



Spring 2011

East Scotland Branch
Newsletter 18





Wall Brown female



Wood Tiger - Jeanies Wood

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Photo Credits: All photos by Iain (and Robin) Cowe, except for those in the article on the Cinnabar Moth Survey, where the adult moth photo was taken by Mark Parsons and the caterpillar by David Green. Those for the article on the Sallow Kitten were by Eric McCabe.

Branch Report 2010, *Richard Buckland*

In my view, the most satisfying thing about the last butterfly year was the discovery that Small Blues had made their way to Eyemouth from Burnham. We had found lots of great habitat for them at Eyemouth and found a strong colony along the coast at Burnham just two miles away. So it was a bit of a mystery why they had not moved the mile or so along the coast to the extensive habitat at Eyemouth. We were even looking into the prospect of having to introduce them, as the colony at Burnham is the only one known still to exist in the Borders. We were therefore keen to ensure its survival by spreading it to nearby sites. But this is no longer necessary, as the butterflies appear to have found their own way there, which is wonderful news.

In fact it was a fairly satisfying year all round. We had excellent weather for most of May and June, which allowed us to find lots of new colonies of Green Hairstreak and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary in the Lothians and Borders, where both species are considered under-recorded. Some of this is covered by Iain Cowe's article in this newsletter. Unfortunately, the weather in July and August turned cold and wet, so few days were available for butterfly surveying. So the year ended on an unsatisfactory note.

That was changed with another very successful Member's Day at the SNH headquarters at Battleby near Perth with over 100 people attending. Once again a team from the branch managed to win the 'lepidoptera' quiz, which means we are now the leading branch in this competition. We were also able to hold our AGM on Member's Day, which ensured a good turn-out, so we might go for this option in future. The minutes of the AGM also appear in this newsletter.

Also on the plus side, we managed to survey a large proportion of our allotted squares in the WCBS. A very big 'thank you' to all the members who answered the call from me to carry out this survey. You were a great help to me personally. To my knowledge we managed to survey 16 of our 25 squares. I am keen to get our percentage as high as possible, and have written an article describing the results so far later in this newsletter. In that I note the squares that have yet to be taken up. Please help if you can spare the time.

I should also add at this juncture that I attended a meeting of all branch chairs held in Birmingham last September to discuss the development of BC in the next decade – our '2020 vision'. There is an article outlining our suggestions later in this newsletter, so I will just draw your attention to it now rather than go into any details. But it does have a lot of important implications for the society, so I would ask you to read it carefully.

As to the branch specifically, many of you will realise that we failed to produce a newsletter last year. Unfortunately, Simon Pinder, who was hoping to take over from me as editor found it impossible due to work commitments. Perhaps he will find it a viable option in years to come and be able to take over then. In fact, there are a variety of vacant positions on the committee currently. Eleanor Stamp has had to stand down as habitats officer, due to the demands of a young family. So we are now looking for a new Conservation Officer. Because of the increasing emphasis on moth recording, a Moths Officer is becoming imperative. We need to keep in touch with the main moth recording efforts of BC and make a full contribution.

With regard to moths, I should mention here that the branch has a spare portable moth trap and the battery to run it. If anyone would like to use it, just get in touch with me. Also I have a lot of the new moths leaflet which is very good and suitable for giving out on stalls and at events generally.

Another important position in the future is going to be that of Press Officer, to handle all our (hopefully) interaction with the media. This will become increasingly important as we roll out our plans for the next big expansion phase of BC in our '2020 Vision'. More information concerning these positions can be found on the branch website.

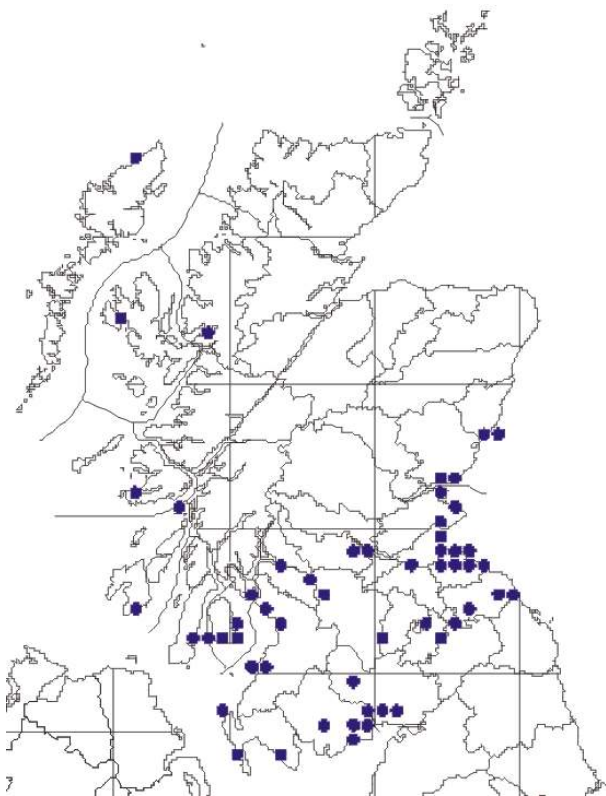
You will have noticed a leaflet from NFU Mutual with your newsletter. This is because they have agreed to pay the postage for the mailing of the newsletter in return for us including a copy of their leaflet with the newsletters. In addition, BC will receive £10 for every policy taken out with NFU Mutual.

So please think on't.....

Cinnabar Recording Project *Barry Prater*

In 2009 I started a project with the aim of discovering more about where the Cinnabar moth occurs in Scotland. There have been suggestions that it is a species which is responding to climate change and that this could lead to a move northwards and to higher ground. The moth also appeared to have few sightings in Berwickshire - my patch. Initially the project focus was on the Scottish Borders region and around 4000 postcards depicting the moth and its caterpillar on Ragwort, the foodplant, were distributed to local libraries, schools, tourist information centres and wildlife sites in spring 2009. However, the project was also publicised more widely, especially to the Scottish County Moth Recorders and as a result records came in during 2009 and 2010 from across the country and the scope was extended to cover all of Scotland.

Many very useful and widespread records of adults and caterpillars have been received, so thanks to all who have contributed to date. These have shown that the moth occurs on Lewis, Skye, Islay, Kintyre and Arran on the west coast, along the east coast at many points as far north as Angus and, most interestingly, at sites all the way across the Borders and the central belt, including at elevations over 250m in the Borders hills. Some of the adults recorded could have been migrants or distant wanderers, so the map shows just the larval records which I have received as these confirm local breeding. Adults have been seen between 15 May and 25 July, while caterpillars were recorded from 23 June to 28 August. So there are more than three months when the moth can be easily found as both stages are active by day.



It's too early to draw any firm conclusions, except to say that the project has had an enthusiastic response from many people and that its continuation during 2011, the final year, will be well worthwhile. Some readers may wonder what all the fuss is about as the moth is all over the place where they live; others will puzzle as to why they've never seen it. Wherever you are in Scotland, look out for this striking moth and its gaudy caterpillar on patches of Ragwort during summer and if you see any please send your records to me at barry@prater.myzen.co.uk or by post (see address elsewhere in the newsletter).

Tentsmuir South Transect 2004 – 2010 *Daphne Macfarlane Smith*

For those unfamiliar with it, Tentsmuir lies at the north east corner of Fife and the transect, on which Gillian Fyfe and I have been recording butterflies since 2004, is one of three with ours being to the south towards Kinshaldy. It is an area of duneland from which 95% of trees/scrub have been removed and is bordered to the west by pine forest and to the east by the North Sea. Much of it is fairly flat and covered with heather (3 species), creeping willow (*Salix repens*) and grasses, including marram and sea lyme grass towards the sea, but some parts are undulating and there are some moist hollows plus areas of deciduous trees and shrubs, including willow and alder, so there is some variation of habitat. It is crossed by a narrow ditch which rarely is full of water but does remain damp.

Following a change to our transect route in 2006, forced upon us by winter storms eroding about 25m of coastline (including dunes, alder trees and the small wooden bridge we used to cross the ditch!) - see article in the 2007 newsletter - erosion has continued but each March, so far, we have decided we could continue with the 2006 route. However, up to 60% of two of the seven sections, which make up the transect, have at times been smothered by sand and flotsam, carried in by strong winds and high tides. Though it has been quite shocking at times to see that dunes, three metres high, have vanished and mature alder trees fallen, it has also been interesting to observe the resilience of some plant species. Whenever there is a period of comparative stability, marram and sea lyme grass, sand sedge, orache and prickly saltwort (*Salsola kali*) reappear through the sand so it does not remain bare for long.

Hoping to do a transect certainly makes one very aware of the weather! To make transect records comparable with other places, certain conditions have to be met, for instance the temperature should be at least 18°C or, if below, there must be at least 60% overall sunshine and the wind should be less than Force 6 on the Beaufort scale, when large branches move and trees sway. Some days in Broughty Ferry, across the River Tay from Tentsmuir, conditions have appeared perfect with warm sunshine and a westerly wind (from which the transect is sheltered by the pine forest) so I have headed off with high hopes of a good result only to find that at the transect it is cloudy with a cold onshore wind! One particular day there was a band of cloud across the sun but blue sky to the north and a northerly wind so I thought the sun would soon appear as I walked round but somehow it never did. After I'd finished the transect, I stood and watched the cloud and realised that as fast as the cloud was being blown southwards new wisps of cloud were forming in the blue sky behind so the 'back edge' of the cloud never moved! Most frustrating!

At first glance, in terms of overall numbers of butterflies counted, 2009 appears to be the best year since we started in 2004 (see Table 1), with a total of 1145 but that result was skewed by the influx of 352 Painted Ladies (the previous maximum being just 4, in 2007) so, discounting them, the highest total was in 2006 with 1009. The total this year (694) was disappointing as it was less than any other year apart from 2004 (350). Strangely for two species – Peacock and Common Blue – 2009 saw the highest ever totals (71 and 89 respectively) but 2010 the lowest for Peacock (21) and second lowest for Common Blue (22).

Also noticeable has been the reduction in numbers of Ringlets from a high of 137 in 2005 to just 40 in 2010 and, since 2006, of Meadow Browns from 152 to 30 and Small Heath from 200 to 75. It is unclear what factors have caused this decline but heavy rain showers during their flight period and loss of grassy areas (due to erosion and sand coverage) cannot have helped.

Table 1 ANNUAL INDEX FIGURES BY YEAR

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Large White	1	1	1				
Small White	1	1	9	1	3	5	13
Green-veined White	11	22	58	27#	30	41#	27#
Orange-tip	5	18	14	14#	6	11	13
Green Hairstreak		10	9	3	1	2	2
Small Copper	113	271	213	197	211	219	293#
Common Blue	13	85	55	28	54	89	22
Red Admiral						1	
Painted Lady	3		1	4		352	
Small Tortoiseshell	1	1	1	3#			2
Peacock	52	58	44	38	38#	71	22
Comma					1		1
SPB Fritillary				15#	19	2#	
Dark Green Fritillary	18	39	78	54#	42	40#	22
Grayling	83	80	83	35#	69	146	134
Meadow Brown	25	108	152	61#	65	50	30
Small Heath	28	90	200	146#	147	52	75
Ringlet	39	137	91	104#	130	64#	40
Total	350	929	1009	726#	816#	1145# (793)	694#

Total in brackets for 2009 is the total without Painted Lady, for comparison.

Best years for selected species shown in bold type. #Totals that were not whole numbers (averaged counts for weeks missed due to poor weather) have been rounded up and overall totals therefore amended.

We are always keen to get back to the transect to start recording in April and every year there have been one or two Peacocks in the first couple of weeks then a few in May before a gap until the end of July/beginning of August. The number of Peacocks then rises to a peak in the second half of the month before tailing away to the end of September. In April it is lovely to hear skylarks singing and to appreciate the golden colour of moss and grey of Cladonia lichens then by mid-April there is a definite 'buzz' about the place as bumblebees forage for pollen from the creeping willow! Towards the end of the month, the cascading song of Willow Warblers to me heralds the arrival of spring, as does the appearance of violets, dandelions and Lady's Smock (*Cardamine pratensis*). Orange Tips, Small Coppers and Green-veined Whites are on the wing with an occasional Small White to add to the 'white' confusion and the caterpillars of Dark Tussock Moth on creeping willow and Garden Tiger can sometimes be seen. The Orange Tips can be around for 3 to 7 weeks with a peak in mid-May (*highest annual total 18 – 2005). Small Coppers are generally seen every week from mid-May to mid-September (unusually one was seen on 19 April in 2009), but there are two peaks in numbers, the first smaller one (up to 17 individuals) towards the end of May and the second during August (up to 91 this year – previously 30-40). (*293 – 2010, previous highest 271 – 2005 following lowest 113 in 2004). Green-veined Whites also have two peaks, one in May (7-10 individuals) and the other in late July/beginning of August (16-21 individuals) (*58 - 2006).

By mid-May the willow catkins are over but green leaves are bursting forth and Tormentil, Bird's-foot Trefoil and Common Vetch provide some colour. Green Hairstreaks generally only occur in the second and third week of May but unusually one was seen on 22 April this year. Sadly, from a high of 10 in 2005, only one or two have been seen in the last three years but it's impossible to know whether the SNH policy of removing invasive species, including birch seedlings and gorse, has had an impact by removing possible 'perches' for the Green Hairstreak males. A visit to the transect at this time can also produce a sighting of Cinnabar moth, Green Tiger beetle, Stonechat or a patch of Cowslips and we start to look for Orange Tip eggs under the flowerheads of Lady's Smock though this year we have become concerned at the lack of these flowers in the northwest section of our transect (?the area has become too dry) though it still occurs near the ditch in the southwest.

In June one may see some Common Wintergreen or Northern Marsh Orchid and, in 2007, a Yellow Shell moth was on an alder leaf. This is the time to look out for Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries which only appear for a couple of weeks and then, towards the end of the month, Dark Green Fritillaries also occur and continue well into August - even into September in 2008, though by then they are showing their age, being very pale and sometimes ragged. Both these species like to nectar on Marsh Thistle but this has, unfortunately, declined with 'spot-weedkilling' which was supposed to be targeted at the invasive Creeping Thistle. We did not confirm any SPBFs until 2007 and they reached a peak of 19 in 2008 but last year only one was seen and this year none. The DGFs peaked in the first week of July in four of the seven years (about a dozen individuals) but were slightly later in 2006 and 2008.

Mid-June the temperature is generally 17C or above, though 16C does occur, and the number of butterfly species to look out for increases with the possible occurrence of Common Blue, Meadow Brown, Small Heath and Ringlet and, by the end of the month, Grayling. Common Blue is generally around in small numbers for about 7 weeks with a peak in mid-July (from 6 to 32 individuals) or slightly later (*89 – 2009; lowest 22 – 2010); Meadow Browns for 6 weeks with a peak about mid-July (12-38 individuals); Small Heath for 9-10 weeks (until the end of August) with a variable peak from the second week of July to the first week in August, (19-47 individuals) and Ringlet for 6 weeks with a peak, in 5 out of 7 years, in week 14 (beginning of July) (11-42 individuals). Grayling occurs for about 8 weeks with a peak varying from mid-July to the beginning of August. Having hit a low of 35 in 2007, it was good to see an increase to 146 last year and 134 this season.

In July, Ragwort as well as being a source of nectar for the butterflies, is the food-plant for the orange and black-striped caterpillars of the Cinnabar moth which can quickly strip a plant bare of leaves. During August the heathers (*Calluna vulgaris*, *Erica tetralix* and *Erica cinerea*) become the main nectar source, especially if there is a shortage of Ragwort, and it was while walking through the heather last year that astonishing numbers of Painted Lady were feeding and flying up making an accurate count impossible – as with counting large numbers of birds, I tried to see them in groups – in this case 20s. During the initial influx in June we had seen only 22 (4 + 7 + 11) over the whole transect but during the weeks from 5 August to 18 September successive counts were 1, 90, 202, 27, 18 and, finally, just 1!

By September the heather flowers are fading and with even Small Coppers declining in numbers, we have to face the fact that another season is coming to an end. In addition to the species mentioned above in most years we have seen a Small Tortoiseshell (in 2007 and 2010 - 2). One Large White was counted in 2004, 2005 and 2006 but there have been none since. Gillian saw a Comma on 28 August 2008 and I saw one on 27 August 2010 - my first ever in Scotland! The only Red Admiral seen on the transect was on 27 September 2009 during the very last week of the season.

The total number of species recorded on the transect is now 18 and it is interesting to note the variation between the species in terms of their 'peak' years though, of the seven years we have been recording, 2006 was definitely 'the best' overall ... so far ...!

Each year brings its own special moments – for me, last year, it was seeing the large number of Painted Lady butterflies and unexpectedly coming across a striking black and white moth, a Wood Tiger. This year it was finding two attractive moths in June and July (not being familiar with many moths, I took photos and had id confirmed later) a Common White Wave and a Blue-bordered Carpet and then, on 5 August, seeing 90 Swallows perched in a large, but now dead, alder tree.

We still approach each week's count with a sense of anticipation as we never quite know what we may see - or hear .. there cannot be many transects from which one can hear Green Woodpeckers and Grey Seals! - roll on 2011!

*highest annual total

The Society's '2020 Vision' **Richard Buckland**

As the decade comes to an end, BC has had a reassessment of exactly where we are and what more we have to do in order to achieve our aims in the next decade. The conclusion of BC Council was that we need to become a stronger organisation. A remedy for this seemed so far-reaching, it was decided to involve the chairpeople of all the branches. A meeting of (almost) all the branch chairs was convened in Birmingham last September to hammer out a plan for the '2020 Vision'. The main aim of this vision is 'to build a strong and effective organisation that is capable of halting and reversing the decline of butterflies and moths and create a healthier environment'.

As Martin Warren, our CEO, writes:

'Butterflies and moths are a vital part of our wildlife heritage and valuable as sensitive indicators of the health of our environment. However, the stark fact is that butterflies and moths continue to decline at an alarming rate, despite Butterfly Conservation's best efforts over the last 40 years. Our data show that they are declining faster than most other well-documented groups of plants and animals, so our task is both daunting and complex. In order to tackle these losses and achieve the aims of the charity, Butterfly Conservation has to dramatically increase its capacity and influence over the next 10 years. The 2020 vision explains how we will achieve this ambitious goal. Butterflies and moths are good indicators of the health of the environment and our work will benefit other wildlife and the ecosystems upon which all life depends'. The weekend came up with the following recipe for progress:

The major aims are,

- ✱ to raise widespread awareness amongst the public, and especially young people, about the role of butterflies and moths in contributing to a healthy environment and the need to conserve them now and in the future.
- ✱ to secure the substantial increase in funding and other resources needed to sustain this and other Butterfly Conservation work in the long term.
- ✱ to develop our volunteer and branch networks so that they contribute significantly to the above outcomes as well as addressing local needs.
- ✱ to expand our member and supporter base significantly to generate sustainable funds and give Butterfly Conservation a stronger voice at national and local levels.

A lot of this is a bit chicken and egg, in that it is difficult to see which has to come first to get the desired results. For example, in order to secure increased funding, we will have to increase our membership base, and probably visa versa.

But the result we are striving towards is: A halt and (preferably) reversal of the decline of threatened species of butterflies and moths in the UK.

In order to achieve the above, the Society now aspires to increase the number of members/ supporters from the current 17,000 to more in the region of 100,000. This is so that we can build the necessary financial resources to carry out the work outlined above. This will become even more important as the financial constraints of the government cutbacks come into force and our funding from government agencies is reduced.

We also aspire to increase our annual income from today's figure of about £3m to more like £10m. Again, it is not clear which is chicken and egg here, as we will require a healthy network of Regional Officers in order to help the branches increase their membership, but we will also need the resources

that brings in, in order to hire the extra personnel to improve the Regional network. Meeting the other branch Chairs was instructive on this matter. We do not appreciate how lucky we are in Scotland with our 'Scottish Office' in Stirling. The branches in England do not have this resource. At Stirling we are blessed with Shona, who organises the office, which includes keeping track of the volunteer time and work programmes of Tom and Paul who have SNH contracts to fulfil. She also organises the Garden Show at Ingliston every year and many will know her through that when she phones and asks for help with it's staffing. She also organises the Recorder's Gathering, plus the Scottish BC Member's Day. Tom Prescott is busy carrying out our SNH contract to conserve various rare species of butterflies and moths in Scotland, with which he has been very successful.

Paul Kirkland, who runs the Scotland operation, is a superb generalist and as such is not only good at the biological side of the job, having a command of ecology and habitat management to be able to advise on most conservation issues, but he also does a great job acting as liaison officer for the Scottish branches. Plus he is adept at writing grant applications and making the necessary submissions to the Scottish Parliament.

We are therefore very fortunate in Scotland, with such a team supporting the branches. They are not so fortunate in England. There, Regional Officers are supported financially through grants obtained from environment trusts and Government agencies. This means they are assessed by their ability to conserve rare species of butterflies and moths and they do not involve themselves in branch activities. This is one of the changes we feel is needed so that branches are able to service their members better and recruit more members in the push to increase the membership. So Scotland is being used as a bit of a model for the rest of the country in this regard.

There are already lots of ideas floating around as to how to increase our membership. One such is to introduce a new category of membership – E-members. These would join online, possibly at a reduced rate as a result of being serviced electronically and would interact with their branch, and BC generally, electronically (entitled to updates and the magazine online and with access to the branches section of the BC website) but apart from that would be normal members.

The Scottish branches have a good record of recruitment over the past decade (the figures for our branch are given in the AGM minutes), possibly as a result of having the 'Scottish Office' at our disposal, but we must be prepared to put in some extra effort to help see the 2020 Vision succeed.



Antler moth
at Lamberton

News from the North East *Helen Rowe*

Over the past year, Butterfly Conservation members in North East Scotland have continued to engage in recording and raising awareness of butterflies and moths to encourage more people to become involved.

Various events were arranged during 2010, many in partnership with other organisations. Several public moth (and bat) nights/mornings and butterfly (and dragonfly) walks were held at nature reserves, community woodlands and other local wildlife sites across Aberdeenshire, some as part of community festivals or for National Insect Week and Save our Butterflies Week. Many were organised by myself (an Aberdeenshire Council Ranger), with support from other recorders in the area or colleagues from Glen Tanar, Balmoral Estate and Aberdeen City Council Ranger Services plus Scottish Natural Heritage. These were generally well attended and most were blessed with good weather so people of all ages were able to discover the diversity of species in their local area and learn about their importance in ecosystems and need for conservation.

Highlights included:

46 species at Glen Tanar on night of 24th July, including Straw Dot (status uncertain, but known migrant) & Pebble Hook-tip (locally scarce).

60 species at Den of Maidencraig LNR, Aberdeen on night of 30th July, including *Carpatolechia fugitivella* (new to NE Scotland), Gothic (locally scarce) & Swallow Prominent (locally scarce).

Over the past year, Helen has also had requests from a range of local groups to give butterfly and moth walks and talks, including primary schools and adult groups, which have provided further opportunities to promote the work of Butterfly Conservation.

A number of sightings of Commas in Aberdeenshire were reported during the year, mostly second generation individuals, but also a spring record from Glen Tanar – could it have overwintered locally? During an unsuccessful search for Small Blue larvae at Cove Bay, Aberdeen in the hope that the species may still be present, though not recorded there for many years, a small colony of Northern Brown Argus was found on the cliffs (10+ eggs on rock rose), which was a new 10km square record.

BC Scotland asked local recorders to survey known and potential sites for Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species, Kentish Glory and Small Dark Yellow Underwing, but this was limited by cold spring weather. On-going monitoring of Dark Bordered Beauty moth sites was more encouraging, resulting in the discovery of new sub-sites and vegetation monitoring was carried out for the first time. One of the land managers enlisted the help of the Cairngorms Junior Rangers (local Academy-age pupils) in site management, who removed invasive scrub towards gaining a John Muir Award.

The abundance of the Bird Cherry Ermine moth in 2010, with extensive larval webs & defoliation of trees particularly noticeable on Deeside, resulted in enquiries from the public and media interest, even a slot on BBC Scotland's Landward TV programme! This was a good opportunity to inform people that the caterpillars do not cause lasting damage to the trees and it is normal for some insect populations to have boom and bust years.

Similar activities are planned for 2011 – at the time of writing it has not been possible to set dates for all events (see events section), but look out for more information during the year on the East Scotland branch and national Butterfly Conservation websites. Alternatively, to find out more about what's happening in the area contact:

Helen Rowe – email: helen.rowe@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or tel: 013398 80868

Aberdeenshire Events 2011 – check in Branch Events insert with this Newsletter

Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey 2009-2010 *Richard Buckland*

This survey was unveiled for the first time in 2009 in its full form. Each branch nationwide was allocated 20 1km squares to survey. We were able to find volunteers for 17 of these, which was a pretty good effort. Few of the branches managed to survey all of their squares. I would like to extend a heart-felt thanks to all those who took part. Surveys such as this are only possible if members take part in them. In that first full year, 14 of the volunteers managed to carry out their part of the survey, and HO managed to find 2 others to carry out the survey in two of our other squares.

This is a joint survey with the BTO, who ask their volunteers who are surveying squares for their birds to do the butterflies as well, and 9 of their members surveyed the butterflies in their squares in the east of Scotland, bringing the grand total up to 26 squares.

Some of the more notable results were the numbers of Fritillaries seen. One member saw 23 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, while another saw 6. In all, four surveyors reported seeing Small Pearl-bordered Frits. and two people saw Dark Green Frits. as well. Fritillary numbers would seem to be holding up. So the results of doing his survey already seem to have brought dividends. I think congratulations all round are in order to all those who took part.

Last year (2010) saw us allocated a further 5 squares, which was bad news for me, as I then had to find volunteers to survey them. Luckily, the membership came up trumps again, and I managed to find surveyors for 3 of the extra squares plus some members to do some of the ones from the previous year. Unfortunately, HO were unable to do the two squares they had done the year before, and so we only managed 16 of our 25 squares, although this was still a very good effort, to the extent that the people running the survey at Wareham were very pleased.

As we speak, I am informed that the JNCC has agreed to fund the survey for a further 3 years, so I am putting all the WCBS surveyors on alert that it will continue again this year, and so please be prepared to do your stuff.

The squares that are still looking for keen members to take them on are:

1. Craig Hill, near Ettrick, Borders (square NT2515);
2. Craik Forest, nr. Ettrick (sq. NT2710);
3. Kindrogan Wood, Perthshire (NO0460);
4. Kindallachan, Pitlochry (NN9950);
5. Dunfallandy Hill, nr. Pitlochry (sq. NN9355);
6. Spartleton Hill, East Lothian (NT6565);
7. Linthill, nr. Eyemouth (NT9263).



There are a few squares that people have surveyed in the past, where the surveyors have had to give them up because of other commitments. Hopefully members may feel they can help out with these. They are:

Kindrogan Wood, nr. Pitlochry (NO0460);
Ditcher Law, nr. Lauder, Borders (NT5156);
Glen Dye, nr Banchory (NO6184).

The advantage of doing one of these squares is that the previous surveyors will have marked out the transect routes for you, which will make it easier.

No doubt we will be allocated a new batch of additional squares this year, so please be prepared to help out if you can.

A Day in the Hills *Malcolm Lindsay*

Fatigued by the late nights of moth-trapping I decided during last summer to spend more time studying day-flying moths as well as butterflies. I had become intrigued about the status in the central Southern Uplands of the day-flying montane moth, Broad-bordered White Underwing. A species with a mainly Scottish Highland distribution in the UK, there were only 2 records of this noctuid in the central Southern Uplands. The eminent naturalist and ecologist, Derek Ratcliffe, had found them in 1962 in the Carrifran/White Coomb area of the Moffat Hills and in 2002, Greg Fitchett from West Lothian saw 2 individuals while on a walk near Dollar Law in the Tweedsmuir Hills.

So a warm, sunny morning in early June found me heading up Glenrathopeen route to Dun Rig, at 744m the highest point in Selkirkshire. Jeff Waddell had suggested this hill as a possible site for Broad-bordered White Underwing.....but left me to do the climbing! In my rucksack I carried several sprays of Cherry Laurel flowers which my moth guide told me could be used to attract the moth on the hill tops!

It was a day of crystal clarity and though it was an early start butterflies and moths were soon in evidence. Small Heath, Green-veined White and Orange-tip flew in the warm sunshine at the edges of the path. A little further up the hill I found large numbers of the Common Heath moth and an abundance of a small pug species flying around Heather. I suspected this to be Satyr Pug and later examination of photographs confirmed this.

Then it was head down and a very steep climb through stony cleuchs to attain the summit plateau. A male Orange-tip flying over the plateau at 700m was a considerable surprise, as were large numbers of the handsome Bilberry Bumble Bee with its striking orange abdomen.

At about 710m the habitat changed quite abruptly from longish rank Heather to low prostrate Heather interspersed with abundant Bilberry. As soon as I stepped on to this normally windswept terrain, and while considering bringing my Cherry Laurel into play, a small dark moth with whitish markings darted low across my path. Soon I managed the close views required to confirm its identity as a Broad-bordered White Underwing.

There followed a wonderful two hours at the top of Selkirkshire with sightings of some 20 individuals, mostly in slightly worn condition, on the highest 30m of the summit plateau. I did place the Cherry Laurel sprigs amongst the Heather but this technique proved entirely unsuccessful. Some of the moths were seen alighting on Bilberry but I did not observe any mating or egg-laying. The descent was always going to be an anti-climax after that. One Silver-Y and a few Common Carpets were the only species added.

So the Broad-bordered White Underwing maintains its presence in the central Southern Uplands and, in all probability, is to be found in most of the few tops in the Tweedsmuir and Moffat Hills above about 710m. Records from some of these other tops in the area would be most welcome. To stand a good chance of finding it you will need a sunny day in late May or early June and good pairs of legs and lungs. Take flowers if you wish!

There is also the possibility of finding it on Cheviot, where there is one 1974 record on the Northumberland side of the hill, and just possibly from the highest hills of Ettrickhead. And what an interesting laboratory this is with regard to climate change. Clinging on to the very summits of these few southern Scottish hills, will the Broad-bordered White Underwing be able to survive there if there is an ongoing period of climate warming?

Ramblings in Berwickshire, *Iain Cowe*

Berwickshire Sightings.... An account of my sightings and findings from 2010.

In 2010 I observed 23 species within the bounds of Berwickshire district. There seemed to be a marked increase in numbers of the new additions to the south of Scotland such as Small Skipper, Large Skipper, Speckled Wood and Wall Brown.

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Small Blue continue to be our scarcest butterflies, though both species had good years. The Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary had an especially fine season being seen in large numbers at Gordon, and I even found 3 at Greenlaw Dean, a new site for this species.

Small Tortoiseshell had a very good season with strong numbers early and late. Comma were sporadic to say the least. Very good numbers from March till May then very few seen in July compared to 2009.

Common Blue had an explosive season at the sites I visited. At Pipers Knowe easily 100+ butterflies at peak. The Common Blue season though seemed very short and I could find no evidence of a second brood in late summer.

At the coast Grayling were spectacular around 100 seen on the Burnmouth- Eyemouth coastline 23rd July.

This summer produced a flood of Skippers. Both Small and Large seen in record numbers. Large Skippers seen at Pipers Knowe, Edrington, Foulden Burn. Small Skipper at Pipers Knowe, Edrington, Gordon Community Woodland. The best spot for Large Skipper was Foulden Burn and Small Skipper on the Edrington banks at Tibbie Fowlers Glen.

Speckled Wood became a regular spot this year with my first ever sighting of the species between Eyemouth and Ayton on the banks of the river Ale. This was a known spot from 2009. As was Pease Dean. A field trip in May confirmed their presence. Sightings were made at Duns Woods, although not by me. I did in July however discover a horde of Speckled Wood on the Edrington banks. That day counting just twenty...but there were very many more. In September I returned to this site counting 44 again, they were well in excess of this number, hundreds would be probable.

It looks as if the Speckled Wood has 3 clear broods throughout the year. From early May....another in late June and another in early September. They should be very widespread in Berwickshire, so I would expect to find more sites that support Speckled Wood in 2011. It will also be interesting to see how the cold winters affect their numbers.

The White butterflies had a famous year with many Small White being seen. At times easily the commonest of the Whites. Orange-tip had a mixed season along with Green-veined White...my theory is that they are both susceptible to dry spring weather. I see both butterflies in damp grassland containing Garlic Mustard and Cuckoo Flower...as is usual. The Garlic Mustard is the common plant in my immediate area, so the Orange-tip uses it exclusively. The problem with dry weather at that time of year is that the plants become stunted and quickly become overwhelmed by more aggressive neighbours. I also observed that the seed pods set very quickly...this may affect the Orange-tip and Green-veined White caterpillars' ability to feed later in the season.

Wall Brown were very evident on the coast from May with very healthy numbers seen. Inland meanwhile sightings were made at Foulden, Edington, Blue Stone Ford, Chirnside, Chirnside Railway Line, Pipers Knowe, and Duns Woods and Quarry. Subject to change due to cold weather tolerance in winter, this species is going from strength to strength. Good coastal sites are at Burnmouth Hill, Blaikie Heugh and Coldingham shore.



Northern Brown Argus at Partanhall



Coldingham Long Moss



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary.



Small Skipper female at Edrington



Large Skipper female at Foulde Burn



Broad Bordered White Underwing



Glenrath Heights



Blackneck at Catcairn



Banded Agrion female at Edrington



Common Carpet at Harelaw



Mother Shipton at Greenlaw Dean



Latticed Heath



Painted Lady at Chirnside railway line

Meadow Brown and Ringlet had a very ordinary season....perhaps suffering the dry spring weather. Large numbers of both species were seen at Newton Brae in early July.

Peacock had a good early season, and were very late to build numbers late on. Peacock have changed habit over the years according to my observations. It was usual a few years back to see Peacock in numbers well into September. It is now very rare to see one throughout this month with August being their peak month. I have also noticed that Small Tortoiseshell also tend to disappear into hibernation very quickly...I have seen them in hibernation mode as early as late July, early August, though restless. And reappearing from time to time, depending on the weather. Small Copper are doing very well, with 2010 no exception. Found everywhere from town centre to the highest hill top, and from dense woodland to open grassland. They are particularly easy to find in the first few days of August with emerging groups nectaring openly on Mayweed and Thistle heads.

Northern Brown Argus were seen at Partanhall, Blaikie Heugh, Burnmouth Hill, Hareheugh Craigs and Greenlaw Dean. A typical season for the Northern Brown...never a record breaker. At Partanhall, Burnmouth a very obvious drop in numbers was seen. The Rockrose on this site looked to be in good order ...so there must be a reason for them having such a lean season at this particular site. It will be interesting to see in 2011 if they recover their numbers. I am hopeful this is merely a typical cyclic glitch that affects other butterflies.



Small Heath at Lamberton,

An attempt was made by me to locate Northern Brown Argus on the lower reaches of the Whiteadder banks at Foulden and Edrington. Not sure about their ever being a historical record of Northern Brown Argus here, however there are historical records of Rockrose. Alas....no Rockrose could be found. I will continue the search next year perhaps on some of the more precarious banks downstream. I did at last witness Northern Brown Argus laying eggs at Blaikie Heugh....seeing the eggs of Northern Brown Argus is quite easy compared to Small Blue and Common Blue.

Red Admiral numbers were very low. Quite often a wave of early Red Admirals will later give way to an emergence, joined by a number of fresh migrants in the late summer months. It just did not happen in 2010.

Attempts were made to find Green Hairstreak at several Berwickshire locations with no luck. Several attempts to find Large Heath and Scotch Argus at Gordon ended in failure. And a reported sighting of a possible Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary on Coldingham Moor was followed up with no joy.

There are, despite the negatives, endless possibilities for future discoveries as the Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary find at Greenlaw Dean, or the outstanding discovery by Barry Prater of Small Blue at Eyemouth, the masses of Speckled Wood and Small Skipper at Edrington.

The Green Hairstreak is a paradox in itself...we have endless expanses of apparently suitable habitat in Berwickshire. I hiked high and low during May 2010 with little reward for my efforts in less than clement weather. And yet I am not put off at the so far stark fact that they do not exist at least in Berwickshire. Even having written the sentence, I disbelieve it entirely. It seems impossible to me that the butterfly has no foothold at all within the VC bounds. I have as yet not seen a Green Hairstreak apart from photographs....I am pretty determined to find them....but where I wonder?

As for Scotch Argus and Large Heath at Gordon...this was indeed harrowing. A mere handful of trips out to Lightfield and deep down I knew I would not find what I was looking for in this location. It is possible that Scotch Argus are in the vicinity, but a lot more searching over a wider area is needed. The Large Heath I would think are unlikely and that is sad to say. It is just possible over a wider area that they might but I really rather doubt it. I visited Dogden Moss in 2009 and saw a habitat I have never experienced before, wild and windswept...that is where Large Heath are, and will be found. I hope, of course, to eat my words some day.

A long hike from Coldingham to the Coldingham Long Moss on the moor was spurred by a possible sighting of a Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Such a find would be outstanding. I had no luck here. But the fact remained a butterfly was sighted and getting a first hand look at the habitat..it seems no other butterfly bar Large Heath would frequent such a place. An environment even wilder than Dogden Moss....very wet with pitch black lagoons, rafts of Cranberry, and a blizzard of Cotton Grass. Historically the Marsh Fritillary once frequented these parts and its no wonder...

I will be back to this site in 2011.....

2011 promises to be very interesting. There will always be unfinished business from season 2010. New areas to explore are plentiful and endless even within Berwickshire. A Green Hairstreak hunt is more than probably on the cards. The search for Small Blue continues....very excited at the prospect of seeing some fresh ones at Eyemouth. Greenlaw Dean to search for the source of the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary seen there. Coldingham Long Moss to see what lurks within. Partanhall to see if the Northern Brown Argus have recovered last years malaise. And monitoring the Small Pearls at Gordon and the Small Blues at Lamberton. A plethora of locations to visit...and as is usual no time at all to visit them all. The best laid plans and all that.

List of Species 2010, with Best Location.

Large Skipper	Foulden Burn
Small Skipper	Edrington Banks
Large White	Common throughout
Green Veined White	Common throughout
Small White	Common throughout
Orange Tip	Duns Castle
Small Copper	Common throughout
Northern Brown Argus	Greenlaw Dean
Common Blue	Pipers Knowe
Small Blue	Lamberton
Peacock	Common throughout
Comma	Whiteadder banks at Ninewells Chirnside
Small Tortoiseshell	Common throughout
Painted Lady	Variable migrant
Red Admiral	Variable migrant
Dark Green Fritillary	Gordon Community Woodland
Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary	Gordon
Meadow Brown	Common throughout
Ringlet	Common throughout
Grayling	Burnmouth
Wall Brown	Burnmouth
Small Heath	Duns Hills
Speckled Wood	Edrington Wood and riverside banks
Large Heath..last seen Dogden Moss 2009.	Dogden Moss

Looking for eggs of Small Blue is fine if you are not faced with a wall of yellow flowers to inspect. It is very often though the isolated plants that the females prefer. The plants growing on the periphery of the site.

I have not given any time to detecting Northern Brown Argus eggs in the past... but now I know what to look for, will in the future make it a little less daunting. It can be very useful to detect eggs on a site where there are few adults.

I did notice that the Common Blue lays its eggs on a wide variety of plants...from clovers and vetches. The most common were the typical Birds Foot Trefoil and the Black Medick. An unusual plant...probably not unusual once upon a time, was Restharrow. This plant was found on the Whiteadder slopes at Edrington in abundance. The Common Blue female did seem to use the plant for inspection but no egg laying was witnessed.

National Moth Night 2010 in Berwickshire *Barry Prater*

This event was on 15 May last year and coincided with Borders Biodiversity Week, which enabled quite widespread publicity, but the hoped-for crowds materialised as a select party of seven. The site in the Monynut Valley was suggested by Malcolm Lindsay; it has fine open stands of mature oaks with nearby birch on the steep valley side at the NW end of the extensive Abbey St Bathans Woodlands SSSI (grid ref NT735636). Like many of the more remote parts of the Borders this area has relatively few moth records despite the richness of the habitat; indeed up until NMN the 10km square NT76 had only around 17 species of macromoth recorded in recent years, so we were confident of adding some new species to the list, and we were not disappointed.

A total of four traps (two MV and two actinic) were spaced out along the valley in an attempt to sample the varied habitats and were run from dusk until around 12.30 am. Almost a hundred moths of eighteen different species were attracted to the lights and were dominated by the Hebrew Character (42), followed by Common Quaker (8), Red Chestnut (7), Brown Silver-line (6), Engrailed (5) and Water Carpet (5). Other species were Brindled Pug, Early Thorn, Nut-tree Tussock, Small Quaker, Powdered Quaker, Red Sword-grass, Lesser Swallow Prominent, Clouded Drab, White Ermine, Muslin Moth, Chestnut and the micro *Diurnea flagella*. Remarkably, eleven of the species found were new for the 10km square and the remaining seven had not been recorded since the 1950s, mostly at a site some 5km distant.

Looking at the significance of these records in the Berwickshire context, three species should be mentioned. The Engrailed has only a handful of previous records in the county, as does the Muslin Moth, which is mostly found near to the coast. The four Powdered Quakers were the first to be seen in Berwickshire since 1961.

One always looks forward to outdoor events and hopes for a good attendance; however, having just a small number turn up gives a greater opportunity to show people butterflies and moths, to talk to beginners and to share knowledge (we all have much to learn). Four of the group were really quite new to moths and so it was great to introduce them to a wide range of species, some of which are very striking (such as the Lesser Swallow Prominent). A good evening with kind weather - not very warm, but it stayed dry until we were packing up. Thanks to Malcolm Lindsay for his support and for bringing a couple of the traps. There is no NMN this year, but it should reappear in 2012. In the meantime, check the branch events for 2011 in this newsletter and on the website.

Berwickshire Moths in 2010 *Iain Cowe*

I always keep an eye out for day-flying moths on my travels and any night flyers disturbed by my plodding. I did see some crackers among them Cinnabar, Dew Moth, Blackneck, Narrow Bordered Five Spot Burnet, Mother Shipton, Small Argent Sable, Emperor Moth, Clouded Border, Bordered White, Antler Moth, Six Spot Burnet, Beautiful Carpet, Silver Y, Map Winged Swift, Clouded Silver, Latticed Heath, Common Heath, the larvae of Chamomile Shark, and Chimney Sweeper.

The star of the show was unfortunately not found by me. My brother is slowly developing an interest in keeping an eye out for Butterflies and moths and is becoming adept at uncovering the less obvious species that stay hidden. His knowledge of the Duns Woods and hills is invaluable in tracking them down. In the spring of the year he photographed what he considered to be an unusual caterpillar. We deduced that it was a Wood Tiger. We put that to the experts, and they suggested it was a Ruby Tiger. The photo was not convincing. The only way to prove it would be to find a flying adult. We both pretty much gave up on ever finding one. Until the 8th of July when on an excursion in the Duns hills he found and photographed this beauty. It sometimes pays to be persistent. The Wood Tiger may or may not be common in the Duns hills. It is certainly one to look out for in the future.

The Emperor moth find was quite exciting as I had not ever seen one before. A female found in a woodland clearing in the Duns hills resting on Bilberry. A week or so later I returned to the site where I was sure I saw a male patrolling in circular flights around the clearing at speed. Again I will look for more of this moth on future trips.

The Blackneck moth was once again on the scree slopes on the Lamberton coast. It is only here that they have been seen so far. Very unusual. In every way the Blackneck colony existing here is a much scarcer insect than the Small Blue that it shares the slope with in May, June time. The moth is very easily disturbed in daylight and tends to fly weakly into cover. Finding other areas where this moth exists would be very interesting. I would like to know how and why it is seemingly isolated here.



Map Winged Swift on old railwayline at Chirnside.

AGM 2010 Report *Richard Buckland*

The chairman thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. It looked as though a record turnout of over 50 people attended, no doubt a result of holding it during the time allotted to branch affairs at the annual Member's Day. This was a big improvement on the 12 that had attended the previous AGM.

Those present from the committee were: Richard Buckland (Chairperson); Susan McKenzie (Treasurer); Duncan Davidson (Fife Local organiser); Helen Rowe (Aberdeenshire local organiser); David Lampard (Tayside local organiser). 45 other members were also present.

Apologies were received from Lesley McCabe (Perthshire local organiser) and Barry Prater (Borders local organiser) from the committee and from 33 other members.

Although quite a while ago, the Chair nonetheless went through the minutes of the previous AGM.

The main points were:

- ✱ This was held in the Guides Centre, Melville Street, Edinburgh in 2003 and was addressed by Michael Usher, chief scientist of SNH Michael gave a delightful slide show of some of the most important wildlife areas in Scotland with some excellent photographs of butterflies.
- ✱ Branch activity included the setting up of a branch Garden Butterfly Survey.
- ✱ The Chair started a discussion on the branch questionnaire, which was sent out to all branch members in a trial run with the 2003 newsletter. Of the 169 sent out, 42 were returned (25%).
- ✱ Comments at the time were that more moth-related activities were requested, a request which has now been amply fulfilled. The questionnaire is now routinely sent out to all new members.
- ✱ The number of members at the time was: 146 in 2002 and 169 in 2003. It is now 350.

B. Matters Arising have long since been dealt with.

Further Reports to 2010 AGM

The Chair then went on to summarise the main activities of the year in the branch.

During the last year the branch had concentrated its efforts on survey work mainly for the WCBS, the RAP and targeted recording for the Millennium Atlas update. He thanked all those who had taken part.

Webmaster's Report: Mark Cubitt asked how many members had used the website, with the pleasing result that a majority of the members present had visited a few times, for a variety of reasons as it turned out. He then made it plain that it should be owned by the membership and that they were to feel free to submit any material they thought fit.

Reports from local organisers

The local organisers from Fife (Duncan Davidson); Tayside (David Lampard); and Aberdeen (Helen Rowe) then gave reports of the year's events in their area. A résumé of these appear in this newsletter. Local organisers not present (Barry Prater, Borders and Lesley McCabe, Perthshire) sent in written reports, which were read out by the Chair and which again appear in this newsletter.

Election of office bearers

The Chair then informed the meeting that all the local organisers had assented when asked if they were prepared to continue in their present roles, and asked if this was agreeable to the meeting. A show of hands indicated that it was. The Treasurer was also re-appointed, but after 16 years in the post the branch organiser was standing down. Barry Prater had agreed to replace Richard Buckland as branch organiser/chairperson. Also, Simon Pinder, newsletter editor was standing down due to pressure of work. Richard Buckland was prepared to take on this position again after a two year break. These changes were agreed by the meeting.

AOB.

The Chair raised the issue of a possible tie-up with Stirling Council to manage a wildlife site outside Stirling. This site has a colony of Large Heath on it plus other fauna associated with a lowland raised bog. The committee had taken the view that, despite this site being just over the branch boundary, and into the Glasgow and SW branch, we should be prepared to help manage this site for this BAP species, and should be prepared to give both manual and financial support. Once again this was agreed by the meeting. The meeting closed after an hour at 4 o'clock. Martin Robinson then proposed a vote of thanks to Richard Buckland for his hard work as organiser over the past sixteen years, which was gratefully accepted by Richard.

A provisional decision was taken to hold the AGM at the Member's Day as a matter of course, as this ensured a good turn-out. A fuller version of this report, with the financial report appears on the branch website, www.eastscotland-butterflies.com.

Fife & Clacks News 2010 *Duncan Davidson*

There are now over 60 member households in the Fife and Clackmannanshire sub-group and during 2010 there were plenty of activities for them to enjoy.

The first event of the year was at Cullaloe, to mark National Moth Night on 15 May. There was an excellent turnout of over 20 people and everyone seemed to enjoy themselves which of course is one of the main purposes of these events. There were five traps set up at different points round the reserve and at the end of the night there was an impressive total of around 120 moths of 20 species.

That same weekend we had a walk over Benarty Hill looking for Green Hairstreak. It was a good sunny day and although there are no previous records from the area, there are acres of the food-plant, Blaeberry - and there are thriving colonies quite close by in the Cleish and Lomond hills. We saw Common Heath moths, some unidentified micro-moths and a good number of Emperor Moths flying in the sunshine; but no Green Hairstreak. It could be that we missed them, or that the lack of shelter and

perching points means that they are not there but I'll be looking again this year!

In June, we had a night of moth trapping to support the Fife Bioblitz at East Lomond Limekiln. This was a very successful event, well attended by members of the public over two sessions, not just to check out the moths, but also to help identify other insects, plants, birds, bats and other mammals. The total species count at the end of the day was 195, of which we estimated nearly 600 moths of 43 species. Most spectacular catches were Poplar Hawk-moth, Small Elephant Hawk-moth, Garden Tiger, Lempke's Gold Spot and White Ermine, but the highlight was an unobtrusive dark coloured micro-moth called *Pylafusca*. It is a member of the Pyralid family and has a habit of resting in areas of burnt heather, where its dark colouration makes it well camouflaged. Despite being fairly common across heathland in the UK, this was the first record for Fife. Also recorded on the Saturday morning were Green-veined White, Common Blue, Small Copper, Small Heath and Small Tortoiseshell larvae.

Next was a July walk across Auchtermuchty Common to look for Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. It was quite a windy day but we did see our target species. A single Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary sat quietly while we all got a good look. By contrast, the few Dark Green Fritillaries we saw were flying low and fast with the wind. We did manage to pot one on a flower head and got a closer look at this beautiful butterfly before releasing it unharmed. We saw a number of 6-spot Burnets, a lot of Grass Rivulets and other "grass" moths along with various types of bumble-bees.

Our August outing to Barry Buddon resulted in a total of 14 butterfly species being recorded. Amongst these were Comma, Grayling, Dark Green Fritillary and a significant number of second brood Small Blue.

As well as these special events, other recording activities continued as normal. There are seven Butterfly Transects in the area at Alva Glen, Auchtermuchty Common, the Clune at Lochore Meadows, Cullaloe, Morton Lochs, Tentsmuir North and Tentsmuir South. The transects are covered by dedicated groups and individuals who walk the same defined route one day every week between April and October and record every butterfly seen within particular boundaries. This is a lot of effort and we are very lucky to have such enthusiasts in the area. All seven transects had a reasonable year – not the absolute best year; some numbers were down, possibly because of the unusually wet summer (July had over three times its long term average rainfall!), but there was no evidence of general decline. If you want to know more about setting up a transect, or think you can help on an existing one please get in touch with me.

There have been around 2000 casual butterfly records submitted (so far) for 2010 by members and others. This is the same level as 2009 and twice as many as in 2008. On that measure alone, it seems to have been a successful year in Fife and Clackmannanshire. Analysis of the records is not complete, but there seems no evidence of decline in our area, although as we might expect, Painted Lady records were reduced considerably from 2009. Dark Green Fritillary, Orange-tip and Green Hairstreak were all reported in good numbers and the Comma is now well established – who will find the first Comma caterpillar in Fife and Clacks? If you haven't already done so, please send me your records for this and previous years – it's never too late.

Moth recorders also had a good year. A number of new or seldom seen species were recorded, including Yellow-barred Brindle, Brindled Green, Scarce Prominent and Green Silver-lines. One member recorded a species new to Scotland, the *Yponomeuta rorrella*, or Willow Ermine. This is a micro-moth related to the Bird-Cherry Ermine that caused such excitement nationally and locally, by covering trees from top to bottom with larval webs. The same coastal site turned up some other species not previously seen in the area, including *Palpita vitrealis*, a rare migrant to the UK.

The day I had Kittens: *Lesley McCabe* (Perthshire local organiser)

I thought this little tale might be of interest. We finally got our own Moth Trap in June 2008 (a Skinner Trap run off a battery) and access to some land on the banks of the River Tay to run it.

The first night we trapped, we were very pleased to catch a Kitten. We took it back for identification. During this time our Sallow Kitten proceeded to lay eggs in the pot. Some urgent research was undertaken on how to rear the caterpillars, and willow seemed to be the requirement – that was easy to source, so things looked hopeful.

The eggs duly hatched and we housed them with fresh willow in a plastic tub. Changing the willow every few days turned out to be quite a task as the tiny caterpillars seemed to ‘stick’ themselves to the leaves with silk which made moving them onto the fresh leaves tricky. We eventually worked out a technique with cocktail sticks, and the caterpillars grew steadily, shedding into new skins, and demolishing plenty willow leaves. It was fascinating to see how their shape, and even their colour, changed as they grew, getting the strange ‘horns’, and what looked like a saddle on their backs.

We had far more caterpillars than we wanted, so took some back to where we caught the adult, and gave some to a friend to raise, leaving ourselves with a more manageable six-

After a month or so they seemed to be feeding less, and trying to escape from the tub. We’d read that they pupate on Willow branches, so acquired a few short logs, and six of our caterpillars duly formed hard cases on one of the logs. So far, so good!

We then overwintered the log in a box in our garage, and brought it out in April to keep an eye on it. It looked dormant until early June when the edges of one of the cases seemed to be cracking, so we put the log in a flight cage and the next day there was a Sallow Kitten! All six of them emerged over the next few days and we released them all back where we first caught the adult the previous year.

Unfortunately we didn’t find any Sallow Kittens in our trap this year at all.



Borders Sub-Group Report *Barry Prater*

Targeted Recording of Butterflies and Moths. A programme of targeted recording started this year. For the butterflies, members were contacted directly with details of sites for key species near to where they live and asked to check them out - some sites had no recent records, primarily because they hadn't been visited for a while. The results have been excellent - most people contacted were very willing to help and the outcome has been the confirmation of some previous records and the discovery of new sites for some of our more important species, including Green Hairstreak, Small Blue, Northern Brown Argus and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. New sites for both Large and Small Skipper have also been found.

For moths, the County Moth Recorders discussed priorities early in the year and each has attempted to pursue these. A variety of approaches have been applied - searches for day-flying species, use of pheromone lures and extending survey work into lesser-known areas. The result has been a huge number of significant records of both scarce species and those which are perhaps spreading north, including Valerian Pug, Broad-bordered White Underwing, Seraphim, Saxon, Currant Clearwing, Annulet, Ochreous Pug, Red Underwing and Shuttle-shaped Dart.

It should also be said that many good records have come from garden traps - there is much out there to discover!

New Moth Recorders

Several new, keen moth enthusiasts have started trapping recently. They are well spread out across the Borders and are making impacts in relatively under-recorded areas. The offer of an actinic trap on loan has encouraged at least one to get started and this approach will be continued next year. There is plenty of expert support for new recorders in Scotland, so anyone interested can begin trapping and know that they will get help.

Feedback to Landowners and Conservation

Butterfly and moth records have contributed to submissions by Borders farmers for funding under the government's agri-environment schemes and the monitoring of experimental sowing of field margins on a Roxburghshire farm with grasses and wild flower mixes has started to try and quantify any benefits for Lepidoptera.

It's a good general policy to give landowners feedback on what has been found on their property, especially the moths as survey work usually involves getting permission for light trapping. Most seem very interested in the findings.

Some active habitat work has been carried out on the coast at Coldingham to increase the suitable area for Northern Brown Argus - it will be next year before the outcome is clear.

Field Trips

Four successful field trips for butterflies were organised, with the target species being found in each case. Two events were held on National Moth Night - Peebles and Monynut Valley - there was an excellent turn-out for the Peebles evening (but unfortunately few moths) while a small number of new faces appeared in the Monynut Valley and we found a good number of interesting moths.

Newsletter

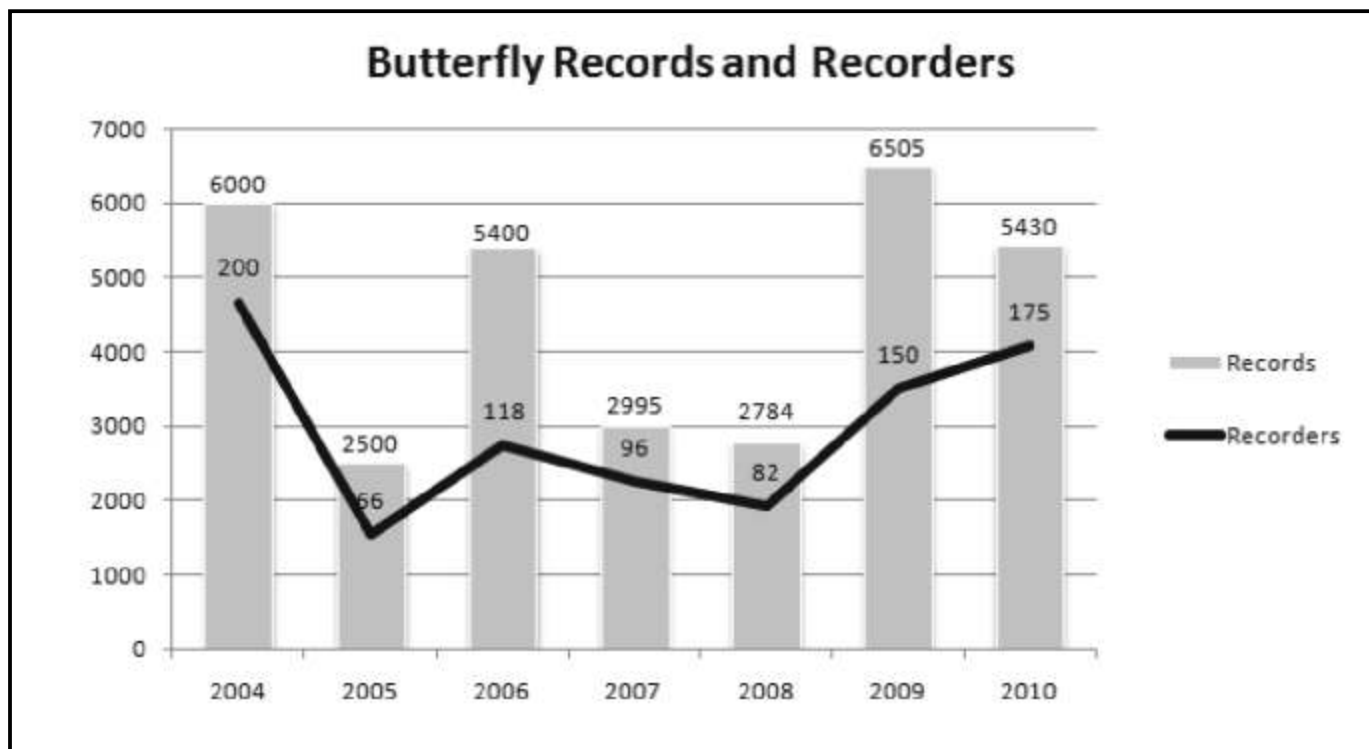
The local Borders newsletter has been produced in spring and autumn and this has been a good way to get more members involved with branch activities, especially some who are unable to do little field work for a variety of reasons.

2010 Butterflies – Some notes *Duncan Davidson*

Records are still coming in for 2010 and analysis hasn't really begun yet. However, we can say that Comma has consolidated through the southern part of the branch and certainly as far north as Pitlochry. The fears that last year's cold and prolonged winter might have been a setback for the hibernating adults proved to be unfounded. The few specimens that were found in Deeside and near Inverurie are thought to be windblown strays rather than breeding residents.

Green Hairstreak has done particularly well in 2010 with new colonies being found in the Borders and Tayside and Northern Brown Argus was recorded in a new 10k square at Cove Bay in Aberdeenshire. Just about everything seems to be doing well in the Borders – large numbers of Scotch Argus, thriving Small Blue populations and Wall and speckled Wood continuing to creep up the east coast into East Lothian.

In fact the only loser appears to be the Painted Lady and only then because there were such spectacular numbers in 2009. So far there have been only around 50 sightings reported of no more than 2 or 3 butterflies at a time (one record of 5) compared to nearly 800 records in 2009 with double and treble figures not unusual, and one record of over a thousand!



Lothians field trips in 2010 *Richard Buckland*

My first trip was to Auchencorth Moss to see Green Hairstreaks. Unfortunately, the weather turned out cold, overcast and windy. Not weather conducive to seeing a small moorland butterfly. So the small band of six people who turned out all expectant at the beginning of the season, were to be disappointed. At one point I thought to myself that, 'at least it has not rained on us', so we are not too uncomfortable. But I thought too soon! The rain came on just as we started for home from out on the moss and hastened us back to the cars in double-quick time which shortened the outing.

My second trip was to the SSSI at Abbey St. Bathans in the Lammermuir Hills, to check an old Northern Brown Argus record. As luck would have it, it was raining from the start this time. But nevertheless, I was joined by a couple of other intrepid butterflyers. As we were searching for NBA, we could at least do this in the rain by looking for the eggs. So although we got pretty wet, we were able to confirm the presence of NBA as the Rock-rose we found had a healthy sprinkling of eggs on it.

After play had been suspended because of high winds at the Open golf at St. Andrews, I was not expecting great weather the following day when I set out for Soutra Hill for my third outing of the year. This was our annual field excursion with the Edinburgh Natural History Society, and as I arrived, the wind at the top of this hill was not as strong as I had expected. In fact the sun came out as people arrived and put on their walking boots.

This is a well known butterfly site with good colonies of Northern Brown Argus, Dark Green Fritillary and Grayling, so I was expecting to see some nice butterflies if the weather was even half decent. The dependable thing about trips involving the Edinburgh Nats. is the fact that a lot of people will turn up, which is different from most BC field trips! So after a short time waiting for people to turn up, we set off with a party of about 15 people in tow, including a small contingent of 6 from BC. Dark Green Frits. were in evidence right from the off, with two flying immediately beyond the car park. It is always good to see a few butterflies early in the walk to keep the party interested and a little further on, we were educated by the Edin. Nat. leader, Neville Crowther, who is a great generalist and was able to identify the more unusual plants. When we got down to the burn, we were able to confirm that the Northern Brown Argus were on the wing by counting the eggs on the leaves of the Rock-rose on the river bank. A little later, we saw our first adult, and then a few more, Although the sun was breaking through the cloud cover occasionally, it was not enough to keep them on the wing, so when they landed they were continuing to bask as much as possible. They were therefore keeping their wings open, which meant that we were able to take some nice photos. much to the appreciation of the photographers amongst us. Throughout all this time, good numbers of Dark Green Fritillaries were flying around us. I don't think I have ever seen so many at one time. It really is a very healthy colony up there.

Perthshire Outings 2010

May 8th Kenmore Hill - 3 of us met at the Car Park on a bright but cool windy day. We set off along the trail round the hill to the sound of Cuckoo calling from the valley below. Out of the wind the sun warmed things up a bit, but the heather and bilberry looked late and there were no butterflies flying. A Dark Tussock caterpillar was found in the heather, and then a fence post had 2 Northern Eggar caterpillars. We explored the main hillside and had lunch there, but all we found were 2 Ruby Tiger pupae. Making our way back down we saw a couple of Peacock butterflies, but that was all. Likely this is a late year at this site and we were just too early. Many thanks to Dan for leading.

July 24th Ballathie Oak Woods - Eight of us met by the Ballathie Farm Shop on a bright day, with only a light breeze. We regrouped into two cars and drove along to the oak wood. After brief introductions we walked up the track where we soon saw Ringlets, Meadow Browns, two Antler Moths, and then our first Purple Hairstreak was spotted up in a low oak tree. This was a life butterfly for most of the group, so we were soon scrambling up the opposite banking to get a better look, and the butterfly obliged by moving around only a little and showing its purple upper side. A further two were soon spotted in the same vicinity so there was plenty to watch. Continuing up the track we even found a Purple Hairstreak low down in the bracken – it looked recently emerged with one wing still a bit crumpled, but proved a popular photographic subject. Returning down the track we added Green-veined Whites and Small Tortoiseshell.

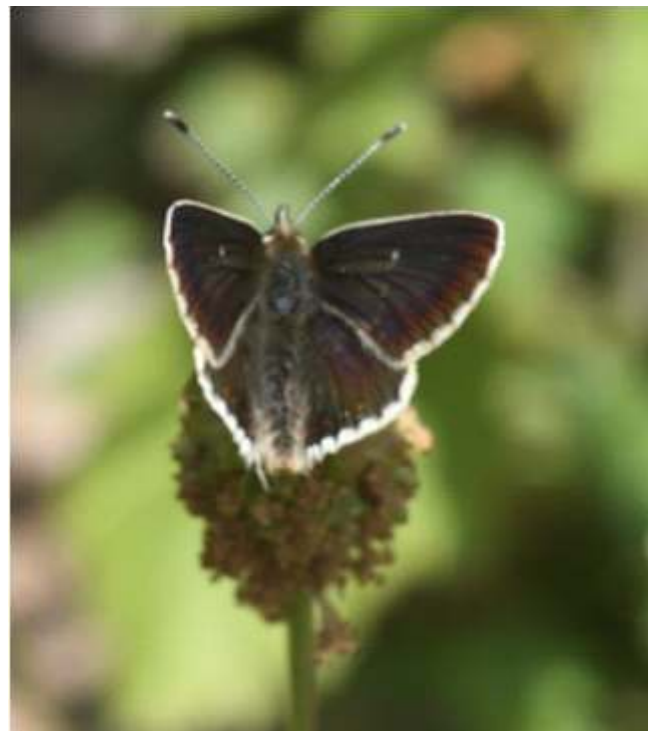
Collecting our lunches, we then drove over to Kercock beside the Tay. After eating our rations we had a walk along the river bank where we just saw more Green-veined Whites, Meadow Browns and Small Tortoiseshells. The mating Soldier Beetles were the most interesting thing there.

Later, four of us returned to the oak woods for another look and saw two Purple Hairstreaks flying around the oaks. A very successful day.

The Provisional Atlas of the UK's Larger Moths shows up-to-date distribution maps for 868 resident and immigrant macro-moth species. This is the first atlas to cover all the UK's larger moths and it includes the first distribution maps ever published for c.300 species (the Geometrids), as well as the first new maps for over 20 years for other species. As such it is a major step forward in our knowledge of moth distributions and a 'must have' for moth recorders. The maps include historical records (pre 2000) and current records (2000 onwards). The production of the atlas is a major step towards helping our declining moth fauna and analyses of the data will follow in due course. The maps illustrate under-recorded areas and will enable targeted recording and improved knowledge and conservation. The Provisional Atlas (455pp., softback) can be ordered for £20 (plus £5.00 P&P to UK addresses) by cheque to Butterfly Conservation Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Dorset BH20 5QP or via www.butterfly-conservation.org/shop.

British and Irish moths: an illustrated guide to selected difficult species (covering the use of genitalia characters and other features) aims to make available up-to-date information on the identification of difficult macro-moths, beyond what is currently available in the field guides. Written by moth experts Martin Townsend, Jon Clifton and Brian Goodey, 72 larger moth species (plus their subspecies and forms) are included. Much of the Guide is focussed on genitalia characteristics, although there are discussions of other characteristics such as wing markings. It provides the next step for those wishing to make definitive determinations of difficult moths such as ear moths, dark/grey daggers, copper underwings and the November Moth group. The Guide runs to 91 pages and contains over 130 superb colour illustrations. It is spiral bound to aid use and has protective plastic covers. Copies of the Guide are available from Butterfly Conservation (www.butterfly-conservation.org/shop or by cheque) and from specialist retailers. The recommended retail price is £20, but it is available from Butterfly Conservation at a special initial offer price of £15 (plus £2 P&P to UK addresses).

Unusual aberrations among butterflies
noted by Iain Cowe during 2010



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Grayling



Speckled Wood at Edrington