



Butterfly Conservation

Minutes of Butterfly Conservation Gloucestershire Branch Annual General Meeting held at Christchurch Abbeydale, Heron Way, Abbeydale, Gloucester, GL4 5EQ, at 2 pm on Saturday 27th October 2018

Sue Smith, Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1 **Apologies for absence:** Margaret Walters, Mike Brown, Daphne Such, Peter Hugo, Mick and Mary Farmer, Sue Carter, Susie Kimber, Duncan and Becky Dine, Nick Heyward, Paul and Jo Arnold, Scott Probert.
- 2 **Minutes of the 2017 AGM**
The minutes of the last meeting were adopted unanimously. Serena Meredith proposed, seconded Chris Tracey.
- 3 **Matters arising from the 2017 AGM minutes**
There were no matters arising from the 2017 minutes.
- 4 **Reports from Branch Officers:**
 - 4.1 **Chairman's Report** – Sue Smith (Appendix 1)
 - 4.2 **Treasurer's Report** – Serena Meredith (Appendix 2)
Adoption of the accounts was proposed by Simon Glover, and seconded by Mo Gardner and adopted unanimously.
 - 4.3 **Membership Report** – Trish Atkinson (Appendix 3)
 - 4.4 **Butterfly Recorder's Report** – Chris Wiltshire (Appendix 4)
Trish Atkinson made a comment that Holly Blue numbers in her garden were up this year, in comparison to CW's report of lower numbers from his transects; a general difference in garden populations, but it is interesting to note that different habitats are likely to see different fluctuations in population size.
 - 4.5 **Moth Officer's Report** – Peter Hugo (Appendix 5)
 - 4.6 **Bill Smyllie/The Masts Report** – John Coates (Appendix 6)
 - 4.7 **Rough Bank Report** – Sue Smith (Appendix 7)
 - 4.8 **Forest Conservation Officer's Report** - Simon Glover (Appendix 8)
 - 4.9 **Back from the Brink Update** – Jennifer Gilbert/Julian Bendle (Appendix 9)
- 5 **Butterfly Monitoring in Gloucestershire** - Trish Atkinson (Appendix 10)
- 6 **Election of Officers** – There were four people eligible from the present committee who were happy to stand for re-election: Peter Hugo, Simon Glover, Dave Sims and Ruth Wollen. All four were re-elected with Serena Meredith proposing and seconded

by Chris Tracey. This was followed by a unanimous vote from members and they were therefore duly re-elected.

It was also mentioned that one further committee space remains available.

Two Associate members were welcomed to the committee:

Natasha James and Scott Probert have agreed to take on the social media aspects of the branch and are already doing a wonderful job of promoting our activities through Facebook and Twitter.

7 Any Other Business None

8 Date of next AGM: 26 October 2019 - Venue to be decided.

The AGM closed at 15.30.

The speaker, Russell Hobson, judged the photographic competition. The winners were:

UK Butterflies and overall winner - Duncan Dine with his Chalkhill Blue.

First Time Entrants - Fae Ennis with a Speckled Wood

UK Moths – Ken Cservenka with Box Moths

Overseas Butterflies or Moths - Chris Tracey with Scarce Swallowtail

Then followed a presentation by Russel Hobson.

Russell Hobson has been working with Marsh Fritillaries since 1993 in both SW England and currently in Wales.

Russell gave a presentation about his extensive work on Marsh Fritillaries (since 1993 in south-west England and for the last 15 years in Wales). Russell is currently Head of Conservation (Wales) and UK Director of Policy and Land Use, covering policy, planning and nature reserves.

Russell's talk discussed the favoured habitat and food plants of the Marsh Fritillary in Wales and the difficulties maintaining suitable habitat. This can be a difficult issue in Wales where much of the countryside is heavily grazed by sheep. Russell's talk also highlighted the need for regular monitoring of sites with these rare butterflies as populations can quickly disappear.

This talk was particularly interesting as Gloucestershire currently has just one good site for Marsh fritillaries and it would be wonderful to maintain and hopefully improve this situation in our county.

Thanks were given to Russell for coming to give this detailed and informative talk.

Russell presented a generous donation of £175.00 to the Gloucestershire Branch – this was half of the authors fee for a British Wildlife article entitled 'Scarce Moths of the Borders' that appeared in Vol 30 No. 1 October 2018 written by George Tordoff and Russel with help from Gloucestershire Branch members.

The meeting closed at 5.30 pm.

Appendix 1

Chairman's Report 2018 – Sue Smith

It has been a very busy year since last October. Thank you to everyone who has contributed and helped in any way. Many things happening in the branch are covered by the other various reports so I will try and keep this brief!

BftB is really running well and is now well into the second year. More news on this later.

'The Butterfly Effect' is an education programme due to start at the end of this year/beg 2019. This is being funded by Restore Global who are contributing £50,000 over two years. The branch is giving £6,000 over the two years. A meeting with Kate Merry from HO and interested members of the branch took place in September to look at the priorities for the project. A project officer will be appointed on a half-time contract for two years.

Social media is a very useful tool for our community to keep in touch and share news, events and butterfly sightings. I am therefore delighted to announce that two new people have come forward to take on the branch Facebook and Twitter accounts – Natasha James and Scott Probert. Do join in and help them promote our activities by becoming a 'friend' or 'liking' the posts. People can also send them information by email bumblebeewatching@gmail.com and natashaajames@hotmail.com to be put on Facebook/Twitter.

A new project has been unfolding at Highnam called the Butterfly Crescent instigated by two of our members – David and Karen Nicholls. Searching out the butterflies and learning about what is on the site has been a revelation. Perhaps this could inspire others?

Work continues at Prinknash; a new sign board was erected in the spring. We also helped encourage Stroud Valleys Project to take on the rest of the garden now that the previous arrangements have ended. They are due to start in January 2019. We hope this will give the garden a boost and help to return it to some of its former glory and possibly some joint activities in the future.

We are currently applying for an AONB grant towards work for the Pearl-bordered Fritillaries in the Bathurst Estate. This will be match funded by the Estate. The total will be £5,000.

A first aid training course was held for 12 people in August 2018.

Trish was the person given a Volunteer Award at the National AGM in 2017 for all her work for BC, but especially for the key species work which has helped demonstrate how many of the sites in the county are doing (many sadly deteriorating).

Brian Atkinson has been short listed by the National Biodiversity Network in the category Adult Newcomer Award. This is for all the work he has done on GIS with the records, relating them to key sites giving all the species and details of habitat where known. 19 people were shortlisted in five categories. The awards will be made on 21 November at the NBN's AGM in Nottingham.

It seems a long time since the National AGM in Cheltenham last year but I hope it was memorable. Thank you to everyone who helped to make it a success. Lots of events have come and gone since then – too many to mention but suffice it to say that I am grateful to all the unsung heroes of the branch who work tirelessly to help keep everything running. Your efforts do not go unnoticed.

Sadly Chris Tracey has indicated that after the spring newsletter she will no longer be able to edit Antennae so we will be looking for someone who could take this on. We thank Chris for both her stints as newsletter editor and also for all the work on the Pearl-bordered Fritillaries on the Bathurst Estate. Without her determination and organisation, these beautiful butterflies would probably have already vanished from the site.

Appendix 2

Hon Treasurer, Serena Meredith

2017/18 Treasurer's report

These accounts have been audited as part of those of the main society.

The deficit for the year was £2936.48.

Overall income £8305.31 was substantially down compared to the previous year when 2 agri environment grant payments were received, one relating to this year. However other fund-raising efforts, especially at the national AGM held in Cheltenham, helped to offset this. The grant was received from the Gloucestershire Naturalists' Society to fund the production of the new sign and leaflet for the Prinknash butterfly nectar garden, and reserve leaflets for Prestbury Hill and Rough Bank.

Expenditure was in line with the previous year if the one-off cost of the walks booklets in 2016/17 is ignored, and the whole of these costs have now been recouped so all sales of walks booklets are now adding to our fund raising total. The contribution to HO was to support the Back from the Brink project that is doing so much work in the Cotswolds for our benefit. Committee expenses have increased as it has been necessary to hire a room for meetings that previously had been hosted by David Perkins.

Branch Accounts and Balance sheet – see next page.

Appendix 3

Membership report – Trish Atkinson

Membership has continued to rise from 604 household members last year to 691 this year, an increase of 14% which is excellent. However if we take account of joint and family membership, we actually have 965 individual members in the branch. This is more than three times the number of members in the branch about 10 years ago.

Many join with a 1-year free membership offer and most continue after the first year as a paying member. A free 1-year membership offer is available online with various promotions or through the branch at an event. I am looking at the figures to try to get some idea of the proportion of members who join for free but cancel their membership after the first year and whether they have been recruited through the branch or online. This should help us to know where to focus our free membership offer.

I also looked at where our members live in the county and found that per head of the population a higher number of members live in the Stroud administrative district than in Gloucester City. We have in fact 291 members in the Stroud district which is a big area including Dursley, Painswick etc. and only 18 in the Gloucester city district which although a much smaller area has a similar size population. This is 16 times as many members. It is of no great surprise that more people living in a lovely rural area should be more interested in butterflies as in a city but we were surprised that the difference should be so great. This is something that we might want to address in future.

We ran a butterfly ID day specifically for new members on Painswick Beacon this summer. We had a huge response and unfortunately couldn't take everyone who wanted to come. We are planning another ID day next summer and will give priority to new members and any who couldn't get on the ID day this year.

I would like to welcome all new members to the branch and also thank existing members for your continued support.

Appendix 4

County Recorder - Chris Wiltshire.

2018 will be one of those memorable years in particular because of the unusual weather throughout the year. After a cold late winter, spring was also late arriving and during April and early May butterflies were almost 2 weeks late emerging during the colder wetter conditions. By late May things were catching up and by July we were well into the long period of hot dry weather and butterflies by then were almost 2 weeks early! Some sites suffered drought effects on the thin soils of calcareous grasslands with plants like rockrose and bird's foot trefoil desiccating and becoming crunchy and subsequently rejected by some butterflies that would normally be ovipositing on them.

Skippers – generally did not have a good year. Dingy Skippers were in reasonable numbers on some sites and the anticipated second generation was a bit of a let-down but the golden Skippers came off worse in particular the Essex which was in very low numbers.

Whites – had an average first generation but with clouds of them in their second generation. Brimstones and Orange Tips were perhaps closer to average and from July small numbers of Clouded Yellows were seen.

Hairstreaks – Green was present in slightly lower numbers; Purple and White-letter had a very good year especially the latter which I seemed to find in most places I looked for it. It should have been good for the Brown Hairstreak too but we will have to wait until we do the winter egg count to find out. Small Copper was found in modest numbers for the first generation but good numbers for the second and unusually good for the third generation as demonstrated by Andrew Brown who found 53 one day on Selsey Common!

Blues- Small Blue in contrast to last year only found in low numbers; Holly down on its peak of 2017; Chalk Hill also put on a poor show this year; Brown Argus and Adonis produced very good numbers in the second generation while my prediction to the committee that the Common Blue would produce a third generation was proved by guess who, Yes Andrew Brown again! The Large Blue did very well at Daneway Banks again.

White Admiral- while numbers are still low they were better than recent years; Red Admirals probably did not survive the cold winter very few being seen until late spring when some migrants arrived but not in great numbers; Painted Lady was only seen in ones or twos surprisingly from early April onwards; Peacocks were scarce with no mass emergence in July. Small Tortoiseshells were equally few and far between although Commas were in reasonable numbers but not like 2017.

Duke of Burgundy- has perhaps just had an average year even if two were seen by Jen Gilbert at Rough bank for the first time since 1992.

Pearl-Bordered Fritillary- seemed to be in good numbers on the Bathurst Estate and were possibly the source of the wanderers seen at Rough Bank by Guy Meredith and Sheepscombe Common by yours truly; Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries showed further decline in the Dean and are still of great concern. Dark Green Fritillaries were certainly well below average numbers but Silver washed although down on 2017 numbers was still to be found in or around most large woodlands.

Browns- Speckled Woods were slightly below average in the spring but more than made up for that in the late summer. Walls – just a few seen around Cleeve Common and Nottingham Hill. Marbled Whites had a reasonably good year although compressed flight period due to the weather; Ringlets were pretty abundant despite the dry weather. Small Heath numbers were also low. More worrying is the fact that Meadow Browns were well down and more or less faded out by the beginning of September rather than late September. In general Gatekeepers were very few and far between in most places but I know that some sites still had reasonably good numbers.

Overall it was a good season especially for some of the scarcer specialists although some of the common wider countryside species suffered with reduced populations. There may well be negative effects on the populations of some species next year.

Appendix 5

Moth Report - Peter Hugo October 2018

The warmest summer since 1976 has resulted in what most people consider to be a good year for moths. Whilst we should never forget that the long-term overall decline in moth numbers is continuing, this year has brought out quite a number of new moth species, though some of these are undoubtedly due to the increase in moth recording which is currently taking place within the county. It remains to be seen whether the dry weather will affect moth numbers next year. The Large Yellow Underwing, the most common moth in this country, is the bane of a moth recorder's life when emptying a trap. These moths thrive in

wet years as the larvae feed on lush, low-growing vegetation, so the prospect of not having to count up to 500 of this species in one night has to be looked upon as a blessing!

I've not had so much time to devote to moths this year and have had to resort, in the peak of the season, to running my trap on just one night per week to satisfy the requirements of the garden moth scheme so some of this report has been gleaned from what other, more active moth recorders have been reporting, mostly on social media.

The exceptional weather this year has caused quite a few moths to travel long distances with the result that quite a few unusual species have been turning up, which people had not been expecting; and these were not migrants. I've had several moth species which are mainly found in large areas of oak woodland yet there is barely a single oak tree in the vicinity of my trap. Guy has, as usual, been very active and continues to turn up new species in many areas. At Rough Bank, again, mainly thanks to Guy, the moth species list is now a tantalising 649 but this number will probably be exceeded as he completes his dissections over the winter. My efforts at Rough Bank this season have only resulted in just one macro moth being added to the list.

As usual, it's not a very good idea to list every species here but I'd like to point out that our previous County Moth Recorder, Roger Gaunt continues to email out his monthly Moth Newsletter to over 100 people each month and most of the unusual finds are listed and illustrated in this publication. Please contact Roger at roger.gaunt@btinternet.com or myself if you would like to be included on the circulation list.

So, the list of moth species is far too long to list here and, in any case, most moth recorders already know what is happening both from Facebook, Twitter and Roger's Newsletter.

I will just mention that the Back from the Brink Project has resulted in greatly increased effort to preserve the protected Barberry Carpet moth with just one larva having been found at its only known Gloucestershire site. We are continuing to increase the numbers of Barberry plants, the larval foodplant. Around 100 plants in total have been set out at Westonbirt School, the Highgrove Estate and sites in North Wiltshire in an effort to connect up the known colonies. I was allowed to siphon off one of these plants which Guy and myself were able to plant out at our Rough Bank Reserve and, long after I have gone, I hope this will become known as "Pete's Barberry!"

The long-awaited Macro Moth Atlas is due for publication by BC next spring. It will contain up to date maps of most of our macro moths. The cost of publication was matched by auctioning off each photo. You won't be surprised to learn that I managed to successfully bid for the Plumed Prominent moth. There is every chance we may be able to arrange a Plumed Prominent evening this autumn if conditions are suitable. Those already on the circulation list will be invited at short notice to attend.

Ken Cservenka and I were able to attend the Garden Moth Scheme Conference in Leicestershire this spring. While it's good to attend the various conferences and meet other like-minded folk, it is impossible not to notice that the attendees are mainly in the older age group and I do wonder what the future will bring. For this, reason among others I do hope the Gloucestershire Branch Education project which aims to encourage young people to take an interest in butterflies and moths, turns into the success we all hope it's going to be.

There have been a number of moth events this year. Sue, Bob and I have been able to help out at Jen Gilbert's moth and bat nights and the following day at Painswick Rococo Garden. Quite a number of younger people attended the events and it was good to see moths and bats interacting. Jen Gilbert's young people's activities were very well attended. We also attended the very successful Stroud Festival of Nature in Stratford Park, where, again, Jen attended with her "Back from the Brink" stall and were able to attract large numbers of young people to her moth and butterfly activities Bob Smith also delighted the attendees with his moth activities. Indeed Bob is now a legend in the Stroud area and is known locally as "Bob the Moth!" He is the moth expert at the annual "Meet the Expert" activities for schools, he ran the moth traps at the recent Bisley Road Cemetery Bioblitz. He also ran the moth traps and displayed the catch to the public at the annual Yew Tree Farm Festival of

Nature event. Another Bioblitz took place in Pittville Park, Cheltenham, which I was unable to attend so I have no knowledge of the results and yet another took place at the National Trust's Sherborne Park Estate in late July. Once again, I was away and so unable to attend. Bob and Sue attended and led butterfly walks and Guy undertook some moth trapping on a separate occasion and added new micro species to their list. The BBC Spring watch team arranged to borrow one of our traps for their Sherborne events this summer but I was disappointed by the lack of any mention of our branch, and also by the brand new trap being returned covered in cow manure!

Talking of Yew Tree Farm, above, Mark Russell who owns the farm has recently donated three moth trap batteries and two battery chargers to the branch. I estimate the cost of these to be around £250.00 so we are very grateful to Mark for the donation which means that we can now lend out a battery-operated trap and charger to members should they wish to run a trap away from their garden.

The Gloucestershire Moths Facebook site is still thriving and seems to be the main medium in the county for passing on information about moths, meeting like-minded people, arranging events and getting assistance with your identifications. This time last year the membership was 119. It now stands at 168.

And finally, we come to the moth trap loan scheme. Had it not been for Dave Sims' assistance with this I would have stopped running the scheme and it would have folded as it has become so popular, with constant requests to borrow traps. Thanks to Dave's help we were able to deliver more traps this year and also help out with identifications. Not everyone continues with their trap but if only one in five continues then this is regarded as a success. We currently have quite a waiting list for these traps.

As **Branch Contact**, I've been able to assist a number of people in obtaining Forestry Commission permits for moth trapping. Did you know that members and non-members alike can be covered by BC public liability insurance while undertaking their moth and/or butterfly activities so long as they have a risk assessment, provide a copy of our public liability insurance and have read BC guidelines on their particular activity? The BC insurance cover is quite generous and covers anybody who is undertaking moth or butterfly recording subject to the above guidelines and so long as their activity is of benefit to Butterfly Conservation. Do ask me if you are in any doubt about activities you intend to undertake in the future.

Appendix 6 The Bill Smyllie/The Masts report John Coates

The restriction of the heather on the Masts reserve saw Glebe contractors cutting a large area of gorse. Heather seed was then broadcast in this area in Feb.18. A boundary fence with rabbit fencing was added also by Glebe contractors.

Grazing started on the Bill Smyllie with Galloway cattle on Sept 11th. They are to be switched to the Masts reserve next week.

All the four horsegates on the BS have been extended to conform to horse society requirements. Thanks to the Cotswold wardens led by Mike Dunning for doing this work.

Work parties last winter were better supported. Thanks to Serena and Tricia for cakes providing an added incentive to help. Thanks also to the conservation volunteers. There will be another work party weekend Feb 9th and 10th 2019.

Dukes were plentiful on the Masts reserve this year and numbers are showing signs of increasing on the BS after extensive scrub clearance (natural England request). Another area is to be cleared by contractors in Nov-Dec below the Cotswold way.

Wall Browns were seen this year on both reserves.

The Cotswold wardens have agreed to do the hedge laying this winter starting by the kissing gate on the BS.

Appendix 7

Rough Bank Report – Sue Smith

Two more committee meetings have taken place in the last year. Kate Jones (NT) has taken over as ranger for the cattle on Rough Bank. Lots of other site visits have taken place on the reserve. Several trees have fallen down. The usual work parties have and are taking place over the winter period.

The HLS Agreement ended earlier this year and Lucy Morton is currently in the process of applying for a Countryside Stewardship agreement. Hopefully this will start next year and will run for five years.

The National Trust Belted Galloways continue to graze on the reserve and are currently on both Myers fields and Rough Bank. No summer grazing took place although this had been discussed last winter. Due to the heat and lack of rain, this was probably a good decision, although it may not be ruled out in the future.

The Western Power Distribution company cut trees on the northern boundary of Rough Bank to clear the power lines.

Half of the scalloping along the bottom of Rough Bank was carried out last winter. The rest is due to be done this winter. BftB is helping with fencing the pond in Great Myers and also replacing the barbed wire fence with plain wire alongside the lower path between Little Myers and Rough Bank. Fencing along the western part of the bottom of Rough Bank was completed by a contractor.

The unusually dry conditions this summer caused many larval food plants to wilt and nectar plants were suffering too with desiccated flowers and thus little nectar available to adult butterflies. The later rain seemed to have refreshed the site and Small Scabious, Stemless Thistle and some Knapweed flowers had butterflies jostling for nectar on the flower heads. Much less Ragwort this year. Turf height measurements were taken again this year – 2018 started with second shortest sward but ended up with the second longest.

Some unusual observations were a Pearl-bordered Fritillary seen by Guy Meredith and a male and female Duke of Burgundy were seen by Jen Gilbert.

About 50 invited guests came along to the unveiling of the Seager Gate on Saturday 30 June 2018, and, as well as viewing the newly installed gate commissioned by the Seager Arts Award and designed by Tobias Forbes Gower, they were given a conducted tour of Rough Bank. Mike Dilger very kindly came along to unveil the gate. Unfortunately, Tobias was unable to attend the opening but Valerie Seager, wife of Richard Seager gave a very moving speech about how the award came about in memory of her husband. The gate sits very well between the two sections of the wall in the access strip and the two butterflies seem to reflect the light whatever the weather.

Appendix 8

Forest conservation officer report - Simon Glover

Our flag ship species is the Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary. This has gone from over 40 breeding colonies in the 1980's to two today. Through Foresters Forest and the Forestry Commission we have finance to undertake some fairly radical habitat development.

Landscape scale plans with partners including GWT and FC will hopefully open up more suitable breeding and nectaring areas.

Dave Green a well-known ecologist with experience of SPBF has been commissioned to undertake survey work and recommendations on habitat enhancement. He has completed his second year of surveys and we are awaiting a written report.

Ground work already undertaken includes clearing an acre of 30-foot conifer trees, then landscaping into mounds and hollows with a large excavator which also inverted the soil to bury the acidic conifer stumps and contaminated soil.

Thanks to Kate Wollen from FC for the following Dean Green Team work:-

The main survey season for the key species ended at the end of July, although volunteers were continuing with weekly butterfly transects at Gorsty Knoll, Mallards and Linear Park, and *ad hoc* surveys throughout the Dean. The weather was kind to butterflies this year and although records are still coming in to be collated, it appears that many species, especially Common Blue and the Wood White, one of the key species, had a better year than for some time.

Over 3000 plug plants were purchased to plant at the newly cleared and landscaped area at Ruspidge Halt (Linear Park). These plants were chosen to be either butterfly food plants or nectar for insects. Species were Common and Greater Birds-foot-trefoil, Bugle, Meadow Vetchling, Betony, Wild Strawberry and Common Dog Violet.

The Dean Green Team volunteers started to plant these out on the 25th September and will continue planting through October as needed. The brash fence designed to keep feral boar off the new habitat will be replaced this winter with a proper fence along with fencing a nearby meadow to allow grazing.

European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIFs) are the European Union's main way of investing in 'smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in its member states'. GWT has managed to tap into the Wild Towns fund with Cinderford in line to receive funds to enhance the Linear Park. Having gone from no funding we are now having to be careful not to double fund projects!

Finally our silent Eco System Engineers are beavering away. Seven Dams and 0.8 metres depth of water in the main pond since August....

Appendix 9

9.1 Cotswolds Back from the Brink (BftB) project update: Jennifer Gilbert

- Project has been going over a year now
 - Over 1800 people engaged with over various events including:
 - 9 volunteer identification & survey workshops for our target species including for the rugged oil beetle, Duke of Burgundy and adder
 - 5 landowner workshops including for managing and restoring limestone grassland, managing for adders and greater horseshoe bats specifically
 - Guided walks, talks, bat nights, moth days and family fun days at Rococo Garden
 - Also includes work parties led by Julian
 - Following volunteer training we've had people out surveying for adders, Duke of Burgundy, rugged oil beetle, rock-rose pot beetle and bumblebees – all workshops fully booked or over-subscribed but could still do with more people to help with surveys – more training to take place in 2019.
 - Currently in process of collating all survey results
 - Total of 95 volunteers have given their time to the project = 253 days
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- 258 people have learnt new skills with us – either species surveying/ID skills or practical habitat management
- Over 93,000 people reached indirectly through radio interviews/articles/social media

9.2 Cotswolds Back from the Brink (BftB) project update: Julian Bendle

- Large Blue Butterfly reintroductions:

One of the aims of the Cotswolds BftB project is to reintroduce the large Blue to at least one new site in the Cotswolds.

Following its extinction in the UK in 1979, two populations have been established, one in the Polden Hills in Somerset and the other in the Gloucestershire part of the Cotswolds. A reintroduction to a new site was carried out at the start of the BftB project last year, bringing the total to five sites where it is now present in the county. Next year it is planned to carry out a further reintroduction to a sixth new site.

BftB is funding all of the reintroduction work, including the rearing of larvae and the ant and habitat monitoring work.

- Larval foodplant planting:

The Stroud Valleys Project plant nursery is currently propagating Wild Thyme cuttings taken from local sites to produce plug plants, which will be planted at Large Blue sites. Marjoram seed has also been collected and volunteer training days have been arranged for a specialist contractor to train volunteers in splitting Marjoram clumps and replanting where required on site for the Large Blue.

- Targeted Paddock grazing:

£3,000 of electric fencing has been purchased and a contractor engaged to set up/remove paddocks at target sites to benefit a number of butterfly species. So successful has this been that one site is now in a suitable condition to allow the reintroduction of the Large Blue next year.

- Marsh Fritillary Butterfly [MF]:

Currently found at only one permanent breeding site in Gloucestershire, the BftB project is looking to carry out a possible translocation to one new site. This February only 7 larval webs were recorded, compared to an all-time peak of 310 webs in 2016! A MF working group has been set up to help steer the reintroduction. It is possible that the donor population may not be from Gloucestershire, but from a dry calcareous site in Wiltshire, which Natural England feel is more similar to the potential recipient sites identified in the county. A visit was made to the Pewsey Downs NNR in Wiltshire to compare habitat conditions with those in Gloucestershire.

Habitat assessments of five potential recipient sites have been carried out and sites visited by Dr Caroline Bulman and Jenny Plackett from BC. Following this visit it was agreed that more data was required on sward temperatures and sunlight levels in late February/March when the caterpillars need to bask to warm up and feed. Rachel Jones [BC Senior Ecologist] will also be carrying out some habitat computer modelling for Gloucestershire to see the likelihood of any introduction persisting in the long term.

- Duke of Burgundy Butterfly [DoB]:

Much of my involvement has been concerned with practical habitat management. In this last year four volunteer work parties have been run to benefit DoB, totalling some 257 hours of volunteer time. More Volunteer work parties are planned for this coming winter.

Targeted paddock grazing is being carried out this winter at Painswick Beacon and Rodborough Common DoB sites to control scrub and create the necessary sward conditions to promote cowslip germination.

Contractors will be carrying out work at a further two DoB sites this winter, mainly removing larger trees.

Appendix 10

Butterfly Monitoring in Gloucestershire – Trish Atkinson

Butterfly monitoring has continued again this year in various forms. There are about 26 transects operating throughout the county, mainly on managed sites. These records show the size of populations of all butterfly species and show trends so that we can check how each species on each site is faring. This data can then also be used as a management tool to help make decisions on management of the site.

We also have recorded in 43 1km squares for the Wider Countryside Butterfly Survey. This is a national recording project to record 1km squares chosen at random throughout the country. These are really mini-transects which are carried out usually just twice in the summer, in July and August. We have 30 members taking part, some recording in more than one square. The purpose of this national recording project is to get records from the wider countryside including agricultural fields, woods and towns rather than managed butterfly sites to keep a check on the so-called common butterflies. If we don't keep a check on these, they could easily become endangered. I'm particularly thinking about the Small Tortoiseshell which used to be a very common garden butterfly which now is not often seen. Thanks to all recorders taking part not only for doing the recording but also submitting the records online which was sometimes more challenging than actually doing the recording. Please do contact me if you are interested in taking part. We are particularly looking for a recorder or recorders to record in squares in the Chipping Campden and Broadway area.

I have had quite a few key site records sent to me, but I think there are a few more records to come in. If you haven't already done so, please send in your records to your area coordinator. We usually get records each year from just over 100 key sites throughout the county.

Also casual butterfly records can be sent directly to Chris Wiltshire. So even if you did not officially do key site recording, if you did see a key species somewhere, then please send in your record. It is probably not important on sites where we do transects as they will be well recorded, but we would be interested to get records from anywhere else. We are particularly interested in any Wall Brown or Dark Green Fritillary records from anywhere in the county.

Casual Recording Forms are available on the website to download. I do have some recording forms I can let you have and can explain about sending in records if you are not sure about anything.

We are always looking for new recorders to help us. We are particularly looking for recorders to help out on transect recording. You wouldn't have to do it every week but could share recording on a rota or just fill in for when a recorder is on holiday or unavailable for an occasional week. You would however need to know your butterflies and be able to ID all butterfly species.

Finally, I want to thank all recorders for their time and efforts not just doing the recording but filling in the forms afterwards which I must admit is not as enjoyable as actually getting out in the sunshine and doing the recording itself.