

# Butterfly Conservation Dorset Branch

## Newsletter No 86



# Autumn 2017

[www.dorsetbutterflies.com](http://www.dorsetbutterflies.com)



**Butterfly  
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

# Editor's Note

**M**any thanks to those of you who have contributed articles



and photographs for this Newsletter. Some of the articles have been edited for space reasons, hopefully without any changes in meaning. Special thanks are due to Lyn Pullen for developing the basic design, and for preparing the edition for print.

You may have noticed that the last newsletter, the Butterfly Report, was given the wrong number - it should have been 85 not 84. Apologies from the newsletter team.

***Jane Smith, Editor***

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Front cover photo of Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary: Chris Becker

# Chairman's Notes

From Nigel Spring, Dorset Branch Chair



We haven't changed the clocks as I write, but I am already looking forward to next spring and summer! Memories of the 2017 butterfly year are fading as the last of the Red Admirals feast on the fallen apples and so our attentions turn to next year! Dare we dream of another marvellous sunny spring with a bumper emergence of Marsh Fritillaries, Duke of Burgundy butterflies, Brimstones and Dingy Skippers (and maybe a rather better showing of Grizzled Skippers, Holly Blues and Small Tortoiseshells)?

Of course, let's dream about next year - but there is plenty to do in the meantime. The transect walking season is over and the stats team is busy adding up the numbers, but on our reserves and butterfly sites there is practical maintenance work to be done. We have a programme of events through the winter which you will

receive in the enclosed Events List, and we hope you will be able to join in some of the activities. In addition, 2018 is an important milestone for Butterfly Conservation – the organisation will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary and March 10<sup>th</sup> will be a national day of conservation action. All over the country there will be groups of people helping to improve the butterfly and moth habitats on their local patch to increase the survival chances of these beautiful and important insects - in 2018 and for the 50 years to follow.

At Alners Gorse Reserve, the plan for the winter is to remove the Norway Spruces that we inherited when we acquired the reserve in 2005. We took out the majority in the first few years of BC ownership, but the last remaining trees have grown to a great height and the time has come for them to be removed.

Clearing them will create a mosaic of clearings in the blocks of scrub that we hope will enhance the Nightingale habitat on the reserve. There will also be routine management of the scrub regrowth in the rides and clearings, though cutting of the young Blackthorn that may have Brown Hairstreak eggs on it will be carried out in the summer when the Hairstreaks are pupae or on the wing (normally early July). The ponies have done a brilliant job this season, and many visitors have commented that the reserve has looked at its best.



**Branch  
Membership  
now 950!**

On Lankham Bottom we have removed a huge area of thorn and bramble scrub over the last ten years and every season the regrowth has to be cut again – so the more scrub we cut, the more potential downland habitat we can re-invigorate but the greater the task of cutting the regrowth becomes. Bramble is a particularly difficult problem and unless it is well trampled by the

cattle will come back every year. On Portland, the important news for us is that the Jurassica project, which was to have been developed in the hole adjacent to our Broadcroft reserve with all the potential infrastructure problems for us, has now been merged with Memo at another site. We have been unable to renew our lease with Stone Firms while they have been negotiating with Jurassica, so perhaps things will start moving again and the future of this BC reserve can be secured. There is plenty of work to be done on both the Portland sites, Broadcroft and Perryfields.

Keep an eye on our branch website for updated news about our workparties on these and other butterfly sites in Dorset. And while you are helping to improve these habitats, picture all the butterflies that will be flying there next spring and summer!

*Nigel Spring*



# 28 years of Jerry's Hole Walk

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By Bill Shreeves

**J**erry's Hole, with only two sections, no stiles, mostly on the flat and taking only half an hour to complete, must be the best choice of transect walk for those of us who have reached an age where our bodies have ceased to function as we would like! It is reached from the A350 Blandford to Shaftesbury road by turning eastwards at Sutton Waldron up a minor road to a small parking area.

Section one of the walk starts here and goes downhill along an ancient Saxon track ending at the Dorset Wildlife Trust gate into an unimproved chalk meadow. From inside the gate section two consists of a clockwise circular route around the meadow and back to the gate. Butterflies in the surrounding hedgerow are within 2.5 metres of the path, so are recorded along with those in the meadow. The route goes over some strange humps and bumps, so in late summer the growth of the sward and brambles may require a walking stick.

For me the chief 'high' after 28 years of walking is the amazing seasonal sequence of colour changes, from a brownish green meadow with the blue flash of early violets in early spring,



Knapweed and Scabious at Jerry's Hole. Photo: Judy Shreeves 2017

through to a carpet of yellow Cowslips, followed by Yellow Rattle, to the purple and blue of Knapweed, Scabious and Columbine. The hedgerow changes from the white of Blackthorn and Whitebeam, to the purple of blackberries and sloes, and has a Crab Apple in the central hollow with red and yellow fruit – perks for walkers! In September we have Ivy blossom humming with Red Admirals and other insects.



Unusual orange Cowslips at Jerry's Hole. Photo: Judy Shreeves 2014

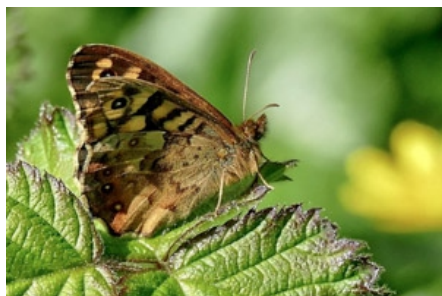
There is nothing spectacular about the butterflies as there are no regular breeding rarities. The data collected over the years shows 32 species recorded, although eight of these average less than one recorded in a year. This small piece of unimproved chalk downland is an oasis for butterflies taking advantage of its nectar rich flowers. The sighting of a Duke of Burgundy (at an average of 0.3 per year and 32<sup>nd</sup> in the Jerry's Hole list) in 2010 was a high point for me. As transect co-ordinator, I have the advantage of being aware of all the rare sightings ranging from Clouded Yellow (0.3 per year), Dark Green (0.8) and Silver Washed Fritillary (0.4), Adonis Blue (0.5) and Grizzled Skipper (0.7). Green Hairstreak (0.8) may

be seen in the hawthorns at the east end of the meadow. A highlight was the first Essex Skipper in 1995, after some careful work to make sure that the diagnostic black tips to the antennae were present. Some of my most enjoyable moments involve seeing the meadow come alive with Common Blues, as this has happened only rarely.

It was only when I took over as co-ordinator and saw the overall data, that I understood these patterns. The top 10 species at Jerry's Hole measured by annual averages include Meadow Brown at 279, Gatekeeper at 45 and Speckled Wood at 23. However, also included is Common Blue at 46 per year, even though generally numbers seen are much lower. The data showed that in some years, notably 1990 and 2010, high peaks were occurring with average counts in three figures.

I also understood why the Wall is at a puzzlingly high position at 20<sup>th</sup>, with an average count of 2.4, despite not having been seen for nearly 20 years. This is a ghostly

fingerprint left by the last years of sightings between 1990 and 1998 (6 to 7). These were mainly seen in section I around the parking area where they took part in the little understood custom of 'hill topping'. Since then Walls have retreated towards the coast, and Jerry's Hole has played its part in the national decline in Wall distribution.



Speckled Wood. Photo: Mel Bray

Without management there would be no meadow, as butterfly nectar plants and caterpillar food plants would be smothered by tall grasses. At one time even the Knapweeds were struggling, as were their parasite Broomrape, which was one of the reasons the reserve was created in the first place! For a small and isolated site like Jerry's Hole, grazing is difficult, and scrub bashing is required. Over the years walkers

have encountered many different types of cattle and sheep, sometimes with moveable electric fencing, and one year there was even a large bull. There was once a chicken which lived for a while under the crab apple tree! It is a battle to get the grazing and scrub control in balance, but just as things are looking good, the English weather becomes more unpredictable.

The results for butterflies and other insects can be unusual. Perhaps one of my best 'highs' was at a time when there was talk of setting up night time 'moth walks', and I saw the meadow magically floodlit by glow-worms.

As the co-ordinator for Jerry's Hole I organise the walking rota and analyse the statistics. Over 28 years more than 20 people have volunteered to be 'citizen scientists'. Hopefully our walks might continue indefinitely and play an important role in measuring the effects of global warming. Statistics are not my greatest love, but this year, trying out Transect Walker online's facility for producing comparative graphs of trends, I gained some



Marbled White. Photo: Paul Godier

new insights for two of the top species, Ringlet (41) and Marbled White (3). This showed that the Ringlet is increasing (as in Dorset and the UK generally), whereas the Marbled White is declining at a significant rate. This is against trends elsewhere as generally the butterfly is benefiting from warmer weather. We must look for causes as this may not be a short term decline. Research started by the late Miriam Rothschild suggests that the caterpillar may need Red Fescue grass in its early stages. This grass is often infected by a species of fungus, which makes all stages of the butterfly poisonous to birds. Do we have Red Fescue on the reserve? Can it be managed for?

One final 'high' for me does not exactly come from Jerry's Hole itself but from the recent provision of a memorial seat across the road. Unfortunately there is a stile to get over first but it is still worth it. From the seat there is a stunning view across the adjacent Combe Bottom and over to Hambledon Hill in the distance. Here on a lucky day, while one adds up the count sheet after the walk, Buzzards, Red Kites or Ravens may glide up above and Kestrels hover down below. This is the place to ponder. How will Jerry's Hole butterflies do in the distant future of global warming? Might the Walls come back again?

As a historian I often get eureka moments when new facts or ways of looking at something suddenly appears. This has happened just this week thanks to Lesley Meaker, one of the walkers at Jerry's Hole. What she told us brought about one of those moments which makes many mysteries around 'Jerry' and his hole suddenly become clearer, so read on ....

# Jerry's Hole and its Past

By Lesley Meaker

It all started with a boring wet afternoon. Not being able to get out to walk I began browsing old maps online to see where my house stands, in Sutton Waldron. Looking at the wider landscape I happened to notice that on the 1887 map 'Wind Whistle Cottage' was marked at

Recently when visiting Jerry's Hole I bumped into Bill Shreeves. This was the first time we had actually met after many months of exchanging emails, arranging survey walks in the diary and receiving his useful updates on sightings. After much discussion



Jerry's Hole, where I record butterflies on Sutton Hill. However it was gone by the 1901 map. I had always thought Jerry's Hole had a strange name; and not being familiar with local history assumed it was along the lines of the Devil's Punchbowl, or Old Harry Rocks etc.

about butterflies we started to chat about the site; I then mentioned the 1887 map: Bill had not heard much about the history and we agreed that this would explain the crab apple tree, orange Cowslips and lumps and bumps across the meadow. Following that conversation I was



struck that not much seemed to be known about the origins of the strange name.

Again on a boring rainy afternoon, I started researching online and Googled the site – not much apart from the familiar wildlife and reserve information. I then looked up the 1881 Census returns for Fontmell Magna in the vague hope of picking up Wind Whistle Cottage, but nothing, nor in the neighbouring parish of Sutton Waldron. By chance I noticed a 'Jeremiah' Lawrence at Parson's Hollow – another quick Google and I found that Parson's Hollow is the name for the green lane running up past Jerry's Hole.

A look at earlier census returns shows Jeremiah living on Fontmell Down with his family and moving around as a labourer. By 1881, aged 66 and still working as a labourer, he was living with a grandson (Frederick Barter) at Parson's Hollow near his brother (also Frederick), and he died in 1887.

Frederick Barter had two sons of

whom one (W G Barter d.1918) is recorded on the local WWI war memorial. The family tree goes cold in the early 1900s, as online census records are not published when less than 100 years old.

It would be great to hear from anyone who has researched the Lawrence family ancestry in the Fontmell Magna area or has other information that fills out this story.

Were there any other candidates for 'Jerry'? In the Fontmell census returns I only found one other Jeremiah (Street), father to Elizabeth Street who was married to Jeremiah Lawrence's youngest son Albert, a blacksmith. Jeremiah Street, in 1871 aged 72 and living in Fontmell Magna village, is described as a former letter carrier, an unlikely candidate to be digging holes 16 years later! I'd like to make the assumption that this isn't 'Jerry' whose hole was probably dug by a labourer working the quarries at Parson's Hollow that still are visible today.

# A visit to La Brenne

**Nigel Spring, assisted by Bryony Miles, writes about a trip to France run by himself and Kathy Henderson.**

A group of 15 of us spent five days/six nights in the Parc naturel regional de la Brenne in July this year, and during this time visited many of the sites we have worked on since 2007 and others in the area where we know the butterflies and wild flowers are so special. La Brenne is a stunning area of France just south of the Loire, a beautifully kept secret, little known in France or the UK. There are around 4000 fishponds and lakes in the region, with associated wet pastures, heath and woodland, and on the western side where the rivers Creuse and Anglin cut through the limestone gorges, there are flower-rich calcareous grasslands with many species of butterflies not found in the UK.

Bryony writes:

*In the late afternoon after a journey down from Caen with a picnic stop in the village of Beaulieu-lès-Loches, we arrived in Mézières-en-Brenne and settled into our gîte. This was ideal for what we needed, with a*

*spacious downstairs communal area to enjoy cooking and eating meals together. The facilities were excellent and I was in a room called La Guiffette, one of the local iconic bird species, the Whiskered Tern (La Guiffette Moustac). Some of the rooms are en-suite, some shared.*

We saw a tremendous variety of wildlife, helped greatly because we had a wide range of interests and expertise in our group and some excellent photographers.

There are 101 species of butterflies recorded, of which we saw 44 during our short stay. We were especially pleased to see the Alcon Blues (*Maculinea alcon*)



Alcon Blue egg-laying

laying on the Marsh Gentian in the La Touche reserve where EuCAN groups have regularly carried out winter brushcutting to reduce the blackthorn and alder buckthorn.



Camberwell Beauty

A species that we were particularly hoping to see was the Camberwell Beauty, so one of the most memorable butterfly moments was on a very hot day at the HQ of the Parc Naturel Régional, where we found not one but five of these magnificent butterflies gorging on fallen plums in an otherwise very arid spot grazed by goats.

We put out the moth trap on two nights in two different places. The species total was 174 including many which are rare,

extinct or unknown in the UK.

This high number is due partly to the diversity of life and habitats in La Brenne, and partly to having favourable weather on the nights we trapped: huge thanks must go to our moth wizard Tim Norriss for his patience and identification skills.

At least 60 species of Dragonflies have been recorded in La Brenne and we were treated to some beauties – including the very scarce Pronged Clubtail, *Gomphus graslinii* and the Western Spectre, *Boyeria irene*, on the very edge of their ranges.



Pronged Clubtail

We visited many of the different areas of the Chérine reserve and saw wonderful birds including all the possible herons, the largest collection of Black-winged Stilts



## Angles-sur l'Anglin

we have seen there, great views of Whiskered Terns on their nests with young, Marsh Harriers and a Short-toed Eagle, plus the first Black Stork to be nesting here.

*At the end of the trip, I was asked for my favourite place or species. For me, the picturesque town of Angles-sur-l'Anglin pipped all the other lovely places we visited for top spot. We admired the view of the Chateau d'Angles-sur-l'Anglin, a ruined castle dating back to the 11<sup>th</sup> century. After yet another delicious picnic, we descended steep steps to the banks of the river Anglin and walked along the riverside path which went under a bridge. On the underside of the stonework we saw a beautiful Red*

*Underwing moth Catocala nupta roosting. We then climbed to the summit of the hill where we viewed some lovely paintings inside the ancient chapel beside the castle.*

We are returning to La Brenne in November (21<sup>st</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>) to continue to work in the Chérine nature reserve. This will be a conservation working holiday and we still have spaces especially for brushcutter and chainsaw operators.

To find out more about the work of EuCAN Community Interest Company, go to the website: [www.eucan.org.uk](http://www.eucan.org.uk) . Photos by Penny Smallshire, Tim Norriss and Nigel Spring.

# Playing our Part for Nature

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**David Brown is the Ecologist at National Trust's Purbeck Estate. This article is based on a talk given to the South Dorset Butterfly meeting in March**

**L**and, Outdoors and Nature (LON) is part of our (the National Trust's) strategy to put nature conservation back at the heart of what we do as an organisation. It is our response to Professor Lawton's 'State of Nature' report that set out a nationwide agenda to

create bigger, better quality and more joined-up habitats for nature. Over the past year we have been making plans for how we will do that in Purbeck.

We think of Purbeck in terms of four character areas that reflect the area's exceptional diversity of landscape, geology and habitats, and the varied nature of the



South Purbeck Coast: Grazing is key  
Photo: Will Wilkinson/NT Images ©



challenges that each of those landscapes pose: (1) the Purbeck Heathlands and associated habitats; (2) the Chalk Ridge; (3) the South Purbeck Coastline and (4) the Purbeck Vale farming landscape.

### **Bigger, better and more joined-up**

In each landscape area we need to make sure that the priority habitats of heaths, dunes, grasslands, woods and hay meadows are managed in the right way for nature, using detailed knowledge of the species that are there to inform the management that we do. It creates challenges for us ranging from restoring species-rich grassland from gorse scrub on the chalk ridge, to reintroducing grazing to the dunes at Studland. Equally importantly, we need to better connect those habitats for wildlife. Professor Lawton showed that we cannot look after nature just by corralling it into small nature reserves; despite noble conservation efforts in recent decades our biodiversity continues to decline, because our semi-

natural habitats have become smaller and more fragmented.



Early Gentian: a priority species needing good grassland management.

Photo: NT Images ©

There is lots of evidence of this in Purbeck: records collected by Butterfly Conservation volunteers, for example, show clearly how specialist butterflies such as Adonis Blue and Dingy Skipper have become concentrated in isolated populations at either end of the Purbeck chalk ridge; unsuitable habitat in between means they no longer move from one end to the other, and that makes them vulnerable to being lost altogether.

By working on our own land, with our tenants and with our neighbours, we are developing a long-term plan to restore priority habitats where they are

most needed to reconnect the land. It won't happen overnight, but across the nation the Trust aims to restore 25,000 ha of priority habitat by 2025. In Purbeck we see opportunities for new woodlands to link old ones, for more heathland restoration, for turning agriculturally-improved pasture back to species-rich grasslands and hay meadows.

This vision for a joined-up landscape is probably best developed on the heathlands. With RSPB and Natural England, we will soon install cattle grids and remove fences that will enable Arne, Slepe Heath, Stoborough Heath and Hartland Moor to be managed as one single connected heathland block that, for wildlife, will be more than the sum of its parts. Our next step is to work with the Forestry Commission so that, as they clear conifers from the Rempstone plantation, it creates heathland corridors that re-connect Godlingston with Hartland. In the future we would like to work with partners to link heathlands all the way from Studland to the

MoD ranges at Povington: imagine how nature would respond to that!

## **A living, working landscape**



Purbeck Mason Wasp: Restricted to a few isolated heathland sites.

Photo: Chris Spilling/NT Images ©

Our landscape is important to people as well as nature, whether it is the visitors who walk the coastal path or the farmers whose livelihoods depend upon the land. Our challenge is to create bigger, better and more joined-up habitats for nature without compromising Purbeck's value as a living, working landscape. Around half of the Trust estate here is let to farm businesses: we need to do everything we can to enable our tenants to farm in a nature-friendly way and still make a living from the land. Brexit means that farmers are entering a time of

huge uncertainty, and a lot is going to hinge on what replaces the subsidies farmers currently receive through the Common Agricultural Policy. We have been lobbying hard to make future subsidies more closely linked with environmental protection.

It's time we stood up for nature!



Godlingston Heath.

Photo: NT Images ©

## **Join us at our Branch Members Day and AGM on Saturday 24th February**

Our speaker will be Dan Hoare, Head of England's Regions for BC, who will talk about BC's Landscape Scale Conservation Projects.

You can also talk to like-minded people, buy items from our Sales Stall, and enjoy our excellent cakes!

Full Details in the Events List.



AGM 2017. Photo: Lyn Pullen

# More about the SPBF

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## Colin Burningham and Christine Bonner write about their sightings of the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary on the Lizard Peninsula this year

**B**rian Arnold wrote an interesting article about the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary in Purbeck which was published in the Spring 2017 Dorset Branch Newsletter. Not too long ago, we boasted a number of Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary colonies in Dorset, but gradually they have all but disappeared except for this colony in Purbeck.

With my close association with Lydlinch Common, I well remember the appearance of Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries there each May. I have fond memories of watching them nectaring in particular on the Meadow Thistles which flower so well at Lydlinch at that time of the season. It was only a small colony but it turned up each year. Alas, our colony at Lydlinch is no more. It has disappeared, like many other colonies in Dorset. It is interesting to note that in the west of England, Devon and

Cornwall still have healthy colonies of Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries. There is an added bonus: many of these colonies apparently have two emergences in a year, one at the more normal time in May and another at the end of July. I have never found out the reason for this behaviour but it definitely happens.

We have visited one particular site in Cornwall, at the west end of Loe Bar on the coast, for the past few years at the end of July. Each year, we have been treated to the amazing spectacle of these beautiful butterflies flying at that time of year.

In 2017, we happened to be on the Lizard during the last week of May and so we paid a visit to the same spot at the end of Loe Bar. We were overjoyed to find that there were copious numbers of Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries on the wing, so confirming to us

that there was indeed a double emergence at that site. We visited other suitable sites on the Lizard and found a number of other colonies, a glorious sight to see. Hopefully, we will visit the same sites at the end of July and confirm that they experience the same double emergence already described at Loe Bar.

## Postscript

After this article was written, we returned in early August to two of the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary sites that we had visited

on the Lizard in May, namely at Loe Bar and Poldhu. The weather was kind to us and we were very pleased to see the species flying, so confirming a double emergence at both places. The unanswered question remains as to why this double emergence occurs in these sites in Devon and Cornwall. Little reference has been found to support our own (and others') practical evidence. Perhaps such queries will remain unanswered.

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## The SPBF in Dorset 2017

The Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary is only just hanging on in Dorset. This year we deliberately restricted describing where it was to 'Godlingston Heath', which is a big area. We consulted with the local transect walkers and the owners of the site, the National Trust, and the consensus was that numbers were extremely low and it was best not to disturb them. There were also ground-nesting Nightjars to consider.

We apologise if we disappointed any of you, but we hope you agree that the good of the wildlife should come first.



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary  
Photo: Chris Becker



# Urban Butterfly Gardening

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**Andrew Cooper brings us Part Three of his progress in creating a butterfly area in his garden**

**T**his has been a record year for Butterfly Conservation's Big Butterfly Count Survey with 60,000 people counting butterflies across the UK! The Red Admiral has become the star of the summer with a rise of 75% nationally compared to 2016. Despite this, soggy weather

conditions caused problems for others, and the fate of butterflies in my Bournemouth garden has also been a tale of highs and lows this season.

With a rocky start, my February search for Speckled Wood larvae and pupae turned up very few and when the spring did arrive,



My garden in the early stages of 're-wilding'.  
Photo: Andrew Cooper

there was an obvious lack. In spite of a warm spring, numbers of butterflies in my garden were noticeably low with just single sightings of these usual garden inhabitants. Holly Blue numbers were also down, not helped at least by the destruction of a large Ivy in a neighbour's garden the previous autumn.

Large Whites and Small Whites were also thin on the ground and I didn't hold out much hope for the remainder of the year but I held tight and waited for the arrival of one of my favourite spring species, the Orange-tip. This familiar butterfly has been breeding in the garden for two or three years after I had planted Garlic Mustard around the garden in semi-shaded areas specially to attract them. The first year I recorded a single female egg-laying and by 2016 I could count just under a dozen caterpillars on my small urban patch which isn't bad! 2017 would be different, however, and May came and went without a sighting and despite extensive searches for larvae, I found nothing the entire summer. With the disappointment of

spring behind me I looked forward to the summer when the garden usually looks its best.

Thankfully 2017 was no exception and the borders were rife with colour from the Ox-eye daisies, Scabious and Birds-foot Trefoil in the 'wild' area to the Erysimum 'Bowles's Mauve' and Verbena bonariensis in the sunny corners. The Erysimum is a firm favourite among the summer butterflies, including visitors such as the Red Admiral and Painted Lady while Ox-eye Daisies provided nectar for our local resident population of Speckled



Gatekeeper. Photo: Andrew Cooper

Woods, Gatekeepers and Meadow Browns, all of which did very well during July and August. In high summer, Speckled Wood numbers improved and could be seen dancing throughout the

summer in the dappled light of our large birch tree. The other resident Browns also had a good year with our highest number of Gatekeepers recorded with at least two mating pairs observed!

It wasn't only butterflies that appeared to do well in the garden during 2017, with the garden's first ever record of the Six-spot Burnet. Not only did we have adults but dozens of caterpillars could be seen in early summer feeding on the Birds-foot trefoil in the now expanding 'wild' area.

The moth trap also turned up some interesting first additions for our patch, including Poplar Hawk-moth and Scarce Silver-lines.



Six-spot Burnet Caterpillar  
Photo: Andrew Cooper

As the garden develops, it shows that 'if you plant, they will come!' but not always in the case of the Orange-tip! I'll have my fingers crossed that, in future years, more species will use the space I've created as an oasis in an otherwise crowded landscape.

## Gardening Tip:

Garlic Mustard, or Jack-by-the-hedge, is best in a bit of shade. If you want a plant for sun which may attract the Orange Tip or the Green-veined White to lay its eggs, try Sweet Rocket (*Hesperis matronalis*). This comes with white or purple flowers, and is a short-lived perennial. Either grow it from seed every couple of years or look at your existing plants in the autumn, and if any stems have flopped over, they may have started to form plantlets. Take these off and plant them, under cover if you can, and they will probably grow.

# Reports of two Joint Walks

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## Tom and Jean Smith led two joint walks with Wiltshire Branch on 22nd and 23rd July

**I**n the lead up to the weekend we had several days of unsettled weather with heavy showers and thunderstorms, so we wondered who would come.

### **Stonedown Wood**

We were pleased that four hardy souls were not put off by the forecast of further showers.

Stonedown Wood is near Sixpenny Handley in Cranborne Chase and is in Wiltshire, just over the border from Dorset.

This visit was aimed at improving identification skills for people less experienced with butterflies and Stonedown Wood is ideal for this with a good range of flowering plants along the rides and a good grassy glade.

From the entrance gate we took the main ride in to the wood arriving at a junction of paths where the Spear Thistles had attracted a range of butterflies seeking nectar. The butterflies were docile so we got a close look at four Silver-washed

Fritillaries, three of which were females and were a more golden colour, also lacking the four bold sex brands along the veins of the forewing. We also had plenty of time to observe the Meadow Browns, noting the females with larger patches of orange on the upper forewings and the males with much smaller patches of orange or none at all. We also spotted a Red Admiral basking on a leaf.



Meadow Brown  
Photo: Catherine Fforde

Fortunately, it brightened up a little and this allowed butterflies to fly. We saw good numbers of Meadow Brown and Silver-washed Fritillary in flight and also a Holly Blue. Much to our

surprise we encountered two large, healthy looking Slow Worms that slowly slithered off into the undergrowth. Further along the main ride we surprised two Roe Deer fawns who made a dash for the trees as we neared their hiding place.

It gradually clouded over and once again the butterflies stopped flying. However, this allowed us close views of Gatekeepers, Ringlets and Green-veined Whites to add to our species list. We had just finished our brief lunch stop when the rain started, but this was short-lived and was replaced by thick cloud. For the remainder of our visit we were able to find a number of roosting butterflies including Marbled White, Small Skipper, Large Skipper and Small White. The only moth we identified was a Silver Y.



Marbled White. Photo: Catherine Fforde

As the weather showed no signs of improvement we returned by the same route to the car, seeing Speckled Wood and Small White along the way. We all felt we'd had a pleasant time and a really good look at the twelve species of butterfly seen.

### **Morden Bog**

Eight people turned up for the second walk we were leading, aimed at seeing Silver-studded Blue and Grayling as well as a range of dragonflies at this excellent site near Wareham.

We began in cloudy, fairly warm conditions and having crossed the B3075 from Sherford Bridge we went to check out the rushy, wet area to the north of the bridleway. We soon found some damselflies, identified as Common Blue Damselflies by the broad blue stripe and absence of a black half stripe on the thorax, then an immature Keeled Skimmer appeared (identified by the thin vertical stripe down its back). The only butterfly seen here was a Meadow Brown.

Shortly after entering Morden Bog NNR on the dry heath we began





Golden-ringed Dragonfly.

Photo: Jean Smith

seeing Silver-studded Blues; the first few were females and we had a good look at them as they were inactive. Males followed and in total we saw three males and five females. We also saw five Gatekeepers across the dry heath. The only moths seen were a Silver Y and a Lesser Yellow Underwing. The weather was steadily deteriorating and the clouds getting darker; however, as we

went through the trees towards the wet heath we had a good view of a perched Golden-ringed Dragonfly. After this the rain set in and we headed out south east across the bog towards some ponds and wet flushes where there had been good numbers of dragonflies a few days earlier. Alas, it was clearly too cold now so we concentrated on plants, admiring the Marsh Club Moss that grows in this area. We were pleasantly surprised to find three baby toads.

In view of the persistent rain we then made our way fairly quickly back to the cars. Despite the weather we'd enjoyed a decent two hour walk in good company and seen some interesting species and given some of our party their first ever sighting of Silver-studded Blue.

If you receive this newsletter in hard copy, would you be prepared to have it via email instead, to save us money? If so, please contact Robin George (see inside back cover). New members are now being automatically assigned email versions, though they can opt for hard copy if they prefer.

The Dorset Branch of Butterfly Conservation is one of 32 Branches of this UK organisation, dedicated to saving butterflies, moths and the environment.

**[www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org)**



## Branch Income & Expenditure 2016/17

[illegible]

Financial report prepared by Georgie Laing (Treasurer)  
Checked and found accurate by Allan Higgin (examiner)

## Balance Sheet at 31 March 2017

|                                     |               | £              | í ÖPÑCE |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------|
|                                     | a Äñ ٲو ٲو    | March 2016     |         |
| Bank (current account)              | £19,635       | £11,619        |         |
| Bank (deposit account)              | £3,000        | £3,000         | D       |
| { Çñ ٲ                              | £254          | £344           |         |
| Prepayment                          | £25           | £25            | Ď       |
| 5 sLÇñ                              | £0            | £1,464         |         |
| Creditors                           | -£50          | -£674          | Ď       |
|                                     | وي ٲآوؤ       | <b>£15,778</b> |         |
|                                     |               |                |         |
| Represented by                      |               |                |         |
| General funds                       | £22,864       | <b>£15,778</b> |         |
|                                     |               |                |         |
|                                     |               |                |         |
| Excess income over expenditure      | £7,175        | -£2,862        |         |
| (Decrease) /increase in stock value | -£90          | -£478          |         |
| <b>Movement in funds in year</b>    | <b>£7,085</b> | <b>-£3,340</b> |         |

### Notes.

1. The committee increased the budget for reserves work after the successful receipt of late Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) grants (see note 3). There was a delay in getting the works cleared by Head Office - too late to complete the Winter programme.

2. Although we did 3 newsletters, the bill for the first one fell in March 2016

3. The BPS grant of £10,926 was finally approved and received a year late (2015-16 nil). Still owed one instalment of HLS £2,121.

£1,000 received from Wessex Water in mitigation for their works on Lankham Bottom (2015-16 nil)

4. Includes £38 bank interest from 2 years

5. Interest (£38 for 2 years) now paid

6. Cerne Abbas Hall deposit

7. Dom Greves £50 - paid in April 2017

Detailed accounts will be presented for approval at the Branch AGM on Saturday 24th February 2018

# Dorset Branch News goes Viral

By Lyn Pullen

In September 2017, Dorset Branch published a website item about the undesirable practice of releasing live butterflies at weddings. Little did we know what we were starting!

It all began on 1st September, when somebody sent us in a photo of some Monarch butterflies taken in Canford Cliffs. These could not be true migrants, as we would not expect to see any before October, when

the Monarchs are on their way south in the USA heading for their wintering ground and very occasionally get blown across the Atlantic.

A member of our Committee contacted a local venue known to host weddings, which confirmed that some butterflies had been released at a wedding organised by a third party. I consulted further with the committee and we decided to put an item up on



The Canford Cliffs Monarchs. What a butterfly to see on your hanging basket!

our website, explaining our objection to using butterflies as live confetti. As it was a touchy subject, we ran it past Butterfly Conservation HQ, and were pleased to learn that Nigel Bourn is strongly against the practice: he made some very helpful alterations to our original version, and we published the article on 18 September.

Andrew Cooper ensured that a link to this went out on social media and things went mad. Twitter in particular did us proud. One 'post' (message) was seen 8,442 times, and 283 people 'engaged' – i.e. reacted in some way, including 115 clicking through to the full item on the website, 62 'liking' it and 44 retweeting it to others.

In turn, this was picked up by national media, and there were lengthy items in the Times, the Telegraph and the Guardian, together with an item on the BBC Dorset news (these are what we know of – there may have been more). HQ reported that it kept them very busy, with

both Nigel Bourn and Zoe Randle doing several interviews on the subject.

Just to fill you in, the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 makes it illegal "to release or allow to escape into the wild any animal which is not ordinarily resident in Great Britain and is not a regular visitor to Great Britain in a wild state". That, of course, leads to the question of which butterflies are not native. HQ have discussed Monarchs with Natural England and the police, and they are defined as not native.

We have since been contacted by Dorset's Wildlife Crime Officer with responsibility for Dorset's Heaths and the Poole Harbour area, seeking further information about the incident.

This particular case rests in the hands of the police, but please do what you can to spread the word about the fact that butterfly releases happen, not only at weddings but funerals too, and why they are undesirable.



# Give As You Live

Lyn Pullen gives a few tips about



Give as you Live®

In the Spring newsletter (number 84) we ran an item encouraging you to do your online shopping via [www.giveasyoulive.com](http://www.giveasyoulive.com), (GAYL) enabling Butterfly Conservation to receive a small payment for items you purchase from participating stores.

I've been doing this for a while, and BC has received nearly £50, at no cost to me. The basic setup is easy, and I find quite a few of the stores I deal with are included. To check whether the stores you use participate, go to the GAYL website, enter the name, then look under 'Important Information'.

For a lot of companies with whom you wish to shop, using GAYL is easy, simply set up their 'donation reminder'. This will bring up a reminder when you go into a store online, allowing the donation mechanism to be turned on with a single click. The rate varies between stores, for

instance, Minerva Crafts give 3.5% of purchase price, Two Wests and Elliott (garden equipment) 3%, and Holland and Barrett 5%. Some stores have exclusions.

However, two commonly used stores: Amazon and Ebay, are less straightforward, requiring you to access their stores via the GAYL website, rather than through the donation reminder bar. Amazon pays only 1.5%, and excludes various items, including those:

- On your Wish List
- In your basket before you go to GAYL
- Paid for with an Amazon gift card
- In a second order placed without going back through GAYL
- Accessed via their mobile apps.

Ebay pays 0.75% average, excluding purchases via their mobile app.

***Happy shopping!***

# Dorset Branch Who's Who

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The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the society or the Branch.

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Elephant Hawk-moth. Photo: Chris Becker