



# North East England Branch



President Sir David Attenborough CH, FRS DEDICATED TO SAVING WILD BUTTERFLIES AND THEIR HABITATS

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**Butterfly Conservation**

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## Contents

Editorial.....	p3
Chairman's Report.....	p4
Highlights of the 2015 Season.....	p5
News .....	p6
Book Review – Jonathan Wallace.....	p7
AGM and Members' Day .....	p8
Event Reports.....	p11
Projects in the North East - Bedstraw Hawk-moth.....	p12
Article - Death's Head Hawk-moth.....	p13
Article - Walking for 10 Years.....	p15
Article - Our Strangest Moth?.....	p17
Article - Essex Skipper.....	p18
Photography Competition 2015 Results.....	p27
Article - Pheromone fun.....	p30
Safety notes and 'How to Submit Records'.....	p32
Submission Dates.....	p35
Committee details (on back cover).....	p36

Cover Photo: The three winning entries of this year's Photography Competition  
**From Left- Brimstone butterfly – Graham Beckwith, Monarch butterfly –  
John Preston and Early Thorn moth – Steve Austin**

## Editorial

Hello and welcome to our 32<sup>nd</sup> Newsletter! This is a bumper edition due in part to an exceptional occurrence of Essex Skipper in our region over the summer; Ian Waller one of our newest committee members' has written an in-depth article surrounding the discovery.

I am pleased that we have quite a few moth related articles in this edition also, including another exciting discovery at the Alwick Garden of a Death's Head Hawkmoth carcass and a contribution by the Editor of Atropos, a Journal for Moths, Butterfly and Dragonfly enthusiasts on the Bedstraw Hawk-moth.

Also included in this edition was the well-attended Members' day and AGM held at Gibside and following this reports from a couple of our events held over the summer, the Big Butterfly Count and National Moth Night.

One thing that was discussed at the AGM was newsletter contributions, if there is anything that people would like to know more about, or possibly introducing new sections, please do let myself know, contact details are at the back.

Wishing you all a happy autumn and winter, and if you see anything of interest over the coming months, make a note and we would love to include it in the newsletter next time.

Thank you to all who have contributed to the Autumn edition.

Kind regards,

Helen Passey

## Chairman's Report - Peter Webb

At the end of July the Durham County Recorder was sent a record, supported by good photographs of an Essex Skipper Butterfly. The photographs were forwarded to the branch's butterfly records committee, of which I'm a member, to verify the record. These showed clearly that the butterfly had distinctly glossy black tips to its antennae rather than the dull brown or orange tips found on the antennae of its almost identical cousin the Small Skipper.

The Small Skipper has expanded its range northwards in the last decade. It is likely that the Essex Skipper has now followed.

The subject of species expanding their range, probably linked to global warming was one which I asked Charlie Fletcher to address during his talk on moths at the Branch Members' Day. Both Charlie and Steve Doyle, in his talk on Butterflies in Cumbria, had also discussed how the population of a species can increase or unexpectedly decrease. The explanation for this is not always clearly understood but in addition to global warming it can be attributed to things such as changes to habitat or the effects of parasites.

The Common Blue Butterfly is the latest example of a species which has suffered a dramatic decline both locally and nationally possibly due to the reduction of the wildflower habitats this species needs. During the summer Butterfly Conservation and the National Trust had sent out a joint appeal to holidaymakers to look for Common Blues on sunny coastal grasslands and to record them as part of the big butterfly count.

One recurring message from the member's day was to encourage all branch members to explore the countryside and record the moths and butterflies they find. Monitoring the changes in the populations of moth and butterfly species, and then undertaking conservation work to protect them, is only possible following careful recording. Many species remain under recorded and our distribution maps do not reflect their true distribution as there are areas of our region which rarely if ever get visited.

Included in this newsletter is the report on this year's members' day and the branch's annual general meeting. Many thanks to all who contributed to a successful day, especially to Helen McDonald and the staff at Gibside for the use of such a good venue and to our main speakers Charlie Fletcher and Steve Doyle for their fascinating talks. This is the branch's main annual event and I was pleased to see more members attending this year. Any suggestions for next year are always welcome.

Since the AGM there have been a number of changes to the branch committee and we have been pleased to welcome Anne Donnelly and Michael Perkins who will join Ian Waller and Steve Le Fleming on the newly formed branch recording group.

In addition to the information provided in the newsletters please also have a look at the branch's website [www.northeast-butterflies.org.uk](http://www.northeast-butterflies.org.uk). This is regularly updated and will include information on winter work parties in the northeast while Facebook followers will find news and photographs of the moths and butterflies branch members are discovering throughout the year.

### Highlights of the 2015 season

“One of my highlights of the year was this magnificent Eyed Hawk Moth which was in the moth trap at Cotherstone on 12<sup>th</sup> June. Although quite common in some lowland areas of Yorkshire less common on higher ground and further north.” - Peter Webb



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary Re-introduction Programme. With two re-introduction sites, staff and volunteers with Durham Wildlife Trust's Heart of Durham Project and Butterfly Conservation waited anxiously for the first sighting of butterflies on the wing.



Putting out the caterpillars



A released caterpillar crawls for cover

## News

### **Moors for the Future Partnership**

Moors for the Future Partnership has launched a citizen science project which aims to track how the numbers and distribution of certain species are changing with time and to see how the timing of events (such as peak emergence) is linked to climate change. The project is centred on the Peak District but also hopes to include data from other important moorland areas such as those found in Durham and Northumberland. You can contribute to the project by submitting details of sightings made on the moors.

The target butterfly species are Green Hairstreak, Orange-tip and Peacock. Other species covered by the project include birds and bumble-bees. Records will be shared with our County Recorders.

For more details of how to take part and to report sightings using the online reporting form see <http://www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk/community-science/surveys>.

### **Update on Durham Wildlife Trust's Heart of Durham**

#### **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary Re-introduction Programme - Anne Porter**

The second release of small pearl-bordered fritillary caterpillars took place on a sunny afternoon on Wednesday the 20<sup>th</sup> of May. One hundred caterpillars at the pre-pupa stage were released onto marsh violets on a new 2015 re-introduction site in County Durham. This is part of the ongoing work being done by Durham Wildlife Trust's Heart of Durham Project to reverse the decline of County Durham's rarest butterfly.

On Saturday the 6<sup>th</sup> of June the call came that the first small pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly had emerged. These butterflies were flying on the first re-introduction site, where 170 caterpillars were released in 2014. These are the second round of small pearl bordered fritillary butterflies from those first caterpillars. Butterflies on this site continued to be spotted over the next couple of weeks, and despite the cold weather conditions good numbers were recorded by volunteers doing their weekly transect routes. The two week gap in recording, between the 10<sup>th</sup> of June and the 29<sup>th</sup> of June was due to poor weather conditions.

Thanks to a dedicated team both sites will be monitored through the summer flight period by volunteers carrying out weekly butterfly transects. It will be an anxious time waiting to see how many of the next generation of small pearl-bordered fritillary butterfly are flying in 2016. Please see website for full article including re-introduction site comparison charts from 2014 and 2015.

**Rainbow Dust. Three Centuries of Delight in British Butterflies by Peter Marren. (Published by Square Peg, 2015). Review by Jonathan Wallace**

As Peter Marren notes in his introduction, there is a huge literature about butterflies including a plethora of identification guides and many factual accounts of life cycles, behaviour and ecology.

Marren, well established as one of our leading natural history writers, takes a different tack and writes what he describes as 'a personal cultural life' of British butterflies. His title relates to an experience in his early childhood when his six year old friend informed him that the scales that had rubbed off onto his hand when he had clumsily handled a Painted Lady were in fact 'rainbow dust' and the book weaves his own experience of a lifetime's passion for butterflies with the wider history of our increasing awareness and understanding of butterflies.

The book is erudite and well referenced as Marren takes us from medieval manuscripts, in which butterflies appear as marginalia, through the beginnings of a serious study of butterflies by pioneers such as Moffet in the sixteenth century, Pettiver, Ray and the 'Aurelians' in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, to our present day authorities on butterfly biology such as Jeremy Thomas and Butterfly Conservation's own Martin Warren. His style is light and entertaining and he succeeds in conveying the personalities and eccentricities of his cast of characters. These characters include such personalities as Elinor Glanville whose relatives succeeded in overturning her will on the grounds that "...none but those who were deprived of their Senses, would go in Pursuit of Butterflies.!" At least posterity was kinder to Glanville with the beautiful *Melitaea cinxia*, which she had discovered, carrying her name to this day, as the Glanville Fritillary.

Marren's history ends with the present day when the abundance and diversity of butterflies in the British countryside is a sad vestige of what it once was. He takes a gloomy view, noting that past government and EU targets for butterfly conservation have not been met and expressing scepticism about the likelihood of new ones being achieved. Butterflies are not like bees in the sense that they make an important economic contribution to human life; if a fritillary or two were to go extinct we'd get by just as well as before, he suggests. But we try to reverse the tide and as an example Marren describes the colossal efforts made in a butterfly reserve in North Devon to preserve its habitat for the Pearl-bordered Fritillary. We do this not because of their value in terms of pounds and pence but, he suggests, because we care: the flutterings of a butterfly "can summon up a small breeze in the human soul". This is a wonderful book that I would thoroughly recommend to anyone with a love of butterflies and who has ever wondered how they come to have their wonderful names.

## **Butterfly Conservation North East England Branch Minutes of Annual General Meeting and notes from the members held on 12th July 2015 at Gibside.**

### **Moth Matters**

Members started the day by examining the contents of the Gibside moth trap. Species: 1 Garden Tiger, 18 Heart and Dart, 3 Common Rustic agg., 1 Lime Hawk, 4 Smoky Wainscot, 11 Dark Arches, 1 Rustic, 2 Purple Clay, 5 Large Yellow Underwing, 1 Fan Foot, 2 Green Arches, 3 Marbled Minor agg., 1 Double Square Spot, 1 Poplar Grey, 2 Bright Line Bright, 1 Angle Shades, 1 Light Emerald, 1 Grey Dagger agg., 1 Peppered Moth.

**Yorkshire Moths-Heading Our Way? - Charlie Fletcher (Moth Recorder for VC65)** Charlie started by giving a summary of the 2014 Yorkshire Moth Report. There were 168,728 records from 298 recorders which took total moth records in Yorkshire to over 2 million. Although 2014 had been a generally poor year for moths it was interesting that in Yorkshire 46 macro species flew on their earliest ever date and 47 species were flying on their latest ever date including an Eyed Hawk Moth in September. Amongst the migrants recorded were 7 Convolvulus, 2 Death's Head, 3 Bedstraw and 107 Hummingbird Hawk-moths. Using statistical evidence Charlie considered some of the moths which are doing well in southern parts of Yorkshire and why their range doesn't increase. Although this is not fully understood he explained that a species which has increased in numbers can suffer a rapid decline due to parasitoids. Having compared moth records between the two counties Charlie had identified 115 macro species recorded in Yorkshire but not in Durham of these 20 were now extinct and 45 were vagrants. Of the remaining 50 species 19 were only found in very local specialised localities. He then described the moths he thought may either already be in the northeast or could extend their range. These included: Barred Hook Tip, Least Carpet, Devon Carpet, Pine Hawk Moth, Small Ranunculus, Varied Coronet, Marbled White Spot, Sycamore, Small Rufus, Orange, Dingy, and Scarce Footman. He stressed the need for members to go to some of the under recorded areas of Yorkshire and the northeast. Charlie's fascinating talk included excellent photos of the species he described.

**Northeast Moth Reports - Keith Dover/Peter Webb** Keith had given his apologies for the day and in his absence Peter gave the northeast reports (see attached). In thanking Charlie for his talk he commented on the smaller numbers of records from the northeast, 41,000 in the northeast compared with 168,000 in Yorkshire, reflecting a smaller number of moth recorders particularly in VC 66. Peter encouraged other members to get involved in moth recording. Using his own experiences as an example he talked about light trapping using a relatively cheap 15 watt actinic trap and not attempting to record every moth. He advised using websites such as Northumberland, Yorkshire, or Lancashire Moths and UK

moths for help with identification. He pointed out the value of a simple digital camera particularly for sending a photo to the county recorder to confirm a record.

## **Minutes of the Annual General Meeting**

**1. Apologies** for absence were received from Ruth Mansfield, Dave Stebbings, Dave Wainwright, Keith Walton and Keith Dover.

**2. The Chairman's Report** Peter thanked the committee for all they had achieved during 2014 including: Producing a Butterfly Atlas for Northeast England sales of which have raised £1000 for Butterfly Conservation's Match Pot Appeal, Two newsletters produced by new editor Helen Passey, Website maintained with increased use of Facebook, branch membership now exceeds 350, members' day held in July 2014, 46 transects recorded as part of the UK butterfly monitoring scheme, conservation work parties on local sites, committee members have given talks to local groups and the northeast recorders group, ongoing recording by members as part of Butterflies for the New Millennium and the National Moth Recording Scheme. New branch committee members are always welcome.

**3. Treasurer's Report** Steve Kirtley tabled a financial report for the year ending April 2015. Projected income will come mostly from members' subscriptions which should be sufficient to cover the cost of two newsletters and one annual report each year. The branch had a balance of £4510 but £1000 (the profits from Atlas Sales) is committed as a donation to go to Butterfly Conservation Head Office.

**4. Newsletter Editor** Helen Passey thanked those members who had contributed to the newsletters. To produce two newsletters she needed more contributions which don't have to be long articles. She hoped members would send pictures or short articles describing their season's highlights.

**5. Web-Master** Jonathan Wallace was pleased to see some increase in contributions to Facebook but hoped more members would see it as a useful way of sharing information and of following where other members were finding interesting species. Jonathan will continue to publish details of branch events on the website.

**6. Election of Officers and Changes to the Committee.** All existing officers had agreed to continue for another year. Ian Waller had recently joined the committee.

**7. Butterfly Report** Steve Le Fleming and Roger Norman gave a short report of the 2014 butterfly season. It is hoped that the full summary will be posted to members before the end of the summer. Roger explained that the branch hopes to have a small recording committee in place before the autumn. The chairman

thanked Roger for his report and for continuing with much of the role of Butterfly Recorder from which he had resigned last year.

**8. Conservation Officers Report.** Mike Harris reported on some of the conservation work completed by work parties organised by himself and Dave Stebbings. One of the work parties organised by Dave had been removing fir saplings from a peat bog on the Wallington Estate which was now supporting an excellent colony of Large Heath. In 2014 Mike had continued with the Northern Brown Argus project started in 2013 and asked anyone interested in this year's Northern Brown Argus surveys to contact him. Dave continues to work with two primary schools giving talks and supporting insect searches. He has helped the Wylam Community Orchard create a flower meadow by removing the grass and sowing wild flower seed. This now supports numerous butterflies and moths where there were none last year.

**Butterflies in Cumbria-Steve Doyle ( B.C.Cumbria Branch)** Steve introduced branch members to the butterflies of Cumbria by describing a season for many of the 41 butterflies species found in the county. Using his superb photographs he covered aspects of scientific information and butterfly conservation for both common and some of the country's rarest species. The description of how Marsh Fritillary was rescued from one web of 68 caterpillars to a healthy 13 colonies with over 2000 webs was one of several highlights of his talk. Steve stressed the importance of the landscape scale management projects with landowners' participation in protecting endangered species in Cumbria and other parts of the country. In addition to Marsh Fritillaries Cumbria is home to the High Brown Fritillary, Mountain Ringlet and Duke of Burgundy. Steve's entertaining talk will have encouraged members to travel to sites such as Meathop Moss to see these iconic species which don't breed in the northeast. Like Charlie Fletcher earlier in the day Steve encouraged members to visit some of the under recorded areas of the North of England where yet to be discovered colonies of rare species may exist.

**Photographic Competition** Jonathan Wallace thanked all who had entered the competition. The vote by attendees had produced a three-way tie for first place between Steve Austin's Early Thorn, Graham Beckwith's Brimstone and John Preston's picture of a Monarch. All three can be seen on the northeast branch Facebook page and will be published in the Autumn Newsletter.

Peter Webb thanked all who had contributed to a highly successful day and thanked the National trust for allowing the branch to use the Stables Centre at Gibside.

## **Event Reports - Helen McDonald, Head Ranger, Gibside, National Trust**

### **Big Butterfly Count Day at Gibside**

On Wednesday 29th July we made our Wildlife Wednesday all about the Big Butterfly Count. We set up in the Walled Garden with information, crafts and competitions to promote the Big Butterfly Count to our visitors. Butterfly Conservation volunteers along with National Trust staff and volunteers helped visiting families identify butterflies in the garden and while the children were making pipe-cleaner butterflies, we handed out butterfly recording sheets and told them all about how they could contribute to the Big Butterfly Count.

The Gibside gardeners were also on hand to give advice about encouraging butterflies and moths to gardens and one of our Rangers invited visitors to join him on a butterfly transect. Unfortunately we had several heavy showers that day and the transect was cut short. Thankfully we had a tent to shelter under in the garden.

Although the weather was poor we counted over 60 pipe-cleaner butterflies had been made and almost as many entries had been submitted into our competition to win some nectar-rich plants. So we managed to spread the message of the Big Butterfly Count and Butterfly Conservation to a good number of our visitors. Many thanks to David Stebbings and Peter Webb who came along to support us on the day, especially as England were playing in the third Ashes test that day!

### **National Moth Night**

We held a moth trapping evening on Friday 11th September as part of National Moth Night. We used one Robinson trap and one bulb and tripod on a white sheet, both in the shelter of the Walled Garden, and two ropes soaked in a wine syrup hanging from trees just outside the garden. The night was fine but cool and with a breeze at times.

We began at 8pm and by 11pm we caught just over 100 moths of 21 different species, from the light bulb, the trap, the wine ropes and five identified from leaf mines.

Thank you to everyone who came along to see what we caught and help us identify the moths. I hope everyone enjoyed the evening and found it as interesting as I did. Special thanks to Keith Dover and Tim Barker, moth recorders for Durham, for their time, equipment and expertise. They came to run both the trial night on the 10th and the event on the 11th and shared their extensive knowledge of moths and identification. We look forwards to holding similar events in the future in partnership with Butterfly Conservation.

## Projects in the North East

### Bedstraw Hawk-moth - Mark Tunmore

For many years Bedstraw Hawk-moth *Hyles gallii* has been known in the British Isles as an occasional immigrant, primarily to the east coast, which may have years of influx but generally remains one of the rarer hawk-moths to occur here, along with its congeners Striped Hawk-moth *H. livornica* and Spurge Hawk-moth *H. euphorbiae*.

Between 2002 and 2011 a total of 197 Bedstraw Hawk-moths were recorded in the British Isles (Atropos, 2015), most of which will have been immigrants; the species has remained scarce as an immigrant in 2015. Now there is strong evidence that this species has been resident in Britain for a long period of time and Northumberland is one of the few known counties where colonies are present.

I have been studying the ecology and status of this species for the last 15 years and last year the Northeast England branch of Butterfly Conservation kindly provided some assistance with the cost of fieldwork to establish the current status of the species at the sites where it is known to live. The good news is that the moth was found to be present and doing reasonably well, although it remains rare and potentially vulnerable, being apparently restricted in its distribution, hence it is not possible to name the specific location in this note.

The boldly marked caterpillars may be found in July and August, feeding upon Bedstraw and Rosebay Willowherb, which is one of the best ways to locate the species, but adults may also be attracted to light and are occasionally seen flying by day. The species continues to occur as an immigrant along the east coast of England and not every record refers to a resident population.

A full account of the ecology and status of Bedstraw Hawk-moth in the British Isles is in preparation for Atropos, the journal for butterfly, moth and dragonfly enthusiasts. I would be pleased to hear of any records of this species in either the adult or larval form which branch members may have. I can be contacted at [editor@atropos.info](mailto:editor@atropos.info)

#### Reference

Atropos, 2015 (website). Migrant Moth Totals.

[http://www.atropos.info/site/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=99&Itemid=114](http://www.atropos.info/site/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=99&Itemid=114) (accessed September 2015).

## **The Sad Demise of a Death's Head Hawk-moth - Jaci Beaven**

Some of you will know that I volunteer as a gardener at The Alnwick Garden, a pastime that I really enjoy. I have lately become the "go to" person for information on all things insect related.

Of course I cannot answer half of the questions they ask me but I can do the butterfly ones - usually!

Imagine my confusion when a very excited young gardener told me he had something to show me in the Observation Bee Hive, a large shed with a working hive behind glass to show the bees' activities to the visitors and especially the competition to spot the Queen. In an extremely large box lay the carcass of a very large winged creature that appeared to be a moth. I had never seen anything like it; the size of it was amazing. There were no scales left on the wing membranes and the body was missing but the head and thorax were intact. I was quite excited.

My immediate reaction was that it was a Death's Head Hawk-moth for there seemed to be the suggestion of a skull on the thorax. Then I thought that I was hallucinating.

I took the fragile thing home and plundered my library for moth books and, starting with my first theory, just to get it out of the way, looked up the Hawk-moth pages. Imagine my glee when I read that these huge creatures were known to raid beehives. I immediately contacted a few of the experts I know and, having been sent a photograph, they happily confirmed my diagnosis. I also informed the Moth Recorder for Northumberland, Tom Tams, who told me that there have been only two sightings of the insect in the last ten years.

The bees at The Garden are managed by one of the gardeners who takes them home to look after them over winter. The Observation Hive is then cleaned during the spring, ready for a swarm to be returned at the beginning of May. The swarm was duly brought back but the moth, which would have entered a regular hive in the previous August, could not be seen for the mass of bees surrounding it. Bees are incredibly tidy creatures and remove any detritus from their home with meticulous care. These had pushed the carcass to the bottom of the glass panel where they were trying to eject it completely. This is when, at the end of May, my young gardening friend spotted something unusual happening and called in some help. It was a tricky business to extract the moth but there was not too much damage done to the remains and none at all to the bees.

I took my prize to our Annual General Meeting and it was much admired. I still have it, in a box, on my desk with other treasured trivia.



Death's Head Hawk-moth



## Walking for 10 years - Dave Stebbings

In 2006, after I retired, I decided to establish a transect at my local patch, Havannah Nature Reserve near Hazlerigg, north of Newcastle. Therefore, 2015 marked my tenth year of walking this transect.

I thought it might be interesting to see if there have been any changes in butterfly numbers on the transect over the last ten years or if any trends are apparent from ten years' worth of data.

Firstly, what is a transect? For those who don't know, a butterfly transect involves walking the same route around an area, once a week from the beginning of April to the end of September, counting butterflies in an imaginary six feet wide corridor. Preferably in a place near where you live, as I find you may have to drop everything and go at short notice if the weather is right. The records are entered into the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme database which holds records from about 1,400.

There have been a couple of bad summers on the transect. It will come as no surprise to anyone that the awful summer of 2012 was the worst I have recorded. The total number of butterflies counted through the year was the lowest for the whole ten year period. I recorded 1,259 individual butterflies. What is perhaps more surprising is the best year in terms of overall numbers seen was the following year, 2013, when I recorded 2,935 individual butterflies. So the poor year of 2012 did not have a knock-on effect of depressing numbers the next year. Breeding success in 2012 was clearly not as bad as might have been feared in the wet summer, given the record numbers the following year. 2011 also stands out as a poor overall year, so there were in fact two consecutive bad years in 2011 and 2012. Of the remaining years 2009 and my first year 2006 were very good years in terms of overall numbers seen.

Consistent and Inconsistent Species. Something that is apparent over the years is how consistent numbers of certain species are from year to year, while others are very variable from one year to the next. For example, numbers of Small Skipper, Green-veined White, Orange Tip, Meadow Brown and Small Heath do not vary much from year to year. While Small Copper, Wall and Common Blue show large variation from year to year. In the case of the Small Copper the best year over the ten years was 2010 when I recorded 130 individuals over the summer, while in 2008 only four were seen, 2012 only five and this year, 2015, I have seen only one Small Copper on the transect all summer. For Common Blue in 2006, 2008 and 2009 I saw well over 300 individuals each year, whereas in 2011 and 2012 I saw only 47 and 26.

Two new species have appeared on the site since I started the transect in 2006. Speckled Wood and Ringlet both appeared for the first time in 2010. Both species are known to be changing their distribution in the north east. The Speckled Wood spreading north rapidly in the 2000 decade, and Ringlet filling in the gap in its distribution in southern Northumberland. Both are now well established at Havannah and Ringlet reached a new high in 2015 when I saw 242 individuals over the summer and Speckled Wood reaching a peak of 191 in 2014. It is surprising to think that these two species not recorded here before 2010 have become two of the most numerous species recorded. In my opinion the Wall is showing a worrying decline from its peak in 2009. For the first five year of the transect (2006-2010) I recorded over 100 Wall each year with an average count of 128 per year.

For the second five years (2011-2015) I recorded over 100 only once, in 2013, and the average count per year fell to 53, with 2015 being its worst year with only 14 recorded. The Small Copper is showing a similar decline from its peak in 2010, and I believe has not recovered on the site from the poor years of 2011 and 2012. A slightly worrying trend is that if I take each species and look at the year in which I recorded its lowest count, for every species that year is from 2011 onwards.

In conclusion, I have recorded 20 different butterfly species on the site while walking the transect. Of these species I would say that only Wall and Small Copper appear to be declining. Apart from Speckled Wood and Ringlet, which have increased from nil to very common, most species can be described as stable over the ten year period. I hope I can continue to walk this transect for another ten years and monitor what is happening to the butterflies on what I call my patch!

## Our Strangest Moth? - Jonathan Wallace

When we think about the caterpillars of moths and butterflies, what tends to spring to mind is a creature sitting on a plant and munching its way through the leaves until it is ready to pupate.

Whilst this basic model holds true for many of our moth species, the reality is that there is a great diversity of different caterpillar lifestyles. Not just leaves, but every other part of a typical plant from roots, to woody tissues, flowers, fruits and seeds all get eaten and then there are also species that feed on fungi, lichens, mosses as well as various kinds of detritus to name but a few. Amongst all of this fantastic diversity perhaps the oddest lifestyle belongs to the Water Veneer *Acentria ephemerella*.

The Water Veneer is a small member of the Crambidae family that can sometimes turn up at light traps in large numbers in high summer. What is strange about this moth is its aquatic life cycle. It is not the only British moth to have aquatic larvae – the China-marks also feed below the surface of the water – but the Water Veneer is unique in completing virtually the entire life cycle under water.

Males are winged and emerge for a brief flight of one or two days but the majority of females lack functional wings and mating takes place on the water surface, following which the females dive back under water to lay eggs on the food plants which include various submerged plants such as *Potamogeton*, *Elodea* and *Myriophyllum*. To add to the strangeness, a small proportion of females is winged and may fly with the males.

The Water Veneer (male) has a fairly distinctive appearance. Look out for a small moth (wing length about 6 – 8 mm) with plain greyish-white, tear-drop shaped forewings fringed with pale marginal hairs, a bluish-grey thorax and a slightly 'hump-backed' appearance.



Image credited to Thijs Calu via Flickr

## Essex Skipper (*Thymelicus lineola*) - Ian Waller

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2015, the Northeast England branch of Butterfly Conservation was alerted to a sighting of three Essex Skipper butterflies in the Greatham Creek area by Michael Wilcox via John Durkin, with two photographs of indeed Essex Skippers.

As Essex Skipper had never been recorded in the north east of England before, Mike Hunter and Ian Waller on the 24<sup>th</sup> visited the site at NZ507251 and found a total of 16 Essex Skippers (eight male and eight female) along a 400 metre stretch of roadside verge by the A178. Encouraged by this find, Mike and Ian set off to investigate immediate areas of suitable habitat around the Cowpen area. The searches were rewarded with Essex Skipper being found in every 1 km square visited apart from one at Dormans Pool and an area opposite the entrance to the RSPB reserve at Saltholme but this was due to the weather deteriorating and not lack of suitable habitat. The search at Dormans Pool did produce a Grayling though, well camouflaged by sitting on a tree branch. By the end of that day, a total of ten 1 km squares had been found with Essex Skipper present to add to the original one.



Male Essex Skipper, sex band running parallel with forewing edge.

train of thought that the Essex likes a slightly more sheltered area than its close relative. On the afternoon the weather dramatically improved but despite this and excellent habitat at South Hartlepool, using a sweep net and a camera, 30 skippers identified in a two acre area and all were Small.

On Saturday the search restarted with areas around Greatham, Graythorp and South Hartlepool explored. Essex Skipper was found at the two former places in spite of a poor morning's weather. Another Grayling was found on a brownfield site near Greatham. It took 16 Small Skippers caught and identified before hard work finally paid off as the 17th Skipper was found to be an Essex at NZ505266.

Interestingly this Skipper was found near an embankment, adding to the

Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup> July started with a visit to Teesmouth NNR and again as the previous morning in poor weather. 20 Skippers were identified as all being Small. Mike Eccles also looked at this NNR and found only Small too. Having checked three sites and 50 skippers in the east of the county over the last two days and with no Essex found Carol Davies and Ian Waller decided to search to the south of Durham having assumed that further searches around Seaton Carew would prove fruitless, for this year at least.



GPS screen shots – Portrack Marsh/River Tees area.

A short drive to the TVWT reserve of Portrack Marshes and in poor weather, two skippers found on the banks of the River Tees turned out to be Essex. All grid references were taken by GPS when Essex was found and a screen shot taken. By using this method it was seen that another 1 km sq. was only metres away. Walking back towards the Tees barrage on the north side of the river the next butterfly found was again Essex.

Ian having observed Grayling fly across the Tees from Maze Park to the north side many years ago at virtually the same point decided to search near the Tees Barrage

on the south side. Another short drive and then searching the grassy embankments near the Marshalling Yards resulted in, out of 11 Skippers found in tall vegetation, five were Essex. This, at that point, brought a total of 18 1 km squares with Essex Skipper present and by crossing the Tees into another county, a North Yorkshire record.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> July Coatham Stob was visited, again the weather was poor. Several days earlier before the discovery of Essex Skipper in the northeast, Ian Waller and Dave Lowery had spent time looking for dragonflies on this Forestry Commission woodland plantation and over 30 Skippers had been observed en masse 'mud puddling' on the edge of one of the ponds. At that time none of the skippers had been checked and were just taken to be Small! Hindsight is an amazing thing.

On re-checking the photographs from that day, all that could be identified from the shots were indeed Small. This was also the case on the 29<sup>th</sup> with all 50 Skippers being of the same species. Unknown to Ian, Mike Eccles had also visited Coatham Stob but the day after and although they had started at the same point, their chosen paths had resulted in different areas being searched for Essex. Mike identified 30 Small during his visit. So, in two consecutive days, a total of 80

skippers had been identified as all Small on this site. This is one place that Essex, if not already present, should be discovered on, probably within a year or so.



Thirteen of thirty Small Skippers mud puddling at Coatham Stob.

After Coatham, it was decided to visit Stillington, where again an intensive search, and 24 Skippers sampled, gave the same findings as Coatham, all were Small. Rain stopped any further field work but on the way back, the rain eased off. A brief visit to Thorpe Thewles County Park resulted in only two Small Skippers caught before the rain started again and called a halt to any further field work.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> July another TVWT reserve was visited by Ian, this time Bowersfield and despite suitable areas of habitat for Essex, a search that lasted nearly an hour and a rare sunny day, no skippers were positively identified. Two skippers were seen but proved too fast for the eye, net or camera. As with Coatham, there is a very good possibility Essex is already there, just undiscovered. Another TVWT reserve where there is even a greater chance of discovering Essex is Maze Park (again, if it hasn't already been found there). Diligent searches of these nature reserves should reward those looking next year.

A few minutes' drive away from Bowersfield is the new bridge at Preston-On-Tees. Right next to the road is a lay-by and a large grassland area. Bizarrely this is one of those sites where four 1 km squares meet. Out of 30 Skippers checked, four were Essex. When one Essex was found here, a very short journey of feet

was made into the next one km sq to continue the hunt. The squares were NZ4315, NZ4415, NZ4316 and NZ4416. It is possible to stand in all four squares at once, which Ian childishly did with the help of GPS!

The first day of August found Mike Hunter in the Hartlepool area visiting Summerhill Country Park but as with previous searches around Hartlepool only Small Skippers were identified, this time another 50. Later the same day an area around the A19/A689 Wolviston Roundabout was searched by Mike with better results, out of 19 Skippers, three were Essex and a new 1 km record as well. Mike bagged another new square on the same day along the A1185 with a male Essex.

The next day Mike looked at Thorpe Thewles but further north from where Ian had been. The weather was the same as the previous day, cool, cloudy and drizzle. Despite this 24 skippers were found, all Small.



Female Essex, Tees Marshalling Yard area.

Spurred on by Mike's find at the Wolviston roundabout, an area that would link discoveries up was Billingham Beck. So on the 3rd August Ian visited this area. A full day walking and looking for skippers in variable weather was rewarded with 3 1 km sq. records from nearly 30 butterflies caught and identified. The same day, Mike worked an area well outside those where Essex had been found, 54 Small Skippers at two sites at Darlington proved scant reward for hard work, but as with

the Hartlepool searches it all helped build up a picture of distribution in the northeast for Essex.

A day later Ian looked again along the River Tees, this time at Eaglescliffe. The weather was again typical of the summer, cool, broken sunshine turning to dark cloud and then rain. The route followed the river as it looped around and suitable habitat was found at the start of the walk near the bridge and pub. Highlight of the day was the number of Large and Small Whites working their way through a brassica crop but only two Small Skippers were found. Anyone wanting to search this area in 2016 could do no worse than check out the area at NZ426135. If Essex is in this 1 km sq. it should be here.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> August in good weather, for once! Mike Eccles and Ian decided to check another TVWT site for Essex Skipper, this time Gravel Hole was chosen.

Essex had been found a few days earlier to the east of the reserve at the north end of Billingham Beck C.P. but not actually on the reserve itself. This was rectified as out of 21 skippers checked, three were female Essex Skipper thus adding a new species to the reserves list.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> August, Mike found Essex in the Saltholme area, in fact in the same 1 km sq. bad weather had stopped play on the first day of the searches. Earlier in the day Mike Hunter had followed in Ian's footsteps at Billingham Beck C.P. and found two Essex's out of the four skippers checked. It had taken Ian seven Small before finding one Essex on the same site. Then Ian walking into the next 1 km sq, north westward along Billing Beck, the first skipper encountered was Essex! Continuing on to the next 1 km sq, the first skipper again was Essex but as the weather had improved and there was no time to walk back to the car and try another site, it was decided to sample the area a bit more intensively. It took another dozen Small before finding Essex again.

At the start of the first day of looking for Essex, only Essex's found were counted and no note was made of the number of Small encountered. This changed hours later north of Cowpen Bewley C.P. as it took Mike and Ian 12 Small Skippers to find one Essex. Keeping a close record of the type of skipper found has proven there is no rhyme or reason in regarding ratios, sometimes Essex was the first found when visiting an area. It was thought that at the further most edge of any expanding population that it would have taken more samples to find an Essex but in some cases it has been the first butterfly found on site. That said, pressure on time hasn't really allowed recorders to systematically work an area or nature reserve to build up a detailed picture of population, rather it's been a case of once Essex had been located, moving on to next targeted area, usually to a new 1 km sq. 1 km squares were used as the base for searches because this allowed the best area to be chosen then targeted and over a short period of time, this method helped quickly build up a picture of this insects distribution, given that poor weather, lack of free time and a limited flight period were hampering searches.

Searches continued sporadically for another few days but as numbers of skippers had dropped off dramatically after a continued period of poor, wet, cold weather, it was decided to call to an end any further explorations on the 12<sup>th</sup> August.

Hundreds of skippers had been checked and very good progress had been made in understanding the spread of this insect in our region in only eighteen days. It is thought, given the distribution of this insect, so far found, that the butterfly has been in our region for several years but has been overlooked. Theories abound as to how the insect is now in the north east. Whether it has colonised naturally, been transported into the region on a shipment of hay or such like or been released clandestinely on one or several spots then colonised suitable areas, are amongst those suggested. That said, it would appear that it has not spread northwards

from south Yorkshire as there is a gap of around 80 miles from those colonies to the ones in the south of our region. Given that Small Skipper colonised County Durham at the leisurely rate of about a mile a year, one can understand the amazement its very close relative the Essex has caused by being found north of the river Tees.

Small and Essex are very similar in appearance and can only be told apart by careful inspection, and because of this similarity, Essex was not recognised as a separate species until 1888 when a collector in Essex (hence its name) queried a specimen caught Small Skipper many years previously.

Both butterflies use the same type of habitat and can be found flying side by side in such places as brownfield sites, roadside verges, coastal embankments, forestry rides, field margins, nature reserves and such like.

Larval food plants for both species are grasses but Essex prefers Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) but can also use several other grass types. Interestingly an Essex female was observed near the Tees Barrage attempting to oviposit on Cock's-foot. Small Skipper prefers Yorkshire-fog (*Holcus lanatus*) but again can use several species.

For those who wish to look for this butterfly it is recommended that recorders use a combination of digital camera, sweep net and close focusing binoculars. It is not easy to separate Essex from Small but it is possible especially with the male of either species. Out of the three choices above, use of digital camera is the simplest and quickest and also records that it was Essex that has been seen.

Once a photograph has been taken, the key features of antennae and sex band,



Small Skipper, orange tips to antennae

on males, need to be checked and rechecked. On the Small Skipper, the tips of the antennae are usually orange but this can vary and may be a very dark brown in some cases. Looking at the insect from behind and deciding it is Essex by observing black antenna is not adequate enough to positively identify one. A front view

needs to be made and not just the tip of the antennae, the end of the antennae needs to appear black. If you turn your hand over and look at your finger nail, imagine this is the tip of the antennae, if this is orange to dark brown, you are

probably looking at Small, if your finger tip looks as if it has been dipped in black ink, it is probably Essex.

The other key feature is the sex band on the male Skippers. These are dark coloured scent scales on the upper forewing. These broadcast pheromones that are detected by females during courtship. On the Essex Skipper, it is much reduced in thickness and length when compared to the Small Skipper. Also on the Essex, the sex band runs more parallel to the forewing edge, on the Small this veers off at an angle.



Male Small Skipper

Also helping with identification is the shape of the forewing, Essex tends to be rounder and on the Small it is more pointier/sharper, but this can vary. The colour of the insect may help as well, with the Essex not as bright/golden but obviously this varies and with age all take on a dull tone. Another pointer towards the difference is that on

Essex the rear edge of the hindwings are slightly paler and so emphasizes the difference more with the inner wing to create contrast and a crisper feel but is only probably relevant in fresher individuals. That said, the best method of identification is always sex band and antennae tips.

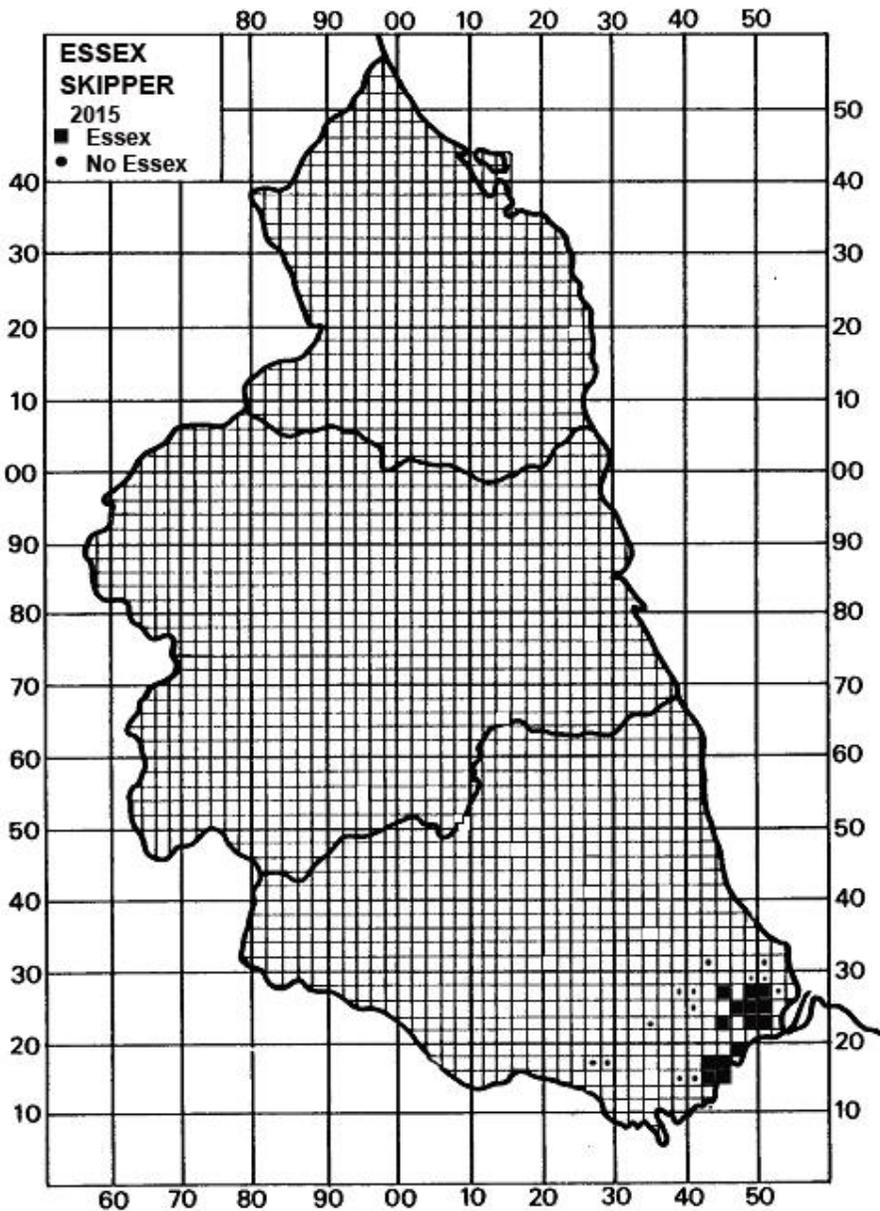
Even with all this knowledge, care needs to be taken to identify the species correctly, for example a female Skipper was seen to land on Cock's-foot grass at Stillington, walk down the stem testing it for suitability to lay eggs on, she probed the stem with tip of her abdomen, observing from behind the antennae were jet black, dipped in ink. On being netted and closely examined it actually had dark red tips to antennae. Small Skippers antennae tips vary in colour, with pale orange, to dark orange, red, brown and black tips having been found on skippers in Durham in 2015, even by changing the viewing angle, tips appearing black turn dark red. Best places to see Essex in 2016 are the Greatham Creek and Cowpen Bewley area. Those wishing to find it on new sites would be encouraged to look for it at Thorpe Thewles, Coatham Stob, Teesmouth N.N.R., Bowersfield, Eaglescliffe, and south of the Tees at Maze Park. There is also a gap in a block of 1 km sq's

that will have Essex present as all surrounding squares do! and a search of NZ4925 will prove fruitful.

Over 600 Skippers were positively identified with 64 being Essex and around 550 Small. A total of 28 1 km sq's were found to have Essex Skipper present. These being (all NZ). NZ4315, 4316, 4415, 4416, 4422, 4423, 4426, 4522, 4526, 4618, 4619, 4719, 4724, 4725, 4824, 4825, 4826, 4922, 4923, 4924, 4926, 4927, 5023, 5024, 5025, 5026, 5027, 5126.

At the moment it is probably best to record skippers as Small unless you can positively identify as Essex Skipper and provide a photograph to have your sighting verified. Please let your county butterfly recorder know your findings because even if you do not find Essex Skipper, it informs them of where it is not present and this will help determine its rate of colonisation and its distribution.

One of the great things about having an interest in nature is that one never knows what is going to turn up, but surely if anyone had suggested the discovery of a new resident butterfly species in the north east and one that has been present for several years they would have been dismissed as ludicrous predictions, yet here we are at the end of 2015 and it is the case, isn't nature wonderful?



Distribution of Essex Skipper from field work by Mike Eccles, Mike Hunter and Ian Waller.

- Essex Skipper = Present during 2015.
- No Skipper = areas searched within the tetrad and no Essex located.

## Photography Competition Results 2015

Congratulations to our three joint winners!



**Brimstone butterfly – Graham Beckwith**



**Monarch butterfly – John Preston**



**Early Thorn moth – Steve Austin**

## Pheromone Fun! - Dave Wainwright

Earlier this year I was approached by North Pennines AONB and asked whether I would lead a workshop on day flying moths. Naturally I was happy to oblige events such as these are a great way to highlight work done by BC and to recruit new recorders. The session was to involve an indoor talk followed by field trips to several sites in the vicinity of Hamsterley Forest. When the phone call came, it so happened that I was in the process of ordering a stock of pheromone lures. These lures are small pieces of rubber that have been steeped in chemical cocktails identical or similar to those produced by range of female day flying moths with the aim of attracting a mate. Males follow the scent trails released by the females from downwind until they locate the source, whereupon mating normally occurs. Suspending one of the lures in a suitable habitat can excite a similar response from passing males, who approach the lure in exactly the same fashion as if it were a female. These can then be netted and examined before being released. The method is extremely useful, as many of the species that can be attracted are particularly difficult to observe in the field, most notably the clearwings (Sesiidae). Each species produces a distinct pheromone and accordingly requires a specific lure. Sadly, there are relatively few clearwing species found in our part of the world and even these, with the exception of the Lunar Hornet Moth and for which no effective lure has been produced, are very sparsely distributed. Regardless, I still like to try out the lures for the species that are known to occur in the hope that I will one day detect a new site for one or more of them. I should add that this is yet to happen in the north east although it has elsewhere.

Anyway, while browsing the webpage of the lure supplier, I noticed that a new lure was available. This wasn't for some obscure clearwing species found only in the distant south; it was for the Emperor moth, a species which is abundant over many of our moorlands in spring. This species is easy to see (it's large and flies a bit like a drunken small tortoiseshell) but rarely settles and is consequently difficult to get a decent view of. This is a great pity as the species must surely be one of the most attractive – butterfly or moth – that can be encountered hereabouts. Immediately I recognised what the pheromone might add to the forthcoming field trips on the moors; a new approach to survey work for most of the attendees and the chance to view a spectacular species close up. Accordingly I placed my order and the small package arrived a few days after.

Now it just so happened that a couple of weeks later I was returning from a morning meeting in Helmsley and had an hour to kill before meeting Stuart Pudney from Northumbrian Water at Scaling Dam on the North York Moors. The sun was shining and I decided to stop off at Lockwood Beck to look for Green Hairstreaks. In a rare fit of preparedness, I'd also bought the lure with me. I proceeded to suspend this from the outermost branches of a stunted Scots Pine. I

proceeded to poke about nearby bilberry patches while keeping a close eye out for anything approaching the lure. Half an hour and several green hairstreaks later, the lure had elicited no response whatsoever. Disappointedly, I replaced it in its container, taking especial care to handle it as little as possible. I then placed the container in my car's glove compartment.

Twenty minutes later I arrived at Scaling Dam where Stuart and I proceeded to look at Small Pearl habitat and took the opportunity to discuss management possibilities. As we stood by a small pond something flew towards us. An Emperor! Pity the lure didn't work earlier, I thought, as the moth proceeded to flutter round our legs. After admiring the moth we both went our separate ways with me heading north to walk my weekly butterfly transect at Hedleyhope Fell. I should mention that the fell is also a good site for Emperors; indeed it's quite common to see one or two most weeks in the spring. Section one of my route starts at the site's car park, adjacent to a conifer plantation. No sooner had I noted the date, start time and commenced walking than an Emperor moth flew by. Like the one at Scaling Dam, this too proceeded to flutter around my legs. It was then joined by another that made a determined effort to gain access to my pocket. After a minute or two both flew off only to be replaced by another, this too fluttered about confusedly by proceeding on its way. Naturally it didn't take me too long to figure out that I'd impregnated my hands and probably my clothes with chemicals contained in the lure. I should stress that at no time did I handle the lure directly, only the net bag in which I'd suspended it. Clearly the moth is attracted to only the very slightest of traces. Anyway, my transect walk continued. As is typical for the site, I recorded the odd, early spring Peacock and Tortoiseshell – and 35 male Emperor moths! On my return to the car, I wound down the windows to cool down the interior while I wrote my notes. Glancing up, I saw yet another Emperor bobbing up and down in the open window, clearly attracted to the scent that must have been carried on the cross-breeze through the car. This individual refused to enter the shade of the car but continued to flutter at the open window for a minute or two longer.

As for the AONB's workshop, the weather conspired against further use of the lure – although a sharp-eyed attendee did spot a male Emperor at rest on a forest track. Indeed, I never used the lure again in 2015 but I intend to do so next year. In fact, I intend to run a BC field trip, probably to Stanley Moss, with the twin targets of Green Hairstreak and Emperor moth. This will be advertised in due course through the newsletter and the branch website. Weather permitting, it promises to be an entertaining experience!

## How to Submit Butterfly Records 2015/16

Records are the bedrock of conservation and the North East Branch welcomes records of all species, for all dates and places, and of course for all forms. Your records will go into local databases and to the national recording scheme, Butterflies for the New Millennium.

**From 2010 there will be two ways of sending your records in. For those without a home computer, the existing yellow paper casual record sheets will continue unchanged. However, if you have a PC, the Branch would urge you to send in your records using a spreadsheet such as Microsoft Excel. Each record should occupy one line and the format of the spreadsheet should look something like the following example:**

	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>
<b>1</b>	Name/s of recorder/s	NZ274423	Palace Green, Durham City	22-Aug-2015	Large White	7	
<b>2</b>	Name/s of recorder/s	NZ196858	Morpeth (riverside)	24-Sep-2015	Peacock	2	Very worn
<b>3</b>	Name/s of recorder/s	NZ2514	Baydale Beck Darlington	1-Jul-2015	Comma	1	Hutchinsoni form

**Column A** – Recorder/s names.

**Column B** - Grid reference, which should be two letters, (NT, NU, NY or NZ), followed by four or six numbers. The first two (or three) numbers are the Easting, read from the top or bottom of OS maps, the last two, (or three) numbers represent the Northing, read from either side of the map.

**Column C** - Site name. For obscure place names please include a nearby town or village.

**Column D** – Date (please try to follow the format shown)

**Column E** - The name of the species seen.

**Column F** - The number seen. The actual number is preferred rather than the letter system. For larva (L), ova (O), pupa (P) or mating (M) records, please use the code letter provided, optionally adding numbers seen.

**Column G** - For any comments you may wish to add.

Optionally, you can add a habitat code to column H if you wish.

A blank spreadsheet, with the date formatted, is available by contacting the recorders. Electronic records are most easily sent as an email attachment. However, you can also send them in by post on CD or memory stick. The deadline for records to be included, and credited, in the 2015 Annual Report is 30 November 2015. Depending on where you live, please send records to:

### DURHAM

By post to:  
Steve Le Fleming  
7 Albert Street  
Durham  
DH1 4RL

### NORTHUMBERLAND

By post to:  
Michael Perkins  
71 Broadway West  
Gosforth  
Newcastle  
NE3 2NH

OR by email to Ian Waller [aeshna@hotmail.com](mailto:aeshna@hotmail.com)

OR email [mjp514@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mjp514@yahoo.co.uk)

## How to Submit Moth Records 2015/16



Over 1200 species of moth have been recorded in our region, some common and widespread, others represented by very few, or in some cases, only a single record. Submitting records of moths helps to improve our understanding of the distribution and abundance of these fascinating insects and to enable potential problems they may be experiencing to be detected. Separate databases are maintained for Durham and Northumberland and records should be submitted to the appropriate recorder depending on where they are made. In all cases the following information should be recorded:

<b>Species name:</b>	Please indicate scientific and (where there is one) common names.
<b>Location:</b>	Where the moth was recorded.
<b>Grid reference:</b>	Ideally a six-figure grid reference for the location.
<b>Vice County:</b>	66 for Durham, 67 for South Northumberland and 68 for North Northumberland.
<b>Date :</b>	For light trapping records the convention is that the date should be that of the evening when the trap is set rather than the morning when it is emptied.
<b>Recorder:</b>	Name of the person who caught/observed the moth(s).
<b>Determiner:</b>	The name of the person who identified the moth(s) (if different to the recorder).
<b>Life cycle stage:</b>	i.e. adult, pupa, caterpillar or egg.
<b>Quantity:</b>	The number of each species recorded.
<b>Method:</b>	Type of trap, field record, or how the moth was caught.

### Durham (Vice County 66)

Records should be submitted to either of the joint moth recorders for Durham:

#### Keith Dover

4 Lindisfarne Avenue  
Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham  
e-mail: [k.dover879@btinternet.com](mailto:k.dover879@btinternet.com)

#### Tim Barker

Tap and Spile, 27 Front Street  
Framwellgate Moor, Durham  
e-mail: [tim@tapandspile.co.uk](mailto:tim@tapandspile.co.uk)

A spreadsheet for the submission of moth records for County Durham can be downloaded from [www.northeast-butterflies.org.uk/recording](http://www.northeast-butterflies.org.uk/recording)

### Northumberland (Vice County 67 and Vice County 68)

Records should be submitted to **Tom Tams**, the moth recorder for Northumberland, 191 Links Road, Tynemouth, Northumberland. Tel: 0191 272 8499  
e-mail: [tomsphotos@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:tomsphotos@hotmail.co.uk) or [recorder@northumberlandmoths.org.uk](mailto:recorder@northumberlandmoths.org.uk)

Full details for submitting records in Northumberland, including a downloadable spreadsheet are given at [www.northumberlandmoths.org.uk](http://www.northumberlandmoths.org.uk).

### Validation

It is important that records are accurate and based on correct identifications and one of the responsibilities of the County Recorders is to scrutinise submitted records and check that this is the case. For any records of rare species, easily confused species or records of species that are outside their usual geographic range or flight period they may ask for supporting evidence to be supplied before the record is accepted. Suitable evidence may include good quality photographs, or sight of the actual specimen (moths can be kept captive for a day or two in a pot in a cool place without being harmed).

## Butterfly Conservation Safety Note

As with any other activity, there are hazards in the countryside and everyone taking part in a Field Trip or Working Party has a responsibility, for their own safety and that of others. We always ensure that our events present no greater hazard than any other walk in the countryside, but please note and act on the following:

1. The leader will provide a briefing on the trip before setting out, with details of any known hazards, and will give advice on what to do in an emergency. Please listen carefully.
2. At the briefing, let the leader know if a) you have a mobile telephone and are able to take it with you on the walk, and b) if you have a first aid qualification.
3. Wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Stout shoes are a minimum requirement for any walk.
4. In sunny weather take a hat, use sun cream or protection for exposed skin. Make sure that you have adequate food and liquid to drink with you.
5. When on a walk, look out for any hazards – rabbit holes, fallen or hanging branches, barbed wire, boggy areas etc.
6. Children are welcome on our walks, but if under the age of 16 must be accompanied by at least one adult for two children. It is the responsibility of the accompanying adult(s) to ensure that the trip is within the children's capability.
7. Dogs are normally welcome on our walks, but must be kept under control.
8. If you are uncertain about any details of the trip, ring the leader/contact in advance. If you decide to leave the trip early, please tell the leader.
9. Take care at all times and above all ENJOY YOURSELF.

Thank you to all who have contributed to this edition of our Newsletter. Our new members might like to know that there are two Newsletters each year and we are always delighted to include any articles, letters, photos or drawings that any member cares to submit.

If you have a question or observation on a butterfly or moth related subject, how about writing to our LETTERS PAGE; or if you are electronic, send an e-mail.

Copy dates are unquestionably:

1<sup>st</sup> March ..... April Edition

1<sup>st</sup> October..... November Edition

Contributions should be sent to the Editor at this address:

E-mail: [passiflora2710@gmail.com](mailto:passiflora2710@gmail.com)

The Committee of North East England Branch would be very interested to hear from any Members who have ideas and suggestions for site visits, conservation opportunities or anything of interest within the Branch area.

Any Member of the Branch who has a particular skill to offer, and feels able to give their services, would also be welcomed.

A list of Committee members can be found on the back page of this Newsletter.



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**Serving Committee Members for 2015-2016**

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Company limited by guarantee, registered in England (2206468)  
Registered Office: Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5QP  
Charity registered in England & Wales (254937) and in Scotland (SCO39268)



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