

Cornwall Butterfly & Moth Society Newsletter

Summer 2016 Issue 03



Whilst our aim is to observe and record butterflies and moths it is also an opportunity to benefit from companionship with others who enjoy the hobby of studying Lepidoptera. Our membership includes some of the most knowledgeable enthusiasts in Cornwall including two authors of butterfly and/or moth publications. Our thanks to Lee Slaughter who has organised the field trips for this season and also to those who have volunteered to act as field trip leaders, and hope the field trips will be both enjoyable and educational. A full list of the scheduled field trips has been sent out separately.

Wedding Congratulations

We are pleased to send our congratulations and best wishes to two of our members Carly Hoskin and Simon Riley who were married on April 2nd at the Bedruthan Hotel, followed by a honeymoon in Rome.

Wheal Jane Update

In 2015 23 species of butterfly were recorded at the Wheal Jane site. (Species list available on request).

Last year we cut the bracken at the site with the aid of Jerry's tractor, and manually in more inaccessible areas with the help of a number of able volunteers. This in places was 4 to 5 feet high. We bruised a trial area once last year which resulted in a height reduction of 2 to 3 feet. Our plan is to assess the effect this has on the area, and to control the bracken we aim to bruise it at least twice through the year. This process is a recognised method to control the bracken enough to enable some sunlight to penetrate the fronds. It is used at Aish Tor by Devon BC. We will be asking for your help with this project.

It would also be helpful if any members would be willing to help with recording at the site. To that end please contact a Trustee if you are interested in helping in any way.

We will keep you updated as things progress.

Winter Moths



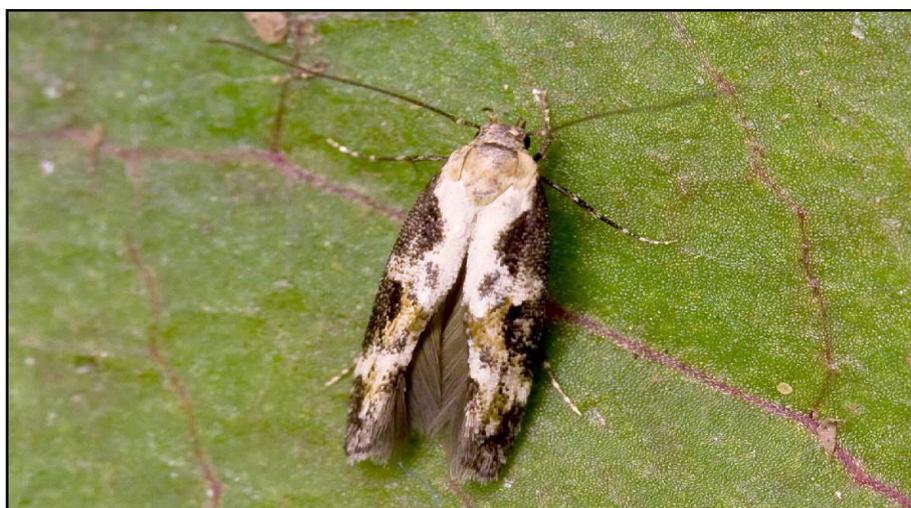
During these cold, dank days of winter it is heartening to find signs of life amongst our lepidoptera. The Herald (*Scoliopteryx libatrix*) is a fairly common species and is one of the few noctuid moths that hibernate. They can often be found during the winter months in outhouses, cellars, barns, caves, even holes in the ground such as under manhole covers and are fond of congregating in numbers.

The specimen illustrated fluttered down onto my basement stairs during December a few winters ago just before some really cold weather set in. It can be seen after hibernation from March to June and again from late July to November in two generations, depending on locality, so the ones you see in March are already 4 or 5 months old! It is a moderately common species but less so in Scotland. It inhabits woodland, marshes, commons, parks and gardens where the larvae feed on a number of trees such as Sallow, Willow, Aspen, Osier and Poplar. The moth, with its scalloped edges, can resemble a dead or dying leaf and can be quite cryptic. In the autumn the adult is often seen at night feeding on Ivy blossom and overripe blackberries. The moth is, not surprisingly, attracted to sugar or a treacle patch, lovingly provided as bait by the lepidopterist. It also comes in small numbers to light traps. I would like to believe that the moth is called the Herald because its appearance in March heralds the coming spring.

Another moth frequently seen indoors during the winter months, but probably overlooked because of its small size, is *Mompha divisella* (it does not have an English name). The moth has a wingspan of between 10 and 13mm which, for a micro-moth, is quite large! The moths emerge in August and can be found, after hibernation, till May. The specimen illustrated below was seen flying towards my basement light during January a few years ago. I have seen this moth a number of times over the past 12 years in my house. The dates are: 15th Oct.1998, 8th Nov. 2002 and 25th Feb. 2003. Its distribution is said to be widespread

but local in England as far north as Cumbria. There is one generation a year and the larvae feed in the stems of Broad-leaved Willowherb, Marsh Willowherb and other Willowherbs, causing a gall which is generally situated at one of the nodes and is about the size of a large pea. Galls are probably caused by the larvae irritating the plant as they eat away at the pith in the hollow stems. The moth can be found in damp woodland, shaded situations, waste ground and open areas.

Another moth I have found in my basement in the depths of winter is the small case-bearing clothes moth *Tinea dubiella* (see below) and as the name implies, the larvae will probably eat your woollen garments if given half a chance. It is truly one of those 'small brown jobbies' that I have often heard referred to and is very similar to *Tinea pellionella*. They are so similar that genitalia dissection is advised to separate them, but it is my opinion that those found in Cornwall are mostly *Tinea dubiella*.



The particular moth illustrated on the right was seen on the 1st May a few years ago and was flying in a zig zag fashion towards my kitchen ceiling whereupon it clung, suspended upside down, as if caught by a minute thread. The moth is quite small with a wingspan no greater than 15mm. and is often found in bird's nests particularly that of swallows and also found in owl's pellets. The moth has a habit of scurrying about fluttering its wings until it finds a suitable resting place often hidden away in a nook or cranny. This habit made it particularly difficult to photograph once disturbed.



Phil Boggis, 4th September 2015.

Book review

In the last issue of our newsletter we included details of Adrian Spalding's new book and two of our members have spoken very highly of the book therefore the book review is repeated.

Loe Bar and the Sandhill Rustic Moth: The Biogeography, Ecology and History of a Coastal Shingle Bar, by Adrian Spalding 2015. ISBN: 978-90-04-27029-9, Brill, Leiden. 346 pages, 25 figures, 64 tables, 16 maps, 57 photographs and 2 appendices.

"In many ways, then, this text is a first as this lovely book investigates almost every conceivable aspect of the scarce coast-hugging Sandhill Rustic *Luperina nickerlii* and its closest relatives - a particularly welcome addition to the literature." Professor R.L.H. Dennis

"This is an immaculate study of a corner of Britain by a prominent entomologist who clearly loves and cares about its future." Dr Martin Warren

"The book is fantastic!" Kurt Jackson

"As a detailed study of a rare insect I can't think of its equal, and, moreover, it is easy and pleasurable to read without the usual jargon overload." Peter Marren

What a wonderful book - science and humanity clearly and beautifully written - it must sit beside Ann Preston Jones' *Early Cornish Sculpture* as one of the finest works of Cornish scholarship....ever! Councillor Bert Biscoe.

Available from the author at the discounted price of £40 (post and packing extra if posted)

Keith Wilson is happy to act as a go-between if you want to obtain a copy postage free.

THE OCCURRENCE OF THE LARGE BLUE BUTTERFLY (*Maculinea arion* L.) IN CORNWALL

**Written in January 2015 by *Malcolm Lee, Gullrock, Port Gaverne, Port Isaac,
Cornwall, PL29 3SQ.***

My report on the history of the Large Blue Butterfly in Cornwall was completed in July 2001. Originally written for the 2003 Cornwall Butterfly Atlas, it proved too long and remains unpublished. Members might like to read this report in full, so I have serialised it for the Cornwall Butterfly and Moth Society newsletters. It has been split into five sections.

PART TWO

THE IMMEDIATE POST WAR YEARS - 1946 to 1962

The lease on the Dizzard Reserve lapsed in 1941, and world events relegated the plight of insect conservation. The war did not diminish Mr Greenwood's activities, or his customers' desires, as he visited North Cornwall in July 1943, presumably to top up his stocks. With the end of the war in August 1945, plans were made by the SCPBI to check up on the Large Blue's status. Petrol rationing continued until well after the war, and special permission had first to be obtained from the Ministry of Fuel for the trip. Miriam Rothschild, who was working at the Plymouth Marine Laboratories, volunteered to go. In the event, her colleague Malcolm Spooner went, accompanied by Freddie Russell. They visited on 23rd June and 14th July 1946. On neither day was the weather ideal and they saw no Large Blues at Dizzard, nor at other sites visited, all south of Bude.

As Malcolm Spooner clearly acknowledged in his report, he had no experience of the Large Blue. Nonetheless, his 1946 visit report was most influential, as it shaped the SCPBI's thinking on Large Blue conservation. The main finding in his report was a negative one - he saw no butterflies at any of the sites visited. He found the Large Blue slopes difficult to traverse with such a thick growth of scrub, and considered it impossible for even quite intensive collecting to eliminate an insect that flew over such territory. He felt the former reserve at Dizzard was capable of providing no better sanctuary than anywhere else along this coast, and there were many miles of similar coast and valley which provided an almost continuous belt of country capable of supporting a scattered population of Large Blues spread more or less continuously. He questioned whether it was much use attempting to protect any particular piece of ground, and concluded that, for the time being at least, the whole matter of conserving the Large Blue in Cornwall was not one of urgency as the insect had ample natural sanctuary (even if this was growing less), and there was time in hand to acquire more information about it. He recommended that someone staying on the spot and working continuously at the height of the season obtain these facts.

Despite Spooner's negative findings, the committee did have a report that year of the Large Blue's continuing survival. Canon T G Edwards told the SCPBI that the Large Blue still existed in '*six separate unfrequented valleys from Crackington to Clovelly, a distance of 35 miles*'. He did not name the valleys, but a few years later he was holidaying near Clovelly and invited Stanley Wakely to join him. Wakely reported being greatly excited to see his first Large Blue over the border in Cornwall, although he also did not name the sites. Locations given for other species confirm he visited Coombe Valley, Morwenstow (probably meaning both Tidna and Morwenstow Valleys), Marsland, and Hartland in Devon. These were almost certainly five of the six valleys. Castle Valley at Crackington was undoubtedly the other. This is visible from the fine church at St Gennys, which the Canon would have visited to satisfy his ecclesiastical interests, and the adjacent valley would have been inspected to fulfil his entomological interests.

Captain R A Jackson was chosen to obtain the detailed information Spooner had recommended be sought. He briefly visited the area in 1947, and in 1948 spent 12 days between 29th June and 10th July walking the coast from Tintagel up to Hartland in Devon. The weather during his visit was uniformly bad, generally windy and cloudy. On the sunny days, a north-westerly gale was blowing. He was greatly helped by a site map of an earlier survey by W G Sheldon, who had first visited North Cornwall in 1895. Sheldon was a founder member of CPBL and had died in 1943. His map has not been located, but Jackson's report identified the sites, all of which were south of Bude. Jackson found several Large Blue colonies in Devon, but in Cornwall butterflies were only found at Yeol Mouth. Inexplicably, he omitted to visit the valleys at Tidna or Morwenstow, despite their relatively easy access. Both were subsequently shown to be excellent sites.

It seems likely that butterfly numbers in Jackson's survey were influenced by the poor weather. The following July, in glorious weather, Baron de Worms joined Captain Jackson at Boscastle. On 9th July they toured the localities which held the Large Blue, and noted it was holding its ground well. The specimen de Worms collected that day is labelled 'Bude District', which probably meant around Millook - a location recorded on several of his specimens since 1930.

There was a resurgence of numbers in the mid-1950s. South of Bude, O G Watkins saw several on the seaward side of Millook Common in 1955 or 1956. On 1st and 2nd July 1957, Baron de Worms and R Eldon Ellison reported seeing around a hundred Large Blues careering amongst the bracken in two separate valleys, almost certainly Castle Valley and Bridewell slope at Millook. North of Bude at this time, it was numerous around Morwenstow, Litter Mouth, Yeol Mouth and Marsland Mouth. As had happened before, numbers started to decline and concerns over its future were raised.

Appendix to Part Two

(a) SPOONER G M 1946: "Confidential Report" of a visit to North Cornwall 23/6/46 & 14/7/46. Unpublished report to SCPBI undated (July? 1946). 6pp. The following text was transcribed by Malcolm Lee from a photocopy of the hand-written six page manuscript found in the minute books of the Standing Committee for the Protection of British Insects by John Feltwell. G M (Malcolm) Spooner visited North Cornwall with F (Freddie) S Russell on 23rd June and 14th July 1946. It is not dated, but was presumably written shortly after the visit, probably in late July 1946. It has been transcribed as written, but explanatory notes in square brackets have been inserted, where necessary.

Confidential Report

In our two visits (by FSR and GMS, assisted on July 14th by Mr P G Corbin) to Dizzard Head undercliff ("The Valley") on June 23rd and July 14th 1946 no arion were seen at all. On the second occasion various other possible sites between Widemouth and Dizzard were also explored, also without success.

It is difficult to assess the significance of these negative results, and so to reach any positive conclusions about the status of arion in the old Insect Reserve. Some inferences, however, can be drawn from our observations on the condition of the ground in this particular area, and on the nature of N. Cornwall arion habitats in general.

On neither day was the weather ideal, but the special area indicated by Mr Edelston's [*H M Edelsten, founder member of SCPBI/CPBL - ML*] sketch was investigated at the best part of each day. On June 23, elsewhere mainly fine and sunny, the N. Cornwall coast was invaded by patches of sea fog, which cut our day short. However, we had 1½ hours of bright sun when exploring the upper part of the undercliff above Dizzard Head, and would certainly have seen any arion present. On July 14, though almost continuously sunny, there was a strong N. wind which was scouring the slopes directly facing that quarter. But the Dizzard locality was quite sheltered and was visited during the warmest part of the afternoon; other butterflies were here in full activity.

Hitting the most suitable date was more than ever a gamble this year. From mid-May onwards the season had been getting later and later. In the South West it has proved a poor year for butterflies in general, and I think particularly for Lycaenids. On July 14th it was even possible without much trouble to take a census of all the butterflies we saw (except Meadow Browns and Ringlets). Our list does not contain a single Lycaenid! It seems likely that June 23 was too early this year for Arion in N. Cornwall, and July 14 certainly not too

late (it may even have been too early!). I conclude that this year many fewer arion have emerged than is usual, and that some of these have been abnormally delayed.

The broad stretch of undercliff between Dizzard Point and Long Cliff, apparently locally known as “the Valley”, was found to be much overgrown with scrub, bramble, and bracken, and much of it was impenetrable. A broad belt of an unusual type of oak scrub, running along its middle part separates an upper and lower zone of shorter vegetation. It was presumably in the broader upper zone that Mr Edelston [*Edelston has been struck through and Hedges (A V Hedges) has been written above, probably by Edelsten - ML*] found his arion colony, though the pencil square marked on his sketch lies right across the oak scrub belt. The ground looks promising at a distance. There are patches of turf-covered slope, and growths of heather around prominences derived from some past landslip. But inspection shows two bad disadvantages: (i) severe restriction of the open ground through encroachment of bracken, gorse, bramble, honeysuckle, blackthorn, and other scrub plants, a process which seems to be progressing fairly rapidly, and (ii) absence or extreme scarcity of thyme. There has probably been considerable change here during the last 10 years or so. In several places heather, and even gorse, could be seen being overgrown and smothered with bracken and bushes. One or two narrow tracks which had evidently been used not so long ago were now blocked. In fact it is now difficult to find any way of getting along through this zone. The best bits of remaining open patches are in the “area 1” I have marked on the sketch map. It includes ground most recently disturbed by landslips, and a shallow depression in which there are strips of grassy banks not affected by cattle. Most of the remaining heather also occurs here. But there is almost no thyme here: on July 14 when this plant was in full flower only two small stray patches were found (we had previously on June 23 failed to find any leaves here). Perhaps the general increase in bracken and scrub has increased dampness enough on the restricted open grassy strips which remain to discourage plants like thyme. It looked also as if the margin of the oak scrub was spreading upwards.

The ground westward of ‘area 1’, in the upper zone referred to, has some grassy slopes, but these are cattle trodden and there is no thyme at all. But a piece of irregularly broken and pitted ground, in a shallow gully opening onto the undercliff from the direction of E. Dizzard (marked “area 3”) is still in a suitable condition. This small patch of ground was only discovered on July 14th: there were several good clumps of thyme, and a small colony of Marbled Whites, a species not seen anywhere else that day. This is the only area in the whole of the upper zone where arion at present would have much chance of hanging on.

The lower zone, fringing the sea cliff, was visited on June 23 - “Area 2” in sketch - Though quite open here, much of the ground is grown over with short bracken or stunted wind-swept gorse a few inches high. The grassy clearings which remain would be suitable for arion, as sufficient thyme occurs, but would presumably not support colonies of any size.

Though it is unlikely that arion ever suffers through lack of suitable ants, of which there are always a variety on every type of waste land (*Myrmica scabrinodis* is almost ubiquitous on grassy slopes, whether on acid or alkaline soils, nesting under stones or tufts of grass), the ant fauna of the undercliff was checked up. In "area 1", the following species were noted:-

Myrmica scabrinodis, nests occurred freely under stones.

Lasius flavus, nests also freely in turf and under stones.

Lasius niger, nests under stones on stony ground.

Formica fusca, nests under stones on grass, etc.

In the lower zone:- *Myrmica scabrinodis*, typical, *M. scabrinodis* var *sabuleti*, *M. ruginodis*; *Lasius flavus*, of which several mound nests; *L. niger*; *Formica fusca*; and *Tetramorium caespitum*. There is thus the normal abundance and variety of ants, wherever the ground is not overgrown by dense scrub.

Rhopalocera seen here include:-

Small pearl-bordered: rather numerous in the lower part of "area 1", on June 23, flying strongly, mostly faded, but some quite fresh. (In a normal year I expect only a few very worn examples would have persisted to this date.)

Common Blue: only one worn, on June 23 (and no other Lycaenid)

Marbled White a few in "area 3" on July 14. Speckled Wood, a few along the edge of the oak scrub, June 23. Meadow Brown, rather sparingly, most concentrated in "area 3". Grayling & Ringlet, singly. Small Skipper, 2 in "area 3", July 14. Pierids; 1. This may give some idea of the poverty of the season!

Among potential arion habitats visited on July 14 were:-

(1) Cliff slopes N.E. of Millook - here we were rather handicapped by the wind, but Graylings, etc were on the wing: a very suitable looking locality.

(2) Slopes N. side of Millook valley - largely suitable where not overgrown with stunted gorse.

(3) A grass slope (short turf) inland from Millook, facing south, and with a luxuriant growth of thyme.

(4) Slopes S. side of Millook - but these too much overgrown with bracken.

(5) Undercliff between Millook and Canceleave Strand.

(6) Undercliff and gully at Sharnhole Point. We also went to Crackington Haven.

As pointed out already, it is difficult to make any definite recommendations, but a few ideas are tentatively offered.

(i) The former Insect Reserve at Dizzard has clearly deteriorated in the past few years from the spread of scrub, etc., which has overgrown the open turf and carpet vegetation. It appears capable now of providing no better sanctuary for arion than anywhere else along this coast.

(ii) For many miles, the coast and adjacent valley slopes provide an almost continuous belt of country capable of supporting a scattered population of arion, and apparently has done so up to the war years. In an average year I picture a sparsely, but more or less continuously, spread population which here and there (but by no means at all suitable points) swells into a more or less populous colony. These colonies may flourish for a year or two and then wane, while others spring up temporarily at other points. This is only surmise: other entomologists, especially those who have any experience of arion (which I haven't!) may be able to disprove me. But if this picture, which is certainly true of some of the Aculeata, is even partially true in arion, the question arises whether it is much use attempting to protect any particular patch of ground. Protection, if feasible, should be aimed at the species rather than the locality. Individual species of birds have legal protection: why not butterflies?

(iii) The extensive stretches of ground over which potential habitats are scattered - mostly slopes facing the sea - are not of easy access and, more particularly, are difficult to traverse. It takes time even for a naturalist (!) to cover the ground and routes have to be carefully chosen. It would be impossible for even quite intensive collecting to eliminate an insect which flies over such country. I do not suppose arion has ever been in more danger of serious reduction by over collecting than any other insect here. (moreover the number of people who would now want to take long series of rarities must now, in 1946, be very small). The question of "development" of this coast, approached by a few abominable narrow hilly roads (at Millook there is only parking space for one car!), does not at present arise and probably will not arise for a long time. It is doubtful whether it is worth attempting protection for arion in this district, it has excellent natural sanctuary.

(iv) At present a notice board, now suffering from age, but still just legible, stands at the top of one of the very few used paths leading to the shore in the Dizzard area. (It warns that insect collecting is strictly prohibited.) Though this board is harmless where it is, it ought to be removed if a watcher is not re-engaged. Notices like this placed near colonies of rarities only draw unnecessary attention, and make it easier for such insect bandits as may still exist.

(v) Encroachment of vegetation on turf and open heather association is not confined to the Dizzard 'valley'. Between Sharnhole point and Millook, for instance, much of the cliff slopes is covered with bracken, which may well be on the increase. It would be interesting to know if any general change had taken place, or tendencies to change apparent, since, say, the early 1900s. Information on this point should be available. If there has been appreciable

increase of bracken or scrub during this period, we are warned what to expect in the future - a general decline of arion. A botanist's opinion would be worth getting. It seems that, except on the steepest and most stony slopes, only occasional landslips and fires interrupt the steady trend towards a woodland-scrub climax. (A stretch of undercliff east of Dizzard pt. has recently been burned, probably accidentally.)

(vi) If Dizzard 'valley' is no longer worth protecting as in the past, it is worth considering whether anything more effective can be done in aid of arion in N. Cornwall. But first, more precise information should be obtained (and supplemented at regular intervals), on the status of the butterfly and its habitats. As a start it would be necessary for someone, staying on the spot, and working continuously for at least a month at the height of the season, to cover most of the coast between Tintagel and Hartland. This would be the only way of getting a reasonable idea of the butterfly's present status, and until this is done, it is scarcely possible to judge the best type of temporary protection or conservation method to adopt. Even then, it would still be necessary to find out the sort of natural fluctuation which takes *[NOTE: Parts of these last two paragraphs are unreadable on my copy. Sections in italics are my estimate of what was intended. ML]* place from one year to another before making any decisions. For instance if, contrary to these predictions, it is found that the population tends to be centralised in flourishing colonies, then protecting one or more of these colonies *may be the appropriate* procedure. Or again, if colonies are found to be diminishing over time, changes in the vegetation, systematic burning of scrub or bracken might be worth undertaking in places where protection is most feasible, and so on - everything depends on how the population is distributed in space and time.

(vii) For the time being at least, the whole matter of conserving arion in Cornwall is not one of urgency, as the insect has ample natural sanctuary (even if this is growing less*). There is time in hand to acquire more information about it. It is strongly recommended that one or more Cornish inhabitants should be persuaded to take special interest in the insect, preferably someone living near Bude. Apart from anything else, a Cornishman is much more likely to arouse the interest of local farmers and rustics and to get their co-operation: the natives still much resent intrusion of "foreigners"!

(signed) G M Spooner

* **NOTE:** In John Feltwell's 1995 book *The Conservation of Butterflies in Britain*, p75 he quotes this section as "(even if this is naturally growing?)" This is not a logical phrase, when taken with the rest of Spooner's report. On my copy, the word "naturally" looks like it is intended to be crossed out (perhaps his use of the word "natural" in the previous phrase made Spooner delete this repetition). There is a word after "growing", which, although obscured, I think may be "less". This phrase would then make more sense, intending to draw attention to the slow reduction of sanctuary by scrubbing over, but that there was still time in hand to get more information. ML

(b) JACKSON R A 1948: "*Maculinea arion*. Visit to Cornish and North Devon Coast. June 29th - July 10th 1948." Unpublished report to SCPBI dated 12th July 1948. 5pp. Typed up by Malcolm Lee from a copy of the original report found in the minute books of the SCPBI by John Feltwell.

Maculinea arion

Visit to Cornish and North Devon Coast

June 29th - July 10th 1948 I stayed first at the Hartland Quay Hotel, and worked the coast from Welcome north to Hartland point. I then moved to Boscastle, and worked the coast from there to Welcome, visiting all Mr Sheldon's old localities.

The following notes are arranged in order from south to north on the various coombes running down to the sea.

Boscastle to Cambeak There is nowhere suitable for the insect.

Tremouth Haven (Cam Draught of Sheldon's Map). A nice valley - recently heavily burned. No ants or thyme to be seen.

Slope above Crackington A very bare and exposed cliff, largely overgrown with gorse, and rather trampled by visitors. An unlikely place nowadays.

Castle Point A little thyme and ants at the bottom of the valley near the sea, and also along the bottom path. Hillside very heavily burned, and with no thyme to be seen. No butterflies observed.

Chipman Point (The so-called "Butterfly Valley"!) This formed the old R.E.S. preserve, and at a distance looks ideal. On approach it was found that the pleasant green sides were really the flat tops of a dense growth of gorse, two feet deep, mixed with brambles and blackthorn scrub. No plant life other than the above exists, except at the seaward end of the valley, where there are a little thyme and a few ant hills, absolutely exposed to every gust of wind. Only by keeping close to the cliff edge can one escape from the valley. This is a clear case of extermination by kindness. No burning has been done, with the result that the gorse has killed everything else.

Bynorth Cliff The owner tells me that years ago the butterfly swarmed on his cliff, but does not now occur - a statement I accept very readily. Part of the slope is under potatoes, the rest overgrown with brambles and long grass and weeds. No ants or thyme were to be seen.

I can hardly imagine the insect living on the top of the hang cliff, where there is abundant thyme, but no ants, or on the under cliff, which is open to all the Atlantic gales.

Millook Common (Sheldon's Antimony level). Two very nice warm valleys, but little hope for arion now. Very little thyme, and a great growth of gorse and bracken, much impenetrable.

Millook The old locality very exposed and overgrown. Saw Mr. & Mrs. Bernard of High Penhalt Farm. The butterfly used to occur on their land, in the bottom just E. of the hill down from Penhalt Cliff. The slope is now almost impassable but there are a few ant hills with thyme near the top. One butterfly may have been seen last year.

Wanson Mouth The best of all the old localities as regards thyme and ants, but no butterflies seen under good conditions. The cliff is very accessible and would not be suitable as a reserve, as it is very close to hotels and lodging houses.

This completes Sheldon's localities, and finishes the survey south of Bude.

I also worked south from Boscastle to Tintagel, but there is no valley suitable for the insect.

Sandy Mouth The first suitable place N. of Bude. The butterfly was present in some numbers in 1946, but has not been seen this year. A few might well exist, but the valley is much frequented by trippers.

Coombe Valley No butterflies seen, but there is a most suitable valley with ants and thyme running north from the road.

Stanbury Mouth is unsuitable.

Yeol Mouth A very nice sheltered valley with plenty of thyme and ants - gorse kept down by cattle. Two arion seen on a dull day and three or four on a sunny but very windy day.

Cornahey Cliff Has plenty of ants and thyme, but it is probably too exposed.

Marsland Mouth Is no good - there are no ants or thyme.

Marsland Cliff and Valley South This looks good and is a noted locality. Some of the valley is very suitable, but I saw no insects. There was a strong wind blowing and I was very tired!

Welcome Mouth A well-known locality, where the insect was very common last year. This is said to be the scene of a noted dealer's depredations. On the 29th I found one arion at rest, and on the 8th, a better day, I saw several flying. There are a lot of thyme and ants at the grassy bottom of the valley and on the northern slopes. The butterflies I saw were mostly flying abreast the "Hermitage" probably driven inwards for shelter.

South Hole Last year I found what looked like a nice place, but it is now under potatoes!

Speke's Mill Mouth and Long Peck Long Peck heavily burned but two arion seen flying in bad weather. Three were also seen at Speke's Mill Mouth - both these contain ants and thyme and seem suitable.

St Catherine's Tor Undoubtedly the strongest colony - as many as ten arion on the wing at once. The bottom of the valley is under grain (kind uncertain!) but the butterfly occurs along the hill behind the Tor which has faces W. and S. Unfortunately the locality is well known, is readily accessible (five minutes or so from a car), with paths along each side of the slope. The Western face was heavily burned this spring, another southern slope last year. This does not seem to have hurt the insect. The cliff forms part of the estate (in) of the Lord of the Manor, who lives at Hartland Abbey.

Dyer's Lookout and Blegberry Both appear suitable localities but no butterflies seen in good weather.

Upright Cliff (below Blagden Farm) A very suitable locality. One arion seen in bad weather - might be worth colonising.

General Remarks

During my stay the weather was uniformly bad. Generally windy and very cloudy, with gleams of sun. On the sunny days a North-westerly gale was blowing. As arion dislikes wind and does not fly much without sun, it is hard to dogmatise on numbers.

I would place the localities in the following order;

St Catherine's Tor, Welcome Mouth, Speke's Mill, Yeol Mouth, although perhaps Marsland and Upright Cliff deserve places.

Swaling

This is essential both for the farmer and the insect. The lack of burning only results in the dreadful state of "butterfly valley". I do not believe that the burning can be done in strips, nor do I think farmers will alter their age-old habits.

Conclusion

The whole coast is intersected by footpaths, and every cliff is passed over by walkers day after day. It seems difficult to recommend the acquisition of any property as a reserve. It might be possible to erect notice boards at St. Catherine's Tor requesting collectors to limit their catch to six insects per season (three boards required) and to respect the females. One collector patrolled the Tor every day for a month last year, and told his landlord that he had done quite well.

(signed) *R. A. Jackson*

(dated) *12.7.48*

Part Three to follow in the next newsletter



Photos by Rowena Nicholls



"Rob and Rowena Nicholls saw 8x (6x female and 2x male) Pearl-Bordered Fritillary on 25 April 2016 on the South West Coast Path in LOOE - access via the National Trust fields called "STRUDDICKS"."

Cornwall Butterfly and Moth Society: Charity registered in England (1160409)

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