshire. Volunteers to help plant out the young Kidney Vetch plants should contact the event organiser Owen Figgis:



owenfiggis@lineone.net

Recommended Butterfly Walks

Barskeoch Hill, Dalbeattie – NX810615

by Owen Figgis



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Access to this site is off the A745 Castle Douglas to Dalbeattie road. Parking is available to Butterfly Conservation members at Buittle Mains farm. As you approach the farmhouse turn right over the cattle grid and park next to the old horse boxes and caravans. There is space for two or three vehicles. The track to the hill winds through the farmyard and is very muddy, so take suitable footwear.



An alternative route you can also park to the west of Dalbeattie Reservoir, following the footpath along the north side of the reservoir and up through the edge of the wood and scrub to join the track half way up the hill.

What to see

This is a great site for fritillaries and both Dark Green and Small Pearl-bordered can be seen in numbers. Another speciality is the Northern Brown Argus in one of its rare inland habitats. When you get to the radio mast at the top there is a fantastic view of the Solway Firth and the Lake District hills beyond.

When to go

Late June and July, when the fritillaries and Northern Brown Argus are on the wing.

Projects

Crichton Farm Survey

Our group has been contacted by Alison Graham of the RSPB who are involved in a joint project with the Scottish Agricultural College (SAC) to improve biodiversity. The RSPB are engaged in bird surveys of the area, however, they are looking to our group to help survey butterflies within the species rich grassland habitat on the SAC farm at the Crichton near Dumfries. There are areas of both established and newly created species rich grassland as well as other wildlife friendly areas, and the SAC are keen to gather data for them. The Steering Group considered that this is potentially a very interesting and worthwhile project and could also engage volunteers and offer training and support to less experienced members. More details to follow in due course, but if anyone would like to get involved please contact Susan and Richard.



Cree Valley

We have also been asked to help with survey work for Pearl Bordered Fritillary (PBF) in the Cree Valley. Please contact Susan and Richard if you wish to be involved.

Events

The group will be joining in with the DGERC 'Bugs-in-Gardens Project' Garden Festival at Threave on Saturday 31st July. Further details will be sent out nearer the date.

Butterfly Walks

Please send us details of your favourite butterfly walks (Mark can supply the map) so we can all enjoy them.