



## **Butterfly Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

# **Butterfly & Moth**

## ***Gloyn Byw & Gwyfyn***

*The Newsletter of the South Wales Branch  
of Butterfly Conservation  
Cylchlythyr Cangen De Cymru  
o Gadwraeth Gloyn Byw*



**Winter Gaeaf 2017/18**

**Front cover main** – Clifden Nonpareil (via Facebook forum)

Well done to Mike and Emma Cram with the first record in Wales (as far as we know).

**Front Cover inset** - Green Veined White on Sweet Rocket



**Crimson Speckled (above)** light trapped by Nick Felstead near Chepstow. There are very few Welsh records of this migrant. (via Facebook forum)

**Members Day** (page 4) featured information on ‘our’ butterflies in Europe. Visit BC’s European Interest Group to find out more at <http://www.bc-eig.org.uk> (preview below)

A screenshot of the Butterfly Conservation European Interests Group website. The header features the EIG logo (a blue butterfly) on the left, the text "Butterfly Conservation European Interests Group" in the center, and a green butterfly logo on the right. Below the header is a navigation menu with links: Home, About EIG, Countries, Events, Holidays, News, Requests, Species, and Contacts &amp; Links. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column has a "Welcome" section with text about the group's purpose and membership, a "Butterfly Identification Service" section with a link for more details, and a "Latest News" section with a link to news articles. The right column features "The 2018 EIG Calendar" for November, which includes a photograph of a Lesser Purple Emperor butterfly on a rock. The caption below the photo reads "Lesser Purple Emperor (Aglais urticae) - EIG's Langdon".

Welcome to all members of the Butterfly Conservation South Wales Branch winter newsletter. 2017 has been the first year I've run a proper moth trap, in addition to my usual butterfly recording. It's been a steep learning curve with identification the main issue, but with help from the Facebook forum that burden has been eased and it's been a great experience.

In this issue there are some great finds in other members' moth traps as well as an incredible tale of butterfly adaptability. With conservation news filled with sad tales of declining insect numbers worldwide it is more important than ever to do something to reverse this. YOU can help your local group by taking an active role in work parties (see page 5). You don't have to do a whole day, just whatever you feel comfortable with. Butterfly conservation is keen to involve young people, so consider bringing younger members or making it a family day out? If you prefer something less physical, we still have vacancies on the committee, so please contact anyone of us if you think you can fill any of the vacancies. We meet about 3 times a year.

*Belinda Jackson -Editor*

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## Members Day 2017

Members Day at Kenfig was a blustery affair with storm Brian battering South Wales as we arrived, but despite the weather there was a packed venue with 53 in attendance and standing room only at the back. It is really encouraging that so many people were able to benefit from this event and that there were newcomers to our group. We were all plied with plenty of tea and coffee and there were free nectaring plants on offer.



Norman Lowe started off the programme with a talk about the Garden Moth Scheme – several years on and what life is like as a county recorder. As with all the talks the information was well illustrated and we enjoyed Norman's dry sense of humour.

We then delved into Europe when Martin Davies showed us how some European butterflies fare across Europe and the lengths he and fellow counterparts abroad, go to to track down species. It involved a great deal of walking and waiting so it was a delight to be able to sit comfortably while Martin's photographs took us on the journey.

The morning session was completed with our own Russel Hobson providing a Wales Update. Really important information on BC South Wales and the concerns about how conservation will be affected when we leave the European Union.

During lunch beginners and experts were able to talk butterflies and moths and share experiences.

Following lunch BC's Jim Asher took the floor and amongst other issues he provided a good insight into the busy role he has undertaken as chairman. A role that has taken him countrywide and further to see the work branches are involved in and highlighting one of the most important areas of conservation work which is to encourage more young people to get involved.

Finally David Agassiz provided a fascinating insight into the specific area of micro moths, covering the history of their identification, curating the Natural History Museum collection and the lengths some species go to avoid predation.

All in all a very worthwhile, but importantly, enjoyable day so make a note of next year's event **Saturday October 20<sup>th</sup> 2018**.

## **Annual Countrywide and Branch Events**

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2018 – Butterfly Conservation Day of Action.**

### **South Wales Branch Events**

**Work parties for 2018** - Get involved by helping out with habitat management by contacting Richard Smith (see page 8)

**Sunday 7th January 2018:** 10am - Alun Valley, Vale of Glamorgan - habitat management

**Sunday 14th January 2018:** 10.30am - Cross Hands: Caeau Ffos Fach/Median Farm - light management work

**Thursday 18th January 2018:** 10.30am - Cross Hands: Caeau Ffos Fach/Median Farm - light management work

**Sunday 21st January 2018:** 10am – Alun Valley - habitat management  
Contact: Richard Smith (07977 811404 ) or <rgsoverton@gmail.com>.

**Sunday 28th January 2018:** 10am - Mynydd Ruthin OR Alun Valley Tbc

**Friday 2nd February 2018:** 10.15am - Ystradgynlais, Swansea - scrub clearance

**Sunday 4th February 2018:** Alun Valley – habitat management

**Thursday 8th February 2018:** 10am - Cross Hands: Caeau Ffos Fach/Median Farm – light management work

**Sunday 11th** February 2018 - To Be Confirmed

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup>** February 2018: 10.15am - Seven Sisters - Scrub clearance (mainly seedling conifers)

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup>** February 2018: 10.30am – Ynys Dawela Country Park in Brynamman. *A joint event with WTSWW.*

**Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup>** February 2018: 10am - Cross Hands: Caeau Ffos Fach/Median Farm - light management work

**Sunday 25th** February 2018: 10am - Clydach, Nr Abergavenny - Habitat Management In Blackrock Quarry in conjunction with Usk Conservation and Environment Group, clearing cotoneaster from this important lepidoptera site with magnificent views.

**Friday 2nd** March 2018 - To Be Confirmed - Habitat Management at a North Carmarthenshire Marsh Fritillary Site - *Joint event with WTSWW.*

**Sunday 4th** March 2018: 10am - Alun Valley, Vale Of Glamorgan

**Tuesday 6th** March 2018 - To Be Confirmed - Habitat Management At An East Carmarthenshire Marsh Fritillary Site *A joint event with WTSWW.*

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup>** March 2018 – **Butterfly Conservation Day of Action.**  
**Details tbc.**

**Sunday 18th** March 2018 - Hendre Wood, Near Monmouth

**Sunday 29th April to Sunday 20th May 2018 Habitat monitoring in the Alun Valley**

We'll probably select three Sunday mornings and six weekdays during this 3 week period to operate habitat transects. The idea here is to set up a "transect" line which represents the habitat characteristics of sub-sites managed at some point in recent years specifically the violet-feeding fritillaries. Usually these transects are recorded by measuring key vegetation data in six one metre square "quadrats". Every four years, all sub-sites are reassessed using the same methodology, so that the changes in habitat and effect of management are measurable. 2018 is one such year. **Contact:** Richard Smith [rgsoverton@gmail.com](mailto:rgsoverton@gmail.com) for selected dates and meeting arrangements.

**Late May to mid June** 2018 - Visits To Marsh Fritillary Sites  
Various, In South Wales actual or potential

**Saturday 30<sup>th</sup>** June 2018 - High Brown Fritillary, Alun Valley, Vale Of Glamorgan.

**Other events** can be found by joining your local moth group. **Monmouthshire Moth and Butterfly Group** produce an excellent newsletter that lists sightings and provides members in the west of our region with an idea of migrants that might be heading their way.

## Ways to keep up to date

Butterfly Conservation Wales, Unit 4D, Cwm Road, Hafod, Swansea SA1 2AY

Telephone No. 01792 642 972

e-mail [wales@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:wales@butterfly-conservation.org)

Follow the links on Butterfly Conservation's main website

[www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org) to the branch page or type

<http://butterfly-conservation.org/303/south-wales-branch.html>

The branch also operates via Facebook.

The main 'open to all' page is

[www.facebook.com/ButterflyConservationSouthWalesBranch](http://www.facebook.com/ButterflyConservationSouthWalesBranch)

Members only Facebook group

[www.facebook.com/groups/ButterflyConservationSouthWalesBranch](http://www.facebook.com/groups/ButterflyConservationSouthWalesBranch)

If you already have a Facebook account you can ask to join the BC South Wales Forum by searching under that heading.

The forum is designed primarily to help with identification and to share sightings or information. Once you are a member you can upload your photos and get advice from the experts. It's a great way to find out what the rest of us have visiting our gardens or what's been seen out and about around South Wales.

Twitter @BCSouthWales



## Committee Members and County Butterfly & Moth Recorders

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Vacant

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Vacant

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#### Wider Countryside

#### Butterfly Survey Officer

Vacant

### Monmouthshire VC35

#### Butterflies & Macro-moths

Martin Anthoney (above)

#### Micro-moths

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#### Moth & Butterflies

David Slade (above)

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### Carmarthenshire VC44

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(See Monmouthshire)

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#### Micro-moths

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## Aderyn – making Welsh records visible

The South Wales Branch has always had close links with the Local Environmental Record Centres in Wales, with various committee members being represented on the board of directors of WWBIC, BIS and SEWBRc at various points both past and present. The record centres have always worked closely together and this culminated in the launch of Aderyn, a website that pulls together all of the records and allows members of the public to interrogate them.

The screenshot shows the Aderyn website interface. At the top left is the Aderyn logo, a stylized bird. Next to it is the text 'Aderyn LERC Wales' Biodiversity Information & Reporting Database'. On the right, there is a language selector set to 'English' and a small graphic showing four circular icons representing different LERCs. Below the header is a navigation bar with 'Home', 'About', 'Public', and 'Tools' links, and a 'Login' button. The main content area is divided into several sections: 'User Information' with a login/register form, 'Aderyn - Home' with a welcome message, 'What's in my Area?' with a map search tool, 'Distribution Maps' with a map view tool, and a 'Login' section with a form for email and password. A footer contains four columns: 'Contact Us', 'Write to Us', 'Get Involved', and 'LERC Wales'.

The first of two tools available to the public on Aderyn is the “What’s in my area?” tool (<http://aderyn.lercwales.org.uk/public/search>), which will return a list of the species that have been found within a 1km square, which can either be chosen from the map interface, or typed into the search box. The other tool allows you to look at distribution maps for any species. There are four ways to find a

species, two of which require a knowledge of taxonomic hierarchy (Species – Drilldown and Taxon Group), and one involves looking at what other people have been looking at (Recently created Species Maps). The simplest option though is to use the Species – Wildcard option. Type in the scientific name or the common name of the species that you want to look at, you may be presented with a choice in the form of a drop-down list, then click on the ‘Map?’ button to view the 10km square distribution map for your selected species. If you wish to see more detail, you can then click on a 10km square to see the 1km distribution for that species.

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1RLmYX3ePmRj8QrLCe\\_12Q](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC1RLmYX3ePmRj8QrLCe_12Q) provides demonstration videos for both of these tools on the SEWBReC YouTube channel Just in case you look at the maps and think, “why isn’t my record here?”, it is worth pointing out that whilst every effort is made to ensure that records pass smoothly from the recorder to the relevant LERC via the County Recorder, the process is not instant or automatic. If you think that something is missing though, please check with either the Record Centre or your County Recorder as it is always good to check!

*David Slade* Branch Secretary and Senior IT & Records officer, SEWBReC

### **Under recorded squares – you may be pleasantly surprised**

Lucie Bromfield is a regular volunteer with us for Marsh Fritillaries in Tonyrefail and High Brown Frits in Alun valley. So when SEWBReC sent out one of their monthly requests for records from OS grid squares with few biological records, the idea of popping up the road from Tonyrefail to have a look & see what delights were in grid square ST0487 was intriguing. So on 10<sup>th</sup> August with mostly sunny but cold and breezy weather, after some larval web searching in Tonyrefail, we set aside an hour to explore the square, which is mainly fields, but with a couple of minor roads. It soon became apparent that most of the square was steep-sloping but south-facing sheep pasture, including plenty of ryegrass, albeit with spectacular views. However, we soon spotted a nice piece of wet heath in the centre northern part of the square with plentiful Devil’s Bit Scabious flowering, viewed

from track and bounded on eastern side by tall rambling hedges, a rare commodity in modern agricultural landscapes. It lead to a rather pleasant wooded grove, very sheltered and sunny. This was the jewel in the square and we felt we did well to watch family parties of Bullfinch, Spotted Flycatcher and Redstart and also watched a pair of Whitethroats and Chiffchaff.



In addition, there was a Nuthatch, a Stonechat, several Speckled Wood, a Meadow Brown and a Green-veined White. A Small Copper spotted by Lucie as we finished was a nice bonus. We were there less than an hour, so it's probably well worth another visit when anyone passes. Not only that but it just shows that rarely visited locations, randomly selected, can yield pleasant surprises, so for both of us it is a definitely recommended (if occasional) activity. Obviously, unless you get landowner permission, you are restricted to public roads, byways, bridleways, footpaths and open access ground, but for a first visit, it can still be rewarding. *Richard Smith*



*Small copper*  
*Ben Williams*

## **And Finally ... a tale of the unexpected and extraordinary**

2 years ago, we had 2 Silver Washed Fritillary females coming into the garden, we had a lot of violets and they were looking for a place to lay eggs. As we don't have any suitable trees in our garden, one of them was looking for cracks into the wall separating our garden from our neighbours' but the other one came very close to me. I will remember this all my life: I was wearing a very worn pair of grey training trousers and was sitting quietly drinking my tea next to a bunch of violets when this female decided that I was a tree and landed on the bottom on my trousers and laid 2 eggs on the grooves. It was a wonderful observation and I remember Barry Stewart saying that maybe kneeling near violets in the vegetation is the key to fritillary conservation...[📄](#)

*Sylvie Herauld*

If you would like to share an amazing story you can email, type or hand write your story and contact the editor for postal details.

*Silver Washed Fritillary (right B Jackson, below Ben Williams)*

