

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

Cumbria Branch

Newsletter No. 28
Spring 2014

Butterfly Conservation

DEDICATED TO SAVING WILD BUTTERFLIES
And MOTHS IN THEIR NATURAL HABITATS

Message from
..... our Branch Chairman

Welcome to our Spring 2014 newsletter and a special welcome to all our fifty new members who have joined over the last 12 months. With

our Branch membership up by about 20% and the national membership up from 19,000 to over 23,000 the UK has the best supported charity devoted to the conservation of butterflies and moths anywhere in the world. That is great news – but we still want more members so we can do even more!

You may remember our membership survey which challenged your committee to come up with more ways to involve a growing membership. I am delighted that Mark Eastlick, our webmaster has been busy creating a fabulous new butterfly and day flying moth sightings/recording page on our website. We now invite all who have computer access to go on to our Butterfly Conservation Cumbria website and click on 'sightings' to see how this works. If you see butterflies or day flying moths while out and about please do your best to identify the species, number seen, location and any other points of interest and follow the user friendly instructions to enter the data. The map provided will help provide a useful Grid Reference. Even if you do not have data to enter it should be really interesting to follow all the sightings as they appear – this will be a wonderful record of what is on the wing and where. It will also chart how their distribution varies. Personal details will NOT be kept beyond the year and are only requested should a query by a committee member need to be raised regarding an unusual sighting. However the butterfly and moth data will be archived to allow us to monitor changes over the years. It will also be available to The Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre at Tullie House in Carlisle and to the national records centre.

I am also delighted to report that starting this year our Annual General Meeting will be a small part of our Members Day devoted largely to providing you with the information, training and social opportunities that many have requested. With that in mind this years Members Day and AGM will take place at Blackwood Farm near Keswick on Sunday 25th May – the national award farm and conservation centre and home of one of the largest colonies of Marsh Fritillaries in the UK. The programme is published later in this newsletter and is focussed on what we do as a Branch, how to identify butterflies and moths and how to record and monitor butterflies where you live. The business side of the day will be short and 'painless' and will be followed by a walk around this amazing farm with its very special flora and fauna. This includes Marsh Fritillaries, Forester Moths, Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries, Otters (if we're lucky), Osprey, Kingfisher – just a pity we cannot guarantee they will all put in an appearance – but we'll try. **Please come to this our first Members Day** – put the date in your diary now.

Regarding dates I would also like to recommend the one day conference at Lancaster University 'Butterflies and Moths of North West England'. It will be run by Butterfly Conservation and part of the conference programme will be put out by the Department of North West Regional Studies. This event is on Saturday 17th May 2014 and full details are in this newsletter and on the Lancaster University North West Regional Studies website. The cost to hire University Lecture Hall facilities is considerable but for members of Cumbria and Lancashire branches of Butterfly Conservation we are able to offer a small discount on your ticket price – down from £25 to £23. Please quote Butterfly Conservation offer when you book places which can be done online or by printing off a postal application. If you cannot afford the entry charge but would like to attend please contact our Butterfly Conservation Officer Hilary Smith as she has a limited number of free places which will be given on a first request basis – she can be contacted on hsmith@butterfly-conservation.org or on 01524 298680.

Finally I would like to draw your attention to some of the other features in this newsletter. In particular the excellent list of summer Field Trips and the various articles written by non committee members. Indeed if you would like to contribute an article please contact our newsletter editor and I know he will do his best to fit it in.

Lets all hope for a really good summer, best wishes,

Chris Winnick.

FIELD TRIPS and OTHER EVENTS - 2014

Saturday 17 May – Lancaster University – study day 0900-1600 hours **Butterflies and Moths of the North West – Contexts, Challenges and Opportunities**

(Joint event: Centre for North West Regional Studies / Butterfly Conservation)

Venue: Management School, Lecture Theatre 3, Lancaster University.

More information on:

http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/users/cnwrs/events/Butterflies_and_Moths_details.html

A fee is chargeable for this course, and early booking is advised to secure a place.

The programme for the day is:-

9.00 to 9.30 am	Assemble: Tea, coffee, biscuits.
9.30 to 10.20 am	Butterflies and Moths of N W England – Chris Winnick
10.20 to 11.15 am	Why threatened butterflies and moths need conservation on a landscape scale - Dr Dave Wainwright
11.15 to 11.45 am	Refreshments
11.45 to 12.30 pm	Conservation in practice in the Morecambe Bay area – Martin Wain
12.30 to 1.30 pm	Lunch (can be purchased)
1.30 to 2.20 pm	Cumbria Projects for Marsh Fritillary and Small Blue – Steve Doyle
2.20 to 2.50 pm	Refreshments
2.50 to 4.00 pm	Workshops on butterfly gardening, recording and moth trapping - with Martin Chadwick and Martin Tordoff.

Sunday 25 May – Blackwood Farm Conservation Centre, Braithwaite, Keswick. **Members' Day and Annual General Meeting of Butterfly Conservation's Cumbria Branch.**

How to get there: Follow A66T from Keswick towards Cockermouth. Pass junctions to Braithwaite village on left; Blackwood Farm is on right hand side around 1km further on. Parking is available at entrance to the farm and in the yard. Grid ref: NY232248

Programme			AGM Agenda
Refreshments.welcome	10.15 to 10.30	1	Introduction/Apologies for absence
Open moth traps	10.30 to 11.15	2	Minutes of the last AGM
The work of Cumbria Branch	11.15 to 11.45	3	Matters arising
Butterfly Identification/recording	11.45 to 12.45	4	Chairman's report
Packed lunch/meet new members	12.45 to 13.15	5	Treasurer's report
AGM	13.15 to 14.15	6	Appointment of Officers
Guided walk around Blackwood Farm	14.15 to 16.00	7	Any other business

*The site is often muddy and wet underfoot please wear appropriate foot wear (Wellingtons recommended). If the weather is poor in the afternoon, Steve Doyle will give a slide show about Marsh Fritillary and Small Blue butterflies and other projects.

Contact: Chris Winnick 01539 728254

Tuesday 27 May - Butterflies of Farrer's Allotment and Wakebarrow, 1030 hours (Joint event with Arnside Natural History Society)

Join us for a first look at the impact of recent management on woodland and grassland butterfly species on this elevated site. Our targets will include Pearl-bordered and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, but who knows what else will turn up?

Directions: Leave the A5074 Bowness road at junction with minor road 1 km north of Gilpin Bridge. Follow minor road north-west for 500m. Meet near Johnscapes Farm at grid ref SD462867 for drive up to site - car share may be necessary.

Contact: Chris Winnick 01539 728254

Friday 30 May – Moths of Serpentine Woods, Kendal, from 2145 hours until late

(Joint event with Fellside Forum)

We will be running light traps on and around the Dancing Green. Can we do better than the 27 moth species seen on a similar event in Serpentine Woods last year? Please wear warm outdoor clothing and bring a torch. Subject to cancellation if wet, cold and windy. Phone before 2000 hours if in doubt.

Directions: From High Tenterfell Road take Golf club access road, and enter wood through stile at SD509926. Notices will be posted to guide you into the wood. Parking very limited, so please try to arrive on foot if possible.

Contact: Martin Tordoff 01539 735935, 07981 348148

Sunday 1 June – Moths of Sales Bank Wood and woodland walk, 1030 hours

Join forester Edward Mills for the opening of moth traps set the previous night, followed by a walk around this rich ancient semi-natural wood. Edward had recorded over 130 species of flowering plant here.

Directions: Take the A590. At Greenodd, turn right at new roundabout onto the A5092. After half a mile turn right in Penny Bridge and go over the bridge. Continue 2.5 miles to Colton and take the left turn to Bandrake Head. Follow this lane to the hamlet, turn sharp left and go down the dip and over the beck, around a couple of bends, up the hill and the woodland gateway is on the left about 0.8 of a mile from the turn to Bandrake Head. Parking in the wood is limited; if numbers are high, you will be directed to the FC gateway 5 minutes' walk up the hill. Please bring stout footwear; sections of the walk are wet and steep.

Contact: Edward Mills (Cumbria Woodlands) 01539 822140, or on the day use 07974 446106

Friday and Saturday 6 / 7 June – Moth trapping at CWT's Plumgarths gardens.

Friday evening from 2145 hours until late and Saturday morning from 0830 hours.

(Jointly with Cumbria Wildlife Trust's Saturday Bioblitz event)

Light traps around the gardens on Friday evening, so we can see and identify moths as they arrive, then on Saturday morning the traps will be opened to examine the night's moth catch prior to their release. For the evening session please wear warm outdoor clothing and bring a torch.

Directions: The venue is the CWT HQ, Plumgarths, Kendal LA8 8 LX (Grid ref: SD494947).

Around 300m on the right along the Crook, Bowness road (B5284) from Plumgarths roundabout.

Contact: Martin Tordoff 01539 735935, 07981 348148. Booking in advance required by phoning CWT on 01539 816300.

Sunday 8 June - Marsh Fritillaries at Finglandrigg and Small Blues at Workington, 1100 hrs

A wonderful opportunity to see free flying majestic Marsh Fritillaries and if there are enough takers we will move on to Workington later in the day to seek out some Small Blues at Oldside windfarm (Grid ref: NX995304) at about 3.00pm but that time will vary depending on when we leave Finglandrigg.

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

Contact: Steve Doyle, 01228 544059

Tuesday 10 June – Linsty Hall Wood, near Ickenthaite, Rusland, 1000 hours

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

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

right turn uphill through woods to Ickenthaite. After less than a mile park on open grassland on left at SD326897.

Contact: Chris Winnick 01539 728254

Friday 20 June – Township Plantation, 1000 hours

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

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

Contact: Sarah Bradley 015395 52340

Saturday 28 June – Mountain Ringlets, Haweswater, 1000 to approx 1700 hours

(Joint event with Cumbria Wildlife Trust)

For this year's Mountain Ringlet walk we're visiting Kidsty Pike / High Raise again to see one of Lakeland's most thriving colonies of this butterfly. This event will involve walking over rough uneven terrain with moderate to steep inclines and hopefully with great views over Haweswater (around 5.5km walk each way with approx 650m of ascent). This event is free but booking is needed as it may be cancelled at short notice if weather inclement. Please book by calling CWT on 01539 816300. Bring stout walking boots, waterproofs, warm clothes, sufficient food and drink to last a whole day out in the hills, and sun cream. Please be aware that good weather (a minimum of 15°C with some sunshine) is necessary to see the butterflies, so phone for information by 0830 hours on the day if weather looking unfavourable.

Leaders: Martin Tordoff and John Dunbavin.

Directions: Meet at Haweswater Head car park, NY468107, at 1000 hours.

Contact: Martin Tordoff 01539 735935, 07981 348148

Thursday 3 July – National Moth Night at Arnside Knott, 2200 hours till late

(Joint event with National Trust)

To celebrate National Moth Night 2014 we'll be running a series of moth traps to see what turns up in the area around the Knott car park, with its diverse mix of species-rich limestone grassland and mixed woodland. Bring warm clothes and a torch.

Directions: From Arnside promenade turn left up Silverdale Road, then right on Red Hills road. After 1 km turn left up minor road signposted The Knott. Car park approx 800m further at SD450774

Contact: If weather doubtful, Martin Tordoff, 01539 735935, 07981 348148 before 2000 hours on the night.

Saturday 12 July – Butterflies at White Scar Quarry, Whitbarrow, 1030 hours

A first visit to this new and exciting site to assess the effects of recent and ongoing management. Possibility of early large fritillaries, among others.

Directions: White Scar Quarry is located on the SE end of Whitbarrow Scar. From either direction along the A590, turn off this road at the last turning before (from Barrow direction) or the first turning after (from Kendal direction) the A5074 Lyth Valley road (SD466850). After 500m, turn right towards Raven's Lodge. Pass through the farm yard, bearing right and park in the second car park on the left (SD 460852).

Contact: Chris Winnick 01539 728254

Saturday 19 July – Butterflies at Witherslack Woods and Howe Ridding 1400-1630

(Joint event with Cumbria Wildlife Trust Duddon Valley Support Group)

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

Directions: Turn off A590 towards Witherslack, then 3.5 km north, passing through the village to Witherslack Hall. Parking area at SD436859 on track (The Kennels) to right of Witherslack Hall main gate.

Contact: Chris Winnick, 01539 728254

Wednesday 23 July – Great Asby Scar National Nature Reserve, 1045 hours

(Joint event with Arnside Natural History Society)

This reserve contains some of Britain's best limestone pavement, and is home to a wide diversity of special and rare insects and plants that are adapted to survive in this harsh, rocky environment. Our leader Rob Petley-Jones of Natural England hopes to show us target species including the Dark Green and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterflies and Least Minor, Purple Bar and *Crambus ericella* moths.

Directions: The reserve is accessed on foot, around 1.5 km walk over rough terrain from the parking area alongside the B6260 Tebay to Appleby road. This is at NY632105, about 400m north of the junction with the minor road signposted Crosby Ravensworth.

Contact: Chris Winnick 01539 728254

Monday 28 July – Moths at Yewbarrow, near Witherslack, 2130 hours till late

Our first moth event at this limestone grassland and woodland site, where extensive management work was undertaken by our members in 2013. Bring warm clothes, strong shoes and a torch.

Directions: Turn off A590 towards Witherslack, then 3.5 km north, passing through the village to Witherslack Hall. Parking area at SD436859 on track (The Kennels) to right of Witherslack Hall main gate. Meet here for approx 1 km walk over rough tracks to event site.

Contact: If weather doubtful, Martin Tordoff, 01539 735935, 07981 348148 before 1800 hours on the night

Thursday 7 August – Butterflies of Allithwaite Quarry and Humphrey Head, 1300 hours

(Joint meeting with Grange Natural History Society)

We will start at the quarry at 1300 where there should be plenty of Common Blues and Gatekeepers plus several other species. We will then drive to Humphrey Head (for 1430) and walk the half mile or so to the wood edge where last year with patience and some sunshine several Purple Hairstreaks could be seen, sometimes at low level. Bring binoculars.

Directions: In Allithwaite, Quarry Lane is just by the post office and leads to the community playing fields (SD388767). There is plenty of parking there. At Humphrey Head we will meet at 1430 by the cattle grid entrance to the Outdoor Centre (SD388747). Parking is limited here so a walk back from the shore parking area may be best. Those wishing to join us for only the hairstreak hunt please contact me beforehand

Contact: Martin Chadwick 015395 32553 or 07963 810027 on the day.

Thursday 14 August – Butterflies and Flowers at Smardale Gill National Nature Reserve, 1030 hours

(Joint event with Arnside Natural History Society)

A walk along a disused railway track into this reserve of internationally important limestone grasslands. Leaders Andrew Walter and Chris Winnick will point out the wild flowers and butterflies on the site's mountain hay meadow and limestone grassland habitats. The Scotch Argus should be flying at this, one of its only two English sites. Bring packed lunch, boots and waterproofs.

Directions: At ~800m south of Kirkby Stephen station turn off A685 (Ravenstonedale to Kirkby Stephen road) by a small tree plantation onto a minor road signposted Smardale. Straight on, cross railway and turn left after about 2km. Ignore sign for Smardale Hall, bear right and cross disused railway followed by immediate left turn and left again into car park marked Cumbria Wildlife Trust, at NY739082

Contact: Chris Winnick 01539 728254

New! Cumbria Branch Butterfly and Day-flying Moth Sightings Page

By the time that you read this, we hope that the Cumbria Branch web site sightings page will be “live”. Like many other branches, our web master has constructed an excellent sightings page for the branch web site.

Click on www.cumbria-butterflies.org.uk and look for the sightings link.

There is a sightings submission form, on which you can submit either butterfly or day-flying moth records. There is a full help facility. A grid reference is required which can either be taken from your paper OS map, GPS device or by using the interactive map by the side of the form to find precisely the location of your sighting which automatically adds the reference to the submission form. After submission, your record is automatically added to the sightings page. The branch asks for an email address or telephone number which may be used to contact you to follow up your sighting for any reason. The branch does not publish your contact details or reveal them to third parties and deletes the data after a period of time.

You will be able to view in the basic mode all the sightings for the month in which you are submitting your records or by selecting from a drop down menu what so ever time period interests you.

In the advanced mode, you will be able to analyse the sightings by date, species, location...

The sightings will be added to a file and submitted to Tullie House, where the data will be collated and sent to Butterfly Conservation for the national butterfly data record.

Please look at the sightings page and add your sightings. All records are welcomed from the very common species to extreme rarities.

If there are difficulties either email or ring David Eastlick (015395 32076, eastlick@ktdbroadband.com) or any Branch Officer or member of the committee.

David Eastlick



Cumbrian Dayflying Moths Identification Workshop

Tullie House, Carlisle, Thursday 10th April 13:00 – 16:30

There are more than 50 species of moth active during the day in Cumbria and these are often as vividly coloured and attractively patterned as butterflies. This workshop will provide a *free* introduction to the field identification of many of these species with the novel use of specimens from the museum collections. The workshop is indoors but seasonally timed so that you won't have to wait too long afterwards before you can start finding some of these species on the wing. Anyone interested in Wildlife is welcome to attend, particularly those who are already familiar with a few butterflies. Participants will also receive a *free* FSC Dayflying moths fold-out chart. Suitable for adults. Capacity is very limited so please book ASAP.

For more information contact Gary Hedges, 01228 618717 recordingofficer@cbdc.org.uk



Curwen Park, Workington 24hour Bioblitz – Saturday
19th July 12pm(noon) – Sunday 20th July 12pm(noon)

Last year CBDC joined forces in the organisation of two BioBlitz's: At Finglandrigg NNR with Natural England, the Solway Wetlands Landscape Partnership and Tullie House, and at Arnside with the Morecambe Bay Nature Improvement Area. Both of these were very successful, producing impressive species lists of close to 500. However, the weather and late start to spring did much to keep the Lepidoptera tallies down. The total of 4 moth species trapped on Arnside Knott on the cold night of 29th May could hardly have been more disappointing. The 22 species caught during heavy rain over night on 14th June at Finglandrigg NNR at least produced some interesting moths to get people enthused such as **Pebble Hook-tip**. Butterfly treats such as **Marsh Fritillary** and **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** did make a showing on the Saturday at Finglandrigg, which brightened up many peoples day! This year we plan to hold a BioBlitz in peak season for Lepidoptera and under bright blue skies (fingers crossed!).

Help us in our 24-hour quest to find and record all the different species of wildlife in Curwen Park in Workington. Join the wildlife experts as we seek out all the nature inhabiting the park, such as birds, bats, butterflies and flowers. Learn how to find, identify and record wildlife with guided nature walks, displays, demonstrations and activities. There will be lots of fun inside and outside for all ages. Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre and Tullie House Museum are running this Bioblitz together with Allerdale Borough Council. Free of charge. No booking required.

Further details and a programme will appear soon on our webpage: www.cbdc.org.uk so please watch this space! If you would like to help out with recording or activities on the day, please contact Gary Hedges, Recording Officer at Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre on 01228 618717 or at recordingofficer@cbdc.org.uk

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

Square Recording for the 2018 Atlas of the UK's Larger Moths

Following on from the Provisional Atlas of the UK's Larger Moths publication in 2010, the National Moth Recording Scheme (NMRS) at Butterfly Conservation aim to produce the first ever complete atlas of the UK's Larger Moths in 2018. The ground-breaking publication is expected to use records up to and including the year 2016. This gives us three years to survey Cumbria's moths as widely as possible in order for the most representative picture to be produced.

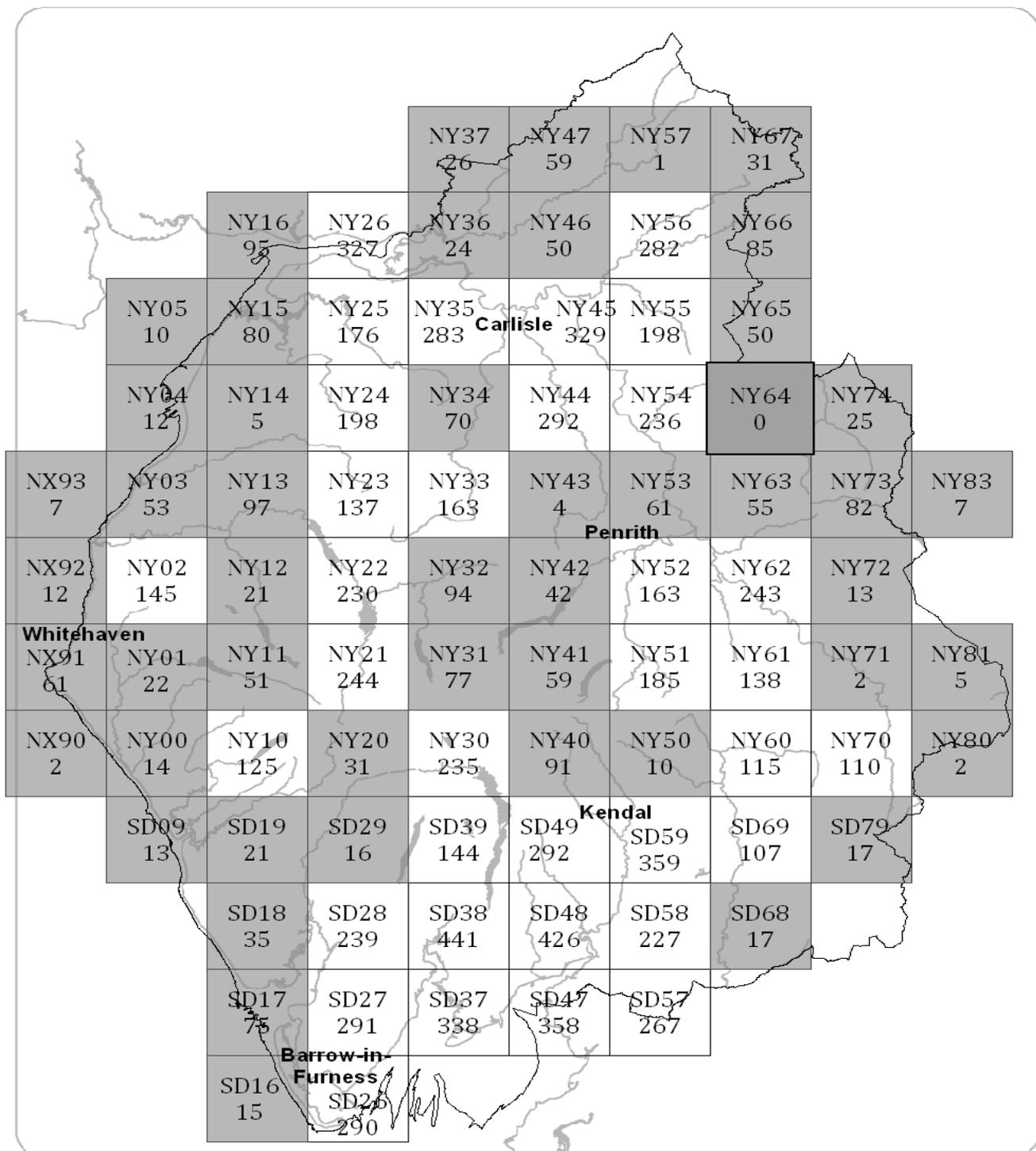
Traditionally, Cumbria has been an extremely under-recorded county for Moths in comparison with many, more densely populated Southern Counties, and there are still major gaps in the knowledge base. Despite this, there is good reason to be optimistic. Recording of macro-moths has shown a very encouraging trend in recent years with a 600% increase in records from 2004 (2500) to 2012 (15000). During this period annual record counts have increased year-on-year, and with the final 2013 count almost in, this trend looks set to continue. Indeed, with 3 years of atlas recording to go, interest is 'peaking' at the right time and I am very optimistic that we can fill in many gaps in the knowledge base during this period.

The map of Cumbria **below** shows species density of macro-moths per 10km² (hectad) in vice counties 69 and 70 using records from 2000 onwards (over 100,000 unique species sightings). This date range has been used because the 2018 atlas is expected to be mapped using date classes 'pre 2000' and '2000 onwards', therefore we are presently recording to improve the '2000 onwards' picture.

The map shows that the hectad with the most macro-moths recorded is SD38 with 441. This hectad includes the well recorded Roudsea Woods and Mosses NNR as well as other outstanding wildlife sites. The next 5 ranked hectads are also in South Cumbria, which is a pattern mirrored by the butterflies and one you might expect in a slightly milder climate, richer in limestone. However, the main purpose of this map is to highlight areas in urgent need of surveying.

The squares highlighted in grey show where fewer than 100 species have been recorded this side of the millennium. It is in these squares where more recording will reveal the most new information about our moth species distributions and where undiscovered rarities (that could be under threat) are most likely to be found. Perhaps the most eye catching pattern in the map is the lack of recording on the West coast of the county. We are not currently aware of any regular moth trapper living along this stretch but there is huge potential for hundreds of macro-moths to be found. The warmer microclimates on the coast feature some of the most important and pristine Lepidoptera habitat in the county, such as the dune systems. Who knows what might be found around Haverigg, Sandscale and North Walney (SD17)? The central Lake District also features a big black hole in the recent moth distribution knowledge base yet there's interesting woodland habitat surrounding around Thirlmere and Ullswater lake, where I'm sure there could be big catches. Don't forget, you can make a very helpful contribution without the use of a light trap at all. There are plenty of day-flying moths and conspicuous caterpillars to find. Why not get your eye in on a few day flyers at our joint workshop (with Tullie house) on 10th April? Please don't forget to ask permission if you plan to light trap on private land or on nature reserves.

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



MOUNTAIN RINGLETS IN CUMBRIA – A NEW APPROACH TO MONITORING

Thanks to the warm dry spell in June and July 2013 we had a good response to our annual appeal for help in tracking down the haunts of Lakeland's Mountain Ringlet butterflies. Not counting reports sent direct to Tullie House or the United Kingdom Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (UKBMS), we at Butterfly Conservation (BC) Cumbria Branch received positive records from over 20 surveyors covering around 35 1km squares - there were the usual nil returns, of course, but these too are valuable to us. First recorded sightings were on 10 June 2013 and the last on 22 July

2013, a shorter than usual flight season following a cool and late spring. To any surveyors we didn't thank personally, a big "thank you" now – we couldn't do it without you! Only one of these 35 squares, NY2411 to the north of Glaramara, appears to have had no previous records. And two of 2013's squares, one on Scafell's west slope and one on Standing Crag north of Ullscarf – both some distance from known colonies - have each had just a single previous record; while these were probably vagrants it is quite possible that there are healthy Mountain Ringlet colonies still waiting to be found in Cumbria. After all, it was only five years ago that the colony on Hartsop Dodd was discovered, despite the site straddling a well-walked footpath. So we continue to make our perennial appeal for help, both in reporting casual sightings and in making dedicated searches during the 2014 flight season. As usual the year's target search squares will be listed on the Branch's website by the start of the flight season (link below).

From 2014, however, we'd like to take things a stage further. Whilst the data we've accumulated has given us valuable information on the butterfly's whereabouts and changes to geographical distribution over time in Cumbria, it doesn't provide a good measure of the long-term health of the species' populations. So, with encouragement from the UKBMS data team, from 2014 we'd like to establish a nucleus of regularly walked transects or timed counts in some of Lakeland's long established Mountain Ringlet colonies. Monitoring by these methods will provide UKBMS with sufficient data to start to derive separate indices of the health of Cumbria's Mountain Ringlet populations, the only ones in the British Isles outside the Scottish Highlands. BC have suggested that with around 45 occupied 1km squares in Cumbria we should be regularly monitoring at least five of these to achieve a robust result. So please can anyone out there think about committing themselves to one of these surveys for at least the next few seasons? Using the transect method, around four visits per season to each site would be required – from around early June to late July - with slightly fewer visits for timed counts. We made a tentative start at this in 2013, with a single-species transect walked four times on Hartsop Dodd; however, without data from additional sites and over a number of years, the data collected there will have been of limited value. Please get in touch if you think you could help with this challenging task – my contact details are inside the back cover of this newsletter. I'll try to give every assistance in setting up a transect route and providing any necessary support. Further information will be available shortly on our Branch website at:

<http://www.cumbria-butterflies.org.uk/surveys/intro.htm>

And on the UKBMS website at: <http://www.ukbms.org/Methods.aspx>

Martin Tordoff

RODIS --- What is it?

You may remember from the Spring 2013 newsletter that Gary Hedges told us about local butterfly recording and the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre (CBDC). What to report and how to report it was fully covered and

there is no need for me to repeat it. I sure that you all keep your newsletters! But Gary was only able to briefly mention the new way of inputting and submitting records via RODIS (Record Online Data Input System). Recently some workshops were run by CBDC to give interested recorders hands-on experience and tuition and although having tried the software before I quite fancied a day at Tullie House learning how to get the most from the system.

With a laptop provided and the projection of the tutor's screen it was easy to follow. We were shown how to log in, create a file, add records, edit or delete and finally submit. RODIS is accessible from any internet-enabled device and so could be used in the field if required. Entries are from a single screen and the species dictionary linked to NBN (National Biodiversity Network) helps to ensure an accurate entry using common or Latin species names. There is even a pop up screen facility showing a photo and taxonomy synonyms if required. The Grid reference is easily found using post code, street name or by clicking on the interactive map. Although I had previously managed to master the basics myself this workshop revealed plenty of short cuts and tips that made the whole process easier and quicker. The mapping tool and other tools for import and export of files for collaborative surveys were well illustrated. I may not use all of these but it was interesting to see the capabilities of this very useful, simple to operate, software.

Why use it? Like many moth recorders and butterfly surveyors I generate a very large number of individual records during the year. RODIS is not I think for this sort of submission. My MapMate and Excel method will remain much more efficient. But I also see of course lots of moths and butterflies in places where I am not regularly recording or indeed may only visit once or twice. It would be a shame not to add these to the CBDC database. This is where RODIS comes in for me. Rather than go to the trouble of creating a new site description on my system I will just put it on RODIS. For anyone who does not produce and submit large numbers of records I think this is ideal. I use it for these extraneous Lepidoptera and for those other interesting mammal or insect sightings when I am out and about in the Cumbrian countryside. Or even at home. The fascinating woodlouse spider surprised in a kitchen cupboard as it sat by it's woodlouse "leftovers" got a RODIS submission!

Thank you Gary, Teresa and Mustafa for organising these workshops. I am sure the staff at CBDC will be happy to advice any of you about the system. I will certainly be using RODIS more often and hope that lots of you will take a look and be encouraged to submit those wonderful butterfly and moth sightings that we are all going to enjoy this year.

Martin Chadwick

THE WIDER COUNTRYSIDE BUTTERFLY SURVEY - CAN YOU HELP IN 2014?

I've appealed elsewhere in this newsletter for help in surveying Mountain Ringlet butterflies in 2014 on a new transect /timed count basis. But as if that was not enough, we also urgently need additional surveyors for the **Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey** (WCBS). This survey, now in its sixth year, is run by Butterfly Conservation (BC), the British Trust for Ornithology and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology. It is the first UK-wide survey of butterfly abundance using a random sampling framework. WCBS covers the majority of habitat types in the UK, including urban and upland sites; this is in contrast with the long-established transect monitoring system, which tends to focus on nature reserves and sites which are generally better for butterflies. Using new analytical techniques, WCBS and transect data will be combined to produce much more accurate butterfly indicators than hitherto available. Like the transect method, WCBS relies almost entirely on volunteer effort. Coverage of WCBS in this thinly-populated county has been less than desirable and BC's Cumbria Branch now seeks your help in achieving higher coverage from 2014

onwards. Would you be prepared to take on one or more 1km squares? All that is required of surveyors are a minimum of two visits to your chosen or allotted square in July and August each year but with optional extra visits from May to August - springtime visits are especially valuable though not essential. I can supply maps for each of the target 1km squares. Some of these have been surveyed previously and will already have a survey route plotted on them; others have not been surveyed yet and it's then up to the surveyor to plot a route on the map – ideally two parallel 1km survey lines running N-S or E-W, divided into ten continuous 200m sections numbered 1-10, the lines around 500m apart and 250m in from the edge of the square. In practice, for various reasons survey lines are likely to deviate somewhat from this “ideal”. The survey is conducted by walking at a slow, steady pace, counting all butterflies seen within 2.5m either side of the survey line, up to 5m ahead and 5m from ground level up (effectively a 5x5x5 “moving box”). As with the normal transect method certain minimum weather standards must be met on survey days. The results can be submitted online to BC or on paper forms if the internet is not available. Around twenty 1km squares across the length and breadth of Cumbria are up for grabs in 2014. If you'd like to help with this survey, or just learn more about it, do please get in touch and I can tell you which squares are still available for 2014 – my contact details are inside the back cover of this newsletter. More detailed information on the WCBS can be found on:

<http://www.ukbms.org/wcbs.aspx>

Martin Tordoff - WCBS Coordinator, Cumbria Branch

The Marsh Fritillary Story

Our plans for 2014 do not include the Introduction of a new colony because we simply don't have the right type of habitat in the right condition just yet. What we plan to do is to strengthen some of our existing colonies. The one at Keswick covers a very big area and with the help of the farmer and Devils Bit Scabious growers Bob and Jim Bennett we have planted up several more fields with that larval foodplant and other fields have been managed into a better condition as we feel that it is prudent to use some of our captive stock to boost the new areas we have created. One of our sites in Ennerdale is also huge though Devils Bit Scabious is more scattered as opposed to locally abundant so we plan to boost the Ennerdale area as well as another field in the Finglandrigg complex.

Steve Doyle

The Small Blue in West Cumbria

The good news is that we found a few Small Blues at St Bees and Lowca in 2013 so a more extensive search is planned for 2014. The not so good news is that 2 of our extant breeding sites in Workington have planning applications on them, which if carried through will all but wipe out the Small Blue south of the River Derwent and put a very real threat of extinction on this species in Cumbria. BC Cumbria will object to the proposals but it remains to be seen how the local council propose to comply with their biodiversity duties.

Steve Doyle

My Butterfly Garden

I have a shady garden in N E Cumbria and hearing that butterflies need sun above all I decided to create a new bed which would always

be full of sun. Some research on the internet gave me a list of the top dozen butterfly plants for nectar, which are :-

Buddleia	Hebe	Marjoram	Perennial candytuft
Lavender	Aubretia	Sedum spectabile	Perennial wallflower
Scabious	Red Valerian	Verbena bonariensis	Michaelmas Daisy

With a large bed to fill I grew as many plants from seed as possible. Those I had to buy as plants, I would try and take cuttings from if possible to generate more plants. For the first year I also sowed some annual seeds to fill up the bed while the plants grew. I planted in groups or drifts.

My take on the top dozen list, how I've grown them and what results I found :-

1. Buddleia without a doubt and to nobody's surprise. I bought 3 small plants of different varieties which have flowered sequentially and I plan to prune them at different times to stretch out the flowering season. Everything loves them, bumblebees, Peacocks, Tortoiseshells, Red Admirals, Whites, and my first ever Comma.

2. Perennial wallflower Bowles Mauve an amazing plant that never wants to stop flowering so provides nectar for the first Whites to the last Red Admirals into November. Although said to be perennial goes very woody after 1-2 years so best to try and take some cuttings in Spring to replace your stock.

3. Verbena bonariensis – flowers August to November, loved by all the butterflies of those months. I failed to get seed to come up so bought new plants but many seedlings have now come up but may succumb to cold winds.

4. Aubretia – flowers April to May: not much else around at this time but was visited by Orange Tip, and waking hibernators. Small plants soon grow and are easily divided.

5. Marjoram – every seed comes up and makes an amazingly big plant that flowers from July and was still trying in December!

6. Scabious – the best is Field Scabious which flowers August to November but seeds itself ridiculously so you could try Small Scabious instead.

I did not see many butterflies on the other 6 of the 12 plants possibly because the butterflies found enough nectar elsewhere but the bees and hoverflies loved them. (*Ed: Don't dismiss Michaelmas Daisy – a wonderful late season nectar source*).

Others to try from seed: **Annual candytuft** – just chuck the seed in anywhere anytime and you will have it forever – adored by the Whites. **Anise Hyssop**: grow from seed, flowers July to October and was literally covered in insects and at night there were 100's of moths on it. **Cosmos**: again you can't go wrong just putting the seed in the ground, collect a few seed heads for the next year as otherwise frost will kill it. **Lacy Phacelia**: beautiful lilac flowers that go on and on, this is a number one plant for honeybees and I have had loads of day flying moths on it.

In the second year I have seen 10 species of butterflies in this garden which for this part of Cumbria is pretty good. There were 3 I'd never seen before in my garden and there were greater

numbers. You can create an amazing area for butterflies for about £5 worth of seed which takes very little maintenance and if you collect seed from your plants it's free and ready for next year! In addition to butterflies you provide nectar and pollen for bees, hoverflies and moths and if you leave the dead foliage over winter, a place for caterpillars and other creatures to hibernate.

Next year I plan to grow a lovely variegated **Honesty**, **Sweet Rocket** to provide a food plant for Whites, and **Nicotiana** and **Night Scented Stock** for moths. There is always something new to discover and try in gardening!

Kath McLellan

(Ed: That is the best article I've ever read about gardening for butterflies especially in Cumbria)

Morecambe Bay Nature Improvement Area, (Hosted by Butterfly Conservation).

2013 was the most extraordinary of summers. The late weather of spring made a big impression on our butterflies, even affecting the High Brown Fritillary emergence in July. In recent years we have become used to them emerging in late June, however, by early July, I was very worried, Pearl Bordered had come out in low numbers, and we had no sign of any High Brown Fritillaries anywhere. The spring had been so cold and last summer had been so wet, for so long, that there was a real possibility that the UK's most threatened butterfly was in danger of disappearing from many of the sites that we value around Morecambe Bay. Most vulnerable in my opinion were the sites where only one or two butterflies had been seen in recent years, such as some of the Winster Valley bracken sites, Hutton Roof, Hampsfell and Roudsea. But actually most sites in 2012 had no sightings of High Browns at all. Surveying makes up a large part of my summer work, but over the last 3 dreary, wet and dismal summers, I have found it very hard to complete the surveys that have been needed. And looking for nothing takes a lot of time. But what a change in 2013! The similar looking Dark Green Fritillaries came out first, with a real lag before the High Browns. I thought I had seen High Browns among the Dark Greens, at Gateside Plantation in the Winster Valley; I was on a walk with my daughter on an early sunny Saturday morning on the 6th July, I had no net with me and they were flying like bullets in the hot sun. On Monday I was back to net my first High Brown of the year, this was very exciting. Gateside is a typical bracken site, recently considered to be marginal if not extinct for High Browns, with head high bracken, and very few violets to be found. But what a change this summer, violets in huge numbers and 3 High Browns netted as well as 6 Dark Green Fritillaries. I was chuffed to bits and texted my team straight away.

Another marginal site, Bark Booth, was alive with large fritillaries when I visited it that afternoon. I had surveyed this site several times over the last 3 years, on dull dark and dank days and seen no fritillary butterflies at all. This year I saw 3 High Browns in 20 minutes, and 2 more at Lambhowe Plantation! Things were looking up.

On Tuesday I was seeing High Browns on Middlebarrow Quarry. This is an SSSI (site of Special Scientific Interest) which had been judged to be in declining condition. We have been able to help

the owner to complete some excellent management work here, opening up scrub and woodland to make sunny rides and glades with a mosaic of limestone grassland – a classic High Brown habitat. It has been looking good for a while, so it was very rewarding to see a High Brown flitting through the glades.

What was wonderful about this summer was that the sunny days followed one another, day upon day of sunshine.

Reports soon came in of High Browns seen in some of the most northerly of sites at Lynsty Hall Park Wood, where numbers were quite good, not brilliant, but 3 definite High Browns among the 27 large Fritillaries seen was not too bad. Records came in from Holmepark Fell, Hutton roof, and Lancelot Clark, where, for the first time in several years, transect walkers Ann and Charles Dale were seeing them. Similarly for several years Martin Tordoff has been looking hopefully for High Browns on his transect on Helsington Barrows, this year he netted 2.

The pattern seemed to be that the High Browns were appearing, in low numbers, but they were still hanging on, bless them. After all those poor years, the long periods of rain last year in

particular, they had still been able to make it to butterflies, mate and lay eggs and go on to survive some of the longest, coldest weather we have had for years. What heros.

Further reports came from Roudsea nature reserve, where one High Brown was seen behind the offices there.

On Whitbarrow, numbers were low all summer, but they were seen. I netted a few on Wakebarrow in the excellent woodland management areas that we have been working on with the Forestry Commission. Chris Winnick saw them on Farrers Allotment. We also had them in Witherslack Woods flying in recently opened rides that Butterfly Conservation have created in partnership with the owners, Stanley Estates.

The icing on the cake for me was re-finding the High Brown in Grizedale Forest. This site is a small wet glade in among the conifer plantations, like lots of other small wet glades that they have there. I have visited this site 3 times in the last 4 years, never seeing anything more interesting than a few Dark Green Fritillary Butterflies. It is way of the road, but on a cycle route, and I managed to borrow a mountain bike from the centre for the day. It took half an hour cycling uphill with a butterfly net, to get there, but how brilliant to find it there, a single male. After 3 further visits this summer, with Richard, a local volunteer and 4x4 driver and a team from BC, we had raised the numbers of High Brown in China Plantation to 3. But interestingly we also found it another Km north from there in another wet boggy area. It really is a puzzle to know what the High Browns are feeding on in Grizedale in such wet habitat, and it's a puzzle worth solving, because maybe, if we can find out how this butterfly is surviving and what it needs, then we could begin to extend its range into other conifer areas.

The summer of 2013 was wonderful but it has also thrown up some really interesting questions, and that's the real joy with working with butterflies, it seems the more you know, the more there is to find out. I have been working in Grange recently to try to bring together woodland owners to share experiences and knowledge and bring win-win benefits for management and butterflies. But it has always been a slight worry that High Browns had not even been seen in the area for a number of years. I surveyed Hampsfell in 2012, as well as the 4 years before, and had only

seen two High Browns. In 2013, I surveyed Hampsfell Allotment again, and in two hours I easily saw 30 plus Dark Green Fritillaries and no High Browns. About ten days later we went again and netted 6 High Browns flying and nectaring in the same meadows and just 3 Dark Greens. This was the end of the Dark Green Flight period, and they had clearly started to reduce in numbers, but where had these High Browns come from, and why were they not recorded a few days before?

I am now really hopeful for the High Brown in this part of the world. We are creating some fantastic habitat for it, with our programme of targeted woodland management, with Farm Stewardship delivering grazing on bracken sites, and working with Forestry Commission grants to stimulate wood fuel and coppicing. We just need a little help from the weather next spring to help larval survival, and we might see High Brown numbers up, and spreading into and using all this great habitat that has been managed. A big than you to everyone who has taken part in surveying this year.

Martin Wain, Woodland Advisor

Trapping Moths at Sales Bank Wood.

We were lucky enough to be able to buy Sales Bank Wood in 2003 – before the more recent rush for woodland ownership! However, I didn't begin recording moths in the garden until 2008 in earnest, and didn't run a trap in the wood until March 2011.

Sales Bank Wood is recorded on Natural England's Inventory of Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland, and it is mentioned in a Royal commission of 1567. So, it's been there for a long time and hasn't suffered from long periods of grazing by livestock – at least recently. It has a typical mixture of oak, birch and alder, with a good shrub layer of hazel, holly, hawthorn, blackthorn, crab apple, bird cherry and dog rose; there are good numbers of willow with a few sycamore, ash, elm, beech and Scots pine. It has been coppiced on and off since at least the mid-18th Century; the last main cut was around 1960 but since 1998, it has been brought back into coppice management with a coupe being cut each year, making for a good variety of age classes. Over the last ten years, I've recorded 114 species of flora plus 10 grasses, 9 ferns and 12 further species either introduced or on the wood boundary, totalling 144 plant species; of these, 20 can be classified as ancient woodland indicator plants.

The woodland faces mainly east and even during gale force westerlies, the main track and easterly edge can be very sheltered. Due to this easterly aspect, any snow that falls lies on the ground many days longer than by the estuary, only 2 miles to the south; the steep lanes mean that in cold spells the wood is effectively cut off without a 4x4 vehicle in which to get there!

Over the last 3 years, I've run 8 traps in the wood – far fewer than I would have liked, but with a full time job, a family at home and a run of indifferent summers, it's easier said than done to trap away from home. I have been somewhat reliant on getting my cheap and nasty generator to start, or relying on help from others. Martin Tordoff has helped on 3 occasions and in 2013, Graham Finch ran the only two traps. I have recently invested in a new generator, so hope to run many more traps there in the future! I've normally put out an MV 125 with a 60W actinic, far enough apart to be just about out of sight of each other.

My very first evening there in March 2011 was with Martin and yielded 16 species, including early tooth-striped, oak beauty, shoulder stripe and, perhaps our highlight, 2 yellow-horned. Fired up by Martin's enthusiasm, I ventured out again on 1st May and bagged 21 species. The prominent dominated that evening with coxcomb, iron, lesser swallow and 5 great prominent. Marbled brown, nut-tree tussock and pale tussock were also lovely to see. There was a very fresh scorched wing, one of my favourites which I sometimes get in the garden too. Martin came out with me again on 7th June – numbers weren't great but we saw common lutestring, satin lutestring, green silver lines, lunar thorn and small rivulet. We caught a rather plain, whitish-looking carpet which Martin identified as a waved carpet. The next day, he reported that it was probably only the second record in the area for 20 years or so. We also confirmed the site as one for Devon carpet, making 32 species for the night, despite some cold rain.

On 30th July 2011, I bagged 43 species. The most memorable aspect of that night was the huge number of bird cherry ermine, coating all the vegetation surrounding the trap. Other moth numbers in double figures included green carpet, July highflyer, small fan-footed wave and lesser swallow prominent.

In 2012, Martin and I went out again in late March and caught a similar range of species to the previous year adding lunar marbled brown, early thorn, water carpet and red chestnut to the list. My next session was on 9th August when 47 species were recorded. There were plenty of bird cherry ermine again and green carpet was the second most numerous moth that night. Also added to the list were orange swift, phoenix, swallow-tailed moth and the highlight for me - scallop shell.

Working in the wood during the day, I have recorded *ericroania subpurpurella*, *micropterix aureatella*, *adela rufimitrella* and *Nemophora degeerella*. This last micro is also known as Degeer's longhorn and is truly remarkable. On its 1cm long body, it holds antennae which are

probably 5 or 6 cm in length; it's a wonder it can fly at all. It's a beautiful little dark brown moth with a striking gold band and well worth looking out for above sheltered bracken beds in June.

I didn't get out again in 2012 and my only outing to the wood in 2013 was with Graham Finch and his wife Anona, on holiday in the Lake District from the Midlands. On a cool 31st May, we recorded 37 species although Graham and Anona stayed much later into the night than I did. They added purple thorn, white-pinion spotted, poplar hawk moth, pale prominent, buff tip and pale-shouldered brocade. They recorded an astonishing 38 nut tree tussocks over their three traps; also there in good numbers were scalloped hazel (25), common lutestring (14), barred umber (18), flame carpet (18) and brown silver-line (31). The latter also fly by day and its larvae use bracken as a host plant; when giving guided walks, people often ask whether bracken is a plant to worry about and whether I control it – I always have the brown silver-line in the back of my mind when I give my answer that it's a native plant and an integral part of the woodland ecosystem.

A couple of days later, Graham and Anona added peach blossom, v-pug, clouded silver and pebble prominent; there were 28 common lutestring and 19 marbled brown on that night.

So, the woodland list now stands at 135. I've always put the traps in the same place but in 2014, I hope to put them in some different areas to see what comes in – there are some lovely areas of wet woodland and some quite rich, flowery areas that have been recently coppiced. I've never run

a trap all night, so I plan to do this as well in 2014. I'm hopeful that there is enough common cow wheat to sustain a population of lead-coloured pug and the same for bilberry pug in areas of bilberry. With such a rich and varied ancient woodland, I hope to add many more species to the list. I welcome company and expertise, especially when it comes to the micros. You know where to find me during national moth night in 2014!

Edward Mills

Fred's Butterflies

a children's story by Ruth Snowden

It was Friday, which was Granny Day for Fred. It was a warm sunny day and Granny was out working in the garden. She had gloves on and she was chopping down some plants at the edge of the wood and piling them into a big pink bucket. It looked fun. 'Can I help, Granny?' asked Fred.

'No. These are nettles and they sting. But you can watch,' said Granny.

The pile of nettles in the bucket grew until Granny had cut them all down. Then Fred noticed something wriggling on one of the nettle leaves. It was a small black and yellow caterpillar!

'Granny! There's a caterpillar!' shouted Fred. They both looked in the bucket. Granny moved the nettles about and they counted four caterpillars. Fred was very worried. 'Will they die now, Granny?' he asked.

Granny thought for a moment. 'I know. There's a net bag in the garage. You could keep them safe in there.'

Fred was excited. He had always wanted a pet of his own. Granny found the net and they popped in a few nettle stalks and put the caterpillars in their new home. They began to climb up the nettle stalks and eat the leaves.

'Can I take them home?' asked Fred.

'Yes,' said Granny. 'But you will have to collect more nettles for them.'

Fred kept the net of caterpillars in his bedroom. They ate and ate and big holes appeared in the nettle leaves. Each day Fred and his mum went for a walk to collect more nettles. Fred soon found out that Granny was right - nettles DO sting! He got itchy red lumps on his hands. But it was worth it, because he loved his new pets.

He took the net of caterpillars everywhere with him. He took them shopping. He took them to his friend Lucy's house. He took them to the beach. He even took them camping. They soon grew big and fat.

Then one day the caterpillars began to do something strange. One by one they climbed up to the top of the nettle stalks and hung upside down. Fred was puzzled. He asked Granny what they were doing.

'Don't worry. That's what caterpillars do,' said Granny. They are making chrysalises. Then if you wait they'll hatch out into butterflies.'

Next day the caterpillars had all made themselves into chrysalises. They didn't look like caterpillars any more. Each chrysalis was a beautiful golden brown colour. They were very still and spiky with no legs and they didn't eat any nettles.

Fred waited for days. He waited for weeks. Then one Friday at Granny's house, the chrysalises began to wriggle about. Slowly they split open and by lunch time, four new butterflies had pulled themselves out. Their wings were soft and limp and they could not fly at first.

But they could sit on Fred's arm. One of them even sat on his nose! He called them Flutter, Flitter, Sunny and Silky and he carried them about to show them all the different flowers in Granny's garden.

The butterflies were orange and black. Granny and Fred looked on the Butterfly Conservation website and found that they were small tortoiseshell butterflies. By tea-time their wings had dried out in the sunshine and Fred watched them fly up into the trees and away.

'Hooray!' he shouted. 'Can we find more caterpillars next year please, Granny?'

'Of course,' said Granny. 'And I'd better leave some of those nettles at the edge of the wood next year too!'

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Ruth Snowden is an internationally acclaimed author of children's fiction and both fiction and non-fiction for adults. You can find more details of her children's stories and books at www.hildaland.blogspot.com. For adults books please visit her Amazon author page.

Our Patch, and we just love it.

If it's not one thing it's another! In 2008 we were lucky enough to

purchase the 5 hectare (13 acre) pasture around our house on sloping ground at the foot of the Pennines overlooking the Eden Valley. Running across the area is a beck with high steep banks covered in part with gorse, but also with a grove of wild cherry trees and some hawthorns, sycamore, elder and the like.

We subdivided the property so that the steep banks along the beck (about one hectare) are fenced off for planting trees and to keep stock out of the beck (with a Grant from the Eden Rivers Trust) and the rest made into smaller units so that we could keep animals separated in them. The idea was to have a flower rich hay meadow in the largest unit and I had visions of fine grasses dotted with yellow, pink and blue flowers as you see in the hay meadows project leaflets. We have taken a crop of hay most years since but it's more of a yellow picture being full of lesser celandine, followed by bulbous, meadow and creeping buttercups with yellow rattle and lesser trefoil, broken up with red clover. Other flowers like field forget-me-not and self-heal are there but have to be looked for. The bumble bees and hover flies do not seem to mind the limited colour scheme though.

There are several fenced off corners planted now with native trees, mostly deciduous and I try to keep some of the grass mown between them to give the flowers a chance as I was advised to do. However there is still a great deal of long grass, big tussocks of it and the reward is the butterflies. We see plenty of Ringlets and Meadow Browns with Orange Tips earlier and Green Veined White and in 2013 an unusually high number of Small White later in the Summer. There are plenty of

nettle beds so we get Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshells and usually Red Admirals though not in 2013, and no Painted Ladies in 2013 or 2012. In 2012 I identified a Speckled Wood near the grove of cherry trees.

I'm no expert at identifying moths but the reference books help. I often disturb Yellow Underwings in the grass and regularly see Chimney Sweepers. Once we found an Elephant Hawkmoth caterpillar and this year on different occasions I found a Burnished Brass, a Herald and some Silver Y's. These are new to me and I thought they were very beautiful even though I read that they are quite common. I'm hoping that the variety of habitat even in our small property, from short grass to tough tussocks and from moderately damp (in most years) to rushy areas will encourage even more insect life.

You can take a stroll from the house along the top of the steep bank looking over the place where the beck takes a sharp turn and sneezewort grows in the rushes, past a clump of gorse which nearly died in 2013, with the grove of cherry trees opposite you across the gill. At this point, if you are careful, you may catch a glimpse of a roe deer. Down the bank which then comes into view the grass grows high, but stitchwort, tormentil and betony seem to cope with it. Past a big sycamore tree the path slopes down to the beck between the young trees. Here the grasses are finer and pignut thrives. You then cross the beck and turn back along the bottom of the little valley. There you are sheltered from the wind between the steep banks and surrounded by patches of gorse, bramble and scrubby trees with open spaces of tussocky grass. One day the young oaks, alders, birch and hawthorn will make more of a wood down here but the hope is that open spaces for butterflies will remain in between.

Gillian Bryan

MORECAMBE BAY BUTTERFLY TASK FORCE

I was very happy to be appointed as Task Force Officer in November for the Morecambe Bay Butterfly project and so far have had the pleasure of working with the amazingly energetic and enthusiastic volunteers on work parties at Halecat, Yewbarrow, Eggerslack Woods and Township Plantation .

I have worked with a wide variety of volunteers in my 28 years in conservation and ecology, but this is the first time I have had the pleasure of working on a small number of sites, to benefit a

small number of butterfly and moth species. The focus of the volunteers, their knowledge and commitment is refreshing.

My challenge in the last 7 months of the Task Force Project is to enthuse the wider community to become more involved in butterfly conservation in the Morecambe Bay Limestone Nature Improvement Area, particularly of our rare species the High Brown and Pearl-bordered Fritillaries. There is a huge conservation effort to benefit butterflies in this area with 10 different organisations running 70 work parties between January and March! Something for everyday of the week... almost, but unfortunately there are few at weekends, so the opportunities for people who work or have families to be able to get involved are currently limited.

The project is part funded by “the co-operative group” to encourage shoppers and staff to get involved in butterfly conservation, and to work with their Green Revolution Schools. I have put together a display which will be in stores up to the end of the project, will be working with five schools both in the classroom, and on trips and outdoor events and hopefully attract new

members for Butterfly Conservation and the branches. I am organising workshops, training and events for butterfly volunteers, and the general public and held a very successful coppice crafts workshop, which showed what could be done with the products of a woodland work party rather than just a big bonfire.

If you are an active volunteer for butterflies doing either practical work, surveys or both you will have been invited to a ***Butterfly Volunteer Day at Yealand Village Hall on Sunday March 16th***. I hope you can come along, meet other volunteers from around Morecambe Bay and get enthused for the summer survey season. Please ring or email me to book on...if it is not too late!

I would like suggestions from yourselves for topics or opportunities which you think would be helpful to yourselves as volunteers, or would attract new volunteers to the conservation of butterflies and moths, and welcome help from you with events such as moth trapping, guided walks or manning the display.

I am working 3 days a week, so if I don't reply immediately please be patient. You can contact me on 07799 469941, (01524 298680) or email hsmith@butterfly-conservation.org.

HILARY SMITH

HIGH BROWNS Bounce Back !

The Morecambe Bay area has many nationally important sites for the High Brown Fritillary including Warton Crag and several others over the border in Lancashire but butterflies do not thankfully observe county boundaries and we have several great sites on the Cumbrian side as well. A conscious effort was made in Cumbria in 2013 to survey the Cumbrian colonies and with pleasing success especially after a miserable 2012. CWT site Barkbooth did well but is always a gem of a site but Lamb Howe over the road also did better than in the least few years when Dark Greens were outnumbering High Browns – but 2013 was much nearer a 50/50 split. In an hour's walk 40 Dark Greens were seen at Barkbooth. Lower numbers of High Browns were on the various Whitbarrow sites but they still were in good numbers as well as at How Ridding Wood and adjoining Witherslack Woods. Pearl Bordered are still in much lower numbers on Whitbarrow but there is no doubt that all the work we are doing on a Landscape basis is now paying dividends. It was equally pleasing to find High Browns at smaller more remote sites where none had been recorded in recent years. These sites included Holme Park Fell, Holmepark Quarry, Hutton Roof are, all east of the M6 and we also had records from Helsington Barrows for the first time in 5 years at this previously prolific site. Hampsfell and Eggerslack Woods can be added to the High Brown list as well as Roudsea Wood and Undermillbeck Common beside Windermere Golf Club. Ickenthaite in the Rusland Valley is another site plus two colonies in the Grizedale Forest – maybe simply under-recorded previously? Just goes to prove that there is no limit to good recording.

The 2013 news of High Browns is certainly good but we must still remember that numbers are still nationally at an all time low and that North Lancs and South Cumbria is the national 'hotspot.' **That's why we need your support here in Cumbria – the future of this butterfly is in our hands.** The need for continued Landscape habitat management which is being done by Cumbria Branch and as part of a Dorset HQ based major project has never been so important as is further recording and surveys of more likely sites in 2014.

Chris Winnick

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☞ **Editor's Note:** We had a very welcome extra number of contributors to this newsletter – fantastic. I've included most if not all articles by new contributors but if yours is not included it is purely because of space (or because the printing cut off had passed) and will be included next time. I think this time we have a great mix of 'lighter' as well as 'heavier' articles so the more contributors we have, the better it is to get that mix right. Many thanks to everyone.