

Welcome to the latest issue of our newsletter for Butterfly Conservation members and many other people living in the Scottish Borders and further afield. Please forward it to others who have an interest in butterflies & moths and who might like to read it and be kept in touch with our activities.

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[See last page for photo credits]

Please write in with your articles and views. The next issue is planned for autumn 2018. Email to me at the above address or by post to:
12 Barefoots Crescent
Eyemouth, Berwickshire
TD14 5BA



Pine Beauty – widespread across the Borders

Let's Celebrate and Keep up the Good Work

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the creation of Butterfly Conservation and the organisation is rightly proud of the practical work it has done to help our native butterflies and moths. Equally valuable perhaps is the raising of awareness amongst the public and politicians of the importance of these insects and the roles they play. These achievements are reflected in our growing membership and the increased frequency we are contacted by individuals, local groups and most significantly are asked for conservation advice by the planning and forestry agencies. So to help celebrate this anniversary do try and join in with one or more of the bumper range of outdoor events coming up over the summer. And once again the **Big Butterfly Count** will take place over the three weeks 20 July to 12 August <http://www.bigbutterflycount.org/> – there must be a few warm sunny days then when you can get out and do some counting!

Summer means surveys and once again there will be a postcard survey; this year it's the turn of the maybe-not-so-Common Blue – see later for details of how to contribute your sightings. Previous postcard surveys of other species in Scotland have given really valuable information on how distributions are changing – sometimes for the better as with the Orange-tip and Speckled Wood. We are concerned for the Common Blue though so this is an important study.

We are also embarking on a wide-ranging survey of Northern Brown Argus colonies across the Borders. We have many of these, some large and flourishing, others small and vulnerable; some regularly visited and monitored, others rather neglected. There are possibly additional undiscovered sites for this butterfly in areas where the caterpillar's foodplant (Common Rock-rose) grows. If you'd like to join in and perhaps check on sites near you then just contact me.

As well as the ever-popular branch Facebook page we now have an offshoot page dedicated to our region's moths (link above). Have a look and join in the chat and share your pictures, queries and achievements.

A big **Thank you** to everyone who has written articles for this issue. They are inspirational and show just how much exciting stuff there is around us waiting to be discovered. Good hunting.

Barry Prater

Outings and Events in the Borders during Summer 2018

All these daytime and evening events are aimed at introducing people to their local butterflies & moths and to help with identification, so beginners are very welcome. Whatever the weather on the day, they will be enjoyable and there will be plenty to see and learn and opportunities to meet and chat with others who have similar interests.

Date	Event	Details	Contact
Saturday 12 May 2018	Gordon Community Woodland for Emperor Moths and spring butterflies	<p>Meet at 10.30 am at the East Gordon car park, turning off the A6105 at East Gordon NT669439, then parking at NT666443 Gordon Community Woodland.</p> <p>We will be using pheromone lures to attract Emperor Moth males that fly by day. The Emperor Moth is the only British resident silk moth and despite it being fairly common, it is seldom seen, and this is a rare chance to get up close to these fantastic creatures. We will also be looking for Spring Butterflies such as Orange-tip, Speckled Wood and Comma, as well as anything else that we are lucky enough to find. We will have an overnight Moth trap to inspect as well, weather permitting.</p> <p>Bring some lunch and decent outdoor gear; you just never know what the weather will do. There are multiple flat and easily accessible tracks and paths around the Woodland to explore. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult.</p>	Iain Cowe 01890 818314 iainacowe@gmail.com
Saturday 2 June 2018	Coastal walk from Eyemouth for Small Blue and perhaps some early Northern Brown Argus	<p>Meeting at Gunsreen Carpark NT947643 at 11 am. Turning off the A1107 in Eyemouth at NT943636.</p> <p>We hope to look for new evidence of Small Blue on this coastal stretch as far as Burnmouth for those willing to do so. Hopefully the weather will hold as there are some very fine coastal views to be had on a decent day as far as Holy Island and Bamburgh to the south and St Abbs Head to the north.</p> <p>You are going to need a bite to eat and a decent pair of shoes as well as a waterproof...you can never be sure about the weather. If you have a camera, binoculars, bring them as well...there will be plenty to see and photograph.</p>	Iain Cowe 01890 818314 iainacowe@gmail.com
Saturday 9 June 2018	A Walk at Lindean Loch. An outing arranged by the <i>Scottish Wildlife Trust Central Borders Group</i>	<p>Lindean Loch is 3km east of Selkirk with parking by a minor road at NT505293. A fairly level walk of about 2 miles, starting at 1.30 pm and led by Sarah Eno, around a lime-rich marl loch with a rich array of plants and a good variety of birds and insects, including day-flying moths such as Burnet Companion, Latticed Heath and Mother Shipton. Good footwear needed. Meet at St. Dunstons car park (Health Centre) Melrose (TD6 9RX) at 1.00 pm for car-sharing or at Lindean Loch (TD7 4QN)) at 1.30 pm. Finish at 5.30 pm.</p>	Jim Russell 01835 824898
Friday 15 & Saturday 16 June 2018	Moth Night 2018 followed by Moth Breakfast at Harestanes Countryside Visitor Centre	<p>Join us at 9.00 pm for a celebration of moths and recording. Discover the beauty of these night-time creatures and the different ways of attracting them. Finish around 10.45 pm. Ages 8+, under-16s must be with an adult. Adult £5, Child £3. No dogs. Booking: Advised.</p> <p>In the morning join us between 9 and 10 am to take a look at last night's selection of beautiful moths. and to enjoy breakfast from Harestanes Café. Ages 8+, under-16s must be with an adult. Adult £5, Child £3. No dogs. Booking: Advised.</p> <p>Harestanes (NT641244) is just off the A68, 6km north of Jedburgh.</p>	<p>1. to book contact Harestanes Countryside Visitor Centre, Ancrum, JEDBURGH TD8 6UQ 01835 830306 harestanes@liveborders1.org.uk www.liveborders.org.uk/harestanes</p> <p>2. Barry Prater 018907 52037 barry@prater.myzen.co.uk</p>

<p>Sunday 24 June 2018</p>	<p>Berwickshire Coastal Walk with the <i>Edinburgh Natural History Society</i> for Northern Brown Argus etc.</p> 	<p>An opportunity to look for the Small Blue, Northern Brown Argus and other coastal butterflies and day-flying moths, together with seabird activity. Meet at 10.30 am in the car park just off the A1 at Burnmouth (NT953607). The coastal path is fairly easy walking but can be a bit steep and may be muddy in places if recent rain so wear appropriate shoes and clothing for any weather. Bring some refreshments too.</p>	<p>Iain Cowe 01890 818314 iainacowe@gmail.com</p>
<p>Saturday 30 June 2018</p>	<p>Pentlands Butterfly Safari for Northern Brown Argus and other Lepidoptera</p> 	<p>Meet at 10.30 am at the entrance to the West Linton Filter Station, one mile north-west of West Linton on the Baddinsgill Road (NT 133531) to record butterflies and day-flying moths in a botanically rich valley in the Pentland Hills. Parking on the road-side. Northern Brown Argus has been previously recorded in the valley, there is suitable habitat for Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, and the outside chance of skippers which are colonising the Western Borders. There are also several species of orchid found in the valley, which we will try to locate. Bring warm clothing, waterproofs, packed lunch and enthusiasm. No dogs as this a working sheep farm.</p>	<p>Reuben Singleton reuben@tweedecology.co.uk 07783 047398</p>
<p>Saturday 7 July 2018</p>	<p>Chisholme Estate - a walk arranged by the <i>Scottish Wildlife Trust Central Borders Group</i></p> 	<p>Chisholme Estate is about 3km SW of Robertson and 8km W of Hawick. A 3 mile walk, starting at 11 am and led by Alison Smith, around the estate and adjacent Chapel Hill - interesting botany, possibly red squirrels, day-flying butterflies & moths and demonstration of moths trapped previous evening, with tea and cakes to finish. Bring a snack lunch and good footwear as parts might be muddy. Meet at Melrose Health Centre car park (NT545341) at 10 am to organise car share OR at Chisholme (NT418122) at 11am. Finish about 5 pm. Directions can be found here: http://www.chisholme.org/contact/contact-directions.</p>	<p>Jim Russell 01835 824898</p>
<p>Wednesday 18 July 2018</p>	<p>St Abbs Head Bioblitz</p>	<p>An event which is part of <i>UK Bioblitz - Nature reserves are not enough</i>. Details to be finalised but we will be exploring the site for butterflies and moths and hoping to make some discoveries.</p>	<p>1. Liza Cole St Abbs Head NNR Warden lcoble@nts.org.uk 2. Barry & Barbara Prater 018907 52037 barry@prater.myzen.co.uk</p>
<p>Friday 10 August 2018</p>	<p>Moths @ Harestanes</p> 	<p>Late summer is the perfect time to see beautiful moths of all kinds. We'll be starting at 8.30 pm to gather round the light and discover the secrets of the night. Finish 10 pm. Ages 8+, under-16s must be with an adult. Adult £5, Child £3. No dogs. Booking: Advised. Harestanes Countryside Visitor Centre (NT641244) is just off the A68, 6km north of Jedburgh.</p>	<p>1. to book contact Harestanes Countryside Visitor Centre, Ancrum, JEDBURGH TD8 6UQ 01835 830306 harestanes@liveborders1.org.uk www.liveborders.org.uk/harestanes 2. Charlotte Cavey-Wilcox charliecheese@hotmail.co.uk</p>
<p>Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 August 2018</p>	<p>Manor Valley near Peebles – Introduction to Moth Trapping and Survey with <i>Tweeddale U3A group</i></p> <p>22 August 2018 8.00 pm - midnight</p> <p>23 August 2018 9.30 - 11.00 am</p>	<p>Meet at 8.00 pm on 22 August at the Old Schoolhouse in the Manor Valley near Peebles (NT213365). Parking in driveway and roadside layby. Come along to learn more about these creatures of the night and watch moth trapping and sugaring techniques in action. Participants should be prepared to stay on until midnight, if good conditions occur! However, the moths trapped overnight will be kept for inspection at 9.30 am on the Thursday morning (23 August) at the same site. Bring warm clothing, waterproofs, midge repellent/midge nets and a torch.</p>	<p>1. Reuben Singleton reuben@tweedecology.co.uk 0778 3047398 2. Graham Pyatt pyattdg@gmail.com 01721 740319</p>

**Saturday 18
August 2018**

St Abbs Science Day

Details to be finalised, but Butterfly
Conservation will be there!

1. Sarah Barnard
Ebba Centre Manager
ebbacentre@btconnect.com

2. Barry & Barbara Prater
018907 52037
barry@prater.myzen.co.uk

Orange Footman – a New Species for Scotland

Andrew Bramhall (Tweedbank)

Among the 19 species of moth caught during an overnight moth catching session using a Skinner Light Trap on the 1st June 2017 was what appeared to be a single Orange Footman (*Eilema sororcula*). This did arouse interest with another local moth enthusiast as it had apparently not been seen in the Borders before. It therefore required a positive identification and photographs were taken and passed on to two Scottish experts known to the local study group. They have been approached before to give a verdict on new or difficult species.

Initially it was assessed by Dr Malcolm Lindsay and Andrew Bramhall using the digital photographs, the field guides and Internet illustrations. It had no clear distinguishing features or markings and was a light orange colour just over a centimetre long. By its shape it was clear that it belonged to a group of moths called “Footman” – but which one? The field guides show several of this family and the two nearest candidates were considered but ruled out as they normally appear much later in the year. The specimen that did fit the flight season, from late May into June, was the Orange Footman but it was realised that this had never been taken in Scotland before.

The next stage in positively identifying the moth was to preserve the specimen by freezing it to keep it in pristine condition. The insect was put in a pot inside a polythene bag and placed in the deep freeze. This might seem unacceptable to some but it is likely that the moth was not on its own as it seems recognised that it is a southern species moving north, particularly as there appeared to be one caught near the Northumberland-Durham border on 27th May 2017.



Orange Footman (AB) and characteristic male claspers (MC)

The experts seek to firmly confirm the identity of moths by carefully looking at the genitalia of the submitted specimen and even performing a dissection to be sure of identity. The moth was forwarded to the expert and he quickly came back that the make-up of the vital parts was so distinct that it did not require the moth to be dissected, a magnified view was all that was required. The other expert considered that the photograph was of sufficient quality to identify it as the Orange Footman. This then confirmed that the specimen was a first for Scotland and therefore a significant and exciting find.

The final step was to submit the specimen to the National Museum of Scotland for their collection. Dr Malcolm Lindsay sent the following note, specimen and photographs to Ashleigh Whiffin, Assistant Curator of Entomology at the Museum on 11th June 2017.

*“I enclose a macro-moth specimen which you may consider adding to the Entomology collection. This is an Orange Footman *Eilema sororcula* and, as far as we are aware, is a new record for Scotland. The moth was light-trapped in a garden at Tweedbank (NT515345), VC80 (Roxburghshire) on 31 May 2017 by Andrew Bramhall. It was determined from a photograph by Roy Leverton and further identified by inspection of the very distinctive genitalia by Mark Cubitt.”*

The submission was subsequently acknowledged by the museum.

A New Universe found on the tip of a Branch

Iain Cowe (Chirnside)

You may have heard that the White-letter Hairstreak has finally arrived in Scotland. But how long has this butterfly been present in the country? At the moment we just cannot be sure. The discovery of an adult on the Scottish side of the border back in August 2017 was to be the very tip of the iceberg as winter searches for eggs by White-letter Hairstreak experts from Lancashire, Jill Mills and Ken Haydock, revealed startling evidence that this tiny arboreal colonist may well have been settled here a good number of years.

Jill and Ken have been looking for this butterfly at all stages of its lifecycle for a decade and more and this winter were directed to look at Paxton in Berwickshire by Andrew Middleton. Andrew Middleton along with Liz Goodyear spearheaded a UK wide survey back in 2006 to look at the changing distribution of this species and found that it was moving north, and that they expected it to get to Scotland at some point. Ken and Jill were convinced it would cross the border in the west first, and perhaps it did and has yet to be discovered, however, my adult sighting changed the direction of searches to the east, and the rest is history.

Jill and Ken discovered the first evidence of eggs at Lennel, near Coldstream in February and just a few weeks later confirmed more evidence at Kelso and Ancrum. Without their obvious enthusiasm and expertise, we may well have gone many years without finding any evidence at all ourselves. I was very lucky to be able to meet up with Jill and Ken to observe those first egg discoveries, and very excited to be able to re-find eggs that they had reported to me that they had found at Kelso. So I have gained some experience, in a way, but have ultimately failed to find any White-letter Hairstreak eggs of my own. How difficult can it be?



Elm twigs in winter

So, starting from scratch, and identifying the Elm tree in winter. Now, that took time to achieve, but surprisingly I twigged fairly quickly. I was feeling very ignorant that I was quite unable to differentiate between Cherry, Elm, Lime or Sycamore. I found that the Elm most likely found in our area is the Wych Elm, and that it's a lot more widespread and common than I thought.



magnificent Elm at Edrington Mill in May 2008 (BP)

After only a few weeks I became proficient at recognising Elm from a distance, but what's going on close up? The butterfly lays its eggs between the old and new growth spurs and looking at the tips of these branches is like looking into a whole new universe under magnification. The White-letter Hairstreak is not the only species of Lepidoptera to follow a similar strategy. Before now, I had no idea. I found several eggs after my first few searches that were, as far as I knew, moth eggs of some sort and was later to learn that I was finding eggs of the Brick moth and the Dusky-lemon Sallow. The Dusky-lemon Sallow was quite interesting as it has been very scarcely recorded in the Scottish Borders yet I found it at several locations. Perhaps this species is quite shy of the moth trap, or it too could be establishing itself in the area.



Two WLH eggs (IC)



egg of the Brick moth (IC)



Dusky-lemon Sallow eggs + enlarged view (IC)

The flight period for the White-letter Hairstreak should be during July and into August. It will be very interesting to see if adults can be found at the known sites that have now been revealed. There will be no exact science to it, just lots of watching and waiting. The butterfly can spend its entire life in the canopy of the tree, so close ups at eye level on the ground are rare. The experts say that the butterfly can seek nectar after rain, as the rain washes the aphid honey dew, its food of choice, from the leaves. The best nectar sources at ground level are Ragwort, Thistle, Bramble flowers and various Umbellifers.

My fingers are crossed that we are able to see the adults come July. Meanwhile I advise that you swot up on your tree identification. It really is worthwhile looking that little bit closer at the world around us.

Plant Communities for Butterflies & Moths Part 8: Disused Railway Lines

Roger Manning (Sprouston)

Railway lines have, for many years, formed some of the most important arteries of Britain, linking our towns and cities and forever changing much of the landscape. Many of us will know of the Beeching Report of the 1960s which eventually led to huge reductions of track. These amounted to something like a 30% loss of mileage between 1961 and 1968 alone. It is difficult not to feel a tinge of sadness (or even fury!) at this destruction and yet, today, we have benefitted greatly in other ways. Mile after mile of wonderful green corridors stretch through the Scottish Borders with these areas often providing easy access to largely unspoilt and near-deserted magical wildlife havens.



Disused line near Reston (BP)



and near Whitrope (BP)

Available routes include the former lines which ran from:

- Peebles to Galashiels
- St Boswells down to Hawick, Riccarton Junction and beyond
- Reston to Duns, Greenlaw and Earlston
- Berwick-upon-Tweed to Kelso with onward branches leading to either Jedburgh or Maxton and St Boswells.

The potential of railway lines which remain in use may well also be tempting but I would implore you not to venture on to any such routes. Today's trains are fast, silent and potentially deadly whilst the old Forty Shillings penalty for trespass has been replaced by a four-figure sum!

It is important to remember that lines will often have similarities to the landscape they are passing through – although for wildlife, frequently with even greater variety. More than 2000 plant species have been recorded along the rail network of Great Britain. Whilst not all of those occur in SE Scotland, the list remains immense and so only a sprinkling of prompts can be itemised here. To avoid unnecessary duplication, I would ask you to refer to back-issues for additional references (e.g. 'Coniferous Woodland' in Borders Newsletter issue 14 and 'Uplands' in issue 15) if these are the types of habitat your chosen stretch is associated with.

Common Stinging Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) is a plant which will be frequently encountered and it alone can attract a wide range of butterflies and moths including Peacock, Red Admiral, Plain Golden Y and Snout. Black Bindweed (*Fallopia convolvulus*) growing at locations which include Hawick and Shankend is the foodplant of the Bright-line Brown-eye whilst its relative Knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*) will occupy bare ground and is important for the Vestal which unfortunately is only a rather scarce migrant to our part of the country with just nine records from the Borders region since 1997. It cannot overwinter in our climate and so any attempts at breeding will come to nothing. Meanwhile,

Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), sometimes referred to locally as “soor docks” is one of the larval foodplants of the Yellow Shell and Grey Chi moths as well as the Small Copper butterfly.



Grey Chi (BP)



Vestal (BP)



Peacock larvae on nettle (BP)

Larvae of the White-line Dart will feed on Common Mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*) and wooded stretches of old railway will often include patches of the boldly-coloured Red Campion (*Silene dioica*). This is the sole foodplant of the Rivulet and is also used by Lychnis caterpillars. The ubiquitous Common Chickweed (*Stellaria media*) can host the Yellow Shell, Setaceous Hebrew Character and Angle Shades.

The white-flowered and strong-smelling Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) and the yellow-flowered and wiry Hedge Mustard (*Sisymbrium officinale*) are all-important to both Orange-tip and Green-veined White butterflies together with the Garden Carpet moth. Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) occurs almost everywhere and supports a huge range of moths, including Grey Dagger, Chinese Character and Brimstone Moth. Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*) occurs with great regularity amongst wet flushes and, despite being frequently found, this plant is used by relatively few species but these include the Fox Moth, Glaucous Shears (really a moorland species) and the widespread and abundant Hebrew Character. Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*) often forms huge patches on old trackbeds and in southern Britain these would be good sites to search for the Grizzled Skipper butterfly; however, it is still possible that Ghost Moth and Dark Marbled Carpet will be present. Trackside thickets will often have Wood Avens (*Geum urbanum*) amongst their plant communities and it's a species which the Riband Wave makes use of.



Grizzled Skipper (BP)



Grey Dagger larva (BP)



Barred Yellow (BP)

Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) typically forms large and impenetrable stands but is an all-important shrub for a great many moths including the Chinese Character, Early Thorn, Chestnut and the much-declined Figure of Eight. Areas of scrubland are also likely to be populated by Common Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*) which brings the possibilities of the spring-flying Streamer and Shoulder Stripe and then in summer the very bright Barred Yellow moth. Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) patches are another ‘must’ and again favour a huge list of invertebrates both as nectaring adults and in the larval form (these include the Beautiful Carpet and Purple Clay). The Peppered Moth and Broom Moth include Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*) amongst their foodplants and this has often spread along disused lines.

Common Birds-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*) frequently occupies the more open and sunny ground, especially where the soil is poorer and it doesn't have to compete with rank vegetation; it is used by the Common Blue (a butterfly which appears to be far less abundant than in the past) as well as several day-flying moths such as the Six-spot Burnet and Mother Shipton. Kidney Vetch (*Anthyllis vulneraria*) has a very limited inland distribution in our area and formerly it did spread along railway lines but has been lost from most of these – the old line south of Hawick used to have sufficient to support a colony of the Small Blue butterfly but this has now gone. The related species Black Medick (*Medicago lupulina*) is one of the foodplants of the Latticed Heath whilst another member of the Pea family, Restharrow (*Ononis repens*), supports the rather scarce Bordered Sallow. Common Dog-violet (*Viola riviniana*) has a

wide distribution and sometimes supplies a source of food for the larvae of the Dark Green Fritillary, which feed on the leaves, as at Longnewton to the south of St Boswells.

Common Rock-rose (*Helianthemum nummularium*) is essential for colonies of the Northern Brown Argus and so its presence is limited to stretches of disused line which pass through limestone strata or other areas with some more basic rocks and have close-cropped swards. One example is the disused track by the A72 to the east of Thornielee towards Clovenfords.



Beautiful Carpet (BP)



Elephant Hawk-moth larva (AM)



Dark Green Fritillary (BP)

Rosebay Willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*) can often be abundant along the tracks and signs of caterpillar damage might have been caused by the Small Phoenix, Bright-line Brown-eye or Elephant Hawk-moth. Bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus*) make the presence of the Green Hairstreak a possibility; it has, for instance, been found in the past on the former railway line at Newcastleton.

Although greatly abbreviated, the majority of my references relate to moths but quite a range of butterflies are attracted to these snaking wildlife refuges. Sheltered stretches, such as those running through cuttings or woodland, are often the most rewarding provided that the trees or scrub do not create excessively shady conditions, although the Speckled Wood will tolerate quite closed woodland as long as there are sunny glades. Many of the widespread species with no special habitat requirements will be found, but the slightly fussier Small Heath is around where the ground cover is short and the Small Skipper (currently spreading quite rapidly through the Borders) should find some of the old track grassland very suitable for colonies. Visiting known haunts, such as the line at Hassendean near Denholm, is obviously worthwhile but it may be more valuable and interesting to look at stretches which have received little attention in the past. I wish you well in your searching.

*The Railway Flora
of Teviotdale
revisited*



Michael Braithwaite

[A really good local read on this subject is 'The Railway Flora of Teviotdale revisited' by Michael Braithwaite which is available through the Hawick Archaeological Society.]

Look out for the Common Blue this Summer!



Have you seen a Common Blue?

Each year Butterfly Conservation Scotland organises a citizen science postcard survey for a species and in 2018 it's the turn of the Common Blue. While this butterfly can be seen in many places throughout June and July there are signs that it is having some trouble in parts of the country so the results of the survey will give really useful data which can help with understanding any causes of a decline and maybe point to how the butterfly can be helped. Please contribute either by returning one of the postcards with your sightings or on line at

www.butterfly-conservation.org/scottishcommonblue

When the Comma Reappeared in the Borders

David & Annabelle Skinner (Chesters)

On Saturday 26th October 1996 we spotted a butterfly in our garden at The Schoolhouse, Chesters, 5 miles north of the English border at Carter Bar. It was sunbathing on a wooden sweet-pea support. A bit different. An unusual "look". Annabelle went to fetch the Butterfly book, I retrieved my camera from the car, I had been taking some "colour print" photographs for a workplace project just the day before. Photographs taken, the book suggested the butterfly was a Comma.

We telephoned a friend, a natural history enthusiast who lives in Melrose. Never one to accept an instant claim of an unusual identification, he gave us a grilling. Perhaps it was a damaged, bird-pecked, Small Tortoiseshell? "I'll get back to you", he said. Half an hour later the phone rang. "I've spoken to Andrew Buckham who lives in Galashiels and is an expert on Borders Butterflies..... well if it was a Comma, it's the first seen in Roxburghshire since 1868. I'll be over tomorrow first thing".



the 1996 Comma (DS)



and one from 2017 (DS)

That night the most awful autumn storm passed over, thunder, lightning, torrential rain. Next day there wasn't a bird let alone an insect moving. Difficult to remember in these days of digital photography but an anxious wait ensued. Eventually the prints came back from the processor. **It was a Comma.**

A delightful letter from Andrew Buckham accompanied by a reference to a previous sighting. There was a mention in the Corbie column in The Southern Reporter. Twenty-one years later, now lots of Commas are seen since in Roxburghshire. Drunken autumnal orgies on over-ripe Victoria plums. But none as good as our first Comma.

01896)756354.
9 Yorse Lane
Galashiels
TD1 2LY

Dear Mr Skinner,

I received your photos of the comma butterfly. I have put the record into the system and have taken the liberty of having the photo copied to go into my filing system. The record is very exceptional being the second for Roxburghshire, the first was 1868! Minto Woods, Denholm. Murray. (Bonnievale Naturalists Club. Vol.5-p329. so you will understand how related we are about the Southern record. I will be pleased to have any records you think worth while.

Many thanks for letting me see your photo

Best regards
Andrew Buckham

If you've seen it, report it

Below are the people to whom you should send your sightings of moths or butterflies during 2018. If you come across something which you think is unusual or interesting then do get in touch quickly as others will like to hear about it, but you still need to send in records to the various people listed to make sure they get logged. **Increasingly, observers are recording their sightings using online systems such as iRecord or posting them on website or Facebook pages; while efforts are made to collect these records, they may not get through to the County Recorders listed below. To guarantee that your sightings get noted you should continue to send them in to the County Recorders.**

You can also publicise your sightings through the forums on the branch website www.eastscotland-butterflies.org.uk/

or on our Facebook pages <http://www.facebook.com/EastScotlandButterflyConservation>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/eastscottishmoths/>

The work of County Recorders is made a little easier if records are sent in from time to time during the year rather than all together at the end.

The Borders County Moth Recorders:

Peeblesshire: Reuben Singleton, 5 Frankscroft, Peebles, Scottish Borders EH45 9DX
reuben@dukehaugh.free-online.co.uk Tel: 01721 723858

Selkirkshire: Malcolm Lindsay, Burn House, Mossilee Road, Galashiels TD1 1NF
malcandles46@talktalk.net Tel: 01896 753425

Roxburghshire: Jeff Waddell, 33 Eildon View, Dingleton, Melrose, Roxburghshire TD6 9RH
jeffwaddell11@yahoo.co.uk Tel: 01896 822089

Berwickshire: Barry Prater, 12 Barefoots Crescent, Eyemouth, Berwickshire TD14 5BA
barry@prater.myzen.co.uk Tel: 018907 52037

& the Borders Butterfly Recorder:

Iain Cowe, 6 Lammerview, Chirnside, Berwickshire TD11 3UW
bordersbutterflies@eastscotland-butterflies.org.uk Tel: 01890 818314 or 07775 747838

There is guidance on submitting your butterfly and moth records on the branch website and also some recording forms which you can use - these help enormously when collating all the records.

Photo credits

AB = Andrew Bramhall

AM = Andrew Mossop

BP = Barry Prater

DS = David Skinner

IC = Iain Cowe

MC = Mark Cubitt
