

Dorset Branch Who's Who

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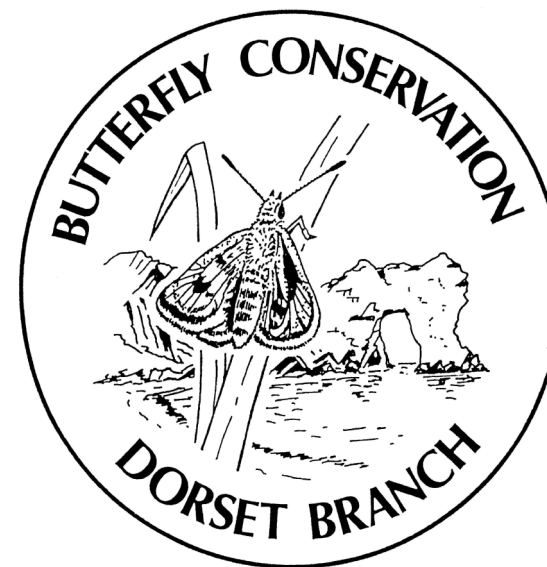
Volunteers needed

** Branch Committee Member*

Newsletter No. 81

Spring 2016

Dorset Branch News



www.dorsetbutterflies.com



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Mrs B Schneider Browne	Mrs J Hudson-Cook	Miss R Ouston
Mr P & Mrs G Bryant	Ms E James	Sir John & Lady
Miss S Burton	Mr S Jones	Dr I & Mrs M Perry
Miss S F Burton	Ms M Jones	Miss L Power
Mr S Butler	Ms N C Kendrick	Miss A Quinney & Mr
Mr D & Mrs S Caals	Mr A & Mrs M King	Mrs K & Mr J Ralph & Family
Mr R Cake	Mr D Last	Mr M & Mrs V Reed
Mrs Z Calvert	Dr J Lee-Potter	Mrs N Richards
Ms B Campbell	Dr C Loeffler & Mr R Cobban & Family	Mr S Richardson
Mrs E Cartwright	Mrs H & Mr S Lynn & Family	Mrs J Rogers
Mr M Childs	Mr D & Mrs P MacDougall	Mr N & Mrs R Rose
Mrs J & Mr P Clark & Family	Mr K Macdonald	Mrs J Sawkins
Mrs A Collier	Mr I D Martindale	Mrs H M A Shelton
Mr R C Cook	Mr P Mauger	Mr J & Mrs L Shonfield
Mrs L & Mr C Cooper	Mrs A McCarthy	Mrs S & Mr S Sneddon
Miss R Eddy	Mrs R McGregor-Bland & Mr K Bland	Ms E Somers
Mrs S Farley	Miss Z McMinn & Mr R Albiston	Mr J Stockwell
Mr S Finnis	Mr D & Mrs T Mcpherson	B Strawbridge & R Howard
Mr D & Mrs G	Mrs J Miller	Mr B Taylor
Miss S Franks	Mrs M Mitchell	Mrs M Travers
Mr R Gall	Mr D & Mrs M Morgan	Miss L Turner
Mrs B Geldart	Mr D Morphew	Mr M Whitchurch
Mr M & Mrs S Gould	Mrs C & Mr N Murray	Miss M Whyte
Mr M Grimsey	Miss T Nash & Mr L Higgins	Miss R Williams
Mrs P Hawes	Mrs V Nunn	Mrs N Williams
Mrs S Houghton	Mrs S O'Leary & Mr K Brown	Mrs C Wootton-Woolley
Mr J R Howell		Mr R & Mrs S Young

There will be events close to home as well as further afield, in some cases held jointly with the neighbouring BC branches. All these (and others) will be listed on our very efficiently maintained website. Let us know what you see this season, use the website sightings page to send in information or even to write up your Lepidoptera experiences for others to read and benefit from.

Enjoy the butterflies and moths and the rest of our wonderful wildlife this summer!

Nigel Spring

Butterfly Conservation Dorset Branch Chairman

Painted Ladies put in an early (and late) appearance

By Adrian Neil

Who would have expected that the first butterfly to be seen in Dorset this year would be a Painted Lady? Nevertheless this is what happened when Neil Croton saw one on the Sadborow Estate, Thorncombe (close to the Devon Border) on January 3rd. It was followed by several others in fairly quick succession along or near the Dorset coast. The next sightings were on January 5th at Lyme Regis and Cheyne Weare, Portland. The following day two were spotted at Durlston Country Park and one each at Sutton Poyntz and Radipole RSPB Reserve. There followed a period of poorer weather and the only other sightings reported to the website in January were on the 15th at Preston, Weymouth and on the 28th again at Radipole. One might have thought that the unfavourable weather around that time would have put paid to the migration, but a few Painted Ladies must have managed to hang on, with one being recorded in Melbury Abbas on 24th February.



Butterfly Conservation's European Interests Group (EIG) now has over 400 members and celebrates its 10th anniversary this year. They have worked with a number of local partners in many countries of Europe doing surveys for rare and endangered species of butterfly. Whether it is the Odd Spot Blue (*T. taygetica*) and Dil's Grayling (*P. orestes*) in Greece or the Scarce Fritillary (*E. maturna*) in Italy or several endemic Spanish butterflies the EIG surveys have helped our collective knowledge. More recently an EIG survey of Europe's most threatened butterfly the Danube Clouded Yellow (*Colias myrmidone*) has helped with the notification of parts of Romania.

Their website www.bc-eig.org.uk is a very useful source of information on European butterflies with links to most European Butterfly websites. There a species lists/recording forms for many European countries and downloadable guides as to where to find butterflies. For France there are regional guides.

Anyone who enjoys seeing butterflies on holiday will find the EIG newsletters a mine of information with trip reports and updates on taxonomy. Back numbers are on the EIG website. Membership of EIG costs £10 per year in addition to the BC subscription. Details and application form on www.bc-eig.org.uk

Atlas, especially in the 'white holes' where few or no butterflies have been recorded. As this was the first time the event had been held we only had five teams taking part, but over the weekend we saw enough species (27 altogether), visited 28 kilometre squares (including 13 as yet unrecorded 'white holes'), and had enough fun to warrant repeating the venture this season! The team that named itself 'Duck for lunch' managed to see a good number of butterfly species from the pub garden where they spent a happy lunch break.

2015 Dorset Butterfly Scramble - Results

	Team						Total
	LF	K	TN	DFL	S1	S2	
5x5 km square (ref is the SW corner 1km square)	SY	SY	SY	SY	ST	ST	-
	61/90	42/93	53/05	90/90	73/05	70/05	
Number of 1km squares visited	4	1	3	7	7	6	28
Number of species seen overall	15	9	16	12	16	17	27
Number of butterflies seen overall	243	49	252	178	178	259	1159
Hummingbird Hawkmoth bonus points	40	0	0	0	0	0	-
Total points earned	508	116	564	422	438	614	-
Position	2nd	5th	1st	4th	3rd	-	-

Team codes are as follows: **LF** = Locke Family, **K** = Kate, **TN** = The Neozephyrus, **DFL** = Duck for Lunch, **S1** = Skippers (August 1st results), **S2** = Skippers (August 2nd results)

- Someone to keep an eye on social media for news of migrants in Dorset and wider.
- A weather back-tracker. When migrant butterflies are seen, the first question is whether they have come here from abroad under their own steam, and a crucial question is whether the winds were in the right direction.
- Someone to seek out news of butterfly releases at weddings and funerals in Dorset, as they may be the source of migrant butterfly sightings.

Contact Bill Shreeves.

Sales/Education Stall Co-ordinator

Bridget de Whalley has been doing this for some years, with Kathie Clarke looking after the ordering. Both are now retiring, and although Georgie, our Treasurer, is willing to take on the ordering, we need a Co-ordinator. This involves receiving requests from various events for a Butterfly stall, working out which ones we can sensibly attend, and organising teams of people to take the stall out – we have quite a few people who will man the stall, so you do not need to do this yourself unless you want to. The stall is sometimes just educational, sometimes sales and sometimes both, as fits the needs of the particular event.

You will need to be able to hold the educational and sales goods in your house and supply whatever is needed at a given time. Most of the team who man the stall know how to keep the inventory of goods taken out, but you will need to be able to keep track of the stock and work with Georgie on banking the money and keeping stock levels up. Attending events is very important to the Branch: the income from sales has been a steady stream, while the benefits of the educational side and of raising the profile of butterflies and Butterfly Conservation are huge. Bridget is willing to help and advise, so you will not be thrown in the deep end.

Contact Bridget de Whalley.



A male Chalkhill Blue feeding on Knapweed at Osmington

© Malcolm Hull

The open down has a slope of about 1 in 4, with cattle tracks giving some bare ground. The sight of a good number of Knapweed flowers with a few Meadow Scabious reflected the balanced cattle grazing. It is essential to have the down grazed, but a balance must be met to ensure patches of taller sward remain: thanks go to both the farm owner and Natural England for helping to achieve this.

“Adonis Blue” came the call, then another. Cameras were clicking as dazzling males opened their wings. The white fringes with black chequer marks sorted out the Adonis from Common Blues. Small Copper, an iridescent, fresh beauty, was next up. Brown Argus were also present in small numbers. A surprise was to find 2 Chalkhill Blues which have not been seen here for many years. Malcolm Hull took the above picture on the ever important nectar flower.

A poem by Keith Powrie

As April Fools' Day comes around
Once again we hear the sound
Of boots treading familiar ground.
It's the transect walker.

With record sheets for the coming season,
Pre-prepared and with good reason
For not to do so would seem like treason
To the transect walker.

In the early weeks there's Brimstone and White
And Nymphalids, with their colours, bright
And Hairstreaks are a wonderful sight
For the transect walker.

After springtime, summer comes around
And whilst covering the same old ground
Blues, Browns and Ringlets are to be found
By the transect walker.

If the wind's from the south and the climate's mellow
There'll be migrants like the Clouded Yellow
To cheer the heart of many a fellow
Transect walker.

Autumn over. In winter lumbers
Forcing the chrysalids into their slumbers
Now is the time to enter the numbers
On Transect Walker.

Some information collated by Lyn Pullen

As you might have noticed (!) we have a referendum regarding our membership of the EU coming up on June 23rd, so I thought it was worth a quick look at the EU in relation to wildlife. My personal knowledge of the subject is limited, so what follows is mainly taken from the internet; my aim is to set you thinking and researching further if you wish.

The Habitats Directive ensures the conservation of a wide range of rare, threatened or endemic animal and plant species across the EU.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), aims to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten their survival.

The Birds Directive aims to protect all of the 500 wild bird species naturally occurring in the European Union.

The "Communication on the EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking" (Feb 2016) sets out a comprehensive blueprint for joined-up efforts to fight wildlife crime inside the EU, and for strengthening the EU's role in the global fight against these illegal activities. "Wildlife trafficking has become one of the most profitable criminal activities worldwide, with devastating effects for biodiversity".

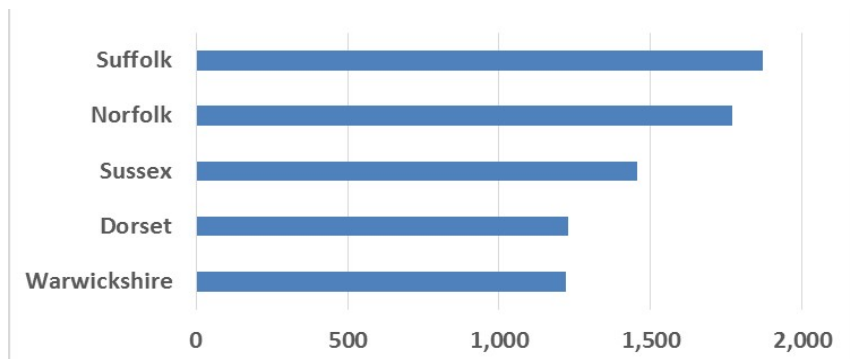
The Thematic Strategy for Pesticides was published in 2009; I can't see that anything has succeeded it. The strategy is designed to reduce further the impact of pesticides, particularly plant protection products on human health and the environment. I would note here that Europe seems to me to be stronger on banning neonicotinoids

appeared on people's Twitter accounts over 8,000 times (though you can never tell how often it was actually viewed), but more importantly, gained 32 'likes', 25 clicks on the links within the post and 16 re-clicks.

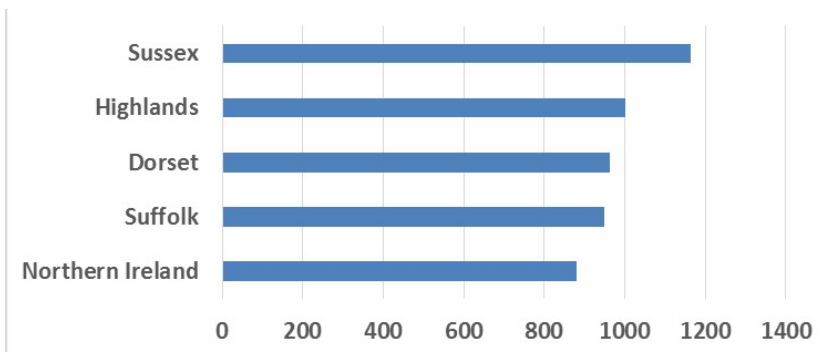
I looked at Facebook for the June to November period. Our 'Reach' over the period averaged at 133 per day (day being a day on which a post was published). 'Reach' is defined as *"the number of people who have seen any content associated with your Page. (Unique Users)"*. The same figure for 'engagement', defined as *"the number of people who engaged with your Page. Engagement includes any click or story created"* was 15, which I think is good.

Comparing us to other branches gives the following:

Top 5 branches by number of Twitter followers



Top 5 branches by number of Facebook likes



A Butterfly Year in Haiku

By Richard Stewart

Under the deep snow
And beneath daggers of ice
New life is waiting.

Late February
A calm day with warming sun
The first butterfly.

Out of long darkness
A comma with widespread wings
Soaking up the sun.

Prefers hedge garlic
Warmed by rays of evening sun
Roosting orange tip.

On such a dull day
Even a single small white
Brightens the landscape.

From a coal blackness
To this large eyed radiance
Peacock's open wings.

Along the leaf spine
Brimstone caterpillar rests
Green on green unseen.

Green hairstreaks emerge
With a scent of yellow gorse
Heavy on the breeze.

Dorset school mothing results: summer 2015

By Nigel Spring

For a number of years I have been visiting schools in Dorset and Somerset to trap moths in the school grounds while camping in the carpark in my old motorhome. During the next school day, I show the moths to the children in groups (half classes or smaller) while discussing a great range of topics on different aspects of ecology, structure and adaptation. As might be expected, the children are amazed at the variety and beauty of these wonderful creatures.

The results of this year's mothing sessions in Dorset schools are laid out below.

<u>Dorset School mothing results Summer 2015</u>	Date	Weather Minimum temperature 'C	Number of Moth species recorded	Number of Moths caught
Portesham School	June 11 th	11.7 with some rain	54	-
Parrett & Axe School, Mosterton	June 18 th	4.8	41	199
Cerne Abbas First School	June 24 th	4.5	54	242
St Nicholas & St Laurence, Weymouth	June 30 th	20 and windy	59	-
All Saints Primary, Bishops Caundle	July 13 th	14	78	771

The use levels throughout the year are much as you would expect: the graph below shows use levels from January on the left, through to December on the right.



The viewing of the site on mobile devices like smartphones and tablets continues to grow, with 20% on tablets and 11% on mobiles.

One of the most interesting statistics for those of us involved in running the site is which pages are most used. The home page 'wins' at 22% of the total page views, followed by the recent sightings page at 14%. After that comes the photo gallery and the recording page, each at around 4%. After that come, in order, the species page, places, news, 'more', events and the sightings input page. The 'more' button isn't an ideal one, but it means we can add new sections at no cost – without it, we would have to pay a technical person to do the necessary work to add them.

The conclusion I draw from all these statistics is that the 'live' parts of the site, i.e. those pages whose information constantly changes, are of considerable importance. We are the only Branch, last time I checked, who have the sort of sightings input page we have, and it is obviously paying dividends. Long-term, I expect it will be overtaken by recording apps on smartphones, but that's a method of inputting sightings which doesn't suit everybody, and I expect our alternative will continue to gain use for some time yet. The butterfly records which were entered via the website for 2015 totalled 6,359 records, containing 37,538 butterflies. In 2014 the numbers were 6,185 and 37,313.

All of these records were verified as they came in by Martin Raper

View from The Chair

After another very strange winter with very few frosts, marked by many extreme weather events and much wind, rain and flooding, we are emerging into what we hope will be a warm, sunny spring and summer season with perfect conditions for our butterflies and moths. 2016 is the 40th anniversary of that memorable summer of '76, when many of our butterfly species had a bumper year – we can but dream!

The warm wet conditions of the autumn and winter will not have favoured many species. Hibernating insects use up more of the food stores in their bodies in mild weather and parasites and predators can be more active: both of these factors will reduce the survival rate. In addition, if butterflies wake up during the winter, there is generally very little nectar for them to feed on and the chances of their re-finding suitable shelter when the temperature drops will be reduced. We regularly find Small Tortoiseshell butterflies dead on the bathroom window sill in mid-winter. During a mild spell in February, there was a small Scarlet Tiger larva on the doorframe of our shed; it had woken up, gone walkabout and found itself marooned and exposed when the temperature dropped again.

While the insects are mainly hidden away waiting for the spring to arrive, the autumn and winter are certainly not times of hibernation for the volunteers looking after the habitats on our butterfly reserves and the other wildlife sites that the Dorset branch of Butterfly Conservation is involved with. A huge amount of practical work adding up to hundreds of man-hours has taken place to improve conditions particularly for our threatened species and we are very grateful to everyone who has turned out to help.

The latest list of events which accompanies this newsletter is full of opportunities to get out and enjoy butterflies and moths and the beautiful places they inhabit – I hope you will be able to join in.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINES

31st August

For mid-September publication

28th February

For late-March publication

If you would like to submit something for the next newsletter please send your articles in by these dates at the latest. Many thanks to those people that have contributed articles to this current edition.

**We are always in need of articles and line drawings, so
please put pen to paper, or your finger to keyboard,
and send in your contributions.**

TREASURER'S NOTE

**Bank balance at 28th
February 2016:**

£14,185

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PLEASE NOTE THE OPINIONS
EXPRESSED IN THIS NEWSLETTER ARE
NOT NECESSARILY THOSE OF
THE SOCIETY OR THE BRANCH

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The first sightings of other species were on 6th January, with Red Admiral (Upton Country Park), and Small Tortoiseshell (Dorchester) being recorded. The first Brimstone was seen on the 17th at Lydlinch Common. These were the only records reported to the branch website for that period, so if you have any others please do send them in.

Of course this was not the whole story of the migration because the strong southerly winds at the end of December and in early January had brought in a number of these powerfully-flying migrants over a wider area. The first evidence of their arrival was the appearance of a no-doubt somewhat confused Painted Lady in a moth trap in Dorset on the evening of 20th December. There were a number of other sightings before the end of the year with the next, rather surprisingly, being on 23rd December in Essex and Sussex. The remainder were all in the south and west: Dorset again on the 24th and one in Devon on the same day. On the 28th and 29th they were seen in Somerset, Wiltshire and Hampshire as well as in Dorset and Devon. Dorset can claim credit for the last reported sighting of the year on the 30th December.

The Dorset Butterfly Scramble: August 1st & 2nd 2015

By Nigel Spring

It was a most successful weekend, with everyone having a great time – start booking your teams in for this year's event!!

Following the well-trialled example of the Dorset Bird Race, where competing teams speed around the county in order to record as many bird species as possible in one day, and inspired by an idea from Jane Martin in the Wiltshire branch, we organised a butterfly race (or scramble) for the first weekend of August to coincide with the Big Butterfly Count. It was intended to be a fun day (the added element of competition was a great asset), but a major aim was to add more records to our database for the next Dorset Butterfly

Signing Off!

A short note from the Editor, Guy Freeman

This is to be my final publication as Dorset Branch newsletter editor. It has been a rewarding task, but unfortunately I now feel that I am unable to devote it the time that it deserves. However, I am pleased to be able to leave things in the very capable hands of ex-Chairman Jane Smith.

I would like to sincerely thank everyone on the Dorset BC committee for their help over the past few years, as well as all those members that have submitted articles.

Electronic Newsletter

If you would like to receive your next magazine by email please will you let Robin George know? Her details are on the back of this Newsletter. You can of course receive it both electronically and by post if you wish. Receiving it electronically will help us to save money and is more environmentally friendly.

Greetings! *The Branch is delighted to welcome the following new members. We hope to meet you all soon at our events and work parties. Please introduce yourselves to any of the committee members and find out how you can get the most out of your membership and what you can do to help.*

Mr N & Mrs D Apps	Mr M Barnes	Mr T Bond
Mrs L & Mr D Bagg & Family	Miss A Barnett & Mr M Burton & Family	Ms S M Breuer
Mrs L Bain	Miss J Barrett	Mr R Britton
Miss C Ballam	Ms J Batchelor	Mr R Brown

Congratulations to team 'The Neozephyrus' (Becky and Paul) for achieving the greatest number of points on the Saturday and to everyone else for taking part and helping us with our record collecting.

Bill Shreeves, the branch records officer, made these comments:

"13 white hole km squares which were not covered in the 2010-14 recording have now gained butterflies & also many km squares which had previously very few species have gained many more. This gets the new 2015-19 Atlas off to a flying start. I am using the Dorset Recording Officer's prerogative to award a special historical medal to the Skippers, Nigel & Kathy, for their record of 7 species in square ST 70/06 on 2nd August, which appears to be in the neighbourhood of Beaulieu Wood, Buckland Newton. The last atlas which recorded species in this 1 km square was 1980-84! Since then for whatever reason no butterflies have been recorded, so August 3rd 2015 was a great historical moment. However it must be admitted that the butterfly recorded back in 1980-84 had some quality as it was a Silver Washed Fritillary!"

This year's Butterfly Scramble will take place over the weekend of July 30th/31st – keep an eye on the Dorset branch website for information and contact me by email (nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk) if you would like to take part.

Walk at Osmington: August 27th 2015

By Lawrie de Whalley

With cloudy skies our group set out from Osmington Church, just east of Weymouth.

Through the village no butterflies were on the wing but as we pressed on past hedgerows a Speckled Wood was found. As it became slightly warmer, my favourite green lane used by the cattle had a few Common Blues on nectar flowers. The track then starts to climb up to the downland, where we found Clouded Yellow and Small Tortoiseshell.

Fundraising

There are two different ways of raising money – organising money-raising events and writing bids to grant givers. Whichever suits you, we need your help. There are event-organising skills within the Committee, but too few people trying to do too much, so more pair of hands are needed, but there is plenty of advice and support to hand. If you feel able to tackle filling in grant forms, Lyn Pullen is willing to advise on this, as she has these skills.

What else?

To turn the subject on its head, what can you do? What skills do you possess? What time can you offer? If you feel you can help in any way, contact Nigel Spring to discuss options.

Dorset is a very active Branch of Butterfly Conservation, but it takes a lot of work, and the more we can share it round, the less of a burden it is on any individual. Please help if you can.

Special thanks to Bridget de Whalley who is stepping down as coordinator of the branch display and sales stalls after many years incredible effort. She is turning out to be such a hard act to follow that sadly, so far, there is no one to take her place.

Particular mention also for Bob Steedman who is leaving the committee of the branch but who will continue to coordinate some of the moth activities for us. And for Kathy and Richard Clarke who have run the BC Dorset sales operation almost since time immemorial.

Transect walker David Hughes, at the age of 85, has decided it is time to hang up his clipboard after many years of involvement in the Cerne Giant Hill transect team – this must be among the most physically testing of our transect sites.

Many thanks to these and to everyone who works to make our county a better place for butterflies and moths.

This species has disappeared from all of inland Dorset west of Fontmell within the past 5 years. Could these two be wanderers from Portland where the species is thriving and abundant? More Clouded Yellows helped to complement the colour scheme, and Marbled Whites were admired. Since the first Adonis Blue sighting the count had gone up to 50, all fresh males except for one female, and all within a 50x10 metre patch. No foodplant for the Adonis was here so I went another 30 metres up the steep slope and there found a band of Horseshoe Vetch, the sole larval host plant for the species. The Horseshoe Vetch was along a change in slope, indicating a different type of chalk. This band stays at the same altitude for some distance, eventually being cut through by the track where the plant is easily visible.

Another pleasant surprise was to find Small Blues close to the tall hedge on the lower slope. Our County Recorder Bill Shreeves tells me they have not been reported at the site for 10 years. We stopped for lunch with views across the sea to Portland and discussed why we had not seen a Wall Brown. Some of the party returned to the start from here, but those of us who went on over



Small Blue

White Horse Hill soon found Walls flying over the bare linear tracks. Also seen were more Adonis Blues (over 100 day total), Small Skippers and Small Heaths. Again, the mixed height sward containing nectar plants was important. Those returning through the village found Small Tortoiseshells and Peacocks which were not seen on the down. Malcolm Hull kept the list and posted 20 species on the Branch website, and we added a few more 'squares' of records west of the White Horse. Seeing so many fresh blue butterflies of 5 species was a real joy - good for the soul!

Help Needed!

Dorset Branch needs help with a number of tasks. Contact details for the people mentioned are on the back of the newsletter or you can send a message via our website – there is a 'contact' button at the foot of every page.

Transect Walks and Wider Countryside Walks

Dorset runs 62 transect (butterfly monitoring) walks across the County. These are walked 26 times a year, so you can see how much effort is needed to keep them all going. Most walks are shared between people so you do not have to do all 26!

There is a set of walking rules, which aim to keep the counts consistent, but don't worry about it: you'll be given plenty of support if you volunteer. Wider Countryside Surveys only have to be done two to four times a year. Both obviously call for skills in butterfly identification, but you have the great advantage of being able to find out what butterflies are usually seen on your walk, which often helps to solve queries.

If you think you might be able to help, contact Bill Shreeves about transect walks and Adrian Neil about the Wider Countryside Survey.

Help for Bill Shreeves

If you fancy some indoor work, and can use a computer, Bill's got plenty with which he needs help.

We've listed the tasks he knows of at the moment, but others are always popping up, so if you've got a general willingness to help out, contact him anyway.

- Creating charts from computer data: this may be short-term, as there is hope that the new version of the software will be able to do this, but we cannot be sure.

(thought to threaten bees and possibly butterflies) than the UK government is.

The EU Bathing Water Directive has led us to improve sewage treatment and the release of nitrates.

Air quality has been a subject for the EU for a long time, with the latest policy I can see being the The Clean Air Policy Package from 2013. Last year the Guardian reported that the UK Supreme Court “ordered the government to make plans for tackling the UK’s air pollution problem, which has been in breach of EU limits for years and is linked to thousands of premature deaths each year.”

The latest version of The Common Agricultural Policy covers 2012-2014 and includes the statement: “Farmers should be rewarded for the services they deliver to the wider public, such as landscapes, farmland biodiversity [and] climate stability even though they have no market value”.

There is an interesting article written for the Friends of the Earth by Dr Burns of the University of York, “expert in EU environment policy and processes” entitled “The implication for UK Environmental Policy of a Vote to Exit the EU” which you might like to search out. She also covers the implications of us becoming a member of the European Economic Area as opposed to the EU, which she views as the worst of all worlds in environmental terms.

My personal conclusion.

How effective these EU initiatives are is no doubt open to debate; as I see it, the UK can always choose to do more than is asked by the EU, though this rarely seems to have happened, but it’s good that there is an enforced minimum.

Flora and fauna know no boundaries, so we need regulation and enforcement beyond our own country.

I worked for Dorset County Council when Bournemouth and Poole were split from the rural county and I ended up in Poole, where we spent the next three years forming partnerships to enable Dorset, Poole and Bournemouth to work together. I fear we will do the same with the EU, and environmental/wildlife protection will be bottom of the priority list – but that’s just my opinion.

And finally, we are moving into another area: Flickr. As I type this, Andrew and I are discussing the mechanics of setting up a Flickr group. For those who do not know it, Flickr is a photo sharing site (www.flickr.com). We are setting up the group partly to further raise our profile, but also to give us somewhere to store and share branch photos, and to gain more images: the rules of joining the group will include granting us the right to use any images added to it for our publicity purposes, whilst crediting the photographer, of course.

My thanks again to those who have helped directly with the work on the website and social media, but thanks also to those of you who have recorded sightings, added photos or whatever. If you have any comments about any of the above, please do make them to me, even if you feel they may sound critical – we all need critical friends!

Plant Sales in 2015

A note from Lyn Pullen

I’ve continued to sell plants in aid of the Dorset Branch of Butterfly Conservation. The stall in 2015 raised £513.23.

Perennials sell best. Annuals may sell if I give them a ‘push’ by giving them a notice extolling their virtues. Bushes generally don’t sell well, though ‘different’ buddleias will go.

As you read this, you may be planning to do work on your herbaceous plants, so if you are splitting clumps of anything, consider donating the spares to the plant stall. Or keep your eyes open for seedlings of good plants. Get in touch with me (contact info is on back cover) and we’ll see how we can get them transported to Winfrith Newburgh. The more people who donate, the more we can make, especially if it gives us a wider range of plants.

With the odd winter we’ve had, goodness knows what sort of growing season we’ll have in 2016, but let’s hope it’s a good one.

Common blues in grass
A mundane name for these bright
Reflections of sky.

Drifting and gliding
The white petal flutters down
Becomes a wood white.

Two peacocks spiral
Up and up into blue sky
Drifting with white clouds.

A bright swallowtail
Wings luminous in the sun
Be still and thankful.

In the bramble glade
Large whites glide like admirals
Through shafts of sunlight.

Flying to the feast
Vanessids land on the first
Sunlit buddleia.

On grey paving slabs
Wide wings of small tortoiseshells
Basking in the sun.

Two feeding commas
On fermenting blackberries
Out of the wind's edge.

Juicy chunks of plum
A dripping pile on the lawn
Feeding butterflies.

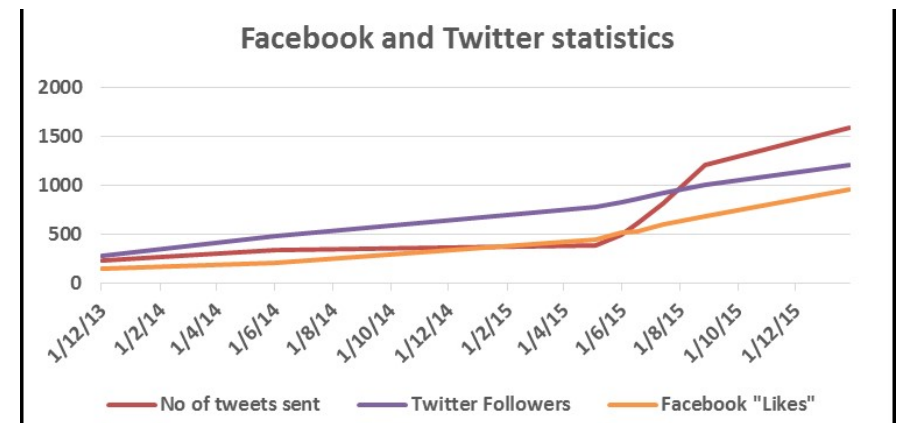
From a pine's darkness
One red admiral seeks sun
And the last nectar.

and Nick Urch, to whom we are very grateful.
Andrew and I are looking at what we can do to improve the website further, so if you have any opinions on this, please let me know.

Social Media

The purpose of our presence on social media is to raise the profile of Dorset Branch, of Butterfly Conservation generally, of the plight of butterflies and moths, and of the work we do to help them. Regarding Facebook and Twitter, I cannot thank Jo Stephens and Andrew Cooper enough for all their efforts – not only is our profile much higher on these social media sites than it was, but it is impacting on the website too: 10% of the website traffic last year came from Facebook or Twitter; referrals from Facebook to the website went up from 21 in 2014, to 811 in 2015, and from Twitter to the website from 182 to 2,441.

The statistics for the two sites tell their own story:



The shape of the lines is a little skewed as I do not check the statistics on a regular basis, just when I can, but you get the idea. You can clearly see where Jo and Andrew started helping in May 2015.

One of our top summer tweets was Andrew's "We've had pink Elephants, now it's colourful Tigers on the prowl here in Dorset", referring to Elephant Hawk-moths and Scarlet Tiger Moths. That

By Bob Steedman

This year the annual survey of moths took place over three nights of 10-12th September, with an emphasis on immigrant moths. Dorset Butterfly Conservation organised four events across the County at Avon Heath Country Park near Ringwood; DWT Urban Wildlife Centre at Beacon Hill, Corfe Mullen; Alners Gorse BC



The attractive Archer's Dart made an appearance at Beacon Hill

Reserve near Hazelbury Bryan and Portland Bird Observatory. The first two produced an average crop of common moths but only two migrants, namely White-point and L-album Wainscot. Both of these species are thought to be partial migrants i.e. they are resident on the south coast as well as immigrant. Beacon Hill produced its first record of Archer's Dart, which is local on heathland in Dorset.

Alners Gorse's claim to fame was a beautiful Clifden Nonpareil among a total of 374 moths of 54 species. This is normally regarded as a migrant, but there is evidence to suggest it may now be breeding in North and Central Dorset. The various Sallows that were found were stunning and the migrants or partial migrants on the list for the night were Scarce Bordered Straw, Rusty-dot Pearl,

Rush Veneer and Silver Y.

Portland produced a bonanza trap with well over 500 moths, although that was largely made up of the common species of this time of the year, such as Large and Lesser Yellow Underwings. The migrant list was impressive featuring, Hummingbird Hawk-moth, Convolvulus Hawk-moth, Pearly Underwing, White Speck, Bordered Straw, Scarce Bordered Straw, Dark Sword-grass, Small Mottled Willow, Red Underwing and Ni Moth. There were several Beautiful Gothics, a Red-data Book species which is relatively frequent on Portland but rare elsewhere. Also a rare micro moth, *Epischmia bankesiella*, was in the trap, a characteristic species of the Purbeck Coast. All together a very satisfactory event with Portland standing out for its collection of migrant moths.

Dorset Branch Website and Social Media

*A review of how we are doing from **Lyn Pullen**. This article has been shortened to fit the newsletter; if you want to see the full version, it will be a 'news' article on the website.*

Website

The Branch website continues to help us spread the word about butterflies and what we can do to help them. We've spent money on automating some functions, which has paid dividends in keeping the site looking fresh even when I haven't had time to pay much attention to it. We are also being helped by Andrew Cooper (more about him below), who has kept the photo gallery going and written some of the news articles – he knows more than I do about butterflies, so his input is extremely helpful. Dom Greves continues to be our behind-the-scenes techie, and does a brilliant job.

The site had a total of 34,475 visits in the last year, with a total of 102,922 page-views.