

Butterfly
Conservation
Scotland

Spring 2015

East Scotland Branch
Newsletter 22





Green Hairstreaks in cop (Oban).
Richard Buckland



Green-veined White, (Scottish Borders)
Ian Cowe

Photographic credit: Front Cover -
Scotch Argus (Eildon Hills, Melrose)
Iain Cowe

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Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary (Glassdrum)

Richard Buckland

Chairman's Notes *Barry Prater*

What a difference a year makes! Over the past twelve months our branch membership has increased by around one hundred and now stands at over 700, which is excellent news for the branch, for Scotland and for Butterfly Conservation nationally as we strive to grow the charity and its influence. It seems that, while green issues and government commitment to conservation are having reduced priority, there is still plenty of grass-roots concern and a willingness for folk to subscribe to BC even when times are hard. The annual Big Butterfly Count is reckoned to be having an outstanding role in encouraging new members and it's happening again this year over the three week period **17th July - 9th August**, so make a note to do your count and please pass the word on to friends and neighbours too. There will be an ID chart available and details of how to send in your sightings later.

It has been very satisfying that people have now stepped forward to take on the role of Butterfly Recorder for each of the five areas of the branch from the start of 2015 - Iain Cowe (Borders), Simon Metcalfe (Lothians & Falkirk), Glyn Edwards (Angus & Perthshire) and North East Scotland Biological Records Centre aka NESBREc (Aberdeenshire). So a huge 'thank you' to them and also to Duncan Davidson who has been very supportive during the transition and is also continuing to look after records for his home territory of Fife and Clacks! All these Recorders are listed elsewhere in the newsletter, together with their contact details and I'm sure they are looking forward to hearing about your sightings from now on. The branch committee has expanded in other ways too. We now have a Branch Secretary (Dot Dahl), a Young Person's Development Officer (Apthanny Bourne), an area organiser for Perthshire (Cathy Caudwell) and Paul Brooks is helping in the Angus area. Thanks to all these people as well.

Our branch website has continued to be developed over the year by Mark Cubitt and is a fabulous mine of information, especially the butterfly and moth distribution maps which are regularly updated and so track our progress with understanding where species live and how their ranges are changing with time. And it's not all bad news with a good number of species of both butterfly and moth spreading (usually north) across Scotland. Social media are continuing to grow as communication and information sources for many and not just the younger generation, so we are increasingly posting on our branch Facebook page which contains local news on sightings, details of upcoming events and links to other important developments, conservation issues and key publications. Do have a look at the content - it'll keep you in touch with day-to-day activities around the branch and further afield:

<https://www.facebook.com/EastScotlandButterflyConservation>

Once again there is a huge range of events scheduled for the coming season across all the branch areas. They are a great way to get to know new sites, new species - and new people! No previous knowledge is required, but if you're lucky there will be folk there who will share what they know and think about wildlife - just like you can. So if you haven't been to any before, make a vow to try at least one this year - you won't be disappointed even if the weather is uncooperative. Another way to get to see some of our outstanding butterflies and moths is to talk to your local area organiser, butterfly recorder or county moth recorder who should be able to point you in the right directions.

Last year saw the end of another five-year cycle of monitoring in the Butterflies for the New Millennium (BNM) project and we must now await the results to see which species are doing well and which are not. I know that many of you will have submitted records over the period and it should be pleasing to see how they have contributed to the project. With moth recording we all have our eyes fixed on the planned atlas of macromoths due for publication in 2018 (which coincides with BC's 50th anniversary) and the focus is on maximising the value of recording over the coming two seasons (2015 and 2016) which will give the final records to be included in the atlas. I would urge all moth recorders and anyone interested in helping with this exciting and fascinating work to talk to your Vice County Moth Recorder (details elsewhere) who will be able to advise on where recording will be of most benefit. There is very active habitat improvement work going on across a number of the lowland raised bogs in the Central Belt, from Ayr to Fife as part of the "Bog Squad" project. The aim

is to re-wet these bogs for the benefit of a whole range of wildlife with one of our main interests being to help the Large Heath butterfly. Regular work parties are arranged and these are both good fun and successful - so give one a try - you'll be doing *real* conservation work!

Finally, our finances remain healthy (see details elsewhere) and the committee is very open to suggestions for expenditure, particularly when this is aimed at conservation.

Many thanks to all who have contributed to branch activities over the past year. Enjoy 2015!

Lothian field trips, 2014 *Richard Buckland*

The first outing of the year was to East Barns on the extension to the John Muir Way past Dunbar to see the Northern Brown Argus colony on Dunbar Golf Course in an effort to coincide with the celebrations marking the centenary of the death of this famous conservationist. Along the way, I was confident of seeing lots of Wall Browns, as I had seen lots when I had done this walk the previous year. Five of us met at Skateraw Harbour, in the shadow of Torness power station. Rather surprisingly we saw precious few Wall Browns, but fortunately the Northern Brown Argus showed up for us and we saw 4-6 without much trouble, despite the weather turning slightly cool and overcast by the time we got to Dunbar. The next outing was to Easter Inch Moss, where I had tried twice before to lead field trips to see the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries. The sun was just threatening to emerge and it was reasonably warm, so we thought we might get lucky if the sun came out at any point. As it turned out it never did but it rather worked in our favour, as the first adult SPBF we came across was reluctant to fly, even when prodded, which meant we were all able to get good photos. In the end we had a very nice walk and ended up seeing at least half a dozen adults flying around rather listlessly.

Our final trip was to Gore Glen to see the Small Skipper colony there. This time we struck lucky with the weather, which was rather a contrast with the previous year when the rain was pouring down. Our leader and skipper discoverer, Chris Sydes took us to what turned out to be a post-industrial site, where a carpet factory had once stood. As such it was not suitable for farming and so had been left untouched for years. This meant that it is now covered with rank grasses, wild flowers and no pesticides. Somehow the Small Skippers had found it, from where? - This just goes to show that there are probably a lot more butterflies out there than you imagine! In the event, we ended up counting almost a hundred. So it is obviously a thriving colony.



Small Skipper at Gorebridge *Richard Buckland*

The Garden Moth Scheme 2014. Heather Young

The Garden Moth Scheme (GMS) runs from the beginning of March to early November, with people recording the numbers of around 300 species of the more common moths in their gardens once a week throughout this period. Further information on the findings of the GMS for the whole of the UK and Ireland, both current and historical, is available in the form of annual reports and quarterly newsletters, which can be found in the Downloads section of the web-site: <http://www.gardenmoths.org.uk>

The Garden Moth Scheme (GMS) welcomes participants from all parts of the United Kingdom and Ireland, and in 2014 received 354 completed recording forms, a slight decrease on 2013. Recorder numbers were stable in Scotland, with 22 complete sets of results returned, including two new participants. GMS members across Scotland counted 20,975 individual moths of 232 species at an average of 948.6 per garden, a decrease of 19.6% on 2013 (1180.1), and 17.8% down on the 4-year average of 1153.9 for 2010-13. Large Yellow Underwing was once again the commonest moth overall, with numbers down 15.6% on last year, but still 15.8% above the average for the previous 4 years. Its relatives the Lesser and Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwings do not seem to be doing as well, with numbers well below average.

The Scottish top 20 are shown below, with the ranking for the previous 4-year period shown in brackets, the percentage change in average numbers per garden across Scotland year on year (2013-14), and the percentage difference between 2014 numbers and the average per garden for 2010-13.

Rank 2014 (2010-13)	Species	Average per garden	Percentage change 2013-14	Percentage difference to 4-year average (2010-13)
1 (1)	Large Yellow Underwing	170.6	-15.6	+15.8
2 (6)	Bird-cherry Ermine	61.4	+192.2	+50.5
3 (2)	Dark Arches	55.2	+21.8	-28.0
4 (3)	Hebrew Character	37.4	+57.6	-28.4
5 (4)	Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing	34.9	-49.2	-32.5
6 (7)	Common Rustic aggregate	30.9	-1.8	-22.0
7 (8)	Common Quaker	25.6	+62.4	-30.3
8 (10)	Dotted Clay	19.4	-49.9	-35.7
9 (9)	Lesser Yellow Underwing	16.9	-54.4	-47.4
10 (19)	Double Square-spot	16.6	-5.8	+41.6
11 (22)	Heart & Dart	14.6	+103.4	+41.3
12 (16)	Beautiful Golden Y	14.4	-25.0	+2.6
13 (24)	Silver-ground Carpet	12.1	+1.1	+26.4
14 (29)	Clouded-bordered Brindle	11.1	+6.7	+34.8
15 (33)	Brimstone Moth	10.9	+28.8	+62.4
16 (12)	Rosy Rustic	10.8	-58.7	-40.0

17 (17)	<i>Agriphila tristella</i>	10.3	-11.1	-23.4
18 (46)	Riband Wave	10.3	+40.6	+99.4
19 (37)	Garden Carpet	10.0	+24.3	+58.5
20 (21)	Common Marbled Carpet	9.5	-24.4	-10.7

Overall, 95 species were present in greater numbers in 2014 than their average per garden over the previous 4 years, with 155 species 'in arrears'. 16 moths on the list of target species have not been seen in any of our GMS gardens at all over the last five years, and 2 were recorded for the first time this year – Common Emerald and Dingy Footman. 20 species that had been recorded at some point over the previous 4 years did not make an appearance in 2014. The one species ranked in the top ten over the 2010-13 period that did not make the Scottish top ten in 2014 is True Lover's Knot, but that is a reflection of a change in geographical composition of the participating gardens rather than a crash in numbers - figures for some locally abundant species can be a little misleading.

Looking at the three Butterfly Conservation regions in Scotland, it seems those in the Glasgow & South-west branch area had a much better year than the others, but with small numbers of gardens involved, particularly in the Highland region, figures can sometimes be misleading. The table below shows the change in the average number of moths per garden from 2013-14 using figures from all participating members, and also the change year on year for those gardens returning records for both years. It still reflects a poor season for those in the East branch area!

	Average per garden 2013 all gardens (n=23)	Average per garden 2014 all gardens (n=22)	Percentage change all gardens	Percentage change gardens common to both years (n=19)
Scotland	1180.1	948.6	-19.6	-2.2
G&SW	912.3	1092.4	+19.7	+2.5
East	1195.6	836.3	-30.1	-10.3
Highland	1926.3	1062.3	-44.9	+37.8

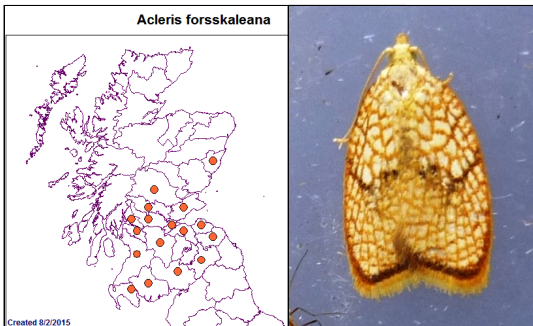
The top 10 for the East Scotland branch region is shown below, along with their 2014 rank in Scotland, average numbers per garden, and rather than the percentage change year on year, I have shown the percentage difference between the average number per garden in East Scotland and the overall Scotland average per garden for 2010-13.

Rank East Scotland 2014	Rank Scotland 2014	Species	Average per garden (East) 2014	Percentage difference to Scotland 4-year average (2010-13)
1	1	Large Yellow Underwing	155.5	+5.6
2	4	Hebrew Character	46.2	-11.7
3	3	Dark Arches	43.1	-43.8
4	2	Bird-cherry Ermine	31.6	-22.6

5	5	Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing	30.7	-40.7
6	7	Common Quaker	27.8	-24.6
7	9	Lesser Yellow Underwing	22.0	-31.5
8	8	Dotted Clay	17.2	-43.0
9	10	Double Square-spot	17.1	+44.8
10	6	Common Rustic aggregate	16.5	-58.3

During the 'off season' we have conducted a review of the GMS species lists, taking into account the non-GMS species recorded in reasonable numbers in each region, and expanding the 'core species' list (those species recorded in every region across the UK & Ireland). This has resulted in the addition of a further 35 species (or aggregates in the case of the Uncertain and Rustic), some of which we are very unlikely to see in Scotland, but the 'zero' count is still of value to the scheme and the new core list of around 230 species will provide a solid foundation for future research.

To compensate, we have also added several species to the Scottish list (taking it to just over 300 species) that were seen in good numbers in our gardens last year, including several micros (all relatively easy to identify) such as the pretty little tortrix, *Acleris forsskaleana*. This moth was quite numerous in gardens across the central belt in 2014, but does not yet occur in the highlands, so it will be interesting to see if it is a species 'on the move'. The larvae feed on Field Maple and Sycamore, and the adult measures 6-8 mm and has a distinctive net-like wing pattern with a dark cross-line, and sometimes a dark dorsal blotch. The present distribution, as portrayed on the micro-moth distribution maps on the East Scotland branch website (http://eastscotland-butterflies.org.uk/sm_Tortricidae.html#49.062) is shown below, along with one of my own garden visitors.



The new GMS 2015 season begins on Friday 6th March, and new participants can begin trapping any time up to Monday 30th March to stay within the protocol for taking part (at least 27/36 weeks, with no gaps of more than 3 weeks in a row).

The role of coordinator for Scotland for 2015 has been taken over by Audrey Turner, so please contact Audrey on unicorn64@btinternet.com for further information if you would like to take part. We have a Yahoo group, Facebook Group & Facebook Page as well as an annual conference and quarterly newsletters (let Audrey know if you would like to be added to the mailing list, even if you don't want to take part in the scheme). The vast majority of our members also send their records to the Butterfly Conservation county moth recorders (something we actively encourage); everyone is welcome from beginner to seasoned expert, and help is always available.

Heather Young, GMS coordinator. e-mail: heather.young@tiscali.co.uk

The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey will be in its eighth year in its full form this coming summer. It's purpose is to assess how many butterflies are actually out there in the wider countryside and is particularly aimed at the commoner species as, with greater numbers, it is possible to do good statistics on them and is therefore easier to work out population trends. So being able to identify all the rare species of butterfly is not important to take part in the survey.

It was launched in conjunction with the BTO and uses the methodology they developed for their Breeding Bird Survey. In fact many of the BTO surveyors do the butterflies on their squares as well as the birds, to give better coverage. Each BC branch was initially allocated 20 1km squares at random within the branch boundaries and were gradually given more as they matched surveyors to squares.

With the improvement in the weather in 2013 (two summers ago), branch members managed to survey thirty-two 1K squares. A handful of squares were also surveyed by BTO members. This was a wonderful effort and the branch got an honourable mention in the write-up of that year's results by the national project organiser. Zoe Randle wrote that with 32 squares, East Scotland was sixth in the UK for coverage by BC members, regardless of the squares surveyed by BTO volunteers. I for one believe this gives the branch good cause to be proud and I give our surveyors hearty thanks.

One of the more unexpected results of the survey in 2013 was the discovery of a new Large Heath colony. Will Telfer, one of our Aberdeenshire surveyors, took over a square on a grouse moor, which the previous surveyors had given up for not having enough butterflies. In the great summer weather the butterflies were able to get on the wing in good numbers, allowing Will to record them.

This effort was happily repeated in 2014, with branch surveyors covering 25 WCBS squares. With the squares covered by BTO members the total was 34 - the seventh highest in the UK. So I think we can rest assured that we are participating to the full.

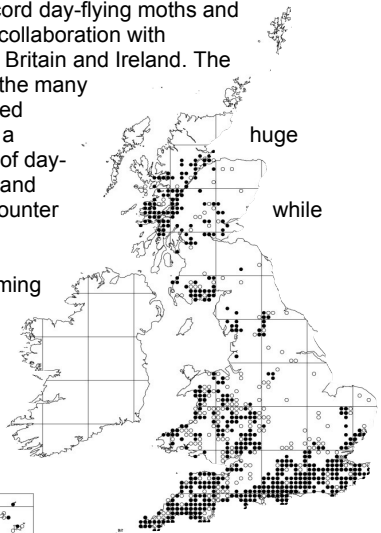
As always, in such programmes, it is not always possible for members to commit for long periods. Squares are therefore constantly becoming available for surveying as people drop out. The branch committee want our great commitment to this survey to continue, and so if you would like to take part, then please do contact me. My contact details are on the inside back page. It just entails doing two 1km transects in the square twice a year, once in July and once in August. You would be contributing to a very worthwhile conservation initiative.

Day-flying moth and caterpillar recording for the forthcoming Moth Atlas.

Mark Parsons and Zoe Randle

Butterfly Conservation would love butterfly recorders to record day-flying moths and moth caterpillars when they are out and about. In 2018, in collaboration with MothsIreland, we will be publishing a Macro-moth Atlas for Britain and Ireland. The majority of moth recorders use light-traps and, as a result, the many species of day-flying moths may be relatively under-recorded compared to nocturnal ones. Butterfly recorders can make a contribution to the forthcoming atlas by submitting records of day-flying moths such as Speckled Yellow (figure 1 and photo) and indeed distinctive caterpillars (e.g. Cinnabar) that they encounter out looking at butterflies.

The National Moth Recording Scheme run by Butterfly Conservation will provide the UK moth data for the forthcoming atlas. The scheme already holds over 17.3 million moth records and geographical coverage of the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man at 10km resolution is very good (97% have at least one moth species recorded). There are only 113 10km squares for which we do not have any



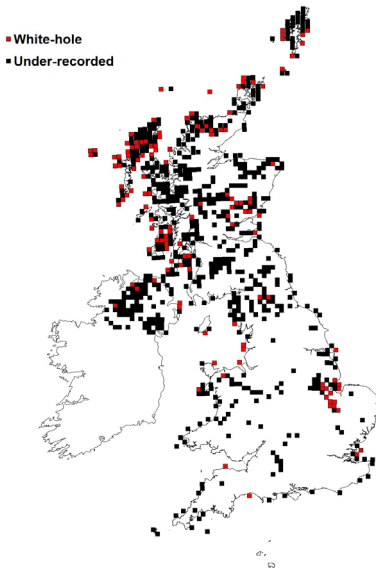
records from the year 2000 onwards (see figure 2). However, in addition to these, there are 613 10km squares which we consider to be under-recorded - they possess 50 or fewer records of 25 or fewer species. You could really help by targeting these unrecorded or under-recorded squares for moths sightings during your butterfly recording. To find out what 10km squares, or tetrads, are under-recorded in your area or if you wish to venture further a-field, please contact the relevant County Moth Recorder, a list can be found the Moths Count



website (www.mothscount.org).

Many butterfly recorders already record the moths they see along their transects. In 2013, the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme (BMS) team extracted moth records entered into Transect Walker software. The data extraction exercise revealed data for 109,485 individuals of 123 moth species, with 13,622 records from 403 sites. The five most frequently recorded species (in descending rank order) were Silver Y, Six-spot Burnet, Cinnabar, Burnet Companion and Speckled Yellow. These records will be re-patriated to County Moth Recorders in due course.

Participants in the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey are also encouraged to record day-flying moths in their squares. In 2014 a record of Blood-vein in Gloucestershire was only the second for SP10 and the first since 1974.



In the run up to the forthcoming *Macro-moth Atlas for Britain and Ireland* all butterfly recorders can help boost coverage by recording moths, whether on butterfly/WCBS transects, during 'casual' butterfly recording or by specifically targeting areas that are under-recorded for moths. Your help will be very gratefully received. Records are best submitted to your local County Moth recorder on an annual basis by the end of the year to enable incorporation into local datasets and ultimately the National Moth Recording Scheme.

Small Blue Survey in Berwickshire and North Northumberland, 2014.

Iain Cowe.

The Small Blue Survey that is concentrated on the Berwickshire coastal strip and North Eastern Coast of Northumberland entered its 3rd season in 2014. You never quite know what you are going to get from one season to the next with most species, and that has been particularly magnified with Small Blue since the rediscovery of the species back in 2007. The butterflies emerged on the 13th of May, or some time a few days before I arrived on the 2 sites at Catcairn and North Burnmouth, Kings Gardens. This date is fairly typical for the species and numbers built slowly till the end of May on both sites.



Once again Small Blue eggs were found to the south of Catcairn, strung out along the coastal path and railway line dividing wall. Any Kidney Vetch is utilised, no matter how isolated, in fact, the more isolated the better seems to be the way with this butterfly. The Kidney Vetches pioneering nature seems to drive the apparent pioneering nature of the butterfly. Wherever the plant finds new ground the butterfly duly follows, it always surprises me, when it really should not. More than a few very momentous breakthroughs occurred this past season. The first minor breakthrough occurred on the 21st of May when it was brought to my attention by a local resident that a Small Blue was flying around the scree slopes above Burnmouth harbour at Partanhall. I made my way to Burnmouth, and after a short wait, a Small Blue male alighted a few feet away. This site has minimal Kidney Vetch, yet, as the days passed, single Small Blues were seen on the site suggesting perhaps a few more were

present. I was quite happy with that sighting, quite satisfied that was the discovery of 2014. On the 8th of June while looking for Northern Brown Argus at Blaikie Heugh, a high cliff shelf around 800 meters north of the known site at Kings Gardens, I spotted a Small Blue skipping around the grasses. I was very surprised indeed. Not just the one Small Blue, in all I counted 12.

How extraordinary! The Blaikie Heugh site is very suitable for the species, and has been for a long while. I may well have missed seeing them here in 2013 or perhaps even as far back as 2012. More shocks to come, as the next day while on a routine search at a small quarry site 5 miles inland from the coastal colonies I stumbled upon 2 adult Small Blues at a site I have known for a long while. This sighting was quite alarming following on from the discovery of a dozen adults at a new site just the day before. More questions than answers. The theory of how these Small Blue have managed to get to this seemingly isolated site so far from the coast still rumbles on. There have been sightings of Northern Brown Argus at this quarry site in the past, arguably, the Northern Brown Argus sightings were even more mysterious as the food plant Rockrose, does not exist on the site.

Kidney Vetch, however, is reasonably established here and in theory there would be no reason to doubt the butterfly surviving at the quarry in numbers. The Small Blue has been known to establish itself at distances of miles in observations from similar surveys, despite

their documented sedentary behaviour. I returned to the site in July to look for eggs or larvae and found after a long search 1 hatched egg proving breeding. It will be very interesting to see next season if this small nucleus colony persists.



Meanwhile at the coast, more discoveries were made at Blaikie Heugh site with many more adults being observed. 21 on the 11th of June, 30 on the 16th of June. These were quite astounding numbers for a small site. On the 16th of June there were many more than the 30 recorded. Also on the 16th of June a single adult was observed 800 meters further north on the coastal path from Blaikie Heugh. How this butterfly managed another 800 meter jump was quite astounding. Only a few windswept Kidney Vetch could be found strewn along the top of the cliff around Daring, a headland that lies only a short distance from Eyemouth. On every single flowerhead an egg had been deposited. I was, and still am in awe. The Small Blue has proved to be a very capable species and not the shy and retiring little critter I

Small Blue larvae feeding on Kidney Vetch flowerhead *Iain Cowe*

had once believed it to be. As the days passed into July I found the larvae of the Daring clan in numbers clinging to the last remaining Kidney Vetch seed heads in defiance. I have no doubt at all that next season the Small Blue will surprise me even more. So it's all good news.

Any help with surveying sites on the Berwickshire or North Northumberland coast from the border to Bamburgh is always much appreciated and most welcome. There are details on how you can get in touch with me or how to look for the butterfly and likely sites here <http://www.eastscotland-butterflies.org.uk/publications.html> The publications from 2012, 2013 and 2014 hold a wealth of current information that I hope can be useful to anyone wanting to give recording a go.

Borders Report 2014 *Barry Prater*

I have to start with talking about some of the amazing finds there were of both butterflies and moths across the four Borders counties during the last year.

Large Skipper - gradually extending its range and now has crossed into East Lothian (Ron McBeath).

Orange-tip - a most unusual record of what was presumably a second-brood male butterfly seen on 15 August at Clovenfords (Patricia Wyllie). Flight charts in the Millennium Atlas do show a sprinkling of such records up and down the country.

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary - located in three more 10km squares, two of which are in Berwickshire - one near the coast and away from all previous sightings (Ewan Munro, John Howard, Roger Manning). One could speculate that this species is in-filling SE Scotland perhaps as historically it has been almost absent from the area and is now found in 16 10km squares.

Green Hairstreak - at last we have some records from Berwickshire, initially with reports from Dun Law by Soutra and then some way to the SE at Peat Law (Ewan Munro, David Thompkins and Nick Morgan). From being found in just three Borders 10km squares during 2000-2004 it has been discovered in a further 14 squares in the decade 2005-2014. A good count of 12 flying at Din Moss (Malcolm Lindsay).

Small Blue - found at an astonishing 4 new sites (3 coastal, 1 inland) during May and June so there are possibly up to 6 colonies now (see Iain Cowe's article).

With moths I have to be even more selective:

Bedstraw Hawk-moth - following confirmed breeding in Berwickshire in 2012, another adult was found, unfortunately seriously injured, at Burnmouth in July (Fran Evans).

Smoky Wave - 1 trapped at Newcastleton in July was probably the first validated Borders record (Philip Hutton).

Beech-green Carpet - not seen in the Borders since 1978, this species was found at two sites in Peeblesshire on July and August dates (Teyl de Bordes, Reuben Singleton, John Woolliams).

Scallop Shell - spotted during the day in June at Gordon Moss in the same location where the only previous Borders record came from back in 1955! (Malcolm Lindsay).

Oak-tree Pug - a second record for the Borders from a new site at Lamberton in early May (Iain Cowe); this moth appears to have spread into many coastal districts of southern Scotland in recent years.

Pimpinel Pug - recorded twice at the coast between Eyemouth and St Abbs in July; the first validated Scottish records, although there is reference to sightings in the nineteenth century which cannot now be checked (Barry Prater, Jack Ibbotson).

Thyme Pug - the number of known Borders sites for this moth has doubled from two to four with findings in Peeblesshire in June 2014 (Reuben Singleton, John Woolliams, Teyl de Bordes). This is a rare and mainly western species.



Clouded Magpie - the fourth Borders record came from Newcastleton in June (Philip Hutton).

Oak Beauty - this much sought-after species came to light in Innerleithen in April (Richard Bramhall). A first for Peeblesshire and only the second site found in the Borders since 1977.

Thyme Pug, *Reuben Singleton*

Northern Dart - moth-trappers were amazed when 65 of these moths came to light at a site in the Tweedsmuir Hills in July (Malcolm Lindsay & Teyl de Bordes). Never seen before in the Borders and with no recent records from south of the highlands, this was a remarkable find.



Northern Dart, *Teyl de Bordes*

There was a good spread of outdoor events from May to September, but with the usual mixed level of success. As part of the annual *Borders Nature Festival*, Teyl de Bordes contributed to a 'bat and moth evening' at Wilton Park, Hawick on 30 May; once again the floodlights there precluded any moth-trapping but moths brought in from elsewhere were very well received. On the other side of the Borders Iain Cowe, Barry & Barbara Prater ran a butterfly walk coupled with moth-trap opening and afternoon children's activities which drew in a fantastic 45 people to Paxton House, including lots of youngsters, and everyone had a great time. Getting up close with Poplar Hawk-moths and others is always successful and memorable for folk; so much so that a similar event is now planned for 2015 at a venue in Northumberland.



A large group (28) greatly enjoyed a Scottish Wildlife Trust walk led by Malcolm Lindsay up the Glenkinnon Burn into Williamhope SSSI on 28 June with a car shuttle allowing less mobile members to reach the highpoint where Northern Brown Argus butterflies and Fragrant Orchid were seen. Green Tiger beetle, Dark Green Fritillary and Meadow Brown butterflies, Quaking Grass, Fairy Flax, Lemon-scented fern, the anthills of Yellow Ants, Common Redstart, Garden Warbler and a beautifully camouflaged Buff-tip moth were

With the public at Paxton House, *Barry Prater*

some of the other highlights of a fine day which also included a recitation of Sir Walter Scott verses at Shirras's Knowe, from where the poet is said to have composed much of "*Marmion*".

We had 10 people turn out for a mixed butterfly and moth look round Gordon Community Woodland on 19 July, with Iain Cowe taking the lead on butterflies, Barry Prater showing off last night's moths and with the help and support of the Community Woodland Group. Rather drizzly conditions kept the butterflies at bay for a little, but we ended up finding six species including an estimated 50 each of Ringlet and Small Skipper - the latter now having a really good hold in this part of the branch. Moths wowed the audience and included the stunning Large Emerald, Welsh Wave, Garden Tiger and Coxcomb Prominent amongst a total of 24 species. This site is increasingly revealing more wildlife secrets.

The next field trip was to the Megget Valley, so that Teyl de Bordes could show how to find caterpillars of the little-seen priority species the Small Chocolate-tip moth. Well, it rained! Fortunately caterpillars which live in these hills aren't that bothered so the four hardy souls who turned out in such conditions were rewarded by actually seeing some of the little beasts and are now armed with the skills to do their own searches - hopefully.

Eventually, the weather did win and that was on Sarah Eno's walk in the Tima Valley to seek out the Scotch Argus on 16 August when conditions were full cloud, high winds and drizzle, so well done to those who made it there; the event had already been delayed by a week because a cycling tour of the Borders required roads in the area to be closed. No butterflies were seen.

Then the focus turned back to moths - usually much more reliable. Firstly there was a family moth evening run by Barry Prater and Michael Scott at Harestanes Country Visitor Centre on the evening of 13 September when a nice little group of parents and children really enjoyed the setting and the excitement of seeing some moths first hand. And who wouldn't be stunned by the beautiful Orange Sallow? A week later on 19 September we combined forces with the Ron McBeath of SWT and went to The Hirsell for the evening. Surprisingly, only half a dozen folk came along which was disappointing as the event was well publicised and local SWT members are usually keen to see some moths and the weather was kind too. Once again, however, those who did make it were rewarded with seeing some nice moths, including another Orange Sallow and the rather scarce Brindled Green, which has only been recorded at four other sites in the Borders since 1979.



Orange Sallow, *Barry Prater*



Brindled Green, *Teyl de Bordes*

We're collaborating with the RSPB in their 'Berwickshire Arable Wildlife Project' which aims to determine, through annual surveys, whether funded agri-environment schemes are beneficial to wildlife on arable farming land in this area. While the emphasis is on the usual suite of farmland birds (Tree Sparrow, Yellowhammer, Grey Partridge, etc) there is also the opportunity to look at butterflies in this under-recorded habitat. The project involved just one farm in 2013, a further three in 2014 and four are scheduled for surveys in 2015. So far the results have revealed how the Small and Large Skippers successfully utilise wide, grassy field margins for breeding and connectivity, new sites have been found for the Wall and Speckled Wood and even some Chamomile Shark caterpillars were spotted on one farm.

Your lasting legacy, *Head Office staff*

Have you ever considered leaving a gift to Butterfly Conservation in your Will? An increasing number of members and friends are choosing to support Butterfly Conservation in this way. All gifts, however small, are welcome and make a crucial and lasting contribution to the conservation of butterflies and moths. Accounting for over one third of voluntary income, legacy gifts make a real difference to the work we can undertake.

So as well as leaving gifts to loved ones in your Will, please consider leaving a gift to Butterfly Conservation, it will help ensure butterflies and moths thrive in the years to come.

For more information about leaving a gift to Butterfly Conservation and sharing your love of butterflies and moths with future generations please contact Helen Corrigan on 01273 453313 or hcorrigan@butterfly-conservation.org or write to her at Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5QP

Thank you for your support.

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 2014, many in partnership with other organisations.

Public moth nights/mornings and butterfly walks were held at nature reserves and other local countryside sites across Aberdeenshire, some contributing to community festivals. We were also invited to have BC stands at large events in Aberdeen and Haddo Country Park. Many activities were organised by myself with support from other recorders/members in the area or colleagues from Aberdeen City Council and Balmoral Estate Ranger Services plus SNH, Cairngorms National Park Authority, NTS and RSPB. Through such events people of all ages have discovered the diversity of species on their doorstep and learned about their importance in ecosystems and need for conservation.

A big thank you goes out to everyone who helped make these events a success and to all those who have participated in butterfly and moth recording in the area!

In addition to events and surveys, there have been requests for butterfly and moth talks or opportunities to share moth trapping with community groups from a care home for the elderly to nursery, primary and secondary schools, which have all provided further opportunities to promote the work of Butterfly Conservation. If you live in NE Scotland and would like to be more involved in local branch activities this year please contact me - Helen Rowe: helen.rowe@aberdeenshire.gov.uk or 07787583976.

2014 Highlights included the following:

4 moth events for Cairngorms Junior Rangers (pupils from Aboyne and Alford Academies) and 2 for the general public were held at Muir of Dinnet NNR between April and September. The reserve holds a good range of species including a few seen this year that hadn't been recorded recently. The participants (even some people who may have had a fear of moths previously!) were amazed by the variety of colours, patterns, shapes and sizes that moths exhibit. At one event in spring, a female Fox Moth had laid eggs in the trap and these hatched to temporarily become 'free pets' to be shown off at other events before being returned to the wild in late summer as fully-grown caterpillars ready for overwintering.

An Easter event for children and summer Environment Day at Duthie Park, Aberdeen – a few hundred folk attended each event and our stand was very popular, including butterfly craft activities at the Easter event and the moth trap (and its contents!) at the summer one, which also coincided with the Big Butterfly Count, so lots of BBC ID sheets were handed out.



Pearl-bordered Fritillary timed counts were continued at some Deeside sites to complement transects being carried out in a couple of Forestry Commission woodlands and the Crannach RSPB reserve. Numbers were generally up on last year's poor season, though the species was still worryingly apparently absent at one site.

Other butterfly news in the NE included the spread of the Speckled Wood, partly as a result of the postcard survey launched in 2013 and continuing colonisation of the Comma. In particular, a cluster of Comma records came from upper Deeside, with spring and late summer sightings from the same sites showing they are surely breeding here – we await the first caterpillar report to confirm it!

Pearl-bordered fritillaries mating *Helen Rowe*

On-going monitoring on Deeside of the nationally very rare Dark Bordered Beauty moth showed the species to be present at all known sites, although not seen in particularly high numbers (but there are lots of variables that can affect counts). At the 'new' location where an individual was found by chance last year, more were trapped at light, including a female to confirm they are breeding there, though some nearby aspen suckers (larval food-plant) had been browsed by sheep. Another site previously been damaged by grazing has recovered well, though new suckers have yet to appear in a neighbouring area where volunteers cut encroaching scrub last year.



Dark Bordered Beauty female and male resp. *Helen Rowe*

On a visit to see the Broad-bordered White Underwing (B-BWU), some visiting moth recorders also turned up its relative, a Small Dark Yellow Underwing (SDYU) just within Aberdeenshire at the Lecht (new 10km square), which was encouraging for this threatened species. Some other known sites around Glen Gairn were searched this year without success, but there was consolation in finding a few B-BWU in a new 10km square as well as numerous Netted Mountain Moths, who share Bearberry as their sole larval food-plant with the SDYU.

Is your MSP a Species Champion?

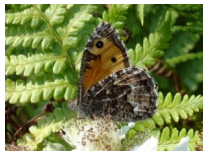
Barry Prater

In 2013 Scottish Environment LINK, the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment and conservation organisations, in which Butterfly Conservation plays a very active role, launched an initiative inviting MSPs to become a 'Species Champion' for a wide range of species from all groups of wildlife across the country. So far around 75 MSPs have signed up for this - nearly 60% of the total, which is remarkable. BC has been very successful in recruiting MSPs to this role for Lepidoptera and the situation now in February 2015 is:

Species	Species Champion
Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	Clare Adamson (Central Scotland)
Forester Moth	Claudia Beamish (South Scotland)
Chequered Skipper	Chic Brodie (South Scotland)
Common Blue	Cameron Buchanan (Lothian)
Large Heath	Aileen Campbell (Clydesdale)
Pearl Bordered Fritillary	Kenneth Gibson (Cunninghame North)
Northern Brown Argus	John Lamont (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire)
Garden Tiger	Margaret McCulloch (Central Scotland)
Kentish Glory	Mark McDonald (Aberdeen Donside)
Marsh Fritillary	Jamie McGrigor (Highlands and Islands)
Dark Bordered Beauty	Nannette Milne (North East Scotland)
Grayling	John Scott (Ayr)
Small Blue	Richard Simpson (Mid Scotland and Fife)
Slender Scotch Burnet	Liz Smith (Mid Scotland and Fife)

Apart from the Marsh Fritillary, either the species or the MSP comes from the East Scotland branch area and most of the species are currently in decline and/or exposed to some sort of threat(s). It is hoped that by engaging with MSPs in this way they will be more aware of conservation issues when they are raised and also be supportive of measures to help the survival of our wildlife.

The MSPs involved are given basic information on their species together with updates from time to time so should have a reasonable feel for why they are important and how they are faring. However, if your MSP is on the list and you have an opportunity to talk to him or her, that will serve to reinforce how valuable we think their support is. It must be a rare situation anywhere to have parliamentary representatives with knowledge of and an interest in these creatures so we should capitalise on this!



Grayling



Slender Scotch Burnet

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Green Hairstreak at Avenel Hill, Galashiels *Iain Cowe*



Orange-tip at Lamberton, Berwickshire coast *Iain Cowe*