



Butterfly Conservation Gloucestershire Branch 'Members' Day' and Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 26th October 2024 at Christchurch, Abbeydale, Gloucester.

1) Welcome

There were 36 attendees at the meeting. Tricia Atkinson, Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2) Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Sue Smith, Christine Blythe, Rosie Woolley, David Priddis, Martyn Leighton, David Elder, Andy and Jane Daw, Steve French.

3) Minutes of the 2023 AGM

Full minutes with officer reports had been made available on the Download section of the Gloucestershire BC Branch website prior to the meeting and also emailed to branch members. There were no comments on the minutes of the last meeting and so they were adopted unanimously, proposed by Matthew Oates and seconded by Brian Smith.

4) Matters Arising from the 2023 AGM Minutes

There were no matters arising.

5) Reports from Branch Officers

- 5.1 Chair's Report – Tricia Atkinson
- 5.2 Treasurer's Report – Serena Meredith
- 5.3 Membership Report – Tricia Atkinson for Christine Blythe
- 5.4 Events Report – Tricia Atkinson for Christine Blythe and Rosie Woolley
- 5.5 Butterfly Recorder's Report – Chris Wiltshire
- 5.6 Moth Conservation Coordinator's Report – Steve French
- 5.7 Cotswolds Landscape Officer Report – Jen Gilbert
- 5.8 Bill Smyllie/The Masts Report – Tricia Atkinson
- 5.9 Rough Bank Report – Jen Gilbert

Full reports (See Appendix 1 below) will be made available on the branch website after the meeting.



6) Election of Officers

A couple of changes have occurred this year:

The first proposal was Lynne Turner who has taken over the management of Antennae magazine. John Coates proposed, Vic Polley seconded and members duly elected.

The second proposal was Simon Fenner who has taken over minute taking for branch meetings. Ken Newcombe proposed, Pete McGeachen seconded and members duly elected.

Tricia then outlined that 4 other committee members, Serena Meredith, Rosie Woolley, Christine Blythe and Chris Wiltshire, needed re-electing and a proposal was made to re-elect them.

This was proposed by John Coates and seconded by Lynne Turner.

Tricia then noted that 4 associate committee members, Sue Smith, Peter Hugo, Ruth Wollen and Chris Tracey, also needed re-electing and a proposal was made to re-elect them.

This was proposed by Serena Meredith and seconded by Jenny Bowen-Davies.

The Committee is also looking for a Forest of Dean representative and a Health and Safety coordinator.

7) Any Other Business

Ken proposed a vote of thanks for the huge amount of work that Tricia does for the branch and for butterflies. He cited her close attention to turf measurements; this takes 3 days in spring and 3 days in autumn and is a vital assessment. He went on to mention her liaison work with schools and other organisations and much besides. There was a unanimous vote of thanks.

8) Date of the Next AGM: to be confirmed nearer the time

Announcement of photographic competition winners.

A video of the photographs submitted for the photographic competition was shown. Many thanks to Chris Tracey for organising this, Andrew Commins who acted as judge and to all the contributors of the photographs. The winners are:

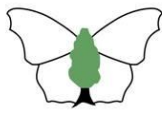
Garden Butterflies or Moths - Peter Rodgers "Small Tortoiseshell"

Overseas Butterflies or Moths - Chris Tracey – "Fiery Copper Courtship"

UK Moths - Peter Rodgers - "Mullein Moth Caterpillar"

UK Butterflies and Overall winner - Paul Sadley "Brimstones in Flight"

UK Butterflies or Moths Junior Section - Cara Ennis (aged 14) "Vapourer Moth Caterpillar"



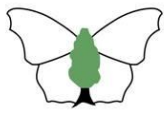
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Following the refreshment break,

Andrew Commins spoke on '**Butterflies and Business in the Cotswolds**'.

Andrew is the nature reserve manager for several sites in the Cotswolds managed by Natural England. He gave a macro and micro view of his management of a number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in the Painswick/Sheepscombe area. These sites were selected as SSSIs in the 1980s. In the subsequent decades climate change and site management has impacted on these sites. Andrew and his team, including many local volunteers, have been working hard to improve these sites individually, but also looking at ways to introduce connectivity between the sites. He mentioned the key role of juniper, one of the 3 native conifer species, and how the practice of burning some decades back had caused the destruction of most of these highly flammable trees. At the Juniper Hill site, land has been cleared and conditions created to recolonise with juniper, a very effective host plant for many species. At the Bulls Cross site, active glade creation has already resulted in an increase in dragonfly and butterfly species observed.

The meeting ended at 4.45pm



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APPENDIX 1: Reports of Officers of Butterfly Conservation Gloucestershire Branch for the AGM, on Saturday 26 October 2024 at 2 pm

5.1 Chairman's Report

2024 started with our committee meeting in early February when we plan the events and walks for the coming spring and summer. Later in the month we had an indoor meeting at Frampton Mansell when David Armstrong gave an excellent presentation of the work the National Trust are carrying out in the Cotswolds. In March we had a lovely talk from Sally Oates, Matthew's other half, about their garden which they have developed to encourage butterflies, moths and other wildlife. This tied in nicely with our Butterfly Conservation's Wild Spaces strategy of encouraging people to maintain a wild space in their garden to help our struggling butterflies and moths.

In April we started our transect recording of butterflies which went on until the end of September along with general butterfly and moth recording. Steve French our moth coordinator gave a presentation on Zoom of the moths seen in the daytime in the spring.

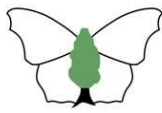
May is the start of the guided walks season and it is probably the best month for some of our more interesting species. It is also the start of the programme of events organised by Christine Blythe and Rosie Woolley, neither of whom can be here today unfortunately. In addition to our planned events, we were invited to an event on a family farm to celebrate the life of Eric Freeman whom some of you may have known. He used to run events at his farm and always invited the branch to go along often with a moth trap. We had a very successful day and the organisers shared the profits with the charities Eric loved. Later the branch received a donation of nearly £2000.

Most of the walks went off well although some were scuppered by the weather which meant that few butterflies if any were flying and few people came along. One walk which thankfully went off well was the walk we did on the Prestbury hill reserve for the Cheltenham Science festival. The weather that day played ball and we saw all the interesting species around at that time. I think the participants were impressed and enjoyed it and thought it was their money well spent.

I expect you have all noticed the dearth of butterflies this year. Everyone was saying 'Where have all the butterflies gone?' As described in our latest edition of Antennae, most butterfly species have fallen in number on the transects this year and although we can't do transect monitoring for moths and other insects, these have been similarly affected. On the transects where I record it has been the worst year in all the 20 odd years I've been doing the transects. I just hope that the weather conditions over the next year are favourable for the butterflies to start to recover.

There were some highlights however. I was thrilled to see lots of Small Blue on the Prestbury Hill reserve this summer. When I did the transect one week in late May, it was difficult to count them as they were clumps clustered on horse dung and bird poo and in places several swirling around on the paths. I think I counted over 400 on the transect one day. Another highlight for me this summer was going to see Purple Emperors at the end of Sapperton Ride near to Frampton Mansell. They were up at the top of trees but a wonderful sight.

All the committee have been working hard in various ways. Ken Newcombe, our education coordinator, worked with a group of pupils from Cheltenham College for their silver Duke of Edinburgh award. When the days were light enough and the weather was dry, they went up to the reserve and did a bit of conservation work supervised by Ken and Serena. Ken has



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also delivered talks on butterflies for various groups and also gave the indoor presentation on butterfly ID for the ID day in July.

Chris Wiltshire and Vic Polley continue to put in many hours verifying and submitting thousands of butterfly records the number of which increase year on year. This is not due to an increase in the number of butterflies but an increase in the number of people sending in records. This is partly due to iRecord when recorders can submit their records directly on their smart phone or enter them later at home on a computer or other device.

We are pleased to report that two new members, Lynne Turner and Simon Fenner, have joined the committee this year and have already got stuck in and are helping. Lynne has taken over as newsletter editor and produced *Antennae* this Autumn. Simon has taken over doing the minutes at our committee meetings and is here today doing the minutes. We thank them both for taking on these roles. We will be voting them in officially later in the meeting.

Now that we are in Autumn, we are into the work party season. We have already had 4 work days on the Prestbury Hill reserve and the next branch work day will be on Nottingham Hill on Sunday 10th Nov. We do however need more volunteers to help in order to get the conservation work done and maintain the habitat. I know that it is not for everyone but if you or a friend or relative could lend us a hand even if just for an hour or two, it would be much appreciated. I really enjoy the work parties as we are getting valuable work done out in the fresh air and with great company.

In February and March we will have our usual indoor meetings. In February, we will be having a talk from wardens at Cheltenham Borough Council about their work on improving their parks and green spaces for both people and wildlife with a special effort to help pollinators such as butterflies and moths. In March we will have a meeting in Stroud when Jen will talk about the work she has been doing for the Duke of Burgundy project.

Simon Glover retired from the committee last year after many years representing the Forest of Dean. We haven't yet been able to find someone to replace him. If you live in the Forest and are interested in the conservation of butterflies there, then please do consider being our man or woman in the Forest to represent that area.

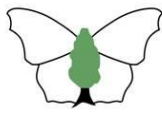
We are also looking for someone to be our health and safety coordinator in the branch. Serena does it at present but she is also treasurer, work party leader and probably also doing a host of other things, so it would be useful for her to pass it on to someone else. If you are interested in helping, then do have a word with her in the refreshment break, that is if you can find her as she will be busy as usual doing the refreshments and sorting out any other problems.

Tricia Atkinson
Branch Chair

5.2 Treasurer's report for the year ended 31 March 2024

The following report is based on the main society's audited accounts as it relates to income attributable to and expenditure by the Gloucestershire Branch. As such the figures presented here now are purely for your information and will be considered for adoption at the national AGM on 9th November.

The branch has a cashbook balance of £21086.58 at the year end, a decrease of just £145.54 over the year, even though contributions were made of £1400 to the Farming in



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Protected Landscape project for which Jen Gilbert is the lead for the Cotswolds and £1610 towards the Ravensgate project to improve the habitat for the Duke of Burgundy on that site. On the income (receipts) side, the increase in events charges reflects our decision to raise the admission charge to our evening meetings to £5 to include refreshments, rather than request donations for the latter. This ensured that the associated costs (room hire and speaker costs) were covered. Walks booklet sales held up well but sales of donated items fell due to attendance at fewer events at which plants were sold. On the expenditure (payments) side, the increase in travel costs reflects the encouragement from Head Office for volunteers to make claims when undertaking activities on behalf of the society. From April 2024, these are payable from the volunteer fund budget held at HO and not from branch funds. The increase in the cost of the branch newsletters is due to 2 editions being paid for as well as higher postage costs.

Since the year end, the branch has offered some of our surplus funds for the use by the Society in the hope and expectation that the branch will reap the benefit, for example by continuing to employ a local staff member but to date, nothing has been agreed.

Serena Meredith
Gloucestershire Branch Treasurer



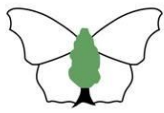
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GLOUCESTERSHIRE BRANCH ACCOUNTS AND BALANCE SHEET

For year 2023/24 - 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

INCOME (RECEIPTS)	2022/23	2023/24	Notes	EXPENDITURE (PAYMENTS)	2022/23	2023/24	Notes
				Transfers	£		
Subscriptions	4308.00	4554.00		Contribution to FiPL project		1400.00	
Donations - individual (inc. Gift Aid)	952.49	511.23		From HO to Branch	500.00		
Donations - corporate	110.00	10.00			500.00	1400.00	
Tax refunds - gift aid donations	125.00	187.50	1	<u>Other expenditure</u>			
Postage and packing on walks booklets	31.45	60.35		Travel and subsistence for volunteers & committee	21.46	180.48	3
Sales - items bought in (ID Charts)	149.50	92.50		Printing (conservation)		104.94	
Sales - Walks Booklets	354.50	383.00		Contributions to Ravensgate and another project		1710.00	
Events charges	251.00	470.00	2	Field equipment (tools, materials, fuel, plants)	471.11	448.62	
Sales - items donated	278.28	118.75		Events - conservation (inc workshops)	85.00	402.53	4
Raffle Income	41.00	32.00		Branch newsletter - printing & postage	508.00	1689.75	5
Sale of moth trap		62.50		Events - promotional	129.27	56.17	
				Cost of sales (calc)	90.05	61.85	6
				Stationery & other office consumables	8.33		
				Postage (including for walks booklets sales)	-230.98	72.71	
				Committee expenses (Zoom licence)	149.88	155.88	
				AGM costs (room hire, photocopying, gifts)	98.99	82.71	
				Printing (publicity)		225.19	7
				Insurance		36.54	
TOTAL RECEIPTS	6601.22	6481.83		TOTAL PAYMENTS	1331.11	5227.37	
				Notes:			
Adjusted cashbook value @ 1 April 2023		21232.12		1. Tax refund from 2022/23 and 2023/24 donations			
Add receipts		6481.83		2. ID day and evening meetings			
Less				3. Mainly travel to give advice on Wild Spaces and moth recording for landowners			
Transfers		1400.00		4. Hall hire and speaker costs			
Payments		5227.37		5. 2 editions paid for			
Cashbook value @ 31 March 2024		21086.58		6. as calculated by finance dept.			
				7. Mainly new display panels			



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5.3 Membership Report

Unfortunately Christine, our membership secretary is not able to attend today as she is on holiday in Kazakhstan. However I can report that membership numbers are not changing very much. In August they were slightly down but hopefully the half price offer to people who participated in the Big butterfly Count on joining BC may have generated some new members. At the last count there were just over 1000 individual members from about 700 households. BC also have a Free Branch offer which we can give to people we meet at our branch events when people can join free for a year provided that they sign up by direct debit and have not been a BC member previously.

Tricia Atkinson for Christine Blythe
Membership Secretary

5.4 Events report

It's me again I'm afraid to report on events. Christine and Rosie are our events leaders and organisers and they are both on holiday! I think Rosie is in France at present. I think they gave a good report in Antennae on how each event went so I won't go through all that again.

However, I would like to mention publicity. We find it difficult sometimes to get our events publicised to the people who might be interested in attending. Most of our events are aimed at families with activities for children. There are several reasons for this. First of all we want to engage with children who we hopefully inspire to be interested in nature, some of whom may go on to be our nature conservationists in the future. While the children are busy doing their activity or having their face painted, it gives us a chance to talk to the parents about butterflies and moths and how they may help by having a wild space in their garden or taking part in the Big butterfly Count etc. BC very much wants to engage with young people under 35 so many parents of young families fall into that age bracket.

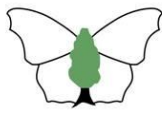
Young people follow social media so we have tried this summer to advertise our events on Facebook and twitter (now X) and tried to share it with people we know who can then share it. However we need help with this and would like some of our branch members to share our posts with local groups they follow who might be interested in attending our events. As most of us are not into social media, Graeme has written a useful guide to social media which will be in the spring edition of Antennae.

Tricia Atkinson for Christine Blythe and Rosie Woolley,
Events Co-ordinators

5.5 Butterfly Recorder's Report

2024 has been a very poor year for insects in general and BC issued a "National Emergency" for butterflies, stating that it was the worst year since records began. This needs clarifying because the data they used was only the Big Butterfly Count data. The press picked up on the fact that Red Admiral numbers were stated to be 80% down on last year, which is true but misleading because last year Red Admiral numbers were at an all-time high! As local examples, Stinchcombe B transect was the worst in 36 years, Rough Bank second worst in 13 years and Stinchcombe A fifth worst in 36 years.

I gave an account of the situation for Gloucestershire butterflies in the latest copy of Antennae. This covered the season to week 22 and since then the only significant changes



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were an increase in the number of second-generation Whites and a trickle of Red Admirals and Speckled Woods.

I was proposing to give a report on the county transects but was thwarted by the fact that the UKBMS website crashed and is still not allowing logins this morning.

All transect data should have been entered online by 25th October to allow Vic and I to check the data by the beginning of November which is when UKBMS require it for analysis. There are 38 transects registered (excluding old ones), 5 have no data entered yet, 5 have data entered but many weeks missing (it was a difficult year regarding suitable weather). This leaves 28 with valid and useable data but I was only able to access 21 of those before the crash.

The saddest note is that no Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries were recorded on any transect this year, it remains to be seen whether any were recorded by anyone else when the records start coming in.

However a provisional scan through the data reveals a few positive notes;

- Small Skipper – highest count 417 on Sapperton Wilder, next 73 on Rough Bank
- Grizzled Skipper – 10 on Linear Park, next 7 on Stinchcombe Hill A
- Orange Tip – 86 on Lower Woods South, next 55 on Highnam Wood
- Small Blue – 680 on Bill Smyllie, next 346 on Masts, 27 on Rodbrough Common
- White Admiral – 15 on Highnam Wood
- Wall Brown – 2 on Bill Smyllie, next 1 on Stinchcombe A (the first for 20 years)

Transect with highest count – 6002 on Sapperton Wilder relegating Bill Smyllie Reserve to second place with 2338.

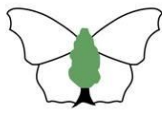
Chris Wiltshire, County Butterfly recorder, 26th October 2024

5.6 Moth Report

As a full report covering the year to August was in the latest *Antennae* magazine, I won't repeat myself and shall keep this short with an update of what has been happening since. Whilst I stand by my somewhat gloomy reporting of moth numbers during the spring and summer (much in line with other insect groups this year), I am pleased to report that there was a belated uplift in some species during the autumn.

As an example, Large Yellow Underwings finally came into their own in September with many recorders reporting scores, and sometimes hundreds, of this species to their moth traps. Setaceous Hebrew Character and Vine's Rustic also had something of a second wind. That said, Autumn species like the Sallows, Deep Brown-Dart, Black Rustic and Blair's Shoulder-knot have not been seen in high numbers yet, but there is still a little time. I have seen less reports of Red Underwing this year, but Clifden Nonpariel appears to have had another good innings (sadly, not in my garden).

Migrant activity has been hit and miss. The common (or at least, regular) species like Rush Veneer, Diamond Back, Vestal and Rusty Dot Pearl appear to have been recorded in lower numbers than some previous years. I have seen just a handful of Rush Veneer and no RDP's at all. I would certainly expect to record, at least, double figures on these two species in late summer. On the other hand, Delicate, Scarce Bordered Straw, Pearly Underwing and the rather handsome Radford's Flame Shoulder have all had a good year.



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Migrant season isn't over yet, so it's too early to draw any conclusions. It will be interesting to see the final numbers when the County Moth recorders compile the data for 2024.

We have several surveys being conducted across the county at locations such as The Sapperton Wilder project near Cirencester, Elmore Court, Westonbirt, Hasfield Court, Hartpury Uni and Hartpury Orchard Centre. All these locations are involved in some kind of conservation effort so the data we have been producing is vital to their ongoing work. We always need more volunteers to help with these. If you'd like to get involved, then please get in touch with me through the usual channels.

The Gloucestershire Moths Facebook Group continues to grow in popularity and now has 477 members. It's an excellent way to communicate about events like moth nights but I am mindful that not all recorders have access to Facebook. However, as Roger Gaunt is no longer producing a newsletter I would encourage as many people as possible to follow the Facebook Group to keep up with the latest sightings and other moth related activities.

Steve French
Moth conservation coordinator

5.7 Cotswolds Landscape Officer Report

Reserves work

Rough Bank

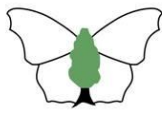
The remainder of the tree safety work was carried out by a contractor in February this year. They removed a number of ash at the bottom of the main bank with ash dieback as well as doing some crown removal work on a large beech tree on the central path to make it safe. We have since had several small trees/large branches come down this summer/autumn in high winds which our volunteers have cleared up and just a couple of weeks ago had a fairly large Whitebeam come down onto the lower slope adjacent to the central path. This has pulled out a section of the path leaving a large hole in the ground, however the path is wide enough to easily get around. Thanks for John Coates, Guy and Serena Meredith for cutting and clearing this up this week. Now to work out how to fill the hole!

We've had a few fence issues to deal with this year including a broken fence along the road boundary in Great Myers and a break in at our neighbours farm which saw their buggy stolen and driven through our fence breaking the wire and ripping the posts out of the ground. Thanks to Chris and Guy for their help in fixing both these broken fences. We also had a large tree come down from our neighbours at the far end of the bank. They were kind enough to get this cleared up and the fence fixed before the cows were brought onto the bank.

The National Trust's Belted Galloways are now back grazing the bank once again using GPS collars although trialling a newer and hopefully improved version this time. They are currently restricted to the eastern end and will then be moved to other sections of the bank for varying amounts of time as needed.

Further tree work has been identified as needing doing this year and a contractor in being sought to carry this out this winter.

Our Rough Bank Committee met at our first work party of the season and to identify the work needing doing this year. The majority will be tackled on our work parties led by Graeme but



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some will be carried out by contactors. Plan to use a robomower to get on top of encroaching blackthorn at the far end of the bank.

Prestbury Hill

I carried out the annual ash dieback survey this summer and to make it easier going forward, put tags on all the trees. A number of them were identified as needing felling this year so a contractor is being sought to do this work.

The cattle have been back on the reserve since early August and will be coming off soon. The bad weather we've had however meant they had to be moved off as they are a commercial breed and not a hardy type like the Belties, but they have managed to get back on. We may look to try and extend the contract period into November should the weather stay ok to make up for the time lost.

I am in the process of finalising the new 5 year management plan for the reserve following site meetings with Julian Bendle and with Serena, Trish, John and Ken. Plans for work to be done over the next 5 years were discussed as was work for this autumn/winter to be done by BC vols and the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens.

Earlier this year the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens helped trim back the hedge along the road in the Bill Smyllie reserve and have been out to repair one of the stiles also in the Bill Smyllie reserve.

Work for the Marsh Fritillary

Work to encourage the Marsh Fritillary at a site near to Strawberry Banks has continued. After much searching I managed to get a grazier to agree to graze the site with her ponies last winter. The Cotswolds Wardens put up an electric fence in advance and although they were much delayed getting onto site the ponies did eventually get there late in the season. Unfortunately however things still did not go to plan with one pony escaping in the first few days and then all had to be taken off. This year we instead plan to cut and rake some of the grassland with the Cotswolds Wardens and BC vols to get on top of the grass growth as we still don't have the grazing sorted.

Temperature data loggers were also put out at another privately owned site near to Rough Bank in Feb /March. The aim is to see what the temperatures are at ground level during the time when Marsh Fritillary larvae would be coming out of hibernation to determine whether the site would have the potential to support the butterfly. Data is still to be analysed and compared to Strawberry Banks/Rough Bank.

Chris and I have been back out to both sites to do the autumn turf height measuring which allows us to track how the management of both sites is progressing and which areas need more/less grazing.

Duke of Burgundy work

I worked with several BC colleagues this year to develop a new Duke of Burgundy habitat condition assessment for use this spring. This was trialled with the help of a Masters student from Glos Uni who also carried out a number of timed counts at the same time. The aim was to help identify the exact attributes which make up "good" Duke of Burgundy habitat so we can better identify which sites are in good/poor condition, better advise landowners and measure our success going forward for this butterfly here in the Cotswolds. While this gave us some indication, more work needs doing to compare a larger set of sites.



Further Duke of Burgundy timed counts were carried out with the help of volunteers again this year to keep monitoring our known Duke sites. In addition, this year I had full access to Stowell Park Estate with the aim of visiting a number of scattered scrubby grassland areas to look for Dukes and assess them for suitability for Dukes and/or as potential stepping stones through the landscape. Located four new areas with Dukes and re-confirmed Dukes at Listercombe Bottom (also part of the Stowell Park Estate) and carried out timed counts at each. A report has been written and given to the estate with habitat management recommendations for each area.

I was also able to explore more of the Taylor's Hill area finding Dukes in three additional areas on top of where we found them in 2023. In addition, I met with two new landowners in Compton Abdale who own potential Duke/good butterfly sites (thanks to Max from National Trust for flagging them up and Brian Smith for setting up the meetings). Visited both areas and have also sent reports back with management advice.

Where we were unable to do timed counts this year or no Dukes were seen on a timed count, I followed these up and carried out larval feeding damage surveys. These confirmed Dukes were still present at two sites however I was unable to find any evidence of them at Kilkenny or Chedworth Roman Villa. I am now currently in discussion with the National Trust at Chedworth Roman Villa and GWT who own Chedworth Railway reserve re how we can better connect up the two sites and provide better habitat for both Dukes and Pearl-bordered Fritillaries.

Events

Although not a major part of my role now I was pleased to be asked to give talks for Bourton U3A Nature Group, Gloucestershire Naturalists Society and at FWAG's (Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group) Farming Awards last week.

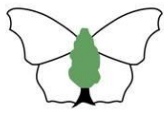
As in the previous two years myself and our branch volunteers jointly led a family event with Nicole from Cleeve Common at Prestbury and Cleeve Common which again was very well received. Nicole and I also led a guided walk for adults later in the year (also at Prestbury and Cleeve), although sadly on a cool, breezy day with next to no butterflies! I was also asked to lead another butterfly walk at Rodborough Common for Stroud Valleys Project but again the weather wasn't really on our side and only a few butterflies were seen. Still, both walks were enjoyed by all!

Work for our moths

This year I have also been able to get involved with the Barberry Carpet Moth work that was carried out as part of our Back from the Brink (BftB) project a few years ago. I have been in contact with all landowners in Glos where Barberry was planted during BftB and aim to visit each site to check the status of the plant to see if they are mature enough to support the moth – two visited already.

Having now been trained up by our Senior Ecologist, George Tordoff in how to survey for the Barberry Carpet moth (or in fact the caterpillars) and put on the survey licence, the plan is to revisit sites next year to see if any of the new BftB sites have been colonised.

Jen Gilbert
Cotswolds Landscape Officer



5.8 Bill Smyllie /The Masts Report

Jen has covered much of the conservation work in her report. However I'd like to add that we have had 4 branch work parties on The Masts this season and have cleared the Gorse in the Heather enclosure. We have also reduced the invading scrub along the southern boundary by the woodland. The part of the site is quite sheltered and very good for butterflies so it is important to prevent too much scrub developing which shades the grassland. We will be holding 4 work parties on Bill Smyllie in Feb and March, again to control invading scrub.

From our transect records, total numbers recorded decreased by about 30% on both The Masts and Bill Smyllie. Most species dropped in number except for the Small Blue which doubled in number on Bill Smyllie. Marsh Fritillary and Duke of Burgundy are still doing well although with fewer recorded this year. There were also 2 Walls recorded on the transect. It was a very poor year for Dark Green Fritillary, Chalk hill and Common Blue.

Tricia Atkinson
Prestbury Hill reserve Contact

5.9 Rough Bank Report

See Jen Gilbert's report above in section 5.7.