

Butterfly Conservation Wales

Gwarchod Glöynnod Byw Cymru

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment Yn achub glöynnod byw, gwyfynod a'n hamgylchedd ni

Butterfly & Moth

Glöyn Byw & Gwyfyn

The Newsletter of the South Wales Branch of Butterfly Conservation

Cylchlythyr Cangen De Cymru Gadwraeth Glöynnod Byw

Welcome to our Summer 2023 e-newsletter. The bi-annual newsletters like this one will now be solely online but we also produce a condensed paper version of the Summer and Winter issues at the end of each year for those without email.

Rosemary Royle – Editor

newsletter@southwales-butterflies.org.uk



Spring butterflies - Pictures by David Moore and Brian Southern

Summer 2023 Haf

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Photographs by Stephen Roberts, Emmanuelle Juan, Paul Denning, Rob Hillier

**DIARY DATE - SATURDAY 21ST OCTOBER - Butterfly Conservation South Wales Branch AGM and Members Day.
At Kenfig Visitor Centre. Starts 10:30. All members welcome.**

As well as the short AGM there will be a range of speakers - these are preliminary details:

Alan Sumnall, new Head of Conservation for Wales & N Ireland - "Lepidoptera sites in Gloucestershire - a personal experience"

Frank Sengpiel - "A year of Butterfly Photography based in South Wales".

Zoe Randle - BC Evidence Team, "State of UK Moths update and South Wales"

Chris Jones - "Introduction to Kenfig NNR - a warden's perspective".

Richard Smith - "South Wales branch volunteer projects - update on Brown Hairstreak & Marsh Fritillary ongoing projects".

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Some background on High Brown Fritillaries

The High Brown Fritillary was once widespread in England and Wales but since the 1950s has undergone a dramatic decline. It is now reduced to around 50 sites where conservationists are working to save it from extinction.

Britain's most endangered butterfly, the High Brown has undergone a massive decline - the population has reduced by 96% since the 1970s. Strongholds now remain on Morecambe Bay Limestones, Dartmoor, Exmoor and it is down to a single colony in Wales.

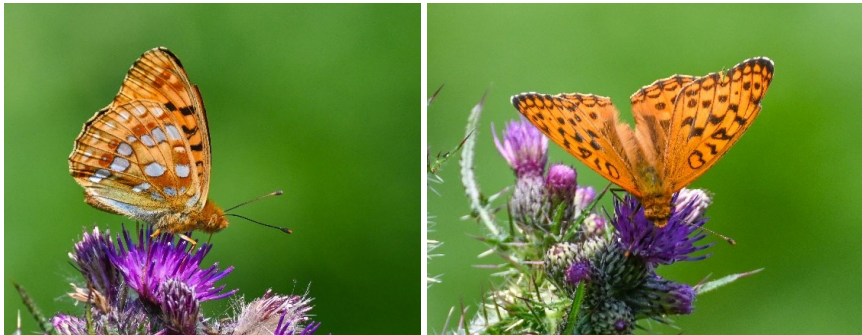
The Welsh population is found in the area between Ewenny and St Brides Major in the Vale of Glamorgan. It is the subject of much conservation effort both in habitat management and public engagement as described below by Dot Williams.



Natur Am Byth! project and the High Brown Fritillary

I'm sure many of you will be aware that the Natur Am Byth! project across Wales has secured over £4million of National Lottery Heritage Fund money spread across four years. This is great news for the High Brown Fritillary in the Vale of Glamorgan as there will be a full-time project officer appointed to oversee the project for the next four years.

Meanwhile, Richard Smith has been very busy coordinating and leading the annual butterfly counts and we have had good results so far, slightly up on 2022.



Pictures by Frank Sengpiel

We achieved our ambition of introducing cattle onto Oldcastle Down and on 15th June six Belted Galloway joined the conservation team. They are initially curious when they see a group of walkers but otherwise get on with grazing. There's been some positive feedback from local people.



Public engagement activities have been continuing, with Dot and a couple of other volunteers taking part in a very successful Pollinators Event at the National Botanic Gardens in May. We raised the profile of Butterfly Conservation and the important role butterflies play in pollination. 500 girl guides, brownies

and rainbows were at the Gardens on the first day and we must have made over 200 butterflies with them!



So far, we have had 5 guided walks with another 2 to follow and Dot is still receiving invitations to speak to various groups across the Vale of Glamorgan and Bridgend area. Some groups are kindly making donations for our work and over £200 has been raised thus far. Look out for us at the Over 50s Forum in Llantwit Major on 13th July.

A report on a High Brown Fritillary Conservation session

On Sunday 20th of October 2022, a group of volunteers including staff and students from Bridgend college, worked alongside Butterfly Conservation to improve a habitat in South Wales for the High Brown Fritillary butterfly (*Fabriciana adippe*). The high brown fritillary is a priority species in the UK, and is protected under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act.

The volunteering session with the butterfly conservation group was a great opportunity to learn about the High Brown Fritillary. We learnt how it was a specialist species requiring a habitat previously managed by humans. The food plant the High Brown Fritillary requires is a species of violet called Common Dog Violet (*Viola riviniana*), of which its caterpillars are wholly dependent on as a food source. We cleared bracken and coppiced trees in order to remove competitive plant species so the violet may bloom uninhibited. Part of the reason we were doing this was to make the area less fragmented, ensuring that the High Brown has a safe habitat to move across. The site we worked on was Ewenny Down, in the Alun Valley, which is an area of high conservation value, having numerous species of butterfly recorded in that one place. It's also one of the few sites in the UK that the High Brown Fritillaries can inhabit.

The project plan was to clear scrub to maintain a patchy mosaic of bracken and grassy areas. In addition, trees such as blackthorn and hazel were coppiced, a process involving the cutting of trees down to ground level stumps, aiding instigation of fresh growth and flowering plants. The environment produced by such management would encourage an abundance of violet growth through the bracken patches. Common Dog Violets require areas that are slightly shaded, but not too shaded, in order to flourish, and as such, this was the main objective. The High Brown Fritillary lays its eggs on dead bracken close to violet plants to survive over winter. In the spring, the larvae hatch and commence feeding upon the nearby violets. The larvae bask amongst the significantly warmer bracken foliage in between feeding, allowing for rapid larval development. Any excess scrub or trees cut down were removed from the area; in order to reduce the overall nutrients within the conservation area, which would otherwise promote the growth of 'unwanted' species such as nettles or new tree growth in areas where they weren't already present. The excess was then set alight on a controlled bonfire as there were no available areas to leave the 'waste' that wouldn't affect the conservation area.



In the future, to ensure a valuable long term habitat, it would be beneficial to manage the area with cattle grazing. Cattle traditionally are less selective with what they consume making them helpful in habitat management, they also trample over bracken which builds a good density of violets. However, up until this point regular scrub clearance is essential.

This project was a very exciting opportunity to take action to conserve not just the High Brown Fritillary Butterfly but a habitat with the potential for high biodiversity and great ecological value.

By Rebecca George, Ffion Jenkins, Rhosyn McMahon, Harvey Stanislaw, Jaiden Young.

This Newsletter is produced for Butterfly Conservation members who live in South Wales. The area covered includes Pembrokeshire, Ceredigion, Carmarthen, Glamorgan, Radnorshire, Breconshire and Monmouthshire including the cities of Swansea, Cardiff and Newport.

As you can see from the Contents list, the topics covered are very varied and include reports from habitat management projects, updates on sightings, and personal notes from members about their experiences with butterflies and moths.

This Newsletter would not exist without your contributions.

So please think about whether you could write something for the next issue, which is due out in mid-winter.

If you have any contributions, thoughts or ideas then please contact the editor, Rosemary Royle at newsletter@southwales-butterflies.org.uk.

Moth reveal events at Newport Wetlands in 2021 and 2022 by Kevin Hewitt

I volunteer for the RSPB at Newport wetlands, and as we emerged from the shadows of the Pandemic, I thought I would persuade them it would be worthwhile having a moth reveal session on days when I was volunteering there. This idea was well-received and resulted in trialling it in 2021. Some of the restrictions regarding social distancing at public events lingering on, which meant that going through the trap would take place away from the welcoming kiosk, so the 'reveal' manifested itself via specimens being displayed in pots on the table which whilst not being perfect did generate quite a lot of interest during the summer months. The positive engagement with visitors to the reserve resulted in a big thumbs-up from the senior RSPB managers. After this I was given the go-ahead to conduct regular moth reveals throughout 2022 on most Saturday mornings.

The results from 2021 were 26 trapping sessions held between 29th April and 3rd December with 188 species of macro moths logged and 100 species of micro moths logged.

Highlights included the 8th and 9th VC35 records of Kent Black Arches; the 3rd and 4th records of the under-recorded micro moth *Monochroa palustrellus*; and my first personal records of the spectacular Large Emerald and White Satin Moth.



During 2022 more moth reveals took place – a total of 34 trapping sessions held between 11th February and 25th November with 214 species of macro moths logged and 117 species of micro moths logged. Regarding the visitor engagement, the number of visitors turning up to Newport Wetlands on Saturday mornings specifically for the moth reveal was very impressive, with over ten visitors present on occasions prior to the reveal. The positive interactions with families with young children whilst the moths were on display by the welcome kiosk has proved to be a great success. Hopefully many people have been enthused to respect our native lepidoptera through their first encounter with our nocturnal friends.

The highlights for 2022 included the 1st VC35 records for Yellow Belle (on National Moth Night 21st May), Dewick's Plusia (whilst performing a reveal for the WI on 23rd September) and the small micro moth *Ptocheuusa paupella* on 19th August. It also included the 8th, 9th and 10th records of Cream-bordered Green Pea, three records of Blackneck, and 10 different species of Wainscot, including the recently established L-album Wainscot on several dates between 10th June and 7th October.



Kevin Hewitt

Photos mostly by Kevin but also George Tordoff and Rosemary Royle

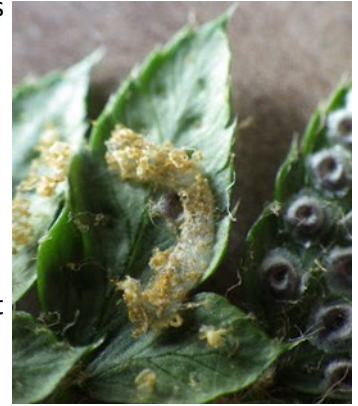
The spread of an Australian micro-moth - *Pachyrhabda steropodes*

Pachyrhabda steropodes is an Australasian species which was first recorded in the UK at Aberglasney Gardens near Llandeilo in 2006. It's been spreading quite rapidly in South Wales in recent years, now being recorded in Breconshire and Glamorgan as well as Carmarthenshire. Now an individual has been identified in Pembrokeshire by Rob Hillier in Haverfordwest on 4th May. It was found on a sycamore leaf in daylight close to Soft Shield ferns *Polystichum setiferum* which are the food plant of the caterpillar. The caterpillar makes distinctive feeding signs on the reverse of the fronds. It eats all the sporangia and creates little silken tubes for shelter.

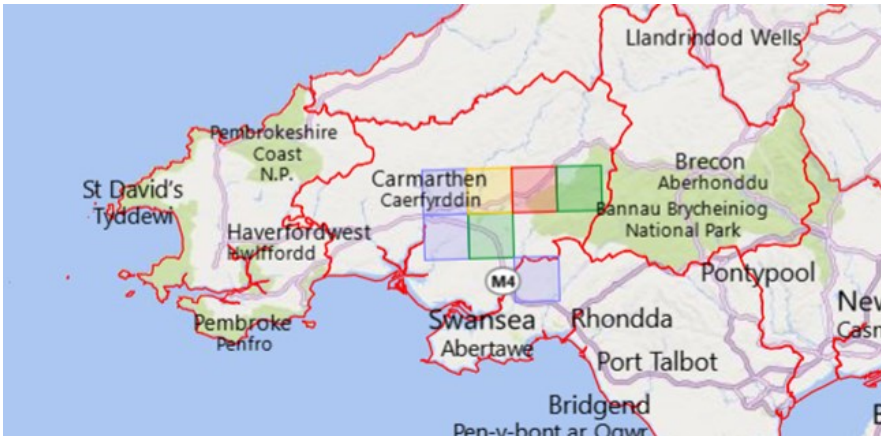


In these photos you can see one of the silken tubes created by the larva of *Pachyrhabda* as it wanders over the underside of the fronds eating the spore-bearing sporangia. Note the absence of sporangia – all eaten by the larvae.

Ian Morgan has been tracking the spread of this little moth through Carmarthenshire, looking for adults in May and the larval feeding signs in the summer. It can only occur where its food plant Soft Shield Fern occurs, which likes base-rich soils. The plant does not therefore occur over wide swathes of the acidic soil of South Wales. If you have this



fern growing near you then have a look – you could find this moth or its feeding signs.



The map shows the initial spread of the moth before the latest finds outside Carmarthenshire.



So what does the adult moth look like?
Here are a couple of photos:

*Photos by Rob Hillier and
Belinda Jackson*

More and more people are finding this little creature in the countryside and in their gardens. Belinda Jackson in Carmarthenshire said on 12th May "It seems to be on every fern in the garden and on one particular clump there were a dozen flying around or landing on it during the afternoon so it's feeling very much at home despite its Australasian heritage".

Black Rock Quarry

Following the sad passing, a couple of years ago, of Dr Martin Anthony, stalwart of Gwent VC35 lepidoptera recording and of Gwent Wildlife Trust, I'm pleased to reveal that our quest to secure his favourite site, Black Rock Quarry near Clydach, now looks like coming to fruition, after I finally tracked down owners who seem prepared to allow Gwent Wildlife Trust to take on management on the site, with our input where appropriate.

Richard Smith

Some “cracking” butterflies – at the Valero Refinery in Pembrokeshire *by Paul Warren*

On and around the refinery’s process units may not seem the ideal habitat to find butterflies. On a hot and sunny day in mid-August eleven butterfly species were recorded when going from the cracking and olefins control room down to the ARU/SRU (Amine Recovery Unit/Sulphur Recovery Unit). The species were:

Large White
Small White
Green-veined White
Red Admiral
Peacock
Small Tortoiseshell
Common Blue
Silver-studded Blue
Dingy Skipper
Meadow Brown
Painted Lady



Picture by Jane Stone

These included three species of white butterflies. Whilst the Large and Small White butterflies do lay eggs on brassicas, the Green-veined White lays its eggs on species of wild crucifers so your cabbages are safe from this butterfly. Red Admirals, Peacocks and Small Tortoiseshells are commonly seen in and around gardens feeding on flowers such as Buddleia. All three of these will lay their eggs on nettles and can be some of the first species to be seen in the year after they wake from hibernation. The Red Admiral has only recently been able to make it through our winters and are mainly migrants from North Africa and southern Europe arriving in late May or June. Common Blue, Silver-studded Blue and Dingy Skippers will all lay their eggs on Birds-foot Trefoil. This low growing plant with yellow pea like flowers with a hint of red is also known as “bacon and eggs” and can be found all around the refinery. The Meadow Brown butterfly is the commonest species to be found in Pembrokeshire and can be found in the grassy areas where they lay their eggs on various species of Fescue and Meadow grasses. Painted Ladies start life each year in Northern Africa or the Middle East and progress northwards through each new generation until they reach our shores usually around May. Numbers vary from year to year with bumper migration years such as 1996 when millions of individuals arrived. They can be seen feeding on nectar rich flowers and lay their eggs on Mallows and Thistles. Painted Lady butterflies can have several generations in Britain but are unable to survive our winters. Many of the Painted Lady adults will migrate southwards in late summer back to Northern Africa and the Middle East to avoid our winter. Other species which migrate southwards in autumn to avoid our colder conditions include Large and Small Whites and Red Admirals.

Seventy individual butterflies of eleven species were recorded on this day which just shows how nature can thrive when given a chance.

Ways to keep up to date

Butterfly Conservation Wales, Telephone No. 01792 642 972

e-mail wales@butterfly-conservation.org

Follow the links on Butterfly Conservation’s main website www.butterfly-conservation.org to the branch page or type <https://butterfly-conservation.org/in-your-area/south-wales-branch>

The branch also operates via Facebook. The main ‘open to all’ page is www.facebook.com/ButterflyConservationSouthWalesBranch

Members only Facebook group — where enthusiasts can share photos and observations of butterflies and moths in our region. It’s a closed group but you can ask to join.

www.facebook.com/groups/ButterflyConservationSouthWalesBranch

Twitter @BCSouthWales

White-letter Hairstreak – an overlooked butterfly

The Hairstreaks are all interesting little butterflies that are rarely easy to see. If you want to see Black Hairstreak you need to go to specific sites in the East Midlands, for Brown Hairstreak there are known sites in west Wales but even there they are not easy to track down. Purple Hairstreak is relatively common in oak habitat and can be seen flying around the tree-tops on sunny days but getting a good view is much more problematic! Green Hairstreak is a bit easier – it can be seen in scrubby gorse places in May and June, and unlike the others, you do not have to peer into the tree canopy to see it.

So what of the White-letter Hairstreak? This butterfly is dependant on elms, and its numbers declined dramatically when elm trees were hit by Dutch Elm Disease – a decrease of 93% since 1970. However there are still plenty of scattered records in South Wales – see this map. Coloured squares indicate a 10-km square with records.



It does not get the same conservation attention as Black and Brown Hairstreaks and seems to be a bit overlooked despite being a High Conservation Priority species. I suspect that this is because there is not much you can do to help this butterfly except preserve elms – whereas Black and Brown Hairstreak benefit from targeted management of blackthorn. However, interest in White-letter Hairstreaks seems to

have recently grown. So here are some more articles featuring this attractive little butterfly. The first two are by local butterfly recorders tracking down White-Letter Hairstreaks in their patch.

The White-letter Hairstreak in Ceredigion by Paul Taylor

In Ceredigion, we are currently doing a survey of the Elm trees of Ceredigion and plotting those that have WLH colonies, more details can be found here on how the project came about: <https://www.wwbic.org.uk/projects/hunting-the-white-letter-hairstreak/?fbclid=IwAR0GDcgQTjC5eInMpRp3Ch15Aqo00lbizi4bRZ2gb41S4ekBZL75390CQNc>

As County Recorder I am involved in creating public awareness of the project as well as checking sites and collating the records. Over the past few years we have had sporadic sightings of WLH, so this year, following the initiation of the project by Chloe Griffiths, I am giving it more of my time, so far with positive results. For instance, there is a large number of Elms on the Llanerchaeron NT estate near Aberaeron (and Oaks!) and we have recorded a number of WLH (plus a Purple Hairstreak) on the site, so I think it could be one of the strongholds for the butterfly. Another area that I had identified with a large number of Elms is a cycleway between Rhydyfelin and Penparcau (Aberystwyth) and only yesterday found 7 butterflies flying, 4 in the tops of the trees and 3 nectaring on Bramble.

The White-letter Hairstreak in Pembrokeshire (taken from information supplied by David Redhead by email in 2018)

This year I have found quite a lot of elms scattered over Pems. Two clumps also produced definite White-letters and another two suspect tree top flights - down for a revisit in 2019.

Elms are more frequent in Pembrokeshire than I realised when I arrived 5 years ago. I suspect WLH is Pembrokeshire's most under-recorded butterfly. Best site this year has been the elms in Pwllcrochan Churchyard (SM920026). This can either be a very peaceful spot or a very noisy spot depending on whether or not the waste gas flares are operating on the adjacent Valero site - if they are they sound like the approach of a mighty dragon. A White-letter was also seen a year or two ago at Teifi Marshes nectaring on hemp agrimony but I don't know where the elms are. This year I also had a suspected sighting in the elms growing alongside Camrose Churchyard. John and I stumbled across a "new" colony south west of Haycastle Cross on a woodland walk designed to avoid the sun & heat and Alan Collens has also added a third "new" colony in the Withybush area

White-letter Hairstreak *a personal note from Rosemary Royle*

The White-letter Hairstreak is not a particularly uncommon butterfly but it is not easy to see. It spends most of its time in the top of elm trees, only coming down from time to time to nectar on flowers such as bramble. Until fairly recently I had never seen one. Then, on the 4th August 2016, when I was working in the vegetable garden and simultaneously keeping an eye out for butterflies in the wild patch adjacent to it, I noticed a medium-to-small brownish butterfly feeding on a teasel flower. I assumed it was a Gatekeeper but something did not look quite right, so I looked more closely. Getting excited I went to get the binoculars and, sure enough, it was a White-letter Hairstreak. The plain brown colour of the undersides was distinctive and with the binoculars I could see the “white hair streak” and the orange wing corner with little tails. I couldn’t get close enough for a photo but I was quite sure about what I had seen. It was a butterfly which was not even on my radar as a visitor to the garden, but in fact we are surrounded by elm trees so perhaps I should have considered it.

In 2016, White-letter Hairstreaks popped up in several new places in Pembrokeshire so perhaps they were having a good year. Apparently my record is possibly the furthest west White-letter Hairstreak in the UK!!

On exactly the same date, 4th August, in 2018, I saw another one. This was quite old and faded and was feeding on hemp agrimony. But since then, nothing.

As mentioned above this butterfly is dependent on elms. Many people assume that there are no elms left in the countryside after Dutch Elm disease but that is not true. There are plenty of wych elms, and even a single one of these is sufficient to support a colony. And here in Pembrokeshire there are plenty of English elms – they succumb to Dutch Elm disease when they get to a certain size - about 12 inches trunk diameter – but they then produce loads of suckers and so the cycle continues. I see from the South Wales Butterfly Conservation Facebook forum that this year so far there have been reports from the Botanical Gardens by Tate Lloyd on 3rd July and from Wendy Sørum-Grebbell in her garden in Penarth on 20th June. (See pictures below).

The flight season runs from late June to early August so there is still time to find some elms and look for your own White-letter Hairstreak. Apparently they can be seen flying in the foliage at the tops of the trees but despite the fact that I have lived for 20 years surrounded by elms I have never seen this – probably my eyesight is not good enough. But also check flowering plants nearby and look for something Gatekeeper-sized but pale brown with orange in the bottom corner.



Picture by Tate Lloyd



Picture by Wendy Sørum-Grebbell

Stop Press: Whilst doing my Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey on 17th July I found a White-letter Hairstreak nectaring on a big patch of brambles next to the woods at St Brides Castle - I think this a new site for it. I would never have seen it if I hadn't been scanning the blossoms for butterflies with binoculars - it was completely stationary and well-disguised.

Carolyn & Evan Lynn wrote the following post on the Ceredigion Moths Blog in December 2022

Tony Allenby

You will be greatly saddened to hear that Tony Allenby died in December 2022. He had been Ceredigion Moth Recorder for almost 10 years and was instrumental in setting up the Ceredigion Moths blog. During this time he created the invaluable document 'the State of all Macro Moth Species in Ceredigion' which can be accessed on the blog and which hopefully will continue to be updated.

He was a dedicated and much respected moth-er and he and Ina were a great team spending many happy hours in the field trapping in the county. As County Recorders they were very approachable and willing to share their expertise with all and sundry. Being a recorder in the manner they did it was more a way of life than just a voluntary occupation.

On a more personal level we have fond memories of shared weekly trapping sessions with him up our valley prior to Ina's arrival and attending a number of David Brown's moth courses together.

He will be greatly missed.

Scarce Merveille de Jour, a first record for Wales - Rob Hillier

Serendipity strikes in Haverfordwest. I very nearly didn't set the trap on the night of 25th June, but I'm so glad that I did. Amongst a modest catch in the 40 W Lucent trap were four new species to my suburban garden, a Plain Golden Y, Fan-foot, Small Blood-vein and incredibly a **Scarce Merveille du Jour** (*Moma alpium*)! Initially I thought the latter was the more common Merveille du Jour but I knew this was a Sept-Oct flier so I potted it up to check its identification. The striking lichen-green, black and white streaked colouration and wing pattern made it easy to identify, but I was still none the wiser as to literally how scarce this species is. I couldn't find it in the Pembrokeshire records so I contacted George Tordoff who confirmed the identification and also that it was a first record for Wales. I still have the bruise from where I fell off my chair. It's a Red Listed rare resident moth with small colonies amongst oak woodland mainly along the south coast of England. It has a single generation from early June to mid-July. Closest colonies are in Devon and Cornwall so it's possible that it flew across the Bristol Channel on southerly winds active at the time. Wouldn't it be exciting if a colony has settled along the banks of the Cleddau? Will keep you posted!



A new moth for Pembs and West Wales - *Neocochyliis molliculana*

On 10th June 2023 my MV trap in the back garden near Dale in Pembrokeshire contained 363 moths of 93 species - it was a really good session. The 93rd species (picture right) took a bit of identifying. There are a whole heap of moths which look a bit like this so you have to inspect every blotch and dot as well as checking flight periods and food plants! It looked a very good match for *Neocochyliis molliculana* but this would be new for Pembs and west Wales so I was hesitant. However, this moth has apparently been spreading N and W in recent years so it was definitely possible.



George Tordoff says that it's getting pretty frequent in Glamorgan, at least near the coast, and checking the map from Aderyn seems to confirm that.

It was a first for Pembrokeshire so I was well pleased!

Rosemary Royle

Nearly a new moth for Wales – *Anarsia innoxii*

Kevin Hewitt and Emma Williams ran a moth trap at Rogiet Country Park near Caldicot (ST45618745) on 24th June and had an excellent catch (116 species in 4 hours) which included a new moth for Wales *Anarsia innoxii*. This is a smart little micro which was only identified as a separate species in 2017 when it was proved to be separate from its sister species *Anarsia lineatella*. Both species have arrived from Europe and have been spreading from SE England. It would appear that *A. innoxii* has now crossed the Severn. The Rogiet moth turned out in the end to be the second for a Wales because one was caught in Caldicot the day before!



Kevin Hewitt

New BC staff

Two new members of staff at Butterfly conservation in important conservation roles:

ALAN SUMNALL

Hello, my name is Alan Sumnall, and I am the new Head of Conservation Wales & Northern Ireland for Butterfly Conservation (BC). I have joined BC from the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust where I oversaw a team managing 30 nature reserves and working with private landowners to connect the reserves to adjacent habitat in line with the Lawton principle of *bigger-better-more-joined*. Sites included Daneway Banks which is a Large Blue reintroduction site, but also supports Drab Looper and Liquorice Piercer, Brasseley which supports butterfly species at opposite ends of the grazing spectrum (Duke of Burgundy and Chalkhill Blue), Strawberry Banks for Marsh Fritillary, Siccaridge Wood for Pearl-Bordered Fritillary and Lower Woods for White Admiral.

I grew up on the North Wales border and am familiar with Whixall Moss and Llanymynech Rocks for example. Previous employment roles include Sand Dune Ranger on Gronant Dunes & Talacre Warren, and Volunteer Coordinator for Glandŵr Cymru covering South Wales, Gloucestershire, and Worcestershire.

I am very excited to have joined BC at such an important time during the delivery of its strategy. I am all about habitat connectivity – if we want our wildlife to thrive, we need to create larger areas of habitat improving its resilience. This will allow for increased species dispersal into the wider countryside, no longer isolated on small habitat patches, which will allow for larger populations to be built, more resistant to future challenges.

I am still familiarising myself with the BC priority landscapes in South Wales but have recently visited the Alun Valley in the Vale of Glamorgan with Richard Smith and Mark Hipkin (BC Conservation Manager Wales). This is part of the Natural Resources Wales led 'Natur am Byth' project for which BC has secured 4 years funding specific for the last colony of High Brown Fritillary (HBF) in Wales. This is an amazing project, with so much potential to build on the excellent work already undertaken by the South Wales Branch. Huge thanks to everyone involved.

I am looking forward to visiting more sites in the coming months. Please let me know what you are doing, and I will do my best to come over and get involved – and meet as many of you in person as possible.



MARK HIPKIN

It has been six months since I started my role as Conservation Manager for Butterfly Conservation. I am responsible for our work across South Wales and am excited to play a part in conservation work in the countryside in which I have spent most of my life. My career path in getting to this point is quite varied. I completed my degree in Civil Engineering at Bristol University in 1995. After that I travelled for 2 years spending time in Australia, New Zealand, Fiji, Hawaii and USA. On my return I settled in London and worked as a site engineer and later site manager on various construction projects including road builds, demolition, Channel Tunnel rail link, ExCel Exhibition centre and the Millennium Dome. After almost 10 years of living in London I decided to return to Wales to start a career in Conservation. From 2008 until 2016 I worked as an ecological consultant mainly doing bird surveys but also some phase 1 habitat work. In 2016 I joined the National Trust as an Area Ranger and later becoming Lead Ranger, looking after 2200 ha of land across Gower, South Wales. My work at NT included habitat management on a wide range of SAC and SSSI habitats. I also looked after 80 ha of farmland which I made better by turning fields dominated by improved pasture and winter arable crops into flower-rich traditionally managed hay meadows and pollinator-friendly arable crops with wider field margins and boundaries.

My decision to move from construction to conservation was driven by my passion for nature and hope that I can make a difference to what can sometimes look like a bleak future for wildlife. In my short time with BC I have been able to work with extremely talented staff and volunteers and visit some great and richly diverse habitats. I'm never happier than when I'm at a location which good for wildlife, and one of the best indicators of these locations is the populations and diversity of butterflies and moths found there. I know that while I'm working with BC staff and volunteers, I will be among similarly thinking minds, and this gives me hope that together we can make a positive impact for species and habitats that we are passionate about. I look forward to meeting and working with you and creating stories that we can be very proud about.



And Finally from Facebook

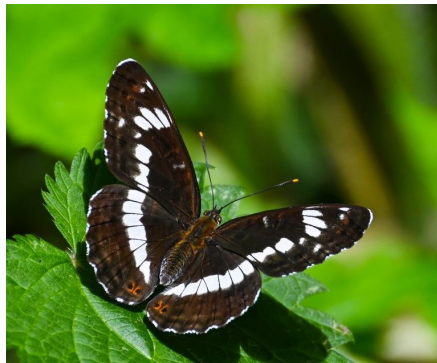
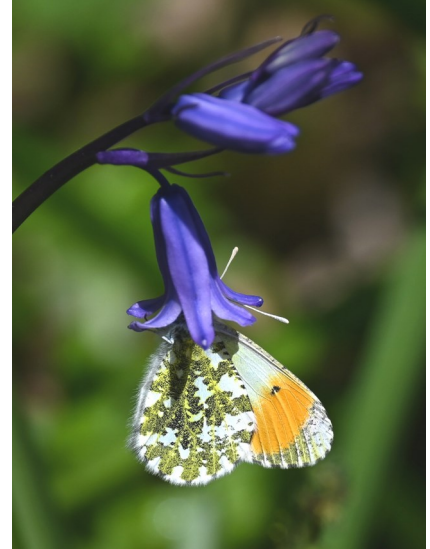
Butterfly Conservation South Wales Forum

The Facebook forum is hugely popular and enables anyone who joins to show their pictures to other users and to get help from experts and amateurs alike. It also allows the group to see what members are up to and has already helped identify previously unknown sites of interest to the experts.



A footnote: You may not feel very comfortable with using Facebook, after all you have read in the press and on-line. However Facebook groups such as Butterfly Conservation South Wales Forum are extremely useful for sharing pictures, getting help with identification and generally sharing information. You can set up a Facebook identity with the absolute minimum of information and this will allow you to participate in groups such as this.

A number of Branch members post the most wonderful pictures of butterflies to the Facebook page mentioned above. Here is a selection from the first few months of the year from Frank Sengpiel.



From the top: Brimstone, Grizzled Skipper, Orange Tip (male), Holly Blue, Small Blue, Marsh Fritillary, White Admiral, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Marbled White, Comma



Butterfly Conservation South Wales Branch

Branch Committee

Chairman and Web Editor Dave Slade dave@southwalesbutterflies.org.uk	Newsletter Editor Rosemary Royle newsletter@southwales- butterflies.org.uk
Branch Secretary Norman Lowe norman@enviro-consulting.com	Projects/Butterfly Events Co-ordinator Richard Smith projects@southwales- butterflies.org.uk
Treasurer Mike Cram mikecram67@btinternet.com	Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey Officer Vacant
Membership Secretary Vacant	Committee Member Kevin Hewitt kvn.hewitt@gmail.com
Moth officer Vacant	Committee Member Martin White
Social Media Vacant	

Recorders

<u>Monmouthshire VC35</u> Butterflies & Macro-moths Kevin Hewitt email kvn.hewitt@gmail.com 07391508729. Micro-moths Sam Bosanquet sambryo@aol.com <u>Glamorgan VC41</u> Moths & Butterflies David Slade (above) <u>Breconshire VC42</u> Moths Norman Lowe Norman@enviro- consulting.com Butterflies Andrew King andy@breconbirds.wales 01874 658351	<u>Radnorshire VC43</u> Moths Pete & Ginny Clarke 9 Dany-bryn, peteandginny@tiscali.co.uk 01497 847877 Butterflies Chris Ledbury theffawydd@btinternet.com 01982 560469 <u>Carmarthenshire VC44</u> Moths Sam Bosanquet (See Monmouthshire) Butterflies Dave Bannister davebbannisterd@gmail.com 01267 202210	<u>Pembrokeshire VC45</u> Moths Paul Warren paul.warren.moths@gmail.com Butterflies Vacant <u>Cardiganshire VC46</u> Moths Peter Skinner peteskinnervc46@gmail.com Butterflies Paul & Leslie Taylor paulandlesleytaylor@gmail.com 07811403713
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