

Butterfly Conservation Lancashire Branch

Spring 2023



Butterfly Conservation
Registered in England
2206468
Registered Charity
254937



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First and foremost, I would like to formally thank our former Branch Chair Jane Jones who held the position for nearly 4 years. Thankfully Jane plans to continue on the committee as Branch Secretary and Editor of the newsletter.

As we head toward Spring and Summer, this edition of the Branch Newsletter may have plenty to interest you, in particular our Members' Day which we are holding on Saturday 5th August at Pennington Flash (Bickershaw Country Park) in Leigh, Greater Manchester followed by a guided walk.

We have had another very productive work party season on our Myers Allotment Reserve, led by Dave Wrigley, and supported by our enthusiastic and committed band of volunteers. We are hugely grateful to Dave and every single one of our volunteers for the effort that they put in. We are also delighted that Dave's work has been recognised at the members day and AGM held in November 2022 in Huddersfield. (see [page 10](#))

Sadly, we recently read of the shocking decline in our butterflies in the UK: 80% since 1970! And the decline in both Moths and Butterflies is a clear indicator of the state of our ecosystems. Yet it isn't too late to try and make a difference. Projects great and small can contribute to making a real, quantifiable change. For example, as a branch, we have just agreed to support Alkincoats LNR near Colne in East Lancashire to extend their space to include a wildflower meadow. We also hope to tentatively approve looking at Bickershaw Country Park (Leigh) and Pennington Flashes in terms of transforming 100,000 wild spaces. Even more exciting is the increase in our membership to nearly 1300 members in Lancashire, Greater Manchester, and Merseyside. Imagine every member doing their bit however great or small to help our Butterflies and Moths. I would be delighted to hear what everyone is doing.

Peter Hardy, Butterfly Recorder for Greater Manchester, has also very kindly agreed to be recorder for Lancashire, but we are conscious that we need to

be encouraging and training the next generation of Recorders, so if you think this may be something of interest, please do get in touch with Peter.

Lastly, I would also like to announce that Gemma McMullan one of our branch members, who has been our webmaster/social media contact stepped down along with Chris Atherton in December 2022. Also, Justine Patton whose expertise will also be greatly missed stepped down in January 2023. However, we have 4 new committee members, Paige Hickey, Janet Grant, Heather Hilton and Bob Crawford and we welcome them all. Yet the committee would still benefit from a few more people so that we can continue to deliver on Butterfly Conservation's 2021 - 2026 Strategy namely to 1.Halve the number of the UK's threatened species of butterflies and moths 2.Improve the condition of 100 of the most important landscapes for butterflies and moths and 3.Transform 100,000 wild spaces in the UK for people, butterflies, and moths.

We meet 4 times a year, currently via Zoom, although we would prefer to get back around a table when we can. It is so important that we recruit new people into the many roles we have as the current committee will not be able to cover all these posts satisfactorily. Please do get in touch with me at chairman@lancashire-butterflies.org.uk if you'd like to find out more about any of the vacant positions and what it means to be a committee member.

Can I also make a plea for articles for this and future newsletters—without those articles we would not have such interesting editions, so please do have a think if you could write something. It may be about creating your 'wild space' on your balcony or in your garden or local park; a book review; or it may be on your quest to see certain butterflies and moths particularly those species deemed at risk or perhaps even a focus on a particular one. I look forward to hearing from you! Again, do contact me on chairman@lancashire-butterflies.org.uk if you would like to find out a bit more.

Dr John Bostock (Branch Chair)

Branch Members' Day 2023

Community Hub, Pennington Wharf

Saturday 5th August 9:30am - 12:30pm followed by a

Guided Walk around Pennington Flash Country Park 13:30 - 15:30

We have a programme of talks in the morning followed by a guided walk around Pennington Flash Country Park for those that would like to join us to try to see common summer butterflies and dragonflies

Programme for the day:

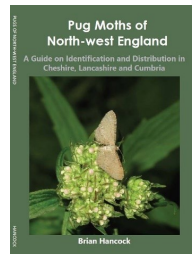
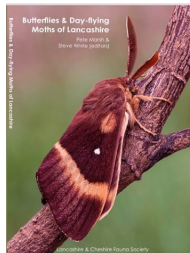
- 9:30 - Arrive and coffee
- 10:00 - 12:00 Talks (further details will be available on the website nearer the time)
- 12:00 - Branch Reports & Election of Committee
- 12:30 Close & Lunch
- 13:30 - 15:30 Walk around Pennington Flash

Please register for this event with Dr John Bostock

chairman@lancashire-butterflies.org.uk

Lancashire Branch Bookshop

We still have 2 books for sale through the branch, both of which have proved very useful and popular. Now is the time to get these books ready for the start of the butterfly and moth season! Brian Hancock's **Pug Moths of North-west Lancashire** is now available for £10 (+P&P) and **Butterflies & Day-flying Moths of Lancashire** is available for £12 (+P&P). Please contact Jane Jones at jcjmail@aol.com (with **Butterfly book** or **Pug Book** in the subject title).



2023 Field Trips Lancashire Branch

Outdoor Events - general advice and information: For all outdoor events, participants should bring suitable outdoor clothing, waterproofs and boots or similar and, sun cream and plenty of water in hot weather. Bring a packed lunch for full-day events,

General safety advice will be given before all our events. We ask all who attend, to take personal responsibility for their own safety and possessions, and to pay special regard to trip hazards and the presence of ticks. Before starting, please advise the walk leader of any medical or other conditions which could lead to you being unable to complete the walk. We strongly advise that you look at the website www.butterfly-conservation.org which will provide you with useful and important information including how-to get-there.

Booking We limit numbers for some events for safety and we require/recommend booking with the party leader by e-mail as soon as you are able to confirm attendance. If you need to cancel a booked place, please tell the leader asap so that the place(s) may be offered to others. Leaders may also be able to answer any individual request for further information.

Butterflies of Warton Crag

Saturday 6th May 10.00-14.00

Target: Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Green Hairstreak and early spring species

Friday 26th May 10.00-14.00

Target: Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Dingy Skipper, Common Blue, Small Heath and other Spring species

Note These walks are steep and narrow in places and are not recommended to those who would find this difficult.

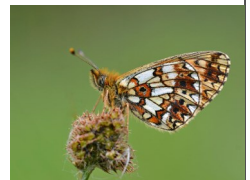
Directions: Meet at main Warton Quarry car park SD 491 723, sat nav LA5 9RB

Registration necessary to: Chris Winnick, chriswinnick@tiscali.co.uk



Pearl-bordered Fritillary

Photo: Adam Gor



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary

Photo: Adam Gor

Mystery Trip (Cumbria)

Sunday 28th May 10:00—15:00

Some of the sites we plan to visit have restricted access and are only open to a small number. These sites are little known and not often visited but have wonderful wildlife and a few surprises! Only those who have booked in advance can attend as there are limited places available. We will meet in two laybys just before the M6 J37 coming from Kendal on the A684 Sedbergh Road.

You must book for this trip.

Bring a packed lunch

Directions: Meet in the layby at SD 593 932 satnav LA8 0AP

Registration to: Chris Winnick, chriswinnick@tiscali.co.uk

Butterflies of Heysham Moss & Heysham Nature Reserve

Thursday 22nd June 10.30— about 14.30

Target species: Large Heath, Large Skipper and other early summer butterflies, dragon flies, day-flying moths and wildflowers

Bring a packed lunch

Meet at: 85-91 Meldon Road, Heysham LA3 2HJ (Access to Heysham Moss is nearby) OS ref SD 423 603

Registration necessary to: Chris Winnick, chriswinnick@tiscali.co.uk



Large Heath
Photo: Tim Melling

Did You Know.... that butterflies taste with their feet? Butterflies have taste receptors on their feet and use them to taste the plants they land on. This allows them to determine whether a plant is a suitable host for laying their eggs or a good source of nectar for feeding.

Cover photo: Grayling taken at Ainsdale NNR taken by Richard Ghorbal

Great Orme (North Wales)

Sunday 25th June 11:30am—16:00

Reserve Days : Saturday 24th June or Monday 26th June

Target species: The unique Great Orme Silver-studded Blue (in good weather we hope to see over 2,000!) and the Great Orme Grayling (another unique sub-species).



Silver-studded Blue

Photo: Bob Eade

You must book for this trip.

Bring a packed lunch

Directions: Meet 11:30. Park northern end of West Parade, Llandudno near the junction with Abbey Rd. on West Shore / OS GR SH 772 821 / SatNav LL30 2ET

Registration to: Chris Winnick, Tel. 01539 728254 chriswinnick@tiscali.co.uk

Butterflies of Myers Allotment

Saturday 8th July 13.00-16.30

Lancashire BC Reserve OS ref SD 474 750

Target species: Purple Hairstreak, Northern

Brown Argus, Large Fritillaries

Meet at: on site entrance on The Row Silverdale Park-

ing alternative: RSPB Leighton Moss Car Park a short walk away

Leader: Volunteer Warden - Dave Wrigley

Registration necessary by email to reserves@lancashire-butterflies.org.uk



Purple Hairstreak

Photo: Gillian Thompson

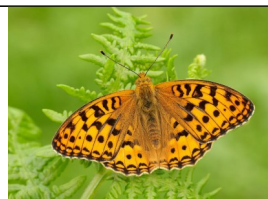
Butterflies of Holme Stinted Pastures and Holme Park Fell (Cumbria)

Sunday 9th July 10:30-14:00

Target species: Large Fritillaries, possible late Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Also look out & listen for Yellowhammers!

Meet: OS ref. SD 5441 7834 roadside 1km NW of Clawthorpe (postcode LA6 1NU approx.) Limited parking here but more nearby on roadside. **Bring a packed lunch**

Registration: Chris Winnick chriswinnick@tiscali.co.uk



High Brown Fritillary

Photo: Iain Leach

Identification and Recording Day at Levens Village Hall

Saturday 22nd July 10:00—16:00

Following the success of our previous training days we plan another two-part programme. The inside morning session will look at how to identify butterflies and day-flying moths and how to record them. The outdoor afternoon session at nearby White Scar will put theory into practice. In previous years participants identified 20 species in the field. (See [Cumbria branch newsletter, Autumn 2019](#) pp33-35 on the branch website).

For this and the next course (for 2023 and 2024) we are indebted to the Kendal Natural History Society for providing the funds to offer up to 20 places free of charge. There will be light refreshments but bring your own packed lunch.

We recommend booking early as places are limited.

Directions: Meet at Levens Village Institute, SD 487 861, sat nav LA8 8NL

Contact: Martin Chadwick and Chris Winnick, chriswinnick@tiscali.co.uk

Butterflies of Ainsdale Sand Dunes

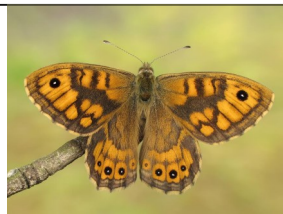
Thursday 27th July 10.30-14.30

Target species: Grayling, Wall, Purple Hairstreak, Gatekeeper, Small Copper

Meet and park at: Ainsdale Sand Dunes NNR, 2 West End Lodge, Pinfold Lane, Ainsdale. Postcode PR8 3QW.
OS Ref: SD 301 111

Bring a packed lunch **Leader:** Chris Ambrose

Registration necessary by email to Jane Jones jcmail@aol.com



Wall

Photo: Ryszard Szczygieł

Cumbria Field Trips - Summer 2023

Cumbria branch also have a summer packed with butterfly walks. Why not check out their [latest newsletter](#) and join one of their butterfly walks - some of which we have included here. Lancashire members are welcome to register for any Cumbria walks and events, please contact Chris Winnick 01539-728254/
chriswinnick@tiscali.co.uk

Longton Open Garden

Saturday 29th July 10:00 – 13:00

Come and have a guided tour of the 3-acre garden of Bob and Rosie Crawford which over the last 11 years has been gardened to support butterflies and other wildlife. See the perennial wildflower meadow, native hedgerows, colourful nectar filled borders, wild areas, sheltered woodland and streamside ride. See what beautiful wildflowers you can grow on hard-core and rubble. See how a backyard was transformed into a butterfly and bee friendly lawn. Learn to love daises. See how we have tried to merge wild and formal. Learn about the importance of shelter for butterflies and how to make a very simple hedgehog feeding station and much more including, we hope, seeing lots of butterflies! Tea and biscuits will be served with contribution to Butterfly conservation.

Afterwards you could visit the local Brickcroft nature reserve at the end of our road with lots of wildflowers or walk on Longton Marsh at the start of the Ribble Way where there is The Dolphin pub with outside seating which does meals.

Directions and parking info will be forward upon registration with Bob.

Booking required: robert.crawford@hotmail.co.uk



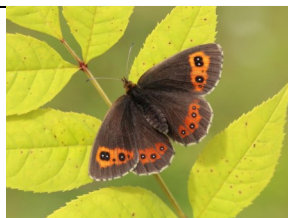
Smardale Gill Nature Reserve (Cumbria joint with Cumbria Wildlife Trust)

Tuesday 9th August 10.00-14:30

Target: Scotch Argus, late Dark Green Fritillary and other common summer species.....and lots of wild flowers and lovely views!

Directions: Meet on Newbiggin to Great Asby road, OS ref NY 701 056, sat nav CA17 4NY

Contact: Peter Boardman peterboardman222@btinternet.com



Scotch Argus
Photo: Mark Searle

Dr David Wainwright: 'Thankyou' but not 'Farewell'

David took over as BC's Regional Officer for North England from Sam Ellis 13 years ago and has done a fantastic job. I do not understand how anyone could have such detailed knowledge of butterfly and moth sites from the border of Scotland to the border with Derbyshire: remarkable and a testament to his 100% commitment. David is enthusiastic, optimistic, a walking encyclopaedia and a really approachable and friendly man who is always willing to share his love of butterflies and moths. 'No' he will not be leaving us or his home and neither will he have more time to fish.....he has been promoted to the key position of Head of Conservation England. A new Regional Officer for the North will be appointed soon but for now 'thank you' Dave for all the brilliant work and support you have given us in Lancashire and Cumbria.

Chris Winnick

In Remembrance of Joy Sharp.

Joy Sharp sadly passed away this winter after giving many years of service as a brilliant butterfly recorder and supporter of all things natural history in the Morecambe Bay area. Joy lived in Silverdale and was well known in the Arnside and Silverdale AONB as an active lover of the countryside and a long-standing member of the local natural history society. She was also a lovely lady and a kind friend to all that got to know her.

Joy was totally committed to her weekly butterfly transect on BC's only butterfly reserve in the NW of England: Myers Allotment. However, her love of nature extended as much to birds and flowers and she would happily share stories of wildlife and how more needed to be done to protect our wonderful countryside in the AONB and beyond. I feel fortunate to have counted her as a friend and especially remember her kind support to my wife and I on our many ASNHSoc. residentials that she was keen to support. We have all lost a dear friend.

Chris and Claire Winnick.

David Wrigley receives “Outstanding Branch Volunteer” Award 2022

We are delighted to announce that David Wrigley, Volunteer Warden at our Myers Allotment Reserve in Silverdale, has been awarded one of the Outstanding Branch Volunteer awards at Butterfly Conservation’s national Members Day last November. We are very proud of David and immensely grateful for all the hard-work that he has put in over the last 12 years at the reserve and also on our committee.

David has managed and run Lancashire’s 7.1 ha Myers Allotment Reserve in Silverdale since it was acquired in March 2011. David joined the committee at this time to enable him to be the Branch Reserve Officer (now Volunteer Warden), and he has held this post ever since, being a committed and enthusiastic committee member.

David has diligently and unstintingly overseen the site over the last 12 years ensuring that work is carried out to the prescription set by the CSA agreements, organising and managing both contractors and volunteers, running once or twice weekly scrub management work parties on the site throughout the winter months, attending all but just a small handful himself.

David manages conservation grazing on the site, repair of dry-stone walls, tree inspection surveys, annual butterfly walks, oversees 2 transects whilst also walking his own on another local site, weekly monitoring over 70 nest boxes on the reserve and generally always being on-hand.

David has, over the years, led work-parties with young people from various colleges and community groups, and Jan his wife used to prepare delicious



*David receiving his award
from Dr Dan Hoare, Direc-
tor of Conservation*

soups and stews to feed the groups which was delivered out the back of their car.

David manages and connects work at Myers with neighbours and neighbouring landowners, including the Scouts, the Golfers and the Nudists and networking local connections at the Woodlands Hotel.

University of Lancaster Symposium October 2022



On Saturday 29th October 2022 we held our 3rd Symposium at the University of Lancaster. This was very successful with 11 student presentations, both Masters and PhDs, on wide-ranging projects along with talks from Matthew Oates (The State of Butterflies in the UK today), Dr David Wainwright (The status of Butterflies and Moths in the NW) and Lee Schofield (author of High Fell) on Landscape Management: RSPB Haweswater.

The symposium was attended by approx 170 people and the feedback was very positive with people looking forward to the next one!

Events Volunteers Wanted

Could you spare some time at weekends to support the Lancashire Branch's events activity? This could be once or twice a year or more frequently if you are able. It is of course up to you how much time you can give, and we are really flexible as to how much time you can commit to. We are also able to help with travel expenses when volunteering for the branch.

We are working hard to increase our profile in the area through attending a number of events throughout the year. These could be country shows, flower and garden festivals and wildlife events. Also, there are plans to do engagement around the Big Butterfly Count in the summer in local parks. For volunteers it would involve being on a stand and talking to the public about Butterfly Conservation, Myers Allotment and what people can do themselves to help butterflies and moths. We would also be providing a children's activity on the stand so volunteers could help with this too.



So if you're enthusiastic about Butterfly Conservation and enjoy talking to people or would like to engage with children and families we would be delighted to hear from you.

If you are interested, please contact Heather Hilton at events@lancashire-butterflies.org.uk

BUTTERFLY GARDENING: WHY IT IS IMPORTANT AND HOW TO BE SUCCESSFUL. PART ONE.

In the first of a two-part series Chris Winnick looks at why we should spend a little more time gardening for butterflies and moths and associated garden wildlife. Chris says “Butterflies are a ‘bio-diversity canary in the coal mine’ and crucial for pollination.....they are also beautiful and brighten the day”. In part two he looks at the practicalities of how we can do this successfully.

I have a confession to make: I have been fascinated by butterflies and moths since childhood. I found and fed a Privet Hawkmoth caterpillar and watched it transform from an ‘eating machine’ to a pupa and then to undergo the even more incredible metamorphosis to a stunningly beautiful adult. Since moving to Kendal 12 years ago I have had more time to indulge in my love of both countryside and garden: it has been a delight to do so in such a special part of the country. However, over the years I have been shocked to see that some of the best places in the UK for butterflies have either been built over or have suffered a change in land use or management that has severely limited opportunities for wild life.....and this includes gardens.



Photo: Steve Mackay

Living in the SE of England until the early 1970's I would visit Morecambe Bay on holiday. In those early days it was wonderful to see herbaceous flower beds being given increasing prominence....after a time of lingering post war shortage when to many gardens were ‘good for fruit, vegetables, a well-tended lawn and, if time, cut flowers’. Even then, most forms of wild life in the garden were considered pests. Almost as many books were written on how to eliminate garden pests and ‘weeds’ as to how to garden. As for ‘wild life areas’ these would be untidy, a waste of productive land and encourage pests and criticism from neighbours!

In the 1960's and 1970's butterflies and moths and other pollinators were still plentiful both in gardens and in the wider countryside. How times have changed. Butterfly, moth, bee and hoverfly numbers have plummeted..... as have the number of song birds and other species dependant on them for their food supply.....and all accelerated by a common agricultural policy that rewarded food production irrespective of any damage it might cause to the environment. This, together with the resultant exponential increase in insecticides, herbicides, fertilizers, removal of hedge-rows and coppices, draining of marginal land and general intensification of production has continued at pace for the last 50 years.

This has led to the loss or degradation of most of our wild flower-rich hay-meadows and heathlands and in the Lake District a doubling in the number of sheep since the 1950's (to over 2 million) with resultant catastrophic loss in bio-diversity in our uplands. Moorlands turned over to 'game bird' production for shooting have also been a disaster for native wildlife. In addition, we continue to lose countryside every year equivalent to the size of Bristol to urban growth; as one of the most densely populated countries in the world pressures on limited resources are mounting.

This worrying picture has been made significantly worse by the near cessation of coppicing and woodland management in our many broad-leaved woodlands with closure of rides and glades and loss of light penetration leading to an impoverished woodland understorey and ground flora. With 40% of our broadleaved woodland lost (the UK is one of the most woodland-impoverished countries in Europe), 98% of our flower-rich meadows removed and 200,000 miles of hedgerow replaced by fencing then the challenge for us all is clear.

However there is a further threat to our flora and fauna.....climate change. It is true that climate has always changed and wildlife has always sought to adapt but through the continued rise in harmful greenhouse gas emissions our wonderful plant and animal life simply cannot adapt at this pace without severe decline and loss. (Plants face the same problem with the

RHS recently announcing that they will move some of their southern collections to Harlow Carr).

Environmental charities like Butterfly Conservation, the RSPB, the NT and the Wildlife Trusts are doing herculean work in the countryside to try and maintain bio-diversity in key areas however this is not enough. We need a change in the way payments are made to land owners and managers and here we can be more optimistic as in future government payments will recognise not just food production but soil and water quality, bio-diversity and carbon sequestration. We also need to value our precious land more and manage for the wellbeing of all.

As gardeners and lovers of gardens we can play a huge role in helping to maintain great gardens and a thriving population of at least 24 of our 58 species of butterfly that regularly breed in the UK.....and most are in South Lakeland! We can also help our populations of moths, (a gardener in Kendal has recorded over 600 species of moth in his urban garden over recent years) bees, hoverflies and other fauna that contribute so much to the vital need for pollination. However, gardeners beware...there are some worrying trends and pressures that we must resist!

At a time when our gardens and parks have never been more needed in helping maintain bio-diversity we are urged to turn our front gardens into car parks, our back gardens into decking, chippings and plastic grass and if we really need to buy plants then to buy ones that have had all the nectar and pollen removed or made inaccessible to insects...our beautiful and valuable pollinators upon which so much depends. Gardens cover more than a million hectares of land in the UK and in urban areas (where 85% of the population reside) can represent half of all green space. However, gardens remain under attack: in 2005 7% of front gardens were completely paved but today, as we are urged to 'drop the curb' by programmes like 'Homes Under the Hammer' it is near to 40% that are paved and covered in parked cars.



Marsh Fritillary

Four species of butterfly and over 60 species of moth have become extinct in the UK during the last century and research by Butterfly Conservation shows 75% of all UK species of butterfly had declined in abundance or range over the last 40 years.....some by up to 90%. Of the 58 species that regularly breed in the UK we can broadly divide them into two groups: habitat specialists and wider countryside

species. The former are usually rare and localised being adapted to niche habitats that tend to have their own special climatic, micro-climatic and geologic and topographic conditions that create a specialist assemblage of plants. These butterflies are usually single brooded, have caterpillars that feed on only one or two specific plants and as adults rarely fly far from their known colony. In short they are very 'fussy' and least likely to survive rapid change or being pushed out of their comfort zone and least likely to visit gardens.

South Cumbria and Morecambe Bay is the country's leading area for many of these rare specialists with nationally important populations of Fritillary butterflies including the UK's two rarest butterflies (the High Brown Fritillary and the Pearl-bordered Fritillary) together with the Silver-washed, Small Pearl-bordered and Dark Green Fritillary. All these butterflies rely heavily on woodland glades with abundant dog violet although the last two will also fly in more open areas. The North West is also home to the rare Marsh Fritillary, the Duke of Burgundy, Northern Brown Argus, Large Heath, Mountain Ringlet, Scotch Argus, Brown Hairstreak, Green Hairstreak, Dingy Skipper, Grayling and Small Blue. All of these species require habitats that would make garden visits unlikely unless a garden was next to a woodland glade or species rich limestone grassland.

The good news is that Morecambe Bay is also home to 24 species that could much more readily be tempted to visit a butterfly friendly garden and these include members of the Pieridae or 'White' family (Large and Small Whites, Green-veined White, Orange Tip, Clouded Yellow and Brimstone); the Satyrinae or 'Brown' family (Meadow Brown, Gatekeeper, Ringlet, Speckled Wood, Small Heath and Wall) the Lycaenidae or 'Blue/Hairstreak/Copper' family (Common Blue, Holly Blue, Purple and White-letter Hairstreaks and Small Copper) the Nymphalinae or 'Vanessid' family (Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Comma and Painted Lady) and the Hesperiiidae or 'Skipper' family (Large and Small Skipper).

Most gardeners know that these wider countryside species have their favourite garden plants that allow better access to good supplies of nectar.....crucial food to provide the energy they need to live longer and have more opportunity to mate and produce fertile eggs for future generations. However, there are some simple guidelines on how you can help turn a butterfly neutral garden into a haven for butterflies, moths, bees and wildlife without too much work or expense.....and have a lovely garden. In part two of this article, I will provide a range of tips on how you can really make a difference no matter whether you own a large garden or a window box!

Chris Winnick

A Lancashire Butterfly Report for 2022.

This report is less thematic and more a chronology of highlights from the Lancashire Butterfly Conservation website sightings pages for North Lancashire..... and occasionally from a little further south!

The year started slowly with a scatter of PEACOCK records from **JANUARY** and a



Photo: Jane Jones

solitary BRIMSTONE on 27th **FEBRUARY** from Silverdale: both species hibernate as adults and probably regret breaking their state of torpor by a short-lived imitation of 'Spring'. Early **MARCH** saw the occasional sighting of SMALL TORTOISESHELL and then on 15.03.22 four Brimstone and a COMMA put in an appearance at Myers Allotment in Silverdale. As temperatures picked up warm sun invited Peacocks to emerge from hibernation and on 22.03.22 twenty-one Small Tortoiseshell were recorded at Miss Whalley's Field, Lancaster. SMALL WHITE and SPECKLED WOOD were the first non-hibernating butterflies to appear from pupation on 23.03.22 with HOLLY BLUE and ORANGE TIP emerging on 25.03.22. Four species were seen at Warton Crag on 27.03.22 [Brimstone, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and Holly Blue] my favourite Spring butterfly site in N. Lancashire! [JANUARY-MARCH 8 SPECIES recorded.]

APRIL saw the species count rise with GREEN HAIRSTREAK appearing at Crowthorn Quarry on 13.04.22 and at Clougha Pike, Quernmore, a day later. Also on the same day RED ADMIRAL, Peacock, Orange Tip and Brimstone were seen at Warton Crag with GREEN-VEINED WHITE appearing on 17.03.22. We all have our favourite spring sites to visit but where else in North West England other than at Warton Crag [20.04.22] can you still see not

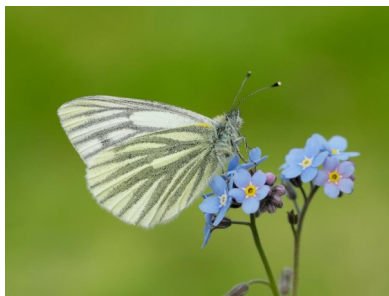


Photo: Iain Leach

only Speckled Wood, Peacock, Orange Tip, Holly Blue, Brimstone and Green Hairstreak but also 14 PEARL-BORDERED FRITILLARY [PBF] and 2 DINGY SKIPPER other than at this amazingly early and beautiful site? Sadly, the answer is 'nowhere else in Lancashire' as this is now the only site left with a colony of the nationally rare PBF. The better news is that the regular winter work parties run by AONB conservation volunteers on this site are invaluable and help meet the butterflies demanding and specialist habitat requirements. LARGE WHITE put in a first appearance on 21.04.22 at Myer's Allotment and the SMALL HEATH emerged at Warton Crag on

27.04.22. taking advantage of the exceptionally warm micro-climate that can be found in some of the more sheltered SW facing parts of this large site. The month ended with 12 species being recorded at Warton Crag on 29.04.22 in a single visit including 14 Pearl-bordered Fritillary, 12 Brimstone, 11 Dingy Skipper and a remarkable 10 Holly Blue. [7 NEW SPECIES were recorded in APRIL and a total number of 15 species were seen for both the month and year.]

MAY started with the WALL appearing further south at Birkdale Dunes on 02.05.22 and 4 DUKE OF BURGUNDY were recorded at Gait Barrows NNR on 06.05.22.... a further 4 'Dukes' were seen there on 08.05.22; 3 on 09.05.22, 6 on 14.05.22 and 3 including a mating pair four days later. These are dangerously low numbers for this rare and specialised butterfly that lived in 30-40 colonies across Morecambe Bay as late as the 1980's but will only survive at this last remaining Lancashire site with plenty of caterpillar food plant [Primrose and Cowslip] and 'tailor-made' scrub management. COMMON BLUE emerged to the south at Wigan Flashes on 08.05.22 [not until 15.05.22 at Warton Crag.] and 12 SMALL COPPER were reported from Speke and Garston Coastal Reserve on 10.05.22. SMALL PEARL-BORDERED FRITILLARIES [SPBF] were first seen on 14.05.22 at Warton Crag flying along side the few remaining 'tatty' PBF and 8 other spring species. [5 NEW SPECIES were recorded in MAY giving a yearly total of 20 SPECIES.]

JUNE, like much of May, had mixed weather not always conducive to the needs of butterflies or the spotting and recording of butterflies. To the south



Photo: Allan Drewitt

the first LARGE SKIPPER was noted [02.06.22] at Martin Mere and numbers of Common Blue at Wigan Flashes reached an impressive 54 on 04.06.22. where MEADOW BROWN were first recorded on the same day. NORTHERN BROWN ARGUS emerged at Warton Crag on 07.06.22 and at Myers Allotment on 14.06.22. Last year

it was late May when they appeared with most sightings running a week later than 2021. PAINTED LADY and DARK GREEN FRITILLARY were seen at Ainsdale NNR [08.06.22] and SMALL SKIPPER [14.06.22] at Heywood. Those on the Butterfly Conservation guided walk on 17.06.22 saw freshly emerged RINGLET at Heysham NR and 5 LARGE HEATH at Heysham Moss.... a disappointing number given it was 21oC and 50% sun. SPBF generally did not do well on Warton Crag however numbers reported from sites in the Quernmore area were most pleasing with 32 spotted at Birk Bank Bog on 16.06.22 and an impressive 58 reported there on 21.06.22. It was also good to see that 5 Dark Green Fritillary were seen at Myer's Allotment [21.06.22] and at Noyna Hill 15 Common Blue and 65 Meadow Brown were reported [23.06.22]. WHITE-LETTERED HAIRSTREAK first emerged on the same day in Blackpool Gardens but not until 8 days later was one recorded in Lancaster. Also of interest is the appearance of an adult Brimstone on 25.06.22..... was this the last of the hibernators [the Brimstone is our longest-lived adult butterfly] or the first of the summer emergence? [9 NEW SPECIES were recorded in JUNE giving a yearly total of 29 SPECIES.]

JULY was the start of a two-month period of exceptional sunshine and higher than average temperatures and also a period of CLOUDED YELLOW migration.... brought in by favourable prevailing winds from the south. The first record was from Lancaster [01.07.22] but they were also recorded on 24th and 27th of July and on the 11th, 14th and 27th August.....mostly on or near the



Photo: Mark Joy

Lancashire coast. Five GRAYLING were noted at Warton Crag [03.07.22] along with 25 Ringlet, 3 Small Skipper, 1 Small Tortoiseshell and nothing else! There was a time when many large fritillaries would also have been seen at this time of year, especially High Brown, but alas they have almost certainly ceased to breed on the Crag. GATEKEEPER and PURPLE HAIRSTREAK appeared to the south at Ainsdale NNR [05.07.22] and on the same

day over 250 butterflies were seen at Myer's Allotment including 51 Small Skipper, 58 Meadow Brown and 143 Ringlet. By 07.07.22 there was just one



Essex Skipper—showing the Black tips to the antenna which are missing on the Small Skipper)

Photo: Bob Eade

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary left at Birk bank Bog. Although some distance south it is worth recording that on 08.07.22 ESSEX SKIPPER was confirmed with clear photographic evidence at Fog Lane Park, Manchester, with a further sighting days later. How long will it be before this species moves north as it has done in NE England? By this time Ringlet numbers had 'exploded' on some sites with one reporting '500'! Also, large numbers of other grass feeding species were

reported.... notably Small Skipper, Meadow Brown and Gatekeeper. [5 NEW SPECIES were recorded in July giving a yearly total of 34 SPECIES]

AUGUST continued the trend with 'high summer' species enjoying a lengthened flight period well into September. At Starr Hills coastal dunes [Poulton-le-Fylde] six species were seen including 6 Small Copper, 40 Meadow Brown, 76 Common Blue and 151 Grayling. Many texts still say we only have a single generation of Common Blue in the NW but our 2nd generation is often best! There have been reports over the last few years of possible sightings of SILVER-WASHED FRITILLARIES in the south of Lancashire [to add to the very occasional record from Gait Barrow] however this year clear photographic evidence shows SWF on the wing on 3rd, 7th, 8th and 20th August across a wide area of south



Photo: Mark Joy

Lancashire. Contrary to expectations this large fritillary may colonise from the south and not from just across the river Kent where it has been within

10 minutes flight for at least 30 years! Again, some outstanding records from further south should be included notably from Ogden Clough near Pendle where an astonishing 18 species were recorded on 09.08.22. [For those who like abbreviations the following were recorded: Br1, Co 5, Gk 3, GVW 3, LSk 1, LW h 1, MB 15, PL 3, P 24, RA 10, R 2, SCo 4, SH2, SSk 15, ST 5, SW h 6, SWo 1, W 5, and 3 days later we can add a single DGF!] On 13.08.22 the first BROWN HAIRSTREAK was recorded at Gait Barrow NNR with further sightings nearby and just across the Cumbrian border on 24th and 25th August. This butterfly has been spreading over a wide area of suitable habitat for at least 20 years and this should

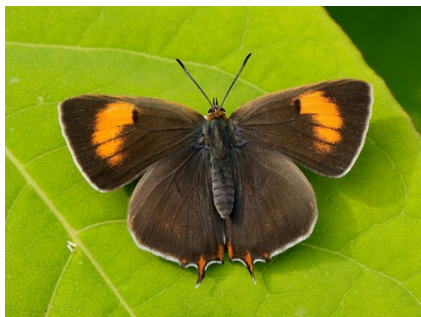


Photo: Iain Leach

encourage land owners and managers to consider how best to manage Blackthorn: at present too much is flailed by those who simply do not know about the presence of this nationally rare species. The good spring show of Holly Blue led to many 2nd generation sightings.... most notably at Nether Kellett where 15 were seen on 15.08.22 in the Hawthorn's Caravan Park. Peacocks put in a disappointing show before most went into early hibernation however a Red Admiral 'boom' resulted in 30 seen at Fell End at Slack Head and 22 at Meadow View near Lancaster. Clouded Yellow were seen in Carnforth, Silverdale, Cockerham and Longridge Fell between 27th-30th of August with this welcome continental migrant still on the wing in early September. [2 NEW SPECIES were recorded in August giving a yearly total of 36 SPECIES.]

SEPTEMBER started with good weather that suited Meadow Browns [34 seen at Meadow View and 24 at Caton Moor, Lancaster on 04.09.22] and Small White with an impressive 48 to be found at Bank End farm Lancaster [02.09.22]. Altogether 14 SPECIES were still on the wing at a time when more often than not the 'butterfly season' comes to a much more abrupt end with the onset of September. The last sighting of Common Blue came

from 07.09.22 and by the last two weeks of the month most sightings were of Small and Green-veined Whites, Speckled Woods and members of the 'Vanessid' family seeking garden nectar sources to help them prepare for hibernation. In **OCTOBER** last brood Small Coppers were seen in reasonable numbers [8 were spotted in Lancaster Cemetery on 18.10.22] giving a total of 8 SPECIES reported for the month. In **NOVEMBER** just 5 SPECIES were seen and all were hibernators.....the last being a Brimstone on Myer's Allotment on 22.11.22. With the arrival of arctic air at the start of **DECEMBER** you will not be too surprised to note that no other butterfly sightings have been reported!

In conclusion it is a sadness that over the last few years North Lancashire may have lost its final High Brown colonies and be down to just one colony of Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Duke of Burgundy however to see 36 species so far north [many southern areas would be delighted to have so many] does show that we are still one of the country's foremost areas for diverse habitat and diverse butterfly lepidoptera. Long may this continue.

Chris Winnick.

Transience

I love those places where Man and Industry have moved out, and Nature is making a bold effort to re-conquer. The butterflies love them too. There are, or have been, so many in our county: abandoned coal mines (the last major one, Parkside, closed in 1993), slag heaps, stone, gravel and sand quarries, iron and steel works, clay pits/brick works, disused railway lines/yards, chemical works, sludge lagoons, bleach, dyeing and print works, rubbish tips, demolition sites ...

One such site quite near to me is the Stretford tip, at the end of Poplar Road, Stretford and also accessible from Lesley Road on the Stretford/Urmston boundary. Latterly, it has tended to be labelled as "Streford

Meadows”, but as my two dictionaries define “meadow” as, respectively, “a low, level tract of grassland pasture ground” and “a tract of rich pasture land; land yielding hay; low grassland by the banks of rivers”, I do not consider this title very appropriate. There were meadows here once: in my childhood in the 1950s Poplar Road was a long winding lane passing through them, and I decidedly did not like to see the fields and the lane steadily but surely disappearing during the next two decades under a hideous rubbish tip – forty-five hectares of it. Tipping however ceased in the 1980s, and in my 1998 book on butterflies of Greater Manchester I included the first photograph reproduced here, with the caption “The reclaimed Stretford tip, SJ7893/4, iii.1997. A fine example of habitat re-creation, quickly colonised by *T.sylvestris*, *O.venata*, *L.phlaeas*, *P.icarus*, *A.urticae*, *I.io* and *M.jurtina* [Small Skipper, Large Skipper (now *O.sylvanus*), Small Copper, Common Blue, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Meadow Brown], further species occur in the shelter-belts bordering the grassland.”



Seventeen butterfly species have been recorded at this site. Of those mentioned, the Small Copper did not last long (last seen 1997) and the Common Blue became very scarce – I did see one in 2022 but it had the appearance of a stray on passage, not one of a resident population. On the plus side, the Speckled Wood colonised in 1997 and the Gatekeeper in 2003. The other species mentioned above still occur but in reduced numbers – a glance at the second photograph, which was taken in December 2022 from as near as practicable to the same spot as the 1997 one, will explain why. As well as scrub, huge expanses of Rose-bay willowherb and bramble have taken over what was once good grassland. The Narrow-bordered Five-spot

Burnet moth *Zygaena lonicerae*, which in some years, notably 2003, 2006 and 2014, could be seen in hundreds, has vanished. During my lifetime I have seen the biotope change from low-grade agricultural meadows to a vast tip, then to superb grassland ideal for butterflies, and now to something not quite so good. I should perhaps add though that another colonist – the Ringlet – appeared in 2022.

These sites – the Stretford tip and all the other types of habitat that I mentioned in the first paragraph – don't remain static; far from it, either a dynamic process of natural succession occurs or else they get modified or destroyed by human hands. Take the collieries: it is at least thirty years since they closed, it is longer since railway lines closed; what in the 1990s may have been very good regenerating habitat with short rough grass, low-fertility soil and abundant host-plants and nectar flowers is now likely to be dense closed-canopy woodland – if it hasn't been man-modified or built over.

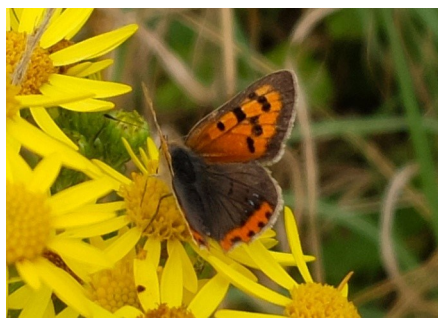
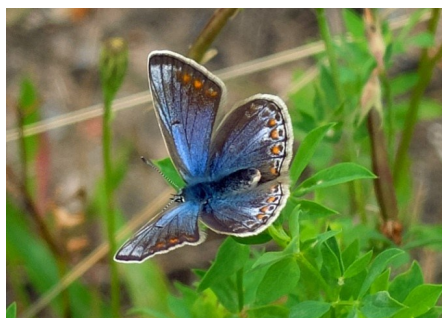
During 2022 I aimed to look for a lot more of these former industrial sites. I did a fair amount of travelling and recording especially around the coalfield; by catching a bus to the “Trafford centre” I could connect with a number of services, to Eccles, Swinton, Bolton, Wigan, Leigh, Warrington and



intermediate once-industrial settlements, so access to potential sites was easy. Here is the Cutacre “country park”, once an opencast mine but which after some years of disuse is now owned by “Logistics North”, who have built huge warehouses over the northern half of the site, but

have reserved a token 26 hectares for management by the Lancashire Wildlife Trust as a wildlife habitat – at least, that is the measurement quoted by the wildlife trust; in the “Logistics” publicity media they state that

the area of the “country park” is 558 acres, which equates to 225.815 hectares! The site has been changed out of all recognition; I hesitate to describe it now as even semi-natural, though some butterflies thrive there: in the spring I found Orange-tips, including along the very highly modified and channelled Cutacre Brook shown in the photograph, and later in the season I confirmed the presence of a good colony of Common Blues – see photograph of a rather splendid blue female. Quite a few other former collieries and the like have been turned into “country parks”; the tendency is for them to become ever more and more developed for human recreation; some, such as Bickershaw, haven’t yet gone too far, but at, say, the well-known Pennington Flash it is even more of a challenge to see the remotest resemblance to what it was in the 1990s ...



One of the eight Small Coppers I managed to see in 2022, just TWO were within Greater Manchester: one of those was at Cutacre – the one in the photograph – and the other was at Bickershaw. In the 1990s this species occurred in numbers through most of the Manchester conurbation, often on small patches of “waste” land, including near the centre of Salford – in 1995, I recorded 124 of them. So did the Wall – my 1995 total was 134, my 2022 was 0. Their habitats have gone: so have they.

Talking of Small Coppers, I was very surprised this summer when someone on “iRecord” recorded one from a site apparently in the middle of the SportCity (which, incidentally, is on another former coal mine, the Bradford

Colliery, which closed in 1968). I queried the record but was assured that it was genuine and that the biotope was managed for wildlife including



butterflies and several other grassland species occurred there. In reply I admitted that I did know a good although small site for grassland butterflies quite close to the SportCity, at the end of Upper Helena Street and also accessible by a bridge across the river Medlock between Holt Town and

Ethad metro stations. I spoke too soon! I had visited this site annually for some years and had recorded thirteen butterfly species (though not the Small Copper) in 2019-2021 – but when I tried it in September 2022 ... Oh NO!!! – oh, of course, I forgot ... it needed “tidying up”, didn’t it? Sadly, I never photographed it before the mowers got at it, so I cannot show a comparison before and after the damage, only this picture of the green desert into which it has been turned. Suffice it to say that this is by no means the only site I have known around Manchester where this has happened and a formerly quite promising little habitat has been mown into a desert. I can only hope that some of the butterflies from there have found refuge at the hidden site in the SportCity.



Here are two photographs taken in Salford in October 2022. Both show places where schools once stood and had been demolished several years ago; the first was St. Clement’s C. of E. Primary school on Robert Hall Street and the second was Windsor High School on Churchill Way. Notice the

difference: the first has developed into a very fair grassland-and-woodland with fourteen butterfly species recorded during the last four years; the second, which in 2014 had seemed every bit as promising as the other, has rather gone the way of the Upper Helena Street site, and just managed to scrape up five species during those four years.

Now for some more comparisons of how locations looked twenty-five years ago and how they look now: on the 19th of March 1997, I walked around districts to the north of the centre of Manchester taking photographs of habitats for possible inclusion in my book “Butterflies of Greater Manchester”, which was then in preparation; I used three photographs from that day in the book. On the 2nd of December 2022, a little over twenty-five years after the above walk, I attempted to re-photograph the sites from as near as possible the same positions, and here are the results (photos overleaf), side-by-side with the 1997 views, plus one more that was not in the book:

The original captions for the three used in the book were:

‘Manchester Cathedral, SJ8398, iii.1997. No breeding habitat, but *P.rapae*, *V.atalanta* and *A.urticae* have been recorded nectaring on a buddleia bush in the centre foreground.’ [Small White, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell]

‘Waste land and demolition at Verdon Street and “Scotland”, behind Manchester Victoria station, SJ8499, iii.1997. Pioneering vegetation and buddleias provide hostplant-habitat and nectar sources for several butterfly species.’

‘Disused railway at New Allen Street, Ancoats, SJ8599, iii.1997. A regenerating site, probably short-lived, but providing habitat for *P.brassicae*, *P.rapae*, *P.icarus*, *V.atalanta*, *V.cardui*, *A.urticae*, *I.io*, *L.megea*, *M.jurtina*.’ [Large White, Small White, Common Blue, Red Admiral, Painted Lady, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Wall, Meadow Brown]

Not long after I had published the book in 1998, one Paul Greenall rang me in great excitement to tell me that he had just been to the Verdon Street/Scotland site and seen a Clouded Yellow going to roost; he hoped that I



would be able to go there with him the following day and photograph it. I wasn't able to go, but the value of the biotope was quite clear.

The 2022 view of the cathedral doesn't look all that different, except that a building to the right has gone and there is a tree visible, but the reality is that the buddleias have gone, so that as well as there being no breeding habitat there is now no nectar habitat, and there are no butterflies.

As for the Verdon Street/Scotland site, well, the river Irk is still there, and so is the bank-side street named "Scotland", but otherwise ... the photograph says it all.

At New Allen Street and the disused railway, although the truncated elevated structure looks the same, note the difference in the foreground: I could not get to the place for exactly the same view because of impenetrable scrub rapidly progressing to climax woodland. The adjacent biotope where the butterflies used to abound is still present, but vastly changed in character due mainly to succession and in recent years I have found very few butterflies there.

The location shown in the third row is the one which I did not select for the book, but I have included it here as I consider it to be of some significance. It shows a bridge over the river Irk from Collyhurst Road, leading up a slope to the former Newtown carriage sidings, and to the right a long footbridge spanning where those sidings used to be. Again, looking at the second photograph, at first glance the view does not seem all that much different, apart from taller trees in the background – but, believe me, it is! The footbridge used to lead to Barney's Tip, which following cessation of tipping a good many years ago had developed into what was surely the best wildlife haven within a mile radius of the centre of Manchester. It held a superb flora, including lots of Bee Orchids; the abundant legumes especially Bird's-foot Trefoil and Meadow Vetchling supported a good colony of the Common Blue and an even better one of the Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet moth; in the autumn large swathes of Michaelmas Daisies attracted Nymphalids.... In about 2003 the former tip started being built over, with

the “Manchester Fort” shopping centre encroaching, though at that time quite a lot of the habitat remained, and there was a path running north-south through it, connecting the footbridge with Queen’s Road. On four days in 2007 I saw Clouded Yellows there – vying with Mr. Greenall’s 1998 sighting at Verdon Street/Scotland mentioned above – but that was the last time I saw this species in (or anywhere near) Manchester. The habitat has now completely gone; following the “Fort”, various warehouses, the “Irish town” and latterly a school have encroached on to it and any green that remains is behind an impregnable high fence. The former carriage sidings also used to be of great interest: the steep west bank produced a warm microclimate; low-fertility lime-rich soil supported hostplants; abundant buddleias provided a mass of autumn nectar, and a woodland with glades and rides developed along where the railway track used to be. Referring again to the species I have mentioned several times in this article, the Small Copper, I saw two there in 2019, those being my last sightings of this species anywhere near the city centre. Now, the whole site had been fenced off and is being bulldozed for building.

It seemed, so sadly, in 2022 that nearly everywhere I went around Manchester, and further into Lancashire, one-time good sites were disappearing, either by being built over or modified out of recognition for “amenity” purposes, or by becoming unsuitable as natural succession had progressed further than their transient stage of suitability for butterflies.

Here is another example of what I look for during a recording walk, a bit further out from the city. On the 23rd of September 2022 I walked up the “Salford Trail” from Forest Bank to the Clifton country-park: some grassland at the start but for most of the way continuous woodland, very beautiful and no doubt just ideal for attracting the public into the river valley (in this case the Irwell) but not exactly abounding in butterflies. I had managed just three Speckled Woods and one Small White and none at all for some distance when at SD792034, just by a bridge where a former railway line went overhead, I came across a small fenced site where industrial buildings

had been demolished and vegetation including buddleias was in the process of taking over, and here added three further species to my day's total. Here are pictures of the site and some of what was in it:



In conclusion: I wonder how long this site will last? It is on the north side of Great Ancoats Street, Manchester; it used to be a large “retail park” if that is the correct expression, with big stores including “Toys Я Us”; its current use (unofficially) is for skateboarding, and its vegetation, again, is such that draws butterflies in the autumn – not that many, but some. I’d infinitely rather see somewhere like this than a pretty tended garden.



Peter B. Hardy

Dalton Crag 15th October 2022

A Practical Introduction to Leaf-mining

The predicted weather for this long-planned leaf-mine session on the edge of Lancashire's upland limestone was not very promising. Strong winds and bouts of heavy rain were forecast and so it was with trepidation that eleven hardy souls gathered in the car park at Dalton Craggs quarry. As we donned wet-weather gear for the 10am start, the sun was shining and the sheltered area amongst trees had us wondering if we'd be overdressed for the day. With participants having travelled from all points of the compass for this event, including NE England, Cheshire, Cumbria, and East Lancashire, we were determined to make the most of the good weather while it lasted.

The event organiser, Justine Patton, gave a brief introduction to the area we would be walking in, which included mature planted deciduous woodland, limestone grassland and scrub. The range of trees, shrubs and other plant species meant we had a reasonable chance of finding a good range of leaf-mining moth species.

Ben Smart, the event leader, then briefed us on the various mine forms we'd be encountering and the various pitfalls of leaf damage, fly mines etc. A print out of plants and their associated leaf-miners was provided to aid identification, although with a good mix of beginners and more experienced recorders present, there was plenty of opportunity to ask questions and present mines to be identified or not as the case might be! As always, an event of this type tests us all and not all mines found were identified to species level – this was the case when the mines were old and the larva had vacated.

With the sun still on our backs we got to the edge of the Car Park and, as is so often the case with events of this type, that's as far as we got in the first 40 minutes or so! Records were coming thick and fast with a hawthorn bush producing a few species here, a willow producing a few species there and birch being remarkably clean of most feeding signs, something we found

across the site during the day. The Apple leaf-miner (*Lyonetia clerkella*) was one early find and it proved an excellent teaching point from the off. The mines of this moth were found on cherry and birch and looked like they should belong to the Nepticulidae (Neps. for short), a family which contains our smallest moths and with around 100 species in Britain. But no, the apple leaf-miner is in a different family and the absence of an egg at the start of the mine was lesson number one for the day. The Neps. (for short) retain their egg and although minute, they can nearly always be seen with a lens – lesson number two – a hand lens is a must for this sort of moth recording.

As the group spread out, one of only two moths seen as an adult (*Acleris emargana*) was found doing a good impression of a partially damaged leaf. The finder admitted if she hadn't been looking for mines it would have readily escaped her attention. In the end most of our records were on trees or shrubs but in the lower limestone grassland, tenanted mines (mines with a larva in them) were found on wild (or was it barren?) strawberry. This was *Ectoedemia arcuatella*, only otherwise noted in our area at Warton Crag and Gait Barrows NNR. The first county record occurred when Justine came across them on Warton Crag exactly five years ago, to the day, of our event. The species has been known in nearby Cumbria, at Arnside, for many years and must be an overlooked but very local resident in Lancashire.



Mines of *Ectoedemia arcuatella* on wild strawberry

With a good selection of species under our belts, we finally left the Car Park and quarry and headed uphill. Initially this took us through an area of planted but mature Beech trees where the usual four species of miners were quickly added to the list (two *Phyllonorycter* and two *Stigmella*). The higher we got, the more the vegetation opened up, and here we encoun-

tered straggly rose bushes where the attractive tenanted mines of *Stigmella anomalella* were present. Higher still and blackthorn and birch added a few extra species to our list, but the latter which can have about a dozen species on it at some sites, only produced records of three species during the day.



Mines of *Stigmella anomalella* on rose

Eventually we reached an open area where the wind was suddenly much more noticeable and a few brief showers interrupted our lunch break. Both south and north of us, with views out over Morecambe Bay, we could see large storm clouds drifting by, but luckily we missed the worst of these. In these open areas recording was becoming difficult and few extra species were noted. In a grike amongst the limestone pavement, a hart's-tongue fern had the distinctive mines and sporangia cases of *Psychoides filicivora* whilst sitting alongside the case was a recently emerged adult of this species.

We started back down the hill and despite examination of several plants of interest we failed to add any additional species. As we gathered round the leader back in the car park, we totted up our list and found we'd recorded 33 Lepidoptera species in all, this including one butterfly, a Red Admiral. Not bad for a windy and cool day in mid-October and probably an average rather than good haul. We left. However, with the great satisfaction of a visit well worth the effort and a good range of records added to the county moth database.

Steve Palmer

Recording Butterflies and Moths - lessons with a historic perspective

Stephen Palmer

Research for the forthcoming book on Lancashire's Moths has been a real eye-opener in terms of how we, as butterfly and moth enthusiasts, make notes of what we see and let other people know of these sightings. Regardless of whether you are making and submitting records, or receiving and storing them, the many changes, particularly in the last few decades, have been seismic in proportions.

Two things struck me when I started delving back into historic data. The first related to how the sightings were reported (or not) and the second was the longer-term retention and storage of that information.

So, let us take a step back in time. As, sadly, I have not come across any records from Lancastrian Ladies prior to the 1940s, we must consider a gentleman who has decided to go out and record moths in 1843. His name is R. S. Edleston and on the 10th May 1843, he wrote a note for a journal, called *The Zoologist*, about a visit he made to Chat Moss, near Manchester (Edleston, 1843). Even before we come to the records he made, one immediate change can be noted – the area Mr Edleston visited was huge compared to today's Mossland remnants in that area. On his visit, he recounts how he lured male Emperor Moths to a recently bred female. Once again, the changes are apparent, as many modern-day recorders carry round a pheromone lure to attract male Emperors. But I digress. What was really astounding to me was that his visit was in April 1843, only a few weeks before this event was documented in print. Some Journals were even run on a weekly basis (*The Entomologist's Weekly Intelligencer* for example). This was over 175 years ago and you could, for the price of a few old pennies, read all about peoples finds withing a week of them being made.

As a recorder of Lepidoptera in 2023, quite a few things have changed since R. S. Edleston's day. Take the Lancashire Moth Group (LMG) for example. We have only been around since 1995 and yet the differences in how records are kept, sent in and stored have changed out of all proportion. Prior to 1995, we were using notebooks, pencils (some of us dinosaurs still proudly do, as it's amazing how they never seem to run low on battery power or lack an internet signal!), and card index systems. In 1995, along came MapMate (MM) and we thought it was the best thing since sliced bread, until we realised all those paper records submitted over many years needed to be entered (this never would have been possible without the incredible help and time put in by Kevin McCabe – thanks Kev.).

But what of Mr Edleston's records. We know about the male Emperor moths he saw because he submitted that information via a publication, but what else did he record? Well fortunately he and others did submit notes to journals and to other authors, such as J. W. Ellis in 1890 and W. Mansbridge in 1940, who put together county lists. But these were very basic summaries and it is concerning to think what was seen but never listed for posterity. How common and widespread (based on records) was the now extinct Sword-grass moth? We simply don't know because for many years it was noted as common – no dates, no locations and no recorders names. These vital bits of information are lost forever.

Using the many technological advances, recording wildlife has become as easy as clicking a button. Sightings can be placed direct onto recording Apps, or spreadsheets created for upload. And the options keep expanding, from MapMate, to Lancashire Moths on-line Spreadsheets, iRecord, iNaturalist, iSpot, NMRS online, Living Record – and these are the ones I know of. It has never been easier to record wildlife – there are even AI Apps that name the species for you (but how good are they and where is the fun in that – but that is another article for another day!). Of course, the job of dealing with this range of record sources is far from simple, but I digress once again. So, let us go back to those sightings of yours and compare them with those

made 175 years ago. Because in many ways, the issue is the same. Unless all records are documented in some way, those not listed in 1843, are the same as those not submitted in 2023.

Instead of the many different journals of yesteryear, today's Entomological Journals are few in number with the Entomologist's Record and Journal of Variation, the Entomologist's Gazette and Atropos the main ones covering Butterflies and Moths. These journals are always keen to receive notes or articles for publishing and their friendly editors are happy to offer guidance and assistance.

For the day to day 'news' on what has been seen, many people turn to Social Media systems, such as Facebook, Twitter and others. These are the modern-day version of the Entomologist's Weekly Intelligencer, are very popular and have many users. But, and this is a big BUT, they also have one crucial difference from that Emperor moth record of 175 years ago. For that, I still have access via The Zoologist, to Mr Edleston's record. But will someone researching moths for the 2123 Lancashire moth book have access to today's Facebook page, for example? The answer is, only if your sighting is submitted to your County Moth or Butterfly Recorder, or the record is documented in a Journal. Some things never change.

Edleston, R. S., 1843. Note on capture of Emperor Moth, by means of a captive female. Zoologist v.1 (1843): 199-200.

Lancashire Branch YouTube Channel

<https://bit.ly/3mMMnEf>



Have you taken a look at our collection of videos and presentations yet? We now have 16 for you to watch and enjoy, including Trevor Davenport's "Photographing Butterflies & Moths", a walk through of the branch sightings pages, and an update on the Green Recovery of Morecambe Bay Woodlands by Martin Wain.

Why not subscribe to the channel and be notified as soon as we upload anything new.

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