

Butterfly  
Conservation  
Scotland

# East Scotland Branch Newsletter 15

## Spring 2007





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## Contents

Branch Report 2007 by Richard Buckland	3
Garden Butterfly Survey 2006	4
My Butterfly Year 2006 by Jeff Waddell	6
News From North East Scotland Sub-branch 2006 by Helen Rowe	8
Butterflies And Bikes by Catherine Fowler	9
Trapping the Lunar Yellow Underwing by Duncan Davidson	10
Garden For Life - Garden For Change by Shona Grieg	11
Awash With Butterflies - Tentsmuir Transect 2006 by Gillian Fyfe	12
national Moth Night 2006 in Edinburgh by Duncan Davidson	13
Reports On The 2006 Field Trips by Dan Baker and Richard Buckland	15
Events - East Scotland Branch Field Trips 2007	17
Events - North East Scotland Field Trips 2007	17
East Scotland Branch Committee	19

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## Branch Report 2007

by *Richard Buckland*

This last year has been very mixed. While it was a good year for butterflies, it was less good as far as branch personnel were concerned. So, first, the good news. I got the impression when out and about last summer, that it was a good year for both Common Blue and Small Copper. As these are species which had seemed to be in decline over recent years, this was very welcome. We also turned up some rare and very unexpected species. In Edinburgh there was what can only be described as an outbreak of Holly Blues. In fact dozens were recorded in Loanhead just out of town, and there were several reports of individual specimens seen in town. As the nearest colonies of this species are as far away as the Northumberland coast near Lindesfarne, this was little short of incredible. Another species that is virtually unknown in the east of Scotland also turned up. This time near Dunbar, east Lothian. This was the Wall Brown. Since then we have also had sightings in gardens near Duns and Galashiels, which neatly fill in the gap between Dunbar and its most northerly sites in England.

I was involved in one of my most successful field rips ever, last year. This was the trip to Carnoustie to see Small Blue. The weather was kind, with a hazy sun trying to poke through the misty clouds, and the walking was easy as we strolled along the coastal path. The butterflies were out in good numbers and we must have seen over two dozen flying on both sides of the path. It is rare for field trips to turn out so well and with such little effort on behalf of the members. This was a great start for our Small Blue Group, which I had assembled to monitor the species in Angus, as the species seemed to have been forgotten.

As far as the committee members go, Neil Mackenzie is still valiantly doing the treasurers job. I cannot believe that there isn't someone out here who has just retired from a job in finance in Edinburgh or Perth, who would be able to take over this job with ease. I myself am not sure what I'll be doing work-wise in the future, as I am taking early retirement from my current job, but am looking to continue working in some capacity or other. So if someone out there fancies the chance of organising a branch of BC, then now is your chance.

Plus, we still haven't replaced Nikki Small as newsletter editor. I have now found companies who can do the design and printing of the newsletter for fairly reasonable sums, so a new editor would just need to collate the material, and maybe commission some articles and 'encourage' people to contribute. So now that a good formula for designing and printing the newsletter has been worked out, the editor's job should not be too onerous.

Other positions have worked out very well. Duncan Davidson has taken to the Recorder's job like a duck to water, and Helen Rowe is getting through an amazing amount of work by combining her duties as a Ranger with the job as secretary of the Aberdeen sub-group. Once again this year she has a full programme of outings and field trips organised in conjunction with the Aberdeen Ranger Service. These are



detailed on the Events pages and Helen's contact details are on the inside back page. In this regard, Dan Baker is also doing sterling work, by combining his tie-up with the Perthshire branch of SWT with his job as secretary of the Perthshire sub-group. He also has an interesting series of events organised for this coming summer, which are detailed on the events page.

Our membership continues to grow apace. Last year we had 49 new members, which means that we are one of the fastest-growing branches in the UK. Highland branch was the fastest, so it would seem to be a Scottish thing (perhaps we just have a lot of ground to catch up) but at least we are expanding at a great pace

And with that I will just wish you a very sunny summer 2007, and please don't forget to send in those records!



## **Garden Butterfly Survey 2006**

The results of this year's survey were substantially the same as last year, despite the recording procedure changing slightly. I take this to show that it is best to wait for a nice sunny day, rather than just counting everything. But I still have people complaining that they are sometimes missing a lot of butterflies by counting too soon in the week missing a subsequent, better day. Some people are such perfectionists!

As to the specifics, Peacock was still way and above our most common butterfly. Of the other common species, numbers of Small Tortoiseshells were down last year, which meant that they slipped to seventh in the table. Orange-tip was again quite common, as were Small Coppers, which reflects the fact that they had a good year last year.

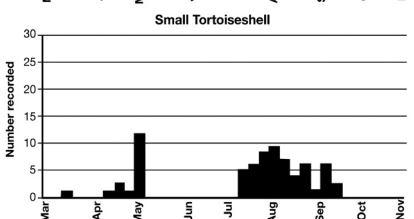
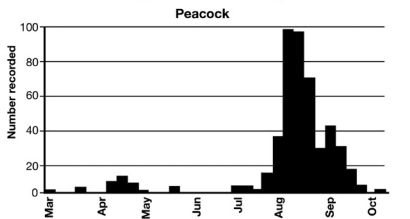
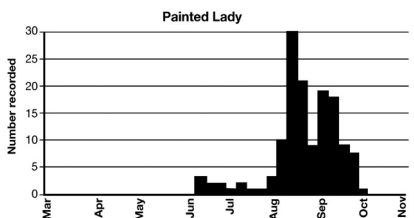
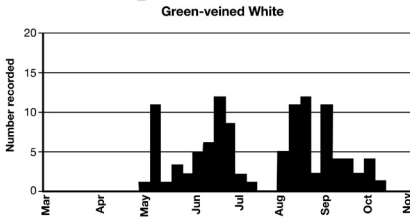
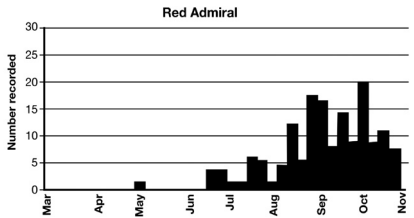
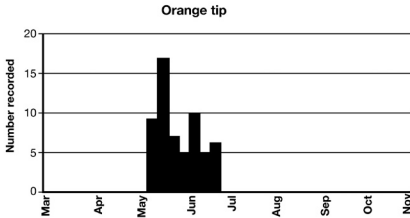
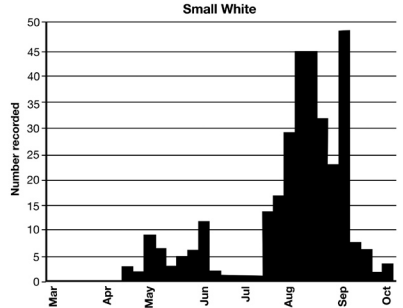
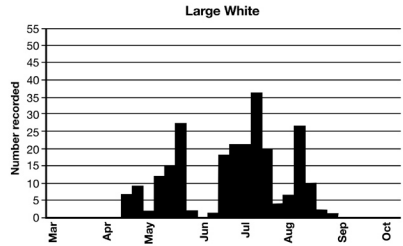
Looking at the graphs, it is clear that the migrants did not arrive very early, with numbers gradually building up over the summer. The Browns were also quite numerous, with one lucky person seeing both Scotch Argus and Speckled Wood in their Highland garden!

Unfortunately, as I mentioned in my report, I am not sure what I will be doing next year, as I could be changing jobs. But it is all a bit up in the air at the moment, so I don't think it wise to start another year of this survey. However, if someone would like to take it on, I'm sure there would be some members who were very grateful.



All butterflies recorded in Garden Butterfly Survey in 2005

Peacock	463
Small White	332
Large White	233
Red Admiral	185
Painted Lady	139
Green-veined White	102
Small Tortoiseshell	71
Orange Tip	60
Small Copper	29
Ringlet	29
Meadow Brown	21
Common Blue	4
Comma	3
Speckled Wood	2
Scotch Argus	2
Small Heath	1



## My Butterfly Year 2006

by Jeff Waddell

Instead of the usual first sightings of **Peacock** or **Small Tortoiseshell** to start my butterfly year **Marsh Fritillary** was to be the first species I recorded. In between rain showers on the 11th of April the sun came out for long enough to count 105 larval webs in Knapdale Forest, near Lochgilphead.

I saw my first **Peacock** at Galashiels shortly afterwards, 15th of April, and first **Small Tortoiseshell** at Nethy Bridge, Speyside on the 23rd of April.

The 4th of May was sunny and warm so I decided to take a trip into the Tweedsmuir Hills to look for day flying moths. I also took the opportunity to check on a new **Green Hairstreak** colony that had been found by a friend of mine the previous year. Along the Scrape Burn I was lucky enough to count 19, showing there is a strong colony here. After the walk in the hills I visited Altarstone Pool on the Tweed and saw my first **Green Veined White**. The first Orange Tip was spotted whilst out cycling on country lanes near Nairn at Conicavel on the 9th of May.

**Small Blue** has to be my favourite butterfly species. I saw my first for the year in the dunes at Lossiemouth Forest on the 21st of May. The best population seen this year was on Nether Dallachy Airfield near Spey Bay, where 22 were counted on the 4th of June. A disused airfield is an unusual habitat for this species in Scotland, I usually see **Small Blue** in dunes or on forest tracks. **Speckled Wood** was also seen whilst visiting Lossie Forest on the 21st, whilst **Small Copper** and **Small White** were seen at Stotfield Links, Lossiemouth afterwards.

A visit to the Dunes in Roseisle Forest on the Moray Coast found 4 **Dingy Skippers** basking in the late afternoon sunshine (4th June).

An early **Painted Lady** was seen nectaring on Common Bird's-foot-trefoil on a forest track in Culbin Forest, near Nairn on the 6th of June. I also saw my first **Small Heath** of the year on this visit.

One of the butterfly highlights of the year for me was a trip to Deeside on the 7th of June in ideal weather to check on the **Pearl Bordered Fritillaries** in the Forestry Commission woods there. We saw an abundance of the species with over 20 at Cambus o' May Forest and over 40 at Inver Forest. A **Red Admiral** was also seen at Cambus o' May.

On the 13th of June I was surprised to see several **Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries** in the dunes at Culbin Forest. I usually associate this species with wet, marshy habitats.

On the 24th of June a friend and I set off on a holiday in England, this was partly with the aim of seeing some new butterfly species we don't get in Scotland. The trip started



well with our first sighting of **Brown Argus** at Monks Dale in Derbyshire. **Meadow Brown, Common Blue** and **Large Skipper** were also seen here for the first time this year. The following day we visited Lathkill Dale and had a surge of new species at one point of the walk with **Red Admiral, Clouded Yellow** and **Dark Green Fritillary** all seen within a few minutes. The **Clouded Yellow** was quite exciting as I saw it flying straight towards me at some speed from about 50 yards away and managed to catch it in a net as it passed by. It was released shortly after. A visit later in the evening to Cressbrook Dale in cool conditions was surprisingly productive with a **Wall** disturbed from its basking site on a limestone cliff.

A brief stop off in Ryton Wood on the 26th of June in Warwickshire produced my first sightings of **Ringlet** and **Marbled White** in the grassy woodland rides and glades. This was particularly nostalgic for me as my interest in butterflies and moths was first started here six years ago, whilst coppicing.

The following day a visit was made to Bernwood Forest in Buckinghamshire where we got fleeting glimpses of **White Admiral** as they glided along shady rides, occasionally stopping to nectar on Bramble flowers. **Small Skipper** were easier to observe nectaring by the track here. We then travelled to Creteway Down in Kent and added **Large White** to the list that evening.

On the 28th of June a trip was made to the famous lepidoptera site of Wye Downs to see the rare **Black Veined Moth**. Another highlight of this visit was my first ever sighting of the **Adonis Blue**. We then travelled on to East Blean Woods, Kent Wildlife Trust reserve and saw the speciality there, the **Heath Fritillary**. The fritillary was quite abundant in small coppice coupes with the foodplant, Common Cow Wheat. This was probably my best ever day for butterflies and moths so far!

A short visit to Ham Street Woods in Kent on the 1st of July turned up a Single **Brimstone** butterfly. The visit was cut short by an important football match!

Back in Scotland on the 15th of July several **Large Heath** were seen over blanket bog in Glen Mazeran, near Inverness. On a warm night, at 10pm, whilst moth recording a **Grayling** was active in the twilight on the vegetated shingle at Lossiemouth Forest (19th July).

A botanical recording trip to Ben Lawers on the 23rd of July produced 2 worn **Mountain Ringlets** on An Stuc at high altitude. The following day, whilst climbing Ben Lui, several **Scotch Argus** were seen for the first time that year.

A trip to Cumbria towards the end of July was to produce the last two species of the year. On the 29th of July I visited Whitbarrow Scar with a friend and recorded **Comma** and **Silver Washed Fritillary** in the limestone woodland.

2006 was a great butterfly year for me with 38 species recorded, including four species I haven't seen before. I think I will be hard pushed to better that next year.



## News From North East Scotland Sub-branch 2006

*by Helen Rowe*

A number of events were organised during the year, mostly in partnership with other organisations, particularly Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service, since I am one of their rangers! A butterfly identification & recording course was organised at the request of NESBReC (North East Scotland Biological Records Centre), led by Tom Prescott plus myself on a scorching hot day in early June. This was held at Aboyne Loch, where very active butterflies, including Pearl-bordered Fritillaries tested participants' skills in catching and identifying them.

Public events conducted included a July butterfly walk in Glen Muick with the Balmoral Ranger Service, which was repeated for the benefit of a summer playscheme group. Both were very successful, with warm sunshine bringing out plenty of butterflies. A colleague from SNH and myself also led a butterfly/dragonfly walk at Morrone Birkwood NNR, Braemar for a group of local families towards their John Muir Award.

Several public moth nights were arranged over the summer: Portlethen Moss (with an Aberdeenshire Ranger colleague), Huntly Peregrine Watch Centre, Bin Forest (with FC staff), Hazlehead Park, Aberdeen (with an Aberdeen City Ranger, who also happens to be my husband!), Glen Muick (with Balmoral Rangers) and Aden Country Park, Mintlaw (with another Aberdeenshire Ranger). Some nights were much better than others moth-wise, but all were well attended and enjoyed, especially the sugaring and wine roping! I've also given talks on the Butterflies of Scotland (using a BC Scotland presentation) to a variety of groups in the area: Scottish Wildlife Trust, Scottish Ornithologists Club, Ballater SWRI, Newmachar Garden Club & Aboyne Ladies Probus Club, which have been well received.

Recording and monitoring has been ongoing, including targeting RAP species such as Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Northern Brown Argus, Large Heath, Nettle Mountain Moth, Dark Bordered Beauty and Sword-grass. Some species have been found at 'new' locations, others have been rediscovered at old sites.

A few new species have been added to the NE Scotland Lepidoptera list this year plus a number of new vice-county records. This has been due in part to favourable weather conditions bringing in unusual migrants and to resident species expanding their range. The increasing number of recorders in the region is also boosting recording effort, so keep up the good work everyone!



## **Butterflies and Bikes**

*by Catherine Fowler*

(see photo montage on the back cover)

At the first sign of good weather this year I set off on my bike round my usual haunts in West Lothian, carrying camera and butterfly net – a curious sight for bystanders, I imagine. The season was to provide many pleasures, some surprises and the occasional disappointment.

One of my finds last year was a colony of Orange Tips in late May and June on ground beside a disused farm at an old bridge over the Niddry Burn (**NS742102**). This year - nothing! Perhaps Orange Tips have been less abundant this year. Sightings were scarce on my cycle trips and I saw only a few round Overton (NT109742), The Weir at Linlithgow Bridge (NS981767) and The Grange (NT118787). There weren't many in my garden at Linlithgow, either.

Some I saw on the grass verge at Kingscavil (NT03765) - a great photo opportunity. I hopped off my bike, unpacked the camera and ran back to the spot at the ready, just when a car drove past the Orange Tips took flight and were gone. This happens a lot. Similarly, when I jumped off the bike to rescue an Elephant Hawk Moth caterpillar on the road a truck roared past and flattened it. (Elephant Hawk Moths are breeding in my garden this year, which may restore the balance.)

One of my regular sites is at a Railway Bridge between Kirkliston and Cramond (NT141755) opposite a small natural woodland. I've never seen much in the woodland but by climbing over the gate and crossing the field (before the maize grows too high) you find a bank of trees which is a butterfly haven. Common butterflies, Large, Small and Green-veined Whites, and Orange Tips are abundant there in June.

Witchcraig Wood between Beecraigs Country Park and Cairncapple Hill (NS987725) is a haven for wildlife in general and butterflies in particular, and the ground adjoining Beecraigs Wood is an especial delight. For once I left the bike and explored by foot. Here I saw numerous Common Blues, both male and female, and Painted Ladies and Peacocks in abundance. When I stepped off the path to photograph a Painted Lady it was as if a box had opened and a host of butterflies had emerged. Witchcraig Wood was offered by it's owners, Andy and Elspeth Gibb, to be made available to the public as an area of special natural interest. There I met Tracey Smith, who is a ranger at Beecraigs. She told me that she regularly walks a transect in the area, and this year was delighted to see a Common Blue and a Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary in June. I'll be joining her on some of her walks next year.

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries have been elusive. Last year I visited sites around Polkemmet Moor and Bathgate with Richard Buckland and I revisited this area this year but again was unlucky. I found no Fritillaries and only a few Meadow Browns and Small Heaths.



Walks along the Union Canal were generally unexciting, but one day in August there was a deluge of Common Blue Damselflies near Bridge No.59.

Two areas that proved delightful were The Weir at Linlithgow Bridge which although marked 'Danger – No Admittance' is a treasure trove of insects. Also in the area from Blackness, past the badger sett in the woods, I saw lots of Peacocks, Red Admirals, Painted Ladies and Large and Small Whites.

All in all it's been a good year, though with a slow start because of the extended spring weather in May. But this has been more than made up for by our Indian summer.

## **Trapping the Lunar Yellow Underwing, *Noctua orbona* in Tentsmuir**

*by Duncan Davidson*

Early in 2006 Gillian Fyfe and I were chatting about the wonderful diversity of butterflies and moths in Tentsmuir and we discussed the possibility of trapping for Lunar Yellow Underwing (*Noctua orbona*). The Lunar yellow Underwing is a UK BAP priority species and has been assigned a category of high priority in Butterfly Conservation's Eastern Scotland Regional Action Plan (Kinneair & Kirkland December 2000). NBN Gateway shows sporadic records at Tentsmuir over the years and the last record seems to have been in August 2002, when Nick Littlewood tells me he caught a single specimen after around a dozen visits. I made arrangements with Tom Cunningham of SNH who kindly facilitated access to the NNR without which our trapping would not have been possible.

Gillian, Anne-Marie Smout and Eleanor and Chris Stamp accompanied me on the first trapping session on the evening of Friday 28th July. We set up three Robinson type MV traps in an open heath area between the forest edge and dunes. The evening was cooler than the preceding few days, with an on-shore breeze encouraging a significant formation of mist. Despite this, there were literally hundreds of moths swarming round the traps by 11pm and by the time we packed up at 1am we had identified 47 different species. We were all thankful for Anne-Marie's camper where we could sit in relative comfort to trawl the identification guides and nibble on assorted biscuits!

The second session was on Friday 18th August. The weather was atrocious in the early part of the evening with torrential rain and a stiff northeasterly wind and so not surprisingly I found myself alone. At one stage, I was ankle deep in puddles while setting up my two Robinson traps. However, moths started visiting the traps even in the heavy rain between 9 and 10pm. The rain abated later and apart from some light showers it stayed relatively dry and the wind rose and fell periodically through the rest of the night. The number of moths increased dramatically when the rain eased and I ended up with 44 identified species and around a dozen micro-moths that I was unable to identify with certainty. There were also a great many toads crawling around the area presumably energized by the rather damp conditions. Although I didn't actually see any casualties I feel sure that they were also stalking the moths resting round the traps! Amazingly, moths were still arriving at the traps when I packed up at 3am.



The third and final session took place on Friday 8th September, when Eleanor and Chris Stamp again accompanied me. There was a clear sky and a near full moon, with temperatures falling fairly rapidly to around 8 degrees. Although it was calm and dry the conditions were far from ideal for moth hunting. We set up two Robinson type MV traps but because of the cool clear conditions, we felt the activity had probably peaked around 11pm and so we packed up shortly afterwards. We identified 23 species altogether along with another handful of unidentified micro-moths.

As well as the light traps, I tried sugaring a few fence posts with a moth-friendly mixture of brown sugar, treacle, brown ale and rum but these patches attracted mostly spiders, slugs and slaters with only a few moths showing interest. Over the three sessions we failed to find any evidence of Lunar Yellow Underwing although we did identify a total of 78 different species of moth along with perhaps a further 20 micro-moths that we could not immediately identify. The list of those identified has been submitted to the VC85 county moth recorder, to SNH and to the Fife local records centre, Take a Pride in Fife Environmental Information Centre.

I think it is safe to say that we all had enormous fun during these sessions and I look forward to trying again this year.



## **Garden For Life - Garden For Change**

*by Shona Greig*

Butterfly Conservation Scotland is taking a stand once again as part of the Garden for Life marquee at Gardening Scotland 2007. This is Scotland's largest Garden Show to be held at the Royal Highland Centre, Ingliston from Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd June 2007. We had such a positive response last year to our marquee and showgarden that this year the event will be even bigger and better, with a large showgarden with demonstration/activity areas surrounded by a host of stands all promoting similar messages about wildlife-friendly gardening and sustainability. It is to be called 'The Living Garden' and as always we will need volunteers to help staff our stand. We will be looking for people to volunteer to help for either a morning or afternoon with the other part of the day available to get out and about and enjoy the rest of the Show. Volunteers will of course be admitted to the Show free of charge and travel expenses will be paid. If you can spare a little time over this weekend please contact Shona on 0870 7706151 or email [sgreig@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:sgreig@butterfly-conservation.org)



## **Awash With Butterflies**

### **The comings and goings on the Tentsmuir Transect 2006**

*by Gillian Fyfe*

The 2006 monitoring season at Tentsmuir began unexpectedly with the discovery that part of our transect had been washed away by the sea. Winter storms had eroded the shoreline by around 25m and changed the landscape quite dramatically. Mature alder trees had been toppled onto the beach or left perched, mangrove-like on exposed roots. Our transect which was restarted in 2004 after a gap in recording ran close to the shoreline but we had not expected to lose part of it. The Tentsmuir Point South transect had been divided into 5 sections (see map). Section 1 runs out towards the sea and used to cross a small bridge before turning north parallel to the shoreline. By March 2006 the bridge had vanished along with the end of section 1 and the start of section 2. Daphne Macfarlane Smith (my recording partner) and I met with Eleanor Stafford (SNH, Cupar Office) and Tom Cunningham (Reserve Manager) at the end of March to agree a new route.

Losing part of your transect to the sea is unusual (perhaps unheard of) among BMS transect walkers and we had to make up our own minds about what to do next. We opted to finish Section 1 at the new shoreline and backtrack to start Section 2 further inland (see map). We retained the rest of the transect as it had been in the previous 2 years and hope that we will not lose more territory to the sea. For those of you not familiar with Tentsmuir, Daphne gave a good description of the site and habitat in last Spring's newsletter.

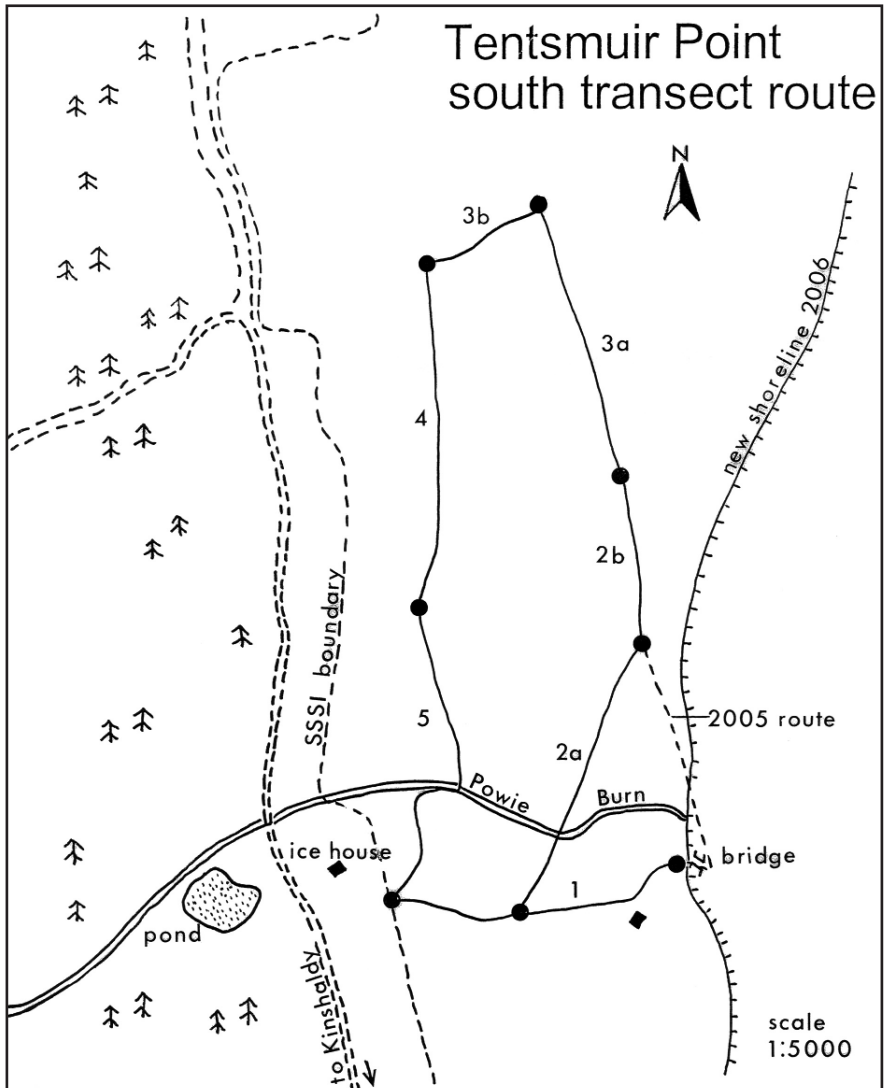
Once the season got going in April it took a while to get used to the new route but we were helped by red pegs supplied by Tom to mark the path. Records of butterflies were confined to a few Peacocks until the middle of May when Small Whites, Green-veined Whites, Orange-tips and Green Hairstreaks all put in an appearance. The Green Hairstreaks are only around for about two weeks and at Tentsmuir are found scattered along the transect in low numbers (9 in 2006).

Orange-tips are a common species at Tentsmuir with 2 flight periods and peak numbers towards the middle of August. Numbers were down in 2006(213) compared to 2005 records (271) but considerably higher than 2004 when only 113 were recorded. Peacock and Grayling numbers have stayed relatively constant over the 3 years since we restarted recording.

In contrast some species have increased considerably over three years. Meadow Brown, Small Heath and Dark Green fritillary have all increased. Meadow Browns which are mainly seen near the forest edge increased from 25 in 2004 to 152 in 2006. Similarly Small Heaths increased from 28 in 2004 to 200 in 2006. Dark Green Fritillaries were recorded at a low of 18 in 2004 to build up to 78 sightings in 2006.

The pattern for Ringlets is different with 39 recorded in 2004, a high of 137 in 2005 and a decrease to 91 records in 2006.





While walking the transect there is always something else interesting to see and moths are common throughout the season. I don't often have time to stop and catch or identify them but the hundreds (thousands perhaps) of Silver Y moths that arrived in August were very obvious.

In early may, I came across a stonechat's nest with 4 eggs, a few inches from the transect route and enjoyed watching their progress to chicks over the following weeks.



At Tentsmuir one of the main delights is the seal colony not far from the shore and on some days with the wind in the right direction the barking of the seals can be heard long before you see them.

With most recording days early in the season not yielding many records I look forward to the summer days of July and August but then sometimes, there seem too many butterflies to keep up with. In 2006 we had no problems finding warm, dry days to walk the transect and occasionally it was too hot for comfort. The hottest day this year was 25oC in the shade and the route seemed a lot longer than usual. Minor setbacks like dropping your net half-way round and having to back-track are offset by all the new sightings and the hope of seeing something unusual.

With only three year's data to look at we don't have enough records to pick up longer term trends in individual species. Only time and more recording will establish a better picture of population declines and gains. As the first of April approaches Daphne and I are looking forward to a new recording season and the surprises that 2007 will bring.

Note: The SNH Reserve at Tentsmuir can be accessed from the Kinshaldy car park. The Ice House (Grid Reference NO500 268) is approximately 1.5 miles north of the car park.

## **National Moth Night 2006 in Edinburgh**

*by Duncan Davidson*

National Moth Night (NMN) is an annual event, when moth recorders all over the UK search for moths on a specific date in their chosen location to determine what species are flying nationwide. Public events are often held on NMN and these can be a great introduction into the world of moths. In 2006, NMN was held on the 23rd of September and Elaine Abbot and I arranged just such a public event at the Hermitage of Braid visitor centre in Edinburgh. Elaine is a committee member of the Friends of Hermitage of Braid and Blackford Hill, whose aims include the conservation of the biodiversity of the Local Nature Reserve, and the engagement of the local community through education and practical activities, so an event like this was ideal for her. It was also hoped to engage the Edinburgh Countryside Ranger Service who manage this and other LNRs in and around Edinburgh. They kindly gave permission to hold the event, but due to other commitments they were unable to attend or assist in other ways. The visitor centre is in a small clearing in the midst of mainly broadleaved woodland including mature elm, ash, sycamore, oak, birch and beech. There is also a small amount of spruce and larch. The burn running through the area has willow overhanging its grassy banks. It was in this clearing that we set up two Robinson moth traps, powered by a portable petrol generator. This was my first public event and I was rather concerned about the need for a formal risk assessment, public liability and so forth - I have heard of instances where mercury-vapour bulbs have exploded, showering the area with glass fragments, and anything combining petrol, electricity and the outdoors will have its risks. However, following advice provided earlier by Tom Prescott and with some common sense safety precautions in place we were ready to go.



It was dark by about 7.30pm, and the temperature fell to quite rapidly to around 10°C, but didn't get any cooler. The light rain from earlier in the day had passed over and in the shelter of the clearing it was calm and dry. Earlier in the evening I had painted a few fence posts with a sugar, treacle, brown ale and rum mixture. This mixture acts as a powerful nectar substitute and can attract moths that might not be drawn to the light traps. However, this is a notoriously fickle method and I wasn't surprised that nothing but a few millipedes were found on the sugar patches throughout the night.

The event was quite well attended, with a dozen people staying for most of the evening between 8pm and midnight. Only one Butterfly Conservation member appeared and didn't stay long and there were a few late night walkers who paused briefly to enquire what was going on. Butterfly Conservation membership leaflets were freely distributed!

Edinburgh moths were not out in force that evening but one or two specimens did start to arrive before too long. First in either trap was a Red-green Carpet, *Chloroclysta siterata*, closely followed by a Brick, *Agrochola circellaris*. The obvious differences between the Geometridae and Noctuidae families demonstrated by these two moths generated a lot of interest and many of the attendees gained a better understanding of the diversity and beauty of our moth population. We finished the night with a small but nonetheless interesting list of nine species. In addition to the two species above, we identified Common Marbled Carpet, Spruce Carpet, Streak, Lesser Yellow Underwing, Red-line Quaker, Copper Underwing (could alternatively have been Svensson's Copper Underwing) and Snout. We also found that the light traps attracted literally hundreds of Caddis Flies but further identification was not attempted!

The habitat suggests that many more species of moth will be supported than we saw on that single night and I look forward to carrying out further trapping sessions at the Hermitage during the summer months. A date for your diaries - this year's NMN is on the 11th of August and I will be assisting with a trapping session at Hopetoun House near Queensferry organised by the Hopetoun House Preservation Trust Rangers.

## **Report On The 2006 Field Trips**

*by Dan Baker and Richard Buckland*

The first trip, to Kenmore Hill on 13th May, was attended by 10 local BC and local SWT branch members. The only butterflies of note were a fair number of Green Hairstreaks. On reflection, it was probably too early in the year for the Pearl-bordered Fritillaries that we were hoping to see. Especially as it was a cold start to the year.

The second trip, to Loch Mealbrodden on the 17th June was well attended by 13 SWT/BC members, despite the overcast conditions. This had its compensations, though, as butterflies were very lethargic, enabling good photos to be taken of the 16 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries seen.

The third trip was to Garrow Hill to see Northern Brown Argus and Large Heath on 8th July. This was again a joint BC/SWT occasion, and 11 people turned up. Despite some



poor weather, 1st and 2nd instar larvae were found, as well as eggs on the rock rose plants at the site. After lunch some shelter was sought in order to see a few adults, and we were fortunate to see eleven in all. Flushed with this success, we set off to the top of the moor in good spirits to see the Large Heath, which were found without too much difficulty. This is also the site of a large colony of Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, which were also seen in good numbers. By the time we got back to the cars the rain was on again. So we had by far the best of the day!

The other field trips were no less successful. Our first was to the beach at Carnoustie, where we parked the cars on the front in the main seaside holiday car park and after putting on our sturdier footwear, embarked on a leisurely walk along the coastal path. Just over the bridge over the Carnoustie burn, we started to see the Small Blues. In all we must have seen over two dozen, all up and down the path. Most people were able to get nice photos (see the front cover of this newsletter) and I have to say that it turned out to be just about the most successful field trip I have ever organised, as the walking was so easy, and the butterflies so abundant (even the weather was good). And 8 people turned up!

For the second outing, only one person turned up, as it was a bit cool and overcast. I'm sure the person in question only turned up because she had seen the trip advertised on the national website, and had phoned to confirm details. But it was nonetheless a very pleasant walk up the Flemington Burn, a lovely part of the Borders near and into the **x** Hills. Unfortunately, there were very few butterflies on the wing, and it was a bit too early to see any Northern Brown Argus eggs, the target species. I returned two weeks later, and all the rock rose was covered with eggs, so they were there somewhere (but keeping their heads down on this occasion).

The final trip was to the Moorfoot Hills near Innerleithen. I had been given a grid reference for a rock rose site and the plan was to investigate this for the presence of Northern Brown Argus. I knew of a NBA site nearby, which we could visit if this came to nothing. On arrival I discovered that the grid ref. was incorrect. Nevertheless, we decided to take a walk in that direction anyway, as the weather was pleasant, and we were feeling positive. Which was just as well, as we managed to find another rock rose site (with NBA), due to the expertise of our SNH guide. It became clear later that this was merely confirmation that there are lots of NBA sites in this area. On returning to the cars, we had some lunch and set off to look at the site I had already found in the area and with the sun by now just about poking through the clouds, adults were on the wing. Much clicking of camera shutters followed and after such a successful outing we decided to call it a day. This left me enough time to travel up the Glentress Water and confirm the presence of NBA at some other rock rose sites on the banks of that stream, while others of us were able to get home in time to see the denouement of the men's Wimbledon final.



## Events Calendar 2007

### East Scotland Branch Field Trips 2007

#### Sunday 20 May

Loch Earn to look for Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Meet at the car park half-way along the north shore (NN659245) at 10.30am. (Contact: Richard Buckland 0131-332 0615).

#### Saturday 9 June

Seaton Cliffs to look for Small Blue. Meet at car park at NO658411 at 10.30am. (Contact: Dan Baker 01764 650180).

#### Saturday 30 June

Moth morning at Kelteyburn SSSI. Traps will be opened from 10.00am. NN768497. (Contact: Dan Baker 01764 650180).

#### Sunday 1 July

Fingland Burn, just south of Innerleithen, to look for Northern Brown Argus. Meet at the entrance to Damhead Farm (NT329342) at 10.30am. (Contact: Richard Buckland 0131-332 0615).

#### Sunday 8 July

Tailend Moss SWT Reserve near Livingston, to look for Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, and possibly Large Heath. This SWT reserve is best approached from exit 3A of the M8. Meet at the lay-by just off the large roundabout at the south-eastern corner of the reserve (NT002675) at 10.30am. (Contact: Richard Buckland 0131-332 0615).

#### Saturday 14 July

Ben Lawers nature trail to look for Mountain Ringlet. Meet at NTS car park NN609379 at 10.30am. Ring Dan beforehand to make sure the trip is going ahead, as the weather is very variable at this altitude. (Contact: Dan Baker 01764 650180).

Sturdy footwear and waterproof clothing should be worn to all field trips, even if the weather looks fine when setting out. Food and drink is also advisable. It is also advisable to phone the walk leader if attending, in order to let them know how many people to expect.

### North East Scotland Field Trips 2007

Aberdeenshire Council Ranger, Helen Rowe is leading the following events in partnership with Butterfly Conservation, Scottish Wildlife Trust, other ranger services & community festivals.

Details are provisional at time of going to press. Contacts for information on meeting places, costs (if any) etc. are given for each event. Booking essential. Please call



Helen Rowe on 013398 85751 or email [helen.rowe@aberdeenshire.gov.uk](mailto:helen.rowe@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) for general enquiries about BC activities in the Grampian area.

**Wednesday 11th July - 9pm till late**

Moth & Bat Night (Braemar Gala Week) at Morrone Birkwood, Braemar.  
Braemar Tourist Information Centre: 013397 41600

**Thursday 12th July - 10am to 12 noon**

Moth morning & minibeast hunt (Braemar Gala Week) at Morrone Birkwood, Braemar.  
Braemar Tourist Information Centre: 013397 41600

**Thursday 12th July - 2pm to 4pm**

Butterfly walk at Glen Muick, Ballater.  
Balmoral Estate Ranger Service: 013397 55059

**Saturday 14th July - 11am to 3pm**

Butterfly & dragonfly walk at Aboyne Loch, Aboyne.  
Scottish Wildlife Trust: 01224 483065 or email [Hoverfly@aol.com](mailto:Hoverfly@aol.com)

**Tuesday 24th July - 10am to 1pm**

Butterfly & dragonfly walk (Active Aboyne) at Aboyne Loch, Aboyne.  
Mid Deeside Ltd: 013398 85222 or email [activeaboyne@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:activeaboyne@tiscali.co.uk)

**Friday 27th July - 8.30pm to late**

Moth & bat night (Active Aboyne) at Ladywood, Aboyne.  
Mid Deeside Ltd: 013398 85222 or email [activeaboyne@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:activeaboyne@tiscali.co.uk)

**Saturday 28th July - 2pm to 3.30pm**

Moth afternoon & minibeast hunt (Active Aboyne) at Ladywood, Aboyne.  
Mid Deeside Ltd: 013398 85222 or email [activeaboyne@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:activeaboyne@tiscali.co.uk)

**Tuesday 31st July - 8.30pm till late**

Moth & bat night at Carnie Woods, Westhill.  
Aberdeen City Ranger Service: 01224 897400

**Friday 10th August - 8pm till late**

Moth & bat night at Glen Muick, Ballater.  
Balmoral Estate Ranger Service: 013397 55059

**Wednesday 15th August - 8pm till late**

Moth night at Crathes Castle, Banchory.  
NTS Ranger Service: 01330 844810

**Thursday 16th August - 10.30am to 12 noon**

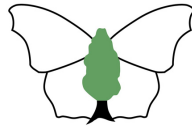
Moth morning at Crathes Castle, Banchory.  
NTS Ranger Service: 01330 844810



## South East Scotland Branch Committee

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