

Butterfly Conservation Dorset Branch
Newsletter No 89
www.dorsetbutterflies.com



Autumn 2018



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Editor's Note

We have a wide range of articles for you in this edition, which I hope you enjoy reading. Many thanks to all our contributors for sharing their experiences with us. Lyn Pullen has, as usual, prepared this edition for print, for which I am very grateful.

Jane Smith, Newsletter Editor

CONTENTS

View from the Chair	3
Hunt for Elusive Butterflies	5
London Eye to Telašćica	8
Ponies at Alners Gorse	10
Butterfly Trends Meetings	13
Brown Argus?	14
Roosting Butterflies	15
Tales from the Sales Stall	17
Barberry Carpet Moth	19
Butterfly Releases	22
Perryfields Reserve	23
Trip to Chase Woods	25
Plant Sales for BC Dorset	27
Dorset Branch Accounts 2017/18	28
Dorset Branch Who's Who	31

Front cover photo: Purple Hairstreak by Adrian Read

View from the Chair

From Nigel Spring, Chair of Dorset Branch

Volunteers – I wonder if anyone has ever counted how many different volunteers give up their time for our branch of Butterfly Conservation every year, some just occasionally, others on a regular and sometimes very frequent basis. Every so often, we try to collect this data to prove what an active organisation we are, but there never seems enough time!

There is the enormous team of butterfly transect walkers and organisers who provide such valuable data to enable experts to work out population trends and to plan conservation measures to protect threatened species (and what a wonderful summer they have all had!) There are the dedicated people who turn up at the Head Office of BC at East Lulworth to help put newsletters into envelopes, those who help run meetings, putting out chairs, baking cakes, selling raffle tickets etc. Our branch committee members put in a huge amount of time, not just for meetings but also to fulfil their particular functions in the branch – for instance butterfly records, website and social media, membership coordination, treasurer and the branch secretary. We also rely on the massive contribution by volunteers to help us look after the butterfly reserves and other wildlife sites in our care (see the events booklet or our website for details), and as agri-environment funding for this management becomes reduced, as it inevitably will (whatever our newly converted secretary of state promises), our volunteers are going to become more and more important to us.

The sad fact is that we are not getting enough volunteers for all the tasks that need doing, particularly the practical management work and certainly not as many as we used to have. A lot of our keen regulars are now not as physically fit as they once were, others have moved away, and we, in common with many other organisations, have found it difficult to recruit younger volunteers.

But why do people volunteer? What do they get out of it? If we can analyse this, we may be able to find ways to reverse this trend. A high proportion of our volunteers care for wildlife, and butterflies in particular, and are always keen to learn more. Others join in for the fresh air, companionship and exercise – the physical and psychological benefits of volunteering are well covered these days by the press and government pronouncements and there is certainly a huge need in the population.

A very successful scheme to involve volunteers in biological recording with ecological training built in was run by the National Trust on Purbeck between 2013 and 2015. This was the Cyril Diver Project, the aim of which was to repeat the surveys carried out on the Studland peninsula in the 1930's by Captain Cyril Diver who produced a huge portfolio of records. As in the 1930s, specialist surveys were conducted by volunteers, both experts and beginners, though coordinated by a project officer. They had a fantastic time and have pioneered the citizen science approach to advanced wildlife recording, much of this in partnership with students from Bournemouth University.

There is nothing naturalists love more than survey work, especially in a place as rich as the Studland peninsula. The project has been a great way to motivate volunteers as well as gathering valuable data. The project officer for the Cyril Diver Project was David Brown (now Property Ecologist for the NT on Purbeck). We are very fortunate that David has agreed to give a presentation about the project and its legacies to the Dorset Branch AGM on Saturday February 23rd in Puddletown. This should be an ideal opportunity to discuss ways to re-invigorate our volunteer team and find new recruits. The future success of the Dorset Branch and the conservation of our butterflies and moths will depend at least in part on an active team of volunteers. I hope you will be able to join us at our AGM.

Nigel Spring

Hunt for Elusive Butterflies

Brian Arnold nears the end of his quest to see and photograph all 58 butterflies found on the British mainland, focussing this year on the Chequered Skipper and Black Hairstreak

It is my ambition to see and photograph all 58 butterfly species found on the British mainland. Unlike Patrick Barkham I am not trying to do them all in one year - not possible with so many other interests and commitments. I now have just one species left to go - the rather elusive Mountain Ringlet; I would have tried to see it this year (2018) but we were not in the right place at the right time. So my main targets were the Chequered Skipper which I had never seen, and the Black Hairstreak which I have seen in previous years, but only at a distance so alas no good photos.

The Chequered Skipper was first found in Scotland in 1939 and little was known about the butterfly's Scottish life-style until the late 1980s. Today its entire UK population occurs in Lochaber and North Argyll, where there are around 50 colonies. Its small size, elusive



Chequered Skipper. Photo: Brian Arnold

nature and restricted distribution makes the Chequered Skipper a special enigma. It is associated with the edges or open spaces within damp woodlands normally below 200m. Sites are usually dominated by the caterpillar's main food plant, purple moor-grass.

Together with two of my friends - I have been butterfly hunting with them since we were teenagers - we decided to go this year to the well known site of Glasdrum Wood NNR in Argyll. We booked in January for



Chequered Skipper. Photo: Brian Arnold

the last week in May thinking that would be the right time. But as winter turned to spring, and the “Beast from the East” and the terrible weather put everything down south back by up to a month we started to fear that we would see nothing in Scotland other than the cold and rain. We arrived on the 21st of May, and could hardly believe our luck - the following day the sun came out and there followed a week of hot sunny weather - up to 27 degrees - almost unheard of in Scotland at that time of year! The Chequered Skipper came out right on cue, and we saw and photographed many of them at Glasdrum. The owner of our holiday cottage at Creagan Station (Appin) just a couple of miles from Glasdrum, told us that the Chequered Skipper could be found along the disused

railway line next to our cottage. He was correct - they were right on our doorstep - all we had to do was walk 50 yards and they were there to see and photograph. What a bonus! We submitted our sightings to the Glasgow and SW Scotland branch and as far as we know the Chequered Skipper has not been recorded at Creagan Station before.

The Black Hairstreak is one of our most elusive of butterflies, found only in thickets of Blackthorn in woodlands on heavy clay soils between Oxford and Peterborough in the East Midlands. The adults spend nearly all their time in the canopies of trees or dense scrub where they feed on honeydew secreted by aphids. It is restricted to around 50 or so colonies and has a



Black Hairstreak. Photo: Brian Arnold

short flight period of about 10 days from mid June to early July.

I have been several times before to see Black Hairstreak but the weather and the butterfly were most unobliging. This year it is thought that the cold spring weather may have killed off predators for the butterfly eggs and caterpillars, and as a result there was an explosion of Black Hairstreak numbers. Over 100 were recorded at Hewins Wood Bridleway, so I headed to the site with a couple of friends and fingers very much crossed. As we parked our car we could see a Black Hairstreak on the verge. We followed the bridleway into the wood, and saw about 25 Black Hairstreak on the oak, privet and blackthorn. The big question is will 2018 be a very exceptional year, as Black

Hairstreak are not normally so numerous, or will they appear again in 2019 in large numbers?

The Black Hairstreak is visually very similar to the White-letter Hairstreak, which I am lucky to see just 150 yards beyond the end of my garden in The Wilderness Woodland near Swanage, and have included a photo here for comparison,



White-letter Hairstreak.
Photo: Brian Arnold

Could you leave Butterfly Conservation something in your will?

The conservation and other work we do to help butterflies and moths never gets any cheaper, but income from grants is becoming ever more difficult.

Remember - if you wish the money to go to the Branch, you need to specify this.

London Eye to Telašćica

Malcolm Wemyss writes about the Wall Brown butterfly, and his sightings on a recent visit to the Dalmatian coast of Croatia in the Adriatic Sea

One of the maxims of our Branch Identification

Workshop in late May each year is observation of the flight patterns of butterflies, whether it be gliding or rapid wing beat or spiralling and so on. I've found one of the most characteristic to be that of the Wall (or Wall Brown) *Lasiommata megera* as it flies along a dry path in front of the walker, wings seemingly half open and veering sideways before settling. Once disturbed it will move ahead and repeat this pattern, keeping the walker company.

The Wall is the butterfly that has inspired a lifelong interest in me from the age of 5, in admiration of the eyespot markings against a mottled background of the underside hindwings. In the 1950s there were many more areas of flowery grassland for their larvae to breed in and it



Wall Brown. Photo: Andrew Reekie

was a common sight on long walks to school. In present times there is great concern for the survival of the species in most inland areas, although it seems to fare quite well in coastal habitats. There are theories why this should be and climate change is mentioned in relation to the number of broods and their continued survival.

Early entomologists applied common or vernacular names to butterflies sometimes associated with an area where they were found. So it was in 1717 that James Petiver called this species



Wall Brown female. Photo: Bob Eade

the London Eye, certainly the upper forewing eyespot is prominent. This was for the female only, with the male named London Eye with a Black List, as the androconial scales or diagonal bars across the upperside forewings are so distinctive. The present name derives from the butterfly's particular habit of basking on walls for maximum warmth.

I'd not seen a Wall in spring, not even on the higher downland of regular transect walks at Black and Giant Hills either side of



Telašćica landscape terrain.
Photo: Malcolm Wemyss

Cerne Abbas. However, during a visit to the Dalmatian coast of Croatia in earliest summer this all changed.

There are 1,998 islands in the Adriatic Sea, and Telašćica Nature Park within an outermost island called Dugi Otok is a butterfly paradise!



Large Wall Brown.
Photo: Malcolm Wemyss

Here there were scores of Large Wall Brown *Lasiommata maera*. The greyer hindwing underside is a good match with the nearby rocks. Other visitors were also attracted by the butterflies, following the friendly flight pattern and admiring the underside wing markings...

END

Ponies at Alners Gorse

Nigel Spring writes about the four-legged grazing team at Alners Gorse

Alners Gorse has been a wonderful flowery spectacle this year particularly in the late summer when much of the reserve was a riot of colour – with the yellows of the Birdsfoot Trefoil, Fleabane and Pepper Saxifrage, the white of the Sneezewort, the reds of the Saw-wort and Black Knapweed and, more recently, the purple sea of Devil's Bit Scabious which is only just going over now, a week into October. Earlier in the season, we had the most Marsh Fritillaries on the wing since the area became a reserve in 2005 and this led to a record number of larval webs recorded – the total of 54 is



Marsh Fritillary web at Alners Gorse.
Photo: James Gould

twice the number from last year. People have come from far and wide to enjoy the butterflies, birds and wildflowers on this tiny relic of what was once a huge area of species rich grassland and forest.

We can perhaps attribute much of these successes to the remarkable weather this year and also perhaps to the ongoing management work by volunteers and contractors that has prevented the encroachment of blackthorn, bramble and gorse. But it is our team of four-legged friends that we must mainly thank for keeping the reserve open and spectacularly colourful. The Dorset Branch acquired four elderly Dartmoor ponies from Devon in November 2012. With the help of a team of trained 'lookers' overseen by Kathy Henderson and her daughter Helen, we have grazed different compartments of the reserve in rotation using electric fencing tape depending on the needs of the habitats and on the



Comma on Devil's-bit Scabious. Photo: Lyn Pullen

time of year. In addition, for a period each late summer, we have grazed different parts of our neighbours' land at Rooksmoor as they do not have stock suitable for that type of rough grassland and their management agreement requires them to use grazing animals for part of the year.

In 2014, one of the Dartmoors, Holly, died – we think probably of old age after what must have been a tough existence on the moors of Devon. Keen to replace her, we managed to find two young ponies which were being re-homed, having been rescued from Bodmin Moor where they had been abandoned along with countless other sheep, cattle and horses. When they arrived at Alners in June 2014, they were in an appalling

state, just skin and bone, and terribly traumatised. They recovered physically in very little time, but it has been a long struggle to calm them down and make them become trusting. With a huge amount of effort and the assistance of a fantastic local 'horse whisperer' trained by Monty Roberts in the USA, Kathy and Helen managed to civilise these two to the point where they are now both halter-trained and biddable and the larger/older of the two, Blaze, can be safely ridden. This also means that it has become easier to lead the herd of five animals, as (theoretically!) the three Dartmoors follow Blaze and Star while Kathy and Helen lead them. Things sometimes don't quite go to plan, though, as they discovered while we were trying to move the five from our reserve to Rooksmoor this August. Star mischievously bumped into Blaze, thereby spooking the most neurotic of the three Dartmoors and all five galloped off into the adjacent woods: they returned to the reserve two hours later and the whole process had to start again the following day.

The five have been grazing one of the fields on the eastern side of Rooksmoor for the past two months and will return to Alners this week. We have been checking them daily (this has been a source of huge pleasure, not a chore, in this wonderful Indian summer we have had!). In the very dry weather the ponies drink a lot so the trough has to be filled up regularly and the landowner has to be notified to do this. The electric fence must also be checked each day – one morning Kathy found that a deer must have run through the fenceline, uprooting the plastic posts and snapping both the electric tapes. This cannot have happened very long before we got down there just after dawn, as the ponies were still happily grazing within the field and seemed none the wiser about the missed opportunity to escape!

It has been very interesting watching what they feed on and the order of preference they show. The soft grasses are taken first along with various flowerheads (they seem especially fond of Angelica flowers) but the ponies only began to get into the stand of



Kathy Henderson moving the ponies on Rooksmoor. Photo: Nigel Spring

the very coarse Bush-grass *Calamagrostis epigejos* after about seven weeks in the field and even then reluctantly. They will nibble the softer tips of Blackthorn scrub in the field and love marsh thistle, eating it right down to the soil!

The ponies will be back on the reserve at Alners when you read this, though Blaze may be stabled elsewhere along with one of the others to keep her company.

The reserve is well worth a visit even during the autumn and winter - there may not be many butterflies on the wing but there should be plenty of wintering larks, pipits and thrushes to keep the resident tit flocks, goldcrests, treecreepers and nuthatches company. And while you are there, pay your respects (at a distance) to the grazing ponies – our reserve would not be the same without them!

Butterfly Trends Meetings

Arthur Bryant & Robin George write about the future of the four annual Butterfly Trends meetings

You will be aware that Bill Shreeves has reluctantly retired from the presentations at the four Butterfly Trends meetings that have been held in February and March each year for many, many years. Based on the responses to the questionnaires completed at the meetings earlier this year, we propose to continue the tradition as near to the current form as possible. There will still be presentations on the local and national trends, but the onus will be on members to contribute to the meetings as much as possible, either with short presentations or pictures, or a general discussion.

During the transition, it is hoped to keep the venues and timing as unchanged as possible. There have been offers to organise and chair three of the four meetings and these will each set their own agenda. Details of each of these meetings are in the Events List and on the Dorset Branch website. If you feel that you can

contribute in any way, please contact the relevant organiser.

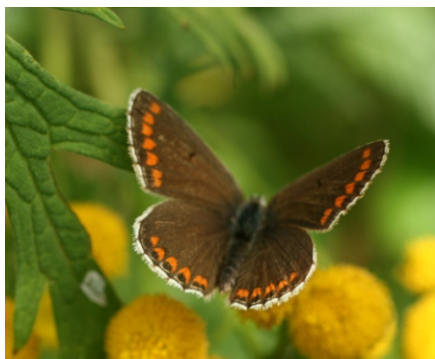
At the time of going to print we have not had an offer to organise the East Dorset meeting in Wimborne. A provisional date has been set, for Friday March 2nd, but the meeting will not go ahead if no one comes forward. Please check the Dorset Branch website for any updates. If you would be willing to organise the East Dorset meeting please get in touch with one of us. A number of the completed questionnaires were anonymous. Some included offers of help in the staging of the meetings so if you made such an offer and have not been contacted, please get in touch

WE ALL SENDS MANY THANKS TO BILL who has been the driving force behind these meetings since at least the early 1990's. We hope you will still attend some of the meetings Bill!

Brown Argus?

Jane Smith writes about the excitement of seeing an unlikely visitor in her garden

Our garden is well within the built-up area of Sherborne, though all the gardens in the vicinity are of a reasonable size. As a consequence, it is unusual to see anything other than the common butterflies. Of the blues, Holly Blue is a regular visitor, and Common Blue visits less frequently, but the habitat is not such that I would expect any other blues.



Brown Argus. Photo: Jane Smith

However, on the afternoon of August 7th, I saw a small brown butterfly with orange spots on the forewing. It was very lively so I was unable to take a photo, but

did not look right for a Common Blue – too small, and a silvery appearance in flight. I decided it could only be a male Brown Argus, a first for our garden, even though it seemed very unlikely. I must admit that my confidence about the identification was a bit dented when, a few minutes later, I saw a pristine female Common Blue nearby, nectaring on tansy.

The following day I was in the garden again, and what should I see, also nectaring on the tansy, but a butterfly that was obviously a female Brown Argus, again in pristine condition. Such excitement! This time I was able to take a photo, and the identification was confirmed by Nick Urch, who said it was the first recording for the area.

It is possible that it has appeared in our garden in previous years, and I shall certainly look more closely in future.

Roosting Butterflies

Colin Nunn writes about recent sightings in his garden

Those of us who regularly monitor and record butterfly populations almost exclusively observe the adult insects when they are in a very active phase. At other times, they are normally well hidden away in low vegetation, bushes, trees and various crevices. However, a number of our British species, notably amongst the Blues, have a different strategy and roost off the ground on long grass or flower stems, often in communal groups. Rival males may finish their active day perched head downwards on the same flower head! This seems to suggest that there is more to communal roosting than merely choosing a sheltered spot for the night.

I regularly record the butterflies in my Worth Matravers garden, and particularly enjoy noting the changes which occur over the years, such as the recent appearance of Ringlets, no longer restricted to a woodland habitat.

This year has been good for the second broods of both Common Blue and Brown Argus, and I have taken to observing them at roost, as well as during their daytime activity periods. This has proved to be a good technique for assessing their total numbers. The peak count was 18 on the 31st July, mostly Common Blues but probably 3 Brown Argus. This was followed by a slow decline in numbers over the next few weeks. Then, at a morning inspection on the 7th August, I had a very unexpected and exciting surprise; one butterfly had opened its wings to warm up and looked like a living jewel. It was a pristine male Chalkhill Blue! Not only was this a garden first in 26 years, but there have not been local records for many years. It remained stationary while I took several photos (one shown here). Then a week later, on the 14th August and again in the morning and at the same place, I noticed that one of the roosting Blues had distinctive



Chalkhill Blue roosting in Colin's garden:
Photo: Colin Nunn



Adonis Blue. Photo: Mark Pike

dark veins across the white wing fringes, indicative of an Adonis Blue. This was confirmed when I boxed it, and it opened its wings to reveal the unmistakable blue of a fresh male Adonis. Not a garden first, but one of only several records, and none of them recent. I placed it back on

the grass stem, where it remained at roost.

It is particularly interesting that I did not see either butterfly in flight in the garden, or on subsequent days, so that both records have only been obtained by observing butterflies at roost.

Join us at our Branch Members Day and AGM

**Saturday 23rd February 2019
Puddletown Village Hall**

Our speaker will be David Brown, Property Ecologist at the National Trust Purbeck Office, who will talk about the Cyril Diver Project and its legacy in motivating volunteers.

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.

Tales from the Sales Stall

Colin Burningham gives us an account of his experiences at the recent Stock Gaylard Oak Fair

Running the Branch Sales Stall certainly gives us an opportunity to raise funds for the branch, but far more important is the chance we have to attend functions arranged by other organisations and meet members of the public who might be interested in Lepidoptera but have not yet considered joining Butterfly Conservation. Of course, we also meet plenty of our members at these functions, and it is a great pleasure to receive their words of support and encouragement. However, it has become our quest to talk to like-minded members of the public who apart from seeking guidance on identification issues might just have a useful comment or two to make on the subject of butterflies and moths. Their ranks include youngsters who have often something worthwhile to say, once they have got over the initial shyness of talking to adults about a subject which I guess is not

commonplace in their age-groups.

As we all know, the weather this year has been very unusual, and has created challenges to our Lepidoptera, where the spring butterflies and moths delayed their emergence in a late cold spring by around two weeks in some cases. When the summer got going, we experienced extremely hot weather and by mid-summer, the summer loving creatures were arriving a few weeks early! Much the same happened with the moths, with little migration occurring with either butterflies or moths.

At our recent weekend spent at the Stock Gaylard Oak Fair, we experienced a common story from many of our contacts. They were sure that garden butterflies were seen to be few in number or in some cases non-existent. With a little more conversation, it was soon quite clear that they had noticed the lack of our more

recognisable species such as Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Red Admiral and Comma but that they had seen plenty of Common Blues, Speckled Wood and Gatekeepers. The overall story was not very encouraging, especially since it appears to mirror the observations we have generally found on our transect walks in Dorset this summer. Many of our contacts had been inspired to take part in the Big Butterfly Count and hopefully this will help Butterfly Conservation to draw more overall conclusions about summer butterfly numbers.

There was a lot of interest shown in the moths that we displayed, and what was very encouraging was the number of people who had seen large brown larvae when working in

their gardens and photographic evidence on their mobile phones enabled us to confirm that they were indeed the larvae of the Elephant Hawkmoth. Many were amazed that such larvae could turn into such colourful moths. There was no doubt that they felt inspired by their discoveries and we gave out a number of membership forms.

The observations made are based on my own experiences, but I believe it runs true with my own garden sightings and also my transect walking.

Many thanks to Sue Anderson and Christine Bonner who helped me run the stall at Stock Gaylard over the weekend.



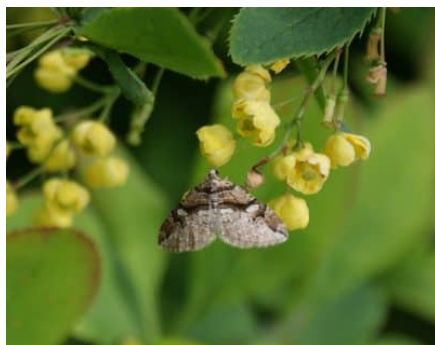
Stock Gaylard Oak Fair. Photo: by permission of Stock Gaylard Estate

Barberry Carpet Moth

Fiona Haynes is BC's Project Officer for the 'Back from the Brink' project on the Barberry Carpet Moth

The Barberry Carpet moth *Pareulype berberata* is believed to be reduced to only 11 remaining populations in Britain, with its stronghold being in North Wiltshire and just into Gloucestershire. There is a single colony in Oxfordshire and a single colony in North Dorset. It is a Section 41 species (NERC Act, 2006) and is protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981.

Butterfly Conservation's ongoing efforts to conserve the Barberry Carpet are being boosted by significant HLF funding and there is now a Barberry Carpet 'Back from the Brink' Project. 'Back from the Brink' is one of the most ambitious conservation projects ever undertaken, aiming to save 20 species from extinction and benefit over 200 more through 19 projects that span England, from the tip of Cornwall to Northumberland. More information can be found at <http://naturebftb.co.uk>
The sole foodplant for Barberry



Barberry Carpet on Common Barberry.
Photo: I. Hughes

Carpet is Common Barberry or *Berberis vulgaris*. This is either a native species or an archaeophyte [introduced, but a very long time ago] in Britain and has been here for a very long time as evidence of berries were found at a Neolithic site in Norfolk. Although this is closely related to some horticultural varieties of *Berberis*, it seems that the only species that will support this moth is *B.vulgaris*. It is an attractive plant with edible red berries and fragrant yellow flowers that attract many species.

The primary aim of the Barberry

Carpet Project is to increase the available habitat for the moth by planting out 3,000 additional Common Barberry plants over four years. We are focussing our efforts on the colonies in Dorset, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire and aiming to establish new colonies of the moth in these areas. New planting sites need to be either within two kilometres of an extant colony, or linked to it by further plantings. We are hoping that this 'stepping stone' approach will enable the species to spread and populations to become less genetically isolated over time. The colony in Dorset is so isolated from other colonies that the aim is simply to encourage the moth to spread rather than

link with other colonies.

Since the start of the project in 2017 we have planted around 770 new bushes in around 40 different planting locations. Thanks should go to the BC Branches in the project areas for their support of the Project and also to the key volunteers who have made it all possible by storing plants, helping with planting and suggesting potential locations. Some of the bushes that were planted last year have failed due to the drought in the summer but we now have many more available, 1,000 in fact, to find homes for! It was good that many people came forward who were interested in taking plants and supporting the Project last



Mature *Berberis vulgaris*. Photo: Fiona Haynes

winter and I'm hoping to find that there are a lot more interested people again this year!

The priority areas for planting in Dorset are all around Blandford, Stourpaine, Durweston, Hanford, Pimperne and Shillingstone.

Therefore, if you live in this general area or know anyone who you think may be interested, please do get in touch with suggestions.

The plants need either full sun or partial shade and do very well in hedgerows or planted on their own or in clumps. We supply plants in quantities of up to 50 for the best planting locations but wouldn't usually supply less than three plants to a location. Over time bushes can reach eight feet in height but they are very easy to keep smaller and can be pruned back during the autumn/winter. During dry periods in the summer they would need some watering in the first few years and can benefit from aftercare such as keeping down competing vegetation such as brambles and clematis. Like their cultivated cousins they do have sharp spines but these are easily



Barberry Carpet larva.

Photo: Fiona Haynes

avoided and we can supply mesh tree guards too. They are supplied in two litre pots and will probably be less than 50 cm tall. One of the most important factors is that we are looking for planting locations that are at least 20 metres from arable crops. This is due to the fact that Barberry is an alternate host for a species of wheat stem rust that affects wheat. We haven't had this particular stem rust in the UK since the 1950s but in case new strains of rust ever appear in the UK, our approach will ensure that our new plantings never have to be removed and never exacerbate an issue affecting food crops. We are working closely with crop scientists at the John Innes Centre and they have advised us that this would only be a problem if Barberry were

planted in very close proximity to wheat .

I will deliver the plants during the autumn and winter to any new locations and take a grid reference so that we know exactly where our plants are going in. Then in future years we plan on visiting the new plantings to survey for larvae.

Please do get in touch for more information, to volunteer, or if you have ideas for planting including in your own garden. We have a number of volunteer tasks planned this winter in North Dorset. Also, if you would like to grow on additional Barberry bushes from seed then please get in touch with me,



New Barberry plant at Shipton Mill.
Photo: Fiona Haynes

Fiona Haynes, Barberry Carpet
Project Officer, 07483 039323
[fhaynes@butterfly-
conservation.org](mailto:fhaynes@butterfly-conservation.org)

Butterfly Releases

In the Autumn 2017 issue No 86 we published a feature about the illegal release of non-native Monarchs on Canford Cliffs, following a wedding nearby. We put an item on our website about this, which went out on social media and then went viral.

This story has been picked up by the BBC, who recently put out an excellent item on such illegal releases on “Inside Out South”, featuring Richard Fox. Hopefully this will help spread the message that using butterflies as confetti is unacceptable, and potentially illegal.

Perryfields Reserve

Nigel Spring updates us on the termination of the lease on our Perryfields Reserve in Portland

The lease that Butterfly Conservation has held for the reserve at Perryfields Quarry on Portland for the last 20 years has been terminated by the owners, Betterment Properties. We received a letter from their solicitors in the spring and it took effect in August. We have been given no reason for this, but the politics on Portland are extremely complex and we are sure this has nothing to do with our organisation or the way we have been running the reserve.

The lease was established in 1998 as part of a section 106 agreement with Betterment and was linked to the planning permission given for new homes on the edge of the reserve. It is not certain whether this agreement was to be a permanent one or whether perhaps the wording was loose and therefore enabled the owners to reclaim the site after the term was up. It seems very

unlikely that more building could take place on this small disused quarry.

Since the original lease was signed, at least three different building schemes have been completed in the close vicinity of the reserve and of course Tesco has been built too. A large area of the adjacent land has been set aside for 'wildlife conservation' though without, it seems, any strict legal protection. This has meant that the little patch of ground that was our reserve has become even more important as a buffer for butterflies and other wildlife, and furthermore could be part of a much more extensive area conserved for nature if a syndicate of wildlife organisations could be brought together to undertake its management.

Although Perryfields is a mere postage stamp of land, a lot of volunteer effort has gone into maintaining it as a reserve,

keeping the bramble, privet and cotoneaster at bay and maintaining a good sward in the grassy areas for the blue butterflies. It is also part of our transect recording scheme: Ian Laing and his team of recorders have been walking the reserve weekly each summer and have this year logged the highest number of butterflies ever for the site, with Common Blue, Chalkhill Blue and Meadow Brown showing the second highest totals ever. It is notable that five of the highest counts have been in the last six years, reflecting perhaps the active management work on the site (and the warming climate!)

At a time of major conservation challenges in the UK and when

(according to my latest BTO Appeal letter), Britain is 'among the most nature depleted countries in the world', nature reserves become all the more important for areas where wildlife is secure against the pressures of housing, roads, industry and agriculture. Portland is a very significant area for butterflies particularly the Silver-studded and Chalkhill Blues, Lulworth Skipper, Wall Brown and Grayling and is renowned for several notable moths as well as for migratory species. It is urgently important that we in Butterfly Conservation find the resources to maintain our holdings on Portland. Let's hope that Perryfields will soon be back on our list of reserves!



Perryfields Reserve. Photo: Ian Laing

Trip to Chase Woods

Jean and Tom Smith led the joint walk with Wiltshire Branch to Chase Woods on 14 July

It was our turn to lead this trip, which has become something of a regular fixture in both Dorset and Wiltshire branches' events programmes. Chase Woods in July offers much butterfly interest and this year was no exception. This large site is owned by the Rushmore Estate to whom we are grateful for allowing us to park at Greatstone Coppice and for access to paths in the woods which are not rights of way.

There were 12 people altogether for this trip, eight from Dorset and four from Wiltshire, so fewer than usual and some might have understandably been put off by the hot weather. Although it was 26 degrees in the shade we walked at a slow pace and were never far from shade so we managed without difficulty.

From the car park we walked up the main ride which is largely shaded and we were fortunate to be able to observe a Green-



At Chase Woods.

Photo: Jean & Tom Smith

veined White ovipositing on Garlic Mustard. Where the first public footpath intersects we turned left and this took us to the delightfully named Scrubbity Barrows and here we had a few good grassy areas where we were able to find Small Skippers.

We continued in the same south-westerly direction to the edge of the wood where it borders Woodcutts Common and spent much time here looking at the woodland edge,

arable headlands and grassland. Some good sightings were made including Brown Argus and Essex Skipper. This was also where we got a good look at a Red Kite.

We retraced our steps back in to the wood and headed north, stopping for lunch in a shady spot, but overlooking some oaks. We scanned the canopy of the oaks and had a couple of high-up sightings of Purple Hairstreaks, which were glinting as they caught the sun.

After lunch we carried on through a variety of habitats of grassy areas and wide rides, seeing a good number of Large Skippers and Silver-washed Fritillaries. The area which normally has the best flora and most nectar sources is the main Bridmore Ride and here we found good numbers of the tiny but beautiful Lesser Centaury. This year we took Bridmore Rides only as far as Shire Rack,



Silver-washed Fritillary.
Photo: Chris Rowland

the east-west ride traversing the Dorset-Wiltshire border. We were glad to get back in the shade and spent some time watching a Silver-washed Fritillary laying in oak crevices.

We carried on eastwards through Great Shaftesbury Coppice, seeing our only Valezina form of Silver-washed Fritillary. We went on to some areas normally good for White Admirals, but this year didn't see any, so wondered if they'd finished early this year. At this point we turned around and walked back to Bridmore Ride, then south to the cars, reaching these just after 3.00pm. It was an enjoyable walk and we are grateful to all who attended and contributed to us identifying twenty species of butterfly. Our thanks to Arthur Bryant for liaising with Rushmore Estate for this visit.

Butterfly list: Small Skipper, Essex Skipper, Large Skipper, Brimstone, Large White, Small White, Green-veined White, Purple Hairstreak, Brown Argus, Common Blue, Holly Blue, Red Admiral, Peacock, Comma, Silver-washed Fritillary, Marbled White, Gatekeeper, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Speckled Wood.

Plant Sales for BC Dorset

Some feedback from Lyn Pullen on 2018's sales



Plant Stall on 5 May 2018 .
Photo: Lyn Pullen

I am delighted to report that I have again raised just over £600 on the plant stall in my driveway for donation to Dorset Branch. This will be added to by Gift Aid.

Please think of the stall next year, if you have got any bits you can separate from clumps of plants or find some seedlings coming up. I can sell more plants if I have them to sell.

Herbaceous perennials sell best: especially 'cottage garden' plants like hardy geraniums and phlox. Neither bushes nor annuals sell well, though 'different' buddleias will if I can get them out whilst in bloom.

I do not sell only plants which butterflies like: that would be too restricting, but I do label the butterfly and bee friendly plants.



One of my favourite butterflies on one of my favourite plants: Small Tortoiseshell on Aster Frikartii Monch.
Photo: Lyn Pullen.

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



Butterfly
Conservation
Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Dorset Branch Accounts 2017/18

These are the accounts presented at our 2018 AGM

If you have any queries, please contact our Treasurer, Georgie Laing (contact details inside back cover).

Butterfly Conservation Dorset branch			
Balance sheet at 31 March 2018			
	£	£	Notes
	March 2018	March 2017	
Bank (current account)	13,456	19,635	
Bank (deposit account)	10,000	3,000	
VAT due (owed) from previous year	83	(5)	1
Stock	390	254	
Prepayments	125	25	Cerne Abbas Hall deposit & cards for re-sale
Accruals	(61)	-	Dom Greves £50 & Water 2 Business £10.91
Debtors	-	-	
Creditors	(488)	(50)	Various late invoices - all cleared in April 2018
	23,505	22,859	
Represented by			
General funds	13,505	22,859	
Designated funds	10,000	-	2
Excess income over expenditure	646	7,175	
(Decrease) /increase in stock value	-	(90)	1
Movement in funds in year	646	7,085	
General Funds			
Balance brought forward 1 April 2017	22,859		
Surplus (deficit) for year	646		
Transfer to Designated fund in year	(10,000)		
Balance carried forward 31 March 2018	13,505		
Designated Fund-	Reserve management Alners Gorse and Lankham Bottom		
Balance brought forward 1 April 2017	-		
Surplus (deficit) for year	-		
Transfer to Designated fund in year	10,000		
Balance carried forward 31 March 2018	10,000		
Notes			
1 Adjustments needed to correct for change in accounting practice			
2. New designated fund to hold back money to manage our two reserves, Alners Gorse and Lankham Bottom, when/if current grant income expires			

Butterfly Conservation Dorset Branch						
Income and Expenditure account for year to 31 March 2018						
			2017-18		2016-17	Notes
Expenditure						
Conservation	(eg reserve management, tools, training)		9,390		12,065	1
Education	(schools, training days)		1,719		997	
Fund-raising	(events, raffle, cost of sales)		494		276	
Membership						
	Newsletters	2,925		2,139		2
	Website	1,050		790		3
	AGM costs	25		31		
		4,000	4,000	2,960	2,960	
Administration	(eg stationery, postage, VAT, meeting costs)		363		1,274	
Total expenditure			15,966		17,572	
Income						
Receipts from Head Office						
	Grants	6,403		15,048		4
	Membership subscriptions	5,277		4,956		
	Other	750		506		5
		12,430	12,430	20,510	20,510	
Donations			2,227		910	
Fundraising						
	Sales stall		687	496		
	Other fundraising		518	2,031		6
				2,527	2,527	
Contract income			750		800	
Total income			16,612		24,747	
Excess income over expenditure			646		7,175	
Notes						
1 Spending below budget as grant income below budget (see note 4)						
2 In 2016-17 only two issues "caught" in accounting year.						
Additional website costs - wordpress migration started and enhancement for "White Holes"						
3						
4 2017-18 grant income delayed.						
5 Includes insurance pay-out on stolen generator - £537.50						
6 Plant sales not received - but increase in personal donations instead						

More Photographers Needed

Lyn Pullen writes:.

We are extremely grateful to the photographers who regularly contribute photos to our website gallery, and look forward to seeing their shots. However, we would love to see more people contributing their photos.

Shots do not need to be technically perfect: we are looking for a passion for butterflies and moths, not cover shots for a photo magazine!

We want moths as well as butterflies, and shots of eggs, caterpillars and chrysalises as well as adults. When you send your photos, please tell us when and where you took the shot and anything about it which will make the sighting come alive for the reader.

We always need more photos in the winter, so have a look through the shots you took this summer and send us some! See www.dorsetbutterflies.com/gallery

for information on submission and how we use your pictures.



Painted Lady. Photo from one of our regulars: Mark Pike.

It is also good if we can have your permission to put any photos you send us on our Flickr site. We are building up images of all stages of butterflies seen in Dorset so we've got an easy place to go to for images for the newsletter, website and other publicity. My grateful thanks to Becky Williamson for doing the work of uploading the shots - we've got lots more yet to do from pictures we've received in the past.

Dorset Branch Who's Who

President

Brian Dicker
Wincanton.

Chair & Reserves Manager

Nigel Spring*
Sherborne. 01963 23559 or
07981 776767
nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk

Secretary, Garden Records & Wider Countryside Survey

Adrian Neil*
Preston, Weymouth
01305 832937
adrian.neil@madasafish.com

Treasurer

Georgie Laing*
Weymouth. 01305 766712
georgie_laing@yahoo.co.uk

Membership & Branch Liaison

Robin George*
Gillingham. 01747 824215
rab.george@which.net

Records

Bill Shreeves*
Shaftesbury. 01747 852587
w.shreeves@btinternet.com

Website & Social Media

Lyn Pullen*
Winfrith Newburgh. 01305 853946
dorsetbutterflies@btinternet.com

Photo on back cover: The ponies on Rooksmoor. Photo: Nigel Spring.

Newsletter

Jane Smith*
Sherborne. 01935 814029
jane_mary@btinternet.com

Committee Member

Richard Norman*
Sturminster Newton. 01258 472887
richard@bagber.co.uk

Committee Member

Stephen Brown*
Dorchester
estherandsteve@btinternet.com

Meetings

Arthur Bryant
Shaftesbury. 01747 228252

* denotes Committee Member

If you would be interested in joining the Committee, please contact Nigel Spring.

Butterfly Conservation. Company limited by guarantee, registered in England (2206468). Registered Office: Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5QP.

Charity registered in England and Wales (1254937) and in Scotland (SCO 39268)

All material in this magazine copyright Butterfly Conservation Dorset Branch.

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

