**Butterfly Conservation Northern Ireland**

**Chairman’s Report 2015 – 2016**

**Committee changes**

The Committee has met five times since the last AGM, and its make-up continues to be fluid. Last year Kieran Higgins joined our ranks and does a great job along with Siobhán in producing the newsletter and has also taken on the mantle of PR and fund-raising. We plan to run a crowd funding appeal to raise money to continue the good work started by the CEDaR Microlepidoptera Initiative.

During the year, Andy Crory stepped down from Committee, but most importantly, continues to be the Macromoth Recorder. A big thank you to Andy for serving on Committee. We would hope to continue to avail of the links made with Ulster Wildlife through Andy by way of future work parties for butterflies. A number of Committee members have flagged up their intention to stand down in the next few years, so succession of Committee posts and roles is a matter to be planned for with a view to continuity and smooth progression of our work. It is good to get new faces and new ideas on board and helps to prevent things becoming stale. A big thank you to all the committee and the work they do behind the scenes.

**Winter 2015/16**

The Winter Talks programme opened with a lively account of James O Neill’s adventures with butterflies abroad and closed with an interesting talk on Spiders by Adam Mantell. A talk on Cryptic Wood White by Danielle Shorthall proved most educational and enjoyable. Last year the committee introduced the new idea of a Conversazione which gave club members the opportunity to present on the invertebrates they discovered on holidays or other studies with which they have been involved. The event proved most successful and a repeat is planned for the coming year. Another memorable event on a sunny day early in the New Year was the scrub removable at Bowara, County Fermanagh to improve Dingy Skipper habitat. The club again planted holly saplings at Glasswater Wood to encourage the Holly Blue butterfly.

**Spring/ Summer 2016**

The undoubted highlight of the summer was the weekend outing to Copeland Islands organised by Siobhán. The event was well attended and apart from Manx Shearwaters, Red Admirals and Painted Ladys, Netted Pug and Sandy Carpet were recorded - and the craic was good too! Visits to Earlsgift Wood in Donemana, an under-recorded 10km square for moths, Murlough with BNFC and Kilbrannish Wood, County Carlow with BCI also were most enjoyable. The season closed with a visit to Islandmagee.

Over the spring and summer, the club made Travel and Subsistence awards available to moth recorders to encourage trapping of priority habitats and species as well as under recorded 10km squares for the forthcoming Atlas of Britain & Ireland. Species and habitats were worked out in partnership with the Macromoth Validation Group. Whilst the uptake appears to have been a little disappointing, there have been a number of notable records over the season that will give a better picture of our lepidopteran fauna for the Atlas publication. Thanks to all who made the effort to do a bit of extra recording.

**Other successes & happenings**

In November, in advance of the COP 21 summit in Paris, Butterfly Conservation took part in the Climate Justice rally outside St. Anne’s Cathedral, Belfast. Let’s hope that the agreement to limit global warming to below a 2 degree rise is achieved! Hope to see you all at future events!

A successful application was made by Abigail to the ERG Fund for £1,000 for a stereomicroscope to assist John McClean, our Microlepidoptera Recorder in his determinations.

The club was also successful in picking up the BC Outstanding Volunteer Award, for the second year running, for long time committee member, former Moth Recorder and supporter, Ted Rolston. Well deserved Ted!

A number of Club members were involved in the production of an Irish Red List for Macromoths, a great piece of work which now gives a benchmark for our moth species.

I would like to express a big thanks to Adrian Kernohan who has pulled out all the stops to get us Jeremy Thomas for the Trevor Boyd Memorial Lecture on 20th October.

A Moth dissection course given by Adam was attended by a number of interested club members and proved a useful introduction and refresher course.

A First Aid training course was organised by our new BC Officer in NI, Rose Cremin (welcome Rose!) and attended by a number of our regular field workers and event leaders. This is testament to the club’s duty of care to those attending our outdoor events.

Finally, our Facebook and Twitter continue to thrive and the Newsletter is always a good read. Membership stands at 316 individuals. So thanks again to the Committee and to Catherine and Rose for their support.