

Butterfly Conservation Newsletter

North Wales Branch

Spring 2003

Member's Day 31 May 2003

The 2002 season was the culmination of another successful year for North Wales Branch. Our membership has again increased, our bank balance is larger than it was at the beginning of the year and a varied and interesting programme of events for members was run right across the region. There are not many British butterflies I have not seen, but I was able to notch up my first sighting of a White-letter Hairstreak larva during Rob Whitehead's well attended walk at Loggerheads (Rob also showed us the adult butterfly later in the year). However, by any standards, the highlight of the year was the opening of Eyarth Rocks, Butterfly Conservation's first reserve in North Wales which had been acquired at the end of 2001.

The opening ceremony took place at the reserve and was generously sponsored by Euro/DPC Ltd, a local firm based in Llanberis. Thirty of the thirty two species of butterfly which occur in North Wales have been recorded at Eyarth Rocks. For this reason we will be holding our first Member's Day at a venue adjacent to the reserve. Richard Smith will be giving a talk on Threatened Fritillaries and, after lunch, Rob Whithead (who knows the area better than anyone) will be leading a guided tour of the reserve. At the opening, almost exactly a year ago, the Pearl Bordered Fritillaries behaved impeccably and came out to bask in the spring sunshine so they could be broadcast on national TV. With a little luck they will do the same for us this year.

However, Member's Day will be an opportunity to see much more than just the butterflies. Sadly, as well as being one of our most attractive fritillaries, the Pearl Bordered Fritillary is also one of our most rapidly declining: a trend we intend to reverse at Eyarth Rocks! This is your chance to see conservation in action. Jan Miller and Rob Whitehead have organised an aggressive programme of scrub clearance with the help of both volunteers and contractors. As a result the management plan for the reserve is on track and we look forward to assessing the impact during the 2003 flight period.

You will have recently received your Member's Day invitation. Please remember to fill out the reply slip and send it to Jan Miller to confirm your attendance. This promises to be an outstanding event at a site which is vital to the conservation of butterflies in our area. I look forward to meeting you there.

Ilija Vukomanovic
Branch Chairman



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Editor's letter

This issue of the Branch Newsletter is specialit is the first one to get to 24 pages.

As the branch grows, more people contribute to the newsletter and so we can give you a wider range of more interesting articles than ever before.

With the butterfly season (and the fine weather for moth trapping) just starting, this issue is all about getting out and looking for lepidoptera. We have a mix of fairly scientific articles from Sam Thomas and Andrew Graham and some 'get involved' articles from Rob Whitehead and Jan Miller.

Again, we have plenty of events planned - I look forward to seeing some of you at those. We are doing events throughout North Wales, so there should be something near where you live.

If you want to contribute to the next newsletter send articles to me via e-mail in Word.doc format to naturaldtp@aol.com or on disk to my address on the back of the newsletter (disks will be returned). If you do not have access to a computer, type or write your article, send it to me and I'll have to ask my wife very nicely to touch type it onto the computer.

Alan Wagstaff

BUTTERFLY REPORT 2002

NORTH EAST WALES

The general perception was that 2002 was a poor year for butterflies. In our area it was certainly not a good year for butterfly watching with few sustained periods of warm, sunny weather.

The **Small Skipper** was first reported by Mike Hubbard from Cefn yr Ogof on 3rd July and did not appear at most sites until the latter half of the month. The last sighting was by John Almond at Pot Hole Valley, Llanferres on 4th September.

The **Large Skipper** appeared, somewhat belatedly at Cefn yr Ogof on 5th June and was last sighted at Pot Hole Valley on 16th August.

Only a few records were received of **Dingy Skippers** in May and June but one specimen was seen in Castle Wood, Ruthin – a first for this site.

The colony of **Grizzled Skipper** at Loggerheads CP seems well established now but the site near Wrexham is under threat from development and none were seen at Eyrarth Rocks this year – the site that was regarded as its stronghold until recently.

Large, Small and Green-veined Whites together with **Orange Tip** and **Brimstone** provided no records of any note; there were no records at all for **Clouded Yellow**.

The **Green Hairstreak** was flying at Cefn yr Ogof from 19th April to 6th June and was reported in small numbers from five other sites.

Although only eleven records were received for **Purple Hairstreak**, they included two new sites – Mynydd Bodrechwyr and Moelfre Isaf.

The only records for **White-letter Hairstreak** came from the Ruthin area.

The **Small Copper** was only seen in small numbers from May to September.

The only records of **Silver-studded Blue** came from Cefn yr Ogof. Did no-one visit Graig Fawr in 2002 ?

Pen y Gelli NR was added to the sites for **Brown Argus** by Brian Roberts.

The **Common Blue** was recorded in more numbers than most species from 5th May, at Cefn yr Ogof, to 14th September, at Pen y Gelli NR. There was a marked increase in the population at Coed Fron y Wylt, Bontuchel where felling had opened up a ride and produced a flush of bird's-foot trefoil and black medick.

Only two recorders reported sightings of **Holly Blue**; all of second brood specimens.

Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Small Tortoiseshell Peacock and **Comma** produced no records of any note although a Painted Lady in my garden on 8th April gave me false hope of better things to come !

The **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** had a season of mixed fortunes. It seemed that the upland, wetter sites (with *Viola palustris* as food-plant) did poorly compared to 2001; whilst the drier sites (with *V. riviniana*) showed increases in population. This species reappeared at Coed Fron y Wylt after an apparent absence of four years but the most notable records came from John Lawton Roberts. A site at Worlds End, near Llangollen, which he regularly surveys had produced only one sighting in the last two years. At the beginning of June he noticed a couple at 7.30am! By the 19th June the count approached 50 individuals, making it one of our larger colonies.

The **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** was again only reported from one site – Eyrarth Rocks. It was pleasing to see an increase in the population of 50% compared to 2001 but the downside is that numbers on parts of the site off the Reserve actually fell. This makes it all the more important to get our site management right and build up the population so that successful emigration can take place.

The **Dark Green Fritillary** appears to have had a poor year. Some sites visited where it has been recorded previously yielded no sightings but females were seen ovipositing on Eyarth Rocks.

The **Speckled Wood** was flying from April to September as usual but in generally low numbers.

The status of the **Wall Brown** in 2002 is difficult to assess, in common with many other species, due to the paucity of records. Second brood numbers were good at Gop Hill but my only local sighting was in May.

Although the **Gatekeeper** count at Eyarth Rocks on 27th July 2002 of 14 does not compare well with the count of 238 on 31st July 2001 this species was seen in good numbers at a variety of sites including Kinmel Bay LNR and Gop Hill. The last sighting was from Pot Hole Valley on 14th September.

A limited survey in east Denbighshire for **Grayling** revealed further losses from previously recorded sites. On the plus side two more colonies were identified further north at Moelfre Isaf and Kinmel Bay LNR.

The **Meadow Brown** was recorded in reasonable numbers at a lot of sites, whilst others produced very low counts (e.g., Eyarth Rocks reserve had only 5 on 27th July).

The **Small Heath** was generally recorded in low numbers and there were no records at all for the **Large Heath**.

The **Ringlet** is one of the easier species to locate in poor weather. It was found at two new sites in the east, at Wych Brook and Pandy, as well as at further sites more centrally.

The low number of records submitted has restricted meaningful comments on the fortunes of our butterflies in 2002. Hopefully, 2003 will show it was a poorer year for recorders than for the actual butterflies.

Rob Whitehead
Recorder for Denbs & Flints (VCs 50&51)

You CAN make a difference!

A chance to help the Brimstone spread across N. Wales - free!

It is not always easy to see a difference in the short term from a lot of conservation efforts - but here's one thing we could all easily do in North Wales which might actually result in a visible increase in one butterfly - the Brimstone, in a just a couple of years.

The Brimstone is a gorgeous butter-yellow butterfly (and where we get the word 'butter-fly' from). It is common in the South of England and midlands, but very scarce in North Wales. We think this is simply because historically it's only two larval food-plants - Alder Buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*) on wet, acid soils and Purging Buckthorn (*Rhamnus catharticus*) on lime soils - were not planted as hedging plants in North Wales.

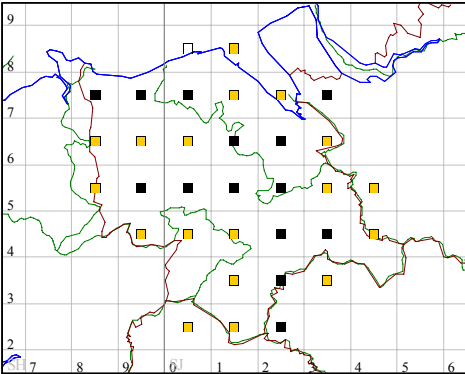
The Brimstone also is one of the few British species that can fly good distances - up to 15 miles - to seek out one of these shrubs on which to lay its eggs.

So here is a special offer for all North Wales branch members - you can have one of these little shrubs absolutely FREE (as long as stocks last!), providing you promise to plant it in a sunny spot (a gap in a hedge is fine) as soon as you get it and water well in the first few weeks.

Contact Jan Miller (01352) 711198 or jan@7wells.org for your free seedling.

BUTTERFLY RECORDING IN 2003

Orange-tip (*Anthocharis cardamines*)



The map shows the recorded distribution of the Orange Tip in VCs 50&51. Black squares indicate records from 2000-2002; shaded squares indicate no records since 1999; and the unfilled square (SJ08) has no records since before 1995.

Butterfly Conservation's recording scheme aims to compare distributions of the five year periods 1995-99 and 2000-04. The map "suggests" there has been a 50% reduction in occurrence of Orange Tips in the latter period ! This is clearly not so.

To rectify the situation all that is needed is for anyone who lives in (or visits) one of the shaded squares to make a note of when and where they see an Orange Tip over the next few weeks and pass it on to me.

Because we made such a good job of recording in the 1995-99 period there are many apparent gaps in the distributions of the majority of our species. Most of these are the commoner, easily identifiable species, so you don't have to be an expert to make a valuable contribution to the recording scheme.

Every member should receive a recording form and you don't have to make too much effort to complete it. You only need to note records when you see a "new" species and you don't even have to use separate sheets for records from

different counties. Neither do records have to come on the official recording sheets – as long as you submit date; site name (& map ref.); each species seen and an indication of numbers of each seen.

Maps are available for all our species and will be e-mailed (preferably) or posted to anyone requesting them.

Rob Whitehead

(01824) 704507
robaud@haulfryn99.fsnet.co.uk

.....HELP NEEDED.....

Have you seen our display stall at a local fair or event? We hope you enjoyed it!

It is important to keep up the publicity for Butterfly Conservation and acquire new members.

We have doubled the membership (to 120) in the 3 years we have been doing this, but we need MORE VOLUNTEERS to help on these stalls. Can you spare a couple of hours to help bring our work to a wider audience?

Free entry to the show and free butterfly plants for every volunteer!

Please phone or e-mail Jan Miller on (01352) 711198 or jan@7wells.org.

.....THANK YOU.....

The swarming of the Red-necked Footman

I thought that it might be worth drawing attention to the swarming behaviour of the Red-necked Footman (*Atolmis rubricollis*), as it seems that few people have witnessed the event in our area. The moth itself will be familiar from light trapping but is usually only recorded in small numbers. However, on hot, sunny afternoons in mid summer (end of June / early July) extraordinary numbers can sometimes be seen swarming around the tops of conifer trees. A typical site consists of an area of boggy ground where the conifers are growing poorly - this being common enough in North Wales where so much land has been inappropriately planted. Unhealthy trees in such situations are slow growing and well spaced with exposed upper trunks that support a luxuriant covering of lichens and algae - food for the footman larvae. The two localities where I have seen swarming, both near Arenig Fawr in Merioneth, were at altitudes of 400m and 450m.

I have witnessed the phenomenon on a number of occasions on Sitka Spruce and Japanese and/or Hybrid Larch but quite possibly other trees would be equally suitable. The lichen assemblage is limited on such an acidic substrate and is dominated by common foliose species such as *Platismatia glauca*, *Parmelia saxatilis* and *Hypogymnia physodes/tubulosa*. Although the majority of moths fly high around the tops of the trees a few can be found at ground level, including mating pairs.

In world terms the phenomenon could hardly be described as spectacular but, never the less, there can be very large numbers of insects involved and I doubt whether any other macro-moth can be seen in anything

like the same abundance in North Wales. I can recollect one occasion when I drove along a forest track with moths impacting on my LandRover's windscreen in numbers reminiscent of Bibio flies in spring.

If anyone is lucky enough to come across a swarm it would be well worth making a note of the date and grid reference as well as the weather conditions and the nature of the site. This information should be passed on to your county recorder.

Andrew Graham

News from other branches

We receive a copy of the newsletters from most of the other branches around the country and they can have some very interesting articles, events etc. in them, here are a few bits and pieces from the Spring batch;

Dorset; 'it almost seemed there wasn't going to be a real winter; a Red Admiral was reported at Charmouth on 28th. December 2002, and a Small Tortoiseshell on New Year's Day at Winterbourne Stickland.'

Wiltshire; 'Once again the Marsh Fritillary was not seen at Boscombe Down in 2002. However, one very exciting event was 2 Duke of Burgundy Fritillaries recorded in early May. This species is reputed to have occurred here many years ago; hopefully this is a sign that a colony is re-establishing itself, perhaps as a replacement for the Marsh Fritillary!'

Hampshire and Isle of White; includes a recording form for their most common moths as well as butterflies.

Upper Thames; arranging joint trips to Norfolk Broads to see the Swallowtail and to Somerset to see the Large Blue.

Cambridgeshire and Essex; 'appealing for volunteers to 'adopt' a species or key site and provide regular annual records'

East Midlands; "My Patch" column - 'Frisby Gravel Pits - Ever since I was a very small boy my parents took me out across the fields and down to the gravel pits. Binoculars in hand, I grew up with the sights and sounds of the countryside. What began as a place to feed the donkeys, the

gravel pits became the playground of my formative years....'(Mathew Billings goes on to poetically describe the many butterflies he has seen there over the years).

[Ed. This 'My Patch' page could be a good way for our members to contribute their own memories and observations]

Until now there has not been an easy way for most N.Wales members to see these other branch newsletters. They can now all be viewed in the sitting room of Pensychnant Nature Conservation Centre (in sets of small blue and grey plastic drawers on cabinet at back). We will also try to have them available at the Members Day.

Contact details for Pensychnant Nature Conservation Centre can be found on the back page.

Go Green - Recycle - Raise Cash for Butterfly Conservation

Butterfly Conservation has recently signed up to a recycling scheme with Reclaim-it, a company that collects empty laser toner cartridges and inkjet printer cartridges and pays us between 25p and £6 each (depending on type).

This excellent fundraising opportunity prevents empty cartridges being thrown away and being sent to landfill sites, and can help Butterfly Conservation raise some useful cash for its conservation work!

How does the scheme work?

The majority of inkjet and laser toner cartridges in use today have a value when empty and can be recycled. Please note that Epson inkjet cartridges and most re-manufactured cartridges are not eligible under this scheme and should not be returned.

All you have to do to help BC is to start collecting empty cartridges! Why not ask your friends, relatives, colleagues and local businesses to give you their empty cartridges too?

Free collection - Reclaim-it provide a free collection scheme.

For small quantities of inkjet cartridges, I can supply reply paid envelopes for you to send your cartridges direct to Reclaim-it.

For large quantities (30+ inkjet and 12+ laser toner cartridges) the cartridges should be parceled up for Reclaim-it to collect. They will send a courier round to you to pick up your parcel.

For larger collection points, e.g. an office, Reclaim-it can provide a large collection bin which they will collect once full.

In each case Butterfly Conservation will receive a cheque within 14 days for the cartridges you recycle.

Do's and Don't's

- Do ensure the cartridges you return are not damaged.
- Do return your cartridges in the reply paid envelopes (which are pre-coded) or a coded collection bin so Reclaim-it will know to send Butterfly Conservation a cheque. If you are making up a parcel contact me first to get Butterfly Conservation's reference number.
- Do pack your cartridges carefully in their original packaging, a piece of bubblewrap or the box your new cartridge came in.
- Do not return Epson inkjet cartridges or re-manufactured cartridges.
- Do not put tape or sellotape on the cartridges themselves as this can damage them.

To get a supply of reply paid envelopes please send an A4 s.a.e. (19p stamp) to David Bridges, Reclaim-it Scheme, Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Dorset BH20 5QP. If you think you can place a large collection bin in a local office or would like more information about this scheme please e-mail your address to me at butterfly.conservation@tesco.net or telephone me on (01403) 256175.

Many thanks

David Bridges

Methods for Moth-finding

Many people who study moths only use a light trap, but there are many other methods. Here are a selection of them.

Sugar

This is a boiled-up mixture of sweet, smelly, gooey substances (treacle, syrup, sugar, fruit, etc.) which is painted on things to attract night-flying moths. It can be painted on tree-trunks, rocks, and fence posts, but can also be effective painted on flowers, flower heads and low vegetation. If used on trunks or posts it is worth trying a long vertical strip rather than a patch, as this gives more 'edge' to feed on and allows for species which may prefer to feed lower down. Applying sugar warm, or to surfaces warmed by the sun during the day, may also increase its effectiveness. Sugar is unpredictable but some nights it works very well and brings species you wouldn't have seen otherwise, other times it is completely useless. Regular sugaring at a site is supposed to improve the success rate.

Flowers

Moths are attracted to feed at a lot of different flowers, some by day, many more at night. So, searching flowers by night can be very productive, especially early in the year on blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and willow (*Salix*) and late in the year on ivy (*Hedera helix*). As an example, this spring I found Red Sword-grass (*Xylena vetusta*) on blackthorn blossom.

Some of the best flowers are; -
Willow, blackthorn, ivy, thistles (*Carduus*, *Cirsium*), ragworts (*Senecio*), brambles (*Rubus*), champions (*Silene*), heathers (*Calluna*, *Erica*), willowherbs (*Epilobium*), honeysuckle (*Lonicera*), St. John's wort (*Hypericum*), goldenrod (*Solidago*), Rhododendron, red valerian and lavender.

Fruit

Not surprisingly you can also find moths feeding on fruit, especially on over-ripe blackberries, yew berries (*Taxus baccata*) and plums.

Honeydew

Can be a good nectar substitute on or under sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) or other plants with lots of aphids.

Sap

According to Tutt (1901), Red Sword grass (*Xylena vetusta*), Sword grass (*Xylena exsoleta*) and Yellow-horned (*Achyla flavicornis galbanus*) come much better to birch (*Betula*) sap than they do to sugar. But the trouble comes in collecting your birch sap: I tried and failed in collecting my birch sap last year.

Dusking

This simple and enjoyable method involves wandering around with a net. For micro's it is very good on a warm afternoon and for macro's a warm still evening is particularly productive. Places with low vegetation are good because the moths are flying at the right height!

Trunk Searching

Careful searching of tree-trunks by day is a laborious but sometimes very satisfying method in woodland; Beautiful Snout (*Hypena crassalis*) is quite easily found this way in woodland which is carpeted with bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*).

Searching fenceposts

An especially good method on moorland. I have found this the best way to find Golden-rod Brindle (*Lithomia solidaginis*) and it is also supposed to be good for species such as Scarce Silver Y and Glaucous Shears

Rocks and bare earth

These areas often provide good resting places for geometrids, especially where an overhang gives shelter. Search carefully during the day; in wet and windy weather in the mountains I have found numerous moths, including Grey Mountain Carpet (*Entephria caesiata*), in a single rock overhang. Searching low down on rocks on moorland used to be the standard way to find Weaver's Wave (*Idaea contiguaria britanniae*).

Bank-raking

Not to be confused with bank raiding, which can be very productive but may get you in trouble with BC HQ. This apparently involves drawing a stick along the underside of an overhanging earth bank so that the moths and pupae sheltering there fall out. I shall be trying this in 2003 and will let you know the results.

Assembling

If you have a fresh female moth it is sometimes possible to use her natural pheromones to attract a male by leaving her in suitable habitat in a net bag or cage. This can be particularly effective with the Emperor Moth (*Saturnia pavonia*).

Tapping

Involves tapping bushes and other vegetation by day; it can be productive for Geometrids and on sunny days it is very good for micro's. When I started micro's all I had to do was go out into my garden and tap a bush and two or three new micro's for me would fly out.

Smoking

Bee-smokers have been used to smoke moths out of bushes or low plants. This method may be useful for some micro's (especially the family Gelechiidae) which are hard to find by other methods.

Beating

Beating for larvae is a very productive method; best done at night in spring and autumn.

Sweeping

Sweeping for larvae is best done at night because lots of caterpillars hide at the bottom of the plant by day. It is most effective in low vegetation such as moorland.

Sieving

Sieving sand in sand dunes can be a good method for finding larvae and adults of sand dune species such as some of the darts.

Pupa digging

Can (apparently) sometimes be slightly productive if you are very patient (and mad enough to try it in the first place). [Ed. This method works really well digging around the foodplant for sand dune species, such as White-line Dart and Sandhill Rustic] It also has the advantage that it is a method which can be used in the winter. It is meant to be more productive under isolated trees on soft sandy soil than in woodland. Another method for finding pupae, which can be almost as productive, is to look under moss on the bark of trees.

Sam Thomas

Ref: Tutt, JW (1901). Practical Hints for the Field Lepidopterist. Tweedie.

BCNW Branch Events 2003

Flintshire

Tuesday 13th May 7.30pm. BCNW & Deeside UWG "Butterfly ID workshop" Event led by Jan Miller at Wepre Park Visitor centre. Contact Jan Miller (01352) 711198 or jan@7wells.org or Claire Christian (01244) 541005

Denbighshire

Monday 19th May 7.30pm. Abergele Gardening Club & BCNW "Gardening for Butterflies" talk with slides by Jan Miller, plus butterfly plants and booklets sale. St. Michaels's Church House, Abergele
Contact Jan Miller (01352) 711198 or jan@7wells.org

Denbighshire

Sunday 25th May and Monday 26th May.
Bodelwyddan Castle (just off the A55 near St. Asaph) "Bodelwyddan Garden and Wood Festival" A popular gardening, woodcraft and conservation show. Volunteer to help on the BC stand and get free entry; Contact Jan Miller (01352) 711198 or jan@7wells.org

Denbighshire

Saturday 31st May 11am, BCNW
"Members Day" A chance to meet some of the other branch members for a selection of short talks followed by a guided walk led by Rob Whitehead around Butterfly Conservation's Eyarth Rocks Reserve to see Pearl-bordered Fritillaries. Meet at the White Horse Public House, Llanfair DC, near Ruthin. Contact Jan Miller (01352) 711198 or jan@7wells.org

Conwy

Saturday 31st May and Sunday 1st June 10am to 5pm. RSPB Reserve, Conwy "RSPB Spring Fair", with stands, activities and competitions by many local wildlife groups including BCNW. Contact Jan Miller (01352) 711198 or Alan Davies RSPB (01492) 584091

Conwy

Saturday 7th June 2pm. BCNW and Conwy CBC Countryside Service "Butterflies, moths and their food-plants" Join BC and the warden of Mynydd Marian Local Nature Reserve to find out about the butterflies, moths and their food plants on this beautiful limestone grassland hillside. Meet at 2pm Opposite the Semaphore Lodge on Ffordd y Llan, Llysaen near Colwyn Bay. Grid Ref. SH892776. Strong footwear & waterproofs required. Children must be supervised by an adult. We aim to finish at 4pm. Booking essential, Contact Jan Miller (01352) 711198 or jan@7wells.org

Conwy

Monday 9th June 7.30pm. BCNW
"Moth-ers Union meeting", our monthly get together, to talk about moths, butterflies and other wildlife. All welcome. Pencychnant Nature Conservation Centre. SH752771 For more information contact Julian Thompson (01492) 592595

Denbighshire

Wednesday 18th June 9.30pm. BCNW and Denbighshire CC. "Moth Trapping at Loggerheads" Join CCW's David Bennett on a hunt for moths in Loggerheads Country Park, near Mold. Meet at Loggerheads Car Park, SJ200628 at 9.30pm, trapping until 1am Contact David Bennett (01352) 780787 or D.Bennett@ccw.gov.uk

Anglesey

Saturday 21st June, dusk. BCNW
"Moth trapping in Newborough Forest" Meet at Forest Road Entrance opposite Wildlife Pool on A4080 (SH414669). Bring warm clothes, strong footwear and a torch. Tea and coffee provided. Booking advised, and for detailed time contact Doug Murray (01248) 750089

Wrexham

Sunday 22nd June 11am. BCNW and NWWT
"Minera Quarry Wildlife Walk" Esclusham Mountain area - target species; Fritillaries, Chimney Sweeper Moths and Orchids. Meet at car park on Old Quarry Road between Gwynfryn and Minera, SJ258519. Bring lunch & stout footwear. Booking advised, contact John Smith (01978) 854030

Anglesey

Saturday 28th June 11am. BCNW
"Butterflies of Newborough Forest and Dunes" A four to five-mile guided walk to look at the rich butterfly populations of the area. Meet at Llyn Rhos-ddu SH426647. Bring strong footwear, waterproofs and a packed lunch. Tea & coffee provided. Booking advised, contact Doug Murray (01248) 750089

Flintshire

Saturday 28th June 8pm. BCNW & Deeside UWG
"Moth Trapping at Llwyni LNR" See the twilight world of moths at Llwyni LNR, SJ284684. Event led by Claire Christian and Alan Wagstaff. Meet at Wepre School entrance 8pm. Bring strong footwear & a torch. Booking essential, contact Claire Christian (01244) 541005

Conwy

Sunday 29th June 11.30am. BCNW and Conwy CBC Countryside Service "Butterflies of the Great Orme" A guided walk around the Orme to see Silver-studded Blue and other butterflies. Meet at West Shore Toll House (near the Gogarth Abbey Hotel) Bring strong footwear & lunch. We aim to finish at about 2.30pm. This walk is always over-subscribed, so booking is essential, contact Sally Pidcock (01492) 874151

Conwy

Monday 7th July 7.30pm. BCNW "Moth-ers Union meeting", our monthly get together, to talk about moths, butterflies and other wildlife. All welcome. Pencychnant Nature Conservation Centre. SH752771 For more information contact Julian Thompson (01492) 592595

Denbighshire

Saturday 12th July 11am. BCNW "White-letter Hairstreaks at Castle Wood, Ruthin" A guided walk, led by Rob Whitehead. Meet in the lay-by on the B5372 (SJ118577) Bring strong footwear. Booking advised, contact Rob Whitehead (01824) 704507

Denbighshire

Thursday 17th July 8.00pm - 10.30pm (on to 1am Moth trapping). Denbighshire CC and BCNW "An Illuminating Walk" Moth trapping and hunt for glow-worms at dusk. Meet at the Iron Gate car park, Moel Famau Country Park, near Mold SJ172611. Contact David Bennett (01352) 780787 or D.Bennett@ccw.gov.uk

Gwynedd

Friday 18th July 8.30pm. BCNW & Snowdonia Soc "Mothing at the Ugly House" Meet at Ty Hyll (SH755575) between Capel Curig and Betws-y-Coed. Booking advised, contact Nigel Brown (01248) 351519

Flintshire

Saturday 19th July 9.00pm-midnight. BCNW & Flintshire CC "Mothing at Wepre" Beginners event led by Alan Wagstaff, meet at the visitor centre, Wepre Country Park. Family £2, adults £1 children 50p. Bring strong footwear & a torch. Booking essential, contact Wepre Park (01244) 814931

Conwy

Saturday 19th July 9.30pm. BCNW & Pencychnant Nature Conservation Centre "Search for the Ashworth's Rustic" Moth Trapping to see this North Wales rarity and other upland moths. Meet at Pencychnant Nature Conservation Centre SH752771 (bring strong footwear and a torch) Booking advised, contact Julian Thompson (01492) 592595

Conwy

Sunday 20th July 11am. BCNW & Pencychnant Nature Conservation Centre "Did we find the Ashworth's Rustic?" The previous night's catch will be on display in the house at Pencychnant Nature Conservation Centre. Contact Julian Thompson (01492) 592595

Conwy

Sunday 20th July 2.00pm. BCNW. "In search of the Large Heath" Meet at Pont-ar-Gonwy on the B4407 (SH778446) south west of Ysbyty Ifan. This area is very wet bog and the appropriate footwear is essential. Booking advised, contact Doug Murray (01248) 750089

Flintshire

Wednesday 23rd July, BCNW and Flintshire CC "Moths - a beginners guide" Illustrated talk by Alan Wagstaff, moth trapping and practical identification workshop for beginners. Meet at the Environment Centre, Greenfield Valley, Holywell. 8pm-12pm family £2, adults £1 children 50p. Bring strong footwear & a torch. Booking essential, contact Mike Taylor (01352) 719177

Anglesey

Saturday 2nd August, dusk. BCNW "Moth trapping in Newborough Forest" Meet at Forest Road Entrance opposite Wildlife Pool on A4080 (SH414669). Bring warm clothes, strong footwear and a torch. Tea and coffee provided. Booking advised, and for detailed time contact Doug Murray (01248) 750089

Conwy

Monday 4th August 7.30pm, BCNW "Moth-ers Union meeting", our monthly get together, to talk about moths, butterflies and other wildlife. All welcome. Pencychnant Nature Conservation Centre. For more information contact Julian Thompson (01492) 592595

Denbighshire

Thursday 7th August 12.30pm to 3pm. BCNW and Denbighshire CC "Butterfly and Hoverfly spy!" Join CCW expert David Bennett collecting and identifying different types of hoverfly. Meet at the Countryside Centre, Loggerheads Country Park, near Mold. SJ200628 Contact David Bennett (01352) 780787 or D.Bennett@ccw.gov.uk

Anglesey

Friday 8th August 9.00pm RSPB & BCNW "Moth trapping at South Stack" Meet at Car Park above Lighthouse. Bring warm clothing, strong shoes and a torch. For further details contact Caroline Bateson (01407) 764973 or Doug Murray (01248) 750089

Flintshire

Wednesday 13th August 9.30pm to 1am. BCNW
"Moth trapping at Parc Bodlondeb SSSI" Meet at
SJ175707, near Lixwm, bring a torch and strong
footwear. Contact David Bennett (01352) 780787 or
D.Bennett@ccw.gov.uk

Anglesey

Saturday 16th August 2pm. BCNW
"Butterflies of Mariandryns" A guided walk to look for
Brown Argus and other butterflies on this limestone
outcrop reserve. Meet at the reserve entrance
SH604813 at 2pm. Bring strong footwear, waterproofs
and a packed lunch, tea & coffee provided. Booking
advised, contact Doug Murray (01248) 750089

Anglesey

Saturday 16th August 6.30pm. BCNW
"Dusking in the Dunes" A search for duneland moths,
nectaring and on the wing. Meet at Llyn Rhos-ddu car
park SH426647. Bring strong footwear, a torch and
net. Booking essential,
contact John Harold (01248) 361126

Flintshire

Sunday 24th August 2pm. BCNW and Flintshire CC
"Butterfly walk down the Greenfield Valley" near
Holywell, with Brian and Sue Roberts.
Meet at Greenfield Valley Visitor Centre.
Booking essential, contact Mike Taylor (01352) 719177

Gwynedd

Saturday 11th October 10am to 5pm. BCNW
"Leaf-miner Workshop" A day studying these
fascinating moths. Both beginners and experts
welcome. Meet at the main laboratory at Treborth
Botanic Gardens. SH550711 Booking advised,
contact John Harold (01248) 361126

Flintshire

Friday 24th October 7.30pm BCNW and RHS
"Gardening for Butterflies" Lecture by Jan Miller, with
plant and book sales. Northop Horticultural College.
Booking essential, contact Welsh College of
Horticulture; (01352) 841000

**Please book events if possible. If we need to
cancel an event (many are weather dependent), we
can then contact you by e-mail or phone and
prevent a wasted journey and advise of new dates.**

When you're out and about: handy seasonal hints for finding Macro-Lepidoptera

May

Cistus Forester larvae may be found by careful
searching of Common Rockrose.

Mid-late May. The orange-coloured eggs of
Orange Tip may be found on seed pods of
various crucifers, especially Cuckooflower.

Early to mid-May. Beat Elm for **White-letter
Hairstreak** larvae, and larvae of The **Brick,
Dusky-lemon Sallow**, **Lesser Spotted Pinion,
White Spotted Pinion** and **Lunar Spotted
Pinion**.

Late May to mid-June. Beat oak for **Purple
Hairstreak** larvae.

Late May. Pull brown and dead-looking Thrift for
larvae of **Thrift Clearwing**.

Sweep nettles at night for larvae of **The Snout**.

Late May. Split open the stems of sickly-looking
rushes for **Small Rufous** larvae.

Split stems of Reed Canary Grass for larvae of
Double Lobed.

Search trunks of Lime at dusk for **Orange
Sallow** larvae crawling up.

Search at base of Ash trees by day for larvae of
Center-barred Sallow.

Late May. Beat Honeysuckle for **Early Grey**
larvae.

Sweep or search Marram Grass at night for
larvae of **Shore Wainscot**.

Sweep or search Common Reed at night for
larvae of **Southern Wainscot**.

Search Bog Myrtle at night for larvae of **Powdered Quaker** and **Rosy Marsh Moth**.

Search coastal lichen-covered rocks at night for **Hoary Footman** larvae and in sun for **Dew Moth** larvae.

Sweep Pignut for **Chimney-sweeper** larvae.

Sweep St.John's Wort for larvae of **Treble-bar** and **Lesser Treble-bar**.

Beat Broom for larvae of **The Streak**.

Beat Juniper for larvae of **Juniper Pug** and **Chestnut-coloured Carpet**.

June

Larvae of **Brimstone** (butterfly, not moth) may be located by searching Buckthorn with feeding damage.

Split stems of Common Reed with a yellowing main leaf for larvae of **Twin-spotted Wainscot**.

Careful sifting under Sand Couch may reveal larvae of **Sandhill Rustic**.

Split Hogweed stems for larvae of **Brindled Ochre**.

Sweep Mayweed, Scentless Mayweed and Chamomile for larvae of **Chamomile Shark**.

Beat pine for **Pine Beauty** larvae.

Search under mats of moss/lichen/crowberry etc in the mountains for pupae of upland **Noctuids** such as **Northern Dart**.

July

Sweep patches of Bird's-foot Trefoil in the evening for adults of **6-Belted Clearwing**.

Dusk (and net during the day too - Ed) on boggy moorland for **Marsh Oblique-barred**.

Beat Hop with holed leaves for **Buttoned Snout** larvae.

Collect flower/seedheads of Mouse-ear to find larvae of **Small Yellow Underwing**.

Split open stems of Reedmace to locate larvae of **Rush Wainscot**, **Webb's Wainscot** and **Bulrush Wainscot**.

Split stems of sickly-looking thistle for larvae of **Frosted Orange**.

Early July. Collect pods of Bladder Campion/Sea Campion for larvae of **Marbled Coronet** and **Tawny Shears**.

Collect Sweet William pods for larvae of **Varied Coronet**.

Search for round holes in the leaves of Devil's bit scabious for larvae of **Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth**.

Beat Spindle for larvae of **Scorched Carpet**. Search trunks of Rowan for adults of **Welsh Wave**.

Beat Larch for **Larch Pug**. Shake heads of Common Valerian for larvae of **Valerian Pug**.

Sam Thomas

When you're out and about: handy seasonal hints for finding Micro-lepidoptera.

May

Early to mid-May. Search for mined leaves and stems of Biting Stonecrop and English Stonecrop for the larvae of the **Stonecrop Fanner** *Glyphipterix equitella* (the mined parts go white and wither).

Search for blanched and shrivelled leaflets of Yarrow for larvae of the **Crested Bent-wing** *Bucculatrix cristatella*. Feeding openly, they fall at the slightest disturbance.

Search for Mines of **Saltern Bent-wing** *Bucculatrix maritima* on Sea Aster leaves.

Mid-May. Collect rolled leaves on alder for **Pale Red Slender** *Caloptilia elongella*.

Spun flowers of Sloe and Hawthorn may contain larvae of **Triangle-marked Piercer** *Pammene spiniana*.

Spun terminal shoots of St. John's Wort may contain larvae of **Red Piercer** *Lathronympha strigana*.

Search for cases of **Common Oak Case-bearer** *Coleophora lutipennella*, **Tipped Oak Case-bearer** *C. flavipennella*, and **Forest Case-bearer** *C. ibipennella* on catkins of oak.

Early May. Search for cases of **Rose Case-bearer** *Coleophora gryphipennella* on Wild Rose.

Under Common Mouse-ear on sandy ground, search for the silken tubes of **Painted Neb** *Eulamprotes wilkella*.

Collect Common Spike-rush stems for **Buff-marked Neb** *Monochroa lucidella*.

Collect Larch shoots with withered leaves for **Larch-boring Argent** *Argyresthia laevigatella*.

Collect Spruce shoots with discoloured (or no) leaves for **Spruce Argent** *Argyresthia glabrata*.

Beat Juniper on a sunny day for **Ochreous Argent** *Argyresthia praecocella* and **Bronze Argent** *A. arceuthina*.

Search for spun Bluebell flowers which may contain larvae of **Bluebell Shade** *Eana incanana*.

Search for spun leaves of Creeping Willow; amongst other things they may contain larvae of **Sallow Button** *Acleris hastiana*.

Beat Spruce for adults of **Dingy Spruce Bell** *Epinotia pygmeana*.

Flowers of Buttercup and Marsh Marigold are likely to contain adults of **Plain Gold** *Micropteryx calthella* and sometimes **Cocksfoot Moth** *Glyphipterix simplicella*.

Late May. Search for spun leaves of Carlene Thistle for **Carlene Flat-body** *Agonopterix nanatella*.

Conspicuous 'windows' in the leaves of Wild Madder reveal the presence of larvae of **Coastal Pearl** *Mecyna asinalis*.

If you find Burdock leaves riddled with holes, search the underside (carefully) for larvae of the **Spotted White Plume** *Pterophorus galactodactyla*.

June

Seedheads of Black Bog-rush may contain **Bog-rush Fanner** *Glyphipterix schoenicolella*.

Search for brown skeletonised leaves of Apple for larvae of **Apple-leaf Skeletonizer** *Choreutis pariana*.

Disturb Devil's Bit scabious for adults of **Devil's-bit Conch** *Aethes piercei*.

Disturb Small Scabious and Field scabious for adults of **Scabious Conch** *Aethes hartmanniana*.

Seedheads/flowerheads of Blue Fleabane may contain larvae of **Blue-fleabane Conch** *Cochlydia heydeniana*.

Containers of wool, grain, feathers etc., placed outside or in outbuildings will attract their own fauna (!), including **Tineids** and **Pyralids**.

Rolled leaves of Sycamore can be collected for **Small Red Slender** *Caloptilia rufipennella*.

Leaf rolls on Azalea may contain **Azalea Leaf-miner** *Caloptilia azaleella* larvae.

Search for silvery inflated blotches on Oak leaves for **Brown Oak Slender** *Acrocercops brongniardella*, worth finding just for the name.

Tap Gorse for adults of **Gorse Midget** *Phyllonorycter ulicicolella*, and Broom for adults of **Broom Midget** *P. scopariella*.

Collect spun leaves of trees and bushes to rear for a host of **Tortrix** species.

Search flowering stems of Ox-eye daisy for aborted flower heads with a slight swelling at the bud base for **Downland Drill** *Dichrorampha consortana*.

Disturb Yarrow in afternoon sun for **Square-spot Drill** *Dichrorampha sequana*, **Silver-lined Drill** *D.plumbagana* and **Common Drill** *D.petiverella*.

Collect unripe Gorse seedpods for **Grey Gorse Piercer** *Cydia succedana*.

Search spun shoots and leaves of Creeping Willow for larvae of **Pygmy Y Piercer** *Pammene populana* and **Black Sober** *Anacampsis temerella*.

Disturb Scots Pine for adults of **Spotted Shoot Moth** *Rhyacionia pinivorana*.

Spun flowers of Wild Rose may contain larvae of **Scarce Rose Bell** *Eucosma pauperana*.

Folded lower leaves of Golden-rod may contain larvae of **Four-spot Bell** *Eriopsela quadrana*.

Search for swellings on Bracken stems for larvae of **Bracken Neb** *Paltodora cytisella*.

Elm leaves spun on top of one another may contain **Elm Button** *Acleris kochiella (boscana)*.

Spun leaves of Meadowsweet may be searched for **Meadow-sweet Button** *Acleris shepherdana*.

July

Search Bluebell seedpods for holes to find larvae of **Bluebell Conch** *Hysterothra maculosana*.

Spun green berries of Hawthorn may contain larvae of **Fruitlet-mining Tortrix** *Pammene rhediella*.

Search for oak leaves spun flat together for **Drab Oak Piercer** *Pammene splendidulana* larvae.

Collect Umbellifer heads for **Dingy Flat-body** *Depressaria daucella*, **Fen Flat-body** *D.ultimella* and **Parsnip Flat-body** *D.pastinacella*.

Common names for micros can be found in;-

Porter, J. (2002). A Label and Checklist of the British Micro-lepidoptera with Vernacular Names. (I may be able to supply copies of this useful but unpublished work).

Sam Thomas
(01248) 361126

Putting it about for Butterfly Conservation

"'emp agri-moaney!" challenged the bluff Lancashireman who'd just marched up to our stand for Butterfly Conservation at the North Wales Garden and Woodland Festival at Bodelwyddan Castle on May Bank Holiday, "Best booterfly plant!"

I was selling, and giving away to new members, collections of butterfly and moth larval food-plants as well as nectar plants, in an attempt to drum up more members for the North Wales branch, and publicise B.C. in general. It took me a minute to work out what he meant, "Oh yes! - Eupatorium - I've got three different varieties here, including the wild one - the large cultivated purple kind seems even more attractive to butterflies than the wild one in my garden - would you like one?" "Ee, no! I've got loads" and he stomped off.

You get some funny comments when you do a stand, like the man who earnestly tried to convince Alan Wagstaff that it's the moths that turn into the caterpillars. Alan stood for most of the two days on the outside of the table next to a net-cage containing moths he had trapped the night before, plus some that I had bred. We discovered this was a great attraction for people who might have otherwise walked straight past. I'd also put in a big furry caterpillar of a Drinker moth that I'd found in the greenhouse, and some pupae; it was nice to be able to show children three life stages.

Children came in droves to our activities table too, making bookmarks or a butterfly mobile, which was the most popular.

This year we have added a 'sponsorship' map of the new Eyrarth Rocks Reserve, where people can make a donation towards the management work and stick a butterfly sticker on the map - one will find a hidden prize, for extra incentive.

Alan has made us some professional display boards, as he happens to do that for a living. We've used our branch chairman, Ilija

Vukomanovic's, wonderful photos of butterflies and moths, and we've tried to keep down the amount of words, conscious that people were not going to stand there and read much with so many other stimuli around. However, we also wanted these panels to pack enough information to display in local libraries in the winter. The cost of printing two display boards was more than covered by the sales on the stand the first time we used them..

We also have what we think is a great membership promotion - 5 free plants plus a free "Gardening for Butterflies" booklet, if you join here! But we have very few takers - generally only one per show! But we give out hundreds of membership leaflets and Wales events programmes, some of which have borne fruit in people turning up to field trips and joining later, and teachers contacting me to go and talk to children and help them plant up a butterfly garden in school grounds. And you know what they say about advertising; we tend to have to see something three times before we get round to acting on it. So it's all good publicity.

Another show we did for a small local nature reserve, which was held in a primary school, got very little interest at all, except for the kid's activities - but did get our photo and name in the local paper as a community event. Raising public awareness is more important than raising money, and getting more people to join the Society is likely to save butterflies from dying out in the long term.

And we really need more helpers!! You only need to take a turn on the stand for a couple of hours, for which you get a free entry pass to the show that you can go off and enjoy afterwards. It is actually great fun sharing your enthusiasm with people, and you really don't have to know much about butterflies and moths.

A huge thank-you to all the people who have helped make our stands possible over the last 2 years; any members who would like to help at forthcoming shows, or have any activity ideas for children - I'd love to hear from you!

Jan Miller (01352) 711198, jan@7wells.org

Record the butterflies you see ...and help save them!

Enclosed with this newsletter is a 'casual' butterfly recording form. Prepared to make things easy for you, it lists all the species you could possibly see in North Wales down the left-hand side. All you need to do is fill in the date and location at the top of the column. This could be your own garden, or where you walk your dog, anywhere you visit during the summer, and put the number of the butterflies (or caterpillars) that you see in the box next to its name.

In autumn send the form to your local County Butterfly Recorder, whose address is on the back of this newsletter. If you have trouble identifying some species (or think you've seen one not on the list) you can always ring your local Recorder for advice.

It's easy and fun to do; the only problem is misplacing the form - what some people do is pin it to the kitchen notice board so it's always to hand when you've just seen that great butterfly in the garden. Others keep it in their car glove compartment so they always have it ready when they return from a walk.

Keeping records like this is vital to the work of Butterfly Conservation. With this kind of data, from members all over the country, the Millennium Atlas was published in 2001, which gave a good picture of the distribution of all our native butterflies across the UK at the Millennium. It also provides much scientific data that many scientists are still studying to follow global warming and other environmental changes. David Attenborough recently hailed the B.C. Millennium Atlas of Butterflies as "the canary in the mine".

The recording scheme continues, with work being done to update this atlas for 2005. Our North Wales butterflies have always been under-recorded, simply because not enough people were doing it. So your contribution will really help, both locally and nationally, to let us know where species need most protection, and to do something about it!

If you want additional forms, including ones for regular recording at one site then please contact your county recorder. Please send ANY records to your local County Butterfly Recorder (preferably in October) and remember... ANY records are valuable to your Local Branch!

Thankyou!

[Copies of "The Millennium Atlas of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland", published by Oxford University Press are available from good bookshops. If you have difficulty finding a copy they are also available from BC Head Office at £30 for non-BC members, £25 for members.]

Records of Weaver's Wave *Idea contiguaria britanniae* old and new



Known since 1855, and with a scattering of records around North Wales, Weaver's Wave is more elusive than our other moorland speciality, Ashworth's Rustic *Xestia ashworthii*. According to early sources such as Newman (1869 - when the species was known as Greening's Wave) the distribution was widely scattered over the 'mountains of North Wales'. Penmaenmawr and Pensychnant became the best known sites in Victorian times, no doubt due to their convenience and proximity to Llandudno.

Waring (in prep.) highlights our poor understanding of the ecological requirements of a species with such common foodplants and such a restricted distribution. Whilst Ling *Calluna vulgaris* and Crowberry *Empetrum nigrum* are probably the main foodplants there is evidence that other species are used, Navelwort *Umbilicus rupestris* being considered likely amongst them.

In the past 12 years Weaver's wave has been recorded from 6 10km squares, out of a total of 19 10km squares if all historical records for VC48 and VC49 are collated. It is always worth remembering that many moth-ers come to North Wales (and particularly Pensychnant), catch Weaver's Wave, and then go home without passing their records on to the County Recorder or land manager at the site.

The most recent records (post-1990) come from;

- Trawscoed SH8432 (Merionethshire), 1 on 3rd July 1999 (A.&J. Graham)

- Plas Tan y Bwlch SH6540 (Merionethshire), 1 to MV on 24th-28th July 2000, and 1(?) to MV light on 25th July 2001 (David Brown)

- Fachwen, SH5662 (Caernarvonshire), up to 5 individuals per year in a garden MV trap from 1990 to at least 1993 (C. Aron)

- Coedydd Aber NNR SH6670 (Caernarvonshire), 1 to Actinic light, 1996 (Duncan Brown)

- Waunfawr SH5359 (Caernarvonshire), 20th July 1998, and most recently one to MV light on 1st July 2001 (Dr. M.Hull)

- Pensychnant SH7577 (Caernarvonshire), 4 to MV on 13th July 2002. Amongst numerous old records, there is an interesting one here of an individual drinking honeydew on a car roof (Porter, 2000).

- Penmaenmawr (Caernarvonshire), 1 to MV light 27th July 2002 (J. Good).

- Moel y Ci, SH5865 (Caernarvonshire), 3 to MV light, 1 found at rest on a wall, between 3rd July and 15th July 2002 (J.Harold, S.Thomas).

The last site mentioned is Moel y Ci, a heathery hill on the northern edge of the newly-enlarged Eryri SSSI and proposed SAC. The first record, on July 3rd/4th 2002, was actually in my nearby garden at 200m asl., part of a sizeable catch in the 125W Skinner trap, and after a rather cool, still night with thin high cloud. Perhaps significantly the catch included a much wider selection of micro's than usual, again probably linked to the calm conditions.

Having caught one Weaver's I was keen to establish that nearby Moel y Ci, the obvious source of this individual, did indeed hold a population. Moving the trap uphill to a friend's garden on the very edge of the moorland (at 250m asl) soon yielded the desired results. At the first attempt (July 13th/14th) a Weaver's was picked off the perspex at midnight.

The following day (July 14th) I found one on the white painted wall of the friend's house whilst going to set up the moth trap.

This was in the early evening, so the individual concerned probably spent the day there, 6 inches above ground level on a white background in a sheltered corner (not near the moth trap). This ties in with Porritt's description in Tutt (1901); -

"Imagines of *Acidalia contiguaria* may be found sometimes not uncommonly at rest in the daytime in July on rocks in the mountains of North Wales, very often a pair a few inches apart."

Finally one was caught on the night of July 15th/16th, this one in the trap in the morning. The trap was not run again at this site for a week, and no more were caught subsequently.

Moel y Ci is part of the land being acquired as part of the Moel y Ci Environmental Centre project. I intend to carry out some survey and research there on Weaver's Wave in 2003, trying to find out a little more about habitat association and foodplant preference. Anyone with any useful information or research material could help greatly by passing it on to me!

The 2002 Pensychnant record refers to 4 specimens taken at light on the ffridd on 13th July 2002, part of a massive catch which included 4 Ashworth's Rustic and a Starwort *Cucullia asteris*, amongst 85 species of macro-moths (J M Thompson, pers. comm.). This was the first time Julian had encountered the species in 10 years at Pensychnant; the weather was still, with thin high cloud and becoming chilly.

Weaver's Wave is currently graded Red Data Book (RDB) 3 (Waring, in prep.).

John Harold

Newman, E. (1869). The Natural History of British Moths. Tweedie.

Porter, J. (2000). The Art of Coarse Entomology. Atropos 10: p39-42.

Tutt, JW. (1901). Practical Hints for the Field Lepidopterist. AES.

Waring, P. (in prep.). A Review of the Scarce and Threatened Macro-moths of Britain and Ireland.

Identification of Burnet Moths in Britain

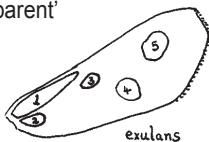
Burnets are a day-flying group of moths which are easy to observe - as they fly in full sun and visit flowers - but are not always easy to identify. Many of them have subtly different subspecies and they are very prone to occurring in isolated colonies in parts of the country where they would not be expected!

As an example, take the New Forest Burnet *Zygaena viciae* which was only known from the New Forest and after its extinction there was refound (as a different subspecies) on one grassy cliff on the coast of Argyllshire. This is its only known locality at present, but it could turn up anywhere from Kent to Cornwall to the Hebrides. To add to the confusion, Burnets also have lots of named aberrations; some with the spots yellow instead of red and some with the spots all merged into one blot.

Here is a guide which should help with the identification of most specimens. Please remember to check the Burnets you encounter - they are very poorly recorded for such showy day-fliers, and there are sure to be further discoveries to be made in this group.

Scotch Burnet *Zygaena exulans*

This is a small, fairly 'transparent' Burnet with 5 spots on the forewing, which can be told from all others by Spot 2 (see diagram) being much shorter than Spot 1.

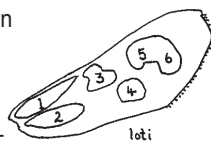


This species has only been found in Scotland at elevations of c.800-900m. on flat mountain tops with abundant Crowberry *Empetrum nigrum*, which is the larval foodplant.

Slender Scotch Burnet *Zygaena loti*

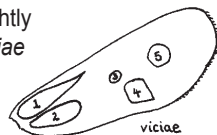
This species has Spot 5 and Spot 6 joined to form a characteristic reniform (kidney-shaped) blotch. Like *Z.exulans* it is a fairly small and slightly transparent moth.

Z. loti is currently only known from the islands of Mull and Ulva on grassy banks and low cliffs by the sea. The foodplant is Common Bird's-foot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*.



New Forest Burnet *Zygaena viciae*

Another of the smaller, slightly transparent species - *Z.viciae* does not have the reniform blotch of *Z.loti*, or the smaller Spot 2 of *Z.exulans*. It differs from the 'five-spotted' Burnets (*Z.trifolii* and *Z.Ionicerae*, see below) in that; Spot 4 is a very large sub-quadrant spot, Spot 3 is very small and elongate in comparison, and the forewing apex is more rounded.



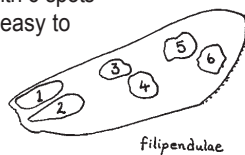
New Forest Burnet has occurred in 2 subspecies in Britain, both of which feed as caterpillars on Common Bird's-foot Trefoil and Meadow Vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*. *Z.viciae ytenensis* is now thought to be extinct. It used to live in clearings and grassy rides in the New Forest, and there are old unconfirmed records from Surrey and Sussex.

Z.viciae argyllensis differs from *ytenensis* by having a broader border to the hindwing, a hairier thorax and abdomen, and a deeper crimson border and darker ground colour to the forewing. This subspecies lives on a steeply sloping dry grassy cliff by the sea in Argyllshire, where it was discovered in 1963. This is the only site in the world for this subspecies.

Six-spot Burnet *Zygaena filipendulae*

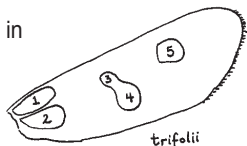
This is the only Burnet with 6 spots and is therefore usually easy to identify. It is one of the larger species, feeds on Bird's-foot Trefoil, and is the most common in Britain.

Our subspecies is *Z.filipendulae stephensi* - the nominate subspecies *Z.f. filipendulae* is not known to occur in Britain.



Five-spot Burnet *Zygaena trifolii*

Differs from *Z. loniceræ* in that Spot 3 and Spot 4 are normally confluent (merged), the termen of the forewing is fairly rounded, the apex of the hindwing is less pointed, and the antennae are thicker and more sharply pointed.



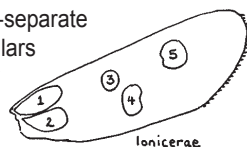
Subspecies *insularis* is (apparently) intermediate in terms of size, hairiness and 'sheen' of hair. Also it differs from the other subspecies in having thinner, more pointed antennae and more elongate forewing spots.

Both *jocelynae* and *insularis* are much more prone to having spots 3 and 4 confluent than *latomarginata*, in which confluence is an uncommon aberration.

Five-spot Burnet occurs as two subspecies in Britain. *Z. trifolii decreta* inhabits marshy places in western Britain as far north as the Isle of Man: it was previously found in southeast England but is now thought virtually extinct in that area. The larvae feed on Greater Bird's-foot Trefoil *Lotus uliginosus*. *Z. trifolii palustrella* is found on calcareous downland in southern England. It differs from *decreta* in its duller colouration, smaller size, thinner scales and (weak) translucence. The larval foodplant is Common Bird's-foot Trefoil.

Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet *Zygaena loniceræ*

Occurs in three hard-to-separate subspecies, the caterpillars of which all feed mainly on Meadow Vetchling and Red Clover *Trifolium pratense*, but also on other Leguminosae.

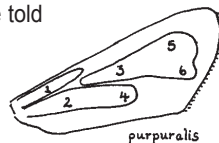


Z. loniceræ latomarginata is the most common subspecies, found in grassy places over a mainly eastern distribution - west as far as Liverpool and north as far as Northumberland. *Z. loniceræ jocelynae* is known only from the Isle of Skye, where it is found on steep grassy slopes, mostly on the west coast and by the sea. *Z. loniceræ insularis* is the Irish subspecies, found in similar habitats to *latomarginata*.

Subspecies *jocelynae* differs from *latomarginata* in being very hairy all over the thorax and abdomen; the hairs being dull in *jocelynae* and shiny in *latomarginata*. Ssp. *jocelynae* also has longer thinner antennae, longer and broader forewing spots, a broader forewing, and larger size.

Transparent Burnet *Zygaena purpuralis*

Transparent Burnet can be told from 'confluent' forms of other species by the transparent appearance, thin covering of scales and shape of the forewing streaks (1, 3+5+6, 2+4). All three hard-to-separate races feed on Wild Thyme *Thymus praecox*.



Z. purpuralis segontii was formerly found on south-facing sea cliffs near Abersoch on the Lleyn Peninsula. Last recorded in 1962, possibly extinct? *Z. purpuralis caledonensis* differs from *segontii* in being larger, with broader forewing streaks. Found locally on the west coast and islands of Scotland from Skye to the Mull of Kintyre, usually on grassy slopes by the sea, but also inland on limestone near Oban. *Z. purpuralis sabulosa* differs from *caledonensis* in showing a warmer red colouration, and from *segontii* in having broader forewing streaks and larger size. Found in Ireland, mainly on the Burren, inhabiting limestone and sand dunes.

Article : Sam Thomas

Art : Jackie Thomas

I have known for some time that there are 'five-spot burnets' at Glan Conwy RSPB reserve, but since writing this article I have collected larvae which turned out to be Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet. These larvae are distinctive because of their very long hairs and their preference for red clover over bird's-foot trefoil. This is a new county record and the nearest colonies are in Cheshire, Shropshire and Monmouthshire. This is a good example of how these moths can be found a long way from their nearest known colonies. So it would be very worthwhile to check any burnets you see.

Sam Thomas.

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