

**BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION**  
Cumbria Branch

Newsletter No. 19  
Autumn 2009

**Butterfly  
Conservation**

DEDICATED TO SAVING WILD BUTTERFLIES  
And MOTHS IN THEIR NATURAL HABITATS

## **MESSAGE FROM ..... Your Branch Organiser**

Welcome to the autumn newsletter which will bring you up to date on all the butterfly news from Cumbria and beyond. I feel as if it has been a good summer for butterflies generally, and certainly a good one for migrants. The much publicised invasion' of Painted Ladies in late May was a spectacle and their beautiful salmon pink offspring can be seen everywhere as I write this in mid August. Red Admirals are also plentiful in the garden, with 10 or more nectaring on a single Buddleia bush, hopefully the Clouded yellow will make an appearance up and down the coast sometime soon.

The real picture will emerge as transect results come in and are analysed. Its all well and good each of us forming an opinion as to what is happening in our own area but it takes hard data to really see what is happening to our butterfly populations. Such data would not be possible without the efforts of our transect walkers, these people devote a day each week from early spring to late summer, walking their route and recording what they see, year after year. It's a real commitment, thanks to all of you.

You will read later on about the Small Blue situation at Workington Mossbay site. A survey of the site earlier in the year has revealed this to be if not the largest, certainly one of the largest colonies in the UK. The efforts to get the best deal possible from the developers and planners is being led by Dave Wainwright our regional officer and Steve Doyle.

Our other major project, the Marsh Fritillary reintroduction continues to move in the right direction. It has been a satisfactory captive stock breeding season and numbers of flying adults held up at least to last years numbers. The definitive measure of site breeding success, the count of larval webs, has yet to be done at two sites but Finglandrigg has shown a large increase over last year, which itself was a large increase on the year before. We hope this will be duplicated at the other sites.

The summer field trip season has in general been a success, and this year we concentrated on visiting sites that hold our local specialities attracting people from all over the UK. Trips have generally been well attended and on all but one trip, which was a washout, the target species were seen. Many thanks to all the field trip leaders without whom such days out would not be possible.

The branch website has attracted lots of positive comment and has been especially useful to visitors from outside the county. Just over 1000 different people accessed it during June and July, proving the value of the site.

Finally, we have the usual full programme of winter work parties so if you feel like a day doing 'keep fit with a purpose' do come along.

Best wishes to you all.

2911

**Steve Clarke** P. S. I understand Clouded Yellows are now in W. Cumb.

## **Work Parties .....**

## .... Winter 2009/10

Each year I stress the vital importance of our Winter work party programme, and this coming Winter is no exception. Pearl Bordered Frits are in dire straits – don't know about you but I only saw them in two places in 2009 – would be interested if anybody else saw them in more.

Better news of High Brown fritillaries however. But you know, one can only go on personal observations and impressions. Sometimes you are in the right place at the right time and on the right day, other times you are not so it will be interesting to see the transect results as they come in. Anyway, here is the work party programme for the coming winter. Please make every effort to come to one or two or more – it really does make a difference.

**Boots or very strong, good soled walking shoes are essential and for Braithwaite Moss wellies are absolutely essential.** Bring sarnies and a drink if you intend to stay for the shorter after lunch session.

The **Contact** people for each session, if you have queries or whatever are, Steve Clarke, Steve Doyle, Sarah Bradley, David Eastlick or any other officer named inside the back page of this newsletter.

### **Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2009 - Braithwaite Moss**

More scrub removal on this vital site near Keswick. I know it is a long way for some to travel but it really is important to have a good turn out there. Transport share is a good option by contacting any of the Branch Officers named on the inside back page.

Meet at the parking area just off the A66 at NY 232247 at 10.00 am. **Wellies essential.**

### **Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2009 - Witherslack Woods**

More ride management and scrub removal. If you managed to visit these woodlands in Summer you will have seen the difference it makes when a bit of woodland management work has been done.

Meet at the usual Witherslack Hall 'kennels' car park, SD 436859 at 10.00 am.

### **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2009 – Township Plantation.**

Targeting Duke of Burgundy glades and Pearl Bordered fritillary habitat creation on this most important site. This work is courtesy of the Crosthwaite and Lyth Valley Landowners who are very keen to work towards habitat excellence.

Meet at The Howe parking area at the horizontal millstone up the lane, SD 454885, 10.00 am.

### **Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> December 2009 - Township Plantation**

This will be our Xmas 'bash' so be prepared for a bit of a 'nosh-up' as well e.g. Millie's forest soup, Sarah's mulled wine, Jean's rock cakes and John Rummung usually brings a surprise or three which sometimes are edible as well.

Meet at the Howe millstone car park, 10.00 am SD 454885.

### **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2010 - Witherslack Woods**

A return visit to this important site to undertake more woodland management for High Brown, Dark Green, Silver Washed, Small Pearl Bordered, Pearl Bordered and Northern Brown Argus. Meet at Witherslack Hall 'dog kennels' car park at 10.00 am, SD 436859.

### **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2010 - Halecat Woods**

A welcome return to this site after an absence of many years. Some work has been done by contractors and we will be creating more suitable glades for Northern Brown Argus. Meet at 10.00 am

### **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2010 - Witherslack Woods**

A third visit to this site for our final scheduled work party of the Winter. We will be putting final touches to our work in preparation for hopefully a great oncoming Spring/Summer. Meet at Witherslack Hall 'dog kennels' car park, 10.00 am, SD 436859.

## **The Morecambe Bay Limestone Woodlands Project**

So why are we continuing to do so many branch winter work parties when we have this big slice of grant aid to employ contractors to do it for us. It would be nice to just sit on our backsides all winter and just expect it all to happen, things will be all 'tickety-boo' and there will be butterflies all over the place next Summer. Easy eh ?

Of course life isn't like that. Although the Morecambe Bay Project will ensure some woodland management work is done on over 20 woodlands over the next three years, the fact that so many woodlands need to be worked on speaks for itself. The fact is so many woodlands have been neglected that there is so much remedial work to do. Yes we are employing contractors and we are also encouraging woodland owners to apply for and get Woodland Grant Schemes in place. All that is aimed at kick starting regular woodland management again so that it continues after the funding for the Project finishes in three years time. Continuity is essential and the Branch along with Regional Officer and Project Leader Dave Wainwright plus Assistant Project Leader Martin Wain are working tirelessly to do as much as possible within those remaining three years and at the same time have a plan in place beyond that.

We within the Branch still have a major role to play. There is still a vast amount to be done. That is why we still need all your support at work parties to cut scrub, create glades, strim and rake rides, burn or stack brushings, and generally tweak things in the most valuable habitats we have, all aimed at our most endangered species. Oh, and another thing – we really need as many people as we can get at work parties for another reason – to eat all the cakes and biscuits which keep being brought these days. I don't know, we must be getting soft or something. I remember we hardly used to have a lunch break and even if we did somebody was detailed to keep the fire going. Nowadays we have a lunch break, cakes, biscuits, sometimes soup – goodness knows we will be getting a short story next followed by a cabaret act put on by all the watching roe deer !!

SO WHERE ARE WE WITH THE PROJECT ?

The Project started in April 2009 although the official 'Launch' meeting was held at Leighton Moss in July 2009. All our conservation partners were invited and all, or certainly most, sent along representation which meant a great deal to us as it demonstrated the togetherness of thinking and not only a realisation of what needed to be done, but also a commitment to doing it too.

All too often words are said in meetings, then there is a long pause and maybe nothing happens. The neglect of our woodlands has gone too far for that to happen. If we are to avoid losing species altogether we, all of us, all our conservation partners along with ourselves **must ensure action follows words**. Make no mistake, we will have extinctions on our hands locally and nationally if we don't do what we say we are going to do and that involves the re-creation of conservation and habitat management on a landscape/connectivity of colonies basis. That last bit is vital for species survival as it is now being realised that inbreeding within ever reducing and isolated colonies will inevitably lead to genetic weakness. So habitat management is important but so too is connectivity of colonies. That will be hard to achieve in some cases but we must try and we must encourage the professional organisations to think and act along those lines too. The alternative is extinction – and there is nothing beyond that, extinction is final. Pessimistic words perhaps but that is simply to ram home the reasons why we have this Project and why we continue to have work parties and implore your support.

At the official Project Launch at Leighton Moss, Butterfly Conservation's Chairman Maurice Avent opened by outlining the objectives of the Project and thanking all those who had contributed to date. He clarified the reasons for the Project being set up in what was a crucial geographical area for many endangered species of butterflies, particularly the High Brown and Pearl Bordered Fritillaries. Finally he wished the Project every success and congratulated the way in which all conservation partners in both Cumbria and North Lancashire were working together.

Sam Ellis then gave a short presentation. Sam, remember was until recently our Regional Officer but is now Head of Regions based at HQ in Dorset but obviously still has a very active interest in what happens in our area. Sam outlined the extent and scope of the Project which would focus on 27 woodlands in the Morecambe Bay area. More might be added as things progressed. In addition to the excellent six figure sum we received to set up the Project further funding was added by way of Woodland Improvement Grants (W I G's) supplied by the Forestry Commission to woodland owners many of whom Dave Wainwright has encouraged and in some cases helped to apply for grant aid. So far there have been 8 successful W I G applications. Most of the work being done will be ride widening and creation, coppicing, glade creation and both scrub and bramble clearance. Sixteen woodlands have had some work done so far in the first year and that will accelerate in the second year. Dave is currently working on the schedule for 2009/10 winter but it will involve more of the same but also include more W I G's being applied for and hopefully obtained. Remember this funding is in addition to our initial Grant Aid and of course is renewable if justified in future applications – all part of our sustainability programme beyond the initial Project period. At the end of the second year we hope of course to see some response from our butterflies, and other forms of wildlife, in terms of numerical increase but need to be patient as nature will take its time, we are just giving it a bit of a nudge, a helping hand if you like.

I mentioned 'other wildlife' in the previous paragraph. Our prime objective is of course butterfly conservation but we also are mindful of the importance of other forms of wildlife. We have to be aware of other important species in the areas within which we work. Having said that, the work we are doing will improve habitat for wild flowers, some birds, bats, small mammals to name a few. We avoid disturbing badger sets, fox earths and one day we hope to find a dormouse nest and

would be delighted to be able to not disturb that. New coppice stools and coppice areas will however encourage creatures like dormice.

Dave then gave a very pointed reminder during his presentation. He outlined the rate of decline of some of our butterfly species the Project is aimed at. Those species are both locally and nationally endangered – in fact we are the national hot-spot for them so that says it all – we simply must succeed. A third of all Pearl Bordered Fritillary colonies in the UK became extinct between 1995 and 2004. Add to that the fact that in 1995 I personally found Pearl Bordered in over a dozen sites in the Morecambe Bay area in 1995 yet only found it on one Cumbrian site in 2009 and two more in North Lancs and the problem is there clearly for all to see. If we lose another third of our colonies in the next few years we will have none left in Cumbria. Dave specified the very precise habitat the Pearl Bordered requires. It needs freshly coppiced glades of a good size with wide well maintained connecting rides. Bare earth is essential in parts along with an abundant supply of the larval foodplant violets in the bare earth areas, in bracken litter and on mossy covered exposed limestone rock.

Landscape connectivity was being planned by using Google Arial maps on computer. That method is used to look at the proximity of extant colonies and plan stepping stone work sites in between. Dave then shocked the audience when he said that the overall loss of colonies in our area was 54% between 1995 and 2004 but that loss would be 73% if we excluded single sighting colonies (where mis-identification was a possibility). The national rate of decline for the High Brown Fritillary was 79% though rather less at 37% in our area. Nationally there are 35 colonies of High Brown of which 22 colonies are in our area with the next highest being 6 on Dartmoor.

Finally Martin Wain gave a short presentation on his work regarding sustainability beyond the initial period of the Project. Martin's work aims at increasing volunteer effort and training, to support transect walkers, help progress actual conservation work on the ground, to increase awareness of the Project and to help secure a long term future for the Project. Already Martin has produced a very informative colour illustrated leaflet copies of which can be obtained from him or from me to those who contact us. This is a most important part of the Project and it is great to see Martin's enthusiasm shining through as he makes good progress in achieving his objectives.

#### GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

I am one of those people who want things done, like, NOW. I see conservation which needs to be done and I see virtually derelict woodlands all around us. Criminal really isn't it to have got that far – but it has. The negative would have been to have done nothing about it and turned the other way as volunteers can do – you know, have another cappuccino and a cake.

The positive is that your Branch, Cumbria Branch did not turn the other way. Through the determined efforts of your committee there was a relentless, well, campaign for want of a better word to do something about it. Our children will want to see butterflies in the years to come and walk well managed woodlands.

This Project gives us, all of us, and our conservation partners, the opportunity to re-start effective woodland management in the vital limestone area around Morecambe Bay. We can all help either physically or in kind. Constructive comment is always welcome, even criticism because we might

not get everything right first time. If you know other woodlands which were good previously let us know, or if you see good sites turning bad, let us know.

The outlook is looking brighter though there is much to be done. But at least we are getting on with it. Look forward to some good turnout on work parties and if you want to join Martin Wain on some of his midweek sessions he would love to hear from you. He is on 01524 33851, [mwain@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:mwain@butterfly-conservation.org)

**Steve Doyle**

2906

## **Match Pot Funding.**

By now each member should have received a leaflet from HQ in Dorset outlining this very useful revenue source. Major grants are available to Butterfly Conservation through what is known as Landfill Tax. This was introduced in 1996 to reduce the amount of rubbish going to landfill and as importantly to reduce the amount of habitat required as landfill sites. Via the Landfill Communities Fund Butterfly Conservation can receive **£10 in grants for every £1 donated** through this scheme. Got to be good value hasn't it as we urgently seek to protect and conserve not just our woodlands but also get our hands on more Marsh Fritillary habitat and help to gain more access to Small Blue sites for instance.

If you have not already got an explanatory leaflet, let me know or go onto the Butterfly Conservation national website. It really is a good use of every £1 donation you can make. If you donate £10 we can apply for a £100 grant. Similarly a £100 donation can qualify for a £1000 grant and so on. Anyone who can spare a £1000 donation could bring us £10,000 in grant funding and so on.

Cumbria Branch have already benefited from Landfill Tax funding on our Morecambe Bay Limestone Woodlands Project. Marsh Fritillaries have benefited in South Wales, Woodland butterflies are benefiting in the Midlands, Denge Wood in Kent is being managed for Duke of Burgundy and other projects are ongoing in Somerset for Heath Fritillary, the Norfolk Breckland area for moths, plus projects in East Sussex, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, Warwickshire, Staffordshire, the Forest of Dene, Worcestershire, North Yorkshire and in several other locations in the Southern England via their woodlands project.

So Cumbria, with help from Dorset is in there battling with other areas. We need to be on the ball and not miss these excellent opportunities to make a difference. **Each £1 you can donate can make £10 of difference.** If you have been thinking about it and put it aside for now, go on, give it a go. It will make a difference to conservation 'on the ground' right where it is needed.

**Steve Doyle**

2907

# MOTH CORNER

## A Rare Visitor to Cumbria – The Silver striped Hawkmoth

The Silver striped Hawkmoth turned up one night in July 2009 at Roudsea Wood NNR! A beautiful streamlined moth, and a similar size to an Elephant Hawkmoth. Incredibly, this is a definite first for Cumbria, if not the North of England. It is an immigrant from North Africa and is usually seen in Southern Europe, with a few reaching southern shores of the British Isles most summers. Like many immigrants it is unable to overwinter here, but its larvae feeds on a variety of plants – grape vine, virginia creeper, lady's bedstraw, great willowherb, fuchsias, honeysuckle and mulleins. One can speculate how it reached Roudsea? Imported with fruit or vegetables in its larval stage perhaps?

Several moth evenings have turned up a great variety of moths on Roudsea, Meathop, Nichols, Foulshaw Mosses, St Catherines, Windermere and GaitBarrow. A band of 'Mothers' regularly run traps in their gardens and several school events using moth traps have taken place over the summer at Brantwood and Witherslack.

Anyone interested in looking at some of these amazing insects should come along to Witherslack **any morning** and go through my garden trap with me. You will be amazed at its contents and there is always the chance of catching a rare hawkmoth! Tel 015395 52340.

**Sarah Bradley**

2920

Not a lot of other moth news just yet but the moth season is still very much underway and I'm sure there will be several interesting sightings in Cumbria when records start to come in. Meanwhile I will be interested to hear how the national Garden Moths Count has gone this year. It was being held in the period 20<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> June when recorders were asked once again to go out and record the many marvellous moths which live in and visit our gardens. Many moths traditionally don't come as far north as Cumbria of course yet we do have some gems here. Climate change can make a difference nowadays and there is evidence that several moth species are moving north.

One spectacular moth to look out for is the Scarlet Tiger which traditionally lived in the South West and South Wales but is now known to be moving further north. And, it is a day flier so better for those like me who are not quite so nocturnal.

Moving away from Cumbria for a moment, I read recently about a big moth project which has started in the Brecklands of East Anglia, mainly in Southern Norfolk. Though I am not really a moth person I was very interested in this project firstly because it is great news that such a project is ongoing specifically for moths. Secondly I lived in East Anglia for 13 years and got to know the wonderful Breckland habitat quite well. In fact whilst there was always a good variety of wildlife generally I always came away thinking that there were gems there still to be discovered. Quite a bit of it is M O D land so maybe access prevents more discovery. Elsewhere in this newsletter I mentioned the Match Pot scheme and if you have a leaflet on it you can read a bit more about the Brecks Moth

Project as that is another being funded by Landfill Tax grant aid. Some of the moths already known to be there are quite mouth watering such as the Basil Thyme Case-bearer (what a name – superb!), The Forester, Lunar Yellow Underwing, False Mocha and Barred Tooth-striped. Much of the work being done however is for the Grey Carpet moth which requires areas of bare earth and its larval food plant Flixweed. The bare earth requirement will also benefit the aptly named Basil Thyme Case-bearer which is a micro moth and the action being taken in the Brecks has been learned from a nearby site near Bury St.Edmunds where numbers of this pretty little micro moth increased significantly following the scarifying of woodland ride edges. Good luck to them.

Nearer home again I read recently that the Cinnabar moth was in long-term decline having reduced by 83% in the last 35 years. Apparently it is now very scarce in Scotland, particularly in the north and east. A survey is being carried out by the various Scottish Branches of Butterfly Conservation and the public in general are being asked to send in any sightings. It is a very striking day flying moth. Even the caterpillar is highly conspicuous as it is black and yellow hoops almost always attached to the dreaded Ragwort plant. Now is that the problem? Ragwort is poisonous to certain animals and public enemy number one to horse owners and many farmers. So the eradication of Ragwort, the larval foodplant of the Cinnabar moth clearly is doing it no good at all in survival terms. Having said that, and as I live close to the Scottish border there is certainly no shortage of Ragwort or Cinnabar moths in North Cumbria and South Dumfriesshire at least. On the question of Ragwort, a leaflet titled *Ragwort – Friend or Foe* can be downloaded from the Scottish section of the main Butterfly Conservation website.

Still on the subject of Scottish moths did you read the article in the Summer issue of the national magazine *Butterfly*? The one I mean is on page 28 and it features Inch Marshes in the Highlands of Scotland. Well worth a read.

### **WHERE TO SEE..... the White Admiral.**

I was reminded of just what a wonderful butterfly the White Admiral is. We don't have it in Cumbria but for those of us who like to stray south of our county boundary it is a species really worth making the effort to see. Early in July John Wilkinson and me went to Fermyn Wood near Oundle in Northamptonshire primarily to look for the Purple Emperor. Without doubt the star of the day (apart from a single lovely White Letter Hairstreak on the ground) was the White Admiral. We must have seen over 100 that day. Fermyn Wood is to be found on O/S Sheet 141 Kettering and Corby, Map Ref of the entrance is SP 966859 and you should also follow the bridleway all the way into Lady Wood to the south as that is also excellent. Open access/Forestry Commission site.

**Steve Doyle** 2920

## ONE KILOMETRE SQUARE RECORDING

Earlier in the year I wrote to most Cumbria based branch members and several others who live close to Cumbria to see if they would be interested in helping us with a new type of butterfly recording. Transect recording has been the usual method of recording thus far and will continue in the future as it is a very valuable source of repetitive data from which trends emerge. That can be sooner or later and from the information we can target action, maybe management action if needs be.

Some regard transects as rather formal however and are not so willing to commit to walking a transect once a week. Even so, despite formal transects and other valuable *ad hoc* records there were still a vast number of blank unrecorded or under-recorded squares in Cumbria.

So we thought hard about what could be done to fill in some of these gaps and came up with the 1km square idea. Just as we in Cumbria Branch were about to launch it locally Butterfly Conservation nationally launched a 1KM square recording plan of their own called the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS). So we decided to support that and mothball our own scheme. The response to our letters to members however was very good as over 40 agreed to take on a 1km square. However many of the WCBS squares turned out to be impractical and some felt the 'rules' were a bit strict. We were in fact only able to activate about 15 WCBS squares.

Enter **Plan B**, or 'Patches' as we call it. For all those who were unable to do a WCBS square for one reason or another we activated our own original 1km square idea and I am pleased to say that the feedback from those on this plan is very positive. I have tried to allocate a 1km square very close to home for everyone, in fact several people have a square which starts right outside their front door. The distance was one of the problems we had with WCBS as many of the squares we were asked to cover were impractical geographically. So Patches has worked ideally for those who want to record close to home. Several have phoned to thank me for getting them out of the house with a purpose. One lady starts her 1km square literally outside her front door and she basically walks through a residential area looking in gardens on the way, bits of hedgerow and then along a river bank and back in a circular fashion home. Some of her route takes her slightly into another square but she keeps that bit separate so we can record it as well. Another old lad (like me) asked if he could record the neighbouring square as well as every time he got to the boundary of his, the next bit always looked more interesting.

So far so good then. I look forward to seeing the end of season results and the opinions of all those who have taken part. We will no doubt need to do some tweaking here and there but I hope everyone will continue next year and a few more will join in. Some might prefer to switch from WCBS to Patches or vice versa but at the end of the season let me know honestly how you feel it has gone and together we can constructively make changes if needs be.

Thanks to you all so far. Remember all your records will be used to update both Cumbria County records and the national butterfly database too.

**Steve Doyle**

2903

## ‘ Patches ‘

If you don't already do a 'patch' can you do one next year? It's not hard work and gets you out of the house with a purpose. By doing a 'patch' it means you wander anywhere you can access within a 1km square. Go out as often as you like, for as long as you like – just get out for a walk and simply jot down the date and what you see.

Your 'patch' can start right outside your front door if you like. Even by walking through housing areas, glancing in allotments, hedges, spare land, scrubby areas, river banks etc. you can usefully record areas which will otherwise be blanks on the County records map. Others might prefer to get in a car or on a bike and do a 'patch' a couple of miles away, you know, that bit you've always thought looks good but never quite got there to have a good look.

If you fancy the idea, and there really is not any more to it, get in touch with me and tell me the 'patch' you want to do or let me know where you are and I'll suggest a 'patch.' I need to know before you start though because somebody else might already be doing the bit where you are. By the way, I don't want you to have to ask for permission to access land (unless you want to). Just use footpaths, roadside verges or areas with open access. We don't want you being frog marched out of anywhere or having to run like the clappers with a longhorn bull halfway up your shirt tail !! Go on, give 'patches' a go next year – adopt a 1km square as your own.

**Steve Doyle**

14, The Willows, Durdar, Carlisle, CA2 4UP, 01228 544059, [stevedoyle44@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:stevedoyle44@hotmail.co.uk)

### COVER PHOTO

This was taken by Jean Ellwood, who with brother David found this White Letter Hairstreak in Brigsteer Woods in July 2008. It was nectaring on Hemp Agrimony of which there is loads on the very bottom ride in those woods. A further search later that year failed to find more WLH's but as we all know this is an extremely elusive little rascal.

A further search in 2009 also failed to find any more in Brigsteer Woods and indeed its larval foodplant Elm or Wych Elm is not immediately obvious so perhaps the 2008 individual came from not so nearby but was attracted to the mass presence of the nectar source. However, there is even better news of the White Letter Hairstreak in Cumbria. Liz Goodyear who lives a long way south of Cumbria is a national expert on WLH's and on a trip to Cumbria in July 2009 found a WLH egg on Elm at the end of the canal near Stainton, Map Ref. SD 520854. I have since visited the site and there are certainly Elms there. **That is definitely a place to look for them in 2010.**

I have also heard a rumour that WLH has been seen at the very top of Arnside Knott so again in 2010 it might be worth a look and in the meantime if you are up there you could find the Elms and save time for next year.

**Steve Doyle**

2904

# The Marsh Fritillary Project

**Don't watch that .....**  
**..... Watch this !**

I bet that each time you turn the page you are expecting to see me rabbiting on about the Marsh Fritillary again. Well, mustn't disappoint you must I? Anyway, so what if it is my favourite butterfly, and after all I edit the newsletter so I'm entitled to dribble on about it and what's more I will. So what's going on now with this little rascal in Cumbria? Good news I hear you say and you would be absolutely right.

To recap, we re-introduced the Marsh Fritillary into the old vice county of Cumberland in 2007 using captive bred stock after it became extinct in the wild in 2004. None of the four re-introduction sites have been topped up since 2007 so the adult butterflies which emerged this year were all genuine third generation which emerged naturally in the wild and from eggs laid by equally wild adult butterflies in 2008. Although such things are perhaps arguably not well understood it is felt by some, me included, that as early generations continue year on year the genetics of that wild stock will strengthen as the colonies 'bed down' as it were, on site. In other words the colony will synchronise its growth with the site conditions and the genetic profile will gradually become specific to the site too. I'm always interested to listen to other opinions on issues like this because we all still have much to learn and books, PhD's and so on don't yet tell us everything. That has become very apparent as we have carried out the captive breeding programme over several years when one observes things every day of the year at close quarters.

So far in 2009 adult butterflies have matched the 2008 numbers on two of our sites, exceeded 2008 numbers on one site and are slightly down on the fourth site probably because of lack of site management – an issue we will be addressing with conservation partners before this newsletter goes to print. I won't name all the sites but on the one with public access, Finglandrigg, I had 104 Marsh Fritillaries flying in 90 minutes during a timed count and it was not yet the peak season. I was on holiday the day after but I imagine the peak count might well have reached 150 or even 200 in a day. So far at Finglandrigg I have located 241 larval webs which will each contain about 150 caterpillars so we look to be in good shape going into hibernation and ready for 2010.

On our other huge site our best figure during a timed count was also well over 100 Marsh Fritillaries with about 50 on the third site and only 6 on the fourth site. Even so not all butterflies emerge and fly together on the same day so actual numbers will be even higher over the full flight period of about three weeks as numbers increase, peak and then tail off again. Put in perspective the larval web count of 241 at Finglandrigg must have resulted from at least 241 females and probably the same number of males so likely numbers of adult Marsh Fritillaries there over the flight season were likely to be around the 500 mark.

## CAPTIVE BREEDING

We now have nine captive breeding sites in Cumbria and will probably add another one or two this Autumn. This is necessary so all 'our eggs are not in one basket.' At present it is estimated we could have up to 20,000 caterpillars in captive stock though there will be casualties over the winter hibernation period. Those caterpillars will go into hibernation during the latter stages of August and will therefore not be released to the wild until early Spring 2010. That is because we feel the new

release sites are still not quite ready to accept stock and it gives us another winter of work to put that right. There are good points and not so good points about holding captive stock over winter. The good points are that we should not have as many casualties as might be the case in the wild. The not so good point is that by not releasing this Autumn the caterpillars will not be able to synchronise their growth with the Spring growth of the larval foodplant on the release site. We compensate for that by not releasing until we think the time and quality of the foodplant is right and as you can imagine, timing is all important and requires regular visits on site depending on climatic conditions each Spring. Equally our captive stock are kept in as near to 'wild' conditions as possible i.e. they get rained on, snowed on and generally blown about with the rest of us during winter though they are all tucked up deep down in their pots inside tightly spun waterproof webs.

## NEW RELEASE SITES

By the time this newsletter is released we will have met with Natural England to discuss the condition of, priority of and work required on our short list of new release sites. Our objectives will be to maintain and extend the condition of two of our extant sites and improve the quality of two other existing sites by getting grazing levels regularised and scrub growth under control again.

Beyond that we need at least two new release sites within close proximity of extant (2007 re-introduction) sites so that metapopulations can be established bit by bit. Two out of several possible new sites are relatively close to being in condition with a bit of over winter work but the important thing is to have a robust ongoing management plan in place for each site. That in my opinion is essential if newly released stock is to have any great chance of survival, the habitat must in the main be suitable and not only be kept that way but more of the surrounding habitat added and in similar condition the year after and beyond that too. It will be counter productive if we release on new sites which are 'sort of' Ok then nothing more is done to make them better by next year.

Hopefully we will have a productive meeting in August 2009 and be able to positively pave the way forward on this Project.

**Steve Doyle**

2910

## **Where there's a WILL there's a way !**

Don't forget the Legacies to Butterfly Conservation mentioned in our Spring 2009 newsletter. It occurs to me that such donations even left in a Will might still qualify for Match Pot funding which puts us in an even better position. Either way, such legacies can be tax advantageous for anyone whose estate might otherwise be liable to inheritance tax.

Of course this appeal, plea, call it what you like is not only aimed at those whose estate is likely to be liable to inheritance tax. It is a good opportunity for the rest of us to donate something to a cause we love and feel happy that we have done something which will help towards the enjoyment of our favourite fauna by future generations, and you never know that little bit you and others similarly minded contribute might just make the difference between extinction and survival of a very special species of butterfly or moth.

**Steve Doyle**

## **What's going on ..... ..... with the Small Blues?**

In the last Newsletter I mentioned that by far the best colony of Small Blues was under severe threat from developers at Workington. That particular colony is on private land on the south side of the River Derwent and since it was discovered several years ago it has very much been clear that it is the epicentre for Small Blues in West Cumbria. In the last few years as many as 1000 or more Small Blue butterflies have been recorded in a single day which probably made it the biggest colony in the UK.

In 2009 during a survey carried out jointly by ourselves and environmental consultants appointed by the developers our best count was 455 Small Blues in the best section. Whilst this is still a very good count it is clear that de-commissioning work already done on the site primarily to remove railway lines has already had a detrimental effect on the colony. Any other evidence of that is there to see by the pure visual sight of the habitat.

During the planning application process it was agreed that the above survey be carried out and the resultant report would be examined to enable all concerned to evaluate the wildlife value of the site before a final decision was made on the new road build. As this note is written, we are awaiting that report although we already know the numbers of butterflies recorded and we also learned a great deal more about the use of the site by the Small Blues, for example where the most important roosting sites are.

Our objective now must be to minimise any further damage to the site and conserve this vast and most important colony of Small Blue butterflies. As I said in the last Newsletter, for the benefit of the local community we would like to see the development proceed on the main 95% of the site even though that would destroy some available Small Blue habitat. However the area we are mainly concerned about comprises only about 5% of the site and within the overall development I consider we have every right and reason to lobby for that 5% to be set aside as a local nature reserve bearing in mind how important it is locally and probably nationally too.

I am sure you will all join me in hoping that commonsense and reason will eventually prevail. I really hope so because to lose or severely damage this colony any further will be a local disaster. You only need to look at what used to be the other three colonies in West Cumbria all of which were affected ten or more years ago. One was and still is totally wiped out and the other two are still struggling to produce a dozen or so Small Blues even on a good day some ten or more years later.

**Steve Doyle**

2901

## What's going on ..... ..... this year ?

Are you thinking, wondering, still trying to make your mind up, has this really been a good butterfly year or not ? I seem to remember it was an Ok start, the Orange Tip did well early on but the Holly Blue did not, so was it a good start or not?

Green Hairstreak started early then seemed to stop abruptly. From mid May through June was good, I know that at least because it is the Marsh Fritillary flight season when I find out if all my prayers for good weather and vast numbers of Marsh Fritillaries, have been answered. July was awful weather wise but even so when I ventured down to South Cumbria I still saw many High Brown Frits and even now into August there are loads of Scotch Argus around Arnside and Smardale. I've just heard that Clouded Yellows have appeared in West Cumbria and as that does not usually happen in a 'Painted Lady' year maybe 2009 is exceptional. Still time to get a Camberwell Beauty or two – dream on, but why not?

So what's your impression? Have you had a good butterfly season? Let me know the gist of it and if I get some printable stories about the good bits, the disappointments, whatever, I will print a few in the next newsletter which will be the Spring 2010 edition, just in time to whet our appetite for the oncoming new butterfly season.

And what about forward planning for 2010. What field trips would you like us to lay on, what species to see, what locations to visit. Should we have an out of Cumbria outing with shared transport. If so, where to suggestions please. Over winter is the time to reflect on what we never got done in 2009 despite all our promises to ourselves. I for one intended to have a couple of days down at Bentley Wood near Salisbury to see Purple Emperor and the *valezina* version of the female Silver Washed Fritillary, but I never made it. I intended to have a couple of days on the Isle of Wight generally walking, looking around, having cappuccinos and cakes and incidentally of course, seeking out the odd Glanville Fritillary or two. Again I never made it.

So what's your opinion of how the 2009 season panned out and what are you definitely going to do next year without fail. Put it in the diary and just do it – simple isn't it, so why does it just not happen. That's a question I ask myself every year at this time. Oh well, maybe next year all will come together – will it for you?

Just to start things moving in your mind I am attaching pictures of some lovely butterflies right below this note, ooooooh, just imagine the perfect specimen three inches in front of your lens, click the shutter and one of two things will happen. Either you will have the perfect photo you always dreamed about, or your camera battery will have run out.

**Steve Doyle**

2011

## JUST ANOTHER DAY OUT .....

..... or so we thought.

Frequently my good friend and fellow Cumbria Branch member John Wilkinson and I have long chats by phone about butterflies. Sometimes we stray onto football and Rugby League but it is butterflies we talk about most all year round. I have to say that it is butterflies in Cumbria we mostly enthuse about as both of us are very into 'Cumbria' even if there are other rather special species outside our county boundaries. John's knowledge of all things 'butterfly' has always been impressive but since he retired more than seven years ago his knowledge has expanded way beyond the boundaries of West Cumberland, an area he knows better than anyone else I am sure.

It is a trip outside of Cumbria I am recalling in this story however. Each year now we have got together to have a blitz butterfly day out. Sometimes three of us go but on this occasion there were only two of us as one was away and we agreed it only the night before to suit the weather forecast. We go butterfly bananas for a day by setting off at an unearthly hour of the day and getting back at an equally unearthly hour of the night. And, I have to say I can't recall us ever having come home deflated as we usually achieve our objectives for the day or very close to those objectives.

This year we targeted Fermyn Wood, a Forestry Commission woodland in Northamptonshire near Oundle. The weather was settled so we met at Penrith very early morning so we could be on site as near to 9.30 am as possible. Our target you see was the Purple Emperor, every bit as majestic and powerful as its name suggests. It is without doubt the emperor of British Butterflies. When you see it coming into view it is like the climax to Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture with canon and mortar effects ringing in your ears. The blood pressure rises, no, stop the press, we can't allow that. Start again, the adrenalin rushes, you already had the camera ready and poised, but you re-check it again in anticipation of that once in a lifetime photographic moment arriving any second. Only it swooped to deceive, a brief flirtation, then gone, back up into the canopy. Back to the drawing board.

Anyway, that was us dreaming on the four hour journey. It was Friday morning and we deliberately avoided a weekend as it is now a well known place to be. When we arrived it was like Trafalgar Square on a Sunday afternoon, cars everywhere. Oh well, we're here now so off we go to join the hordes. But Fermyn Wood along with it connecting woodlands like Lady Wood is a long stretched out place and for all the cars outside it was not nearly as congested with people as we thought it would be. The main ride as you enter Fermyn is excellent. If you are lucky you might see Purple Emperor quite quickly. You will certainly see White Admiral by the dozen. To digress for a moment, and John might not thank me for this but I'm going to tell you anyway, he was so enthralled by all the White Admirals he was clearly heard to say ' I just love White Admirals. If ever I was to take a butterfly to bed with me it would be a White Admiral.' HmMMM.

Not many people on the first section of the ride, not many butterflies either, just several of those very common White Admiral things. Then, two lads with a tripod and a huge video camera. We

sneaked up and whispered, 'what have you got?' A White Letter Hairstreak one of them said. Me for one was so excited I forgot all about the mandatory adrenalin rush. You see we had planned to stop off at a site near Doncaster on the way back for White Letter. If we could see and photo it at Fermyn we could stay there all day without rushing about all over the place. Common logic eh?

Would you believe the little beauty fluttered down on to the grass right in front of us. The video lad filmed as if his life depended on it. John, me and the other lad crawled into the best positions we could without disturbing the butterfly. No need to worry about habitat flattening damage, it was on the edge of the path. For me it was the highlight of 'just another day' because although I had seen the species several times before I had never got what I call a decent photo. But now I have.

The day was still early however and lo and behold it got even better. John had got shots of a Purple Emperor the previous year so his main objective was the underside of a White Admiral. This was the place to be and he will certainly have his underside shots now. He came back to Cumbria a very happy lad, we both did in fact.

But the day was still far from over as it kept happening for us. I bumped into a couple of lads who had been further into the wood. They said a couple of Purple Emperors had been found in neighbouring Lady Wood by a film crew. John and me were parched and hungry so we quickly adjourned back to the car for refreshments and a handy nearby tree. Unlike us I know but it was a long hot day and we're not getting any younger! Anyway, we allowed ourselves only 10 minutes then back into the wood, in fact all the way about a mile and a half into Lady Wood. There we bumped into a BBC film crew who was being aided by none other than our good friend Matthew Oates who I have known well for years. He keeps popping up on butty TV programmes these days but works for the National Trust in the Cotswolds. When we got there the TV presenter had a male Purple Emperor on his finger and the butterfly hung around on nearby foliage, several fingers and various other body parts for ages. John showed us his party trick of smearing saliva over a leaf and watching the butterfly lap it up – it worked a treat. Late afternoon by now and the TV crew had to go after what was a day out they had clearly enjoyed – so had we as we spent ages with them. Then as they were driving away (they were allowed their vehicle into the wood) there was a Purple Emperor on the track about to be run over. We shouted and waved, the car shuddered to a halt. We explained, the cameraman jumped out and started to film again in impromptu fashion. Real live drama it seemed – the front offside wheel had come to a standstill only one inch or less from the butterfly, no exaggeration. The TV presenter leaned out of his car window and asked if it was alright, the cameraman kept filming us all around on the ground rescuing the butterfly. It had survived by the skin of its teeth. All I could think to say was 'well that was very nearly one for the road.'

All's well that ends well and we thus ended our marvellous butterfly day well satisfied ..... Just another day, or was it?

**Steve Doyle**

(aided and abetted by John Wilkinson)

2902

## Just Lucky .....

## ..... Or What ?

This year was my third in full retirement. The first was well, frankly 'up in the air' as it were whilst my wife and I sorted the new house, got into a sort of routine, dealt with internal matters like Inland Revenue, VAT people,

Accountants and people who wanted to come and see us in our new home and wanted to invite us to theirs. Then some of the new neighbours wanted to be 'nice.' Oh, and we spent a lot of time wondering when it was going to stop raining. Did it always rain and was it just that working in a busy Post Office as we did maybe we never noticed that was what it was always like out there. Yes, this retirement lark doesn't just start at the press of a button you know! Did we do the right thing?

Course we did. Can't recall much about last Summer mind – just flew by – but I think it rained quite a bit again from July onwards. I know it was OK until mid June 'cos the Marsh Fritillary season was good and that is my barometer.

Anyway, Summer 2009 arrived and I planned to do lots of things. Course I didn't get half of them done but I did get quite a few things done because in retirement you can have weekends away in the middle of the week! In fact weekends and Bank Holidays are a bit of a nuisance really 'cos they are too busy. So what did I do and what's this lucky business I mentioned at the start. Well, one of the things I set out to do was walk all over Whitbarrow Scar throughout this butterfly season. I used to live only a couple of miles from Whitbarrow but whilst working I never got there as often as I would have liked and I was weather restricted. I just love the place so in 2009 I decided to renew my acquaintance with it.

Whitbarrow has many different habitats from woodland to open fell, from limestone outcrops to bracken areas, from boggy bits to bare earth areas, hills and sheltered areas, steep cliffs and gentle slopes, in fact just about everything except a beach! If you include Witherslack Woods as part of the Whitbarrow complex, and I do, you need to visit different parts of that complex at different times of the butterfly season to see everything which is there. Most species have their own distinct and preferred bit of Whitbarrow and the secret is to find out where those best bits are and as most of it is open access it is a really interesting exploration.

In 2009 I was lucky. Being a butterfly photographer it is not usually just a case of being lucky it is also a case of being very patient. That I am with butterflies but what I am not usually, is lucky. But I was on Whitbarrow in 2009 both in terms of what I saw and with the weather which as you will know was not entirely great all the time in Summer 2009.

In all I managed to record 31 butterfly species plus several other notable sightings. On 13<sup>th</sup> August I saw a Grass Snake, the first I have seen on Whitbarrow ever. I have seen foxes on three occasions, badgers, a stoat, Southern Hawker dragonflies, roe deer and lots more. One thing I was nearly always short on seeing were people but I can put up with that no problem. An exception to the 'people' thing occurred in mid July when I led a butterfly walk with the Crosthwaite and Lyth Valley Landowners and had a very enjoyable afternoon with them. Collectively they own what we know as The Howe but which is also known as Township Plantation and Township Allotment. Even on that cloudy day we managed to see 13 species of butterfly and it really was

good to have the opportunity to show them the work we have done there, why we do it and then to see the butterflies themselves put the icing on the cake for all of us.

Getting back to the 'lucky' bit, I am really referring to things one hopes to see rather than the things you would be disappointed not to see. For example I saw Purple Hairstreak and Small Skipper. I saw Green Hairstreak at a place I would not normally go to see it. Small Copper was better than usual and so too was Wall Brown. In fact in my opinion both those species have done well this year – and add to that Small Tortoiseshell which I also saw there and has done better than in recent years. The Gatekeeper and a Ringlet were a surprise but they are thankfully spreading nicely in Cumbria now.

All in all Whitbarrow is a special place. You can wander into its different habitats and on a single day you can encounter common species like Meadow Brown, Small Heath and the Whites, Then further up the path the odd Brimstone shimmers in front of you tantalisingly, yet flutters off before your camera is at the ready. Again I was lucky as a brilliant and freshly emerged male settled in front of me and I got wonderful shots of it. Then what's that? A Wall Brown or a Grayling – my pace quickens as I seek to find out. It lands on the bare limestone path – a Grayling. Onwards and upwards then a Wall Brown does enter from the left and settles also on the path – timing personified. Further up I am getting into Dark Green, High Brown and Silver Washed Fritillary country and I was not disappointed. A bonus was the Common Blue, not so aptly named in my opinion. Firstly they are not really common any more on inland sites although again they have had a good year. Secondly, how could you call them common? Freshly emerged they are fantastic. The male in its rich bright blue livery is nothing short of spectacular – a real jewel of the skies. The females can be brown – a rich brown with powdery blue scales near the abdomen as a give away clue so not to confuse it with the Northern Brown Argus which invitingly appeared just as I was explaining the difference to the Lyth Valley people. As my solitary walk continued I came across other classics like Peacock, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Speckled Wood, Small Tortoiseshell and more. Add to that a Grass Snake and a fox and you can well imagine my reluctance to drag myself away from that wonderful place on an equally wonderful day.

Whitbarrow is a very special place indeed.

**Steve Doyle**

## **Trampling Problems on ..... .....Township Plantation ( The Howe )**

This year there has been far too much trampling on the Duke of Burgundy glades. The Crosthwaite and Lyth Valley Landowners have asked if we can suggest ways of reducing the trampling as they, and we, fear for the butterflies in this very sensitive area.

I am fairly sure much of the trampling is not done by our Branch members but this is a historically well known site. This Spring in particular someone posted great detail of it on a website and I have little doubt that attracted many from away, who perhaps had rather less concern for the long term welfare of the site. Indeed one of the landowners challenged a chap who was swinging a stick trying to locate Dukes in the foliage.

All I ask from our Branch members and any others reading this is that they exercise care on site and stick to the paths. Please avoid excessive trampling and habitat damage. Thanks.

## Branch Website

Have you accessed our Branch website yet? If not, why not? If so I hope you like what you see and please do feel free to comment to me or a member of the Committee. There is still work to be done of course, not only to update things like news items, work party dates etc. but also we need a moth section.

Did I say 'a moth section?' You know I do believe I did. The thing is I am quite open about it, I know not a lot about moths, wish I did but in my advanced years if I started in getting serious about moths my wife would not be amused. As it is I am just about secretly getting away with my increasing interest in dragonflies. When I talk about dragons she thinks I am talking about the mother in law so that's nothing new you see.

Which is why ..... we need one or two moth people to come forward and volunteer to start putting something together for the website. At first it need be no more than skeletal, say a list of macro moths which can be found in Cumbria, then widen it out a bit over time with up to date news items posted through our webmaster via Steve Clarke. At present the moth connection link we have is to the Tullie House site but in addition to that we really could do with something of our own. Any volunteers?

**Steve Doyle**

## **Records and Recording ..... ..... not just butterflies.**

Many of us no doubt send in records of our butterflies each year to Tullie House, the County records centre. If you don't already do so please consider it as your records will make a difference. There are many Cumbrian 'squares' with no records at all or very few and there simply must be at least a cabbage white even in the most urban of areas.

A decade or so ago I printed in our newsletter a bold statement 'There are no butterflies in (a particular town).' I got a quick response from several people in the area and a call from the local newspaper. What on earth was I saying? Of course there are butterflies in ----- town. And indeed there were, but the thing is that nobody had ever sent in any records so officially there were no butterflies in ----- town. Thanks to that article and those who responded I am pleased to say there are now quite a lot of butterflies in ----- town. But did you know there are none in most of Barrow, most of Carlisle and the central lakes area? There must be some in front gardens even in Lowry Hill or Harraby in Carlisle or in Vickerstown on Walney Island. Even if you don't have a car, still please jot down what you see even on a trip to a supermarket or out walking the dog or the budgie.

A special word of thanks to all our members who volunteered to record a 1KM square 'patch' in 2009 either as part of the WBCS scheme or as part of our own Branch scheme 'patches.' I have

commented on these schemes elsewhere in this newsletter and I hope all who did a square enjoyed it and will continue into 2010. It is worth making the effort and doing something worthwhile and under our own 'patches' scheme many volunteers' patches start right outside their own front door even if they live in the middle of a town.

The other thing to consider is on the end of your records also put a note of what else you saw e.g. a red squirrel, a stoat, weasel or a badger, a dragonfly species, whatever. Tullie House will appreciate all your Cumbria records which will also be fed into the national recording databases.

The address of Tullie House is: Tullie House, Wildlife Records, Castle Street, Carlisle, CA3 8JP or visit their website [www.tulliehouse.co.uk](http://www.tulliehouse.co.uk) either directly or via the link through our own Branch website.

**Steve Doyle**  
2013

## **Landscape Planning.**

It is good to be able to get out each summer and have a walk, see some butterflies and generally enjoy our leisure time. We in this Branch are not taking our Cumbrian countryside for granted however. Things change either naturally or through human intervention. We know our broadleaved woodlands are not as they used to be, that's why we have our ongoing Morecambe Bay Limestone Woodlands Project. Marsh Fritillaries have had a hard time in Cumbria and so too the Small Blue will be sent packing if we don't look after their interests.

Pearl Bordered Fritillaries are on the very brink of extinction in Cumbria with the realistic (not pessimistic) view being that extinction in Cumbria is likely to happen in the next couple of years. Hopefully we can halt the decline through the Morecambe Bay Project but it looks bleak.

We need to plan on a 'landscape' basis. Postage stamp size reserves are a start but if isolated and/or unmanaged they will eventually implode. Our Projects are designed firstly to conserve what is presently left and from there extend a network around existing colonies of whatever thus forming a metapopulation with connectivity in between to allow or at least encourage movement of individual insects to and fro to maintain cross breeding and genetic strength. Our Morecambe Bay Limestone Woodlands Project is one example of landscaping. The Marsh Fritillary Project is another as we attempt to create close together colonies as metapopulations.

I was pleased to read in Cumbria Wildlife's last magazine and also their 2009/9 Annual Review that they are also thinking on 'landscape' lines. This has to be the way forward and I feel if all conservation organisations in Cumbria continue to work together, we have a great opportunity of making significant progress.

**Steve Doyle**

2013

## Trampling ..... Again !!

I know the trampling issue has already been mentioned earlier in this newsletter but I feel I must make the point again, this time in respect of a different site. In 2007 we re-introduced the Marsh Fritillary to 4 different sites, one in West Cumbria, one on the Solway Plain, one near Penrith and one near Keswick. Two of the sites are on private land, one is on Common Land and the other is a National Nature Reserve.

I don't want to be a killjoy and stop people seeking out and enjoying our wonderful Cumbrian butterflies but trampling and general habitat damage can be a problem on very sensitive sites especially those on private land. Such is the case at the Keswick site. That is on private land but there is a public footpath which runs over part of the site so that is not a problem. It is the breeding areas well away from the public access area where the problem has arisen. The farmer and also the Natural England HLS (Higher Level Stewardship) manager both noticed severe trampling in the best breeding area and I also found a dead trampled on female Marsh Fritillary as I did a cursory adult butterfly count around the edge of the site. We will do our best to patrol the site in the 2010 flight season and the farmer will challenge anyone he sees 'off bounds' although I have to say I suspect it might not be our own Branch members causing the problem. There unfortunately are those who know about this historical site and might well have decided on a speculative search knowing that re-introductions had taken place in Cumbria.

For the record the other private site is the one near Penrith where there is no open access. The West Cumbrian site for those who know it is Common Land so access is not restricted but I do ask that care is taken to avoid too much trampling. The Solway site is at Finglandrigg NNR and this is the site we have made available for public access to the Marsh Fritillary whilst it establishes itself back in Cumbria. The Finglandrigg re-introduction has gone fantastically well thanks to all the efforts of the Natural England staff, Colin Auld *et al* so this is an excellent place to visit and we have field trips for members and guided walks for others. When visiting the main field however please stick closely to the path around the south side (right hand side) of the main field. There are loads of Marsh Frits right there so there is no need to trample all over the site.

Thanks for taking time to read this – it is important.

**Steve Doyle**

### **The 'White Spot' Argus.**

Maybe it is a bit ironical that here I am referring to the 'White Spot' Argus when I don't like the Northern Brown Argus being called the Durham Argus. I do so however for good reasons in this article as David Newland gave a very good but brief history of those now unofficial names, in his excellent book *Discover Butterflies in Britain*. David recalls that the Scottish sub-species was originally called the Brown Whitespot but when the differences between the Durham and Scottish versions were recognised the two names Durham Argus and Scotch Argus were used. Well as you can imagine that too caused confusion as there is the 'real' Scotch Argus so eventually sanity prevailed and as recently as 1974 the name of Northern Brown Argus was adopted for both Scottish and English versions (yes, even the Cumbrian ones) of the Northern Brown Argus. I still refer to the Scottish one as the White Spot Argus and look forward each year at St Abbs Head.

**Steve Doyle** 2014

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