

# **BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION**

Cumbria Branch

Newsletter No. 29

Autumn 2014

## **Butterfly Conservation**

DEDICATED TO SAVING WILD BUTTERFLIES

And MOTHS IN THEIR NATURAL HABITATS

## News from .....

### ..... our Branch Chairman

This is my fourth year as a Cumbrian resident but my first 'proper' Summer! At last a really warm and sunny Summer (*Ed: he wrote this before the middle of August!*) with most of our butterflies and moths doing well. As usual some species have done better than others with highlights being the strong showing of Small Blue and Marsh Fritillary (see later articles) along with the speed of the Small Skipper, Ringlet and Gatekeeper wider and stronger colonisations. Early days as we write but few sightings yet of migrants such as Painted Lady and Clouded Yellow.

Less welcome is the poor showing of the Pearl Bordered Fritillary now one of our most endangered resident species. This highlights the fact that our ongoing habitat management for fritillaries has never been more important. With this in mind I am delighted this newsletter includes a very full Autumn/Winter schedule of work parties aimed at maintaining and improving habitat for our rare butterflies and moths. PLEASE note the dates and try to join us whenever you can even if it's not for the full day. Training, tools and safety guidance are all provided on site. Contact the named person for further information and updates if any. If changes are made however they will be posted on our website under 'work parties.'

This year the AGM was held near Keswick at Blackwood Farm Education Centre and was just a small part of a full members day programme. Over thirty attended and we have had some very positive feedback so we are planning a similar event for 2015 – details will be in the Spring 2015 newsletter. A similar number attended our day conference on Butterflies and Moths of the North-West and held at Lancaster University in May.

As part of our AGM I thanked three long standing committee members who after giving exceptional service decided to 'stand down.' Robin and Verity Eddleston and Sarah Bradley have done so much for our butterflies and moths that I could not begin to list all their contributions but it would include work

parties, field trips, policy meetings, equipment storage and maintenance, breeding caterpillars, booking facilities, transect walking and recording as well as just being so supportive and first class colleagues. Thanks for everything.

Our new 'Sightings Page' facility on our website has been a tremendous success. Thank you to David and Mark Eastlick for all their excellent work – see David's article in this newsletter. This facility will improve record keeping in Cumbria and hopefully help us produce an annual butterfly report – more of this in the next edition – also it has been great in telling us what is about and where. Sometimes however we must withhold some information about very sensitive sites.

This issue may also include an extra four pages (weight and postage permitting) and this will allow us to maintain the diverse content and increase the font size – I hear cheers for that and I too am looking forward to putting away my magnifying glass (*Ed: I've got no problem, I use the right pair of glasses!*). We are also including a loose insert of our AGM minutes. If you wish to raise any issues please do contact me.

Finally on behalf of Cumbria Branch I welcome Karen McLellan and Tom Dunbar to our committee. Karen wrote an excellent gardening for wildlife article in the previous newsletter and both she and Tom are welcome additions to our committee. Welcome also to Susan Anders who has been appointed by Butterfly Conservation as Branch Liaison Officer – we look forward to working with Susan who will be a valuable link between all branches and Head Office in Dorset.

**Chris Winnick**

Branch Chairman

## Work Parties 2014/5

Work parties are arranged for the second Sunday in each month (except November when it is the third Sunday) starting in September. Meet at 10.00 at the places in the table below.

Contact in the first instance the named individual in the table for updates or Chris Winnick 01539 728254. It will be as well to check the status of the work party during periods of bad weather particularly ice and snow.

Day	Event
14 September 2014 Sunday 10.00	<b>Braithwaite Moss</b> Follow A66T from Keswick towards Cockermouth. Pass junctions to Braithwaite village on left and Braithwaite Moss is on right hand side by farm buildings ( <i>ca</i> 1km). Parking available at entrance to farm and in yard. Grid reference NY 232248 Bring lunch, rainwear, warm clothing and wellingtons. Wellingtons <b>a 'must'</b>  Contact Chris Addy 01768 215773
12 October 2014 Sunday 10.00	<b>Braithwaite Moss</b> Details as for 14 September
16 November 2014 Sunday 10.00	<b>Township Plantation</b> Take A5074 from Gilpin Bridge, take second left turn to 'The Howe' (no signpost), cross minor road and climb to the centre of the hamlet. Turn left on tarmac road, and then bear right onto a track with concrete wheel tracks. Enter the wood and park at the first clearing--parking limited. Grid reference SD 454885. Bring rainwear, warm clothing, lunch and stout footwear.  Contact Chris Winnick 01539 728254

<p>14 December 2014 Sunday 10.00</p>	<p><b>Yewbarrow</b> Turn off A590 towards Witherslack, continue on road to pass through the village to Witherslack Hall. Turn right onto rough track (the kennels) for parking Grid reference SD 436859 Bring rainwear, warm clothing, lunch and stout footwear.  Contact Chris Winnick 01539 728254</p>
<p>11 January 2015 Sunday 10.00</p>	<p><b>Township Plantation</b> Details as for 16 November</p>
<p>8 February 2015 Sunday 10.00</p>	<p><b>Barker Scar, Old Park Wood, Grange over Sands</b> From the east, turn off A590 at round-about and follow signposted road to Grange. Drive through Grange centre following the major roads in the direction of Allithwaite and Flookburgh. Leave Grange by Risedale Hill (large pink building on right) and enter open country. Follow the main road through Allithwaite, then Flookburgh sign-posted Ulverston, and past Holker Hall on left. After a gradual descent, turn left to caravan site and Old Park Wood. Follow the straight road to the caravan site and park at reception (SD 337783). Grid reference: SD 335780. Bring rainwear, warm clothing, lunch and stout footwear.  Contact David Eastlick 015395 32076</p>
<p>8 March 2015 Sunday 10.00</p>	<p><b>Witherslack Woods</b> Details as for Yewbarrow 14 December 2014</p>

## Agenda for Wednesday Work Parties 2014/2015

### Fixed up to 31 December 2014

Agenda for 2015 to be published on the Branch web site in December after a review of the autumn work, listing of new works priorities and permissions sought. See Note 1

Meet at 10:00 at the parking places described on the branch web site [www.cumbria-butterflies.org.uk](http://www.cumbria-butterflies.org.uk). Check the web site for last minute changes or ring Chris Winnick 01539 728254 or David Eastlick 015395 32076.

Dress appropriately for Cumbrian weather, boots, waterproofs, warm clothing and, bring lunch and drinks. We supply tools and protective items.

Date	Place	Activity
24 Sep 2014	Kirkhead	tbc
8 Oct 2014	Howe Ridding	brush cutter, raking
22 Oct 2014	Howe Ridding	brush cutter, raking
5 Nov 2014	Kirkhead	tbc
19 Nov 2014	Yewbarrow	fire, clear scrub, mark trees, tidy stumps
3 Dec 2014	White Scar	scrub clearance, herbicide treatment
17 Dec 2014	Finish Yewbarrow	fire, scrub clearance
7 Jan 2015	Howe Ridding/Fell Edge	cut scallops, herbicide treat, fire
21 Jan 2015	Witherslack Woods	ride maintenance
4 Feb 2015 fixed	White Scar	scrub clearance, herbicide treatment
18 Feb 2015	Witherslack Woods	ride maintenance

4 Mar 2015	tbc	
18 Mar 2015	tbc	
1 April 2015	tbc	

#### Notes

1. Possible work sites are, High Dam, Wartbarrow, Eggerslack Woods, Barker Scar, Witherslack Woods

### DERMOT BARTON

Since our Spring 2014 newsletter we have heard of the death of one of our longest serving Branch members. Time caught up on Dermot Barton who sadly passed away after a lifetime of achievement in Natural History and in his case that was over the course of many, many decades. Dermot it was who told me about the thriving colonies of Duke of Burgundy both in Flash Bank (Brigsteer Woods) and at Scout Scar near Kendal. Both became extinct several years ago for different reasons and before Cumbria Branch started its major habitat conservation programmes. It would be a fantastic tribute to him if we were ever successful in getting that species back into the Flash Bank area. Dermot walked the Flash Bank transect for many years before that troublesome thing called age caught up with him.

We have lost a good friend and naturalist whose expertise will be missed. Our thoughts are with his family who will be very proud of his lifetime achievements.

**Steve Doyle**

### 4<sup>TH</sup> CUMBRIA WILDLIFE RECORDERS' CONFERENCE



**Date:** 8th November 2014

**Time:** 10:00 am - 4:30 pm

The annual Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre conference offers a chance to meet others interested in exploring nature, share discoveries and learn more

about the species which make their home in Lakeland. The day will have the usual diverse range of speakers sharing their inspirational studies of

our county's wonderful wildlife, the nitty-gritty of identification and information on how you can get involved.

This year we'll be looking to the future and how digital naturalists are revolutionising biological recording. We'll be booking back too, with a chance to learn about the botanical collections at Tullie House and what they tell us about how Cumbria has changed since Victorian times.

If you would like to bring along displays or posters or have a spot for up to five minutes in the Open Mike, please contact Recording Officer, Gary Hedges (01228 618717 or [recordingofficer@cbdc.org.uk](mailto:recordingofficer@cbdc.org.uk)). As in previous years although free of charge, booking is essential with the Tullie House Box Office as places are limited. Please call the Tullie House box office (open Monday to Saturday 10am to 5pm, Sunday 12pm to 5pm) on 01228 618700 or go to the Museum reception during opening hours. Alternatively, please email [recordingofficer@cbdc.org.uk](mailto:recordingofficer@cbdc.org.uk) to book your place.

Suitable for adults and young people aged 12+ with an interest in wildlife.

Full programme will be available at [www.cbdc.org.uk/conference](http://www.cbdc.org.uk/conference)

Gary Hedges

## **Cumbria Butterfly and Day-flying Moth Sightings Pages**

This year the branch has instituted butterfly and day-flying moths sightings pages on its web site at <http://cumbriabutterflies.org.uk/sightings/>

The deployment of the new sightings and reporting pages has run smoothly, with relatively minor glitches discovered, which have been resolved promptly. The site was developed by our web-master to be automatic meaning that the details entered on the on-line sightings report are downloaded and immediately entered on the sightings pages in real time.

At the end of July some 62 recorders had entered sightings from all over Cumbria including the common species but also some exciting rare species.

There are also splendid photographs as well.  
Have you seen the Clouded Yellow?

The use of the sightings page has been at the upper-end of expectations with at least 1000 individual sightings reports submitted during the first seven months of 2014. The sightings are monitored and the reports may be amended to produce, for example, consistent spelling/punctuation on site and town entries or revised grid references in case of error. At the end of year the records will be down loaded to Tullie House to augment its own sightings records.

Further development of the sightings pages continues. This includes plotting information on interactive maps, image galleries and other graphical views of the data. If you have not seen it, go on and look at it at home, at work (during lunch time of course!) or in your local library, you'll be impressed!

The committee are very grateful to Mark for developing and monitoring our sightings pages, getting it up and running speedily without any horrors.

**David Eastlick**

## **What's the difference?**

Catching moths, whether by light trap or swishing enthusiastically with a butterfly net in a summer meadow, is a pastime full of anticipation. There is so much that you can find. Will the gorgeous Merveille de Jour come this year? Will I have to rush to the kitchen to find a big enough container for a Convolvulus Hawk-moth? People often look askance when learning about my strange hobby, imagining me, I think, studying little brown jobs that will probably eat my jumper if given half a chance. But one of the pleasures of studying moths is being able to reveal to my friends and relatives a display of stunningly patterned, colourful moths of a variety of shapes and sizes. Many people are surprised by these common gaudy nocturnal insects of which they were previously unaware. But then

comes the inevitable question. "What is the difference between a moth and a butterfly?" This is a poser. Do I just say "not much" or go on to attempt an explanation that is peppered with "buts" and "sometimes" and "there are exceptions".

Moths and butterflies are all within the Order Lepidoptera (meaning scaled wings) and very closely allied to the caddis flies, the Trichoptera (hairy wings). Caddis flies are really very primitive micro moths. There are more than 2,600 moth species in the British Isles and many are equally as colourful as our very attractive well-known 60 or so butterfly species. The term moth is given to the more primitive families of Lepidoptera, which we presume have evolved first "the micros", and also to the supposedly more advanced families in the Linnaean classification; the ones we call rather unscientifically the "macros". Surprisingly the butterfly families are lumped together between these moth groups. Presumably they branched off as a specialist day-flying group. They are pretty much exclusively day flyers but the occasional individual surprises us moth-ers inspecting traps in the morning. I have had Red Admiral turn up so they are occasionally on the wing at night.

My awe struck visitor may then assume that moths are nocturnal; hence any pretty lepidopteran flitting through the meadows or woodland glades must be a butterfly. This is where I produce my copy of Newland, Still and Swash's "Britain's Day Flying Moths" in which 133 macro moths are selected as regularly or exclusively active by day. In addition about 20 micros make the cut to be included in the book although sometimes the distinction between voluntary activity and flitting about after being disturbed from diurnal rest is difficult to make. Browse the wonderful photographs in this book and such stunning insects as Latticed Heath, Hummingbird Hawk-moth, Emperor Moth and Speckled Yellow will make you wonder what is so special about butterflies.

So eventually we have to discuss anatomy. The butterflies have clubbed antennae. But the skippers, that even when pristine and freshly emerged are very mothy in appearance, don't have distinctive club ends to their antennae. Theirs are more tapered towards the bulbous end and sometimes with a little hook tip. However some hawk-moths, burnet moths and clearwings have

antennae like the skippers. Moths have a variety of antennae shapes and lengths ranging from long and wispy to huge and feathery but never distinctively clubbed. Confused? Let's move on to the wings. All the moths likely to be confused with a butterfly have an interlocking mechanism by which fore and hind wings are coupled together. From the base of the hind wing projects a long bristle (the frenulum) that hooks onto a catch (retinaculum) on the underside of the forewing. By this means the moth moves fore and hind wing as one.

By this time my initially attentive moth admirer has perhaps nodded off and half the specimens have escaped from the light trap. Or even worse someone wants me to demonstrate this clever wing locking mechanism on a micro moth! So I have decided to reply to the inevitable "What's the difference" question with a whispered "moths have a frenulum and butterflies don't", give a knowing wink and hope that they will be too embarrassed to ask for details.

## **Martin Chadwick**

### **The Small Blue Project**

This year has brought mixed fortunes for our very rare Small Blue butterfly which is only found along the coastal strip between Maryport and Lowca just south of Workington. I'm pleased to say however that this time that mixture of fortunes contains a greater percentage of the good news stuff. So, let's get the not so good bits out of the way to begin with before we focus on the positives. Firstly the habitat the Small Blue requires to survive, largely ex industrial sites are still under development pressure as the local council have a duty to provide housing and jobs. However they also have a biodiversity duty to conserve fully protected species such as reptiles and also locally and highly endangered species such as the Small Blue butterfly. Fortunately many protected, rare and endangered species tend to use similar 'wild' habitat so there is a positive there. Still on the negatives however the biggest single colony of Small Blues is the ex steelworks site south of the river in Workington. Persimmon Homes are currently progressing the outline planning permission to develop that site with hundreds of houses and

other facilities which could devastate or even completely destroy the Small Blue population there. Added to that we have already lost a small separate site also south of the river in Workington as planning has been agreed for that site to have a dozen or more new homes on Town Quay. We fortunately worked well with the builders and successfully translocated 60 Small Blues to Oldside windfarm as they emerged at the very start of the flight season. Nevertheless it is one more site lost and we will shortly lose another south of the river as the Old Coal/Goods Yard is also to be re-developed though we hope to retain some of the habitat there.

Turning to the positives we can return to the ex steelworks site and Persimmon Homes. The latter are making very positive noises about conservation of habitat for the Small Blue and are presently awaiting the ecologists report. That will include an up to date Small Blue count for 2014 and also an updated distribution map of the spread of Kidney Vetch which is the larval foodplant. In addition that report should include recommendations for Small Blue conservation along with similar recommendations for other key species present such as reptiles and rare flora. At that point all interested parties can have a fresh look at the overall situation. It is to be hoped however that sense will prevail because if that 'core' colony is lost then the future of the Small Blue south of the river will be seriously in doubt as it is unlikely the remaining much smaller satellite sites will be robust enough to survive on their own especially as two of them as mentioned above have already been lost or very much weakened and that area does not have another core colony.

Still on the positives with the services of a local ecologist paid for by the builder, 60 Small Blues were successfully relocated to Oldside windfarm. We already knew that attempting to translocate habitat is a non starter firstly because it is brittle poor substrate material, we have already tried that and secondly much brownfield ex industrial habitat is contaminated to some extent so permission to move it would be most unlikely.

Another positive is that the Small Blue Network (Action Group) are working well together and looking at ways to create Small Blue habitat in Workington and Maryport. There will be more on this in future newsletters as things

progress but at this point it should be remembered that habitat creation or restoration takes time to mature and does not happen overnight as the loss of an extant habitat site can.

There is one more very positive bit of news and I've left that until last. The Small Blue in 2014 had a fantastic flight season and I can tell you that was totally essential. More Small Blues were found at most known sites and at Maryport in particular. On a visit there in May this year with several local prominent local people and members of the County Council we were able to show them lots of Small Blues and explain how they had responded to the conservation work already done. It was the same at Oldside in Workington where we all saw lots of female Small Blues egg laying on the Kidney Vetch scrapes we had created. A perfect example of conservation and various bodies working together. It can be done with a bit of give and take plus commitment. We can achieve that win/win situation and within any development there should be room for wildlife and leisure. Lets just hope we can continue in the positive vein we appear to be heading in just now.

**Steve Doyle**

#### **JUDY PALMER a Stalwart of the Small Blue Network**

In summarising the current position of the Small Blue I have mentioned some of the positives at present ongoing and many of those positives are attributable to one of our members, Judy Palmer who worked as the Ecologist for Cumbria County Council. Judy fell victim to the various financial cuts which are having to be made by public bodies and she was made redundant at the end of July. She worked tirelessly for what she believed in whilst in post and I'm sure her colleagues who remain will miss her greatly. We also will miss her in that role but equally we will welcome Judy into whatever role she enters in the future and she has already indicated her wish to continue to progress matters in the Small Blue Project. Indeed she attended a field meeting with me on her very first day of redundancy. A gem of a lass who we greatly appreciate being one of our members.

**Steve Doyle**

### **A couple of David and Jean's Spanish Odysseys.**

We knew Spain was a catholic country but there were cardinals everywhere. It was late **September** with no great variety of wildflowers but a tall aromatic Inula was nectar for the butterflies. Cardinals here and there in their dusty work robes a more muted brown in old age with dulled green and less silver on their wings. They were named fritillaries by the Italians who patterned their dice boxes with fiery patterns and this was probably the last throw of the dice for these cardinals before winter set in. They are named *Argyniss Pandora*. The bushy Inula grew above the grey swimming pool and the late flowers were a magnet for all the insects which were still enjoying the warm sunshine. The Queen of Spain (fritillary) was still flashing her silver patches and the Bath Whites and Swallowtails were gracing the hillside with their swift flight. Clouded Yellows were more scarce but a flash of mustard yellow zig-zagged past above the parched grass where the locusts were hatching. They were maybe wondering what greenery there would be to eat in the now landscape of dull crackling brown. The leaf cover had gone from the herbage and there were little brown pancakes of wasps and hornets nests showing clearly now with their black and yellow bodies crowding around their papery and beautifully sculptured homes/nests. My thoughts went out to John the Baptist and his diet of locusts and wild honey and I wondered how he managed on such a Spartan fare in the wilderness.

The little dry valley was dotted with the yellow Inula and we had Brown Argus and Small Coppers along with several Skippers swopping feeding stations from plant to plant and the Egyptian grasshoppers swirling away in a burst of energy when human footfall disturbed their peace. Around the pool the frogs kept station, emerging from time to time on the concrete apron enjoying the warmth then plopping back into the water when they'd had enough. On the bamboo shelter over the pool edge the little lizards were working their territory and flickering effortlessly over the dried boards. Sitting quietly under the shade we watched both ordinary and red rumped swallows and crag martins come curving over and sweeping up a drink of water or two on their way south for the winter.

We occasionally sat in an Almond orchard on an **April** visit. The grey green shells were ripening under the warm sunshine which is very comfortable in Southern Spain at this time. A hoopoe was calling further up the slopes somewhere. A Queen of Spain fritillary was resting on the bare earth as they do with the sun reflecting off her silver patches. The Spanish call her Sofia but that doesn't sound right for the male of the species as Cleopatra doesn't either. Sitting and watching the Clouded Yellows and Spanish Gatekeepers with Blues and Whites fluttering back and forth against a backdrop of multi coloured flowers they seemed to be weaving a magic spell on us. We had left a cold wet England and here suddenly we were in sunshine and warmth with butterflies all around us. Time to walk up the dusty track to an old building with its red pansies set amongst the scents of aromatic herbs with little lizards sunning themselves in mid morning. From time to time we in Britain have a Clouded Yellow year but here we were in Spain with plenty to spare. Painted Lady butterflies pass through here and reach Britain in a good year – wonder if it will be this year?

We flew back to Manchester with patches of snow still showing on the Pennines and landed on a damp grey runway and wondered why any butterfly would bother to leave Spain with its warm, sunny, peaceful flower rich meadows and orchards bearing ripening fruit.

**David and Jean Ellwood**

### **Mountain Lepidoptera**



After a recent visit to an orthopaedic surgeon, the latter wrote to my GP about his examination of me, and in his first paragraph he said, “He goes up

mountains to study butterflies". I presume that was a coded message, putting me in the same category as Eleanor Glanville, whose will was 300 years ago declared null and void because she studied and collected butterflies and was therefore clearly insane. Not many people know that you have to climb mountains to find some sorts of butterflies and moths.

This set me thinking about mountain Lepidoptera. I only know of one butterfly in England confined to mountains, the Mountain Ringlet, and one moth. However, there are several such moths in Scotland, one of which I have seen on two occasions on Cairngorm. There you can cheat by driving up to the car park at about 2000 ft, and in 2009 I saw several Black Mountain Moths on the ridge between this car park and the summit. The moth takes two years to complete its life cycle, presumably because of the short summer and low temperatures, and interestingly nearly all the adults emerge in odd numbered years, which fitted my experience. I was therefore very surprised on two counts to see one this year, 2014; firstly because it is an even numbered year and secondly because it was blowing a gale. A tiny "something" splatted down on the stony ridge just beside me, but try as I might I couldn't see anything animate until it started to move because it was so well camouflaged. It then crawled with its wings partially open flat to the ground so that I could identify it and walked crabwise up-wind for a couple of feet before being whisked off again by the gale. I have since read that the females typically run around like this, flying less readily than the males. They belong to the Geometridae, which normally rest with the wings erect like butterflies, and I presume the flat-held wings are an adaptation to their windy habitat. The larval foodplant is Crowberry, which is also the foodplant for the Northern Dart, another Scottish mountain moth, reputed to reach the adult state only in even numbered years. The Black Mountain Moth is, I believe, so far unrecorded in England, but the Northern Dart is found at Moor House NNR in the north Pennines and has been seen on Skiddaw.

Crowberry is not uncommon in the Lake District, but in my experience only in much quantity at any great altitude on the northern fells. Both these moths are presumably relics from the tundra conditions left as the last ice age closed and would be likely candidates for extinction if global warming continues since

they are here unable to climb any higher. It would be well worth while keeping an eye open for them in Cumbria as well as in Scotland.

**John Mounsey**

## **The Marsh Fritillary Project**

What a great flight season we had, almost perfect weather and this species greatly appreciated it as numbers in flight were very high – something very much enjoyed by all those who came to one or more guided walks. As this is written in mid August we are still in the midst of larval web counting which is the barometer of success year on year. Early signs however are that numbers of webs have greatly increased on several sites and at least held their own on others which is good news.

On the site between Penrith and Carlisle number were up 10% and that site is almost at carrying capacity. At our Keswick site the landowner successfully purchased many extra acres which he and we knew had Marsh fritillary on them but we were banned from access by the previous land owner. On a like for like basis however 2014 produced 392 webs compared to 147 in 2013 and the additional land produced a phenomenal 339 webs making 769 in total. Even so we will have missed a few!

Only one of the Ennerdale sites has so far been done but produced an extraordinary count of 472 webs compared to a previous ever best of 53. The other Ennerdale sites will be done in August and I expect one at least and probably two of them also to have big increases. The other two I hope will hold their own as they are in transitional stages of habitat management.

So all good news on the existing side of things. Not such good news on the other hand as far as habitat acquisition is concerned. Whilst 'our' farmer successfully purchased the land he bid for Butterfly Conservation were not successful in purchasing a vast amount of similar Marsh Frit occupied habitat. Our bid was apparently the best one but the seller chose to accept a different

bid and we have to go with that. A great pity as we would have had a BC Reserve right here in Cumbria. At some point we hope to make contact with the new owner and offer to help in any way we can both for his benefit and that of the butterfly – hopefully a win/win. The bottom line however is that ‘our’ farmer got his additional land so half a loaf is better than none. That land is being managed for the Marsh Fritillary and we’ve already had 339 webs on it!

Lastly I keep mentioning ‘our’ farmer. He is Paul Barnes who along with his dad Geoff have been absolutely fantastic with us. Under their stewardship the Marsh Fritillary has gone from strength to strength in the Keswick area. Never has there been a better use of Natural England’s Higher Level Stewardship scheme.

Next Spring 2015 we plan further Reintroductions which will further our aims to create metapopulations across Cumbria and the old county of Cumberland in particular which was its historical geographical range.

**Steve Doyle**

### **Then and Now – why the Grange/Witherslack area is still number one for butterflies.**

This article was inspired by two recent events. Firstly I was lent an old newspaper article about butterfly hunting in the Grange area and dated 14<sup>th</sup> August 1957. Secondly a wonderful day out at Allithwaite Quarry near Grange on 7<sup>th</sup> August 2014 as part of our guided walks programme. The newspaper was the *Lancashire Evening Post*. The article was written by the well known journalist, author and butterfly enthusiast Eric Hardy when it was still widely accepted that butterfly hunting for pinned specimens was both a laudable pursuit and at its best in the Morecambe Bay area.

Mr Hardy begins by visiting Meathop Moss. ‘The reserve is best known for its colony of the dark philoxenus variety of Large Heath with large eyespots underneath its wings like the larger, darker Scotch Argus which shares with Silver Washed Fritillaries the sunny hillsides across the road at Witherslack and

across the estuary at Arnside Knott. It is an insect of damp and grassy places, The reserve seems to have lost *Masseyi* variety of Silver Studded blue which lingers on at Witherslack. ' Mr Hardy is equally enthusiastic about the moths he encountered noting 'The tiny Purple Bordered Gold which flickers at dawn and dusk over damp moors in Lakeland; the Manchester treble bar, an artic-alpine visiting cranberry here, the Bordered Grey, the Grass-wave and the Small Emerald – these are a few of the moths found on the reserve.'

He was especially enthused by the Duke of Burgundy at Eggerslack, the High Brown Fritillary at Holker and the Dark Green Fritillary on Hampsfell and Yewbarrow. But he reserves his greatest delight for Witherslack and the Winster valley. 'A walk up the Winster valley tempts one to wield a butterfly net in pursuit of four or five kinds of fritillary from Dark Green and High Brown to both the Pearl Borderedes and look out for Large Heath, Grayling, the Bedford (Small) Blue, Dingy Skipper, Purple Hairstreak and the colour varieties of Small Copper and the blues. Witherslack is the haunt of Dark Umbar moths, clouded minors, Blossom Underwings, Satin Carpets, Sharp Angled Peacocks, Marble Coronets, Copper Underwings and Haworth's Carpet.'

Although some of these 'haunts' have lost habitat and species it is great to know we can still enjoy most of what Eric Hardy saw but with a camera and a notebook rather than a net and killing jar.

As I set out for Allithwaite Quarry the weather was perfect. My mind went back to Eric Hardy's August day in 1957 – would this still be a wonderful place for butterflies 57 years later? The quarry has benefited from management by volunteers and facing south-west towards Morecambe Bay it is a real sun trap. The 36 members of BC and the Grange Natural History Society who turned up were delighted to record 15 different species – Large, Small and Green Veined Whites, Meadow Brown, Brimstone, Speckled Wood, Wall Brown, Gatekeeper, Small Skipper, Peacock, Red Admiral, Common Blue and the highlights being second generation Holly Blue plus Painted Lady and Clouded Yellow the latter two being rare migrants to Cumbria. I had already seen High Brown, Dark Green, Silver Washed Fritillaries and Ringlet in Witherslack Woods on my way to Allithwaite and when some went on to nearby Humphrey Head we also

found Small Tortoiseshell, Comma and Purple Hairstreak plus another Clouded Yellow. Realising I had seen over half the Cumbrian species in a single day I could not resist calling in at White Scar at the Southern foot of Whitbarrow on my way home. There I saw Small Heath and Grayling giving a species total of 25 for the day.

That wonderful day would have pleased Eric Hardy. We may have lost Silver Studded Blue many years ago from Cumbria and the sheer number of butterflies and moths that he would have seen but at least the variety we have on a sunny August day in the Grange/Witherslack/Whitbarrow area is still remarkable. If you have any old newspaper articles or books on Cumbrian butterflies please let me know and if you would like a copy of Eric Hardy's article in full please send me a SAE.

### **Chris Winnick**

*Ed: Mention of Silver Washed Fritillaries in Witherslack by Eric Hardy in 1957 reinforces my opinion that it did survive in small numbers until a couple of us re-found it in about 1991. There are old records there in 1947 and 1971 as well. Hope the doubters and those who think clandestine are reading this!*

### **Publicity and Sales Donations**

From time to time we take part in various events with a publicity stand. Such events have included the Reged Centre near Ullswater and the Aquarium of the Lakes at Lakeside, Windermere. Butterfly material proves to be very popular. If you would like to help with our education and publicity or can donate items for sale to help branch funds and fund our conservation projects the please contact me. Things like nature/butterfly books or similar items of interest, photos, collections jars of jam, honey would be useful.

Many thanks.

### **Chris Winnick**

Branch Chairman, contact details on the back cover of this newsletter.

## 2014 Records

With the 2014 season sadly almost at an end it's almost time to collate our records. Summer seemed to come to an abrupt end as I write this towards the end of August having just come back from a day out at Arnside Knott. Whereas I'd usually expect to see quite a few butterflies there even in late August on a nice day it was a tad depressing to realise that it was really becoming very autumnal. There were still plenty of Scotch Argus although very worn they were and there were also several worn Gatekeepers and Small Skippers – but nothing else. Hopefully we will still see a good spell of weather at the end of August and into September and I still cling to the hope that will suddenly bring in some more Clouded Yellows or Painted Ladies.

Moths are by no means finished yet of course so I'm not trying to rush in those records just yet. Indeed I expect several more weeks of decent mothing weather to come.

Something else worth mentioning is that the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre don't just record butterflies and moths. They also record all other wildlife species so please also send in records of other things you have seen such as Red Squirrels, Badgers, Weasels, Stoats, Reptiles, Hoverflies, Dragonflies, Bees, Flies and so on. Road kills also count so jot down that nocturnal road kill you saw – I saw two dead Polecats on the A6 a couple of years ago and I'd never have seen them alive during the day.

This then is just a gentle reminder to at least think about collating your 2014 records and not leave it until Christmas like me – I promise to act on my own words this year!

Please send your 2014 records to the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre at Tullie House, Castle Street, Carlisle, CA3 8TP. You can do that by posting a hard copy but preferably electronically. The latter can be by Email, Excel or other recognised software or system. If in doubt you can contact the Data Centre on 01228 618717 and Gary, Moustafa or

Teresa will be pleased to help. The Email address is recordingofficer@cbdc.org.uk

## **Patches**

Quite a few of our members still record their 'Patch' which is a 1km square chosen by them. In that patch they record everything they see by using rights of way. It is not a fixed transect route but they wander where they can within that square and linger at times without being continually on the move and they can record species more than 10 metres away such as that Brimstone in flight over there or the Purple Hairstreak you just saw through your binoculars high up in an Oak tree.

This patches system is not meant as an alternative to transect walking because the latter is a time established method of recording each week a certain route and records can then be compared year on year and provide us with very important data as far as trends are concerned.

Patches is there so that any individual who can not commit to walking a transect every week can instead opt to 'adopt' their own 1 kilometre square, it could be more, whenever they can get out into it. It can start at your own front door as you walk your dog – just take a notebook with you. It can start a short drive away at a favourite place you like to walk. Or, like me it can be 25 miles away on a coastal strip I enjoy visiting. Two people I know opt for recording whilst fell walking. Remember, it's mainly to record butterflies but most of us 'Patches' people have so much adopted 'our' patches that we now record just about anything that moves in there! To take it to extremes I know of at least one recorder who has identified every tree and bush, every wild flower, every butterfly and runs a moth trap as well. Add to that small mammals and birds which 'trespass' on his/her patch and there is not much more to find – or is there? Incidentally before that person started to record that patch it was a 1km square which previously had very few records at all.

Why not think about doing something similar?

**Steve Doyle**

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Assisted in N. Lancs and Cumbria by Martin Wain.

Pictures are added to printed and published versions of this newsletter but are not displayed on electronic versions. The butterfly depicted on the front cover is the Large Blue (as well as our Marsh fritillary). On the back cover is our usual Brimstone.

