



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



Small Pearl bordered Fritillary

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**

Contents

Editor: Helen Bantock

Butterfly Conservation Members Day 2009.....	2
The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey.....	14
Clearwings in VC48.....	3
A Review of New and Notable Lepidoptera recorded in Merionethshire 2008.....	7
Unusual moths in Denbighshire VC 50 in 2008.....	13
Anglesey and Caernarvonshire Marsh Fritillary news.....	13
Events Guide.....	16
County Recorders.....	20

Saturday June 27th Butterfly Conservation North Wales AGM and Members Day, Craflwyn, Beddgelert, Gwynedd

" Creating a dynamic and robust mountain landscape through extensive cattle grazing at Gelli lago" - talk by Sabine Nouvet, Monitoring Ecologist.

Programme:

10.00am inspection of previous night's moth traps*

10.30 to 11.00am coffee; Branch information display.

11.00am brief AGM

11.30 to 12.30 talk by Sabine Nouvet, Ecologist for the National Trust, about the changing grazing management at Gelli lago, the National Trust farm which we will be visiting. At Gelli lago they have drastically reduced sheep numbers, and in some areas have virtually replaced them all with Welsh Black cattle. This extensive cattle grazing system will encourage the restoration of key habitats as well as natural succession based on the livestock's grazing patterns. As a result it is expected that there will be an increase in the diversity of sward height, vegetation cover, and species. Sabine will then focus on how we expect this will be of particular benefit to butterfly and moth species such as the **Small Pearl bordered Fritillary**. Finally she will outline the results from the first two years of SPBF surveys, and discuss the results or potential changes.

1pm. Lunch (soup and sandwiches, cakes and drinks to be booked in advance, or bring your own.)

approx. 2pm; field trip to Gelli lago

approx. 4pm; close.

Overnight accommodation will be available to be booked well in advance for those wishing to come from further afield. More details nearer the date will be sent out to members, also from ; info@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

***Members are welcome to attend the moth evening on the 26th from 10-12 midnight. This is a joint Butterfly Conservation Moths Count and National Trust event.**

Wanted-20 new Butterfly recorders to monitor a 1 km transect for the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey-see page 14

Clearwings in VC 48

Helen Bantock

A fascinating group of under recorded day- flying moths

Andrew Graham is well known for his discoveries of the Welsh Clearwing *Synanthedon scoliaeformis* and on 6.07.06, he and his sister, Janet, using a pheromone lure which mimics the scent of the female moth, had the first county record of a Red tipped Clearwing, *Synanthedon formicaeformis* at Llanaber. Two weeks later, having borrowed the appropriate pheromone lure (FOR) from a Montgomeryshire moth-er, I cycled to the camp site at Mochras a few miles further north and explored the shallows there, which grow in wet areas behind the saltmarsh. As advised, I only tried the lure for 10-15 minutes or so at each tree and it took several tries before a Red tipped Clearwing appeared almost immediately.

I bought my own set of lures for 2007 but the only sighting I had was of a Red tipped Clearwing at Tir Stent. This one did not linger for more than a few seconds and I had no success at other sites.

In 2008, I had a further success with the FOR lure at a farm in lower Harlech where I had failed the previous year. It was on a fine, sunny day and there weren't many of those last summer. This lack of good weather meant that I couldn't sample as many places as I had hoped and I never did manage to try the MYO lure for Red-belted Clearwing *Synanthedon myopaeformis* because of this.

On the 8.06.08, the morning after National moth night, my son Tristan and I returned home with John Hicks and he showed us his blackcurrant bushes, which were quite mature, saying he was hopeful of Currant Clearwing *Synanthedon tipuliformis* of which there were no records existing for Merioneth. That afternoon he sent us a text message with exciting news.

He had been trying the MYO lure by an apple tree in his garden at Talybont, but after about an hour gave up. On passing the currant bushes he saw a group of Currant Clearwings basking on the leaves! He netted two at once and managed to pot one (a female). By the time he had fetched the TIP lure they had vanished and none came to the lure, either then or on the days following, although several appeared in different places.

We at once went to some currant bushes in the Coleg Harlech car park, which John had told us about. By this time in the late afternoon, the bushes were in shade and no clearwings came to the lure. But next morning it was hot and sunny and not only did a male Currant Clearwing come to the TIP lure there, but one was also attracted fleetingly, in a garden about a mile away on the other side of Harlech.

I took a brief video clip of the Currant Clearwing which can be seen at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/33358461@N07/3167060756/?processed=1&cb=1231083081235>

The Clearwings are easily overlooked and before the advent of pheromone lures most were seen as adults only if they were reared out from the wood or material in which the larvae were feeding.

J.W. Tutt in ' Practical Hints for the Field Lepidopterist' (published between 1901-1905) gives insight into the persistence and tenacity of the earlier lepidopterists in looking for larvae. The Amateur Entomologist, Volume 23 (1994), is the recent edition of Tutt's work which has a separate interpretive index, needed because of the use of the older moth names.



Curren Clearwing June 2008 Tristan Bantock

Hints for finding Clearwings

Although the reported flight periods seem to be quite long, my experience with Curren and Red-tipped Clearwings is that local populations may have quite short flight times. Sunny days are best for trying the lures but failure does not mean the species is absent from a site. The timing of insect emergence may vary and be earlier in warmer years. Remember also that the pheromone lures available are not exact matches for the UK species, and so males may not be strongly attracted to them. A lure must be watched carefully as interest may be only transitory!

It is important to identify likely trees before the season and look for signs eg holes and old exuviae.

Red- tipped Clearwing favours osier beds (which are scarce in North Wales) or willows growing in very wet conditions. The flight period is in June and July. It is likely to be widely distributed as by using the pheromone lure it has now been seen in five different areas in Merioneth.

The **Curren Clearwing** may be found on red currant as well as blackcurrant bushes. The flight season is said to be June/July and adults can sometimes be seen on the leaves, especially on sunny days.

The **Red- belted Clearwing** likes old apple and crab apple trees and also Conference pear. It is not a threat to fruit trees as it is not a cause of disease. The flight period is June-July. The specific lure has been tried on many crab apple

trees in VC 48 but with no success as yet. The historic record for VC 48 is unconfirmed.

Thrift Clearwing larvae are found feeding on the stems of sea thrift in early May. A little red patch on the cushion of thrift betrays the work of the larva. The adult moths fly from mid June into July. Although found in rocky areas on the Lleyn, Thrift Clearwing has not been seen on similar cliffs south of Fairbourne in VC 48.

The **Welsh Clearwing** is classified as Red data book 3, but surveys by Andrew Graham have shown that it is present in the Berwyns and at sites near both Dolgellau and Bala and probably also in areas which have not been surveyed. The moth favours mature trees whose lower trunks are exposed to light. As with other clearwings, the use of a pheromone lure is appropriate only in sunny conditions and is best attempted in mid-July immediately after adult emergence. Emergence holes are the easiest way to detect the presence of the moth and fresh cocoons and/or exuviae may be found.

Clearwings recorded from North Wales (as on NWWales database <http://trawsgoed.com/>) with most recent sightings

		VC48	VC49	VC52	Host
<i>Sesia bembeciformis</i>	Lunar Hornet Moth	2008	2000	2006	Sallow
<i>Synansphecica muscaeformis</i>	Thrift Clearwing	1917	2006	2006	Thrift
<i>Synanthedon culiciformis</i>	Large Red-belted Clearwing(VC50)	1978	-	-	Birch stumps
<i>Synanthedon formicaeformis</i>	Red-tipped Clearwing Nb	2008	-	-	Sallow
<i>Synanthedon myopaeformis</i>	Red-belted Clearwing	?1985	-	-	Apple, pear, rowan
<i>Synanthedon scoliaeformis</i>	Welsh Clearwing	2008	-	-	Downy birch
<i>Synanthedon tipuliformis</i>	Currant Clearwing	2008	2006	-	Blackcurrant
<i>Synanthedon vespiformis</i>	Yellow-legged Clearwing	-	2005	-	Oak
<i>Sesia apiformis</i>	Hornet moth(VC50)	-	-	-	Black Poplar
<i>Synanthedon spheciformis</i>	White barred Clearwing(VC50)	-	-	-	Alder, birch
<i>Bembecia ichneumoniformis</i>	Six-belted Clearwing (VC50) 1991-2002	-	-	-	Bird's foot Trefoil, Kidney Vetch

The larvae of the **Large Red-belted Clearwing** are found in two- year old birch stumps, feeding just under the bark so that frass collects between the wood and the bark. The adults, which may also use mature birches, emerge from mid May to late June and are delayed by cool, wet weather. Pheromone lures have been tried in VC48 with no luck so far.

Exit holes of the **Lunar Hornet moth** can be found in willows, and adults reared out from logs. The adult moth emerges early in the morning in July and August but is not often reported. This is a common moth but as yet no pheromone lure is available.

Yellow legged Clearwing is found in open woodland and parkland, especially where felling has taken place. Larvae can be found beneath the bark in stumps of felled oak (Oct-May) and the adult moth flies from late May to mid August.

Clearwings not yet reported from VC48, 49 and 52 in North West Wales but which could be present.

The **Six belted Clearwing** seems to be increasing in continental Europe and it has been seen in Pembrokeshire and as far north as Yorkshire. The typical habitat is said to be mainly chalk or limestone, which is not heavily grazed, but it appears also to favour post- industrial alkaline sites. The moth was swept this summer from bird's foot trefoil growing on acidic grassland on the edge of Epping Forest in Greater London suggesting that the soil type may not be so important.

White barred Clearwing is found in alder groves, woodland edges and streamsides. Larval frass may be seen on the ground beneath the exit hole. Peak numbers are said to occur in early June with a flight period from mid May until early July.

The **Hornet moth** is often found in isolated trees where the trunk is exposed to the sun. Aspen and Lombardy and other poplars as well as Black Poplar are used. The moth flies from mid June to July and the best time is said to be early morning in late June. A new pheromone lure is available and is said to be very effective.

The **Raspberry Clearwing** is a very long shot. This is a new addition to the British list and is probably overlooked. It is established in North Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire, where it was discovered by Jim Reid. There will probably be more found in 2009 as people target it using pheromone lures. The attached photo (which was taken by and is copyrighted by Jim Reid) shows the gall made in the stem where it meets the soil. The caterpillar lives for 2 years in the stems (canes) of raspberries, so if you prune your old raspberry canes you are probably destroying it. Look for neglected raspberry canes on allotments, unkempt gardens and growing wild.



Raspberry Clearwing gall Jim Reid

A brief review of new and notable Lepidoptera recorded in Merionethshire in 2008
Andrew Graham
VC48 County Moth Recorder
New County Records

Thirteen species were recorded as new in 2008. These discoveries bring the total number of species recorded in Merionethshire to approximately 1296 (there are a few dubiously recorded species so the number is not exact). This is an increase of 241 over the past decade. These numbers suggest not only that the county fauna was poorly known ten years ago but also that there are still likely to be further species of which we are unaware.

Argyresthia glaucinella

(John Hicks and Helen Bantock, 24th June 2008, Cae Gwian, nr. Barmouth, to light)

This small moth may well be widespread but it is easily overlooked and has not been reported previously. The larvae feed on the bark of oak trees and are alleged to betray their presence by ejecting red-brown frass, which is most easily seen in March and April. Now that we know the moth is present in the county we should be looking all the more carefully for this evidence.

Bucculatrix cristatella

(Helen Bantock, 30th July 2008, Traethdy, Harlech, to MV light)

This is a surprising and totally unexpected addition to the faunal list for North Wales and thought to be new for Wales as a whole. The larvae of this moth feed on *Achillea millefolium*, Yarrow, which becomes shrivelled and whitened as a result.

Caloptilia azaleella Azalea leaf mine

(John Hicks, 25th July 2008, Glenville, Talybont, to MV light)

This moth is thought to have been introduced to Britain by gardeners and has spread rapidly across the country. John's catch, on the Merioneth coast, confirms that the species is now present in NW Wales. In truth, it has probably been here for some time and is sure to be present in built up areas elsewhere in the region. Look for the conspicuous leaf mines and cones on Azalea leaves; *Rhododendron simsii* and *R. indicum* are said to be favoured, as is the cultivar *R. hina mayo*.

Capperia britanniodactyla

(Andrew and Janet Graham, 30th June 2008, plantation nr. Llyn Celyn, netted)

This plume moth is dependent upon *Teucrium scorodonia*, Wood Sage – a fairly common plant throughout North Wales. It, therefore, seems likely that the moth may be widespread in the region but overlooked, as is the case with so many other species. I netted this individual simply because I happened to spot

something small and insignificant-looking, flying weakly, just above the vegetated strip in the middle of a forest road. I wasn't even sure if it was a moth at all but was delighted when I examined what I had caught. The forest track was unexceptional although there was wood sage growing on a bank nearby.

Dichrorampha acuminatana

(Helen Bantock, 29th August 2008, Traethdy, Harlech, light trapping)

This species is almost certain to be very scarce in North Wales, as it requires flower-rich grassland, specifically with Oxeye Daisy or Tansy (or possibly Yarrow). This sort of habitat is now extremely rare in the region.

Epiblema sticticana

(Andrew and Janet Graham, 30th June 2008, Coed y Brenein, netted)

This Tortricid moth depends upon *Tussilago farfara*, Colt's-foot as the larval foodplant. We chanced upon an extended colony, living on plants growing beside a forest track in Coed y Brenin. The moths were flying freely at midday and a specimen was netted for dissection. There may well be other roadside colonies scattered throughout the county but the moth is unlikely to be common due to the scarcity of Colt's-foot on farmland.

Eulamprotes immaculatella

(Helen Bantock, 8th May 2008, Traethdy, Harlech, light trapping)

This was another totally unexpected moth, with few previous British records and, in fact, very few records globally. Next to nothing is known about the life history of the species but there is no reason to suppose that the moth is not resident here. It may even be widespread, perhaps occurring around the coast, but is unlikely to be common anywhere.

***Galleria mellonella* Wax Moth**

(John Hicks and Helen Bantock, 26th August 2008, Coed Lletywalter, to light)

This capture provided confirmation of the rumour that the Wax Moth is now common in the Llanbedr district, having been introduced in hives from Coventry. Beekeepers are unlikely to pass their records on and, no doubt, destroy the moth whenever they can. Lepidopterists, on the other hand, are pleased to have an interesting addition to the local fauna.

Glyphipterix forsterella

(Andrew and Janet Graham, 15th June 2008, Trawscoed, swept)

Much to my surprise, I swept a specimen of this moth whilst trying for the related *G. haworthana* (see below). The larval foodplant is given as sedge and there were indeed a few sedge species growing on the moorland site where the moth was taken, most notably some large tussocks of *Carex paniculata*.

Glyphipterix haworthana

(Andrew and Janet Graham, 9th October 2008, Tir Stent, larval record)

Whilst searching for invertebrates in a wet, rough, flowery area on my farm I tubed a small moth which I showed briefly to my sister, Janet, and then, for some inexplicable reason, promptly released - causing howls of protestation and anguish from Janet. She realised that this was not the Cock's-foot Moth (*Glyphipterix simplicifella*) as I had vaguely thought but something unfamiliar to us. Later, having consulted the literature, she identified it as a probable *G. haworthana*. The only positive consequence arising from my strange behaviour was that on returning to the site to hunt for the moth again, though failing to re-find it, we did discover some interesting Diptera, including a rare Microdon hover-fly. In addition, whilst searching another hopeful boggy spot on the farm I swept the *Glyphipterix forsterella* discussed above.

Fortunately, later in the year, we were able to confirm *G. haworthana* for the county by discovering larvae in the spun-up seed heads of *Eriophorum angustifolium*, Common Cotton-grass. The heads remain white and conspicuous when tenanted. Interestingly, the moth seems to prefer lower altitude bogs as we failed to find any on moorland, even in areas with abundant Common Cotton-grass.

Pammene germmana

(Andrew and Janet Graham, 4th June 2008, Coed y Brenin, netted)

This was a handsome, blackish Tortricid, netted in a forest glade in Coed y Brenin. The larval pabulum is not known with certainty but may be Blackthorn or Oak. If this is indeed the case then it is hard to explain the apparent scarcity of the moth in Britain and it may just be a coincidence that this specimen (the first for North Wales) was taken in one of the few high quality areas of flower-rich grassland left in the county.

Parapoynx stratiotata Ringed China-mark

(Helen Bantock, 29th August 2008, Traethdy, Harlech, light trapping)

This is obviously a local species in NW Wales, probably restricted to low altitude ponds. Possibly, targeted light trapping at such sites would prove successful in finding further colonies.

Synanthedon tipuliformis Currant Clearwing

John Hicks, 8th June 2008, Glenville, Talybont, spotted on currant bushes. The exciting story of the discovery of this, the only new macro-moth to be found in 2008, is related elsewhere in this newsletter.

Scarce Moths

A) RDB species

➤ **Northern Footman (RDB2)**

This is actually an abundant species in NW Wales and the RDB categorisation should be reviewed.

➤ ***Synanthedon scoliaeformis* Welsh Clearwing (RDB3)**

Several new sites were discovered in 2008. I was particularly pleased to see an adult male very close to my house on one of the few sunny days in July. I knew the moths were here, due to the presence of exit holes, cocoons and exuviae, but had never actually seen an adult.

B) Notable Na

➤ ***Mompha divisella***

Recorded on two occasions in the very early spring by Helen Bantock in the Harlech dunes. This remains the only known site for the species in North Wales.

➤ ***Xestia ashworthii* Ashworth's Rustic**

Three larvae were seen, feeding on *Calluna* and *Erica*, on Dduallt (SH812272) on the 5th May – a new ten-kilometre square for the species. Two adults came to light on the night of 22nd July (SH8432). My view remains that this is a common upland species.

➤ ***Anania funebris***

This pretty, day-flying moth was recently added to the UK BAP and is thus attracting rather more interest than previously. A new site was discovered on the 2nd June 2008 (Brwyn-llynau, nr. Llanfair, SH583296) making two known colonies in NW Wales, both of which survive by chance, without receiving any special attention. Both sites could be described as semi-abandoned farmland and are very vulnerable to the urge to tidy up such places – by conservationists as well as farmers. All in all, the future does not look bright for this species.

C) Notable

Twenty-five moth species with Notable or Notable Nb status were recorded in 2008.

<i>Nepticulidae</i>	<i>Enteucha acetosae</i>	
<i>Lyonetiidae</i>	<i>Leucoptera lathyriifoliella</i>	
<i>Sesiidae</i>	<i>Synanthedon tipuliformis</i>	Currant Clearwing
<i>Sesiidae</i>	<i>Synanthedon formicaeformis</i>	Red-tipped Clearwing
<i>Glyphipterigidae</i>	<i>Glyphipterix forsterella</i>	
<i>Yponomeutidae</i>	<i>Yponomeuta sedella</i>	
<i>Coleophoridae</i>	<i>Coleophora lithargyrinella</i>	

<i>Gelechiidae</i>	<i>Bryotropha boreella</i>	
<i>Tortricidae</i>	<i>Olethreutes arcuella</i>	
<i>Tortricidae</i>	<i>Epiblema incarnatana</i>	
<i>Tortricidae</i>	<i>Eucosma aemulana</i>	
<i>Tortricidae</i>	<i>Cydia microgrammana</i>	
<i>Tortricidae</i>	<i>Pammene germmana</i>	
<i>Pyralidae</i>	<i>Crambus pratella</i>	
<i>Pyralidae</i>	<i>Scoparia ancipitella</i>	
<i>Pterophoridae</i>	<i>Capperia britanniodactyla</i>	
<i>Geometridae</i>	<i>Scopula emutaria</i>	Rosy Wave
<i>Geometridae</i>	<i>Lampropteryx otregiata</i>	Devon Carpet
<i>Geometridae</i>	<i>Eupithecia plumbeolata</i>	Lead-coloured Pug
<i>Geometridae</i>	<i>Eupithecia valerianata</i>	Valerian Pug
<i>Geometridae</i>	<i>Eupithecia expallidata</i>	Bleached Pug
<i>Geometridae</i>	<i>Chesias rufata rufata</i>	Broom-tip
<i>Noctuidae</i>	<i>Agrotis ripae</i>	Sand Dart
<i>Noctuidae</i>	<i>Mythimna litoralis</i>	Shore Wainscot
<i>Noctuidae</i>	<i>Hypenodes humidalis</i>	Marsh Oblique-barred

Some of these moths are common in the county whilst others are discussed above or elsewhere in this newsletter. Of the remainder, I will comment only that I was particularly pleased with the records for Lead-coloured Pug (various recorders). This moth is rare for the usual reason (little remaining habitat) and had gone unrecorded for twenty years.

Other noteworthy records

There were many other records of interest in 2008 but I will only pick out two further species.

➤ ***Adscites statices*** **The Forester**

This UK BAP species was recorded at several known sites but remains vulnerable to prejudice against the sort of rough, untidy-looking areas needed by this and so many other scarce invertebrates. The inevitable comment is that such sites 'need a bit more grazing' and the inevitable consequence of 'a bit more grazing' is the loss of another colony.

➤ ***Amphipoea fucosa paludis*** **The Saltern Ear**

It is well known that ear moths can only be distinguished by genitalic examination. Personally, I have now examined many specimens in this way and I admit that I was beginning to have doubts as to whether the Saltern Ear occurs in Merioneth. I suspect that most of the old records are incorrect and refer to *Amphipoea lucens*, the Large Ear which is generally abundant even (or especially) on moorland. However, a specimen taken at Traethdy, Harlech on the 23rd August 2008 (Helen Bantock) did have two rows of bristles overlapping on the cucullus, as per the description for Saltern Ear. (In the Large Ear these rows of bristles do not overlap). This distinction may not seem very significant but appears to be the best way of distinguishing between the two members of this species pair although, as the books tell us, the distinction becomes blurred in western Scotland. The other two ear moths have highly distinctive genitalic differences and have clearly speciated much further in the past.

Migrants

2008 was a poor year for migrants. A Delicate in late April (Helen Bantock) presaged a wave of commoner migrants, such as Diamond-back Moth, seen through early May. Few migrants were seen in June or July with only a scattering of records of common species such as Silver Y, Rush Veneer and Dark Sword-grass. August provided a little more interest with three records of the *Convolvulus* Hawk-moth in Talybont by John Hicks. Two sightings were on *Nicotiana* and the third was actually seen by a holidaymaker who took a photograph, allowing John to confirm the record. The remainder of the year was unproductive, with a White-speck on 11th October being the only noteworthy migrant (John Hicks, Talybont).

Migrant butterflies were notable by their almost total absence, with only four Painted Lady sightings reported.

Butterflies

2008 was not a good year for other butterflies either and there are few interesting records to report. The Marsh Fritillary did particularly badly but this was due as much to poor management as to the weather. Only a very few larval webs (a maximum of four) were found on the Morfa Harlech National Nature Reserve, following a period of particularly heavy grazing on the colony area. It can only be hoped that lessons have been learned and that the population can recover from this low ebb if the necessary management changes are made.

I will finish with a reminder that 2009 is the last year in the current five-year mapping period for butterflies. There is an urgent need to target ten-kilometre squares with specific butterfly species in mind. Study the distribution maps on www.trawsgoed.com; set the maps to show a hectad plot with the cut-off year set at 2004. The blue squares will then represent ten-kilometre squares where the species has been recorded in the past but which have not yet been filled in for the current five-year mapping period.

Unusual moths in Denbighshire VC 50 2008 **Bryan Formstone**

I have received some 2008 records from the four following recorders, all are from garden traps, and are the pick of their 2008 records.

Peter Rathbone Llanarmon yn ial

Red Swordgrass- singles on 31.5.08 and 4.5.08
Lunar Marbled Brown- one on 5.5.08
Beautiful Brocade- one on 13.6.08
Oblique Carpet - singles on 19.6.08 and 26.8.08
Beautiful Snout- one on 25.7.08
Scalloped Shell - one on 30.7.08
Blomers Rivulet- one on 31.7.08

John Smith Marford

Dingy Footman -three in May
Dingy Shears-one in May

Justin Williams Marford

Leopard Moth-one on 31.5.08
Lead Belle-three- dates in June.
Puss Moth-one on 23.5.08
Poplar Kitten-one on 31.5.08
Dingy Footman-one on 31.5.08
Light Brocade-singles on 23.5.08 and 5.6.08
Dusky Lemon Sallow-one on 8.9.08
Lesser Spotted Pinion-one on 27.7.08
Beautiful Hook-tip-one on 22.7.09
Pinion-streaked Snout-one on 22.7.08

Mike Grice Rossett, had an average year with his moth trap.

The highlights were a Pale Pinion on 14.3.08, White-pinion Spotted on 13.5.08 and Light Brocade on 30.5.08, Oblique Carpet on 2.6.08 and Blotched Emerald on 21.6.08. All are scarce Spring species in Denbighshire VC 50.

Caernarfonshire and Anglesey Marsh Fritillary News **Dave Thorpe**

A number of events have been run in Gwynedd (Caernarfonshire) in 2008 to look at marsh fritillaries (adults and larvae) and survey for new populations and good habitat areas. In June, Butterfly Conservation and the North Wales Wildlife Trust members had a joint visit to Cors Y Wald on the Lleyon to look for adult butterflies. For once the

sun shone and we were rewarded with plenty of views of marsh fritillary, small pearl bordered fritillaries, small copper and numerous birds and some reptiles too. This site – an extensive upland wetland south of Clynog Fawr, is of international importance for this species (a Special Area of Conservation) but is open access land so available for visitors. It also host green hairstreak – a species for which there are few records in Caernarfonshire.

Autumn larval web survey

In partnership with Cyngor Gwynedd, the Environment Agency's Biodiversity Team ran a training day for ecologists, consultants and volunteers on the ecology, management and survey of the critically rare marsh fritillary butterfly. Dave Thorpe gave a presentation on this rapidly declining species. This was followed by a site visit and survey for the communal caterpillars at one of Gwynedd's wetland nature reserves. The day was very successful with 20 attendees from a range of backgrounds. Over 40 larval webs were found on the day. Following the training volunteers with Gwynedd Council have surveyed a range of sites and found an additional colony at Bwlch y Derwen (no records here since 2000).

Anglesey

Les Coley of CCW has rediscovered a population at Cors Erddreiniog in 2008 but few other records have been received. Rhosneigr dunes had adults in 2004, Aberfraw headland some adults in 2002.

The Eifionydd Fens wetland sites of the Llyn remain the best population in the area with extensive *succisa*-rich habitat. Only 5 sites within the area still host marsh fritillary butterflies though, and these are scattered and isolated. Cors y Wlad does still host a healthy population with over 1000 marsh frits on the wing in 2007 (Andrew Graham). For information of where to see either adults or larvae contact Dave Thorpe.

The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey (WCBS) goes ahead in 2009

By Dr Katie Cruickshanks, WCBS co-ordinator

After two years of pilot testing, a new method of monitoring butterflies in widespread habitats, such as farmland and upland moorland, is to be rolled out nationwide this year.

The Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey method has been developed by Butterfly Conservation and the Centre for Ecology and Hydrology as part of the UKBMS project.

The existing Transect network provides invaluable data on the status of butterflies, yet widespread habitats are under-recorded. More information on the fate of butterflies in these areas is needed. The new survey is intended to fill these gaps by complementing, rather than replacing, the existing Transect network.

The pilot testing has thrown up some interesting information. Last year, despite the unsettled weather, nearly two thirds of the 1-km squares visited in 2007 were revisited by volunteers. In total 40 species were recorded.

Importantly all 23 target species were detected in both pilot years which means that trends can be analysed to test whether classic Transects provide a truly representative picture of butterflies in the UK landscape as a whole.

Volunteers who have participated in the pilot testing have shown considerable enthusiasm and it is hoped this will continue to grow.

There has been close involvement with the British Trust for Ornithology and the method is based on the highly successful Breeding Bird Survey. We hope that many BTO recorders will be returning to their bird sites this summer to collect butterfly data as part of the survey along with many new surveys completed by BC recorders.

The new method involves making a minimum of two visits to a randomly selected square near to your home between May and August to count butterflies along two 1km survey lines running roughly north-south or east-west through the square. The survey will be co-ordinated centrally by BC but we aim to find a Champion in each Branch to help find willing volunteers. We are aiming for 20 squares per Branch.

The following squares have been selected in North Wales

SH3039	Fron Oleu near Nefyn
SH4179	Anglesey near Llangwyllog
SH4574	Anglesey, near Llangefni and A55
SH5055	Bwlchyllyn near Penygroes (A487). Houses some stony areas
SH5263	Llanrug , near Caernarvon
SH7035	Trawsfynydd 25% water
SH7067	Foel Fras 942m
SH7205	Near Pantperthog A487
SH7410	Mynydd Hafotty near Tal-y-llyn lake ,forest on a sloping hillside
SH8064	Llandogged near Llanwrst A470
SH8565	Llangernyw A548
SH9146	Cerrigydrudion A5 Looks quite steep, two rivers
SH9978	Near Towyn A548
SJ0272	St. Asaph A55
SJ0714	North of Llanfair Caereinion-Dolanog. Forest, river and several footpaths
SJ0821	Penygarnedd near Llanfyllin
SJ0830	Mid way between Oswestry and Bala. Mountainous 600+metres.
SJ2656	Llanfynydd mid way between Mold and Wrexham
SN7895	Near Machynlleth
SN8487	Hafren forest fairly near Plynlimon

Please email survey@butterfly-conservation.org or call 01929 406036 to register interest in taking part and you will be contacted in early spring with instructions .Please choose one of the above 1km survey squares. Keep an eye on www.butterfly-conservation.org/wcbs for more information.

Butterfly Conservation North Wales Events, 2009

Events Guide North Wales Butterfly Conservation

If you would like to be added to our e-mail mailing list to receive advance information about future and extra events, or if you have a request for a certain event please e-mail; info@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

March

Marsh Fritillary web-search workshop- contact Dave Thorpe 01286 871982 or david.thorpe@environment-agency.wales.gov.uk

Wednesday 18th March Gardening for Butterflies talk by Jan Miller, St Paul's Church Hall, Llandudno. Contact Jan on 01352 711198 or mobile; 079 7960 3846 info@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

April

Sunday 19th April 10.30 until 4pm. Gardeners Market at RSPB Reserve, Conwy, come and see the new butterfly garden and buy some of the plants to take home! Contact Jan Miller 01352 711198 or mobile; 079 7960 3846 info@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

May

Thursday 14th May Butterfly Identification Course at Rhydymwyn Valley Nature Reserve, a one-day course including Powerpoint presentation of how to distinguish all 36 North Wales species, a hands-on workshop and after lunch a walk around this interesting historical as well as natural history site to learn identification and Transect recording skills. trainer; Jan Miller. Max 20, booking essential; contact Jacinta Challinor, NEWW, Nant Alyn Road, Rhydymwyn, Mold. 01352 742 115 weo@newwildlife.org.uk

3 Hairstreak Weekends! - Three Saturday afternoon field trips to search for the little-seen larvae and adults of our 3 Hairstreaks in North Wales. Warm sunny conditions are required for each of these meetings so those members wishing to attend should contact Mike Hammet (tel; 01248 450735) before setting out if weather conditions are wet or windy.

Saturday 16th May Meeting time 2.00pm. The meeting to see Green Hairstreak adults will be at a site near Tregarth. Meet at Grid Ref. SH 61456658 parking on the B4409 southeast of Tregarth Village. Leader David Thorpe 01286 871982 or david.thorpe@environment-agency.wales.gov.uk

Saturday 23rd May Meeting time 2.00pm, Rhyd-y-Gaseg.near Ruthin. Grid Ref. SJ111565 To locate White-letter Hairstreak larvae. Leader Mike Hammett 01248 450735 mhammett@toucansurf.com

Thursday 28th May –Wrexham area- making nectar rich hanging baskets and planters at Ty Mawr Country Park for wildlife (mainly bees and butterflies) in gardens.

We will be at the Guild Hall on Friday 29th

Trevor Community Centre on Sat 30th

Stryt Las (for school children – so won't be charging) on Wed 3rd June.

Remani Jones, Johnstown Community Wildlife Officer, NEWWildlife, Rhydymwyn Valley Nature Reserve, 17 Nant Alyn Road,

Rhydymwyn, Mold, Flintshire CH7 5HQ tel: 01352 742238, mobile 07847525787 volunteer@newwildlife.org.uk

29th May 2009 - Butterfly identification course at Moelyci Environmental Centre, contact John Harold 01248 361126 www.moelyci.org

June

6 - 14 June Wales Biodiversity Week

Sat/ Sun 6th&7th June WOODFEST at St Asaph near Abergele, BCNW stand with children's activities, plant sales

Sat/ Sun 6th&7th June Garden Festival at Llangollen; Biodiversity village including BC stand – **but only if we get some volunteers to help! please contact Jan Miller; 01352 711198, or info@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk**

Saturday 6th June at Coed Caeddfydd; One of the 'Three Hairstreak' events- to locate Purple Hairstreak larvae. Meet at parking area Grid Ref. SH 62054675. Meeting time 2.00pm. leader Mike Hammett.. If you wish to explore this beautiful area bring stout footwear or wellington boots as you may have to wade across a ford in the river. tel; 01248 450735

Thursday 11th June at 11:30am

Silver-studded Blue guided walk on the Great Orme; numbers limited to 12, booking essential- contact;

Sally Davies

Warden Parc Gwledig Cynorthwyol / Assistant Country Park Warden

sally.davies@conwy.gov.uk 01492 874151

Saturday 13th June moth-trapping Alyn Waters Country Park-(near Wrexham) Jan Miller 01352 711198, & Emma Broad (Biodiv. Officer Wrexham Borough Council) emma.broad@wrexham.gov.uk

Saturday 13th June Moth night at Eithinog and Brewery Fields, Bangor. - This is a NWWT event; details from Kate Gibbs -geoffkate.gibbs@care4free.net,

20th to 28th National Garden Moths Count week. See
<http://www.mothcount.brc.ac.uk/default.aspx>

Saturday 27th June BCNW AGM and Members Day, Craflwyn, Beddgelert, Gwynedd See page 2 of the newsletter.

July

Saturday 18th July; moth-trapping at Talacre (Point of Ayr) contact; Jan Miller
01352 711198, Kim Norman

Saturday 18th/Sunday 19th Ashworth's Rustic weekend, Pensychnant, (Conwy); contact Julian Thompson.

25th July to 2nd August National Save Our butterflies Week
Have you any suggestions for events?
Would you like to open your garden to visitors or lead a walk? Volunteers to help you can be found. Contact Jan Miller 01352 711198 so that details can be emailed to members

September

Monday 14th Sept Gardening for Butterflies talk by Jan Miller 01352 711198, St Thomas' Gardening Club, Denbigh

National Moth Night 18/19th Contact country moth recorders, see page 20

October

Branch Autumn Newsletter please send contributions to the editor: for details see page 20

Monthly meetings

Moth-er's Union Meetings. These are on the first Monday in each month. 8.00pm at Pensychnant Nature Conservation Centre near Conwy **SH752771** Our monthly get together to talk about moths, butterflies and other wildlife. All welcome. Contact Julian Thompson 01492 592595 or secretary@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

Treborth Monthly Moth Meeting

This is held on the third Monday of each month, 7.30 onwards. Treborth Botanical Gardens, Bangor.

These informal meetings do not generally have a planned programme, but are arranged so that anyone can come along and meet others with similar interests, to get help in identifying your trapped moths, to put forward ideas for activities and to see moths of interest caught at Treborth the previous night. Contact Nigel Brown .

We regret no dogs are allowed at any of these events, except the moth-trapping nights being run by Mike Hammett, and all children must be accompanied by an adult as many sites can be hazardous due to quarry faces, etc., they may also be inaccessible to the disabled. Please ring the contact person named next to the event if you'd like more information about it. If they are not available please ring Jan Miller. We take all reasonable precautions with safety on our field trips, but attendees come at their own risk. Although not essential, you may find it adds to your comfort to bring sunglasses (to shield eyes from bright lamp) and a flask of hot drink and jumper (even in summer) to the moth trapping nights. A torch is also essential for finding your way back to the car, and stout footwear, a bottle of water, thick trousers and waterproofs are best on all field trips.

Butterfly Conservation is a Registered Charity No. 254937, dedicated to saving British wild butterflies and moths and their habitats .All our events are run entirely by volunteers; if you would like to contribute to our work and are not already a member, please join the society; details on the Membership page on the website (you can join by credit card from there) or from the national website; www.butterfly-conservation.org or by telephone Butterfly Conservation Head Office; 0870 7744309

Brecknock Butterfly and Moth Group

Please contact Norman Lowe 01874 658453

Monmouthshire Moth and Butterfly Group

Please contact Kevin Dupe 01633 216599 for details

Glamorgan Moth Recording Group

Please contact Mike Powell 02920 545521 for details

The Great North/South Divide?

No! Not quite!

It's just that we've got a bit of a dilemma with issuing Newsletters to some of our Members - who live close to either being North Walian or South Walian.

So.....instead of letting the Committee 'fight it out' - we've decided to give those members the choice of either being a member of North Wales, South Wales, or Both.

If you wish to be in both, this will incur an additional membership fee of £6.00.

Please contact Hannah Cooper at head office hcooper@butterfly-conservation.org if you wish to make any changes to your membership.

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 Recorders

Moth Recorders

Anglesey - Vice County(VC)52

John Harold
Hen Ardd, Carreg y Garth
Rhiwlas, Bangor
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LL57 4HD
jhmoths@yahoo.co.uk

Caernarfonshire - VC49

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