



NEWSLETTER

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Editorial

EIG has always tried to work with local partners in European countries for mutual benefit. These are usually the Butterfly Conservation Europe (BCE) partner organisations and part of our role is to encourage volunteers to submit records, do surveys and take an interest in the butterflies of other European countries. In Holland, with its own strong organisation (de Vlinderstichting) and army of volunteers, EIG can add little to the knowledge about butterflies. Elsewhere it is very different and very variable. Often external interest can have a positive role as a catalyst. Our collaboration with Proserpine in France to put on a butterfly conference in Digne les Bains was our most ambitious project yet and was very successful. It was attended by over 100 people and went very well. It was partly intended as a catalyst for the conservation of butterflies in France.

My guess is that the Danube Clouded Yellow (*Colias mymidone*) could become extinct in the EU27 countries fairly soon. On the Red List, it is endangered in Europe and critical in the European Union. It has already been lost from several countries such as Czech Republic, Hungary, Austria and Germany. It appears to require large areas of suitable habitat to do well. Although its foodplant *Chaemicytissus*, a form of broom, is far from scarce, it requires young shoots for egg laying and either grazing or a patchwork of irregular mowing. The species hangs on in Romania and Poland and is near extinction in Slovakia. The species is one of a few with an EU action plan for its conservation (Marhoul, P. and Dolek, M. 2010) and its requirements are actually quite well known. They are the sort of thing that could be delivered by an intelligent targeted Agri-environment scheme and not one that insists that all hay meadows are cut twice a year. It also occurs further east outside the European Union in Belarus and the Ukraine but there is little reliable recent information.

Several EIG trips have found *Colias myrmidone* in Romania. One of the sites visited in 2013 had been recently damaged despite being in public ownership. As I see it, the problem is that there is no proper capacity to do something about it in Romania and though EIG have helped Paul Kirkland and Jacqueline Loos train people on doing transects in Romania (See Pages 19-21) there is a long way to go. The two BCE partners do what they can but they have other commitments. Romania is a big country with lots of butterflies, some of which are very scarce. The situation was very similar for some of the Scarce Large Blues *Phengaris telejus* and *P. nausithous* in Hungary but the determination and energy of our old friend Szabolcs Safian (Safi) has made a huge difference. EIG has played a role here over a number of years. Mike Williams will lead an EIG trip there next summer. We need a similar sort of effort in Romania.

The recent CAP changes suggest that more of the enormous budget of the Common Agricultural Policy is being moved from Pillar I (direct support) to Pillar II that can be used to fund Agri-environment Schemes. Whether any of it can be used to fund an Agri-environment Scheme that will prevent *C. myrmidone* becoming extinct is more doubtful.

I have spent quite a lot of the last 20 years trying to protect the Pearl-bordered Fritillary (*Boloria euphrosyne*) in my part of the world - mid Wales and, more recently, Shropshire. The situation is fairly stable and well monitored and it seems reasonably easy to get funds for management work. On a European scale, Pearl-bordered Fritillary is ubiquitous and often common. The contrast between northern Europe which has already lost much of its limited butterfly diversity and Southern and Eastern Europe which were richer to start with but where recent changes have been alarming is considerable. Belgium has lost 17 species. Its butterfly fauna is well known and well monitored and most of its richer sites are now protected but still losing species. Greece has endemic butterflies that are threatened and, though it has a rich butterfly fauna of 230 species, conservation action to protect even rare endemic butterflies is extremely limited. Thanks to the work of Lazaros Pamperis, its butterfly fauna is well known but there is so little he can do on his own to reverse those declines. If they can very nearly quarry the only site in the

EU for Odd Spot Blue (*Turanana taygetica*), a red list endangered species, there is certainly scope for improvement.

Even in France with a rich butterfly fauna and some of the best field naturalists I have met, there is not a conservation focussed national Butterfly NGO with paid staff. We had hoped that the Proserpine/EIG conference in Dignes les Bains might stimulate the formation of such an organisation but though it brought the leading butterfly experts together, often meeting for the first time, my suspicion would be that regional NGOs might be more successful. (See Pages 4-6). It is up to the French.

It was so encouraging to visit Spain and to hear about the BCE MAVA project that is working to protect four endemic threatened and little known butterfly species:- Nevada Blue (*Polyommatus golgus*), Andalusian Anomalous Blue (*P. violetae*), Zullich's Blue (*Agriades zullichii*) and Spanish Greenish Black-tip (*Euchloe bazae*). EIG has played a role here too sending volunteers to help with the surveys (See pages 11-14). However a small amount of funding has brought together many Spanish butterfly enthusiasts so that there is now a real determination to look after these important Spanish species. The issues are familiar: overgrazing, abandonment, inappropriate development etc. The butterflies are often within National Parks and they all appeared to be doing a lot better than *Colias myrmidone*. Their distribution and ecology is now better known and there is now a critical mass of enthusiasm and expertise to ensure their survival. The survey work has shown that one species *P. violetae* is more widespread than previously known and new colonies have been found over a wide area including the Sierra Nevada where it had previously never been recorded. The threats are mainly inappropriate development and, in the long run, climate change.

Though the EU LIFE funding, Natura 2000 and Agri-environment schemes are all very useful in protecting wildlife including butterflies what is desperately needed is something completely different. What is really required is a small amount of seed corn funding to bring together local enthusiasm and local, as well as international expertise, to create national butterfly organisations which are not just the odd dedicated individual trying to balance a career as well as an all-consuming hobby but small independent professional outfits in every European country with the resources and time to tackle government, to champion the cause of butterflies and make things happen.

When I started to work as a butterfly consultant in Wales my local wildlife trust had just received an unexpected legacy of £1 million. Some of this they spent on paying me to do surveys for butterflies as I had just found a High Brown Fritillary (*Argynnis adippe*) colony sadly no longer there. The then Countryside Council for Wales also contributed. As it was now 'work', there was no difficulty winning the argument on the domestic front about whether I should be doing DIY or decorating or out looking for butterflies. Few of us have the luxury of sufficient income AND sufficient time to be able to work for butterflies at a stage in our lives when we can still run after them. If there was a BC Romania with a small office and a couple of full time people with telephones and cars and computers all paid for they could sort *C. myrmidone*. They could harness the enthusiasm of volunteers, including those from EIG, and provide the expertise and then find the funding to make it happen. Butterfly Conservation did it here in the UK though often protecting some of the most widespread and commonest butterflies in Europe.

Simon Spencer

Chairman EIG

EIG/Proserpine Conference in Dignes les Bains June 28-30 2013

Les papillons de jour de France: état des connaissances et perspectives de conservation



Some of the speakers at the Conference

This year EIG took on the slightly risky and rather ambitious project of running a Butterfly

Conference in France. As it was in France, it had to be in French. I knew it would only work if we could get two people to sign up to it. The first was my old friend Tristan Lafranchis who had not spoken in France for more than 20 years despite having written the only decent French book on butterflies (*Les papillons de jour de France, Belgique et Luxembourg et leur chenilles*, Biotope 2000). The second person was Nicolas Maurel, also a good friend of Tristan's, and who is the inspiration behind the Jardins de Papillons run by the



Nicolas Maurel & Tristan Lafranchis



Visit to Jardins de Papillons

organisation Proserpine in Dignes les Bains. To cut a long story short, both agreed and EIG said it would put up some money. As it happened, Nicholas managed to get a huge amount of financial support locally and it cost us rather less than we anticipated. It was also supported by the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle in Paris and their organizer of the data for butterflies Pascal Dupont was one of the speakers. The local Mairie even supplied coffee & breakfast and a mid morning cocktail. I can't see my local



Tristan looking for eggs on sanfoin

unitary authority doing anything like that. Nicholas also did a wonderful job of organising the conference and chairing it and it turned out to be a huge success. There were 100 delegates including more than 20 from the UK. It was the first ever conference of its kind in France. The key individuals in the French butterfly world all came, many meeting each other for the first time. The French loved it. It all went very smoothly and the dinners and talks were both excellent. The weather was also very good and the two afternoon butterfly walks clocked up a huge list of species, slightly helped by Tristan identifying caterpillars. The visit to the Jardins de Papillons which is run by Nicholas Maurel and our French partner Proserpine was particularly enjoyable with some seeing Iolas Blue (*Iolana iolas*) for the first time. I particularly want to thank Jude Lock, the EIG Rep in France, who soon found herself translating emails between me and Nicholas virtually daily. She has now sorted a collection of most of the PowerPoint presentations and an English summary of the talks and you can now see them on the EIG website under events <http://www.bc-eig.org.uk/events.html> where they can all be downloaded. Her partner Peter Derbyshire did a great job of translating during the talks. The other person I would like to thank is Jim Asher, BC's Vice Chair who talked about the Millennium Atlas in FRENCH! We all know Jim to be a superb communicator and we all know that the Millennium Atlas is a very good story but to get him to do it in

French was a big ask. He was brilliant. Only he could tactfully suggest that they produce a French atlas. He should have stayed an extra day and seen *Papilio alexanor* (Southern Swallowtail) with Mike Prentice & myself.

There were many great talks but I was particularly impressed with the 'Biological history of butterflies by Christian Perrein - historian & Jean-Alain Guilloton, president of the regional

entomological Atlas (Nantes)', which discussed the historical changes in a region of France and also Pieter & Brigitte Kan's exquisite film on the Swallowtail ***Papilio machaon*** in Provence.

Their films are beginning to be available on the internet. See

<http://www.filming-varwild.com/>



High Brown Fritillary (*Argynnis adippe*) ©Jim Asher

Some of the conclusions

I don't think France will do a National Atlas soon but I think several regional atlases such as the one for the Midi Pyrenees will get published in the next few years with maybe a national atlas one day.

There are still things to be discovered in France and, with 250+ species, there is still a lot of work to be done. They have red data book species about which they know only a limited amount such as ***Phengaris telejus***, ***nausithous*** and ***alcon***.



Conference Dinner

English ex pats living in France who are interested in Butterflies and English people who regularly visit France can make a big difference. Graham Hart in Ariege, Jude Locke in the Pyrenees, Roger Gibbons in Var and Tony Williams in La Brenne are just a few examples. There are many others. Anyone with a home or holiday home in France should be able to make a large contribution to their local regional atlas project as many already do.

The French butterfly community is still dogged by the issue of collecting and most of the French butterfly journals and societies are mainly collectors. We may think this incredible but we don't have 250+ species and new cryptic species being discovered quite often. It does make people nervous of sending in records or publishing details of sites for scarce butterflies such as Chequered Blue (***Scolitantides orion***).

EIG will work on trying to do projects in France in collaboration with French national and regional groups.

It was a good occasion to meet new members of EIG as well as old friends and to spend time with our many friends in France.

They will do it again!

Simon Spencer

Letter from Michel Boutin (President of Proserpine)

Re: Proserpine / EIG conference Digne-les-Bains June 2013

Pour la première fois un colloque exclusivement consacré aux papillons s'est tenu en France ! Sur une idée originale de nos amis Simon Spencer et Tristan Lafranchis nous avons réussi le pari d'unir français et anglais autour d'une cause commune, la protection des papillons. Qu'ils soient ici remerciés chaleureusement pour leur enthousiasme et leur passion.

Nous sommes particulièrement fiers d'avoir pu organiser ce rendez-vous dans notre petite ville de Digne-les-Bains. Nous devons également remercier l'ensemble des conférenciers pour leur disponibilité et la qualité de leurs interventions unanimement appréciée.

C'est également un grand honneur pour l'association Proserpine qui fêtait ses 20 ans d'avoir pu compter sur la confiance de l'E.I.G.

Nous souhaitons que ce colloque soit l'événement fondateur d'un partenariat pour la conservation des papillons à l'échelle européenne et pourquoi pas l'organisation d'un nouveau rendez-vous en 2015 !

Plus que jamais les papillons ont besoin de nous et nous devons unir nos forces pour cette belle cause !

Michel Boutin

Translation by Jude Locke:

For the first time ever in France a conference devoted entirely to butterflies!

It began with an idea instigated by our friends Simon Spencer and Tristan Lafranchis, we succeeded in uniting both French and English enthusiasts for a common cause, the protection of butterflies. We thank them warmly for their enthusiasm and their great passion.

We are particularly proud to have been able to organize this event in our small town of Digne-les-Bains. We wish to pass on our gratitude to all of the conference speakers not only for making the time to attend and contribute at the conference but also for their superb presentations which were greatly appreciated by everyone.

The Proserpine organization celebrated 20 years of existence in 2013 and it is has been a great honour to have the support of EIG.

We hope that this conference will be the beginning of a partnership for the conservation of butterflies on a European scale and why not work towards another rendezvous in 2015! Now more than ever butterflies need us and we should join forces for this good cause!

Michel Boutin President Proserpine

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Please email any thoughts, ideas or whatever you want included in the newsletter to Simon Spencer: cerisyi@btinternet.com

NOTICES

2014 EIG Calendar

The 2014 EIG Calendar has now been printed and now available for ordering. Photos that have been chosen for the calendar are shown on the website: www.bc-eig.org.uk. The cost of the calendar is £8 each or 2 for £15 + £1.50pp (for up to 2 calendars) Please order from Anne Spencer email: rhoslan.anne@gmail.com.

Thank you to everyone who sent in photos for the calendar.



European Interests Group European Butterflies



2014 Calendar

EIG POLO SHIRTS



EIG have produced a lovely grey polo shirt with one top pocket and an embroidered EIG logo.

The cost is £15 each – sizes: S – M – L – XL – XXXL. Please order from: Anne Spencer email: rhoslan.anne@gmail.com

2014 EIG Projects and events

EIG Fund Raising Tour of Hungary provisionally 14-21th June 2014 In support of the Hungarian Natural Heritage Trust.

This is our 5th year of fundraising tours and the plan is to revisit the Orseg National Park in western Hungary to see some of the progress that has been made using funds raised by EIG members. We shall also visit nearby areas of southern and western Hungary in search of additional species including Freyer's Purple Emperor (*Apatura metis*). Contact Mike Williams (mike@stagborough.fsnet.co.uk) if you are interested.

EIG Butterfly Camp 14-20th July at Camping Les Faures, Valjouffrey

Valjouffrey is on the edge of the Écrins National Park. 2 hours south of Grenoble. The intention is to get a mix of experts and novices so everyone can improve their butterfly ID skills. The campsite itself has a rich butterfly fauna and there are a range of altitudes rising to over 2000m nearby. We will also do some research on whether standard transects work in an area of very high butterfly abundance with many similar species. This trip is designed to be a cheap butterfly holiday for young people. The campsite does Pizza some evenings. There is limited hotel accommodation locally contact Office de Tourisme du Valbonnais (ot.valbonnais@wanadoo.fr). This was our base for the EIG 2007 survey for Balkan Fritillary (*Boloria graeca*). There is no charge but participants will make their own travel arrangements and will pay the campsite directly. I will need to know numbers to make the booking. More details and expressions of interest to Simon Spencer - email: cerisyi@btinternet.com - Tel No: 01691 648339

Visit to Natural History Museum, Thursday 27th February 2014

This winter's EIG visit to the Natural History Museum in South Kensington will take place on Thursday 27 February 2014. The visit will follow the established pattern - meet at 1045, spend the morning examining specimens, then lunch in the Museum restaurant. There are 12 places. If you would like to attend please e-mail Nigel Peace (liz-nigel@hotmail.co.uk) as soon as possible. Nigel will then contact you to confirm your place and provide further details

2013 EIG Projects

Endangered Endemics of Southern Spain (2013 Field Season)

This work was a continuation of that started in 2012 and organised by Miguel Munguira from the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid and funded by MAVA. The project covers four species of butterfly, Nevada Blue (*Polyommatus golgus*), Zulich's Blue (*Plebejus zullichi*), Andalusian Anomalous Blue (*Polyommatus violetae*) and Spanish Greenish Black-tip (*Euchloe bazae*). The

2012 work was reported in the EIG12 Newsletter.



A. Zullich larva

For 2013, fieldwork started early in April with surveys for *E. bazae*, although this was hampered somewhat by the poor Spring weather. Martin Davies and Mike Prentice spent a week in Spain searching for the elusive *E. bazae* amongst the rainstorms and, on one of the few fine days, managed to find 19 individuals most of which were hill-topping on the gypsum hills near Baza.

This work was followed later in the Spring by foodplant and larval surveys for *P. zullichi* in the Sierra Nevada mountains, often in challenging conditions. Miguel's team had earmarked for detailed study a number of colonies of *zullichi* in each of the lower, middle and high altitude bands in which it is found. The larva is actually quite easy to find, as it basks openly on the foodplant, despite the air temperature often being only a few degrees above freezing. It also only feeds on flowering foodplants, so this makes an assessment of the potential number of viable foodplants possible. In each colony, a ten metre square was marked out for study and the number of foodplants and larvae was recorded (see photo).

Spain had suffered its coldest Spring for 50 years and with the summer field season starting at the beginning of July, many species were still up to 2 weeks late. A number of EIG members had volunteered to help with the fieldwork and fortunately *zullichi* had been reported on the wing in the last week of June. In fact, the very first *zullichi* colony surveyed had a good number of adults on the wing, including some worn specimens. Odd specimens of *P. golgus* and *Aricia morronensis* were also flying, giving confidence that we were not too early. This pattern was however not always repeated, with at least one *zullichi* colony being visited where emergence had just begun, two or three individuals only being seen, one with wings still not properly unfolded. At this latter site, the lack of imagoes to count led to a search for pupae, with Sara being successful (see photo).



On a

Zullich's Blue Male (*Agriades zullichi*)

more general note, Small Tortoiseshell (*A. urticae*) was possibly the commonest butterfly in the mountains in early July, for example around 100 were seen mud puddling along a stretch of dirt road at around 2000m. This maybe has interesting parallels with the abundance of the same species in the UK in 2013, and indeed one of the authors saw unusually high numbers in coastal northern France too. Is this a result of the widespread cold Spring?

P. apollo was probably not as late as other species and was flying in good numbers. Iberian Marbled White (*Melanargia lachesis*) was flying in large numbers in valleys at around 1000m, but it was also seen with Spanish and Western Marbled Whites (*M. ines* & *M. occitanica*) at around 2100m and well above the tree line.

The second week of field-work was a continuation of the search for *P. zullichi* and *P. golgus* in various localities along the length of the Sierra Nevada and then further afield. Both species were found in good numbers and, wherever colonies were found, transects were walked to estimate population sizes and we counted the number of larval foodplants in a 10m quadrat. *P. golgus* has a sub-species *sagrattox* which flies on La Sagra, a beautiful isolated mountain about 80km north of the Sierra Nevada, and this was also on our itinerary. A stiff early morning climb from the track where we left the cars at an altitude of 1650m to the summit at 2384m was worth the effort for the fantastic view, the sight of more than 20 *P. golgus sagrattox*, as well as numerous other butterflies hill-topping including Purple-shot Copper (*Hippothoe alciphron*), Long-tailed Blue (*Lampides boeticus*) and Escher's Blue (*Polyommatus escheri*) as well as Griffon Vultures and Red-billed Choughs soaring past.



Nevada Blue (*Polyommatus golgus sagratorx*)

Weeks 3 and 4 were principally spent searching for Andalucian Anomalous Blue (*Polyommatus violetae*). A combination of Miguel and his students, EIG volunteers and other volunteers from Spain covered a vast area from La Sagra through the Sierra de Cazorla looking for *P. violetae*. This included known, existing sites and seeking new sites where habitat looked suitable. Wherever *violetae* were found, we counted larval foodplants as well as numbers of adult imagos.



Nevada Grayling (*Pseudochazara hippolyte*)

Two interesting diversions from our work in the Sierra de Cazorla were trips back to the Sierra Nevada to look for *P. violetae*, which had never been recorded from the area and therefore not included in the superb book on the Sierra Nevada butterflies published in 2011. Two of the authors, Jose Miguel Barea-Azcon and Javier Javier Olivares, were with us on both occasions and were delighted when we found several thriving colonies.

In addition to the target species, there were numerous other species to see in a range of habitats ; highlights included Nevada Grayling (*Pseudochazara hippolyte*), Spanish Brassy Ringlet (*Erebia hispana*), Spanish Argus (*Arícia morronensis*), Black Satyr (*Satyrus actaea*) and Hermit (*Chazara briseis*). There were opportunities to see other wildlife from various species of stick insect to Griffon Vultures and Black-bellied Sandgrouse. Evenings were spent sharing delicious Spanish food, mostly outdoors in a beautifully warm climate with convivial company.

The MAVA project lasts for three years and the only fieldwork to complete now is the Spring 2014 work on *E. bazae*. Miguel and his team will use most of 2014 for writing the final report, which is due to be presented to MAVA in early 2015. Of course, we hope to be able to present a summary of that report in the EIG Newsletter.

Many thanks again go to Miguel Munguira and his team for inviting EIG volunteers along - we all hope we helped in some way! A thank you also to José Miguel Barea Azcón of the National Park for his invaluable help, both this year and last.

Butterflies of the Sierra Nevada

You can download this free as a pdf

www.juntadeandalucia.es/medioambiente/site/portalweb/menuitem.7e1cf46ddf59bb227a9ebe205510e1ca/?vgnextoid=746e0a8d8b856310VgnVCM2000000624e50aRCRD&vgnextchannel=453e545f021f4310VgnVCM1000001325e50aRCRD&vgnextfmt=portalwebTipolInfo

Thank you Blanca Ramos

Mike Prentice and Neil Thompson

The EIG in Romania 2013

Each year, the European Interests Group (EIG), a sub-group of Butterfly Conservation, runs a trip in support of the Hungarian Natural Heritage Trust; all of the profits from these trips are donated to the Trust, which is a prime example of hands-on local conservation in the Őrség area of western Hungary. The Trust uses traditional husbandry methods on small parcels of land it acquires, to maintain environments which support colonies of all four of the *Phengaris* (= *Maculinea*) (large blue) butterfly species. Needless to say, these efforts also benefit a magical variety of other butterflies.



Danube Clouded Yellow female (*Colias myrmidone*)

These fund-raising trips are organised for the EIG by Mike Williams who also shares the lead in the field with Sáfíán Szabolcs (Safi), who manages and heads-up the Trust. We also benefit from a supporting cast of Martin and Tomas who, between them, do an amazing variety of tasks to help make our holidays memorable. Needless to say, these trips are always well supported, usually with groups of 12-14 folk. A nice thing is that one can rely on meeting up again with the same core of stalwarts each year. Sometimes, we venture into largely unknown butterfly territory to see what we can find - as last year in Serbia - and at other times we go to known sites, or areas where there is a high probability of seeing something good (i.e. rare). This year we went to Romania, from 22 to 30 July. The initial announcement of the trip highlighted a visit to a Violet Copper site, but by the time the detailed itinerary was available a whole array of possible goodies was dangled before us (when was a butterfly trip itinerary not like this?). Some of the sites visited were well-known ones, but some others less so. We were lucky to have had pre-survey work done by Lajos Nemeth-Bóka, the Director of Greeneye Ecotours,

who knows the country well and made all the hotel reservations on our behalf. The area covered during the week was entirely within Transylvania (no Dracula jokes, please), and more precisely to the east and south of Cluj-Napoca.



Fenton's Wood White (*Leptidea morsei*)

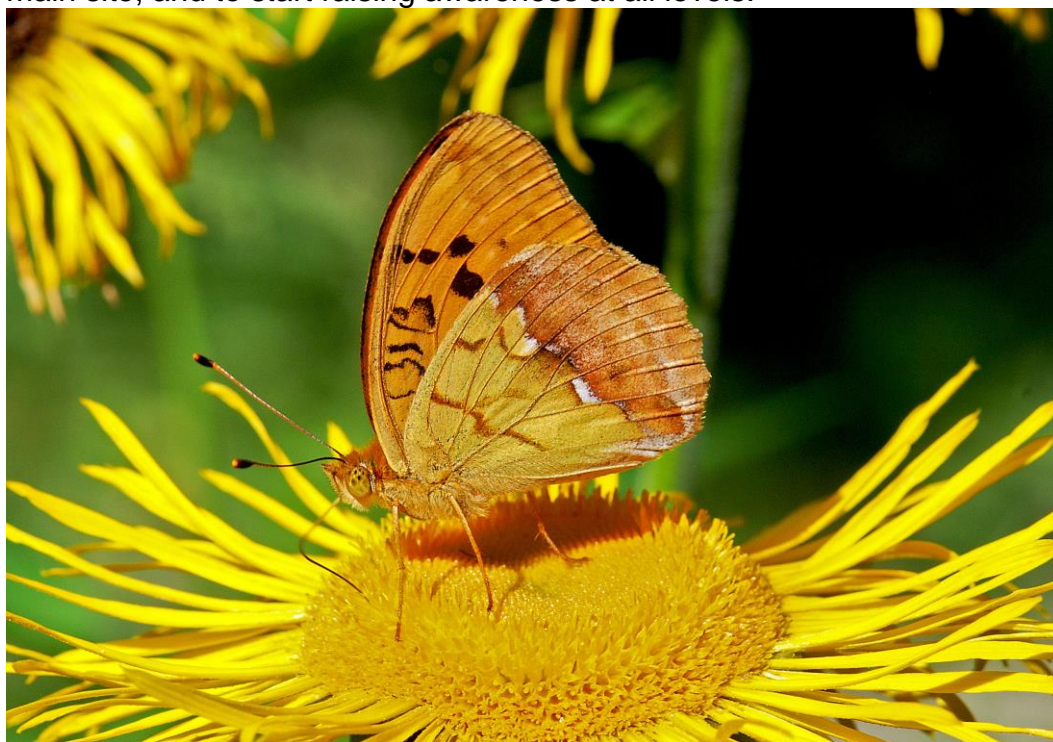
Day 1, and after the usual tedious journey to Luton airport, and the flight itself to Cluj, it was nice to get aboard our two mini-buses and head off towards our hotel, a fair distance away in Odorheiu. But not yet; to our surprise, the buses shot off the main road, up an unpaved track for two or three miles through a hilly, forested terrain, until we ground to a halt and Safi, as only he can, announced 'something special' on

the side of the track. There, still nectaring in low sunlight and amenable to having pictures taken were several Pallas' Fritillaries (*Argynnis laodice*).

I know, from my previous attempts, that this is a difficult butterfly to find - what a way to start our holiday! Next day, we had a very tight itinerary, beginning with a mountain road up to a ski station - we are now in the Eastern Carpathians. True to form in the mountains, the weather soon clamped down, leaving us with sightings of singles of Niobe Fritillary (*Argynnis niobe*), Large (*Erebia euryale*) and Blind Ringlets (*E. pharte*) and Purple-edged Copper (*Lycaena hippothoe*). Cutting our losses, we descended to find sunnier conditions in Racu Valley where highlights included Cardinals (*A. Pandora*) on thistles, Eastern Bath White (*Pontia edusa*), Hungarian Glider (*Neptis rivularis*) and a passing Lesser Purple Emperor (*Apatura ilia*). It was obvious by now that Lajos' itinerary needed 16-hour days and a total disregard of the mediocre condition of local roads. So to Plan B, which missed out the Violet Copper (*L. helle*) site for this day and took us to a steep, high, grassy hill near Badeni, the top of which was inhabited by Hermit (*Chazara briseis*) butterflies. Before the climb, we sustained ourselves with the daily picnic while recording Meleager's (*Polyommatus daphnis*), Chapman's (*P. thersites*), Mazarine (*Cyaniris semiargus*), Turquoise (*P. dorylas*), Osiris (*Cupido osiris*), Long-tailed (*Lampides boeticus*) and Eastern Baton Blues (*Pseudophilotes vicrama*). We found the Hermit (*C. briseis*) on top of the hill, together with a nice display of Swallowtails (*Papilio machaon*), hill-topping in a brisk breeze.

On Day 3 we headed south for a couple of hours on the poor roads to the Violet Copper (*L. helle*) site near Fagaras. We knew that we were late in the second brood of this butterfly, so were grateful to discover that some females were left. By following the trail of Bistort plants, we found that the butterfly's range here was a bit more extensive than we expected; they were not only in the dried-out bog area but also in the adjacent, lightly wooded areas. Today, we also changed our base to the small town of Gheorgheni, so another longish drive followed to our new hotel.

Having settled into Gheorgheni, our next adventure was east of the town into the Carpathians, First, a stop at the touristy 'Killer Lake' and then through the Bicaz Gorge with its dozens of stalls selling 'local crafts', to a flowery meadow beyond. This was a day with a good number of species seen, but nothing really memorable. We were all waiting for the next act - and the real reason to be in Gheorgheni - a visit to the Danube Clouded Yellow (*Colias myrmidone*) site near the town. A bit of a shock awaited us as the steep slope where the butterflies fly had been cleared, rather uncaringly, of all scrub, and the passing track had been regraded. All very suspicious and worrying. Passing herders and the local museum curator (who previously had had an interest) did not know what was going on or even who owned the land. As far as I know, this is the only 'for sure' Danube Clouded Yellow site remaining, and the numbers of butterflies we saw did not fill us with optimism. We investigated two other likely sites in the immediate area and found the butterfly's food plant in each. We also found one Danube Clouded Yellow in each area - one seen from a distance and one captured. We might have done better, but we were all herded off the property by a pack of fierce-looking sheep dogs (literally!). Safi suggested that the Trust should get involved in its first 'international' project and, that evening, announced that he would donate moderate funds to initiate urgent fact-finding action on the main site, and to start raising awareness at all levels.



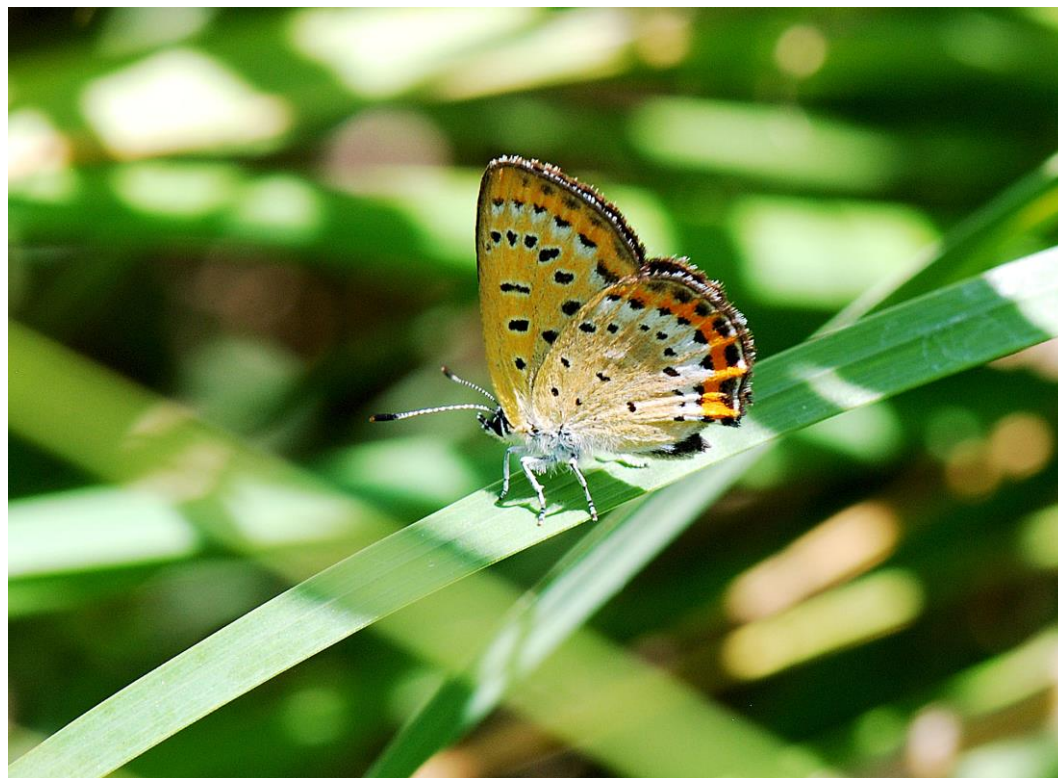
Pallas' Fritillary (*Argyronome laodice*)

The following day, we romped among gentle hay meadows on the way to our next and final base, the interesting village of Rimetea, which nestles below the picturesque Szekelyko Mountain (1200m). The group was split into two to fit into available accommodation. The luckiest ones had rooms looking out onto the mountain and an

amazing collection of butterflies in the garden: our list included Geranium Argus (*Eumedonia eumedon*), Lesser Purple Emperor (*A. ilia*), Oberthur's Grizzled (*Pyrgus armicanus*) and Mallow Skippers (*Carcherodus alceae*), Common (*P. machaon*) and Scarce Swallowtails (*P. podalirius*), and Short-tailed (*Everes argiades*), Eastern Short-tailed (*E. decoloratus*), Chequered (*Scolantides orion*), Reverdin's (*Plebejus argyrognomon*) and Meleager's Blues (*Polyommatus daphnis*). In my initial excitement, I did not notice the funny smell - these butterflies were attracted by the run-off from the farm's chicken shed!

Our first morning in Rimetea just had to be up the mountain - well, not all the way up but a good half way. It was a fairly easy walk and soon produced new 'firsts' for the trip: Blue-spot Hairstreak (*Satyrium spini*), Pearl-bordered Fritillary (*Boloria euphrosyne*) and Great Banded Grayling (*Brintesia circe*). Then, real excitement as we saw what was undoubtedly an *Erebia* on a rocky outcrop - but which one? We were lucky enough to net it and it proved to be a Black Ringlet (*Erebia melas*), one of our rare target species and unexpected in this particular place. This local speciality does not look like the illustrations in the book, as it is from *runcensis*. In all,

our morning walk produced 38 species. The afternoon, in contrast, was disappointing as we went to a gorge a few miles to the south where the Black Ringlet was supposed to be. After much clambering up and down steep and scary scree slopes, we had to be satisfied with more mundane (to me) species, including Twin-spot (*Brenthis hecate*), Lesser-spotted (*Melitaea trivia*) and High Brown Fritillaries (*Argynnis adippe*).



Violet Copper (*Lycaena helle*)

For our last day, we visited the area of the Turda Gorge - not down in the gorge itself but on the surrounding dry limestone pavements and meadows. The first butterfly, a few yards from our starting point, was a Lesser Clouded Yellow (*Colias chrysotheme*). Then, in the course of the morning, we turned up another fine selection including Safflower Skipper (*Pyrgus carthami*), Rock

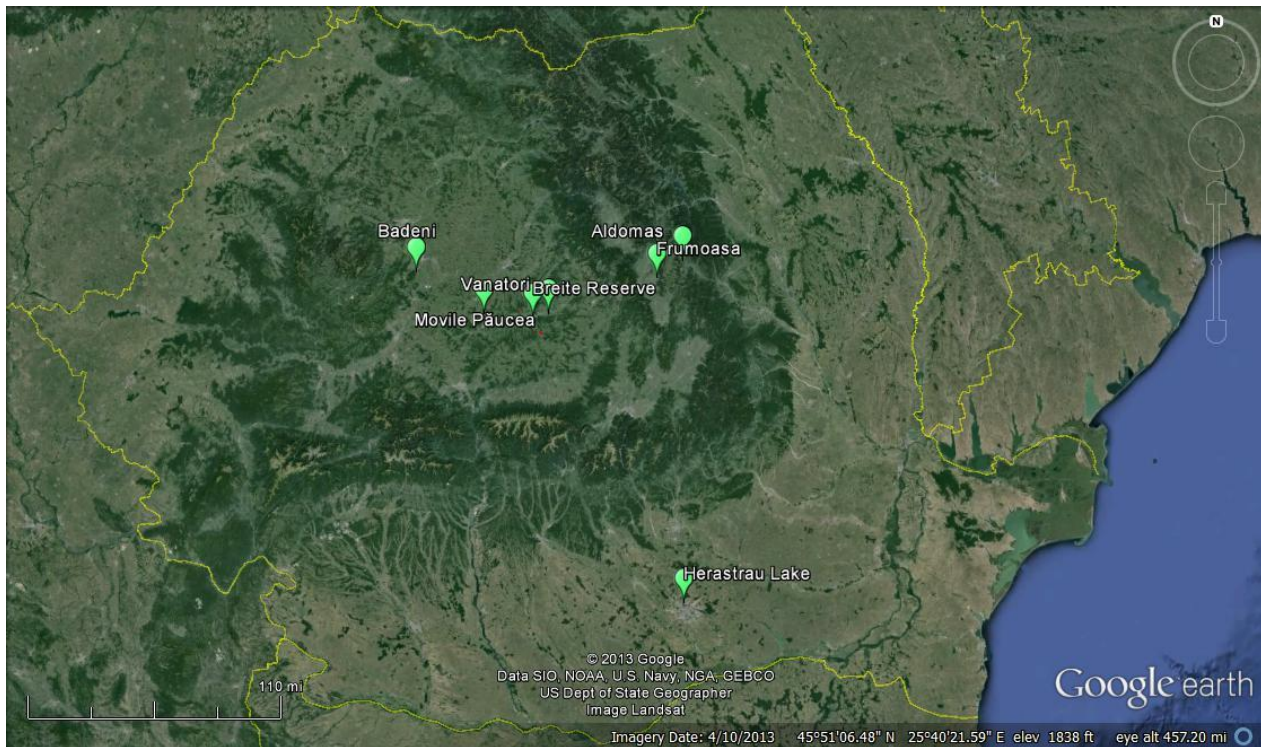
Grayling (*Hipparchia alcyone*), Hermit (*C. briseis*), Niobe Fritillary (*A. niobe*) and Lesser Fiery Copper (*Lycaena thersamon*). I remember this as a prime site for Meleager's Blue (*P. daphnis*), but grazing and maybe drier weather, had ended that. After lunch, we headed for the final site chosen by Lajos - a green and leafy track somewhere near the bottom of the gorge, along which were a few isolated holiday homes. Firstly, we noted an unusually high number of Common Gliders nectaring, and we were happily snapping away when, from up the track, there was a sudden strangled cry from Safi. I've never seen him so excited (and that's saying something), but he had just caught a butterfly he had been seeking for years and whose very existence he was beginning to doubt - Fenton's Wood White (*Leptidea morsei*)! We all agreed that it really was quite different from other wood whites, and that Lajos had it spot-on.

So, after a trip which started with Pallas' Fritillary (*Argynnis laodice*) and ended with Fenton's Wood White (*Leptidea morsei*), we did not mind having to get up at 3am the next morning to catch an early flight home. Our final count for the trip was 106 species, and no doubt a couple more will turn up as members of the group check their photographs back home. Well done to all who helped make this a memorable trip.

Ken Bailey

Supporting butterfly monitoring and conservation in Romania

Our first steps in this project were outlined in a previous EIG newsletter (March 2013). Now, with the support of the EIG and others, we are very pleased to report that butterfly monitoring commenced in 2013, and that volunteers walked 14 transects in 7 different areas of Romania - in nature reserves, city parks, around fields and in woodlands.



Location of 14 Transects in seven areas of Romania

Progress during 2013

Following on from the first meeting in Sighisoara in November 2012, a variety of activities have taken place:

Training events

In Cluj in April, we ran two training events, and monitoring was also a topic at the annual meeting of the Lepidopterists' Society of Romania, where JL explained the origins of the project.

Two training days were held in Harghita County in May, in Delnita and Ghimes, with the help of Pogány-Havas Association (<http://poganyhavas.hu/main.php>). The funding we received from EIG and others meant that we were able to provide volunteers with butterfly nets and guidebooks (Lafranchis and Tolman & Lewington, as there is not yet a Romanian butterfly guidebook).

Communications

Facebook

To help spread the word about the project Cluj students Agnes Kastal and Kinga Timea set up a Facebook page (Butterfly Conservation Romania), which now has nearly 200 followers.

Website

We developed an informal website as a resource for transect walkers, which has our recent newsletter, datasheets and powerpoint presentations, and a link to the new BC Europe monitoring manual that has been translated into Romanian

<https://sites.google.com/site/monitorizareafalurilor/home>

Conferences

JL spoke about the project at the annual German butterfly conference in Leipzig in early March, and PK took posters to the European Lepidopterists' Society (SEL) conference in Bulgaria in July, and the BC AGM in Swindon in November.

Butterfly Camp

This was the highlight of the year and it took place at the Piatra Craiului National Park, organised by Park biologist Ionut Bordea, who had raised 1000 Euros from friends to fund it! Funding from the German Society for the Protection of Butterflies helped to cover travel costs, material for creating their own butterfly nets and more books.

At the camp, school children, University students, teachers and experts came together to record butterflies and moths, and to teach and learn more about life cycles, identification and monitoring methods. We were very pleased that we were able to add 64 new species to the Park's list.

Species recorded on transects

Some of the species recorded on transects this year included EU rarities such as Clouded Apollo (*Parnassius mnemosyne*), Large Copper (*Lycaena dispar*), Scarce Fritillary (*Euphydryas maturna*) and Pallas' Fritillary (*Argynnis laodice*).

Plans for 2014

Monitoring workshop in Sighisoara, April

We will hold a pre-season meeting and workshop at the end of April to which all the contacts on our database have been invited. The aims will be to find out how the transect walkers got on, to provide any advice and support needed, to see what further help, funding and training is needed, and to plan future activities and events. We are especially pleased that one or two volunteers are keen to take on regional co-ordinating and supporting roles - it is obviously essential that we have Romanians to run the monitoring scheme.

Butterfly Camp, July

We are hoping to have a second Butterfly Camp in the Ghimes area, Harghita County in early July, in conjunction with Pogány-Havas. We will be able to go up to survey the montane hay meadows (over 1000m), many of which are now being abandoned, and establish more transects. Everyone is welcome, so if you can spare the time it would be great to see you there! (See also <http://www.treasuresoftransylvania.org/> <http://www.mountainhaymeadows.eu/>).

Data

One important issue for next year is the handling of the monitoring data. Fortunately, with the help of Dr Martin Wiemers from UFZ, we will be able to collaborate with Tagfaltermonitoring Germany and develop our own version of their internet-based interface to enter the data. However, volunteers are needed to translate this interface into Romanian and Hungarian.

Longer-term planning

Finally, we think that we now have so many people interested and enthusiastic about butterfly monitoring that we need to form an '**Association**' (similar to a UK charity) to help manage the work and make it easier to seek funding so we can continue to organise training events, support transect walkers and create a more useful and interesting website. The association would work very closely with existing organisations, and we are now sounding out our Romanian friends about the idea as we will need support across the board for it to happen. If you would like to keep in touch with the project, just send us your email address.

Acknowledgements

We very gratefully thank EIG and individual BC members, BC Europe, the European Forum for Nature Conservation and Pastoralism, Gesellschaft für Schmetterlingsschutz, European Union (DG Environment), Natural History Book Service Ltd and Leuphana University for their financial support and donations, and the Romanian Lepidopterological Society, Pogány-Havas Association, Adept and Mihai Eminescu Trust for their advice and encouragement.

Jacqueline Loos (loos@leuphana.de) & Paul Kirkland (paul.kirkland@btconnect.com)



Southern Hermit (*Chazara prieuri*) ©Paul Browning

The Reserva Nacional de Montes Universales lies in central-eastern Spain between Teruel and Cuenca, some 180-200 km east of Madrid and 140-150 km north-west of Valencia. The range of mountains embraces the Sierra de Albarracín and runs roughly south-east to north-west, separating the Serranía de Cuenca to the south-west from the A23 Teruel – Zaragoza motorway to the east. It is an area of some 1000 square km (roughly the same size as our English Lake District) with an elevation between 1000 and 1900m, made up of patches of arable land in the low-lying areas mainly used for grain, arid scrub, poplars, junipers and pine forest with occasional oak woods. The Tagus River rises here but there are many dry riverbeds, filled only by storms and late winter snow-melt. Summer temperatures are very high with little rain: we experienced only one brief shower and c.29-36 C.

The Reserva and immediate area is said to hold some 140 butterfly species, including several notables, and this visit had been proposed in order to search for and map the distribution of species such as Hermit (*Chazara briseis*), Southern Hermit (*C.prieuri*), Striped Grayling (*Hipparchia fidia*), Mother-of-Pearl Blue (*Polyommatus nivescens*), Spanish and Azure Chalkhill Blues (*P.albicans* and *P.caelestissima*), and forms of Argus, Spanish Brown Argus (*Aricia cramera*), Mountain Argus (*A.artaxerxes*), and Spanish Argus (*A.morronensis*); Zapater's Ringlet (*Erebia zapateri*) was also a target but we were aware that the timing of our visit might be too early in view of the late season.

The EIG team making the visit comprised Simon and Anne Spencer, John and Diana Winterbottom, Mike Prentice, Dudley and Jean Cheesman, and we were fortunate to have Paul Browning as our leader on the ground. Paul is an outstanding lepidopterist and photographer, and authored "Butterflies of the Iberian Peninsula", a photographic field guide, the first edition

sadly now sold out. Paul's knowledge of the habitat and butterfly habits, together with his identification skills helped make this a very productive and successful visit, although not all our objectives were achieved.



Azure Chalk-hill Blue (*Lysandra caelestissima*) ©Paul Browning

The Thriplow Trust must be thanked for funding part of some participants' costs.

The narrative that follows provides an indication of individual site location, together with brief habitat descriptions and highlights from our observations. Mike and Simon have collaborated on comprehensive species lists which have been sent to Miguel Mungira.

We were based in Albarracin, at the eastern edge of the Reserva for the duration of the study. Albarracin is a delightful historic fortified Moorish town, carefully restored without the over commercialisation shown in many of the French 'Plus Beaux Villages': it is a National Monument. It sits at an elevation of c.1000m with a population of about 1000, and quite worth a visit in its own right. Mike, Paul, Jean and I were based in the Hostal Los Palacios on the south-west edge of the town centre with direct access to facilities, whilst Simon, Anne, John and Diana were at the Municipal Campsite to the north-east of town. We were able to eat together on all but one evening, and on one occasion there were 13 of us at the restaurant on the campsite, including colleagues from Holland whom we met up with during the course of our searches!

Saturday 27th July – Municipal Campsite

We were able to meet up in the early evening, with John and Diana already on site having been touring locally, Simon and Anne had driven down from near Barcelona, Mike had driven up from the Sierra Nevada where he had been assisting in a butterfly project with a team from Madrid University, and Jean and I had driven down from the Lot, stopping overnight in Bielsa.

As is often the case, the campsite became de facto HQ for operations. In fact it had the bonus of direct access onto an arid, scrubby hillside via a field gate in the perimeter fencing. We were amazed at the diversity of species seen flying and roosting in the evening sunshine within a matter of half an hour or so and no more than 50m from the gate. It filled us with anticipation of what was to come, but supper called and we never did return to see exactly what was on this particular hillside, although we made several more visits to the campsite for meetings.

Sunday 28th July – a.m. Municipal Campsite, Paul's 'Dried Pond' Barranco

Paul arrived at the Hostal as planned at 9.30am and we travelled together to meet the team at the campsite. It was agreed that the priority species for the day were Hermit and Southern Hermit so we set off for what Paul described as his best site for these species: a former pond and wet area, dried out as a result of road improvements, a few km from Albarracin on the road to Pozondon, with the barranco leading northwards. A 'barranco' is described as a ravine and this was a fairly wide ravine with a mixture of grain fields alongside a stony track, bounded by 30-50m cliffs on either side, some sheer, some graded or terraced with loose stone and little vegetation.



Black Satyr (*Satyrus actaea*) ©Paul Browning

In the warm sunshine butterflies were everywhere; the heat and humidity were not what they were to become later in the week. The tunnel, or large culvert beneath the road built to allow melt waters to clear provided the first excitement with an Oberthur's Anomalous Blue (*P.fabresse*) together with many blues 'puddling' in damp soil, including Spanish Chalkhill Blue and Chapman's Blue (*P.thersites*). Later, on return to the cars for lunch, we were to find dozens of male Lycaenids on the outside of the tunnel wall taking salts. In the 'Dried Pond' area gatekeepers and graylings were flying, together with Black Satyr (*Satyrus actaea*); all three gatekeepers – Gatekeeper (*Pyronia tithonus*), Southern Gatekeeper (*P.cecilia*), and Spanish Gatekeeper (*P.bathseba*) – were seen throughout the week, together with Grayling (*H.semele*),

Rock Grayling (*H.alcyone*), Great Banded Grayling (*Brintesia circe*), occasional Tree Grayling (*H.statilinus*), and False Grayling (*Arethusana arethusia*). One skipper that must be mentioned with Spain being a stronghold is the Sage Skipper (*Muschampia proto*), which was seen in low numbers throughout the week.

Quite early in our walk we had our first sighting of the Hermit and, a little later, Striped Grayling – success, but no sighting of Southern Hermit. It was a lovely start to our week and we returned to the cars for lunch delighted with what we had seen.

Sunday 28th July – p.m. Javier's Rambla (Rambla de Monterde)

Mike had been given a sketch of a location where Southern Hermit might be found, by Javier Pérez López with whom he had been working in the Sierra Nevada. It proved to be a little further east along the A1512 road from Albarracin to Gea de Albarracin where a wide lay-by on the south side of the road was set above a triple tunnel built to allow melt or floodwaters to run into the Rio Guadalaviar, flowing parallel to the road.

The word 'rambla' seems to apply to a river valley and we followed the quite distinct dry riverbed, with a track alongside, in a northerly direction. Somewhat narrower in places than the barranco, the deep ravine again had walls of some 30m. and was less open, winding its way in the general direction towards the north. Scrub vegetation along banksides provided a distinct scent with forms of Santolina and Thyme amongst the diversity of plants. Bath White (*Pontia daplidice*) was much in evidence here, and Simon soon identified Silver-spotted Skipper (*Hesperia comma*) in the riverbed. The butterfly fauna was similar to that seen in the morning but, soon after the rambla split with the main course turning west, a shout went up and signalled the discovery of what was to be our only Southern Hermit. We were able to get photographs before the butterfly disappeared, only to discover that one antenna tip was missing!

We continued to explore deeper into the rambla without further success and on return met up with two Dutch enthusiasts, Peter Groenendijk, who runs the 'anything but common.nl' website and Bernard Fransen, looking for the same species. We enjoyed an exchange of 'butterfly gossip', and allowed ourselves to misunderstand some exciting information regarding Spanish Sooty Copper (*Lycaena tityrus 'bleusei'*), that was said to be flying at Noguera, and we were given the location; we agreed to keep in touch and meet up during the week. The delayed return to our cars meant that we were caught in the only rain shower of the week, but were well satisfied with the excellent day's butterflying.

Monday 29th July – a.m. Noguera

In view of what we believed we had understood from Peter and Bernard it was agreed that we should go to Noguera north-west of Albarracin on the A1512 road to search for Spanish Sooty Copper. We parked in the village and walked north along the stream valley to where two streams joined in an area of damp grassland; it was cold in the early morning shade. We first took the westerly fork that ran up through scrub and then mixed woodland along a well-marked footpath. Initial excitement at the sighting of a copper roosting in the early morning sunshine dissipated when it was disturbed and flew off (we later concluded it probably was Purple-shot Copper (*L.alciphron*)). We never did find our Sooty Copper, but this was an extremely rich area with considerable species diversity. Large Fritillaries were present – Dark Green (*Argynnis aglaja*) and High Brown (*A.adippe*) – and Paul called us to see our first Mother-of-Pearl Blue. Paul later saw Large Tortoiseshell (*Nymphalis polychloros*) in the same area then pointed to a Peacock (*Inachis io*). We then took the eastern fork that opened into a wide valley with grazing grassland. It was here that a possible Apollo (*Parnassius apollo*) was seen, but a confirmed Black-veined White (*Aporia crataegi*) put this in doubt. Silver-washed Fritillary (*A.paphia*) were nectaring on flowers along the stream bottom together with Cardinal (*A.pandora*). During the

return down the valley there was a question as to whether we had seen a particularly beautiful Spotted (*Melitaea didyma*) or Lesser Spotted Fritillary (*M. trivia*) (photos later confirmed Spotted), and then Jean sighted Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urticae*) on bramble.

The first sighting of Southern White Admiral (*Limenitis reducta*) occurred as we approached the village, where we stopped briefly at a café for a drink before setting off for Bronchales.

Monday 29th July – p.m. Near Bronchales

We stopped for a picnic lunch above the Bronchales Campsite, then at two woodland sites off the road running westwards that joins the main Noguera – Orihuela A1512. At the second site near Fuente del Canto we had opportunity to photograph Purple-shot Copper and fresh Lesser Marbled Fritillary (*Brenthis ino*); Spanish Chestnut Heath (*Coenonympha glycerion iphioides*) was also present. On the return to Albarracin via the main road we stopped at what must have been a picnic area with pool, now looking derelict, and saw several large fritillaries, one of which I believed to be Niobe (*A. niobe*) but did not get a photo.

In the evening we met up with Joost Uittenbogaard and Mireille de Heer from Holland, with whom Paul had earlier been in contact regarding his book and other matters relating to butterflies in Spain. They joined us for supper at the very agreeable Hotel Prado de Navazo, approximately half way between our hostel and the campsite, and proved to be informative and good company.

Tuesday 30th July – a.m. Calomarde – Moscardon

Joss and Mireille had told us of a visit they had made to the Ojos del Cabriel, near El Vallecillo, far to the south-west of Albarracin, and we agreed to see this site after first exploring the Calomarde – Moscardon area. Instead of taking the more direct route to Moscardon via Royuela we chose to keep on the A1704 towards Frias de Albarracin and turn south on a minor road at Calomarde. Soon after joining this road we made our first stop of the day in a clearing in a lightly wooded area, and enjoyed a mixture of early morning butterflies, including a worn Silver-studded Blue (*Plebeius argus*) that at first I had taken to be Baton Blue (*Pseudophilotes baton*), only to be told that this species does not occur in this part of Spain. All part of the learning experience!

Further down this road, as we approached Moscardon, we started to pass meadows on our right (the west side of the road) and decided to stop. This area proved to be astonishingly rich in butterfly abundance with large areas of thyme and germander, thistle and knapweed in flower. Dominated by the various graylings there were skippers and a number of Southern White Admiral, some quite worn, plus large fritillaries. The road was bounded by woodland on its eastern side and to our surprise a Twin-spot Fritillary (*B. hecate*) was identified soon after our arrival, although Paul explained that this species could be found in the Montes Universales, a habitat quite different to that in which we find this lovely butterfly in France. It was here that we found good numbers of Azure Chalkhill Blue, plus some hairstreaks and, after lunch, several of the group saw all five of the *Argynnis* fritillaries, including Niobe. Here, too, Diana and Jean pointed out a solitary example of Spanish Rusty Foxglove (*Digitalis obscura*), and Paul and I saw and photographed an Ocellated Lizard (*Lacerta lepida*). This site was a genuine discovery, in that all other sites we visited were either known to Paul or recommended by the Dutch.

Tuesday 30th July – p.m. Ojos del Cabriel, near El Vallecillo

Negotiating Moscardon, then El Vallecillo, proved to be more of a challenge due to poor maps and signposting – Oh! How lucky we are to have the Ordnance Survey! After one particularly difficult and incorrect track in Vallecillo we did spot the route to Ojos del Cabriel and, after a brief climb, descended down a very dusty track into a parking area above the infant Rio Cabriel, not so very far from the Nacimiento del Rio Tajo that it joins downstream.

We were able to walk down a well marked track, adjoining which was a stand of poplars covering some 3-4 hectares, and here Paul identified Esper's Marbled White (*M.russiae*), including a freshly emerged female that we were able to photograph. Further along the route to the falls were 'puddling' blues, including Azure Chalkhill Blue, and a fresh Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*) by the pumphouse. Following the little stream brought us to the top of the falls which allowed for paddling and sunbathing on the smooth stones – we weren't the only people here today! The relaxation was enjoyed by all, despite or perhaps because of the cold water. Whilst finding our way to see the falls from below Simon spotted a new species for us: a Spanish Purple Hairstreak (*Laeosopis roboris*); and some of us thought we might have seen a Southern Comma (*Polygonia egea*) only to be told that this species is not present in Spain, it was simply a Comma (*P.c-album*)!



Cinquefoil Skipper *Pyrgus cirsi*) ©Paul Browning

An enjoyable and rewarding day was concluded by meeting up with the Dutch contingent at the campsite where Anne and Diana generously provided refreshments before we ate at the campsite restaurant, somewhat late after persuading the proprietor that there were 13 of us, not the 8 for which John had originally booked! Nevertheless, it turned out to be a most agreeable meal in excellent company and the proprietor ended up in good humour despite the difficult start to the gathering.

Wednesday 31st July – a.m. Javier's Rambla (Rambla de Monterde), second visit

The second visit to this site was necessitated by our desire to discover more examples of Southern Hermit. Apparently, Peter and Bernard had seen one specimen close to the triple tunnel when they returned from their walk on Sunday at about 4p.m., so we were keen to see what we could find. However, despite good photo opportunities for Striped Grayling around the tunnels and close by, and further sightings of Hermit, we did not find Southern Hermit. Compensation came only in the range of species we were able to see and their abundance.

Wednesday 31st July – p.m. Paul's 'Dried Pond' Barranco, second visit

We took lunch by the cars in the lay-by then went on to the barranco; temperature was in the mid-30s C. and we were becoming uncomfortable with the heat. Despite careful searching, with Mike and Paul going even further up the barranco there was only one possible sighting of significance, but unconfirmed by photo. Some members resorted to sleep on the bankside! It was noticeable how the butterflies sought shade beneath the banks and within the few trees. In addition to our EIG group, Joss and Mireille, and Peter had been searching the same areas without success.

It was on this evening that we didn't all eat together – some needed an early night!

Thursday 1st August – a.m. Griegos area, including the Museum of Butterflies

To the west of Albarracin, accessed via Tramacastilla and Villar del Cobo, is Griegos set in a high level valley and backed by the massif of Muela San Juan. We drove up to the mirador where there is extensive car parking, presumably for winter sports. We had our closest views of Apollo here, but none would settle for photographs. The habitat was a mixture of grassland and pinewood, so there was a reasonable mix of species. We took advantage of the restaurant that sits at the north of the car park and had cold drinks – the day was again very hot. Dropping back down into the village we were directed to the Museum of Butterflies based in the community/health centre on the first floor, used productively by villagers as an internet facility. The collection included more than just local species but was a worthwhile stop for us.

Thursday 1st August – p.m. Guadalaviar picnic area and Orihuela, Bronchales, near Monterde de Albarracin and, finally, Javier's Rambla (Rambla de Monterde)

In searching for a site that Paul recalled we came across the community picnic area for Guadalaviar. This proved convenient in that there was shade for the cars, plus a picnic table for us, and the small river provided 'puddling' patches for butterflies. A Hermit was persistent in maintaining a flight area around a crossing point over the stream, and just upstream good numbers of Cinquefoil Skipper (*Pyrgus cirsi*) were found, as well as Cardinal nectaring on thistle.

We made a stop on the Sierra Alta near Bronchales en route to a site near Orihuela where Paul thought we might find Zapater's Ringlet (a site where he had previously found the species), but disappointingly none was to be found. The habitat used by this species is grassland amongst pinewood. Paul felt that if the species had emerged and we found it here we would not need to make the journey on Friday to the site he knew at Tragacete to find this species. What we did find, of course, were more graylings including Tree Grayling amongst the pines.

Our determination to find Southern Hermit caused us to return via Bronchales and the Pozondon road, turning south-east for Monterde de Albarracin to find an area of the Rambla de Monterde upstream of the site we had already visited twice. It turned out to be a 'Punto limpio', or waste tip! Black Satyr and a number of grayling species were found, along with skippers, but

no Southern Hermit. Perhaps more in desperation than in hope we again, for the third time, called in at the rambla as it met the main A1512 road. We spread out to search and, apart from photo opportunities of Striped Grayling, our most exciting find was a large cricket, believed to be an *Ephippiger* species.

Friday 2nd August – a.m. Tragacete, Cuenca Province

An early start was made for a known site at Tragacete in order to find Zapater's Ringlet. The route was via Calomarde and Frias de Albarracin over a high pass with spectacular views. We were able to park on a dead-end track adjacent to the mixed grassland and pinewood habitat north of Tragacete, and quickly found a good range of species, including Azure Chalk-hill Blue and various graylings, plus another Twin-spot Fritillary. We were able to photograph both male and female Hermit, and a Large Tortoiseshell attracted to John's campervan. It was a rewarding habitat and seemed perfect for our target species, but no Zapater's Ringlet. Reluctantly, we had to draw the conclusion that we were too early in this late-season year.



Group of Blues ©Paul Browning

Friday 2nd August – p.m. Huelamo and the Rio Jucar

We drove south towards Huelamo and parked alongside the road at a point where the Rio Jucar is close by. We made a brief reconnoitre of the area, including a fragile crossing of the river and found several very worn Spanish Purple Hairstreak, and Mike felt he had seen Spanish Argus, although the only photos we have are of Mountain Argus (*A. montensis*). Further searching after the picnic both sides of the road failed to find Spanish Argus, nor did we find Sandy Grizzled Skipper (*P. cinarae*), a species that Paul thought might be present. There were numbers of skippers 'puddling' here and at a later stop beside the river below Huelamo, mainly Cinquefoil.

At this location there were stands of thistle and large numbers of Cardinal nectaring, a beautiful sight. For the photographers, there will be the challenge of identifying all those skippers and blues seen 'puddling'.

So concluded our week in the field. A wonderful experience and privilege to be in such good company. About 90 species were seen but not necessarily seen by all, including one sighting of Southern Hermit, several Hermit and Striped Grayling, and a number of 'firsts' for all of us except Paul. The evening rounded off a superb week with an excellent meal at the Hotel Prado de Navazo, in part to celebrate John's imminent birthday on the Saturday.

Saturday 3rd August – a.m. Final hours and Departure

Paul went back to his 'Dried Pond' site very early in the morning and added Meleager's Blue *P.daphnis* and Esper's Marbled White, a new location for this species.

Paul headed for Castellon area, and Jean and I headed north for Bielsa. What a wonderful week!

Dudley Cheesman

Photographs by ©Paul Browning

SARDINIA, 5 TO 11 JULY 2013, AND ELBA, 10 TO 12 AUGUST 2013

This article reports on visits which I made this summer with my wife Liz to the Italian islands of Sardinia and Elba. On Sardinia we joined up with Simon and Anne Spencer for a few days after the Digne conference, whilst our visit to Elba a month later was tacked on to a non-butterfly holiday in mainland Italy. Elba is a small holiday island situated between Corsica and the Italian mainland and shares some of the restricted-range species of Corsica and Sardinia.

The inspiration for these visits came from the report by Mike Prentice and Martin Davies of their trip to Sardinia in 2008, in EIG Newsletter 5. Like them, we wanted to see as many as possible of the restricted range taxa to be found in this part of the world, in particular the following:

English name	Scientific name	Range
Corsican Swallowtail	<i>Papilio hospiton</i>	Corsica, Sardinia
Corsican Dappled White	<i>Euchloe insularis</i>	Corsica, Sardinia
Bellier's Blue	<i>Plebejus bellieri</i>	Sardinia, rare Corsica; Elba (f.villai)
Sardinian Blue	<i>Pseudophilotes barbagiae</i>	Sardinia
Sardinian Chalkhill Blue	<i>Polyommatus coridon gennargenti</i>	Sardinia
Corsican Small Tortoiseshell	<i>Aglais ichnusa</i>	Corsica, Sardinia
Corsican Fritillary	<i>Argynnis elisa</i>	Corsica, Sardinia
Southern Grayling	<i>Hipparchia aristaeus</i>	Corsica, Sardinia, Elba, Sicily
Corsican Grayling	<i>Hipparchia neomiris</i>	Corsica, Sardinia, Elba
Corsican Heath	<i>Coenonympha corinna</i>	Corsica, Sardinia
Elban Heath	<i>Coenonympha corinna elbana</i>	Elba & mainland nearby
Sardinian Meadow Brown	<i>Maniola nurag</i>	Sardinia
Corsican Wall Brown	<i>Lasiomatta paramegaera</i>	Corsica, Sardinia
Corsican Red-underwing Skipper	<i>Spialia therapne</i>	Corsica, Sardinia

SARDINIA

On Sardinia, we based ourselves at the east coast resort of Tortoli, which has hotel and camping facilities and is convenient for the mountainous (and very scenic) Gennargentu National Park, the main area for butterflies.

It has to be said that we were very fortunate with the weather. Summer had been late arriving on Sardinia but by the time of our visit it was warm and sunny. This seemed to have a concertina effect on flight periods so we saw not only the last of one early-flying species (Sardinian Blue) but also the first of some mid-summer ones, such as Corsican Grayling and Southern Grayling.

We concentrated our efforts on two parts of the National Park – the road up Bruncu Spina on the north side of the Park, and the mountains above Gairo Taquisara on the south east side.

Corsican Heath (*C. corinna*), **Sardinian Meadow Brown (*M. nurag*)** and **Corsican Wall Brown (*L. paramegaera*)** were easily found once we gained some height, and **Bellier's Blue**

(*P. bellieri*) was common on the mountain slopes. **Corsican Small Tortoiseshell (*A. ichnusa*)** was also seen occasionally, although was not common.



Bellier's Blue (*Plebejus bellieri*)

A small damp area near the top of the Bruncu Spina road was our best spot. Here we had **Corsican Red-underwing Skipper (*S. therapne*)**, **Sardinian Blue (*P. barbagiae*)**, still in reasonable condition, and **Corsican Fritillary (*A. elisa*)** – seemingly just emerged on 10 July.



Corsican Fritillary (*Argynnis elisa*)

On the south east side of the National Park we found one or two **Southern Grayling (*H. aristaeus*)** and **Corsican Grayling (*H. neomiris*)** flying together on a hot and rocky roadside above Gairo Taquisara, but despite a lot of looking we failed to find **Sardinian Chalkhill Blue (*P. coridon gennargenti*)** which we concluded had yet to emerge.



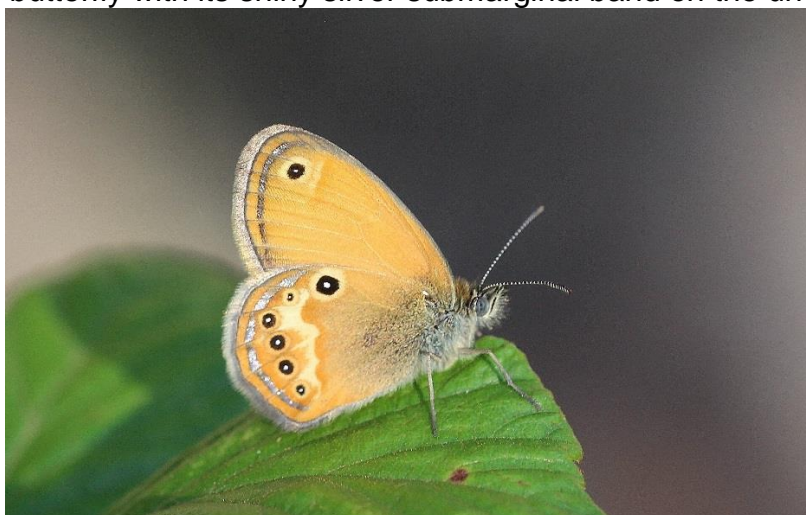
Corsican Grayling (*Hipparchia neomiris*)

We also failed to find **Corsican Dappled White** (*E. insularis*) and **Corsican Swallowtail** (*P. hospiton*). The White will certainly have been over by the time of our visit, and the Swallowtail probably also – the main flight period is understood to be mid-May.

All the restricted-range species were seen at higher altitude. Lower down, we found some more widespread species of interest, including **Cardinal** (*Argynnis pandora*), **Nettle-tree Butterfly** (*Libythea celtis*), and **Pygmy Skipper** (*Gegenes pumilio*). Also worth a mention is that we photographed an **Essex Skipper** (*Thymelicus lineola*) on the Bruncu Spina road – a species for which we are not aware of previous records for Sardinia.

ELBA

August is the peak holiday season on Elba but it is an attractive island if one can negotiate the busy tourist traffic (best to avoid the ferry crossing at weekends). We concentrated our efforts on the mountainous west of the island. **Elban Heath** (*C. corinna elbana*) was easy to find and is an attractive little butterfly with its shiny silver submarginal band on the underside.



Elban Heath (*Coenonymphus corinna elbana*)

Corsican Graylings (*H. neomiris*) were numerous on the top on Monte Capanne, reached by chairlift, albeit they were very worn. We were too late for the *villai* form of Bellier's Blue, but we did find some fresh **Two-tailed Pashas** (*Charaxes jasius*) on a track through *arbutus* trees. Other species included **Swallowtail** (*Papilio machaon*), **Cardinal** (*Argynnis pandora*), and **Wall Brown** (*Lasiommata megera* – not the Corsican form).



Two-tailed Pasha (*Charaxes jasius*)

For those interested in further reading, there is a good account of Sardinian butterflies in “A distribution atlas of the butterflies of Sardinia” by Leigheb, Crnjar & Balletto (*Linneana Belgica* Pars XX 2005/06 p.135-144, 234-244), and I found a list of Elban butterflies in the paper “Faunal patterns in Tuscan archipelago butterflies” by Dapporto and Cini (*Eur. J. Entomol.* 104: 497-503, 2007).

Nigel Peace

Visit to La Palma 20th to 27th September 2013

We travelled to La Palma on the once a week Thompson flight from Gatwick and stayed in self catering accommodation at Todoque in the west of La Palma. Each of the bungalows had its own gardens and the small complex had communal areas with lovely plants and sea views, though the actual coast was a 20 minute drive away. Todoque was a good location for exploring the island – we hired a car, and Sonvida Bungalows are recommended without reservation <http://www.bungalowssonvida.com/en.html>.



Canary Blue *Cyclotrius webbianus* ©Tim Norriss

The real thrill of the holiday was to find Lang's Short-tailed Blue (*Leptotes pirithous*) breeding in the garden. Several females were observed laying on the shrub *Plumbago auriculata*. Research on the internet seemed to indicate the species had only been found on La Palma for the first time earlier in 2013. In nearby El Paso we spotted several butterflies over a garden wall. The photograph Tim took showed in was Geranium Bronze (*Cacyreus marshalli*), another recent colonist it seemed.

As we saw some species in quite different locations to the group who visited in February a list is given below. A few day flying moth records are included but the

night-time moths at Sonvida were too numerous to mention! And they made the holiday extra special.

Sonvida Bungalows

Lang's Short-tailed Blue (*Leptotes pirithous*) (7)

Canary Blue (*Cyclotrius webbianus*) (4)

Puerto Naos (car park area)

African Grass Blue (*Zizeeria knysna*) (approx 30)

Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) (2)

Plain Tiger (*Danaus chrysippus*) (2)

Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*)

Small White (*Pieris rapae*)

Crimson Speckled (*Utetheisa pulchella*) (5) - day flying moth

El Paso (two gardens)

Geranium Bronze (*Cacyreus marshalli*)

Long-tailed Blue (*Lampides boeticus*) (3)

African Grass Blue (*Zizeeria knysna*) (3)
Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*)

Parque Nacional La Valdera de Taburiente (Visitor Centre near El Paso – endemic garden and nearby fields)

Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*)
Canary Blue (*Cyclurius webbianus*)
Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*)

El Cubo de Galga (car park & area across the road from car park)

Canary Red Admiral (*Vanessa vulcania*) (2)
Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*)
Canary Islands Large White (*Pieris cheiranthi*) (4)
Small White (*Pieris rapae*) (8)
Bath White (*Pontia daplidice*)
Palma Cleopatra *Gonepteryx* (*Cleopatra palmae*) (4)
Clouded Yellow (*Colias crocea*) (3)
Canary Speckled Wood (*Pararge xiphioides*) (12)
Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*) (6)
Small Copper (*Lycaena phlaeas*) (4)
Canary Blue (*Cyclurius webbianus*) (12)
Southern Brown Argus (*Aricia cramera*)

El Remo near Puerto Naos cliff tops and village

Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*)
Plain Tiger (*Danaus chrysippus*)
African Grass Blue (*Zizeeria knysna*) (2)
Canary Blue (*Cyclurius webbianus*)
Spoladea recurvalis - day flying moth (12)

San Pedro (east coast)

Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) (2)
Canary Speckled Wood (*Pararge xiphioides*) (2)
Clouded Yellow (*Colias crocea*)
Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*)

Los Cancajos (east coast)

Canary Blue (*Cyclurius webbianus*)
Small White (*Pieris rapae*) (2)

Tim Norriss and Lynn Fomison (email lfomison@madasafish.com)

Butterfly Atlas for the Midi-Pyrénées France co-ordinated by the Conservatoire des espèces naturels en Midi-Pyrénées.

As 2013 is the final year for gathering data in the field for the Atlas of butterflies and day flying moths of the Midi-Pyrénées, the Hautes Pyrénées group of Nature Midi-Pyrénées organised 9 collective outings in areas where information was lacking. I happily accepted to take two additional “mountain” boxes of 10km x 10km, at Cauterets and the Balaitous. The Parc National des Pyrénées kindly authorised a netting licence for the group to cover a four month period over the summer. The first of these two outings took place at Cauterets (box C24) on the 13th July where we were fortunate to be joined by Philippe Bricaire, his help was invaluable particularly with the identification of Burnet Moths. The second outing took place on the 11th August



M.dejone_genitalias (credit Philippe Bricaire Fleeting Wonders)

“Balaitous” (box B25). Both areas encompassing a rich and varied mountain habitat.

We arrived under grey skies, for the July outing at Cauterets (box C24), the weather was cool and not looking too promising but fortunately the skies cleared giving us sunshine, warmth and butterflies.

The area we prospected was between 1300m and

1670m of altitude, comprising mountain pastures, grassland both limestone and acid, damp areas and streams.

After an exceptionally snowy winter the flora was several weeks behind, with Lily of the Valley still in flower. The butterfly species were less abundant than normal for this time of year, nevertheless we observed numerous butterflies.

Two male *Anthocharis cardamines*; **Orange Tip** still flying, several *Callophrys rubi*; **Green Hairstreak** and numerous *Parnassius Mnemosyne*; **Clouded Apollo**.



Parnassius Mnemosyne (credit Philippe Bricaire Fleeting Wonders)

There were several *Mellicta* species, Christophe (from the Conservatoire Botanique National Pyrénées and Midi-Pyrénées) verified the genitalia of *athalia*, *dejone*, *parthenoides* and *diamina*; **Heath, Provençal, Meadow and False Heath Fritillaries** which were also photographed by Philippe.

We came across several *Polyommatus escheri*; **Escher's Blues**, *Plebejus idas*; **Idas Blue**, *Pseudophilotes baton*; **Baton Blue**, *Lampides boeticus*; **Long-tailed Blue**, *Eumedonia eumedon*; **Geranium Argus**; *Lasiommata petropolitana*; **Northern Wall Brown**, and *Erebia gorgone*; **Gavarnie Ringlet**. The specimens of *Pieris napi*; **Green-veined White** seen at altitude revealed more defined markings than those observed at lower altitude.

A superb team effort with a total 40 butterfly species and 3 Burnet Moths recorded for the day. With follow up surveys this box has increased from 31 species at the start of the year to 76 species.

The second outing took place in the Balaitous area, a high mountainous zone, within the Parc National des Pyrénées, commencing at around 1800m in the Cauterets area and almost 2000m in the Arrens valley and comprised of alpine pastures with rocky outcrops, granite blocks, streams and lakes.

We were rewarded by fabulous weather, a perfect day to be in the mountains, deep blue skies and sunshine!

We started the day at Cauterets, Pont d'Espagne, at 1439m where we came across many species, which rather held us up on our way to the designated site: *Melitaea didyma*; (male and female) **Spotted Fritillary**, *Erebia epiphron* and *meolans*; **Mountain and Piedmont Ringlets**, several *Lycaena vigaureae* (males); **Scarce Copper**, *Polyommatus amandus*; **Amanda's Blue**, *Parnassius apollo*; **Apollo**. Also *Zygaena loti*; **Slender Scotch Burnet** et *Zygaena contaminet*; **Sienna Burnet** Then an *Erebia euryale*; **Large Ringlet**, giving us the opportunity to catch our breath a little on the climb, a *Plebejus argus* (male); **Silver-studded Blue** which on inspection revealed a small spine on the fore-leg.

Once we arrived in the designated box and continuing on to approximately 1790m we observed and verified several species including *Erebia manto* (ssp *constans*); **Yellow –spotted Ringlet**, several *Boloria euphrosyne*; Pearl-bordered Fritillary, numerous *Argynnis aglaja*; **Dark Green Fritillary**, *Hesperia comma*; **Silver-spotted Skipper**.

A total of 35 butterflies (18 in the box) and 5 Burnet moths (2 in the box), with follow up surveys



the Balaitous box has increased from 4 species at the start of the year to 31 species.

With the contribution from the EIG trip led by Simon Spencer in 2010 and EIG members who have contributed observations over the years, several mountain boxes in the Hautes Pyrénées have now over 100 species recorded.

The atlas of butterflies and day flying moths coordinated by

Pieris napi

the CEN is a project that has been running since 2008 involving the collaboration of 9 naturalist organisations from the Midi-Pyrénées region and is due to be published in 2014.

By the end of 2012 more than 72,000 recordings were registered on the CEN's database, representing 218 species from the 228 species of butterflies and day-flying moths known to the region. Parallel to the work done by volunteers some targeted research has also been carried out by University students on species (*Zerynthia polyxena*, *Chazara briseis*, *Maculinea alcon*) and endangered habitats, for example the marshlands in the Aveyron and dry grassland in the Gers.

Many thanks to EIG members who have contacted me to share their recordings with this project and don't forget there is still time for anyone who wishes to contribute to this valuable project.

Please contact either myself or David Demèrges at the CEN.

Jude Lock: jude.lock@orange.fr

NEWS

Brigitte and Pieter Kan have just uploaded their Butterfly Film site to the web.

<http://www.filming-varwild.com/>.

Where you can download samples of their amazing films

Butterfly Conservation's International Symposium on The Ecology and Conservation of Butterflies and Moths. 4-6th April 2014 Southampton University. Book before 31st December for the Early Bird 15% discount.

NEW BOOK

L'ouvrage de *Biohistoire des Papillons**

par Christian PERREIN¹ et Jean-Alain GUILLOTON²

1 - *docteur en histoire des sciences, président honoraire de l'Atlas entomologique régional (Nantes).*

2 - *docteur-vétérinaire, président de l'Atlas entomologique régional (Nantes).*

Our book 'The Biohistoire des Papillons. Diversité et conservation des lépidoptères rhopalocères en Loire-Atlantique et en Vendée' (The bio-history of butterflies. Diversity and conservation of lépidoptères rhopalocères in the Loire Atlantique and Vendee departments) is the fruit of 20 years of research for the regional entomological atlas (Nantes), it concerns the Hesperioidea and Papilionoidea families in these two departments of western France.

The first two sections explain the area of study, together with three centuries of lepidoptery and regional museological research, including the methodology chosen to both classify collections and for work in the field. The main body of this work, the third section, details all the actual species, including those not seen or extinct, with detailed explanatory monographs, it offers a body of information which is interesting both scientifically and culturally, with illustrations and referenced diachronic maps. There are several chapters which form a fourth scientific section which is devoted to the biodiversity, the erosion of habitats and the biology of conservation. The fifth section can be seen as a tribute to the work of local naturalists, it is a biography of some 600 entomologists and helpers who contributed to the cartography, both in the past and present.

So this study is based on an extensive amount of field study, one of the most comprehensive zoological studies ever realised in France. The data base has 84000 observations, 26239 from before 1990, and 57680 for the period 1990 to 2005. This work allows us to measure the losses, and the gains, over a period of time and also allows us to understand the actual geographical distribution of specific species, to localise 'hot spots' and to see pattern of those species in decline. It allows us equally to see the plurality and to visualise the complexities involved in the decline of certain species (n = 100), on this regional scale (16000 km²) and over a century and a half (1850 - 2005). It particularly allows us to see the link, or lack of it, between the factors of changing habitats and climate change.

The objective of the book is to offer an unequalled understanding of butterflies in these two French departments. From a scientific point of view its aims were ;

- innovate with a sound methodology, with roots in anthropological and historical sciences as well as biological.
- to produce quantifiable referenced data on the erosion of the biodiversity.
- to provide useful practical tools to understand the phenomenon of global change.

We hope this research work will help towards a greater awareness and provoke a debate of the richness of our biological patrimony, notably from a technical and cultural point of view (the concept of technotope, humans living in a society dominated by technology). In associating the history of butterflies with that of climate, habitat, human development on one hand, and the observations and recordings through recent times on the other hand, the work contributes to a history of living things on a human scale or to put it otherwise, the story of the 'artificialisation' of the biosphere. Finally as well as the aesthetic editorial challenge this book demonstrates that such a quality research document is possible through collective and voluntary participation.

*PERREIN Christian avec l'Atlas entomologique régional (Nantes), *Biohistoire des Papillons. Diversité et conservation des lépidoptères rhopalocères en Loire-Atlantique et en Vendée*, préfaces de Jean Guilaîne, professeur honoraire au Collège de France et de Gérard Christian Luquet, maître de conférences au Muséum national d'histoire naturelle de Paris, Rennes, Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 24 x 28 cm à la française, couverture reliée pleine toile, jaquette pelliculée, 624 pages, environ 1300 illustrations photographiques, diagrammes et cartes en couleurs [ISBN : 978-2-7535-1968-8]. Ouvrage couronné du Prix Réaumur 2012 de la Société Entomologique de France.

REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE

Macedonia

Rudi Verovnik and others have done the first part of a study on *Pseudochazara cingovskii* (Macedonian Grayling), one of the few Critically Endangered butterflies in Europe, in southern Macedonia. They hope to return next summer and have asked for EIG volunteers to help do a survey. Their paper in which they considerably extend the known range is on the BCE website <http://www.bc-europe.eu/index.php?id=405> or copies are available from Simon Spencer (cerisyi@btinternet.com). It would require two weeks in the first half of July and the nearest airports are Skopje and Thessaloniki. Volunteers would help in mark-release-recapture studies on several newly discovered sites for *P. cingovskii*, in the wider surroundings of the Prilep mountains. These sites have a fascinating butterfly fauna so should be interesting for EIG members. Expressions of interest to Rudi Verovnik Rudi.Verovnik@bf.uni-lj.si with a cc to Simon Spencer (cerisyi@btinternet.com).

LEADERS FOR TOUR COMPANY

I have been approached by a leading wildlife holiday company who are looking for new leaders to run butterfly tours in Europe. They already do several and want to refresh their portfolio by doing tours to new places. Tour leading is not for everybody and you need to have people skills as well as butterfly skills. It is also very hard work. If you think you have what it takes contact Simon Spencer (cerisyi@btinternet.com).

**Butterfly Conservation is a Charity registered in England & Wales (254937)
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