



Butterfly Conservation Wales
Gwarchod Glöynnod Byw Cymru

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NEWSLETTER OF NORTH WALES BRANCH BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

Events and Activities organized by the North Wales Branch of Butterfly Conservation are regularly updated on the branch website
www.northwalesbutterflies.org.uk



Wall Brown, which seems to have had a good year in North Wales

**Butterfly Conservation Wales
Gwarchod Glöynnod Byw Cymru
10 Calvert Terrace, Swansea, SA1 5AR
Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats**

Achub glöynnod a gwytnod gwyllt a'u cynefinoedd **Registered Charity No.254937**

North Wales Branch AGM and Members Day 2009.....2

Butterfly Sightings in 2009 Home and Away.....4

Update on the Mynydd Mawr Marsh Fritillary Project.....9

Searching for Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk moth Caterpillars.....9

Is the Tir Gofal Scheme Benefitting Butterflies?.....10

The Problems of Attempted Eradication of Foreign Invasive Weed in Europe.....11

Marsh Fritillaries Hanging on in Harlech.....13

Wildlife Networks.....15



North Wales Branch AGM and Members’ Day 27 June 2009

This year’s Branch AGM and Members’ Day was held at Craflwyn, the National Trust’s facility near Beddgelert. It began on the evening of 26th June with a moth-trapping event providing an interesting catch which was viewed before the moths were released the following day. Anyone who has attended one of our Members’ Days will know I try to keep the AGM part of the meeting brisk and (although I allowed an extra five minutes for election of officers) this year was no exception. The key points from the AGM were:

- Branch funds had risen by approximately £1500 to just over £5000 during the last year. £1100 of this had been raised by Jan Miller from her plant and book sales. A remarkable contribution!
- Branch membership is stable around the 155 mark.

- At Eyarth Rocks Pearl Bordered Fritillary numbers had increased after two poor summers.
- Mike Hammett stood down as Moth Conservation Officer.
- The remaining committee members were re-elected unopposed.

The meeting was followed by an enthusiastic talk from Sabine Nouvet, a French Canadian ecologist working for the National Trust. Sabine's subject was **"Extensive Grazing as a Tool for Habitat Restoration at Gelli Lago; Management and Monitoring Techniques"**. At Gelli Lago they have drastically reduced sheep numbers, and in some areas virtually replaced them with Welsh Black cattle. Sabine described how extensive cattle grazing had encouraged the restoration of key habitats as well as natural succession based on the livestock's grazing pattern. Much of Sabine's work involved measuring the changes in the diversity of sward height, vegetation cover and species composition and she went on to explain how this benefited butterfly and moth species, particularly the Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary.

Those of you who regularly attend our Members' Day will be familiar with your committee's infallible knack of selecting a day with atrocious weather! Saturday 27th of June did not bode well in the morning, but over lunch the rain cleared and the sun began to shine. After lunch Sabine led a walk up the mountain beyond Gelli Lago to see the results of the Trust's work and after about a mile up the hill from the farm the first Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries were glimpsed fluttering in the early summer sunshine.

However, at this point an event occurred which will always overshadow the day's visit as Michael Griffith CBE, one of our members, collapsed and subsequently died.

Michael Griffiths was a former Chairman of the Countryside Council for Wales and was a leading environmentalist and a conservation- minded farmer. He had held a number of other senior and honorary posts and had wide experience of conservation and farming and of the delicate politics which link them across Wales. He had regularly attended our AGM and Members' Days over recent years and will be remembered as a gentleman of the old school, and for his advice and wise counsel.

This was a sad end to an otherwise successful and enjoyable day and I would like to offer my thanks to all those present who rallied round so effectively in this difficult, tragic and totally unexpected situation. The sun shone and butterflies were on the wing and our hearts went out in sympathy to Mr Griffith's family.

Ilija Vukomanovic
Branch Chairman

Home-Transect Walker Sightings-Greenfield Valley 2009

When you look at the weather patterns that have prevailed over North-East Wales this summer it is difficult to see how Sue and I could have had such a wonderful butterfly year.

The main reason is that of the two Butterfly Transect Walks that we undertake, one of them (Greenfield Valley) had its best year since we started surveying it in 2003. Sue and I use three distinct measures to assess each survey year.

The first, which gives you an indication of the number of walks undertaken each year and the butterflies seen, I detail below: -

Year	Butterflies (total)	Walks	Average no of butterflies per walk
2003	179	9	19.9
2004	645	19	33.9
2005	954	14	68.1
2006	1974	17	116.1
2007	1417	25	56.7
2008	1489	19	78.4
2009	2777	19	146.2

It can be clearly seen that 2009 was by far the best year.

The second measure is the number of species seen during each year, these are as follows: -

- 2003- 15 Species
- 2004- 19 Species
- 2005- 20 Species
- 2006- 21 Species
- 2007- 20 Species
- 2008- 20 Species
- 2009- 23 Species

This year has again been the best year by 9.52% on the previous best year 2006.

The third measure is the total number of each species seen during the year compared with the average of previous years. The results are set out below: -

Greenfield Valley: Highest Numbers of Butterfly Species Seen During Surveys

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Average	Comment on 2009	2009
Wall	0	0	1	1	1	1	0.67	Equal record count	1
Holly Blue	2	3	1	3	3	3	2.50	Drop	2
Common Blue	9	14	22	48	13	15	20.17	Increase	32
Large White	2	4	7	8	3	27	8.50	Record count	31
Green veined White	4	7	4	8	6	10	6.50	Record count	11
White letter Hairstreak	0	0	1	1	6	4	2.00	Same	2
Purple Hairstreak	0	3	3	3	2	2	2.17	Record count	5
Small White	5	6	14	51	38	26	23.33	Record count	101
Small Skipper	2	2	4	20	13	8	8.17	Record count	22
Large Skipper	0	2	4	8	13	3	5.00	Increase	6
Clouded Yellow	0	0	1	2	0	0	nk		
Orange Tip	13	13	2	13	14	23	13.00	Record count	27
Small Copper	0	1	2	4	2	1	1.67	Record count	6
Red Admiral	2	3	7	20	10	13	9.17	Drop	7
Small Tortoiseshell	7	10	8	9	4	5	7.17	Drop	3
Ringlet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00	New species	1
Peacock	3	3	19	27	16	13	13.50	Drop	9
Comma	2	4	4	8	10	9	6.17	Record count	11
Speckled Wood	18	18	51	57	38	54	39.33	Record count	69
Gatekeeper	2	32	74	121	51	59	56.50	Increase	96
Meadow Brown	16	23	39	87	31	48	40.67	Record count	123
Brimstone		1					0.17	Increase	1
Small PB Fritillary							0.00	New species	1
Painted Lady	1	2	0	12	3	2		Record count	44
Total	88	151	268	511	277	326			611

It clearly shows that again 2009 was the best year since the surveys began, 19.57 % better than 2006.

Record Counts for the site:

Purple Hairstreak, Small White, Small Skipper, Orange Tip, Comma, Speckled Wood, Meadow Brown, Painted Lady, Small Copper, Large White and Green-Veined White.

Equal to the record count for the site: Wall Brown and Brimstone.

Increase in the average sightings of the species: Common Blue, Large Skipper and Gatekeeper.

Average sightings of the species: White-Letter Hairstreak.

New Species to the valley seen in 2009: Ringlet and Small Pearl-Bordered Fritillary.

Drop in average sightings of the species: Holly Blue, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell and Peacock.

Not seen in the valley in 2009: Clouded Yellow

Therefore, in 2009, of the 23 species seen in the valley only four show a decrease in the average sightings of the butterfly since 2003. Eleven of the 23 species seen this year have given record counts.

It has been an exceptional year for Sue and I in Greenfield Valley given that we have added two new species to the valley. The most surprising was of course the Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary, what on earth that was doing in the valley? A few days earlier Sue and I had been to a local site (Wern-y-Gaer) to monitor the SPB Fritillary there and it was so good to see one in the valley. The time spent on surveys has been so rewarding and hopefully the results bode well for butterflies on this site.

Therefore by which ever measure you use 2009 has been the best year, and so despite all the doom and gloom of species that are declining it is nice to report that in Greenfield Valley and probably in other areas most of the butterflies are `fighting back`. It does however help in our case that we are able to have direct dialogue with both the Operations Manager and the Head Ranger of the valley to make recommendations about not only grass cutting regimes but also as with this year making sure the access paths to certain areas of the site are cut.

In addition to Greenfield Valley Sue and I went to the Great Orme and obtained the usual wonderful views of the Silver-Studded Blues and two or three views of

the Grayling. This year, however, the usual butterflies were supplemented by the Painted Lady invasion and there was a memorable sight of a bush literally exploding with them.

As mentioned above, Sue and I visited Wern-y-Gaer for our usual monitoring visit for the Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries and we were not disappointed, as we saw about 10 individuals. Also present were Small Skipper and Small Heath.

All in all North Wales has provided us with 26 species this year.

So you can see that Sue and I have had a terrific year and seen so many positive signs for butterflies in our area, also I may say we have also enjoyed the surveys since 2003 so if you feel that you can help by undertaking surveys of a site in your local area, please make contact with Jan Miller at

education@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

I am sure that you will enjoy it and if you are undertaking just one site it only takes about an hour to undertake the Transect Walker Survey each week of the butterfly flight season, not much when it could help us understand what is happening to butterflies in North Wales and also helps in establishing the range of species within our area.

If you are in the area do have a look around Greenfield Valley in June, July and most of August, which are the best times to visit the site to maximise on the number of species and butterflies seen.

The site has become one of the best places to see butterflies in Flintshire so, if you are contemplating a visit, please email us and we will let you know the precise directions. If the weather is good it is certainly worth a visit.

brian007_014@fsmail.net

Away

As with North Wales our visits to other parts of the country have been really successful and resulted in us seeing our 57th species of butterfly in the UK.

In May on a visit to Bristol we visited Buckland Wood Nr Taunton and saw Duke of Burgundy, Green Hairstreak, Dingy and Grizzled Skipper. Compared with other sites the Duke of Burgundy is much easier to see here and in our 4 visits to the site we have never failed to see what can be a difficult species.

June was the real highlight of our visits away from home. On our way to Cambridge we firstly dropped in at Ryton Wood near Coventry and thanks to some most helpful advice and precise directions from Mike Slater of the Warwickshire Branch we were able to see a single Wood White.

Then on to what we rated as probably our butterfly of the year until the SPB Fritillary appeared in Greenfield Valley. We again had been given very accurate directions to Glaphorn Cow Pasture in Northants by Doug Goddard and as a

result we were able to see our 57th species in the UK the wonderful Black Hairstreak.

Whilst staying in Cambridge we visited RSPB Lakenheath Fen really to see the Golden Orioles but what did amaze us was the large numbers of Small Tortoiseshells at this site, as was also the case in the field that adjoined our Hotel in Cambridge and also at RSPB Strumpshaw Fen. The butterfly appears to be faring better in the East than here in North Wales and it was very encouraging to see this.

At Strumpshaw Fen we visited `The Garden` which adjoins the reserve and there had fabulous views of Swallowtails -I, together with several other people, took numerous photos of these beautiful butterflies in the front garden of a wonderful gentleman who is so proud that these butterflies visit his garden that there is a sign saying that people are welcome to photograph them.

Our next visit of the year was to Wokingham in Berkshire and whilst there we visited Martin Down near Salisbury and obtained wonderful views of White Admiral, Dark Green and Silver Washed Fritillaries and Marbled White.

A visit to Bookham Common in Surrey produced a real magic moment for us as I finally was able to photograph a Purple Hairstreak low down and in the same area of bushes we saw well over a dozen species of butterfly and then as a fitting finale to this trip we enjoyed good views of Purple Emperor.

The final trip of the year was to Newcastle upon Tyne and whilst there we visited the Saltholme RSPB Reserve. Now you may think that RSPB reserves are only concerned with birds but what a surprise Saltholme is because, apart from the countless Whites we saw, there were also Small Copper and best of all lots of Wall Browns affording me the best opportunity I have ever had of taking photographs of this species.

All in all a wonderful year and we managed to see 38 species of butterfly. What I think is encouraging is that firstly, in our local valley, the vast majority of the butterflies appear to be either increasing or holding their own this year. Secondly, it was so nice to see good numbers of the Small Tortoiseshell in the East of England, and thirdly, and I think that this is very important, there appear to be people around the branches who are very willing to give advice enabling one to see the specialist species in their area.

Altogether a wonderful year for butterflies for Sue and I. Let's see what 2010 brings.

Update on the Mynydd Mawr Marsh Fritillary Project Deborah Sazer

The Mynydd Mawr Marsh Fritillary Project in Carmarthenshire has entered its sixth and final year – although we are already planning a new wider landscape project to continue our work around Mynydd Mawr.

Half of all suitable or potential Marsh Fritillary habitat in the project area is now protected by management agreements with landowners. That's over 100 ha of rhos pasture - 65 ha in our purpose-built agreements, with the rest receiving agri-environment, SSSI or other grants.

These fields are being summer-grazed by cattle or ponies, which create the tussocky habitat needed by the Marsh Fritillary caterpillars. We've installed around 1½ kilometres of new fencing, along with new gates and water troughs to enable grazing. We've also cleared over 6ha of scrub, Bramble and Ragwort, to win back the grassland that has been lost through neglect.

This year, Richard Smith and Lyn Gander are searching for further Marsh Fritillary habitat within a 10,800ha area around Mynydd Mawr. This work, on behalf of Carmarthenshire County Council, will give us invaluable information about the entire Marsh Fritillary metapopulation and its prospects for long-term survival. This in turn will help us and the Council to understand the butterfly's requirements in the context of continuing threats from development, mismanagement and neglect.

For more information or a copy of the newsletter contact Deborah Sazer 01792 642972 or email: dsazer.bcw@btconnect.com

Searching for Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth caterpillars Russel Hobson

For the past three years Butterfly Conservation staff have been trying to find Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth larvae at sites with only adult records. The aim is to find where the moth is breeding, determine the favoured type of breeding habitat and try to work out how best to manage the sites for the moth. This follows up work done by Barry Stewart on the Gower and John Harold on the Lleyn.

The data have yet to be analysed but some observations can be made:

- 1) At two large sites the larvae are still to be found.
- 2) The painstaking searches are best not done in torrential rain or after heavy rain as this washes off the frass. The frass makes finding larvae much easier.

- 3) Compared to the Gower sites, the more upland sites had a high abundance of the Tansy Leaf Beetle (*Galeruca tanacetii*) larvae, which produce extensive and very similar feeding damage on most of the scabious leaves.
- 4) However, where larvae have been found it is in broadly similar vegetation to the Gower and Lleyn sites.

The work so far is helping increase our understanding of the moths' needs but is still insufficient. We need to find more larvae on sites away from the Gower and Lleyn.

If you would like to help search sites in 2010 please contact Russel Hobson on 01792 642 972 or email: rhobson.bcw@btconnect.com

Is the Tir Gofal scheme benefitting butterflies?

George Tordoff

The Tir Gofal agri-environment scheme has been in operation across Wales for 10 years – but has the scheme actually improved the fortunes of the wildlife it was intended to help? In an effort to answer this fundamental question, the Welsh Assembly Government has contracted Butterfly Conservation Wales and four other conservation organisations (RSPB, Plantlife Wales, Bat Conservation Trust and Wildlife Trusts Wales) to monitor wildlife on Tir Gofal farms over a three year period.

Butterfly Conservation's element of the project is focussed on three UK BAP Priority butterfly species: Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Marsh Fritillary and Brown Hairstreak. Each of these species has declined dramatically in recent decades and depends on suitably managed farmland habitats for its survival in Wales. A desk study carried out over the winter found that the habitat management prescriptions of the scheme have the potential to benefit these and other butterfly species; for example, the grazing restrictions placed on marshy grassland habitats could benefit both Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Marsh Fritillary. However, until now there has been no field monitoring of the scheme to see whether it is actually working for these species in practice.

Fieldwork for the three species is spread across the year, starting with Brown Hairstreak egg counts in the winter, followed by Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary adult timed counts in June and July, and finally Marsh Fritillary larval web surveys in August and September. Conventional farms and nature reserves will also be surveyed to compare butterfly populations and habitat condition with that on Tir Gofal farms.

The project commenced in May, and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary surveys have now been completed in North Wales. The majority of surveyed farms are in north-western Merioneth, but there is also a scattering of farms through the rest of

that county, as well as two farms in Caernarvonshire and one in Denbighshire. The excellent June weather meant the butterflies were active on most days, and the species was found in marshy habitats on nearly all of the surveyed farms. Large populations were found on several farms with light grazing levels, while a number of other farms with moderate sheep densities only supported small, localised populations, due in large part to selective grazing of the foodplant, Marsh Violet. Fieldwork for the remaining two species will be conducted in South Wales.

If you have any questions about the project, please contact George Tordoff on 01792 642972 or email: gtordoff.bcw@btconnect.com

The problems of attempted eradication of foreign invasive weed in Europe **Jan Miller**

While we tend to worry most about the abandonment of agricultural land in some parts of Europe and intensive farming in others as the major causes of habitat loss, another pressure on the habitats of butterflies and other insects came to my attention whilst on a trip to Hungary this year. Colin Penny, our guide who has lived in the Matra Mountains for the last 5 years, said on our arrival that the national sport in Hungary is now strimming. We thought he was joking, but after a few days visiting different brilliant butterfly sites we did notice the continual sound of strimmers and mowers in the background.

Some internet research on my return showed this to be an attempt by the authorities to eradicate an American invasive plant, *Ambrosia artemisiifolia* or 'Ragweed' (not the same plant as our Ragwort) which has been found to produce allergenic pollen causing problems to the human population. However, the bylaws mean that all verges, parks, 'waste land' has to be cut, whether *Ambrosia* is growing there or not. Substantial fines are threatened if householders and landowners ignore these regulations.

The threat to wildlife corridors, including nectar sources and larval foodplants for Lepidoptera throughout their breeding season, will be obvious to EIG members. What happens with repeated mowing, as has happened in Britain, is that many wildplants, which are nectar and larval foodplants, die out because they do not have a low growing point. The reason that grass is so successful is because it can be mown/eaten very short, but the growing tip is so low down in the plant that it can regenerate. This is also true of many rosette-forming wild plants, But it is not true of many others. That is why, for example, we have lost most of the viola species (larval foodplant for our rapidly declining fritillaries) from our lane verges – annual mowing of the verges, which could provide corridors for short-distance flying insects, has destroyed the foodplant altogether in a very few years. This repeated mowing is a trend which is moving across Bulgaria, France and other countries – have other visitors noticed this in the countries they have been

to this year? Other invasive plant species are also causing problems in Hungary – Solidago and False Acacia being two mentioned. And no doubt other invasives will continue to present problems in other areas of Europe – but is mass cutting or weed-killing the answer? As Colin Penny says, “The irony is that this plant can never be eradicated ! I've found it at the top of banks (off forest tracks) after some really steep and risky climbs. If no one goes to such places, then the plants seed and continue to spread. Also, if the top is cut off it just sprouts from the root again.” Whereas Szabolcs Sáfián [“Safi”, pers.comms.July 2009], Lepidopterist in Hungary says: “according to my knowledge Ragweed is a very weak competitor anywhere, and it therefore disappears after few years of abandonment from any arable land in Hungary. We are reverting a 7 hectares plot of arable into a grassland and not a single plant of Ragweed is found now in the area after 7 years of mowing. As soon a grazing will reappear Ambrosia will disappear forever [which begs the question, why are the authorities trying to mow it out at all?] Agnes Vozar (Hungarian National Parks, personal communication, .July 2009) says; “20% of Hungary is Natura 2000 and more than 10% is protected.” Agnes thinks that Solidago invasion is much more serious. But I think we ignore the corridors between these ‘protected’ sites at our peril.

Safi added:

“I think the agricultural practice will change when the area-based subsidies from the UK (I think he means EU) cause large scale, intensive farms to plough right down to the edge of the plots which was not the practice before... It damages (if not destroys) the butterfly-corridors between habitat patches and I would like to discuss this issue with national parks and higher conservation authorities (Ágnes' bosses) next year or later this year.”

The Hungarian Natural Heritage Trust is trying to help the areas of Hungary which have high biodiversity potential with acquisition and sympathetic management. It is setting up a butterfly conservation centre in the Órség National Park to protect around 100 species of butterflies and 1500 species of moths.

Safi says we might help them by getting more people involved who are enthusiastic enough to come and see our work in Hungary and willing to support us.

Colin Penny runs excellent tailored wildlife tours for 1, 2 or 4 people, including pick up from Budapest airport and a private apartment in Gyongyas; contact him at;

3232 Mátrafüred, Hegyalja utca 10, Hungary.

e-mail;heathling01@gmail.com

Tel; Home: (from outside Hungary add 0036 06) 37 320 176

Marsh Fritillaries Hanging on in Harlech

Helen Bantock

The population of Marsh Fritillaries on Harlech NNR has increased following the erection of electric fences in the spring of 2007. The colony was very large prior to 2004, and during the flight period in that year I counted 37 adults in 45 minutes. However, in the autumn of 2004, the best area was mown before the web count was complete with the loss of more than half of the 108 webs which had so far been counted. Subsequently, the area was severely overgrazed and the colony declined. In the autumn of 2006 only two, very small webs were found and it seemed likely that the colony would disappear. However, following the erection of an electric fence around the area with most succisa in 2007, about 5-6 webs were found in 2008.

The vegetation recovered well once grazing had stopped and measurement of the sward height using a drop disc in one of the best succisa areas gave a height of 21.8cm on 25.06.09. Optimum conditions exist where for at least 80% of the sampling points the vegetation is within the range of 12-25cm and *Succisa praetensis* is present within a one metre radius.

Undergrazing is also detrimental and for this reason it was decided to open up the area by removal of several fence sections for a couple of weeks before the eggs were likely to hatch. These were on opposing sides in order to encourage the cattle to move through the area. Sheep were also taken off the morfa for the two week grazing period, as they eat flowers and would have possibly grazed down the succisa preferentially. Two further sward measurements were taken on the 5.07.09, when it was 16.6cm, and on 12.07.09 when it was 11.7cm. At this point the fence sections were replaced.

A timed count by 3 observers along the same transect walk as in 2004 on 3.06.09 gave 12 adults in 54 minutes and 19 webs were counted by 4 observers in early September, at which time the sward height was was 15 cm. Although further winter grazing was considered, as the area is very wet in winter time, leading to heavy poaching, it is probably best that there is no further grazing until next June.

Ideally, in terms of management for the Marsh Fritillary the whole of the NNR should be more lightly grazed, in which case the electric fence would not be necessary. However there are difficulties over managing sand dune habitat and so for the moment the fence is likely to remain. In the absence of cattle for all but brief periods, willow scrub is developing within the fenced off compartment. This would be controlled by the cattle if they were present year round but in the present circumstances will have to be removed manually in selected places. Although by definition no more than 5% of optimum condition grassland is covered by scrub, the webs on the NNR are often close by or within gorse bushes, suggesting that in this terrain they provide shelter from the elements.

The habitat for the Marsh Fritillary on the Harlech NNR is unusual and is one of only a very few on sand dunes, though the best area of *succisa* is now in the dune slacks. Although Marsh Fritillaries usually only travel short distances to lay second egg batches, they can travel several kilometres and in the past butterflies from the NNR site must have migrated to other sites within the area. This type of spread is very important as colonies die out because of disease and the specific parasitoid, *Cotesia bignellii*.

About 4-5 kilometres inland from the NNR, a farm in lower Harlech has excellent Marsh Fritillary habitat. This is more traditional Rhos pasture and has been grazed by small numbers of Welsh Blacks without sheep for some time. However, in spite of this, the numbers of adult butterflies and autumn webs has been declining over the last three years. In June 2005, there were 48 adults flying at the peak count and 10 webs that autumn. Sixteen webs were present in the autumn of 2006 but in 2007-2009 only 1-3 webs have been seen each year. Although there were 18 butterflies at the peak flight period this year I could only find two webs. This contrasts with other areas in the UK where 2009 has been a good year for the Marsh Fritillary.

Another colony in lower Harlech that was between the NNR and the farm disappeared in 2005 and so migration from this site is no longer a possibility. If the NNR colony were as robust as in the past there would be some hope of movement between it and these two sites in lower Harlech. As things stand it will be surprising if the farm population persists and this will leave the NNR as the only colony in the area. In the long run this will prejudice the butterfly's survival there.

Wildlife Networks

Susan Loose

Want to do your bit for wildlife generally? Here could be the place to start! Like many people I watched the Gardeners World episode in which Sarah Raven got the whole village behind her to create corridors for butterflies, inspiring people to plant or encourage wildflowers for nectar. More and more thought and attention is being given to the fact that all areas of conservation need joined up thinking, wildlife can't function in isolation. Even creating large corridors of nectar plants for butterflies is no use if the larval food-plants aren't considered too. If they fail at the caterpillar stage the species will still die out, so every little action is as equally

important as the big picture. I have 6 acres of land that I manage in as wildlife friendly a way as I can, and over the last few years the wildflowers and butterflies have started to thrive. Sometimes though, when neighbouring land is sprayed or overgrazed, I feel quite isolated.... enter the Wildlife Network project. Whilst volunteering on a stand for North Wales Wildlife Trust at a local gardening show I voiced my concerns and put the idea out that perhaps there might be a way of

getting together a list of people who have gardens or larger parcels of land which they are managing with wildlife in mind. This could be beneficial in many ways. It would act as encouragement for people like myself, to know that others are also involved in similar projects. It could also act as inspiration for others to follow suit. It could potentially act as a resource for organisations such as Butterfly Conservation to contact landowners about surveys or projects in certain areas or fields and it could be used to put landowners in touch with professionals and organisations with expertise in different areas of conservation. The idea has certainly caught on and I had several landowners willing to put their names forward for this list on that very same day. E-mails have been flying around since and everyone is coming up with their own ideas and putting me in touch with other people who are already running similar projects in various parts of the country. Dorset Wildlife Trust for instance has a scheme where people can acquire a sign to put up if their gardens meet certain criteria for encouraging wildlife. After talking with people in my local B.C and N.W.W.T groups the idea came up of using Face book as a way of quickly and easily getting something off the ground as links can easily be added to other websites. It looks as if something is actually getting off the ground and personally I'm very excited. If you are interested in the idea or getting involved and would consider going on the list please contact info@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

Apologies to moth-ers!

The next Spring newsletter will make up for the dearth of moth articles in this issue.

But copy is needed so please write about your adventures and findings. What happened locally on National Moth Night? Have you reared any livestock?

Articles can be emailed to me but please send me a note of your email or telephone number to the address on the back page.

County Butterfly and Moth Recorders

If you would like to send records by e-mail please use the recorders' e-mail if shown, or info@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk Butterfly recording forms can also be printed off from the website www.northwalesbutterflies.org.uk or can be sent to you by post from any of the Recorder

Moth Recorders

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