

Butterfly Conservation Newsletter

North Wales Branch

Winter 2004

Happy Christmas and a Good New Year to all our readers!

As many of you know, Alan Wagstaff, our Newsletter editor, has been seriously ill for the last few months, and so I am producing the newsletter temporarily while he is undergoing treatment. The signs are positive, and I'm sure you will want to join me in wishing him a speedy recovery, when he can get back to producing our Branch newsletter that his efforts have made one the most celebrated in the country. Please excuse my attempts in the meantime. Most thanks should go to my husband, Richard, for doing the layout, and of course to our excellent article writers. If you would like to contribute to the newsletter please send to my address that you can find on the back cover or e-mail to info@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk for now.

The Branch events list for 2005 is included in the centre so you can pull it out and pin it on the kitchen notice board. Most events last year were not well attended, and so we have attempted to reduce the number, but as you can see there is still a lot to choose from! To help us decide which events are more in line with what members want, please also send any ideas or suggestions to me. **If you would like to be sent an e-mail reminder a week before each event, and to get advance notice of extra events and courses that appear throughout the year after the events list is printed, please also send an e-mail to the above address requesting this.** You can also always view an up to date events list, plus Branch news, sightings, photos of all the regional species, educational resources, plants for butterflies and moths, an online identification workshop, information about both BC, Welsh Reserves and much more on our website; www.northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

I look forward to seeing you at one of our events in 2005,

Yours voluntarily,

Jan Miller

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A week's holiday in Gosport –in a flat overlooking the Harbour where Ferries, Military Ships (including two Aircraft Carriers seen during the week) could be observed was our base for a butterfly and bird trip.

On the mudflats Little Egrets were very common.

The weather as we arrived at our first destination –the wonderful **Martin Down** in Hampshire was not good, cloudy with a threat of rain-it had thundered and lightened on our way to the site was not a good omen-however with much perseverance we managed the following:-

White Admiral, Brimstone, Meadow Brown, Comma, Dark Green Fritillary, Silver Washed Fritillary (including one Valezina), Gatekeeper,

Small Heath, Ringlets Large and Small Skippers, Small Tortoiseshell, Green Veined White Marbled White and Small White. Not a bad start to the trip.

On the path by the side of the flat a Holly Blue was found.

Really poor weather on the Sunday stopped any butterfly or bird watching so on the Monday we headed for and finally found **Bentley Wood**-(difficult site to find albeit we have been there several times)the weather was again not brilliant but an area of blue sky came over and positioning ourselves in the car-park we first saw White Admiral and then the star of the show(the Purple Emperor-His Majesty) not only put in an appearance but it landed on my jacket sleeve and then proceeded to perch on a car(photo below) much to the delight of the assem-

bled people who were waiting to see it. The Purple Emperor is a truly superb butterfly and this site must be the best place to see it.

As if this was not enough Purple Hair-streak were flying above us and Silver Washed Frits were flying and just along

Holly Blue was seen together with about 100 Meadow Brown, 2 mating Small Coppers, Gatekeepers and Small Skippers, and a few Marbled Whites.

The final call of the day was **Durleston Country Park** near Swanage and the sight of over 400 Marbled Whites was



the track nearly 100 Ringlets were observed together with Essex Skipper.

The next day saw us firstly going to **Sto-borough Heath** where the main bird quarry was located Dartford Warbler-it was then up to us to try and find Grayling and Silver Studded Blue-different races to ours in North Wales. The Grayling was soon found and a little later several S.S.B.'s were located.

Ulwell Meadow (by Ballard Down) was the next location and there another

brehtaking, Lulworth Skippers were soon seen, Small and Common Blue were also located.

A nice sighting was a Grass Snake near one of the paths in the park.

A further visit to Martin Down was made on the Wednesday where many more Meadow Browns were seen than our last visit as were the numbers of Silver Washed Fritillaries, another Valezina seen, twice as many Ringlets, and this time nearly 30 Marbled Whites.

Martin Down is so good we went back again on the Thursday and saw our first Red Admiral of the trip (they seem scarce this year!) and this time 3 White Admirals came out to play, a solitary Common Blue, 3 Small Blues, 3 Commas, Dark Green and Silver Washed Frits also were very co-operative the Ringlet numbers increased to over 100 and Small Skippers were over 50, Marbled Whites were also more numerous, we recorded our first ever Purple Hairstreaks at Martin Down on this visit.

Also in large numbers were Scarlet Tiger Moths (that's what we were told they were as we are not very good on Moths). The tally of species (excluding different races etc) was 27 and brought our tally of species for the year to 50.

We are going back to Gosport in August for another week of hopefully good Butterflying

Our finale was a visit to Southampton's West Quay to see the Queen Elizabeth the second boat and also Oceania.

We came home with some wonderful memories of a `truly royal trip` and we will always remember our close encounter with `his majesty` at Bentley Wood.

Brian and Sue Roberts

[Details of Butterfly Conservation Reserves all over the UK can be found on the national website;

www.butterfly-conservation.org

Bentley Wood is not a BC Reserve, but can be found just south of Salisbury at Grid. Ref. SU 239 296 - Ed.]

BUTTERFLIES IN NE WALES (VCs 50 & 51) IN 2004

by Rob Whitehead

I am writing this at the end of September when I have had few reports from other recorders.

After a decent spring and good spells of sunny weather in May and early June, the summer months seemed to have more dull and wet wet than usual.

Species overwintering as adults appeared in March and April but it was not until 19 April that I saw my first Orange Tips, followed two days later by Speckled Woods.

Large, Small and Green-veined Whites appeared as the season got going and they all continued in good numbers and at the end of the summer were often seen flying on very dull and even wet days. The occasional Brimstone was seen but I only have one record of a Clouded Yellow, near Ruthin on 16 June.

Green Hairstreak was only seen in small numbers except at Penycloddiau on the Clwydian Range. Purple hairstreaks could not be found at a couple of established sites I visited but were recorded from a few new locations in the area. Of the three sightings of White-letter Hairstreak I have, one was a new record from Trevor Uchaf and another was of five at Bryn Meiriadog where previous sightings have only been of singletons. Did a good year go largely unnoticed ?

Small Coppers were noticed more frequently than of late, including records from sites where there have been no sightings for two or more years.

My only sighting of Silver-studded Blues was of eleven rather old specimens at Mynydd Marian on 13 July. A reasonably good season is indicated by David Hinde's count of seventy-two at Cefn yr Ogof Quarry on 10 June. Brown Argus were present on the known sites I visited but in rather low numbers. In contrast Common Blue numbers seemed higher at most sites this year, although I could not find any when in SJ16 (around Denbigh). Holly Blue seem to be increasing again and there may be a third brood, sightings being made in the last few days.

Red Admirals never appeared in great numbers and Painted Lady didn't breed as successfully as hoped for after a good invasion in early June. Small Tortoiseshells and Peacocks were generally disappointing but Commas, at least in my locality near Ruthin, had a good season. Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries had a mixed season, depending on the site, but one new colony was found. The Pearl-bordered Fritillary was in record numbers at Eyrarth Rocks and, perhaps more exciting, was the report of one in Llandegla Forest by Bryan Formstone; a site with no previous known records. Dark Green Fritillary sightings have all been of singletons.

Speckled Wood have been recorded in every week since late April and in at least average numbers. The Wall also appeared to have a good year although it is still scarce east of the Clwydian Range. I presume the Grayling had a good year as one made an appearance in my garden for the second year running. Gatekeepers and Meadow Browns had an unremarkable year and Ringlets were found at some new sites. Small Heath were seen in better than average numbers at some sites but Large Heath were not seen on the Llandegla Moors despite a search of

the last known site.

On the next page is a spreadsheet showing the 10km squares in which each species has been recorded in the last five years (2000-04). Squares where records exist for earlier years are highlighted. (Not all the squares for VCs 50&51 are included).

As this is the final year of the period for review of the BNM project any records you have which will add to the recorded distributions will be gratefully received. Please send any records to Rob Whitehead, Haulfryn, Graigfechan, RUTHIN LL15 2HA

(roboud@haulfryn99.fsnet.co.uk).

Advance notice

The 4th. Butterfly Conservation International Symposium is scheduled for April 2005. This is an excellent event where you will learn lots and meet all kinds of people interested in Lepidoptera from all over the world—not to be missed! (You don't have to be a scholar to enjoy it) Details from Head Office (see back page)

And another **All-Wales Volunteer Seminar is planned for late 2005** - another chance to be inspired by what volunteers are doing all over Wales.

Pensychnant Conservation Centre,

Some of our events, in particular the monthly moth meetings and some Lectures are held in the beautiful old country house and grounds of the

Pensychnant Nature Conservation Centre on the Sychnant Pass above Conwy. A leaflet about the centre, showing how to get there, is enclosed with this newsletter to help you find the location. It is up a rather rough track, but it is quite safe for any car! (See address and phone number on back page)

Butterflies																
in NE Wales	SH85	SH86	SH87	SH94	SH95	SH96	SH97	SH98	SJ04	SJ05	SJ06	SJ07	SJ08	SJ12	SJ13	
Small Skipper	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	
Large Skipper		x			x		x			x		x	x			
Dingy Skipper			x				x					x	x			
Grizzled Skipper																
Clouded Yellow									x		x					
Brimstone															x	
Large White	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Small White	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Green-veined White	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x		x	
Orange Tip			x		x	x	x			x		x	x			
Green Hairstreak			x				x			x			x			
Purple Hairstreak		x				x	x		x	x	x	x				
White-letter Hairstreak										x		x				
Small Copper	x	x	x		x		x		x	x	x	x	x		x	
Silver-studded Blue			x				x						x			
Brown Argus			x				x					x	x			
Common Blue			x				x	x		x		x	x		x	
Holly Blue			x				x				x	x	x			
Red Admiral			x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x				
Painted Lady			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
Small Tortoiseshell	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
Peacock	x		x	x	x		x			x	x	x	x			
Comma			x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Small Pearl-bordered Frit.				x	x		x			x						
Pearl-bordered Fritillary																
Dark Green Fritillary			x				x			x		x				
Silver-washed Fritillary																
Speckled Wood			x			x	x			x	x	x	x			
Wall	x		x				x			x	x	x	x			
Grayling			x				x	x				x	x			
Gatekeeper/Hedge Brown	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Meadow Brown	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	
Ringlet		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x			x	
Small Heath	x		x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x			
Large Heath					x											

Key: Records 2000-04 = x ; Records only pre 2000 =

News

Important Information about *Butterfly Magazine*

BC. Head Office has sent this message to all Branches; Due to a mechanical problem at our publisher's mailing house, a small number of members will not have received a copy of the autumn issue of *Butterfly* magazine this September.

If a member has not received *Butterfly* issue 87, please could you ask them to contact us on 0870 7744309 or info@butterfly-conservation.org, and we will ensure that they are sent a copy straight away.

Unfortunately, there is no other way for us to identify those members who did not receive their magazine. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this may cause.

Charlie Rugeroni
Director of Development
Butterfly Conservation

Wales Office Staff Changes.

Many of you will know BC staff member Nichola Davies, from the BC Wales Office in Swansea, who has done so much through the Butterfly Guardians campaign to revitalize and support our branch and run training courses. It is with much sadness that we have to announce that she is leaving Butterfly Conservation in February, but wish her the very best of good fortune in her next enterprise. The Wales office has a new team member - Deborah Sazer, especially working on the Mynydd Mawr Project in South Wales, as well as invaluable administrator, Kelly Thomas and Russel Hobson, now promoted to Senior Conservation officer for Wales.

Christmas cards of Eyarth Rocks are available from Jan Miller (see contact details on back cover) or see the website (www.northwalesbutterflies.org.uk) for the colour picture of the reserve in the snow, with the Clwydian Hills in the background at sunrise. The card also features a photo of the Pearl-bordered Fritillary that lives on the reserve. Printed on lightweight card so that it can be sent 2nd Class, even with that circular letter, all proceeds from the sales will go directly into the Eyarth Rocks Reserve fund that we urgently need to help match-fund the grant for fencing and interpretation panels plus other essential habitat management. Sending these cards also helps to spread the word about Butterfly Conservation. They cost £3.50 for a pack of 5 plus envelopes. (postage extra) They can also be printed with your own address or business details.



Christmas card of Eyarth Rocks Reserve in the snow, with inset Pearl-bordered Fritillary. (This small black and white reproduction doesn't do justice to the vivid blue sky, pink-tinged mountains and orange bracken and butterfly on the actual card)

Greeting inside in English, Welsh or both, saying "Happy Christmas and a Good new Year"

Butterfly Conservation North Wales Branch (BCNW) Events, 2005

Eyarth Rocks BC Reserve habitat management work

Thursdays and Saturdays every week until end of March

10.30am to 3pm or whenever you want to leave.

BCNW and Cheshire Branch

Meet at Eyarth Bridge Grid ref. SJ 127553 to car-pool up to the site.

Steep, rough walking. Cutting and burning hawthorn and gorse, so stout footwear, tough trousers, leather gardening gloves and reasonable fitness necessary. Tools provided.

Volunteers must contact one of organisers below first.

Contact; Jan Miller, Rob Whitehead or David Hinde.

Moth-er's Union Meetings

First Monday in each month. 8.00pm

Pensychnant Nature Conservation Centre, near Conwy SH752771

Our monthly get-together to talk about moths, butterflies and other wildlife. All Welcome.

Contact Julian Thompson

Treborth Monthly Moth Meetings

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 Doug Murray

Gardening for Butterflies, lecture by Jan Miller

Thursday 3rd. February. 7.30pm

BCNW & Henllan and District Gardening Club

The Church Institute, Henllan. Visitors invited.

Booking advised.

Sales of butterfly plants and books.

Contact Jan Miller

Gardening for Butterflies, lecture by Jan Miller

Monday 14th. February. 7.45pm.

BCNW and Caerwys Women's Institute.

Memorial Institute Hall, Caerwys, near Holywell.

Visitors invited. Booking advised. Sales of butterfly plants and books.

Contact Jan Miller

Lecture "Do European Butterflies Need Farmers?" by Dr. Simon Spencer

16th. March 7.30pm. BCNW

Pensychnant Nature Conservation Centre, near Conwy. SH 752771

A powerpoint presentation by this well known butterfly researcher and surveyor, showing video clips of work on butterflies in Greece and other parts of Europe.

Contact Julian Thompson

Moth ID workshop and trapping

Friday 29th April. 7.30pm.onwards

BCNW

Pensychnant Nature Conservation Centre, near Conwy. SH 752771

An evening of learning how to identify moths, aimed at beginners, but all levels welcome. Bring a torch. Booking advised. Contact Doug Murray or Julian Thompson.

Moth-trapping

Wednesday 11th May - 8.30 pm BCNW -

Nercwys Forest –

Ring for directions and grid ref and to check if still going ahead.

Bring stout footwear and a torch.

Contact David Bennett

Butterfly Conservation North Wales Branch (BCNW) Events, 2005

Gardening for Butterflies, lecture by Jan Miller

Wednesday 4th. May. 7.30pm.

BCNW and Broughton and Bretton Gardening Club

Broughton and Bretton Community Centre, Brookes Ave., Broughton

Visitors invited. Booking advised. Sales of butterfly plants and books.

Contact Jan Miller

Butterfly ID Evening

Monday 16th May 7.30pm

BCNW

Pensychnant Nature Conservation Centre, Near Conwy. SH 752771

An evening of learning about the British Butterflies - their identification, their life cycles, food plants, etc. Aimed at enthusiastic beginners, but all levels are welcome.

Contact Julian Thompson

Butterfly Identification Course

May 27th. 9.30 am to 4pm

Rhydymwyn Conservation Centre, near Mold Organised by Deeside Urban Wildlife Group, CCW and BCNW

Only 20 places available, booking essential Cost; £5.00 for members,

Including a PPP detailed comparative study of photos of all the North Wales species, then workshop to learn them yourself. In the pm. a field trip to look for live butterflies and learn how to record them by walking a transect.

Trainer; Jan Miller. Bring packed lunch.

Contact Jacinta Williams for details and booking.

Deeside Urban Wildlife Group

Phone / Fax 01244 541005

email: weo@duwvg.org.uk

Pen y Gelli Local Nature Reserve, near Holywell, Grid.Ref ; SJ.135761

Saturday 28th. May 11am. BCNW.

A short walk to see some scarce butterflies and some dragonflies.

Meet at McDonalds at the Holywell/Caerwys

exit from A55

Steep drops in this old quarry, children must be supervised by an adult.

Also brief hop over to nearby Race Course Mire SSSI.

Target Species – Dinky Skipper and Common Blue. Contact Jan Miller

Eyarth Rocks Reserve, near Ruthin

May 29th. 2pm. BCNW and Llanarmon yn Ial Conservation Society.

Meet at Eyarth Bridge Grid ref. SJ 127553

between Llanfair DC and Pwll Glas

Short but steep, rough walking up to this limestone pavement SSSI, Butterfly Conservation's only reserve in North Wales. Stout footwear and tough trousers necessary.

Booking advised.

Target species; Pearl-bordered Fritillary.

Contact; Jan Miller

North Wales Branch Member's Day and AGM

Saturday 4th June. 10.30 to 4pm.

BCNW at the Bryn Teg Village Hall, Anglesey.

Guest Speakers including Marsh Fritillary specialists, pub-lunch at The California or picnic, then a Ranger-guided walk to see the rare Marsh Fritillary on NWWT Reserve at Cors Erddreniog. Free to members of Butterfly Conservation.

More details to members and on Branch website nearer the date. Booking essential.

Target species; Marsh Fritillary, Narrow-bordered Bee Hawkmoth, native orchids,

Contact Doug Murray or Jan Miller

Moth-trapping

Wednesday 8th June - 8.30 pm BCNW

Coed y Felin SJ196678 park in car park above Mold/Denbigh road

ring for directions and grid ref and to check if still going ahead.

Bring stout footwear and a torch. Contact David Bennett

Butterfly Conservation North Wales Branch (BCNW) Events, 2005

Butterflies of Newborough Forest and Dunes

Saturday 25th June. 11am.

BCNW

Meet at Llyn Rhos-ddu. SH426647.

A four to five mile walk, to look at the many butterflies of Newborough. Bring strong footwear, waterproofs and packed lunch. Tea and coffee provided.

Target species; Dark Green Fritillary, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Ringlet, etc.

Contact Doug Murray

Moth-trapping

Wednesday 6th July - meet 9.00 pm

BCNW

Rhes y Cae SJ 184710 park in layby near cattle grid

Ring for directions and grid ref and to check if still going ahead.

Bring stout footwear and a torch. Contact David Bennett-

NATIONAL MOTH DAY AND NIGHT 2005

Saturday 9 July

This annual event aims to get records from all over the country on the same day, even if you don't have the scarce target species. Recording forms can be downloaded from Atropos website, where more information can also be found. You can send in records from your own garden, and/or join one of the organized trappings below. Target species this year will be Clearwing, Northern Dart, Chalk Carpet and Double Line.

National Moth Night Trapping at Eyarth Rocks Reserve, near Ruthin.

Saturday July 9th. 8.00pm.BCNW

Meet at The White Horse Pub, Llanfair DC Grid.ref. SJ 134555

Steep, rough walking; especial care must be taken in the dark not to fall off the cliff edge. Sorry, but no children under 14. Strong footwear and a torch required. Booking advised. Contact; Jan Miller, or David Hinde;

National Moth Night Trapping, Lixwm, near Holywell.

July 9th meet 9.00 pm BCNW

Y Parc Lixwm SJ 173710

Bring strong footwear and a torch. Contact David Bennett before to check if going ahead.

Moth-trapping for Ashworth's Rustic Saturday July 16th. 9.30pm.

Pensychnant Nature Conservation Centre and BCNW

Pensychnant Conservation Centre, near Conwy SH 752771

Moth trapping to see this North Wales rarity and other upland moths.

Bring strong footwear and a torch.

Booking advised.

Target species; Ashworth's Rustic, Weaver's Wave

Contact Julian Thompson

Did we find Ashworth's Rustic?

Sunday 17th July 11am.

Pensychnant Nature Conservation Centre and BCNW

Pensychnant Conservation Centre, near Conwy SH 752771

The previous night's catch will be on display in the house at Pensychnant.

Contact Julian Thompson

A Butterfly Walk down the Greenfield Valley

Sunday 31st July at 2pm

BCNW and Flintshire Countryside Service

Meet at the Visitor Centre, Greenfield Valley, Holywell. Grid.ref.; SJ 196774

Booking essential

Guided walk led by Brian and Sue Roberts

Target species; Purple Hairstreak

Contact Brian Roberts

Butterfly Conservation North Wales Branch (BCNW) Events, 2005

Moth-trapping

Saturday August 13th - meet 9.30pm
BCNW Cors Prysau - SJ165725 (subject to permission) Ring for directions and to check if still going ahead. Bring stout footwear and a torch. Contact David Bennett

Moth-trapping

Wednesday 21st September - meet 9.00 pm -
BCNW Penycloddiau SJ 130664
Bring stout footwear and a torch.
Essential to ring first to check the event is still running; contact David Bennett

Butterflies of Mariandryrs Reserve, Anglesey.

Saturday 13th August. 2.00pm.
BCNW & NWWT
Meet at Reserve Entrance. SH604813.
Bring strong footwear and waterproofs.
Targets; Brown Argus, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary (2nd generation), Grayling, etc.
Contact Doug Murray

Leaf Miner Workshop and Moth-trappings at Moel y Ci environment centre and other sites in NW Wales will be run by Sam Thomas and John Harold at dates to be arranged; Both beginners and experts welcome.

Contact John Harold (01248) 361126 for further details.

Contact Telephone numbers and e-mail addresses;

National Moth Night;
www.nationalmothnight.info
Butterfly Conservation Wales Office Tel: 0870 7706153 Fax: 0870 7706154
Email: info.bcw@btconnect.com
Brian Roberts 01352-714758 or email brian@ovenbird.fsnet.co.uk
David Bennett 01352 780787 or davetreebennett@aol.com
David Hinde 0151 648 3887
Doug Murray tel; 01248 750089 or e-mail; Treasurer@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk
Jan Miller; 01352 711198 or info@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

Jacinta Williams, Deeside Urban Wildlife Group

Phone / Fax 01244 541005 email:

weo@duwg.org.uk

Julian Thompson (Pensychnant Conservation Centre) ; 01492 592595 or

secretary@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

Rob Whitehead 01824 704507 or

Records@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

See updates and additions to these events throughout the year on our Branch website;

www.northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

If you would like to receive e-mail updates please send a request to info@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

We regret no dogs are allowed at any of these events, and all children must be accompanied by an adult. 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, thick trousers and waterproofs are best on all field trips.

All these events are run entirely by

Volunteers who want to help save our native wild butterflies and moths from dying out. If you are not a member of Butterfly Conservation and would like to help too, please join the society, you can do this on the website

www.butterfly-conservation.org or by telephone; 0870 7744309 Fax 0870 7706150 Butterfly Conservation is a charity that cannot do its work without its members' contributions. Registered in England No. 2206468 Registered Charity No. 254937

Ivy blossom and light trapping: a simple comparison of two different methods of recording moths.

There are three sizeable ivy bushes near my home and every autumn I spend some time checking the ivy blossom to see which moths are attracted to it. In 2003 the flowers started opening quite early; presumably due to the long, hot, and dry summer and autumn. Anticipating a good 'ivy season', I decided to make a comparison of the moths recorded at ivy blossom with the moths recorded at my garden light trap. I can't claim any kind of statistical validity, but I think the results are at least interesting.

The garden moth trap used was a 15W Actinic 'Skinner' type which was run overnight on each night that moths were being recorded at ivy. The ivy bushes are all within 30 metres of the moth trap but are not within sight of it – they are screened by hedges and walls. Visits to the ivy bushes were made three times during an evening, the first as soon as it was properly dark, the others spaced out at one- to two- hour intervals, with the last visit generally no later than 11 o'clock. Each visit took around 15 minutes, and involved careful searching of blossom by torchlight.

This comparison was carried out on a total of 29 nights between 22nd Septem-

ber and 15th November, comprising of 6 nights in September, 17 in October, and 6 in November. Nights were chosen firstly on the practical basis of my having time; very wet and windy nights were excluded, but otherwise weather conditions were ignored.

Results

A total of 1127 moths were recorded during the study, made up of 60 different species, as shown in Table 1 below

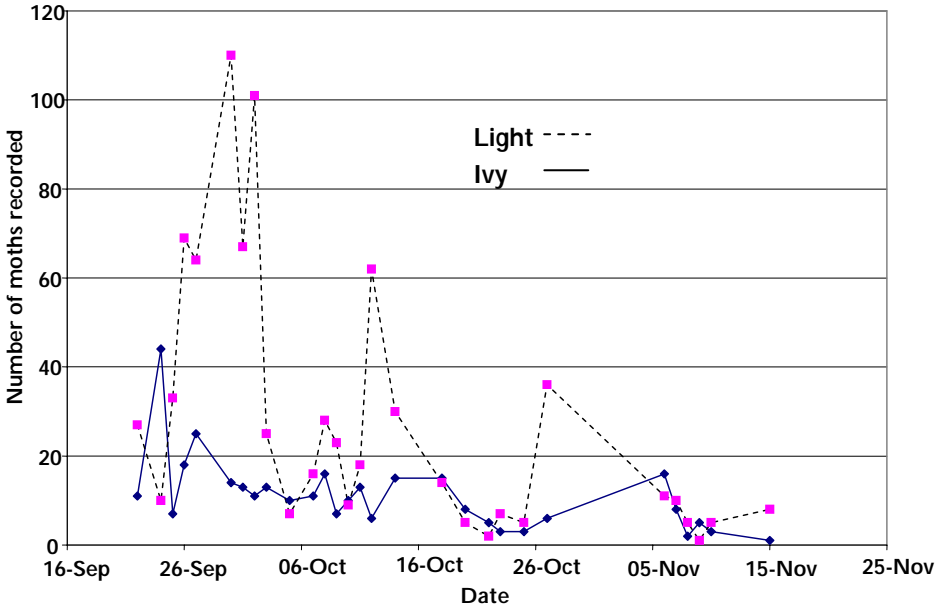
It is clear from Table 1 and Graph 1 that significantly higher overall numbers of moths were recorded at light than at ivy blossom. It is also the case that many more species of moths were recorded at light than at ivy blossom (see Table 1 and Graph 2). Nearly half of all species were only recorded using the light trap, whereas 10 species were only recorded at ivy blossom. On a small number of nights (6), more moths and more species of moths were recorded at ivy; for the remainder of the study the reverse was the case.

It might be concluded at this point that ivy blossom is simply an inferior method of recording moths – for numbers of moths and species, light trapping performs better overall and on most nights.

Table 1. Numbers of species and of moths, by method of recording.

	Ivy	Light	Total	Ivy and light	Ivy only	Light only
No. of species	33	50	60	23	10	27
No. of moths	319	808	1127			

Graph 1. Numbers of moths recorded per night at ivy blossom and at 15W Actinic light trap



However the situation becomes more interesting if one takes a closer look at the species being recorded. As an example, Table 2 shows the numbers of moths recorded for those ‘rarer’ species which turned up during the study. These are all the species (of macro-moths) which have a national status other than ‘Common’; in fact they are all currently graded as ‘Local’

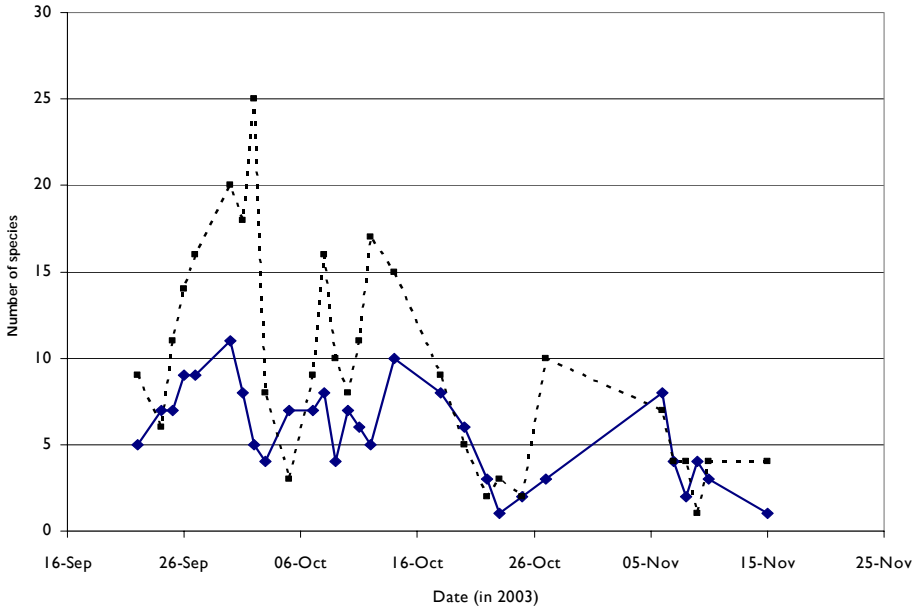
means of recording ‘rarer’ species, picking up 4 out of 5 species, and indeed recording greater numbers of moths than the light trap for 3 out of 5 species. Furthermore, the record of Tawny Pinion was by far the most significant record of the entire autumn – a new site record, and apparently the first record for years in VC49, if not the whole of North Wales

From Table 2 it can be seen that ivy blossom was disproportionately effective as a

Table 2. Numbers of moths with ‘Local’ status, by method of recording.

	Total number at ivy blossom	Total number to light
Pale Pinion	2	0
Feathered Ranunculus	3	131
Tawny Pinion	1	0
Red Sword Grass	7	1
Brindled Ochre	0	5

Graph 2. Numbers of species of moths recorded per night at ivy blossom and to a light trap.



A number of other interesting observations were made concerning individual species which appear to be strongly attracted to ivy blossom. Two of these are Angle Shades and The Brick. In the case of Angle Shades, over the study period 104 were recorded at ivy blossom, while 102 were recorded at light. For The Brick, a total of 27 were noted at ivy blossom, with only 4 to light. It is of course well-known that some species are more easily recorded at blossom (or sugar solution) than they are using light traps, but it is interesting to see this phenomenon at work.

Other species which were recorded more numerous at the ivy flowers than at light include Dark Chestnut, Chestnut, Red-line Quaker, *Agonopterix arenella* and

Agonopterix heracliana.

Perhaps the most intriguing observation concerns the plume-moths. During the 29 nights of the study, *Emmelina monodactyla* was recorded with a total of 17 individuals, the most at any one time being 6 individuals. 2 *Amblyptilia acanthadactyla* were recorded, along with one other plume which is still waiting for a name, giving a grand total of 20 plumes of 3 different species. No plume-moths were recorded at the light trap during the same period.

Conclusions

It is of course not possible to draw too many conclusions from a 'comparison' of this type. To do so would require some

way of standardising the method – perhaps having one person watching the ivy blossom all night, while another attends the moth trap (any volunteers?!). In any case, how could one decide what size of ivy bush was comparable with a moth trap of a certain wattage?!

However as an indication of the relative merits of different methods of recording moths, this study has shown that there is clearly some value in using a diversity of methods. Different species show different responses to the stimuli which ivy blossom and light traps give them. Some species appear to be influenced much more by one than the other, whilst some (e.g Angle Shades) appear to respond quite equally to both.

If the aim is to record large numbers of moths, from a wide range of species, there is little doubt that light trapping is both effective and easy.

Ivy blossom was useful as a means of recording some of those species which in a national context are considered amongst the 'rarer' or more geographically restricted. The most important single record during the study - that of Tawny Pinion, was made at ivy blossom. The attraction of numerous individuals and species of plume-moths to blossom was unexpected, especially when compared with their complete absence at light. Ivy blossom is also pleasant and easy to work – one has the opportunity to watch moths going about their business undisturbed – and can be done wherever there is a suitable bush; the only equipment you need is a small torch. Wind-up torches are ideal for this (as well as being ecologically preferable to battery torches), as anything too bright causes the moths to drop off the bush as

an evasive action.

John Harold

[Ivy has two stages of growth and it only flowers on the second 'arboreal' stage; if you keep cutting it back you will never get flowers. Specially prepared cuttings of this arboreal stage, that could be grown in a patio pot to attract moths can be obtained from the gardening section of our Branch website; www.northwalesbutterflies.org.uk Or telephone Jan on 01352 711198.—Ed]



Ivy in Flower in November.

Education, Education, Education

North Wales Branch hope to gain a grant in 2005 to expand our education resources. If you would like to be involved in helping us take the conservation message into schools, or have suggestions for materials we could produce, (for adults as well as children) then please contact Jan Miller 01352 711198 or

northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

A Walk Down the Greenfield Valley Sunday 1st August 2004

On a wonderfully sunny Sunday afternoon 9 people and Sue and I set out on a walk to discover some of the butterflies that inhabit Greenfield Valley.

Amongst our number were members of the Cheshire Branch of Butterfly Conservation, the Butterfly Recorder for Flintshire and Denbighshire (Rob Whitehead) and four local residents. The main target species for the day was Purple Hairstreak. The Meadow Mill section of the walk produced Holly Blue, Gatekeepers (that were seen everywhere) Common Blue and Large White. As we walked to the Battery Pool area a Common Darter Dragonfly gave good views and the species list increased as firstly Small Tortoiseshell, then Red Admiral were added, however one of the best parts of the walk was when just below the Battery Pool Small Skippers and more Common Blues were seen, the population of Small Skippers had not been seen before this year and it was feared that this species had disappeared after the renovation work that had been undertaken in that area. Four Small Skippers were seen and also a Comma together with Comma, Meadow Browns and Green-Veined and Small Whites.

Taking the steps up past the Royal Oak we then walked down the Valley and in the process saw good numbers of Speckled Woods, would we see the target species as one of the group from Cheshire was anxious to see one ?. A few minutes later Rob said he could see one high in an Oak Tree (aren't they always) and this one or was it two individuals put on a good show of flying towards the top of

the tree. A new colony had been found and all members of the group got good views of this difficult to see species at close range.

We then proceeded to Top Meadow, pausing on the steps to look at the Oak Tree where Sue and Brian had seen Purple Hairstreaks two days before. However after waiting for several minutes they did not appear so we proceeded to the top where we were greeted by good numbers of Gatekeepers.

We had another look at the tree on the way down, but still no Hairstreaks, so we all (except Rob) made our way down a couple of minutes later he joined us to tell us that 15 seconds after we started to walk down a Purple Hairstreak had appeared in the Oak tree.

We made our way back to the Visitor Centre after a most enjoyable experience, many vowing to return. Fourteen species were seen, however one further surprise was still to come, as Sue and I with Rob walked back to where his car was parked a Kingfisher flew past-what a day. **Sue and Brian Roberts**

[If you missed this walk in 2003 and 2004 you have another chance to miss it in 2005! See Events list in centre.—Ed]

Purple
Hair
streak



Moth Pitfalls Volume 1, Issue 1

There are certain groups of species which many people have trouble with when they start mothing. Here are a few notes on some groups I am familiar with. I hope they are of some help.

Small Emerald and Light Emerald.

These 2 species are not very similar but if you only look on the page with the 'true emeralds' then you could mistake them. The inner cross-line is straight in Light Emerald and curved in Small Emerald.

Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet and Red Twin-spot Carpet.

The red form of Dark-barred can be confused with Red Twin-spot Carpet, but Dark-barred has the inner edge of the central band notched near the costa (leading edge of the wing).

Beech-green Carpet and Yellow-barred Brindle.

Most people call their first couple of Yellow-barred Brindles Beech-green Carpets. This is due to the very poor pictures in Skinner. The definite character is that Yellow-bared Brindle has only one pair of spurs on its hind tibia, whereas Beech-green Carpet has 2 pairs. Beech-green is much the rarer in North Wales, if it is present at all.

Devon Carpet and Water Carpet.

The Devon Carpet is much smaller, has a more curved wing margin and has the mid-band strongly angled towards the costa; it is barely angled in Water Carpet.

Scarce Umber and Mottled Umber.

Many Mottled Umbers are strongly marked and should be obvious. It is however a very variable species and ob-

scurely marked or worn individuals may be confused with Scarce Umber, which in spite of its name is a common moth. Both species have wingless females, so the following applies only to males. The terminal fringe of cilia of the forewing is normally barred in Mottled Umber and plain in Scarce Umber. On the underside of the underwing, Mottled nearly always shows 2 dark bars, whereas scarce has 1 at most. The front legs are strongly barred and the underside of the abdomen strongly speckled black in Mottled Umber; the legs are hardly barred and the abdomen not speckled in Scarce Umber. The most reliable feature is the pectination (feathering) of the antennae; Scarce has long pectinations with a tuft of short hairs at the end, whereas Mottled has the opposite.

Spruce Carpet and Grey Pine Carpet.

The terminal (outer) line is normally more distinct in Spruce and the edges of the mid-band more obviously toothed.

Dusky Brocade and The Confused.

The Confused is much more restricted in distribution, seemingly found in rocky places near the coast and around the upland margins, but it is difficult to be sure of this due to confusion with, in particular, Dusky Brocade. The costa (leading edge) in Confused is straighter, and the subterminal line (the outermost wiggly line) is straighter in the middle. The reniform stigma (kidney shaped blotch in the middle of the wing) is much smaller, and the underside of the wings show 2 well-developed lines, as opposed to 1 in Dusky Brocade.

Sam Thomas

The Moth-Trap

They keep their secrets well,
 Lapped in the barren folds of granite
 Above the tree-line,
 Feeding on vetches, thrift and creeping things.
 For three decades till now we had not glimpsed them,
 Up there,
 High on the humming mountainside at midnight.

Our forbears gave moths names:
 The Annulet, Small Dusty Wave, the Hebrew Character.
 Striving to catalogue and own them
 We marvel at the myriad differences,
 Yet never master them.
 When Ashworth's Rustic flies to light
 We thrill to recognise
 But are ourselves the strangers.

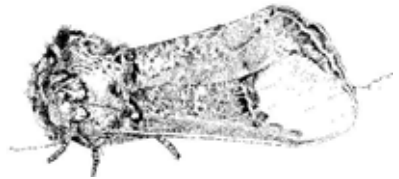


We release them, and they fly
 Back to the darkness and their hidings.
 Each year their drama is played out,
 Hatching and crawling, searching and eating, till rest comes.
 Predestined cells, miraculous,
 Dissolve, then knit to a new excellence,
 A feathery ecstasy of wings and questing tongues,
 Tuned to the sweets of nectar
 And the mate-attracting scent beyond our senses.

Those lepidopterists of yesteryear
 Had no mercurial lures to cheat the dark,
 No dazzling invitations in the night.
 Treacle, perhaps, could tempt,
 But nothing could avoid for them
 The slow, painstaking search for eggs, for larvae,
 The creeping evidence of life out there,
 Present and future.

We in our century expect to see
 Dozens each summer night.
 So, were they always there,
 The years we never saw them, Annulets?
 They never missed us.
 We really do not matter much.
 But I am swirled into their mystery.
 The chambers of my heart
 Quail with the awe of this.

Is it then such a virtue to be rare?
 I am hushed with wonder that they are still there.



County Butterfly and Moth Recorders

If you would like to send records by e-mail please use; 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
 named below.

Moth Recorders

Anglesey - Vice County(VC)52
 POSITION VACANT –
 If you would like to consider
 taking on this job, please en-
 quire of Doug Murray
 Ty Moireach, Lon Tudur,
 Llangefni, Anglesey LL77 7HP
 tel; (01248) 750089

Caernarfonshire - VC49
 Julian Thompson,
 Pensychnant Conservation
 Centre, Sychnant Pass, Conwy
 LL32 8BJ (01492) 592595
 E-mail; Secretary
@northwalesbutterflies.org.uk

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 Bryan Formstone
 15 Beech Avenue
 Gresford
 Wrexham LL12 8EL
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Flintshire - VC51
 David Bennett
 Arosfa,
 Rhes y Cae,
 Flintshire CH8 8JG
 Tel; 01352 780787

Merionethshire - VC48
 Andrew Graham
 Trawscoed
 Llanuwchllyn, Bala
 Gwynedd LL23 7TD
 Tel;(01678) 540370

Montgomeryshire - VC47
 Peter Williams
 "Pandy", Commins Coch
 Machynlleth
 Powys SY20 BLG
 Tel;(01650) 511583

Butterfly Recorders

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