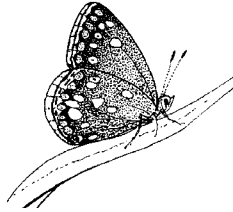


On the spot

The newsletter of
the Glasgow and
South-West
Scotland Branch
of Butterfly
Conservation



November 2007



Small blue by Keith Futter

Dedicated to saving wild butterflies, moths and their habitats

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION
REGISTERED OFFICE: BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION, MANOR YARD, EAST LULWORTH, WAREHAM, BH20 5QP
REGISTERED IN ENGLAND No. 2206468, REGISTERED CHARITY No. 254937
COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE.

Chairman's Notes

We may have recorded less this year and seen fewer species, but it has still been a busy time. The committee has been busy with lots of events this year including moth recording, talks (Arran, Bute, Auchincruive), attending public shows (Bioblitz, Gardening for Scotland, Kelburn Country Estate), moth events (Mabie Forest Magical Moths, Glasgow Botanical Gardens); mentioned here are just a few of the things. There, as always, have been lots of background tasks such as data entry, verifying records, corresponding with enquiries from our website (www.SouthWestScotland-Butterflies.org.uk), arranging meetings and attending Mabie Forest Nature Reserve opening. It seems to have been a busy and productive time. I thank the committee for their hard work. Outside of this group there have been many volunteer hours put in this year, which we are thankful for.

Butterfly Conservation has now joined forces with the Forestry Commission with a partnership in Mabie Forest to form a superb nature reserve. Mabie is described as being the best place for butterflies in Scotland. It also has a lot of moth life including the (appropriately named) Forester moth. We hope to run some events there next year. This will include a trip from the West Midlands branch. If you would like to help organise or indeed run an event at Mabie or elsewhere please do let us know.

Our branch membership continues to grow steadily, many people having taken advantage of the free membership for 1 year by Direct Debit. In the coming years they will mature into paying membership and their value will be greatly appreciated. We have managed to sell a good number of atlases this year too. It is not too late to get your copy. Contact Argyll publishing for copies directly or if you see any of the committee members we would be pleased to sell you a copy direct. If you know of outlets that would like to purchase copies for their shelves, places such as book shops, visitor centres or larger establishments please let us know. The more books we sell, the more will be raised to help Butterfly Conservation, and awareness will be raised of what species are found in our area.

Moth recording is now becoming more and more widely undertaken. The use of the internet for sending digital photographs and looking up images has greatly helped. I now regularly get images from people asking for my opinion on species, although this year no one has said they've seen a Hummingbird as we did a lot in 2006. The National Macro Moth Recording Scheme (www.mothscount.org) has now started. This has had funding for an initial 4-year project to encourage and develop recording of the 900+ species of macro moth in the UK, a good number of which are to be found in our branch area. At the last simple count I have 585 species in our database! 61 of these species are nationally notable species or rarer! Do contact your local county recorder for more information or sending in your records. In my area of Ayrshire, Inverclyde and Renfrewshire we are still looking for most of the common species. Let me know if you've seen Cinnabar caterpillars or Silver Y moths or 6-spot Burnets for starters. My 4-year old son can now identify Tigers and Elephants in my garden and even takes them into school to show his class!

I was still seeing butterflies into October at home and the moths will be flying throughout winter. I've yet to see a Merveille du Jour this autumn.

Neil Gregory – Branch Chairman

Butterflies & Moths in the Loch Lomond & the Trossachs National Park 2007

Despite a poor summer, some interesting butterfly and moth observations were obtained which proves that making the effort to get out and about to look for Lepidoptera in Scotland is a worthwhile and rewarding experience.

APRIL: the season began with exceptionally warm and anticyclonic conditions in April in which very early records for both butterflies and moths occurred.

Butterflies: Peacock were recorded widely in mid-April together with a few Small Tortoiseshell and one Green Hairstreak was found at Little Drum, Loch Venachar on 15 April. Orange Tip and Green Veined White were widespread in the last week of April.

Moths: some species such as Grey Birch which normally fly in May were recorded in mid-April and some less common species only found locally were Great Prominent & Scarce Prominent at Cashel Farm and Glaucous Shears at Glen Falloch.

MAY: the weather was unsettled and wet.

Butterflies: presumably in response to the warm April, both Small Copper and Small Heath were seen early during mid-May. Orange Tip and Peacock were again common and singletons of Red Admiral and Painted Lady were seen in mid-May. The most exciting observation was the re-discovery of Pearl-bordered Fritillary at Loch Katrine on 26 May in an area where it was last seen in the 1990s. This butterfly is known as the 'lost butterfly' of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs as it used to be known in various locations. There certainly are pockets of suitable habitat – dry open bracken/grassland mosaics on south facing slopes with Dog Violet – around the National Park and this UK BAP species may well be under-recorded here. Areas worth searching in May next year are west of Loch Lomond including the Arrochar Alps and Glen Falloch and Dukes Pass, Loch Katrine & Glen Finglas in the Trossachs and also Glen Ogle.

Moths: little moth trapping done but the Spruce Carpet which is local in Scotland was found at Millarrochy Bay.

JUNE: another month dominated by dull wet weather limiting fieldwork.

Butterflies Saturday 9 June was a fine summer day and large numbers of Small Pear-bordered Fritillary & Small Heath were found in Glen Falloch & Glen Ogle together with some Peacock, Painted Lady and Green Veined White. Towards the end of June, Ringlet were found at several sites together with Meadow Brown, Common Blue and a few Dark Green Fritillary.

Moths: the nationally scarce Saxon was recorded at Cashel & nr Ben Lawers and the local Small Yellow Wave was also found nr Ben Lawers. .

JULY: another very disappointing summer month with lots of rain and little sunshine which again limited fieldwork.

Butterflies: this month is the main flight period of the Mountain Ringlet, which is found in many of the Breadalbane mountains. Despite poor weather, nine were seen on Cam Chreag, two on Ben Lomond and two on Ben Lawers. This species is now a UK BAP species and members of the Glasgow & SW Scotland Branch are encouraged to get involved in the monitoring of this species. Ringlet, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Dark Green Fritillary, Small Tortoiseshell, Common Blue, Green Veined White and Meadow Brown were all seen at a number of sites.

Moths: the highlight was the nationally scarce Great Brocade at Glen Falloch but it was also delightful to find the Garden Tiger, a species which is decline in England at Glen Falloch & nr Ben Lawers

AUGUST: yet another disappointing summer month with little sunshine or warmth.

Butterflies: Ringlet, Meadow Brown, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Green Veined White, Common Blue & Dark Green Fritillary all found on one of the few fine days. The Scotch Argus is a species which is found in the west and north of the National Park but absent from the south and east and this was again the case during August 2007 with observations confined to the Loch Lomond area and Strathfillan and none were found in Glen Dochart east of Crianlarich where it has been found historically.

Moths: another Garden Tiger was found at Millarrochy Bay and the local Anomalous was found at Glen Falloch. Autumn moth species appeared in numbers during late August.

Andrew Masterman

BAP Priority Review

The Process

It was initiated in 2004 and is co-ordinated by the Priority Review Group (PRG) and chaired by Defra, Secretariat JNCC. Membership includes Government Departments, Conservation Agencies and NGO reps coordinated by WCL (RSBP, Plantlife and BC) For invertebrates, the Invertebrate Review Group is co-chaired by BC and JNCC, Secretariat JNCC. Membership includes specialists of Conservation Agencies, Buglife, BC and Invertebrate Link.

The draft list was determined through liaison with invertebrate specialists. The list was then forwarded to PRG which initiated 'signposting' and finalisation. The list was signed off by all country ministers in August 2007.

The Criteria

1. Threatened internationally
2. International responsibility and a 25% decline in the last 25 years
3. More than 50% decline in the last 25 years
4. Other (indicator or major issue i.e. climate change)

As a result of the huge volunteer recording effort over the years and hence BC's massive datasets, a strong case could be demonstrated for many butterflies and moths.

The Result

Generally, the number of priority habitats on the list has increased from 45 to 65 and priority species from 577 to 1149. Butterflies and moths have increased from 64 to 175 species. (Butterflies have increased from 11 to 24 and moths from 53 to 151.) This includes 16 new butterfly species and 40 new moth species (plus 69 widespread species). Three butterflies and 11 moths have been removed from the list.

BC is making significant progress on many of the species, particularly through the mechanism of landscape scale projects. The next steps will be to review the Landscape and Regional priorities and to develop new projects.

Dr. Nigel Bourn

The Miracle of Metamorphosis - in just 10 days

The transformation of a caterpillar into a butterfly is one of the miracles of nature but even we were surprised how quickly this transformation can take place. Two mature Peacock caterpillars were collected near our garden and put in a large container in our kitchen. The first caterpillar pupated on the 15th August, the second caterpillar the next day on the 16th August. After just 10 days on the 25th August a Peacock butterfly emerged from the first pupa. The next day on the 26th August the second Peacock butterfly emerged, again taking just 10 days for the caterpillar to transform into the butterfly.

When you consider the astonishing amount of re-organisation and growth that occurs during pupation it is truly amazing how fully functioning wings, eyes, antennae etc can take only 10 days to form.

Interestingly both butterflies emerged just before 9am in the morning and were ready to fly after only 30 or so minutes with the wings fully enlarged.

Keith & Susan Futter

National Moth Day and Night 2008

Saturday 7th June 2008
Daytime and night event

Targets:

1. *Anania funebris* – day-flying, new UK BAP Priority due to declines, found in Eng, Scot & Wales (and in Republic of Ireland). We think this is the first time there has been a micro target species.
2. Bordered Gothic *Heliophobus reticulata* – night-flying comes to light and sugar, UK BAP Priority due to severe declines, formerly found in southern England and Wales, particularly SE England but no known colonies at present! Occurs in south of Republic of Ireland.
3. Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth *Hemaris tityus* – day-flying, UK BAP Priority due to declines, found in all UK countries, mainly in west.
4. Orchards – new idea to have a target ‘habitat’. Orchards are UK BAP priority habitat and probably greatly under-recorded for moths.

Richard Fox

Mabie Forest Nature Reserve Opening

Date: July 24th 2007

Location: Mabie Forest

At last a butterfly reserve in South West Scotland!!



On an unusually fine day in July, only slightly marred by a heavy but short shower of rain, representatives of Forestry Commission Scotland, Butterfly Conservation and members of other conservation organisations gathered to mark the opening of the Mabie Forest Nature reserve. After introductory talks we went to the reserve entrance where Paul Kirkland and Dudley Cheesman of Butterfly Conservation (on the left in the photo) assisted in the unveiling, or more appropriately the un-netting of a magnificent wooden sculpture of a pair of butterflies.

We spent about an hour exploring the reserve before returning to Mabie House Hotel. Unfortunately the weather at this point clouded over and

very few butterflies were in evidence. We did manage to spot 2 Ringlet and a single Red Admiral braving the elements.

Mabie supports over 20 species of butterfly including two UK BAP species, Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Dingy Skipper. Moths have been little studied so far, however Mabie Forest is well known for the rare Forrester moth. There have been around 250 moth species recorded, mostly while walking butterfly transects, however, it is expected that with some concerted moth trapping that the number of recorded moths should pass the 500 mark. We hope to commence a programme of moth trapping in Mabie Forest in 2008.

In addition to woodland and scrub areas the forest also contains grassland and wetland areas, each of which supports a wealth of different plant and animal life.

David Welham

Does the Butterbur Moth Occur in Our Area

The moth confusingly known as the Butterbur (*Hydraecia petasitis*) feeds on and is closely associated with the plant that is also called Butterbur (*Petasites hybridus*). In this note I shall attempt to avoid confusion by calling the moth the Butterbur Moth

Although it is principally an inhabitant of the beds of Butterbur in northern England, the distribution map in Volume 10 of *The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* (Eds J.Heath and A Maitland Emmet) shows that it occurs north to the Forth estuary. There is no indication that it occurs in west Scotland, however, there are at least two claims for the moth in our area. They are a 1992 record from Paisley and a record from the Rothamsted Trap at Rowardennan in 2000. As far as I am aware, no specimen or other form of validation exist for either record and they must be regarded as suspect for the following reasons :

i) The Butterbur moth is not known to occur in west central Scotland and any record would require authentication (either a voucher specimen or good quality photograph).



Extreme colour forms of Rosy Rustic, John Knowler

ii) A dark colour form of the Rosy Rustic is not uncommon in our area and can be as dark as the Butterbur moth. Furthermore the female Rosy Rustic can be almost as large as the Butterbur moth. For separation of the two species see P. Waring et al (*Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland*) and D. Brown (in *Atropus* vol 20, p23 2003)

iii) The Butterbur moth is notoriously sedentary and even where it is common it is seldom caught far from its food-plant. The adult flies among the leaves of the food plant and most are caught by placing an actinic trap actually in patches of the food-plant.



Photo of Butterbur moth (left) and Rosy Rustic (right) photo courtesy of Jon Clifton

Despite considerable doubts over the above records, it does appear possible that the Butterbur moth occurs in our area as its food-plant is locally frequent along river banks and in damp meadows. I would encourage those interested in adding a moth species to our faunal list to locate a patch of butterbur plants when they are in flower during March to May with a view to placing an actinic (Heath) trap in it during the moth's August flight period; but please authenticate your records. I am also told that the moth can be located by looking for wilted shoots of Butterbur during hot weather as a guide to the caterpillar feeding on the root below. However, it seems a bit optimistic to talk of heat-waves after the summer of 2007. Care is needed in locating the food-plant when it is not in flower as the closely related and alien White Butterbur (*petasites alba*) is common in our area, especially in the Clyde valley, and I can find no evidence that it is an alternative food-plant.

John Knowler

Butterflies of the Vercors and Dauphine Alps

This year, (June 6th – 14th) we had an enormously enjoyable visit, to two of the finest mountain areas of France, to indulge in a 'rainbow of butterflies'. France is one of the most interesting and exciting European countries for the naturalist. It is remarkably varied, with an enormous coastline shared between three seas, and vast areas of semi-natural habitats stretching upwards to the highest mountains in Europe. It shares species from virtually all the climatic regions in the continent, as well as having a number of its own. We travelled by 'Eurostar' to France and then by the TGV from Lille to Lyon, it was an enjoyable, relaxing and hassle-free journey that we can thoroughly recommend. The first 4 nights we spent at the Chateau de Passieres in Chichillienne in the Vercors mountains. The Vercors mountains are a dramatic limestone range to the south of Grenoble. About 13500 ha of the Vercors are within the Vercors Natural Park, and within this there is a 16,662 ha Nature Reserve – Les Hauts Plateaux du Vercors, the largest in France. There is a wide variety of habitat, including flowery high pastures, old hay meadows, pine, beech and oak woodlands, gorges, clear fast flowing rivers, screes and cliffs reaching to 2341m at the highest point, Grand Veymont.

Mt. Aiguillies, an isolated butte 2086m is the most distinctive and impressive feature in the area where we were based and is said to be one of the 7 wonders of the Dauphine and we did a lot of our butterfly watching near to this mountain.

Memorable sightings in this area were – our first Swallowtail and Scarce Swallowtail of the trip – a pasture carpeted with wild flowers with a couple of hundred Clouded Apollo's floating gracefully over the flowers – our first ever Purple Shot Copper, happy to pose repeatedly for a photo of his under wing but teasing us with just short glimpses of his iridescent upper wings – there were also numerous sightings of Berger's Clouded Yellow passing by at speed.

Our second stop was at the Hotel Algiere, Puy-St.-Vincent in the Gyrone Valley, an excellent base for exploring the Ecrins National Park. This is a vast park comprising of a 918 sq km central area and a further 1789 sq km in it's surrounding peripheral zone with an altitude range of 800-4102m. Within it's borders, there are 17000 ha of glaciers, 36750ha of high summer-grazing pastures, and 3000 ha of forests, together with cliffs, screes, lakes, rivers, snowfields and scrub. The flora and fauna of the park is very rich, with over 1800 species of flowering plants, 210 species of birds have been recorded and there are 180 species of butterflies. Mammals include Ibex, Chamois, Marmots, Mountain Hares, Red Squirrels, Martens, Snow Voles, occasional Wolves and Lynx, plus a dozen or so Bat species.

Memorable sightings here were – a single Camberwell Beauty – the willingly displayed flame red wings of 2 male Purple Edged Coppers (alpine form) which without the purple edge had us totally confused, as the upper wing appeared to be a Scarce Copper but the under-wing was fortunately diagnostic! – in a still, hot, valley we were stopped in our tracks by the approach of clouds of Black Veined White's forming an enormous swarm of thousands of individuals – and our first ever Green Underside Blue.

If you visit this area do not miss the chance to visit the Lautaret Alpine Botanical Garden – Station Alpine du Lautaret – Col du Lautaret – Le Monétier-Les-Bains. This garden is at 2000m but fully accessible by car, there are 48 rockeries of alpine plants from the mountains across the world with over 2000 species. Peak flowering period is 1/7-15/8 but there was a lot in flower when we visited on 14/6. The garden also features a lake and a stream with numerous small cascades. The minimum time suggested is to allow an hour but realistically you would want to spend much longer. Our visit also produced the only Green Hairstreak of the trip, we had good views of it but it managed to evade the camera.

Our butterfly species count for trip totalled 62. Overall our main impression of the trip was the sheer numbers of some species of butterflies that we saw, some of which occur in Britain but not in the abundance that we encountered within a short walking distance. Butterflies we saw large numbers of included – Orange Tip, Clouded Appollo, Berger's Clouded Yellow, Pearl-bordered Frit, Duke of Burgundy, Dingy skipper, Chequered Skipper, Grizzled Skipper, Black Veined White, Small Heath, Wood White and various Blues. We were however surprised by not seeing a single Peacock or Speckled Wood and very small numbers of Small Tortoiseshell, Painted Lady, Red Admiral, Green Veined White and Brimstone. 2 or 3 only of each).



Purple-edged copper and Scarce swallowtail butterflies. (Photos D Welham)

The tour we went on was Natural History Tours with Bob Gibbons, www.naturalhistorytravel.co.uk. The three leaders were Bob Gibbons, Dick Hornby and Paul Toynton who are all excellent all-round naturalists. They all expressed concern about conservation and management of grasslands in France. Traditionally an integral part of the rural economy was to keep huge flocks of sheep and goats, and to provide adequate grazing these flocks were moved to high pasture in the summer and down to milder locations for the winter, this is called transhumance. The pressure of this grazing produced vast open areas of unimproved grassland rich in wildflowers and their attendant insects. Transhumance has steadily declined and some grasslands in parts of France have become rank, reverted to scrub and woodland. Other areas have been

enclosed and stock left to graze until there is nothing left. Some have been ploughed up and more intensive farming methods utilising fertilizers, herbicides and insecticides have been adopted. Mountainous areas such as those we visited are as yet still rich in good habitat, but sadly, while we were there, we observed evidence of cutting wide areas of grass verges where it was obviously not required thus destroying habitat unnecessarily.

SIGHTINGS

Common Blue	Wood White	Dark Green Fritillary
Small Blue	Small White	Pearl Bordered Frit.
Adonis Blue	Large White	Sm. Pearl Bordered
Silver Studded Blue	Black Veined White	Glanville Frit.
Osiris Blue	Green Veined White	Meadow Frit.
Marazion Blue	Orange Tip	Knapweed Frit.
Turquoise Blue	Apollo	Lesser Marbled Frit.
Green Underside Blue	Clouded Apollo	Queen of Spain Frit.
Alcon Blue	Swallowtail	Duke of Burgundy Frit.
Reverdin's Blue	Scarce Swallowtail	False Heath Frit.
Alpine Purple Edged Copper	Camberwell Beauty	Marsh Fritillary
Purple Shot Copper	Gt. Banded Grayling	Grizzled Skipper
Geranium Argus	Small Tortoiseshell	Lg. Grizzled Sipper
Green Hairstreak	Painted Lady	Red Underwing Skipper
Chestnut Heath	Red Admiral	Marbled Skipper
Pearly Heath	Clouded Yellow	Dingy Skipper
Small Heath	Berger's Clouded Yellow	Chequered Skipper
Alpine Heath	Brimstone	Alpine Skipper
Meadow Brown		Large Skipper
Wall Brown		Essex Skipper
Northern Wall Brown		
Large Wall Brown		
Woodland Ringlet		
Almond Eyed Ringlet		

MOTHS

Gypsy
Burnet Companion
Mother Shipton
Silver Y
Hummingbird Hawk
Clouded Border
Chimney Sweeper
Forester
White Banded Carpet
Speckled Yellow
Anania Funebris
Idaea Aureolaria
Psodos Quadrifaria

MOTHS

Latticed Heath
Yellow Shell
Four Spot
Spotted Sulphur
Black Veined
Wood Tiger
Common Heath
Common White Wave
Small Emerald
Bird Cherry Ermine
Mythimna Vittellaria
Lythria Cruentaria

OTHERS

Chamois	Jay
Marmot	Marsh tit
Short Toed Eagle	Crag Martin
Black Redstart	Black Woodpecker
Serin	Blackbird
Common Redstart	Red-backed Shrike
Honey Buzzard	
Alpine Chough	
Marsh Harrier	
Hen Harrier	
Chiff chaff	
Coal tit	
Great tit	

David and Anne Welham

News from H.Q.

New Butterfly Conservation website

We are pleased to announce that Butterfly Conservation's new website launches this week (Wednesday 14 or Thursday 15 November).

The new website has been designed by Headscape, whose portfolio includes a large number of natural heritage websites e.g. Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust and numerous AONB websites. The new website is also fully content-managed, enabling BC staff to easily update and amend it.

New features include butterfly and day-flying moth identifiers, a new nature reserve section and a section on all our conservation projects. We hope to add more content and features over the coming months.

The website address (www.butterfly-conservation.org) will remain the same.

James Driscoll (IT Manager)

Cumbrian Marsh Fritillary Restoration Project

From 1941 the range of this species began to decrease and by 2004 only 140 caterpillars, in two small clusters, could be found. In 2005 a breeding project was set up using 140 larvae from Cumbria and 95 larvae collected from 20 sites in Western Scotland (which had a close genetic link to the Cumbrian type). Two years later there were 50,000 caterpillars available and releases took place at four key sites in Cumbria. More information can be found in the Spring 2007 issue of *Atropos*.

Keith Porter (Cumbrian Branch).

Dunbartonshire Highlights 2007

The year started well, April was sunny and it was very encouraging to see several Small Tortoiseshell, a butterfly that has suffered declines in recent years. This included a sighting of 5 Small Tortoiseshells at Brucehill Cliff grassland, Dumbarton (NS384751) on 28th April. These were flying alongside 7 Peacocks, a butterfly that is now fully established in Dunbartonshire.

The poor Summer weather was depressing, cold and wet. The Orange-tip caterpillars took longer than usual to mature and some were pupating as late as mid July. In our Dumbarton garden we had 11 caterpillars, 9 on Garlic Mustard and 3 on Cuckoo Flower. Those on Cuckoo flower were able to mature by feeding on stems and stem leaves as the seed pods had long gone. Those on Garlic Mustard were seen to eat leaves but were also able to feed on the increasingly toughening seed pods. At first it was feared that the seed pods would become too tough to eat as they matured but this fear was unfounded and the caterpillars appeared to cope with the ageing seed pods.

The cool temperatures also affected the maturation of Peacock caterpillars with some not pupating until mid August. This led to many cries in July and August of - "Where are the Butterflies ?" as many Buddleia bushes were empty of butterflies. Indeed the second flourish of Peacocks did not really appear until the last week in August.

It has not been all doom and gloom. The major highlight was the appearance of a small number of Dark Green Fritillary at Glen Douglas (NS324978) in mid July. This is the second consecutive year that they have appeared at this spot and with a local abundance of Marsh Violet, the caterpillar foodplant, it is hoped that a breeding population will become established. The area currently supports good numbers of Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary.

Another plus was the continuing spread of Ringlets and consolidation of their numbers. This butterfly can now be expected to be seen in any suitable grassland habitat in Dunbartonshire.

With the recent upsurge in house building and general development, most of the wasteground/brownfield sites have now been developed in Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven. This has meant that the Common Blue butterfly, which occurred on many of these brownfield sites, has now become very uncommon in Dunbartonshire.



(Photo of Wood Carpet, Keith Futter)

On a happier note a Wood Carpet Moth was found in Glen Douglas on the 15th July, close to the Dark Green Fritillary site - this is the first record of this moth in recent years in Dunbartonshire. A first in my Dumbarton Garden moth trap was a Cinnabar Moth. This hopefully means that this moth is continuing to move north. Despite several attempts to locate the yellow and black caterpillars on Ragwort none could be found in Dunbartonshire - possibly next year.

Keith Futter

A Tale of Two BIG Sites

I took part in the BIG (Biodiversity In Glasgow) Project and was allocated two sites for both birds and butterflies.

Hurlethill and Rosshall Park are two contrasting types of green space located quite near each other on the south-west margins of Glasgow. Hurlethill is quite rural grassland/woodland grazed by highland cattle adjacent to housing whereas Rosshall Park was a typical urban park sort of green space comprised of mown grass and woodland and tarmac paths.

Birds: bird assemblages at the two sites were similar and comprised the woodland and garden species you would expect and at both sites, birds were most numerous in mixed and deciduous woodland habitats. Most grass at Rosshall park was mown and this habitat was used by a number of species including Magpie, Jackdaw, Woodpigeon, Carrion Crow, Blackbird, Robin & Pied Wagtail whereas at Hurlethill, all grass was unmown but the northern half of the site was grazed by highland cattle. But only three birds were observed on the unmown/rank grass at Hurlethill: Blackbird; Wren; & Grasshopper Warbler. The most unusual bird species for an urban space were Grasshopper Warbler and Buzzard at Hurlethill.

Butterflies: a marked difference between sites was found for butterflies with many more being observed at Hurlethill with very few at Rosshall Park. As would be expected, the unmown grass habitat at Hurlethill was good for butterflies with Meadow Brown and Ringlet being found in this habitat. An area of unmown grass was surveyed on 14/07/07 (NS526636) close to Rosshall Park and four Meadow Brown were seen here indicating that Rosshall Park also would have Meadow Brown if it was not mown. An interesting observation was five Painted Ladies (small home-grown forms) being counted along transect 1 at Hurlethill on 08/09/07: one at each end of transect and three more feeding on Devil's Bit Scabious in the middle. This suggests Painted Lady were breeding at Hurlethill in numbers during the summer and there certainly were patches of nettles and thistle within and outside the site. So the grassland at Hurlethill was certainly good for butterflies being damp and herb-rich and grazed by cattle providing suitable habitat for Ringlet and Meadow Brown and providing late summer nectaring sources for Painted Lady.

The butterfly totals for the two sites were:

Rosshall Park: 3 Green Veined White & 1 Red Admiral

Hurlethill: 64 Meadow Brown; 3 Green Veined White; 4 Ringlet; 1 Peacock;
1 Red Admiral; 1 Large White; 6 Painted Lady.

Participating in the BIG project was certainly an interesting exercise and I have volunteered to continue with it next year.

Andrew Masterman

Transect Walkers Required:

We are currently without transect walkers at Dean Castle Country Park and Gailles Marsh in Ayrshire. If you would be available to help please contact Neil Gregory for more details. These are long standing transects and well worth picking up for the 2008 seasons. Perhaps a team of people could be found to help with this simple and fun way of recording.

Please also contact Neil if you would like consider starting your own transect. There is plenty of advise and documentation available as well as free software. Transects can be on nature reserves or your local dog walking patch, across grazed fields or up mountain tracks. This would add to our existing 70 transects currently walked in Scotland. Neil looks forward to hearing from you.

Neil Gregory

Letter to Editor

Dear David,

Many thanks for publishing my letter, and also for your detailed account of all that had been going on, largely unseen, behind the scenes. I do not particularly want to embark as a regular columnist in " On the Spot ", but if you wish to publish any of the following, I have no objections.

- 1 I am delighted that the branch has 180 members - I thought it was about 50, a reflection of my ignorance. Can anything be done to winkle them out into the open ?
- 2 In the distant past, some of our outings have been jointly organised with other groups, eg National Trust, or Glasgow Nats, and it could be helpful to have input from these other organisations
- 3 As you very correctly say, an enormous amount of work has been undertaken; perhaps this could in future be publicised to the general membership
- 4 I heartily commend Neil's efforts on the website
- 5 Small Blue re-introduction - bring it on. And what about Speckled Wood for Ayrshire
- 6 Volunteers - Here I am. Just ask!
- 7 Could the next " On the Spot " contain a short Questionnaire / Feedback form to find out what the 180 would like from the branch.
- 8 Would it be feasible to have an electronic "O t S" to save costs.
- 9 Great news about Mabie, how about a joint venture with Dunskey estate at Portpatrick as well ?

Yours
Jim Black

Reply from Editors

Jim,
Thank you for your letter, I would like to add a few comments in reply.
The Branch membership is now 220 and the total membership for Scotland over 600. Many of these members are locally very active in various ways, however the problem for many is that they live some distance from Glasgow and are not willing/able to travel large distances to attend meetings/outings that are not close to where they live.
We usually have at least one joint outing with the 'Glasgow Nats' each year and their current President is a member of the Branch committee.
As to work parties etc, BC Scotland is currently in discussions with Forestry Commission Scotland over the management plan for Mabie Forest, so watch this space.

Some of your other points are under active consideration by the committee and we will announce any outcomes in the next newsletter.

David & Anne Welham

News from BC Scotland H.Q.

Butterfly and Moth Snippets

Marsh Fritillaries have been found on Bute and at Mallaig, both sites many miles from the nearest recorded colony. John Knowler found a Cousin German at Ben Lawers. Barbara Ballinger sent in a lovely photo of a Convolvulus Hawk-moth that appeared in the moth trap at Fearn Station on 24th August and Duncan Davidson has also had a report of a Convolvulus Hawk-moth at Inverdoat Estate, just south of the Tay Bridge on the 6th September.

David Bell has seen a lovely, fresh second generation Comma butterfly in his Abernethy garden on the 20th September. Duncan Davidson has also had Comma records in from South Queensferry, Inchture, just west of Dundee and Tillicoultry. Holly Blues have been spotted at Newhailes by the Rangers there.

Michael and Margaret Rochester found a Speckled Wood butterfly in their utilityroom in Lochinver at the start of July. Most of the records have of course yet to be collated so much more on sightings and interesting records are still to come.

Orange-Tip Survey Update

The Orange-Tip survey postcards continued to flood in to the Stirling office over the summer – with such a fantastic response we hope to repeat the survey for another species next year. To date 2,243 records have been entered and 1,393 recorders have sent in their sightings. A great many thanks go to Bertie Robinson for all the time and effort she has spent entering all the records.

Members Day at the Birnam Institute – 27th October 2007

Butterfly Conservation membership in Scotland has increased dramatically over recent years passing 500 households in the summer of 2006 and now, just a year later, we are well past 600! So this Autumn for the first time we held a Members Day where we invited all our members to join the staff and Branches for a day filled with talks, presentations and displays. There are many exciting things going on in the world of butterflies and moths, thus there was much to talk about and share.

The day, held at the excellent facilities of the Birnam Institute, near Dunkeld, Perthshire was enjoyed by all who attended.

Volunteering with Butterfly Conservation Scotland

In the Spring Butterfly Conservation Scotland carried out a pilot survey of Volunteering, in order to learn more about the experience of volunteering with BCS. The full report is still being completed but here are the summary results from the volunteers who responded:

The volunteers were very positive overall:

- most volunteers were satisfied with their access to training courses and support for their volunteering.
- over $\frac{3}{4}$ said their skills-base had increased.
- $\frac{1}{4}$ felt their general health and well-being had increased.
- almost all felt their access to new contacts and networks had improved and the majority felt they now participated more in local activities.
- almost $\frac{3}{4}$ felt their awareness of environmental issues had increased, with $\frac{1}{4}$ reporting an increase in their participation in eco-friendly activities.
- Almost all stated they would recommend volunteering to others.

May I take this opportunity to thank all those who took the time to respond to the questionnaires – it was much appreciated.

Shona Greig

West Kilbride Butterfly Garden

It has not been a good year for gardening but we did get a dry and warm day in August to make a start on the butterfly garden. There were still lots of puddles and the ground was wet and soggy but a small band of committee members laboured for about 4 hours to bring some semblance of order to the proposed natural wildflower patch. We cleared brambles and other unwanted vegetation to allow a good nettle patch to develop as caterpillar food-plant. This decision was taken as earlier in the year we had observed there were a large number of Small Tortoiseshell butterflies flying around nettles in this area. There was a very large clump of rosebay willow herb growing here which we reduced in volume as it was threatening to swamp the nettle bed, but we left a reasonable amount in the hope that it may support elephant hawk moth caterpillars. We also planted some wildflower nectar plants in this area. Keith and Susan Futter have made a further visit to do yet more planting and weeding.



Before we started

as we left it

There is also to be a more structured butterfly garden to contain a range of native and cultivated flowers which could be used in your garden at home. We have ordered a number of plants for this area and they have been delivered and are awaiting planting in 2008. Therefore if you wish to help us in this project, do contact me as there is still plenty of work to be carried out. While working in the area as well as the Small Tortoiseshell we have seen Peacock, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Large and Small Whites. Therefore it is an area that already attracts butterflies and there is scope to increase the numbers of these species and try to attract others.

Anne Welham

Branch AGM

The branch AGM was held on Sunday 18th November 2007. Reports were presented by the branch chairman, recorder and treasurer. The committee was elected and contact details for all committee members can be found at the end of the newsletter. Three committee members stood down this year:- Keith Futter, John Rostron and Pru Williams, we are sorry to lose their input to the committee and thank them very much indeed for all of their hard work during their time on the committee. John Rostron has agreed to continue to act as branch treasurer until the end of March which is end of the financial year. We urgently need a branch treasurer commencing 1st April 2008 and if anyone wishes to take on this post please contact Neil Gregory as soon as possible. Two new committee members were proposed and elected, Andrew Masterman and Scott Shanks. So we extend a warm welcome to them and hope they will enjoy serving on the committee. The meeting was followed by an enthusiastic and interesting talk about the special Scottish moths throughout the seasons by John Knowler. The whole event was enjoyed by all who

attended. Tea and coffee with delicious homemade cake provided by Pru Williams rounded off a very worthwhile event!

Date for your Diary!

On the 7th March 1968 a small group of naturalists, including Sir Peter Scott, met to form the British Butterfly Conservation Society, now renamed as Butterfly Conservation. Their aim was to try to halt the decline of butterflies in Britain. Next year marks the 40th anniversary of Butterfly Conservation. To celebrate this occasion a number of events are being held throughout Britain over the weekend of 7th to 9th March 2008. Our branch will be holding a spring meeting on Sunday 9th March 2008, at the Quaker Meeting House, Glasgow. There will be a talk on a 'butterfly' topic (details to follow later) followed by presentations of member's best butterfly and moth pictures. David will show the pictures from our visit to France featured in the newsletter, If YOU have any pictures in electronic format (sorry we do not have a slide projector) that you wish to be included please contact David Welham as soon as possible. Do not worry, you do not have to get up and speak if you do not wish to, your work will be presented for you if you prefer. Also if you have photo's that are in a printed format that you would like to share with others, please bring them along (try to ensure they are labelled with the species name and country of origin and place them in an album to ensure they will not be damaged) ensure your name is on the album to prevent their loss. There will be a spring raffle and butterfly goods for sale including the Butterflies of South West Scotland Atlas if you do not have your copy yet. (Don't forget they make a great present for friends and family). We will issue more information closer to the date. This promises to be an excellent event and we look forward to seeing you on the day.

Anne Welham

Clouded Yellow

Idling dreams had fogged the errant mind
Blown skeins of misty thought around
Opened eyes though inward looking were not blind
To miss the yellow insect, leave the ground
Lost in a blink as the high sun hid away
A puzzling disappearance on the shaded bank
Not to be found among the stalks that selfsame day
Though eager hands searched long its flowering flank
So the bright image, the imagined saffron hue
Lay stored away like many faded dream
Lost when the billowed cloud revealed the blue
Of heaven reflected in the rippling stream
But later that same week the answer came
Clouded Yellow, sunlit bank, unclouded brain.

M. R.T. Spernagel

And finally if any of the more technologically minded of you out there wish to receive future newsletters by e-mail then please let me know your email address and all future copies of On The Spot will be sent electronically in pdf format.

David & Anne Welham

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