



AUTUMN 2008 NEWSLETTER OF NORTH WALES BRANCH, BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION



Merveille du Jour

Butterfly Conservation Wales

Gwarchod Glöynnod Byw Cymru

10 Calvert Terrace, Swansea, SA1 5AR 01792 642972

Saving butterflies, moths and their habitats

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

BCNW Winter Events	p. 1
North West Wales Lepidoptera Database Website	p. 2
Pheromone Power	p. 5
Transect Walks Greenfield Valley and Pen y Gelli 2008	p. 6
Butterfly Transect in Llanfairfechan	p. 8
Joint Event for Marsh Fritillaries	p. 9
Have you seen many Small Tortoiseshells this year?	p. 9
An Englishman in Wales	p.13
County Moth and Butterfly Recorders	p.16

BCNW Winter Events, 2008/9

October

11th. Butterfly Conservation Branch Liaison meeting, London; if you would like any point brought up with Head office staff or other Branches all over the UK, please contact Jan Miller 01352 711198, info@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

November:

3rd Nov and on the first Monday of every month.

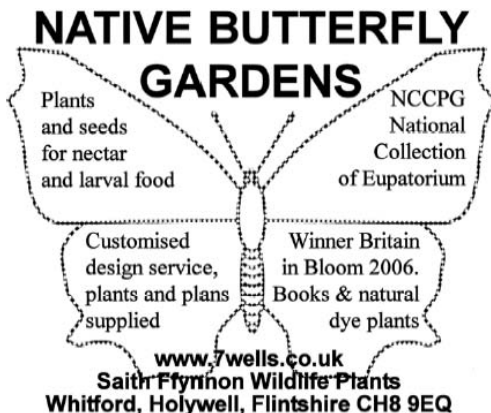
Moth-ers Union, Pencychnant Conservation Centre, Conwy; 8.30. Contact Julian Thompson

17th Nov (evening); Gardening for Butterflies talk by Jan Miller, Abergele Garden Soc.

Contact Jan Miller 01352 711198

20th Nov (evening); Gardening for Butterflies talk by Jan Miller, at Rowen village hall. Contact; Kath Barrar, Secretary, Rowen Gardening Club (Conwy Valley) 01492 650 764

Nov 17th and the third Monday of every month Meetings of the moth group at Treborth (Bangor) at 7.30pm in the laboratory at the botanic garden - please contact Nigel Brown (01248 353398) or email bss057@bangor.ac.uk for further information.



North West Wales Lepidoptera Database Website

<http://www.trawsgoed.com>

Andrew Graham

(Moth and Butterfly Recorder for Merionethshire)

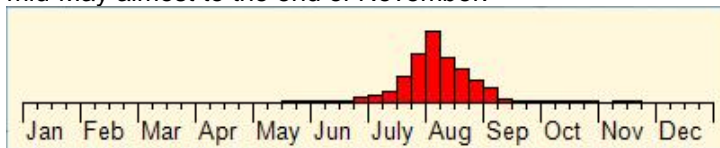
This website has been developed to make available the Lepidoptera records held for the three Vice Counties of North West Wales, namely Merionethshire (VC48), Caernarvonshire (VC49) and Anglesey (VC52). These three counties have often been considered together in the past although the land boundary is obviously artificial. It would certainly be very interesting to include a larger area, perhaps all of North Wales, but some limit is needed and, for the time being at least, this is it. Slightly over 1500 Lepidopteran species are known from the region and these are all treated on an equal basis and are accessible from the main web page. A particular species can be located in a variety of ways, for example the list of taxon names can be sorted by scientific name, English name or by the Bradley and Fletcher code number which roughly equates to taxonomic order. (The choice of sort order is made in the conventional way by clicking the column headers). The full list can be shortened to show only butterflies, only macro-moths, only micro-moths or only species from a chosen family - and there are other possibilities too. The resulting list can, if desired, be further condensed to show only those species with a name starting with a particular initial letter. This all sounds rather complicated but it actually takes longer to write out the possibilities than to learn to use it in practice. The aim is to find the species of interest and then to select it; the page is then automatically updated and displays information about the chosen species.

Having found the species of interest, there are now three main possibilities. Firstly, there may be one or more photographs to view. These are taken locally (with only one or two exceptions) and cover the majority of species. However, there is plenty of scope for improvement and everyone is welcome to add to this photographic library. Secondly the actual records for the chosen species may be viewed in tabular form, with a default sort order of vice county then date. There are no restricted species and every available record is included. The third and perhaps most interesting option is to view the records plotted as a dot distribution map.

The dot distribution map plots the records to the one-kilometre square accuracy where possible and to the ten-kilometre square if that is the best achievable. Records specified only to the county level are not plotted which can, admittedly, be a little confusing as the map may be totally blank if there are no more accurately specified records. Two colours are used for the dots: red for records with dates more recent than a chosen cut-off year and blue for records from years up to and including the cut-off year. Accurate mouse clicking on a one-kilometre square dot brings up another screen showing the underlying records pertaining to that individual dot.

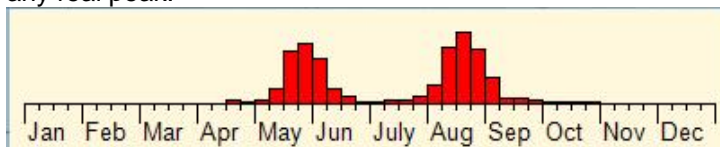
A flight time histogram is included with the map and this gives a clear, graphical indication of which weeks of the year the species has been seen in the adult stage. This can be particularly interesting as this represents the actuality as opposed to the flight season specified in the literature. (The two are often different). Records of ova, larvae and pupae are obviously not intentionally included in the flight time histogram although in some cases the life stage may not have been clearly specified by the recorder and this can give rise to confusing and misleading peaks.

The extent to which the maps and the flight histograms represent reality is clearly limited by the number of available records. No species can be said to be well recorded as even the commonest have distribution maps which are largely blank. However, for some species with sufficient records (say 1000+) the flight time histogram is clearly becoming close to representing reality. It is interesting that all these cases show a familiar Gaussian-looking curve but with extended tails on either side. An example is shown here of a univoltine species, *Noctua pronuba*, the Large Yellow Underwing (2,570 records). As can be seen, the flight season is principally July, August and the first week of September with numbers peaking in the first week of August but also with the odd record in most other weeks from mid-May almost to the end of November.



Large Yellow Underwing

An example of a bivoltine species is *Lasiommata megera*, the Wall Brown (970 records). Again the main flight periods are well defined but the odd butterfly is seen outside these times, e.g. throughout October. Note how the first week of the flight period, in April, shows a small peak. I rather suspect this reflects the enthusiasm with which we all record the first butterflies of the spring rather than any real peak.



Wall Brown

It is important to remember that these histograms are based on all records from all years and all sites. Thus any effects of altitude, or indeed climate change, are masked and merely go to widen the peaks. (Of course, it would be possible to analyse the data more carefully).

One further aspect worth mentioning is the ability to filter the taxon list by larval foodplant. For example, if one is interested in species utilising Alder this plant can be chosen from the drop down list and the 'selected foodplant only' checkbox ticked; the taxon list then condenses to show thirty-five species with Alder as one of the principal larval foodplants. I should emphasise that this is not a definitive list as there are so many species are polyphagous. The database only holds up to three foodplants for each species whereas, in reality, many more may be utilised.

Hopefully, the above paragraphs will give some idea of the functioning of the website. There are other aspects to explore and further functionality will be added in the future. My hope is that readers will have a look for themselves and will appreciate the concept of making this information readily accessible to anyone, anywhere. The website is not meant as a direct aid to identification but will certainly assist with this in various ways, not least by giving an indication of the likelihood of a particular species being caught on a given date at a particular locality.

Please, do let me know if you spot any errors or if you have suggestions for improvements. As mentioned, I would welcome extra photographs if these fill gaps or improve on those already present. (Photographs will be credited). Of course, the most important thing is to keep careful records of all your Lepidoptera sightings and send these to your county recorder. (See elsewhere in this newsletter for contact details of county recorders). In the fullness of time, your records will become viewable on the website.

Addendum. For anyone interested in the technical aspects of website design I will mention that this website is based on ASP.NET technology and is, currently, built around an Access database. When a map for a particular species is requested by your browser, a SQL query is constructed and the appropriate records are delivered from the database held on the server. The records are stepped through, programmatically, on the server and their positions on the map calculated and squares of appropriate size and colour are drawn. When the map is prepared it is sent back to your browser. As can be appreciated, this is a remarkable sequence of events – the server is probably hundreds of miles away - and it is hardly surprising that there is sometimes a noticeable delay, especially for more common species with more records. The advantage of this whole approach is that all that has to be kept up to date is the database itself with no further work necessary to make the records, maps and histograms available to anyone interested.

Our road in Rhos on Sea, Colwyn Bay has lime trees along it but in 24 years at this house I have never seen a Lime Hawk moth, *Mimas tiliae*, or had one come to light until 2003.

In August of that year, I found a Lime Hawk caterpillar beginning to pupate on our front lawn. In 2005, I found pupae in leaf litter on top of our front wall. The three I found produced perfect adults and another pupa turned up in leaf litter under a small conifer in November 2006.

An adult emerged from the latter on May 25th, 2007. The weather was inclement-cold with heavy showers and as the moth was slow to expand its wings I decided to keep it in the garage where it had hatched and release it next day.

At 9pm I went to the garage through our carport. Two large moths were flying at high speed around the carport and striking the garage door. I was surprised they were not damaged and even more surprised that they were flying on such a cold night. Netting the two moths proved what I had suspected-both were male Lime Hawks which must have been attracted to pheromones emanating from the female in the garage.

I took the female outside to a sheltered spot as her wings were now dry and I did not want the males to suffer damage.

I was left marvelling at the power of pheromone attraction and the determination of the male moths to try to get past any obstacle in order to reach the female.

Editor's Comment:

Stuart was lucky to see the above drama. Sometimes, artificial lures can attract male moths, but they are much less potent than the genuine article. On the 8th June, the morning after National Moth night, John Hicks saw three Currant Clearwings, *Synanthedon tipuliformis*, on his blackcurrants in Talybont. As there were some blackcurrant bushes near us in Harlech, I tried the specific TIP lure that same afternoon but with no success. However, the next day, I did have a male *Synanthedon tipuliformis* to the lure, but John did not see his clearwings again in spite of using the lure several times.

This summer, at three separate sites, I saw male Gold Swifts, *Hepialus hecta*, dancing above the bracken at dusk attracting females with their pineapple-like scent.

Transect Walks 2008-Greenfield Valley and Pen-y-Gelli

Sue and Brian Roberts

1. Greenfield Valley

Sue and I have undertaken butterfly Transect Walks at these sites since 2003 in the case of Greenfield Valley, and 2004 in the case of Pen-y-Gelli. The former site is a Heritage Valley about one mile from the centre of Holywell and the latter is a disused quarry about 4 miles from Holywell. In addition to producing figures for Butterfly Conservation we also liaise with Helen Bantock about the flight period of the White-Letter Hairstreak in the Greenfield Valley and have looked for the butterfly in one of the nearby White letter Hairstreak project squares.

The Transect Walker year 2008 did not start well with appalling weather that resulted in the first 3 walks producing only 113 butterflies. Sue and I had expected reduction in numbers due to the severe cutting of the main butterfly area of the valley that had been undertaken in 2007, despite us submitting proposals for a rotational cut of the area on a four-yearly basis. It therefore appeared that our worst fears had been realised.

During the period from mid May to the latter end of July we undertook a further 8 walks which totalled only 245 butterflies, the scenario looked disastrous. As July ended and August began a transformation took place and the next 6 walks produced 1042 butterflies so that by the end of week 22, 2008 was the 2nd best year for butterflies since we started monitoring the site, only surpassed by 2006.

So what did we see: -

SKIPPER-Small-Wks 14,15,16,17,18 and 20

SKIPPER-Large Wks 11,12

WHITE-Large Wks 6,7,8,9,10,12,16,17,18,19,20,21, and 22

WHITE-Small Wks 6,7,8,9,10,11,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21, and 22

WHITE-Green Veined Wks 6,7,16,17,18,19,20,21 and 22

TIP-Orange Wks 6,7,8,9 and 10

HAIRSTREAK-Purple Wks 17,18,19,20

HAIRSTREAK- White Letter Wks 17,18,

COPPER-Small Wks 10,16,17,19 and 20

BLUE-Common Wks 8,9,10,11,12,14,15,18,19,20,21 and 22

BLUE-Holly Wks 7,17,18,21 and 22

ADMIRAL-Red Wks 16,17,18,19,20,21 and 22

LADY-Painted Wks 19

TORTOISESHELL-Small Wks 4,7,19 and 21

PEACOCK Wks 4,6,7,10,19,20,21 and 22

COMMA Wks 4,15,16,17,18,19,20,21 and 22

WOOD-Speckled Wks 6,7,8,9,10,11,12,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21 and 22

WALL Wks 17,19 and 20

GATEKEEPER Wks 16,17,18,19,20,21 and 22

BROWN-Meadow- Wks 14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21 and 22

The most numerous of the butterflies seen during the year were Speckled Woods and good numbers of Small and Large Whites were seen, as were Red Admirals and Peacocks. However, concern at this site is expressed for the Small Tortoiseshell, which is also threatened nationally.

The Orange Tip count this year was the highest ever for the site. White-Letter Hairstreaks reached a maximum of 4 and Purple Hairstreaks were up to their usual level.

As in 2006, no Clouded Yellows were seen in the valley and in the South of England there has also been a dearth of this butterfly in 2008.

All in all, after a very poor start to the year, the butterfly numbers increased considerably and by the end of August an average of 83 butterflies had been seen on each transect Walk this year. The highest number of butterflies seen on a single walk was 228 on the 8th of August. Overall, 2008 showed a 45% increase over 2007.

2. Pen-y-Gelli

As mentioned earlier, Pen-y-Gelli is a small-disused limestone quarry and Sue and I have monitored it since 2004 when we discovered a colony of Dingy Skippers there.

It could not have been a more disastrous start to the year at this site with the total disappearance of the Dingy Skipper colony. We do not know whether it was down to the awful weather that prevailed at the time or for some other reason, but it left us very saddened that a colony that we had discovered had possibly gone.

The first 8 transect walks at the site produced only 69 butterflies and when in the next 5 walks only 65 butterflies were seen, it looked as if this was going to be the worst of years. So as with Greenfield Valley the year had started badly.

Then again, as with Greenfield Valley, the numbers at the site increased rapidly to the extent that we exceeded 100 butterflies in a walk, a feat we had never achieved at this small site. The good numbers continued to the end of August and 2008 was therefore the 2nd best year for butterflies here, showing an increase of 24% over 2007.

During the year the second best ever count of Common Blues was achieved (51), the best ever numbers of both Large Whites (15) and Small Whites (10) and an incredible 26 Red Admirals, which was by a long way the best ever count of this butterfly at Pen-y-Gelli and at one point during this count we had 8 of them flying around us. The Wall continues to be seen at this site, so at least one of the priority species remains at this site. When you add to this the good numbers of Peacocks and Meadow Browns these factors somewhat ameliorated the sadness over the Dingy Skippers and ended the year on a positive note. We are ever

optimistic and have not given up on the Dingy's at the site and will make a concerted effort to find them next year.

We saw the following species in the following Transect Walker weeks: -

SKIPPER-Small Wks 16

WHITE-Large Wks 8,16,19,20,21 and 22

WHITE-Small Wks 7,8,9,16,17,18,19,20,21 and 22

WHITE-Green Veined Wks 8,9,17,19,20 and 22

TIP-Orange Wks 7 and 8

COPPER-Small Wks 20 and 21

BLUE-Common Wks 8,9,10,11,12,14,15,18,19,20,21 and 22

BLUE-Holly Wks 22

ADMIRAL-Red Wks 18,19,20, 21 and 22

LADY-Painted Wks 14

TORTOISESHELL-Small Wks 20

PEACOCK Wks 4,5,19,20,21 and 22

COMMA Wks 21

WOOD-Speckled Wks 20 and 21

WALL Wks 20 and 21

GATEKEEPER 17,18,19,20 and 22

BROWN-Meadow Wks 14,15, 16,17,18,19,20 and 21

Combining these Transect Walks with visits to various parts of the country it has, all in all, been a good year with us getting very good views of Silver- Washed Fritillaries, White Admirals, Purple Emperors, Silver Spotted Skippers and three Blue species, Adonis, Small and Chalk hill. Locally a visit to the Wern-y-Gaer site resulted in a single view of a Small Pearl-Bordered Fritillary. In total 33 species of butterflies seen during the year.

Butterfly Transect in Llanfairfechan Geoff and Kate Gibbs

It has certainly been a frustrating year, with the weather making it difficult to walk the transect, week after week. We were reduced to counting butterflies in quite marginal conditions, such as when it's rather windy but you know there will be sheltered places with butterflies flying. Also reduced to getting part-way round and then hanging about waiting for the sun to come out! These are all strategies you might need occasionally, but not as often as this year.

By late September, we've managed 19 weeks out of 25, with double-week breaks in late May and late June, both caused by holiday absences. The species list was 17, four down on last year; the missing species were Small White, Small Skipper, Painted Lady and Small Heath. Our second-ever Brimstone on 4th June was perhaps the highlight, and Purple Hairstreak held up well, being recorded between 30th July and 2nd September. Other species were in very low numbers,

including only single records of Wall and Small Tortoiseshell, and a scattering of Small Coppers.

Our plan for next year is to try to find someone to fill in during holiday absences, but who? It would be rather easier for a bird survey.

Joint Event for Marsh Fritillaries Geoff and Kate Gibbs

On June 14th members from the Arfon Branch of NWWT and Butterfly Conservation went in search of Marsh Fritillaries at Cors-y-wlad, an area of rough grazing SE of Clynnog. If you don't know the area, Clynnog is a village on the Caernarfon – Pwllheli road, a few miles before the road turns inland to pass E of Yr Eifl (known to some as The Rivals). The weather was good, as was the turnout, 24 in all, including a young naturalist (age 12) who can't get enough of such events. David Thorpe briefed us well, and then we left the road to hunt for Marsh and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries. Although it was quite windy, we all had good views of both species in several parts of the site.

For the latter part of the morning we visited NWWT's wildflower meadow reserve at Caeau Tan-y-bwlch, a mile back along the road to Clynnog. There were lots of orchids to be seen, including (appropriately) butterfly and various marsh orchids.

We felt this trip was quite successful; a joint event brings in more people, and the specialist group (Butterfly Conservation in this case) provides expert leaders. And events west of Caernarfon attract local NWWT members who otherwise aren't well catered for.

Have you seen many Small Tortoiseshells this year? Jan Miller

Nor has anyone else over the whole country, it seems. Even those coming back from trips all over Europe are reporting a paucity of Small Tortoiseshells there. This just demonstrates the importance of as many people as possible sending in their butterfly records every year. Species we have thought of as very common all our lifetime can vanish suddenly – whether due to weather, new diseases or parasites, and with the poor stocks of population we already have in the UK, this could mean sudden extinction.

Butterfly Conservation has become concerned that a parasitoid fly that has arrived recently in the UK may be causing widespread mortality to Small Tortoiseshell caterpillars in southern Britain. Numbers of Small Tortoiseshells recorded on transects were extremely low in 2006 and 2007, and the parasitoid is one potential explanation for this worrying trend. The scientists at Butterfly Conservation Head Office in Dorset pay close attention to population trends, and often link up with university departments.

Nia Hamer at Oxford University is looking at what is happening to the Small Tortoiseshells, and asked for our help. Earlier this year she sent out an e-mail

request to active members asking them to collect wild batches of Small Tortoiseshell larvae and rear them through to adulthood, in an attempt to determine parasitism rates as a whole, and specifically, parasitism rates from *Sturmia bella*.

A website <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~scat3369> has more information on the project, and a detailed protocol for the practical work of collecting and rearing the Small Tortoiseshell larvae. Butterfly Conservation provided information on the UK transect data for the small tortoiseshell, and this was used to identify sites where the population trends appear to be decreasing, increasing and stable.

Subsequently, I looked regularly at the large nettle patches where I usually get several colonies of Small Tortoiseshell as well as Peacocks, but I have seen only the beginnings of feeding and frass, together with single, very small, sick looking larvae, which turned out not to be Small Tortoiseshells. There were certainly many nettles where attempts were made by larvae to feed, but all failed to mature and I have seen only one or two occasional Small Tortoiseshell adults this summer, though there have been a lot of Peacocks and Red Admirals. I have not see the parasitic fly.

Nia commented that she had had similar reports from all over the UK concerning the lack of Small Tortoiseshell adult sightings and larvae nests, and it really does seem that Small Tortoiseshell populations are suffering at the moment. Hopefully, the study will provide some insight as to why.

This is the power of the internet! If you would like to be involved in this, or any future projects like this, where all you have to do is look at a patch in your local area and send in your observations, then please do e-mail me at info@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk and I will put you on our e-mail circulation so that you also get news of new events and activities that have just come up too late for the newsletter.

So please send in any records of all butterflies you've seen this year– you'll find the list of your local county recorder on the back page of this newsletter. They are always grateful for even the occasional odd record - including 'cabbage whites'!

You don't have to have regularly walked a particular area – casual recording forms are sent out with this Branch newsletter each spring – if you loose it you can always print off another from the Recording page of the branch website; www.northwalesbutterflies.org.uk , where you will also find a 'Sightings' page where anyone can send in their casual observations of any butterflies and moths – including photos. You will find it a very interesting read; for example strangely enough, in North Wales this year we seem to have had a resurgence of Holly Blues, after over ten years of extremely low or even no records. Why? It's fascinating, like good apple and bad plum years, some species seem to do well when others don't.

One of the silver linings in all this bad weather is that it can knock back the parasites that prey on the butterflies, so that the following year the population of the host soars again.

£100,000 is in sight for the STOP EXTINCTION Appeal

Thanks to the marvellous support of Butterfly Conservation members we have raised a magnificent £84,000 for this appeal. However, we need a further £16,000 to meet our ambitious target to stop further extinctions across the UK. Acknowledging the tremendous response to the Appeal, our Chief Executive, Dr Martin Warren, urges everyone who has not contributed so far to support the appeal with gifts of any size, either by post or made online. "Every donation, whatever the amount, will make a difference. We have conservation projects ready to start immediately, as soon as funding is in place".

Your £10 can become £40 when used to match a Sustainable Development Fund grant. For example, a study into habitat restoration for the Duke of Burgundy in the North York Moors can now go ahead thanks to match funding donated by the Yorkshire branch.

Please help **STOP EXTINCTION** today by sending your 40th Anniversary donation to Dr Martin Warren, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5QP, or go online and make a donation to the **STOP EXTINCTION Appeal** at www.butterfly-conservation.org

Pentax Papilio Butterfly 8.5x21 Binocular Jan Miller recommends

I was interested to read in the Hampshire Branch newsletter a report by Keith, David and Margaret Godfrey, on searching for close-focus binoculars for use in the field. They finally came upon this make and say they are lightweight, focus to 0.5metres, fantastic for looking at small moths flushed when walking and at moth-trapping nights, and of course just what you need to see butterflies without frightening them away before you get the important diagnostic identifiers!

Named for the Latin word for butterfly, PENTAX Papilio 8.5x21 binoculars are the perfect choice for insect observation in the field and in museums and galleries. The enhanced observation capability of the Papilio binoculars is made possible by a PENTAX Convergent Lens Optical System Engineering (CLOSE) mechanism. The CLOSE mechanism automatically slides the left and right objective lenses toward the center when the focus is fixed at a short distance.

Search on the internet for the best price – when I bought them in September they were around £80.00



Iolo Williams at one of our events again.

The popular BBC Wales TV wildlife presenter, Iolo Williams, is a member of Butterfly Conservation North Wales Branch and is always very keen to help us publicise our efforts. Last year he attended one of our events at Conwy and this year he was on our stand at the Llangollen Garden show where he chatted informally to many visitors, in English and in Welsh, about the moths caught in our moth traps - the night before being National Moth Night. Wonder where Iolo will turn up next year? Keep an eye out for our events list in the spring newsletter! Jan Miller

Butterfly Corner

Paintings of butterflies in their natural surroundings by Julie Horner



Butterfly prints for sale

in small runs of 25 or 50 Limited Edition prints

Mounted ready for framing

Visit www.butterflypaintings.co.uk

or phone **Julie Horner 01829-250939** for colour brochure & prices

A donation will be given to the local Branch of Butterfly Conservation

Please quote BC01 in any communication

An Englishman in Wales

Mark Taylor

By the spring of 2004, I had been working on the Wrexham Industrial Estate for 8 months, when during one of my 30 minute lunch breaks, I noticed the huge proliferation of Cowslips wherever I walked. On roadside verges or scrub areas, even tended company borders, grew this lovely, and to me nostalgic plant. In my native Cheshire, where I still live and travel to Wrexham from, the Cowslip used to be a familiar part of spring during my childhood. Sadly no more, but suddenly here I was, only 35 miles from home, surrounded by it. Of course the Cowslip can only really survive in great numbers on underdeveloped land, and Cheshire is now so intensively farmed.

So, how was it that it grew in such profusion on an industrial estate? What made this site so different from other industrial estates that are purpose built for commercial units?

Well, WIE, was built on the site of a World War 2 Royal Ordnance Factory, which was spread over a large area (5.5 sq km). Many of the old buildings and pill-boxes can still be seen. I realized that the estate was really a patchwork of "developed" and undeveloped plots. A glance at Google Earth quickly confirmed that the estate is in fact an island surrounded by modern agriculture.

Being a member of Butterfly Conservation, I then began to wonder what else this unique estate, with so much underdeveloped land, could throw up. And so, my 30 minute breaks became devoted to ploughing my way through scrubland in the hope of finding, mainly, butterflies. I had some funny looks when I returned to the office covered in all sorts of flora. I had seen a promising field some weeks previously, and on my first visit, I was hugely surprised and excited to find good numbers of Grizzled, and Dingy Skipper, Small Heath, and Burnett Companion. Butterfly Conservation staff were already aware of these butterflies on the estate, but not on this site, and the next couple of weeks were to produce further sites, particularly for the Grizzled. In July I was equally delighted to discover a healthy colony of White letter Hairstreak.

This year has been a good year for the Grizzled and Dingy Skippers, but not so good for the White letter Hairstreak, with very low numbers visible. Perhaps not surprising after last years wash out.

The estate is also home to other notable flora and fauna, notably for me were the Grasshopper Warbler (2 singing males), Viper's Bugloss, Kidney Vetch, Spined Rest Harrow, and small numbers of Bee Orchid. One factory owner was truly amazed when I showed it to her, and immediately consigned her strimmer to the shed! There is one huge area of scrub, which is criss- crossed with tracks made by a group of scramblers. These tracks form rides, which are rich in flowers and good home for the Grizzled Skippers.

Early this year I approached 4 companies to help us with our Moth Count. I targeted companies adjacent to suitable areas, and had a night shift, in the hope that inspection of their lights would produce good numbers of moths. One replied,

but politely declined, and the other 3 didn't respond, despite follow up letters. Perhaps they were afraid of future development issues.

However, I like to think that this was just a pilot for future similar projects, and that maybe a direct Butterfly Conservation approach would reap more rewards than my individual efforts. All was not lost. I have a clandestine source in the maintenance dept at one of the factories in question and each fortnight since May he has supplied me with a box containing dead moths which had been attracted to the lights.

It has certainly been a quiet Moth year, but notable species for me were, Peach Blossom x 2, Golden Rod Pug x 1, and last week my first Merveille Du Jour!! I will send the full list to Russel and the excellent Jan Miller at the end of this month.

An Englishman in Wales. Well, it's certainly worth the trip just for my 30 minutes slog, and only on suitable days.

Just imagine what might be found with a concerted effort.....

Nomads of the Wind by Ingo-Arndt, Claus-Peter Lieckfeld and Peter Huemer

This book tells the story of the 2,000 mile migration of the Monarch butterfly from the north-eastern United States and southern Canada to the Oyamel fir forests of Mexico, where they survive the winter. In spring, the return journey through the Rio Grande and Texas involves several generations before the butterflies arrive back at the Great Lakes.

The Monarch has been extensively studied and the text of this beautifully illustrated book explains the latest research ideas simply and clearly. The story line is vivid and compelling.

The book also includes information about conservation strategies to ensure the Monarch's survival. A final section on other wonders of the butterfly world briefly outlines various aspects of mimicry with very colourful images.

Anyone who has enjoyed photographing butterflies and moths will despair of ever achieving comparable results. My personal favourite is the image of *Ectoedemia groschkei*, one of the smallest moths in the world, which is elegantly posed on the tip of an immaculate fingernail.

Because of its style this book is not indexed. However, anyone who wishes to look in more detail at the research issues can find a great deal of information about the Monarch on the internet.

The publishers are offering copies to members of Butterfly Conservation for £17 instead of £20 from 01635 248833 or info@papadakis.net

Helen Bantock