



North East England Branch



President Sir David Attenborough CH. FRS

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

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Butterfly Conservation

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Cover Photo: a female Common Blue *Polyommatus icarus* (Jonathan Wallace)

Autumn Newsletter

Welcome to our newsletter number 34! The summer of 2016 has perhaps not been a vintage one for butterflies (or sun-bathers!) but in the brief periods of fine weather (and frequently in less promising conditions) people have been out and about across the region recording butterflies and moths, adding to our store of knowledge and having diverse experiences in the process, some of which are reflected in this issue.

We often cast our eyes enviously towards places with richer lepidopteran faunas than our own and Peter Webb provides an account of some of the exciting species he has seen on his travels abroad. As Ian Waller's account of his best day of the summer shows, though, it is possible to see plenty of great butterflies here too when the weather is favourable! Likewise, Tom Tams' account of an exciting moth discovery in his own back garden and Jaye Scott's summary of her study of the Dingy Skipper show that we still have plenty to learn about our moth and butterfly fauna.

I am very grateful to all of the contributors and hope that you enjoy reading this newsletter. Contributions for the next newsletter will be gratefully received and I would stress that everyone is welcome to contribute whether expert or beginner or somewhere in between.

Production of the newsletter was slightly delayed this Autumn and as a result it may not reach members until after the AGM and Members Day (see page 15) in which case we apologise sincerely. If it does reach you before 9 October then we hope to see you there!

Jonathan Wallace, Editor

Please note that submission deadlines for the newsletter are:

Spring edition: 1st March Autumn edition: 1st September.

Chairman's Report.

Peter Webb

Travelling to other countries has the additional excitement for anyone interested in butterflies and moths of providing an opportunity to see species which otherwise you would only read about in books. In this newsletter are two short articles which I hope give a little idea of this. I am writing this at the end of August, after a challenging summer for butterfly watchers in the UK and the clear blue sky and warm sunshine of the south of France is a somewhat distant memory.

As you may have read in this summer's Butterfly magazine this year marks the 40th anniversary of the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme which provides accurate measures of annual butterfly abundance at site and national levels. At a local level you will have received your copy of the branch's butterfly summary for 2015 which also included a summary of moth records for VC 66. The records we contribute not only increase our understanding of butterflies and moths but also allow evidence-based conservation to take place.

The annual summary is produced by a small group of volunteers and we should all recognise the amount of work involved. In particular I would like to thank the writers of the species reports, Anne Donnelly who edited the summary and Steve Le Fleming who wrote this year's introduction. Steve is resigning from the committee after more than ten years of coordinating records and helping to write the summary. In his recorder's review, at the beginning of the summary you will have read of the particular difficulties in compiling the annual summary for 2015. To assist the recorders and the summary editor, but also to avoid delaying the publication of the report, a number of deadlines have been set for this year. The most important for branch members is that: ALL records for inclusion in the 2016 Summary must be received by the recorders by 30th November.

During the autumn the branch always welcomes new members following the Big Butterfly Count. Many of you will have taken part in a butterfly survey for the first time and may be new to the pleasures and excitement of looking for butterflies and moths. This can be especially challenging in the North East because of the uncertainty of our climate.

The branch has been using a number of ways of communicating with members. Information about branch events, which are often weather dependent are shown on the website (www.northeast-butterflies.org.uk) with reminders or updates sent by email where possible. Facebook is useful as a means of providing up to date information and allows members the opportunity to share information or report unusual sightings. I have only started to use the branch facebook page recently but have enjoyed sharing member's excitement when an unusual butterfly or moth appears. The appearance of a White Letter Hairstreak in a North East garden in a built up area or a stunning picture of an Elephant Hawk Moth, are wonderful encouragement to run the moth trap or go out and see what can be found. I would appreciate your views on communication within the branch.

It is important for the future of both the branch and Butterfly Conservation nationally that members continue to submit records of their observations but also get more involved by helping with the production of the annual report by writing one of the species report or writing an article for the newsletter or bringing some ideas to the branch by joining the committee.



Brown Argus. Photo: Ian Waller

Assessing the Habitat Requirements of the Dingy Skipper (*Erynnis tages*) in South Tyneside.

Jaye L Scott.

As a MSc student in Biodiversity Conservation and Ecosystem Management at Newcastle University I found myself looking for a research topic in 2014. I had recently returned from an ecological expedition in Transylvania, Romania where I had been leading a team of students in a series of butterfly surveys. I knew that this was something I was interested in and would like to pursue further. After a series of conversations with Dave Wainwright I found the perfect topic – something which was equally interesting to myself and relevant to my local environment. This is how I found myself searching for the Dingy Skipper in the summer of 2016.

The Project

The Dingy Skipper (*E. tages*) is declining nationwide though maintains a stable distribution in North East England. It is allocated high Butterfly Conservation Priority and is a Biodiversity Action Plan species (medium priority) with an aim to halt decline, maintain viable networks of populations and restore its 1950s range. To help meet this goal it is imperative to understand the underlying factors behind its abundance, which is where the North East's stable populations come in particularly handy. While studies have been undertaken the habitat requirements of the Dingy Skipper are still largely unknown, and it is not understood what limits the species distribution despite the wide distribution of its host plant.

a *Lotus corniculatus*



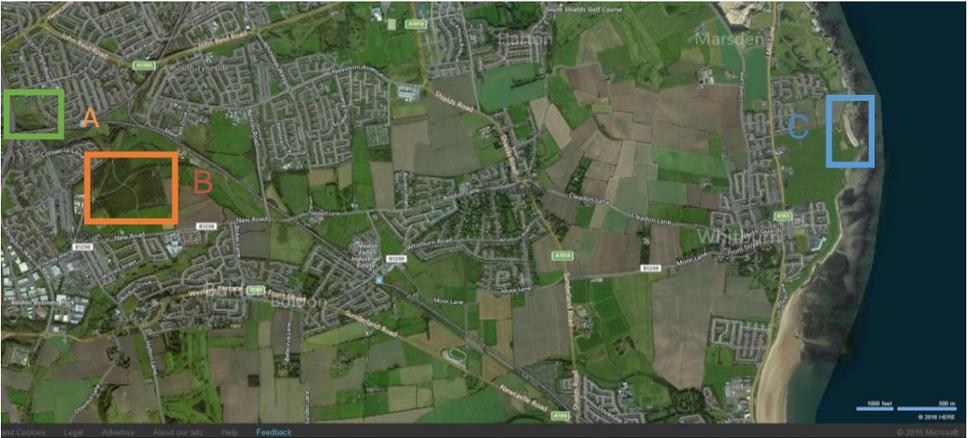
b *Erynnis tages*



Figure.1: The distribution of *Lotus corniculatus* (the dingy skipper's host plant) and the dingy skipper in the UK. (Taken from: Gutierrez, D., Thomas, C. D., & Leon-Cortes, J. L. (1999). Dispersal, distribution, patch network and metapopulation dynamics of the Dingy Skipper butterfly (*Erynnis tages*). *Oecologia*, 121, 506 – 517).

In order to encourage a precautionary approach to conservation, a range of factors highlighted in the literature were tested to assess their effect on Dingy Skipper abundance in South Tyneside, while attempting to identify any other factors which have not yet been identified. The factors identified in the literature were; an intermediate proportion of bare ground, short sward length and presence of host and food plants.

I set up a series of short transects in three local sites; Colliery Wood, Station Burn and Jackie's Beach. I knew the species had been spotted in each of these sites, and was informed the population at Colliery Wood was good but struggled to find much information on the other two. This gave me the opportunity to not only test habitat factors, but to report on the species' current status in each site. Transects were set up in areas containing bird's foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), the species' host plant, and were visited each day until the dingy skipper emerged and official counts began.



An aerial view of the three study sites located in South Tyneside. A= Station Burn; B=Colliery Wood; C = Jackie's Beach.

From May – June I surveyed all 18 transects, testing relationships by applying the well-established, standardized Pollard Walk alongside vegetation sampling utilising quadrats and desk based research into site history and management.

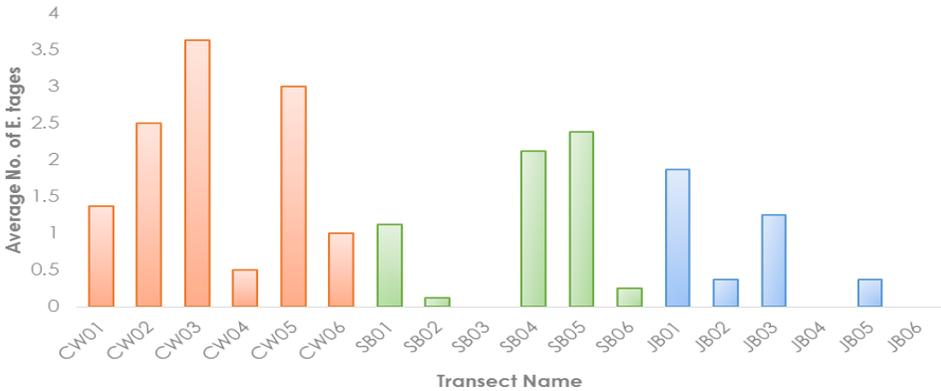


Figure.2: The average number of dingy skippers found at each 10m transect. colours represent each site; orange is Colliery Wood (CW), green in Station Burn (SB) and blue is Jackie's Beach (JB). A total of 10 surveys were carried out.

Figure.2 shows the basic results of my study, this is the average number of Dingy Skippers recorded in each one of the 10m transects across the entire survey. It is clear to see that Colliery Wood held the richest abundance of Dingy Skippers, with Station Burn and Jackie's Beach being more or less equal in richness.

The study uncovered some statistically significant relationships between the Dingy Skipper and habitat factors, in particular tree presence, vegetation height and bare ground coverage. There was a positive correlation between Dingy Skipper numbers and the number of trees nearby the transects, this was clearest in Station Burn where only SB04 and SB05 were located near trees – these two transects had the highest abundance at that site by far (**Figure.2**). The role of trees in providing a suitable habitat for the Dingy Skipper is likely to be its usefulness for shelter from adverse weather and potential weather as the species is not known to feed on any tree species.

Vegetation height was also important, 1-20cm appeared to be the perfect height range for the Dingy Skipper, with an average of 3.5 individuals spotted in these transects. This is a medium sward, which is often said to be preferred by the species. Transects with longer grass had a much lower abundance of dingy skippers, with an average of 0.9 individuals spotted.

Finally, bare ground also appeared to be important. Transects with 11-30% bare ground held the highest abundance of Dingy Skipper. This coincides with the literature which found an intermediate proportion to be favoured. Bare ground warms up faster than the surrounding vegetation, creating a warmer microclimate which is essential for egg laying and basking.

Table.1: Factors highlighted in the study and a description of their suitability for *E. tages* habitat.

Factor	Suitability
Vegetation Height	Medium turf preferred (5-20cm).
Bare Ground	An intermediate level is preferred (11-30% in this study).
<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	Presence of the host plant critical to sustaining <i>E. tages</i> populations though no relationship regarding abundance was found.
Other Plants	<i>Trifolium pratense</i> holds a positive relationship with <i>E. tages</i> though no definitive explanation was found.
Trees	Presence of trees was the most significant factor in this study, a separate study is required to determine which species and management provides the optimum habitat.

To summarize, vegetation height and bare ground were both shown in the literature and in the study to be essential for proving a suitable habitat for Dingy Skippers. Tree presence was not reported as an essential factor but appears to be the most significant in this study. Host and foodplant abundance did not correlate at all with Dingy Skipper numbers but its presence is undoubtedly integral to providing a suitable habitat.

I would suggest that tree cover and composition be investigated further in relation to the dingy skipper; factors such as tree species, management and shading may well have influence on the number of dingy skippers at a site and could be key to providing a suitable habitat.

It was important to remember that factors tended to give an optimum range rather than a correlation – in other words a particular proportion is favoured rather than ‘the more the better’. For Dingy Skipper conservation it is therefore essential to ensure this mosaic of factors is provided rather than simply increasing the magnitude of any one factor in particular.

Growing cabbages for Butterflies. Dave Stebbings

Last year my sister told me a story of how the sprouts she was growing in her garden had been devastated by Large White caterpillars. Nobly she left them to carry on feeding and watched them grow. In early October she observed the caterpillars crawl across her patio, up the side of the house and pupate high up under the eaves of the house. They spent the winter there to emerge in early spring this year as adults.

Inspired by this story I thought I might have a go at growing cabbages specifically to attract the so called 'Cabbage Whites' into my garden to breed. Rather than requiring specific habitats the Small and Large Whites are generalists and roam the countryside looking for plants of the Brassica family on which to lay their eggs. It is difficult to get most butterflies to breed in gardens but the Small White and Large White are species which are easy to attract and get to breed in small gardens by growing Brassicas.

In early April I bought a packet of cabbage seeds and planted them out in small pots in a mixture of compost and soil from the garden. By mid-May I had about twenty plants which I transplanted to large pots to keep them off the ground and make it more difficult for slugs and snails to get at them. By August I had some well-developed cabbages just waiting for the arrival of the late summer generation of Whites. Sure enough the scent of the Brassicas attracted Small Whites first. They lay their pale yellow bottle shaped eggs singly, usually on the underside of cabbage leaves. It was interesting to watch the females laying; they fluttered around the plants inspecting them closely but not landing. They laid their eggs by dabbing their abdomen onto the leaf while still in flight. So far I have dozens of Small White eggs and about ten caterpillars feeding. The Small White caterpillars are vulnerable to predation by birds and I have noticed caterpillars disappearing which I presume have been eaten by birds. To counter this they are beautifully camouflaged, being the same shade of green as the cabbage leaves. They also align themselves along the ribs of the leaves when not feeding, making them quite difficult to find.

The Large White butterflies and caterpillars behave quite differently. The female lands to lay her eggs and spends a few minutes laying a batch of up to 100 bright yellow eggs. In contrast to the camouflaged caterpillars of

the Small White, the Large White caterpillars boldly display themselves on the plants, their vivid yellow and black markings advertising that they are poisonous. Unlike the Small White they can absorb mustard oils from Brassicas and store them in their bodies making them unappetising to birds. So far I have only seen one batch of 19 Large White eggs on my cabbages.

At the time of writing the caterpillars are feeding and growing on the cabbages, although I have put some netting over the plants to protect the Small White caterpillars from birds. It remains to be seen if I can follow their progress when they look for pupation sites in the autumn. Being able to study their behaviour at close quarters made me realise there is more to these butterflies than meets the eye. So often just dismissed as pests or just another White, they are in fact fascinating insects to watch at close quarters, and one of the few that are easy to study in your garden.



Left: a batch of Large White eggs. Right: a Small White caterpillar.
Photos: Dave Stebbings.

A New Moth Species Breeding in the UK

Tom Tams

In the previous newsletter (Newsletter 33) I reported how the 2nd and 3rd British records of a pyralid moth *Vitula edmandsii* (Packard, [1865]) were obtained at Souter Lighthouse, Co Durham and Howdon, Northumberland, respectively in 2015. On 4th June this year I caught another adult *Vitula edmandsii* in the Robinson trap, in my garden in Tynemouth, representing the 4th British record. As it was worn, a genitalia dissection was performed which confirmed that it was a female of this species

These records were exciting enough but I was amazed when, on 20 June, I observed a “calling” female at the entrance to a bird nest box occupied by *Bombus hortorum* bees. Nineteen individuals emerged from the nest box on the 22 June and moths have continued to emerge throughout the summer and at the time of writing a total of 103 individuals have been recorded. I assembled five “calling” females to males which were attracted to the female pheromones on the 23 June. After mating occurred all were released back into the garden.

Once the bumble-bees had finished breeding and the colony broken up I was able to open up the nest box for closer examination and was rewarded with the discovery of around 80 pink larvae, (the larvae feed on wax and nest detritus). Ten have been bred through, allowing photographs to be taken of the larval and pupal stages – to my knowledge the first such images to be obtained anywhere.

This represents the first breeding record of this species in the UK. Originally a North American species, *V. edmandsii* has been established in Germany and a number of neighbouring countries since the 1950s, where it is believed that it was accidentally introduced in cargo ships unloading in the Baltic ports.

During the summer there have also been records of *Vitula edmandsii* in light traps in Howdon (John Hall), approximately five kilometres from my garden, as well as one site in Whitley Bay (M & N Tuck) and it must be suspected that there are other undetected nests in the Tyneside region in addition to the one in my garden. It may pay to look closer at any bee

colonies especially during the evening for any signs of emergence of this pyralid moth. I would be very keen to hear any other sightings.

A more detailed account of this discovery is in preparation for publication in the Entomological Gazette.

Tom Tams

Northumberland VC67/68 moth recorder (contact details for Tom and for the County Moth Recorders in VC 66 (Durham) are given on page 38 of the Newsletter).



A group of five *Vitula edmandsii* emerging from the nest-box.



A mating pair of *Vitula edmandsii*.

Photos by T J Tams.

Members' Day and AGM

To be held in the Stables Learning and discovery Centre at Gibside National Trust, Rowlands Gill on Sunday 9th October 2016

Programme

Arrive at 10.00am . Entry on the day is free, but please tell reception staff you are coming to "the butterfly day". A shuttle bus is available if you don't want to walk up to the stables. Coffee or tea will be provided at the stables on arrival and after lunch.

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- 10.30 Inspection of the Gibside moth trap to see moths captured overnight.
- 11.00 Talk on moths by Dave Wainwright (BC Senior Regional Officer for the North of England)
- 11.45 North East England Moth Report
- 12.00 Annual General Meeting (to include Annual Chairman's report and Conservation Officers' reports)
- 12.30 pm Lunch (bring a picnic or alternatively purchase food from Gibside Café)
- 1.30 North East England Butterfly Report
- 1.45 Guest speaker: "Emergence time" Allan Rodda (Branch Conservation Officer, Yorkshire Branch)
- 2.45 Guest Speaker: "Conserving Threatened Butterflies and Moths at the Landscape Scale " Sam Ellis (Butterfly Conservation Director of Conservation and Regions)
- 3.45 Results of the Photographic Competition and closing comments

All members are invited to bring or email original photographs of **British Butterflies and Moths** for a **photographic competition**. Photographs can be emailed to Jonathan Wallace (jonathan@cherryburn.com) by 1st October or given to him before 11 am on the day (size no larger than 10" by 8").

Please notify Peter Webb (apwebb546@gmail.com or 01833 650772) if you plan to attend.

Notes on some 2016 Field trips Ian Waller

4th June 2016 Bishop Middleham - Transect Training Day

Although it was very poorly attended, I am pleased to say that following the event the two members who took part have set up a transect at the Spetchells. We wish Sue and Chris the best of luck with their transect. After the training, we found possibly the first Northern Brown Argus of the year.

24th June 2016 Coatham Stob - Field trip for Forester moth

In spite of poor weather Forester moths were found before the heavens opened. The cold weather conditions meant that insect activity was scarce but Large Skippers were quite common when it brightened up. After the Forester, probably the highlights of the day were Broad-bodied Chaser and Four-spotted Chaser that kept us entertained while visiting some of the ponds on this site.

2nd July 2016 Sherburn Hill - Field trip for Northern Brown Argus & Dark Green Fritillary

Again the weather was overcast and rainy which was a shame for this was the best attended field trip of the summer. Half a dozen Northern Brown Argus were found but no Dark Green Fritillaries. There was still enough of the vast floral display of Columbine to be appreciated and Bee Orchids were in evidence too. This is a beautiful site and worth the effort of several visits over the course of a year. It was found rock-rose had been damaged by grass cutting and that an area of sea plantain had also been destroyed.

23rd July 2016 Cowpen Bewley - Field trip for Essex Skipper & White-letter Hairstreak

What was possibly the first Essex Skipper of the year was found on this field trip minutes before the walk began. Barry Johnson had arrived early and found the species in an area near the car park. One was captured and temporarily placed in a plastic container so all could see an Essex Skipper close-up. A few minutes later as we were standing under an elm talking about the habits of the White-letter Hairstreak, surreally one descended

and landed within feet of the group! Both target species had been seen by all just 10 minutes into the field trip. Time to go home! Of course we carried on and time was spent explaining the differences between Small and Essex Skipper after which all those who attended felt confident in telling the two apart. The next three skippers seen were Essex and this reserve is probably the easiest to visit if others want to see this butterfly next year. Also noteworthy was the weather: the sun shone for once.

24th July 2016 Coatham Stob - Search day for Essex Skipper, White-letter Hairstreak, Purple Hairstreak

The plan was to locate the three target species, none of which had been recorded at Coatham before although the habitat is more than suitable. Of course things didn't go quite to plan: a week before the event, I walked around Coatham to work out an optimum route for the day and bumped into four White-letter Hairstreaks. I'd rather they had waited till the field trip before being discovered there! Of course on the day of the event, it rained. White-letter was present again. Over 100 Skippers were checked by the group but all were Small. Wall was an unexpected discovery as the habitat does not look suitable at all for this species. Those who attended will remember standing in the rain looking in vain at a woodland edge of oaks. I had suggested that the south west position and maturity of trees screamed "Purple Hairstreak" and on a subsequent return visit this was confirmed when I found at least four Purple Hairstreaks! It is intended there will be a return field trip here in 2017 with the same three target species plus late summer dragonflies.

14th August 2016 Smaredale Gill - Field trip for Scotch Argus & Northern Brown Argus

The weather wasn't great, but nothing new there! No Northern Brown were seen but good numbers of Scotch Argus were noted with over 40 in total and plenty of opportunity for photographs. It was hoped Dark Green Fritillary would be found but they were absent. Stone-berry was a notable find - quite easy if you know where to look on this site but still a rare plant.

I would like to thank those attended these field trips. It is always a pleasure to meet members in the field and it was great to make some new acquaintances this year and meet with friends from years ago. The field

trips are I hope informative and friendly, a chance to see butterflies that may be elusive and meet other like-minded butterfly enthusiasts. It was particularly pleasing to see the same members returning for another event and I hope you will return in 2017. To those who have never attended one, these are friendly events and whether you know nothing or very little about butterflies, you are very welcome to come along, but please bring the sun.

Wine roping for White-letter Hairstreak

Michael Perkins

Our home patch of Northumberland represents the maximum northern range of White-letter Hairstreak in the UK. Populations of this small cryptic butterfly have declined significantly across the UK (-96% abundance 1976-2014). The lifestyle of this butterfly doesn't lend itself to accurate recording, spending much of its time as it does, at the tops of elms and as such numerous populations are likely overlooked.

With this in mind, I greeted anecdotal reports of White-letter Hairstreak being attracted to wine roping with a cautious optimism. Lepidopterists have known for several centuries that sweet smelling solutions are an alluring attraction for many species of moth and butterfly. White-letter Hairstreak however was not previously known as one of those species. If this survey method could be found to be useful, it could prove a valuable tool in aiding recording of this enigmatic species.

Not having any prior experience of wine-roping I purchased a bottle of merlot, and added half to a recommended internet concoction including treacle and honey; the other half of the merlot being put to good use elsewhere. Two visits to the Chester-le-street A1 roundabout followed, known for a reasonably large colony, but alas none of the target butterflies were tempted to come down from the tree tops. With limited survey time available, it was hard to take anything conclusive away but hopefully further research will follow next year and I'd be very keen to hear if anyone has observed this behaviour or observes it in the future.

Thoughts on Moth Trapping – Steve Austin

So you are thinking of investing in a Moth Trap? Perhaps you have been looking at some of the moth-related articles that appear in Butterfly Conservation and a small thought has switched on inside your head “that looks interesting” – but then the doubts start to creep in and you see the price of a moth trap and think “why no” – “far too expensive”, and “have I really got enough time”. Can I write a few lines regarding moths and trapping as I went through this dilemma myself when I purchased my Robinson 125w Mercury a few years ago?

Running a moth trap is enormous fun, some of the moths that have appeared in my trap are nothing short of spectacular in size, shape and colour. There is nothing I could say that would do justice to the feeling you experience when, if you are lucky you go to the trap in the morning – look inside and see your first Elephant Hawk Moth. The thrill still exists when you see the third or fourth, by the way.

Some others that are impressive in colour have included a Ruby Tiger with its bright red legs and the Swallow-tailed Moth almost defies description. The thing is you never really know what will appear until you inspect the catch. Also, contrary to common belief, there are a huge number of moths that are brightly coloured and superbly marked. Beautiful Golden Y is named so for a reason, Buff Arches, Peach Blossom and Herald are all worthy of note and they have all visited my trap here in County Durham at some time. Brimstone Moths may be common but are always a delight, along with others like Burnished Brass and Spectacle that regularly appear.

I also enjoy noting and counting the moths and sending the results to the moth recorder at the end of the season knowing that my findings will be appreciated and end up in a national database: my little contribution to the monitoring of the planet. I still struggle at times with identification but always get helpful and friendly advice when I email another photo that I cannot recognise to the experts. I suppose that I am lucky in having a half decent digital camera and a macro lens and photography is one of my many hobbies. And to be fair you do need to be able to get a good shot of some of the micro moths, so as to give the determiner a chance of identifying the moths that you can't find in the book.

The nice thing about some moths is that they can be pretty dormant first thing in the morning, which gives you a chance to set up the camera on a tripod and you also have time to think about the shot, butterflies fluttering about are a much harder target.

Talking about books, it should also be mentioned that this may be another expense but then you will be then able to page through your field guide looking for a new moth that you may have never seen before. The field guide to Moths of Great Britain and Ireland by Waring, Townsend & Lewington is a very good book.

I really should say at this point that the Robinson is a very bright light and if you run it then the light may shine through your window at night and light up the bedroom even with heavy curtains. With this in mind you may also want to consider the neighbours. A timer is also a good idea and they are readily available and fairly cheap and then you can control the amount of time the trap is on for.

I may never be an expert but with each season I think I am getting a little better at identification. There are other traps available but I can't comment on these as I have not seen one running – but they are an alternative and cost less than the Robinson. Perhaps the best way to look at it is to compare the cost and with this in mind – a trap is cheaper than a football club season ticket and costs about the same as one hundred pints of beer. It would also make a really nice Christmas or birthday present.

Editor's note: The 'Robinson' trap, equipped with a mercury vapour (MV) lamp is generally regarded as the most effective trap design available. As Steve notes, however, it is also the most expensive and it does not necessarily best serve the needs of all trappers. Actinic lamps (the blue fluorescent lamps of the type commonly seen in fly traps in food shops) have the advantage that they can run off a battery (and therefore be operated away from a mains supply) and the less bright light that they produce may be more acceptable in situations where neighbours overlook your garden. Some trap designs such as the 'Skinner' can be home-made with fairly basic DIY skills and designs can be found on the web. The smaller catches in these types of traps may also be more manageable for the beginner! In short it is worth considering your own needs carefully before making your choice and choosing accordingly. The possibility of borrowing a trap is also worth looking into.

Observations of the Small Copper

Ron Henderson.

Despite its diminutive size the Small Copper, *Lycaena phlaeas*, is a beautiful butterfly that can at times be elusive. It has two emergences per year, the first in May and the second in August with, occasionally, a third emergence in September. It can be found on waste grassland, old quarries and meadows where the larval food plants Sheep's Sorrel and Common Sorrel grow.

Frustratingly it is usually only seen in ones and twos and in 2015 it was particularly elusive. I personally saw only three examples in all of that year; one in Cumbria and singles at Gateshead. This year, almost having given up hope of seeing one locally, it was not until the 13th of August that I saw my first one feeding on Ragwort at Lamesley Pastures, Gateshead. Thereafter examples were seen on every visit right through to September with the maximum number recorded being ten on the 23rd of August. Most of the Small Coppers at Lamesley were of the blue spotted aberrant form 'caeruleo-punctata' but on 23 August an individual of the rare white form was also spotted.

The butterflies were distributed randomly throughout the site with no particularly centralised location and were commonly found feeding on thistle, Ragwort, Clover and Vetches or resting on the top of grass stalks. In one area they were commonly found resting on the ground basking in the sun with wings fully open and are, with care easy to photograph. When disturbed they will fly off and often return back to the same area but others will disappear never to be seen again.

On the same day that the white form was found at Lamesley a visit was made to Raisby Way, County Durham where six Small Coppers were quickly seen, all resting on the bare earth or crawling over low herbage perhaps depositing eggs and occasionally taking flight in pursuit of a Wall butterfly. Having enjoyed the delight of watching the butterflies and starting to make the journey home another small butterfly was noted at ground level, a rare white form ab. *Schmidtii*. Its habits fluctuated between basking on the ground and feeding on Scabious flowers and it was

something of a great thrill for two of this form to appear in the north east on the same day.

It was recently published in the national press of the Small Tortoiseshell's reduction in numbers but in the case of the Small Copper, certainly from personal observations, it has had a good year in 2016.



White form of the Small Copper (*L. phlaeas* ab. *Schmidtii*) Photo: R Henderson.

As I Walked Out One Morning... Ian Waller

Apologies to Laurie Lee, but I did, and although my journey on the 16th of August was certainly not as epic, lengthy or noteworthy as his, in the context of the northeast it did have many notable points.

Doubtless many of us have complained about the weather this year. Day after day, rain, cloud or cold was served up, sometimes all three together, ruining our all-too-short summer. How I yearned for the golden summers of our youth, which we are told, did not happen. Apparently we just made-up the continuous run of blistering hot sunny days, playing in buttercup-filled meadows where we discovered Meadow Browns in the long lush rich grass and yellow and black tartan-patterned Small Tortoiseshell caterpillars on patches of nettles. Our rose-tinted glasses may embellish our past, but I am certain that the summers were actually better - good grief: even last year's poor offering was preferable to this year's dish.

Of course back in former times, the northeast of England was more species impoverished (is that an oxymoron?) than it is now: no Commas flashing gingerly (or should that be boldly?) along the hedgerow, no Speckled Woods waiting to meet and greet you by the entrance to every dim woodland path or dancing merrily in the first dappled area of that forest, no Essex Skipper, to dart over waist high grasses taking delight in confusing lepidopterists trying to discern whether they actually are Essex or the very closely related Small Skipper. Even Small Skipper was missing from our species list forty years ago. Hard to imagine now.

It was the pursuit of one of the new species to make its way to Co. Durham that led to very possibly my best day's 'butterflying' of 2016. There have been a few personal highlights: a couple of Dark Green Fritillary and a run of several weeks of White-letter Hairstreak at Raisby; Brown Argus ovipositing at Bishop Middleham Quarry; the discovery of several new locations for the Purple Hairstreak and the surreal experience of leading a field trip where almost by magic a White-letter Hairstreak descended from the heavens to land within six feet of everyone as I was explaining how it is possible with luck to find this elusive species at Cowpen Bewley! But the butterfly I sought this August day was the newest resident to our region, the Essex Skipper.

After excellent progress had been made to ascertain the distribution of the Essex Skipper in Co. Durham in 2015 and the opportunity was appreciated to watch and learn from a 'new' butterfly that most would only see briefly while on holiday in another part of England, 2016 was frustrating to say the least. The week leading up to the field trip on the 23rd July at Cowpen Bewley for Essex was not only frustrating but worrying, as the butterfly had not been seen. Mike Hunter and I had searched around Greatham Creek and Cowpen but numbers of skippers seemed reduced on the previous year and they were all Small. It is stated in publications and phenology graphs prove that the Essex Skipper usually appears slightly earlier than the Small which just added to our exasperation that we couldn't find any. Jokingly I even asked Mike 'Did we actually find any Essex last year?' Of course we did, and of course Essex was found again this year but it helps reinforce the point that just because it was there last year, does not automatically mean it will be there next. And to add another twist, many of the places on the 'to do list' were being searched only because they are next to an area where Essex was found the previous year. This meant the butterfly might not even be present if it had not reached there yet in its slow colonisation of the county.

This was the case with the 1km sq. NZ4426. Essex Skipper had been found just off the A19/A689 roundabout. Heading west on the A689 an area had been identified as possibly being suitable for Essex; it looked as good as any patch of habitat can while passing at 50mph! Finally on the 16th August, a rare yellow object was seen in clear blue sky, the temperature was unusually high, no grey clouds, little wind, astonishingly a freak combination of factors had resulted in a summer's day!

When we arrived at the target destination the habitat for the intended Essex Skipper search did appear suitable. Cock's-foot grass was present albeit in a small patch as were the excellent nectar sources of ragwort and Bird's-foot trefoil, stretched out in a bountiful golden flowing carpet of undulating height. The walk along the track proved disappointing though; the first butterfly was a Large White landing on Spear Thistle then moving quickly to Creeping Thistle, of which the majority had passed its sell-by date. It was not disappointing to see the White but it was unsatisfactory that no other species were apparent on this glorious day. A sudden movement caught my eye, following the insect's flight as it dashed along, it finally touched down. A swipe of the spring net and the first Skipper of the

day was in the bag for identification. Obviously nothing is easy; it was a harder to distinguish female Skipper, no sex band to help and this time disappointment, Small. A swift turn of the net inside out and she was away again.

Black and gold banded caterpillars were feeding on ragwort, another recent arrival in the scheme of things. As a child I used to love to come across these on the Northumberland dunes but Cinnabar were never in evidence around Durham back then. Another fleeting movement caught my eye, but rather than a continuous flight, this dives into the vegetation, where a cautious approach as not to disturb whatever it is, reveals the migrant Silver-Y, beating its wings continually. Rather than walk forward with a hedgerow on one side and an arable crop on the other I choose to walk through the ragwort in a zigzag fashion. As I stepped through a nettle patch I spied a web atop of the plants and, on closer inspection, a gregarious group of Peacock larvae. This was quite surprising given the time of the year and the fact that the adult butterflies had just emerged. It is given in literature that the Peacock can be double brooded in a good year, but this year has been anything but; and judging by lack of sightings and reports from other recorders there's a strong possibility this year will be one of the worst ever for our resident Nymphalids.

There is a garden near me in Coxhoe, with nettles and brambles running around its southern parameter. A wall shelters it from the worst of the wind and rain from the north. Last year within this small patch this habitat managed to support: Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock and Comma caterpillars. In stark contrast, this year has been a disaster with only Small Tortoiseshell larvae being found, and even these did not make it to maturity as a prolonged spell of rain and wind managed to wash out the first instar caterpillars: there one week and gone the next. Mulling this conundrum over as to why second instar Peacock caterpillars should be found so late in the season, a dark shadow flew past at speed, an adult of the species I have just been thinking about, the unmistakable Peacock, no doubt lured in by the abundant nectar sources. Next find was another member of the same family, this time the Red Admiral.

Continuing along, heading back for the car but never in a direct line, a small butterfly darted up, around the ragwort and came to rest again. Edging closer to it, a Small Copper! The exclamation mark is for the fact

this butterfly has been causing concern the last few years, or more exactly the lack of them has been and it was pleasing to see one this year, as I had not come across any of the first generation in spring. Another small insect took off from the ragwort, this time a female Common Blue. As the heat of the sun increased so did the abundance of butterflies. Another skipper was seen and netted - again a female Small. The next butterfly was also Small, this time a white and a Green-veined White closely followed it.

Whites seem to have had a decent year. Cabbages and nasturtiums planted for Small and Large in the garden have been regularly visited and countless eggs of the Small have been dotted on the plants. Two groups of about 30 Large White eggs were found under nasturtium leaves in the garden and their progress was closely followed. Within several days they had hatched and the gregarious mass soon made short work of the large leaf. When I turned the leaf and pointed them out to a friend, the caterpillars reared up en-masse and started waving, a defence mechanism to ward off predators. Sadly this was not enough to save them from the fate that awaited. A few days later, both leaves were examined and not one caterpillar was found. sitting down, to think this over I saw a black and yellow insect circle the nasturtiums, land effortlessly, and crawl onto the underside of the vegetation. Disappearance solved, b**** wasps! Over sixty Large White larvae either eaten or carried back to the wasp nest. The Small Whites seemed to have fared better, being more dispersed but even this does not save them from ichneumon wasps. Just these last few days, a pupating Small on the garden shed burst and yellow furry cocoons were found. Another caterpillar, not yet turned into a chrysalis but in situ under a ledge, had an ichneumon wasp crawling over it. It is amazing that any Whites actually make it to maturity, given that vegetable growers, be it on the garden or the farming scale, will try and eradicate them too.

My first site visit of the day had been a success in that Peacock larvae had been found and a Small Copper finally seen. It was disappointing was no Essex Skipper were found but the more searching one does, the better the chances of finding something noteworthy.

Deciding to continue the hunt for Essex, a short drive along the A689 then through Wolviston to near Warren Farm brought me to the start of a public footpath in an adjacent one km square, south to the previous search. I

parked the car by a large set of stone pillars with a rusting gate guarding the entrance where a pair of ubiquitous Speckled Woods kept watch. Unfortunately their little kingdom was not secure; children's, toys, household items and the general detritus associated with those too lazy to dispose of their rubbish correctly had been dumped unceremoniously. No doubt these people of little brain passed a recycling centre to jettison their junk in the countryside. Unbelievable.

As the path headed north and out of the wood, a patch of nettles was checked over but no larvae could be found. Large and Small Whites fluttered over the tops of rose-bay willow herb bypassing them probably searching for richer nectar sources. The path then split into two, decisions, decisions. As my intended destination was to the north, it was decided to spend a few minutes on the left hand path running westwards. With hindsight, it was the best choice by far. Wandering along the track, directly in front there was quite a lot of butterfly activity. A couple of Skippers were netted, identified and released, male and female Small. A Green-veined White was added to the growing species list for this square.

A small brown butterfly circled the low-growing vegetation. At first glance it appeared to be a brown-form female Common Blue, but it landed on top of a blade of grass, it's something a butterfly basking would do but it quickly took off to intercept a passing Common Blue male then re-landed in about the same place it took off from; definitely the actions of a male. Carefully approaching it with camera raised, I could see it was a male Brown Argus. In the scheme of things the Brown Argus is a fairly recent arrival to our region. No doubt many are overlooked each year, not only in the spring but also in late summer when another generation takes to the wing. All recorders are encouraged to take photos of female Common Blues that are the brown form. Under wing and topside would be preferred to help with identification but obviously that is not always possible. As the butterfly took off and landed many times, it was photographed to get as many shots as possible, and finally it landed with its wings at a 90 degree position, a chance of an under wing shot but the butterfly had different ideas and opened them out. By lying prostrate in the grass, a photograph of the underside was eventually obtained.

Turning my attention back to the Skippers I had seen while pursuing the Argus, I returned to an area where I had seen three or four. Net, ID,

release, this time proved more rewarding: a tatty, raggy male Essex. Two very notable butterflies within a few minutes! Continuing westward by only a few feet another butterfly caught my attention, a Wall Brown sitting on the path. I approached carefully for a photograph; it was aware of my encroachment and took flight, but another butterfly was already in view: a male Small Copper. This butterfly sat quite happily while several pictures were taken. It's always great when such an obliging insect is encountered. I decided to follow westward in the direction the Wall had gone, but apart from several male Common Blues no other butterflies were found.

Deciding to head back to the Y where my earlier choice of orientation westwards had proven to be right, I now headed north where my route would brush against two ponds. I am always on the look-out for dragonfly records but the two ponds failed to deliver much. Common Blue, Azure and Emerald damselflies were all present and countless Common Darter but none of the larger species. Another butterfly first for the day was a Small Heath which led the way for me, jittering along. Just after the second pond, the artificial boundary of a different one km square was crossed and back into the one in which the day's butterflying had begun.

A mature hedgerow ran northwards on the right-hand side of the footpath. Within the boundary of the wire fence to the east the path meandered through patches of vegetation, with plenty of nectar sources and species of grass. Speckled Wood was under mature Ash trees, Common Blue butterflies basked and chased each other over the lofty grasses. A late male Meadow Brown soaked up the sun, three species of Whites, solitary Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral and Painted Lady passed by, some stopping to nectar, others travelling without stopping. A few moments were taken to check on the Skippers, surely Essex would be amongst them, but no, 3 male and 1 female Small. Another Small Copper popped up as if to say hello and pose for the camera. As the path swung north-westwards the area opened up and it looked as if the site has been cleared for further housing development. Bird's-foot trefoil had taken over vast stretches and Dingy Skipper may be present though obviously it would have been an exceptionally late individual that showed its face that day.

Goggle Earth is a fantastic tool (although some aerial shots are about nine years out of date) to use to ascertain what the terrain looks like without

actually visiting the site. Having done my homework on this route previously, I was aware that the footpath continued through mature woodland. As I was looking for Essex Skipper, it would probably be a futile exercise searching unless the wood contained glades or wide rides so, knowing that the footpath was narrow, I turned back. Walking along the southern edge of the woodland an elm was inspected but no White-letter Hairstreaks or Commas were found. There were also several magnificent specimens of oak. Standing backing and surveying the trees, I noticed some movement in the trees but these were Speckled Wood high in the canopy. This butterfly does like to impersonate Hairstreaks, and care needs to be taken when identifying butterflies in trees, something that was not a problem a decade or so ago, apart from the occasional Red Admiral that would fly over and around the canopy. I stood for five minutes scanning the oaks, and after a few Speckled Wood false alarms, patience was rewarded with a Purple Hairstreak. Watching it flit out, spiral than re-land on another bough, moving position for a better look I could see that it certainly was a Purple Hairstreak. A further wait was fruitless but, such is the life when butterflying. Luck can play a huge part, although planning, patience and persistence can pay off as well!

As I walked back south across the flat cleared area, the vegetated mounds of earth looked promising. Common Blue was the commonest butterfly and two females were checked out; both the brown form but no Argus this time. Another Skipper was seen and as the four (3 male, 1 female) I had already checked were all Small, this species was expected again. A swipe of the net and on inspection it was a female and it appeared to have black antennae. A transfer to a clear plastic container for a better look...the second Essex Skipper of the day and in another new one km square! Photographs were taken as proof and for verification, although holding a DSLR in one hand while trying to focus on the butterfly crawling around the container is not the easiest thing to do! After a dozen pictures the butterfly was gladly released to continue her journey.

The return walk back was uneventful, no species were seen which had not already been recorded. A slightly different route was chosen around the second pond but a search of young oaks found nothing but more Speckled Woods.

On arriving back at the Y, I decided to see if the Brown Argus was still present. It wasn't but another couple of Small Coppers were there when earlier it had only been the one. As I followed the path westwards and around further than before, a Holly Blue travelled towards me, landed on ivy, then continued past and away along the hedgerow at a height of six feet. Frustratingly no photo was obtained but what an amazing species list had been made from spending a few hours in total and half an hour around the Y junction. The habitat had looked nothing special, but the species seen had been excellent considering it was such a small area.

As time was not pressing and the weather was still good it was decided to continue searching in other locations and an area that was nearby and in a different square looked to be worth a visit. A very short journey along Sandy Lane West and a turn off on to a country lane ensued.

The roadside verge was past its best with very few nectar sources remaining in flower - a few knapweeds but not much else. No butterflies of any description were seen along this stretch but it is probable that a few weeks earlier in the season this paragraph might well have been full of butterflies! Turning the corner, another artificial boundary was crossed into NZ4324. The country road side verge continued and a few butterflies were spotted, the three whites were seen, Large, Small and Green-veined. Turning the corner and entering a wooded area Speckled Wood soon made its appearance showing me the way as they floated along the footpath, landing only to take off again as I neared. A few elms were checked out but no evidence of the two butterflies associated with this tree. In a normal year Comma larvae and pupae are easily discovered and a dozen had been found in 2015. 2016 was a totally different story with not one found to date. The trees came to an abrupt end and an arable field lay ahead, Small Tortoiseshell hurried by and a Meadow Brown landed in the green grass, tucking its forewing in. A rectangular route was walked briefly crossing into another one km square but although the walk was a kilometre in length not another butterfly was seen.

Undeterred, although time was running out there was still time for one last throw of the dice and I set off to another target site which Google Earth had helped discover.

Fulthorpe Quarry was mined until recently for sand and gravel judging by the bank sides and the remaining heaps of spoil. It has been abandoned for a few years and nature has made great strides in reclaiming it for her own. Carpets of golden bird's-foot trefoil and purple rest-harrow encroached on the dry, sandy areas with patches of sky blue scabious dotted intermittently around. Walking towards this hidden gem and discreet entrance I came upon Speckled Wood again, waiting along with Green-veined White. Species numbers soon started climbing along with actual individual numbers, Common Blue male, female, Wall, Large White, Common Blue male, another male, Wall, Small Heath, Wall and so on. The pungent smell of rest harrow was released walking through the vegetation and seemingly intensified by the heat. Wall was observed to be laying on the exposed roots of grass species on a steep bank side where the sand had fallen away. A couple of Skippers were both checked, it is within the realms of possibility that Essex is here, but both were Small. Small Whites were added to the list, then singles of Peacock and Meadow Brown. Writing this and totalling counts in a well-worn notebook, over 60 Common Blue and 50 Wall are staggering on one hand but not when taken with the context of the habitat.

The habitat was in optimum condition for Dingy Skipper and a search in May/June should be very fruitful.

At the start of the day I would have been happy with an Essex Skipper and delighted with an additional Brown Argus but the six or so hours spent in the field added with the hour of so poring over ordnance survey maps and Goggle Earth I had been rewarded with possibly one of the best days butterflying ever in Co. Durham and certainly the best day of 2016. I love watching butterflies, I have always done so since being a child and days like that make all the times very little of note is found worthwhile. Due to time restraints and dozens of other problems it is so easy and practical to go to the so called honey spots to see butterflies. I can fully understand why naturalists and enthusiasts do this, but by doing so one may be missing out on a day like I experienced. None of the places I visited on the 16th of August I had ever been to previously and I realise the day was exceptional but I would encourage all recorders to go off the familiar well-worn track and just see what you can find out there. Essex Skipper and Brown Argus are awaiting.....

An Early Summer Walk in the French Pyrenees

Peter Webb

It was a beautiful sunny morning when we set out to walk to the foot of the magnificent Cirque de Gavarnie high in the French Pyrenees. Avoiding the main tourist route we walked slowly up the side of the valley amongst the alpine flowers. Reminiscent of an English spring day the first butterflies we saw were Orange Tips, Brimstones and Green Hairstreaks but then the sight of Purple-edged Copper, Swallowtail and Mazarine Blue reminded us this amazing landscape is home to some of Europe's most beautiful butterflies. In a walk of less than a mile I counted 25 species I could easily recognise. Other unfamiliar species were more difficult. Although I recognised Heath Fritillaries I was less sure of the other Fritillary butterflies and were the Grizzled Skippers I was seeing Large or Rosy Grizzled Skippers?

One of the highlights of the walk was seeing clouds of butterflies flying up from the path and then on closer examination realising that these were mostly Small Blues puddling in patches of mud.



Swallowtail. Photo: Peter Webb.

Monarchs and Queens

Peter Webb

A bonus of travelling to the United States of America has been watching Monarch butterflies migrating through the eastern states on their way to their over-wintering sites in Mexico. I hadn't expected to see them in New Zealand and Tenerife or to find them washed up on the shores of the Pacific Ocean in California. The Monarch is possibly the most researched butterfly in the world and much of this is available on the internet. In the southern-most states of America it is easy to confuse the Monarch (*Danaus plexipus*) with its cousin the Queen (*Danaus gillipus*).



Monarch Butterfly photographed in Christchurch New Zealand.

In Australia and New Zealand Milkweed is planted in gardens to encourage the butterflies to breed.



One of several Monarchs found on a walk along Pismo Beach. Every year 25,000 Monarchs flock to the coast and escape the freezing winter in a grove of Eucalyptus trees at Pismo State Beach in California.



These Queen Butterflies were photographed roosting in a tree growing on the edge of the Sonoran Desert in Arizona. In flight they look very similar to Monarchs.

Photos: Peter Webb

New Members

Welcome to all the following new members of the Branch; we look forward to meeting you at some of our events. Every member of Butterfly Conservation makes an important contribution to protecting the nation's butterflies and moths and the habitats on which they depend, especially at a time when funding from other sources is hard to obtain. The increasing number of members also adds weight to Butterfly Conservation's voice when it urges government to implement appropriate policies to maintain a rich and healthy fauna and flora across the nation.

Susan Hepworth and Chris Wood
John Buxton
Norman Tiplady
Mary Milner
Ivan Thompson
Alison Dickens
Amie O'Neil
Klajra Morvai
Heather Purdy and Peter Lawrence
Thomas German
Wendy and Robert Bell
Rachel Doward

Blaydon on Tyne
Darlington
Gateshead
Barnard Castle
Morpeth
Sunderland
North Shields
Durham
Esh Winning
Bishop Auckland
Sunderland
South Shields



Painted Lady. Photo: J Wallace

Announcements

Considerate photography

The days have long gone when an interest in butterflies automatically meant collecting and pinning them in cabinets. By taking photographs instead we can still enjoy looking at the species we have seen, long after we have returned home from the field, whilst leaving the butterflies to fly free and continue their lives. However, determination to get the perfect shot does occasionally lead to thoughtless behaviour by some photographers.

On several occasions this year complaints were made regarding excessive trampling of vegetation by photographers seeking to snap butterflies such as the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and the Northern Brown Argus. This occurred at sites including Bishop Middleham Quarry and Black Plantation. This can be avoided and we would politely request that every photographer and observer takes care to minimise their own impact on the wonderful sites that we all enjoy and recognise that getting the perfect shot should not be at the cost of spoiling the site.

Deadline for submission of butterfly records

For many years the branch has published an annual summary report of butterfly sightings. We aim to bring this out as early as possible in the Spring of the following year but this depends upon records being submitted promptly as there is considerable time-consuming work required by the Recorders reviewing and collating records before the report can be written.

In order to make this manageable and ensure the timely production of the report we are introducing a deadline for submission of records which must be received by **30th of November** if they are to be considered for inclusion in the report. It is stressed that this deadline only affects inclusion of records in the annual report – records received later than this will still be validated and added to the regional and national data-bases. See page 39 for details of where/how to submit butterfly records.

Safety Notice

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 seek to 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. Be aware of Ticks. Check the recommendations on the Butterfly Conservation Web Site.
8. Dogs are normally welcome on our walks, but must be kept on the lead.
9. 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.
10. Take care at all times and above all ENJOY YOURSELF.

How to Submit Moth Records

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:

Species name:	Please indicate scientific and (where there is one) common names.
Location:	Where the moth was recorded.
Grid reference:	Ideally a six-figure grid reference for the location.
Vice County:	66 for Durham, 67 for South Northumberland and 68 for North Northumberland.
Date :	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.
Recorder:	Name of the person who caught/observed the moth(s).
Determiner:	The name of the person who identified the moth(s) (if different to the recorder).
Life cycle stage:	i.e. adult, pupa, caterpillar or egg.
Quantity:	The number of each species recorded.
Method:	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

Tim Barker

26 Farrier Close
Pity Me, Durham, DH1 5XY
e-mail: 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

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: tom-tams@blueyonder.co.uk or recorder@northumberlansmoths.org.uk

Full details for submitting records in Northumberland, including a downloadable spreadsheet are given at 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).

Submitting Butterfly Records 2016

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.

Records can either be submitted on paper using the casual records recording sheet or electronically. The latter is preferred if you have a computer as it greatly facilitates the addition of records to the database. Each record should occupy one line and the format of the spreadsheet should look something like the following example. An 'Excel' spreadsheet can be downloaded from the web-site (www.northeast-butterflies.org.uk/recording.html):

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Name/s of recorder/s	NZ274423	Palace Green, Durham City	22-Aug-2010	Large White	7	
2	Name/s of recorder/s	NZ196858	Morpeth (riverside)	24-Sep-2010	Peacock	2	Very worn
3	Name/s of recorder/s	NZ2514	Baydale Beck Darlington	1-Jul-2010	Comma	1	<i>Hutchinsoni</i> 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 2016 Annual Report is 30 November 2016. Depending on where you live, please send records to:

DURHAM

Steve Le Fleming (postal records)

✉ 7 Albert Street
Durham,
DH1 4RL

☎ : Ian Waller : aeshna@hotmail.com

NORTHUMBERLAND

Michael Perkins

✉ 71 Broadway West
Gosforth,
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE3 2NH

☎ : mjp514@yahoo.co.uk

North East England Branch Committee Members for 2015-2016

Chairman & Membership Secretary

Peter Webb. Tel. 01833 650772

apwebb546@gmail.com

Conservation Officer Northumberland

David Stebbings. Tel. 0191 2859097

david.stebbing@blueyonder.co.uk

Butterfly Recorder Northumberland

Michael Perkins.

mjp514@yahoo.co.uk

Moths Officer

Keith Dover. Tel 0191 3889640

k.dover879@btinternet.com

Health & Safety Officer

Stephen Lowther.

stelow4@live.co.uk

Committee Member

Helen McDonald

Helen.mcdonald02@gmail.com

Committee Member

Coralie Niven

coralie.niven@durham.gov.uk

Treasurer

Steve Kirtley. Tel. 01325 460198

stephen@skirtley.fsnet.co.uk

Conservation Officer Durham

Mike Harris. Tel. 0191 5220160

michaelsharris@talktalk.net

Butterfly Recorder Durham

Ian Waller

aeshna@hotmail.com

Transect Coordinator

Brian Denham. Tel. 01228 495 062

brian.denham@ntlworld.com

Newsletter & Web-site Editor

Jonathan Wallace. Tel 0191 2744303

jonathan@cherryburn.com

Committee Member

Roger Norman. Tel. 0191 2858314

roger@norman784.plus.com

Branch website: www.northeast-butterflies.org.uk

Butterfly Conservation Regional Office (Northern England)

Dave Wainwright. Butterfly Conservation, Low Barns, Witton-le-Wear

Bishop Auckland, County Durham DL14 0AG

Tel: 01388 488428 Email: dwainwright@butterfly-conservation.org

Butterfly Conservation

Company limited by guarantee, registered in England (2206468)

Registered Office: Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5QP

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