



# **NEWSLETTER**

**Issue 10**

**December 2011**

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## **Chairman's Introduction**

First another apology. This newsletter is even later than the last one and should have appeared in October. My apologies again but many of the things I wrote about in the last newsletter have only recently come to fruition and to some extent I have been waiting for some exciting news. As I said in the last newsletter we had made quite a lot of progress in five years despite only having just over 200 members. I also said I thought that we were now in a position to make a quantum change in our operation and do a bit more to further the interests of butterflies in Europe.

One of EIG's roles is to make contact with butterfly enthusiasts throughout Europe and to be able to put self funded EIG Survey teams in to assist them in surveys. We have made more contacts; we are getting requests to do important survey work and we now have secured some funding to part pay for people's expenses in doing survey work in Europe.

As I announced at the EIG AGM, we have secured a grant of £4000 from the Thriplow Charitable Trust to be spent over the next two years. In anticipation of obtaining such funding we have set up a small subcommittee chaired by our treasurer Nigel Peace and including BC's chairman David Dennis and past chairman Dudley Cheesman to administer the fund. Nigel

reports on page 7 on the sort of projects that might be funded and how to apply. Full details are on the website.

I have attended Butterfly Conservation Europe meetings in Laufen (Germany) in the past but this year Mike Williams, our main trips organiser came with me. It was an ideal opportunity to hear how different organisations in most of the countries of Europe were getting on and what progress was being made in conserving butterflies. In the UK there are about a thousand transects walked every week of the summer and Butterfly Conservation has over 17000 members and branches that cover the country. In many European countries there are only small groups or a few individuals. I was impressed by the recent progress being made in Serbia and Turkey. I gave a talk on the work of EIG and asked for projects where an EIG survey team could be helpful. Some of the initial responses are listed in Possible EIG projects on page 5. EIG always aims to work with local partners where possible and prefers to work on Red List species of limited distribution in places that are poorly surveyed and where local butterfly expertise is limited.

I very much hope that EIG members will take up these challenges. We particularly need people who can lead a small team in doing a survey and writing it up afterwards. They don't always need to be 'EIG trips' open to all members with a group of a dozen participants. One of the reasons why I enjoy field trips with other people is that one sees more, everybody has an opportunity to learn and hopefully the shared expertise produces a more accurate list than one would produce on one's own. One or two colleagues is often enough if you are all experienced and makes a lot of sense in terms of logistics. What is important about working with others in the field is to maintain a careful approach to ID. Each new species might be observed or caught but I prefer to allow colleagues to come to an opinion before seeing if we have all come to the same conclusion, rather than naming it immediately. With *Pyrgus* initial agreement is very rare but with a discussion and reference to the keys a consensus usually begins to form. Other species are easier. On commercial led trips the leader usually calls out the ID as soon as a species is seen. In these circumstances participants fail to learn to come a view themselves in a situation where their identification can be verified. That is the way to learn.

Though EIG members that have come regularly on EIG trips have forged friendships amongst themselves and have built the nucleus of a proper EIG group we need more UK activities to get to know our members and provide an opportunity for members to come and introduce themselves. The annual visit to the Natural History Museum led by Nigel Peace was fully booked last year and provides one such meeting but I would welcome other opportunities for EIG members to meet. These could be by providing a speaker on European butterflies to BC branches or by arranging an annual EIG meeting in a venue such as Butterfly House. All suggestions welcome.

**Simon Spencer**  
**Chairman**

## **Contact Details:**

### **Chairman:**

**Simon Spencer** - email: [cerisyi@btinternet.com](mailto:cerisyi@btinternet.com) - Tel No: 01691 648339

### **Vice-Chairman/Field Trip Organiser:**

**Mike Williams** - email: [mike@stagborough.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:mike@stagborough.fsnet.co.uk) - Tel No: 01299 824860

### **Minutes Secretary:**

**Ian Duncan** - email: [duncaniz@aol.com](mailto:duncaniz@aol.com) - Tel No: 01684 574965

### **Membership Secretary:**

**Anne Spencer** - email: [apatura.metis@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:apatura.metis@yahoo.co.uk) - Tel No: 01691 648339

### **Website Manager:**

**Neil Thompson** - email: [webmaster@bc-eig.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@bc-eig.org.uk) - Tel No: 01386 710917

### **Treasurer**

**Nigel Peace** email: [liz-nigel@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:liz-nigel@hotmail.co.uk) Tel No: 01420 85496

### **Newsletter Editors:**

**Simon & Anne Spencer** - as above

### **Other Committee Members:**

**Dudley Cheesman** – email: [Dudley.cheesman@talktalk.net](mailto:Dudley.cheesman@talktalk.net)

**Nick Greatorex-Davies** – email [nickgdlepman@googlemail.com](mailto:nickgdlepman@googlemail.com)

**EIG WEBSITE:** [www.bc-eig.org.uk](http://www.bc-eig.org.uk)

Please email any thoughts, ideas or whatever you want included in the newsletter to:  
[cerisyi@btinternet.com](mailto:cerisyi@btinternet.com)

## **Dates for your Diary**

### **Visit to Natural History Museum**

The annual Natural History Museum Visit will be on Wednesday 15 February 2012. Meet at 10.45 at the Museum - the morning will be spent viewing specimens, followed by lunch. Contact Nigel Peace ([liz-nigel@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:liz-nigel@hotmail.co.uk)) to reserve a place. Last February's visit was over-subscribed and priority will be given to those turned away on that occasion, provided applications are made to Nigel promptly (two weeks from this newsletter, please).

### **Wageningen Conference**

#### ***International Symposium: Future of Butterflies in Europe III***



Dutch Butterfly Conservation (De Vlinderstichting) is organising the 3rd international symposium on Future of Butterflies in Europe, to be held in Wageningen from 29th to 31st March 2012.

We look forward to meeting you in 2012!

More information on [website Future of Butterflies](#).

## **EIG Trips for 2012**

### **EIG Fundraising Tour to Serbia 17-25 June, 2012**

For the past two years the EIG, in co-operation with Greeneye Ecotours, has organised fundraising tours in support of the work of the Hungarian Natural Heritage Trust to Slovenia in 2010 and Montenegro this year. The Trust is working mainly in the Orseg National Park in western Hungary to conserve four species of Large Blue butterfly that occur there. Over the past two years, the EIG has raised almost 14,000 Euros in support of this work. This year's fundraising tour, again to raise money for the Natural Heritage Trust, is to Serbia visiting three national parks (Derdyn, sometimes referred to as the Iron Gate NP; Deliblator Sands; and Stara Planina, which borders Bulgaria). Target species include False Comma (*Nymphalis vau-albm*), False Eros Blue (*Polyommatus eros subsp. eroides*), Almond-eyed Ringlet (*Erebia alberganus*), Southern Festoon (*Zerynthia polyxena*) and Yellow-legged Tortoiseshell (*Nymphalis xanthomelas*).

The cost of next year's tour is £1,345 + £150 single supplement if required. Airfare to and from Luton (around £100) is additional. There are just 14 places available. Contact Mike Williams if interested by email: [mike@stagborough.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:mike@stagborough.fsnet.co.uk) or telephone 01299 824860.

### **Bosnian Blue in Greece and Bulgaria July**

Simon Spencer might return to Mt Orvilos (GR) on the Greek/Bulgarian border and try and find Bosnian Blue *Plebejus dardanus* (Red List Near Threatened), possibly with Lazaros Pamperis (we failed on our last visit) and Nick Greatorex Davies is going to do a survey for the same species on the Bulgarian side 4-13th July 2012 through the British Bulgarian Friendship Society. He is looking to take a party of 5-7 and has 2 already. This species is usually found on the tops of rocky mountains where it has a specific foodplant *Androsace villosa*. In Europe the Bosnian Blue has only been recorded from a few calcareous mountains in the Balkans. In Bulgaria it has been recorded from 3 (possibly 4) 10 km squares only. However there are several other mountain areas where the geology is similar and where the butterfly may occur. He aims to visit and survey as many of these as time permits. At least one of the known sites is threatened by the construction of a wind farm. Those coming on this trip will need to be fit enough to walk up mountains each day of the trip. Based on a group of six participants (including leader), the cost of the trip is expected to be about £670 (includes: flights, accommodation, driver/guide and fuel). Contact Nick Greatorex-Davies: Tel: 01480 301685, email: [nickgdlepman@googlemail.com](mailto:nickgdlepman@googlemail.com).

The Greece survey will need a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 4 (if one car) and would fly Easyjet to Thessaloniki and hire a 4X4 and approach Mt Orvilos from the west probably staying in Sidirokastro. Mt Orvilos is on the Greek/Bulgarian border and is the only site for this butterfly in Greece. Though it has been seen since a major forest fire there 10 years ago there are no recent records. We would also survey for the food plant and butterfly on neighbouring mountains as weather and time permit. Dates are also early July, but to suit participants, and the trip would be about a week. I am waiting for the situation in Greece to resolve itself before booking anything. If they are kicked out of the Euro it will be a cheap holiday. Flights are also not yet available. Expressions of interest to Simon Spencer 01691 648339 email [cerisyi@btinternet.com](mailto:cerisyi@btinternet.com). I have a small group interested already.

## **Estonia**

Mike Williams is organising a butterfly trip to Estonia this June to look for species like Scarce Heath (*Coenonympha hero*), Cranberry Blue (*Plebejus optilete*), Frigga's (*Boloria frigga*), Scarce Fritillary (*Euphydryas maturna*), Clouded Apollo (*Parnassius mnemosyne*), Poplar Admiral (*Limenitis populi*) and Northern Chequered Skipper (*Carterocephalus silvicolus*). The dates are 6-13 June and more details are available from Mike (tel. 01299 824860 or [mike@stagborough.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:mike@stagborough.fsnet.co.uk)). This is being arranged as a private tour rather than through the EIG but EIG members are very welcome to attend. Places, however, are limited so if anyone is interested they are advised to get in touch as soon as possible

## **Possible 2012 EIG Projects/opportunities**

**North Finland** - Finnish Lepidopterological Society. I sent them the following as a possible entry in next EIG Newsletter

'EIG has had a request from colleagues in Finland for butterfly surveyors to make surveys of some of the remoter parts of Finland and in places that are poorly surveyed for butterflies mainly in the north. There is also a need to make regular monitoring of known populations that are highly threatened by climate change. There will be opportunities to see some of the 18 species of arctic endemic butterflies. This opportunity is not for the faint hearted as you will know from EIG Newsletter 9. The weather can be awful and the mosquitoes can drive you mad! The season is late June/early July. It would be an adventure and you never know what you might find!

I have had a positive response from Jari but he says it might be better mid July and will get back to me in detail soon.

**N Swedish mountains** – I have followed this up with Nils Ryholm following a conversation in Laufen but I have yet to hear from him. It was a similar suggestion to the N Finland one.

**Western Italian Alps** A search for **Scarce Fritillary** *Euphydryas maturna* (VU) in the Western Italian Alps where a new colony was found recently. The Italian population was thought to be extinct. An EIG survey was suggested by Emilio Balletto, BCE's Italian partner. Anne and I will probably do this one as we have local contacts and can use our campervan. I have a possible 4 other participants which would be ideal. The flight period is most of June so although we will do the first week or so, if others would like to explore the area later in June we could do a better job of it. Contact Simon Spencer [cerisyi@btinternet.com](mailto:cerisyi@btinternet.com).

**Romania** A mark and recapture exercise on Violet Copper (*Lycaena helle*) (EN) in Romania - Lazslo Rakosy & student Cristina Craioveanu in late May /early June. I have had a correspondence with Cristina and she is keen to have some help. There is a local Hotel that looks good and charges £8 (40 RON) a night. Food extra but they have a restaurant. Participants would need to hire transport. It sounds a nice area and from our previous visits there are lots of butterflies to see near Cluj. There are cheap flights from Luton to Cluj with Wizzair. Contact Simon Spencer [cerisyi@btinternet.com](mailto:cerisyi@btinternet.com)

**Tenerife** Martin Wiemers suggested a survey for *Pieris chaeranthi* (Canary Islands Large White) (EN) in Tenerife. I have had a huge amount of detailed information on this butterfly which is highly endangered but may still exist. The project would suit anyone who can get there and do a survey and it flies all year. They could revisit the humid valleys, often with laurel, on the north of the island and see if they can find it. Former localities are well documented. Contact Simon Spencer [cerisyi@btinternet.com](mailto:cerisyi@btinternet.com)

**Picos de Europa** We have a suggestion from Professor John Dover that we survey for Woodland Brown *Lopinga achine* (VU) in the Picos de Europa late June/early July. Again I have had a lot of detailed information and John has local contacts. For the main known site an ordinary car would be fine and there is plenty of accommodation. It is a nice area with lots of good butterflies. This is a useful project as *L. achine* is very scarce in Spain and a red list vulnerable species. If further populations can be found then they can be protected/perhaps managed in the National Park.

**Ariege** – It has been suggested that EIG repeat the work of Grahame Hart on Violet Copper (*Lycaena helle*) in the Ariege 15 years ago. This was a habitat assessment on a small site near Andorra and for conservation purposes it would be useful to assess how the situation has changed. It would make a good MSc project with a timing of June. Grahame lives nearby and would be able to assist.

Contact Simon Spencer [cerisyi@btinternet.com](mailto:cerisyi@btinternet.com) in the first instance if you are interested in any of these opportunities.

### **Romania**

Martin Warren passed EIG a request to do some butterfly surveying in Romania for a UK run project. Mike Prentice and I spent a week out there this year with John and Diana Winterbottom and we found some interesting stuff including Scarce Fritillary (*Euphydryas maturna*) and Clouded Apollo (*Parnassius mnemosyne*). We might go back. Nigel Spring took a team out there as well. It is an interesting experiment in trying to provide opportunities for a local rural community in a protected area rich in wildlife.

We have had a request for more butterfly surveyors to work in Romania over a six week period next summer. There is a small amount of payment. I (Simon Spencer [cerisyi@btinternet.com](mailto:cerisyi@btinternet.com)) can forward the advert or send your statement of interest and your time of availability to Jacqueline Loos ([loos@leuphana.de](mailto:loos@leuphana.de)).

### **Possible French Conference at Digne les Bains in 2013.**

To celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Jardins de Proserpine (<http://www.proserpine.org>) in Digne les Bains in southern France we are hoping to put on a joint EIG conference with them in spring 2013. It will be an opportunity to bring many people interested in French butterflies together in one place including French nationals, ex pat British who live in France and UK residents who have holiday homes in France. The Jardins have been very successful at promoting interest in butterflies in France and a remarkable 136 species of butterfly have been seen in the gardens. Though we hope to organise simultaneous translation of the talks some knowledge of French will be useful if you are going to participate. More details soon.

## **THRILOW CHARITABLE TRUST - GRANTS TO SUPPORT SURVEYS OF RED LIST BUTTERFLY SPECIES**

During the year, EIG made an application to the Thriplow Charitable Trust for a grant to establish a fund from which contributions could be made to help defray the expenses of EIG members undertaking surveys of Red List Butterfly Species in Europe.

I am pleased to say that the Thriplow Trust has now generously provided a grant of £4,000, to be spent over the next two years. The funds will be administered by an EIG subcommittee comprising David Dennis (BC chairman), Dudley Cheesman (former BC chairman), and me (EIG Treasurer).

Applications are now invited for contributions from the fund. An application form, together with a list of qualifying criteria, will be placed on the EIG website soon. Applications must be received by Friday 16 March 2012. A further round of applications will be invited in twelve months time if the funds are not exhausted on this occasion.

The essential qualifying criterion is that the trip must be to survey for or contribute to the conservation of one or more Red List species, particularly those that are Endangered or Vulnerable. Contributions will only be made if the expenditure is approved in advance. And a report of the trip must be submitted to the EIG subcommittee and made available to BCE partners.

In addition to the application form and the list of qualifying criteria, the website also contains a table listing Red Data species which has been annotated with information about the range of each species and notes suggesting whether it should be regarded as a priority for EIG to survey. The table has been drawn up by Simon Spencer with assistance from EIG committee members and should be viewed as a working draft not as a final document. Any comments on the contents of the table will be welcome.

I am concerned that applicants have realistic expectations about the level of grants that are likely to be made. The application to the Thriplow Trust said that contributions might cover the following:

- subsidies of up to £250 towards travel and accommodation costs for EIG members leading expeditions
- subsidies of up to £100 towards travel costs for individual EIG members undertaking a visit to carry out targeted recording
- travel and accommodation expenses incurred by local collaborators where appropriate
- travel costs by EIG committee members to relevant conferences or workshops in Europe or meetings with local collaborators.

The subcommittee looks forward to receiving your applications.

**NIGEL PEACE**  
**EIG Treasurer**

## Winner of the European Marsh Award 2011



David Dennis presenting Tristan with his award

Tristan Lafranchis was the winner of the 2011 Marsh Award for his contribution to the understanding and conservation of European Butterflies.

I first became aware of Tristan Lafranchis at the end of 2000/early 2001 upon the publication of his book 'Les Papillons de jour de France, Belgique et Luxembourg'. It became an instant best seller amongst European butterfly enthusiasts and professionals alike. It led to considerable debate about the level of recording in France, for example, and how this might have influenced the regional distribution maps. I treasure my copy and have found it enormously helpful in building my own knowledge of the butterflies of France.

In 2004 Tristan's 'Butterflies of Europe' was published in English. This is by far the best key to identifying the butterflies of Europe available today and most of us carry a copy on our field trips to Europe. It may not be perfect, and some of us would declare that identifying (all) butterflies is far from easy, in contrast to the bold statement on the front of the book, but it is, nevertheless, a thoroughly well

thought out key. In addition to the key, it does describe the means by which 'genitalia' can be used to differentiate difficult species. Without doubt, this book has done much to improve and refine the discipline of butterfly identification and we are indebted to Tristan for this invaluable work. A French and Polish version have also been published. It is the preferred field guide of nearly all EIG members.

Tristan has published an authoritative publication on the plants of Greece, but his first, and lifelong love of butterflies is now absorbing his time as he works on a new book on the ecology and life history of the butterflies of France. Having worked as a consultant on butterflies in France for many years Tristan emigrated to Greece at the beginning of this century having become disillusioned with 'conservation' in France and his children were subsequently educated in Greek. Those who have accompanied him in the field are constantly amazed how the combination of botanical and butterfly knowledge produce an insight into a butterfly fauna that is shared by very few. If the foodplant is there he will find the egg or the caterpillar. This sort of knowledge is the product of a field season that starts in February and ends in November. Much of this time is spent under canvas whatever the weather.

No other individual has had such a widespread influence in bringing European butterflies to a contemporary international audience through his books. We anticipate his current studies will lead to further knowledge and understanding that will help conserve the rich diversity of European, as well as France's butterflies.

Tristan has also been a great influence for sensitivity and restraint in how butterflies should be treated. He has taught us how to identify difficult species in the field by their genitalia, without damaging the insect, and has argued strongly against irresponsible collecting and in favour of banning damaging trade practices.

Tristan was unable to attend the Butterfly Conservation AGM in Cheltenham on 19<sup>th</sup> November but did happen to be in the UK to do a lecture the week before. A small group of BC Council and EIG members met him in Birmingham on the Sunday morning before his flight to Paris. David Dennis (BC Chairman) presented him with the award.

EIG members are reminded to send their nominations for the 2012 European Marsh Award to the EIG chairman Simon Spencer by the 1<sup>st</sup> September.

**Dudley Cheesman**



## EIG visit to the Pyrenees 10 – 21 July 2011



Looking for Gavarnie Ringlet (*Erebia gorgone*) Col de Tentès ©Anne Spencer

The European Interests Group (EIG) of Butterfly Conservation organizes or coordinates visits by its members to locations around Europe where team effort can help with habitat improvement and enhance the quality of search, recording and monitoring of butterflies, particularly notable species as defined by the IUCN. In this case the objective was to establish records, rigorously checked and verified, in the departments of the Haute Pyrenees (65) and Ariège (09), to add to the information required to produce a distribution atlas for the region of the Midi-Pyrenees.

The team for the first week in the Haute Pyrenees, led by Simon Spencer, EIG chairman, comprised Anne Spencer, Anne and Mairie Whitehouse, Greg Herbert, Chris Lunn, Frank Bell and his sister, Margaret, Hugo Brooke, Richard Davidson, Stephen Skillman, Jean and myself. We were based in Luz-St.-Sauveur and Jude Lock of Borderline Holidays (see my report in Branch News, Spring 2008, Issue No.78) was our guide and driver throughout the first week. In fact, some members had arrived a day or two earlier and Jude had kindly acted as guide and driver. Several of us enjoyed the comfort of the Hotel Montaigu in Esquizeze Sere on the edge of Luz, whilst Frank and Margaret stayed at an apartment in Bareges, and others camped at a site in the town.

Weather in the mountains can always be changeable and an unsettled spell was with us throughout the trip, with only one day, Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July, lost to rain. The fine spring weather had meant that emergence of many species had been early, in contrast to our previous visit in 2007 where poor weather had meant later than usual emergence and uncertainty about what we should find. Overall, we had an excellent and productive week with the rain on Wednesday prompting the opportunity for Jude to show us how to enter records onto the database that will be used to construct the distribution atlas.

What follows is a diary of the visits we made and an indication of the species we recorded, but it is not intended to be an exhaustive list. I should add that many of the team carried nets and specimen were potted and examined with great care. Whilst we were able to achieve consensus on the ringlets (*erebia*), debate as to the identity of the skippers (*pyrgus*), based on photos, has continued to this day, well beyond the conclusion of the date of sighting! The difficulty of differentiating between Oberthur's (*armoricanus*), Foulquier's (*foulquieri*), and Large Grizzled Skipper (*alveus*) was never easy, as Tristan Lafranchis warns in *Butterflies of Europe*, and we felt the need for a more decisive key. The species that has caused most discussion is one that was netted by, I think, Hugo Brooke on the Pic de Pibeste: we all agreed it was Cinquefoil (*circii*) and initial analyses seemed to confirm this, but doubts remained and at the time of writing the consensus is moving towards Grizzled (*malvae/malvoides*).

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2011 – Below Col du Tourmalet and Bareges valley old road

Jude had arranged for us to meet up with the local French team some way above Bareges on the road up to the Col du Tourmalet. Conditions were not promising but it was decided to go further up towards the Col in search of sunshine, and this proved to be right. We found

Mountain (*Eebia epiphron*), Piedmont (*Erebia meolans*) and Pyrenees (*E. rondoui*) and Western Brassy Ringlet (*E. arvenensis*), Large Wall Brown (*Lasiomata maera*), Purple-edged (*Lycaena hypothoe*) and Sooty Copper (*L. tityrus*) and Shepherd's Fritillary (*Boloria pales*) in improving weather conditions, plus more common species. A Mountain Dappled White (*Euchloe simplonia*) was netted on the way back down the mountainside, and another 'large' Wall Brown created discussion when it was diagnosed as Northern Wall Brown (*Lasiomata petropolitana*), the first time I has seen this species.

We had enjoyed sightings of Lammergeier earlier in the morning but lunch by the stream provided sightings of Ring Ouzel, Rock Bunting, Water Pipit and Wheatear.

After lunch we travelled back down the valley and turned off and parked alongside the old road, one of my favourite spots in the area. The afternoon proved to be as rewarding as the morning with our only sighting of a (worn) Clouded Apollo (*Parnassius Apollo*), several Lesser Marbled (*Brenthis ino*), Heath (*Mellicta athalia*), Spotted (*Melitaea didyma*) and a Niobe Fritillary (*Argynnis niobe*), Scarce (*L. vigaurae*) and, again, Purple-edged Copper (*Lycaena hypothoe*). The 'Blues' included Large (*Phengaris arion*), Mazarine (*Cyaniris semiargus*), Turquoise (*Polyommatus dorylas*), Silver-studded (*Plebejus argus*) and Common (*Polyommatus icarus*) and, as well as the golden skippers, including Essex (*Thymelicus lineolus*), there were Red-underwing (*Spialia sertorius*), Grizzled (*P. malvae*), Large Grizzled (*P. alveus*) and Olive Skipper (*P. serratulae*).

Monday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2011 – Gavarnie Vallee d'Ossoue and Col de Tentes

We were greeted by sun and cloud and wonderful views all around us on this day spent in the area around Gavarnie. This is a species rich part of the Pyrenees and we were not disappointed. Nets were in action early and group discussion became earnest as species after species were shown. Marbled Skipper (*C. levatherae*) was quickly identified, others less speedily agreed, a Swallowtail (*P. machaon*) was seen and then Apollo (*P. apollo*); in addition to the 'Blues' we had seen the previous day we noted Small (*Cupido minimus*), Chalkhill (*Polyommatus corydon*) and Amanda's Blue (*Polyommatus amanda*). Bright-eyed (*Erebia oeme*) and Yellow-spotted Ringlet (*E. manto*) were new species for the trip, as was Woodland Grayling (*Hipparchia fagi*) and Mountain Argus (*Aricia artaxerxes*); both Meadow (*M. parthenoides*) and Heath Fritillary (*M. athalia*) were seen. Rosy Grizzled Skipper (*Pyrgus onopordi*) was identified towards the end of the morning to add to Large Grizzled (*P. alveus*) and Olive Skipper (*P. onopordi*). What we had not seen were Small (*B. selene*) and Pearl-bordered Fritillary (*B. euphrosyne*), nor Alcon Blue (*P. alcon*).



Group enjoying lunch © Anne Spencer

Riverside gravel on which had been laid to dry some trainers and socks created a wonderful spot for blues, skippers and fritillaries to assemble and caused amusement to us and embarrassment for the owner! It did add False Heath Fritillary (*Melitaea diamina*) to our list.

Lunch was taken in a lovely spot close to the river in a meadow full of butterflies and with the added advantage of full view of the sheer south facing rock buttresses in front of which flew Lammergeier and Griffon vultures.

We drove up to the ski-station close to the Spanish border at the Col de Tentes, after lunch and searched out the Gavarnie Ringlet (*Erebia gorgone*), with distinctive paler veins, flying alongside Mountain (*E. epiphron*), Bright-eyed (*E. oeme*), Piedmont (*E. meolans*) and Western Brassy Ringlet (*E. arvernensis*). The Gavarnie Ringlet was one species that I believe we missed when we were last here.

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2011 – Pic de Pibeste and Luz Ardiden

The weather looked particularly poor for butterflies as we prepared to depart for the day so Jude had wisely recommended that we travelled north towards Lourdes to the Pic de Pibeste, a protected zone with access close to the village of Agos Vidalos. For Jean and I this was a repeat of what had happened in 2007 due to weather conditions at that time and the visit had proved to be very productive. What surprised us on arrival was the level of intensive grazing that had taken place within the now fenced area that had provided open access on our earlier visit. However, several common species welcomed us and Great Banded Grayling (*Brintesia circe*), Southern White Admiral (*Limenitis reducta*) and Dark Green Fritillary (*Argynnis aglaja*) quickly added to our list. Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon*) and Scarce Swallowtail (*Iphiclides podalirius*) were taking advantage of the buddleia in flower, as was Red Admiral (*Vanessa atalanta*). We saw Silver-washed Fritillary (*Argynnis paphia*) and I'm quite sure I saw High Brown Fritillary (*Argynnis adippe*) although I was unable to photograph it, although Queen of Spain (*Issoria lathonia*) was confirmed. It was here that the 'Cinquefoil' Skipper (*Pyrgus cirsii*) had been netted, and one Small Tortoiseshell (*Aglais urtica*) had been seen by some. After lunch and a walk up the mountainside a White Admiral (*Limenitis camilla*) was seen and, although doubted, a photo provided evidence that this was, indeed, the species.

Late in the day, Jude drove us up to just below Luz Ardiden where the Tour de France was due to finish on the following Thursday, just two days later. Tour aficionados were already booking the best spots with their huge motor-homes and, along a side lane, a mobile bakery was already in action and colleagues were buying freshly baked items! Our objective was a small water meadow, now with campers close-by, that was full of Meadowsweet and Great Masterwort, territory of False Heath (*M. diamina*), Lesser Marbled (*Brenthis ino*) and Dark Green Fritillary (*Argynnis aglaja*); Scarce Copper (*Lycaena vigaurae*) was also present. A most enjoyable end to the day.

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2011 – Entering records only. Too wet and windy for butterflies!

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2011 – local and Tour de France day!

We met up at the campsite and were delighted to say 'hello' to Tristan Lafranchis. Some of the group planned to go up the Lyse valley with Jude whilst Jean and I had earlier determined to see the Tour come through in late afternoon so did a local walk from the hotel towards Vizos in the morning. Our 'fresh' sighting was a Long-tailed Blue (*Lampides boeticus*), plus the discovery of a lovely butterfly area that we learnt subsequently is Jude's favourite local butterfly hotspot. In contrast the majority of the team had an excellent sighting of Purple Emperor (*Apatura iris*) with time for all to get good photos. For me, it was the first time I had seen the 'Tour' in the flesh, having followed it on TV for many years, so some consolation for missing 'His Imperial Majesty'.

Friday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2011 – Barrage and Lac des Gloriettes

Since our last visit considerable civil engineering work had been done to secure the dam wall by establishing a properly functioning spillway, but what surprised us most of all was the number of cars parked in the two areas of flat standing provided. I could not recall that this had been the case on our earlier visit. Nevertheless, our target for the day was the Gavarnie Blue (*Agriades*

*pyrenaicus*) and we decided to search all areas, firstly above the dam wall towards the sheer cliffs that surround the Lac. The weather was kind to us and butterflies were everywhere so we were kept occupied, but no Gavarnie Blue. Large Blue (*Phengaris arion*), fresh Chalkhill Blue (*Polyommatus coridon*) in good number, Marbled Skipper (*Carcharodes levatherae*) and Yellow-spotted Ringlet (*E. manto*), but no Gavarnie Blue. Had we imagined that we had found it previously? I saw a fresh Purple-shot Copper (*Lycaena alciphron*) in the base of an old dwelling or barn, and spotted Pearl-bordered Fritillary (*Boloria euphrosyne*) alongside the narrow path above the Lac. We must have recorded about 30 species, and taken lunch, before reaching the bridge crossing the river that feeds the Lac. We had met the National Park Ranger and, as best we could, exchanged information on what we had found before someone decided to explore the higher slopes for our target species. And, of course, there it was. A netted example was shown and I chose to walk up the lower slopes and sit quietly: female Gavarnie Blue (*Agriades pyrenaicus*) were flying about me in reasonable numbers and could be photographed, whilst the few males were too active to allow me to photograph them.

However, I did get a close shot of a Marmot that took up position at its lookout post.

Meanwhile, Jean had identified a Blue-spot Hairstreak (*Satyrium spini*) roosting in the top of a Juniper bush, our only sighting of this species. It sat quietly and allowed those who wanted to photograph it.

Two plants dominated the magnificent scenery: the rich, blue English Iris (referred to as the Pyrenean Iris by locals) and the Pyrenean Saxifrage (*longifolia*) that appeared to be growing out of every possible crevice in every rock-face. Just spectacular! We saw small groups of Field Gentian (*Gentianella campestris*), but were unsure if this is the same as ours, but concluded it must be.

This was a superb end to our week in the Haute Pyrenees and we were and remain most grateful to Jude for her expert guidance and company.

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> July 2011 – transfer to the Ariege

Our transfer to the Ariege coincided with the Tour de France leg from St. Gaudens to the Plateau de Beille, near Tarascon. We saw the Tour entourage on the A64 motorway from Lourdes, the finish of Friday's race, en route to St. Gaudens, and knew that the N20 would be closed south of Tarascon from 1pm. We were, as we thought, in plenty of time as we drove south of Foix on the N20 at about mid-day. We had a contingency plan but decided we had adequate time to clear Tarascon. Big mistake! We had just cleared the last exit point prior to the Tarascon roundabout and crested the hill that drops down to Tarascon when everything came to a halt. We lost very nearly 2 hours and then only to retrace our route back up the N20 and following the contingency plan along the Corniche, bypassing Tarascon. A lesson for me and to any other wishing to compete with the draw of the 'Tour'!

The remaining group consisted only of Simon, Greg, Chris, Jean and I. We were to be guided by Graham Hart, partner in a local veterinary practice, who has lived in the area for more than a decade. Jean and I were in a B&B in Perles a village just south of Ax-les-Thermes, whilst Simon, Greg and Chris were camping at Les Cabannes, mid-way between Tarascon and Ax.

Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2011 – Porte Puymorens via the tunnel beneath Col de Puymorens

The weather was unsettled so Graham recommended that we go south to Porte Puymorens, and follow the valley leading upwards towards Pic Carlit, the very location Paul Browning had shown Jean and I back in 2006. In showery conditions, through the wet meadows on the south side of the upper valley, we were surprised to find Bog Fritillary (*Boloria eunomia*), along with Lesser Marbled (*Brenthis ino*), Small Pearl-bordered (*Boloria selene*) and Dark Green Fritillary (*Argynnis aglaja*); Chestnut Heath (*Coenonympha glycerion*), Purple-edged (*Lycaena*

*hippotoe*), Sooty (*L. tityrus*) and Scarce Copper (*L. vigaurae*) were also flying as soon as the sun shone.

On the north side of the valley, in brighter conditions, we found Spanish Marbled White (*Melanargia ines*) and added Weaver's Fritillary (*Boloria dia*), Bright-eyed (*E. oeme*), Piedmont (*E. meolans*) and Large Ringlet (*E. euryale*). A rewarding end to a day that had promised little, and evidence that the heavy grazing we had been concerned about in 2006 was fairly limited on this visit.

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2011 – above Caussou village and Col de Marmare

On the NE side of the N20 above Luzenac sits Caussou, high on the mountainside. We followed a track beyond the village and parked in an area occupied by agricultural equipment. The track led on up the mountain with a stream valley on one side, so offering a combination of wet meadow and open hillside. During the morning and over lunchtime we saw over 40 species. We found eggs of Mountain Alcon Blue (*Phengaris alcon*) on Cross Gentian (*Gentian cruciata*) although no adults were seen, Large (*Phengaris arion*), Amanda's (*Polyommatus amanda*), Turquoise (*P. dorylas*), Escher's (*P. escheri*) and Chalkhill Blue (*L. coridon*); Purple (*Favonius quercus*), Sloe (*Satyrium acaciae*) and Ilex Hairstreak (*Satyrium ilex*). Purple Emperor (*Apatura ilia*) was seen at a distance above an enclosed wet meadow alongside the track. Marbled Skipper (*Carcharodes levatherae*) was netted by Graham, a first for him at this location. This was a most enjoyable morning in reasonable weather.

In the afternoon we drove up to the Col de Marmare where weather conditions had deteriorated with cloud and low temperatures although it was not raining. Graham explained that it was an important site for Mountain Alcon Blue (*P. alcon*) and although we found eggs there was no sign of adults.

Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2011 – Barry d'en Haut, above Ussat-les-Bains, and above Verdun

The weather remained unsettled but there was promise of some sunshine and our visit to the hamlet of Barry d'en Haut was blessed with sunny periods, enabling us to find a good mix of species including Large Blue (*P. arion*) and a splendid female Sooty Copper (*Lycaena tityrus*) in prime condition; False Ilex Hairstreak (*Satyrium esculi*) was also seen. Graham had advised that we should find Dryad (*Minois dryas*) and this turned out to be so, at least enough to get photos. We had thoroughly enjoyed the morning after initial uncertainty about which track to take out of the village. Storm clouds built up and we returned to the cars and drove down to Les Cabannes where we found a restaurant for lunch, believing a storm was imminent. In the event there was no storm and it was not until we were at the site above the village of Verdun that we were caught out in a heavy shower. This was not before we had had a chance to walk along a track that Simon and Graham had explored on the late afternoon of the previous Saturday. We did see High Brown (*Argynnis adippe*) and Silver-washed Fritillary (*A. paphia*), plus White Admiral (*L. Camilla*) and Holly Blue (*Celastrina argiolus*), before the rain came but this did curtail a promising afternoon.

Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2011 – Montsegur Lasset valley and Gorges de la Frau

Poor weather in the Ariège valley prompted us to travel over to the north side of the mountain range to near Montsegur along a track running up the Lasset valley. Here we found some wet meadows with a splendid display of Dark Red Helleborine, in numbers not usually seen. Bright-eyed Ringlet (*E. oeme*), Heath (*M. athalia*), Dark Green (*A. aglaja*) and Silver-washed Fritillary (*A. paphia*) were present, and what was believed to be Oberthur's Skipper (*P. armoricanus*) was netted. The decision was made to take lunch and drive over to the Gorges de la Frau.

Jean and I had taken friends along the Gorges back in 2004 and had enjoyed the scenery, plants and butterflies but had not anticipated just how species rich this location is. In total we exceeded 40 species in a couple of hours and I find it difficult to present the highlights. Almost from the time we parked the cars we were finding different species from those we know like Red Admiral (*V. atalanta*), Brimstone (*G. rhamni*), Meadow Brown (*Maniola jurtina*), Marbled White (*Melanargia galathea*), Large Skipper (*Ochlodes sylvanus*) and Ringlet (*Aphantopus hyperantus*), to Weaver's Fritillary (*Boloria dia*), Large Wall (*L. maera*), Marbled Fritillary (*Brenthis daphne*) and Apollo (*Parnassius apollo*); White and Southern White Admiral (*Limenitis camilla* and *L. reducta*) were recorded; Small and Pearly Heath (*Coenonympha pamhilius* and *arcania*), Dark Green and Silver-washed Fritillary (*Argynnis aglaja* and *paphia*). Large Blue (*P. arion*) and Chalkhill Blue (*Polyommatus coridon*), eggs of Mountain Alcon Blue (*Phengaris alcon*), Ilex Hairstreak (*Satyrium illex*)..... the list goes on. Perhaps the most surprising find was a very, very worn Woodland Brown (*Lopinga achine*). This alone makes the case for carrying a net. I don't, and had it not been for Simon this species would have been missed. Jean and I had seen worn examples in Burgundy (Foret de Moloy) in mid-June; we had found one very worn example in the Dordogne near Belves on 24 June. The flight of this butterfly is quite distinctive and I had noticed such a flight on the walk out along the Gorges but had no way of catching or identifying what I saw. It was on the return that the butterfly was netted.

In a way, this was a fitting end to our work in the Haute Pyrenees and Ariege. Graham Hart had been an excellent host and guide in the Ariege, as had Jude in the Haute Pyrenees, for which we were most grateful. The weather had turned out fine and warm and we had recorded an excellent range of butterflies. At times during the trip I had felt frustrated that too much netting had been going on, but I am bound to acknowledge that without the netting we should not have identified a number of species (whatever difficulties we had and have with *Pyrgus*) and that the Woodland Brown (*Lopinga achine*) would not have been identified, not least because one would have thought it improbable that the species would still be flying so late in its season.

We had enjoyed some very full days despite the weather and, on occasion, we were glad to get back to base to take some rest and refreshment. We've seen a few species we had not seen before, had better sightings of some species we had seen before, and have a better understanding of some habitats and requirements. We are satisfied that we have added to the total knowledge of species distribution in the Midi-Pyrenees. We should love to go back again! It seems to me on reflection that a couple of weeks in the mountains of mainland Europe, given good weather, can do much to satisfy the butterfly enthusiast.

If any member would like more information then I shall be happy to provide it.

## **Dudley Cheesman**

### **Editors Note:**

A big thank you to both Grahame Hart and Jude Locke both EIG members living and working in France. They both gave up a lot of their time to help us and we hope our combined contribution to the Atlas of Butterflies of the Midi Pyrenees was useful.

## Searching for Danube Clouded Yellow in Slovakia and Romania



The Danube Clouded Yellow (*Colias myrmidone*)  
©Gabor Orban

The Danube Clouded Yellow (*Colias myrmidone*) is amongst the most endangered butterfly species in Europe (classified as Endangered in the IUCN Red List, with a declining population trend, and Critically Endangered within the EU). With a range extending eastwards into Kazakhstan, the Volga basin and the Urals, it falls into that group of species which are on the extreme western edge of their distribution in Eastern and Central Europe and in common with others such as the False Comma (*Nymphalis vau-album*), seems to have undergone an eastwards regression over recent decades, possibly in response to fluctuations in climate. It is now thought to be extinct in locations such as Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic.

The populations reported as persisting in Slovakia and Romania may thus represent the westernmost survivors, and with a view to gathering information on the current status of these, a party from the EIG, with the guidance of various local experts, undertook a tour in the first two weeks of August 2011. This was timed in order to coincide with the second (and typically more numerous) generation of this double-brooded species.

Its distribution pattern and habitat may suggest that the core ecological niche of the Danube Clouded Yellow is steppe grassland, and it is generally described as a lowland butterfly. However, at least in the western part of its range, such remaining suitable habitat as there is seems to be found in more hilly areas, with low-intensity agriculture. But, as with many grassland species, the effects of neglect and abandonment are over time as harmful as those of arable monoculture. The larval foodplants of the Danube Clouded Yellow are various *Cytisus* spp. – short, shrubby members of the broom family. As our Slovak expert explained, the larvae require new, young growth; the robust, woody shrubs into which the plant grows if left unchecked by grazing or cutting are much less suitable than tender plants sprouting in short sward. So grazing pasture tends to provide the best habitat. Cut hay meadows can also sustain populations, but the management regime needs fine-tuning to take account of factors such as the timing of the two generations and the need to maintain nectar plants as well.

The last stronghold of the species in Slovakia is in the White Carpathians, close to the Czech border. Our field work days in this area was divided between survey of sites from which the target species had recently been recorded, in the low hills north of Nové Mestonad Váhom, and visits to more general hotspots on both sides of the border (these being just too good to resist whilst we were there).

In the event, we had rather more success with the “general butterflying” in Slovakia than in tracking down any confirmed Danube Clouded Yellows. Both Scarce Large Blue (*Phengaris teleius*) and Dusky Large Blue (*Phengaris nausithous*) were still on the wing, False Grayling (*Arethusana arethusa*) had emerged, whilst Large Copper (*Lycaena dispar*) seemed almost ubiquitous. In all, we recorded around 75 species in five days, including Apollo (*Parnassius apollo*), which survives in an isolated population on limestone outcrops to the north-east of our base.

But at the locations where we hoped to record Danube Clouded Yellow, it looked as though prospects for the species were not too promising. One site is a protected area managed with a view to assisting the Danube; it had been mown at the end of the previous month (although our Slovak guide was not convinced this was the ideal timing), in a mosaic pattern designed to leave areas of nectar plant as well as producing the right type of larval foodplant growth. The cut remnants of some substantial shrubs suggested that there had been a degree of scrub invasion before the cutting, and our guide thought it remained to be seen whether the remedial work was too late to save the species at this site. There were, indeed, some hopes raised here, with the sighting of three deep yellow *Colias* spp. individuals, but none of these materialised into a confirmed Danube. (At this location, the use of nets was not permitted so upperside examination was not possible. Whilst photos obtained of the underside were arguably consistent with the target species, these views were equally or perhaps more suggestive of the “ordinary” Clouded Yellow (*Colias crocea*), and one individual further undermined its credentials by laying twice on a foodplant not used by the Danube Clouded Yellow, so in summary there was no persuasive evidence that the target species was present.)

At other locations, apart from a couple of “in-flight” sightings which eluded the net (and thus could not be identified as *myrmidone* rather than *crocea*), there was little seen which even raised an initial *frisson*. Although characteristically deep orange-yellow, the Danube does have a whitish form (f. *alba*), which seems to be relatively common in the Slovakian population, and it may be that this was present, but overlooked among the fairly abundant Berger’s (and possibly also Pale) Clouded Yellows (*Colias alfacariensis* / *Colias hyale*). However, the sample “pale” *Colias* individuals examined proved to be Berger’s.

Our quest also extended into the Czech Republic, to a site west of Uhersky Brod where a reintroduction had been attempted five years previously. However, although this seems to have met with some success – individuals had been reported from there as recently as two years ago – we were unable to locate any Danube Clouded Yellows in the course of a fairly extensive search. Although the foodplant was still present in shrub form, at least, much of the grassland vegetation seemed very high, so it is questionable whether conditions there are suitable for the survival of the Danube.

The fact that we drew something of a blank in Slovakia should not in itself be the cause for complete pessimism. Although the weather was pretty favourable during our stay – mostly warm, with plenty of sunshine, sometimes tending towards rather sultry conditions with hazy cloud – our guide told us that much of the summer had been cool and wet, so that numbers for many second-generation species were abnormally low. Although his own observations had recently been restricted by work commitments, he reported an earlier sighting of the Danube at one site where, despite an extensive search on two occasions, we had had no definite ones. It is, however, difficult to feel confident about the prospects for the species in this area. The areas of habitat seem to be fairly small and fragmented, and there is some evidence of abandonment (at one site, two-thirds of a meadow compartment which, on a visit two years earlier, had a grazed, short sward was now overrun with tall grasses and thistles, and examination of foodplant in the remaining small patch of suitable habitat found no evidence of egg laying). It looks like a suitable case for landscape scale management treatment.

## **Searching for Danube Clouded Yellow in Slovakia and Romania (part 2)**

We left early after our week on the Czech/Slovakia border to undertake the long drive through Hungary to Romania, waving goodbye to Marian Thomas at Bratislava airport. Almost immediately we crossed the border into Hungary and set off eastwards, across the great Hungarian sandy plains towards and through the fine city of Budapest, where we undertook a deviation following the Danube to the South of the city. Our first very welcome halt was at a national park, the Orszagos Forest where during a brief break in half cloudy conditions we noted



17 butterfly species, only a tired Cardinal (*Argynnis Pandora*) in a forest clearing was a newcomer to the species list of the first week. Meanwhile a brightly coloured Sand Lizard and a range of dragonflies including a bright Scarlet Darter posed.

Soon we were en-route again and our next stop was some 60kms due South of Budapest close against the banks of the Danube at Dunaujvaros where the key species sought went out of its way to show off, several extrovert and beautiful Freyer's Purple Emperors (*Apatura metis*) dashed past us and were kind enough to pose but very briefly in thick riverine bush majorly of Willow and Poplar. This particularly flashy butterfly prefers very low altitude terrain and is thus nearly always seen close to the Danube or its key tributaries in its limited range in central Europe. A few Common Gliders (*Neptis sapho*) were also seen fluttering on the banks of this enormous waterway alongside White-legged Damselflies and several Kingfishers. The reason for our sudden diversion to the South soon became apparent as we travelled on to stay overnight at the beautifully rural home of our Hungarian guides. Three thatched cottages stood close to the edge of a very large shallow area of wetland lakes where Black Terns flew erratically above Ferruginous Ducks and Marsh Harriers soared above Little Egrets and Purple Herons.

The long journey to our target area of Hungarian speaking northern Romania, Transylvania, began early in the morning with little time even for comfort breaks; again our journey was virtually due East. By lunchtime we had crossed the border into Romania and stepped back in time to early 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe. The journey was hampered by numerous horses and carts travelling at a trot through landscapes dotted with Ceausescu's white elephants such as power stations without a coal supply and vast dams creating only a tiny head of water. However the great news was that agriculture operating as had been the case for a century, (we even saw ox carts), required hay instead of petrol to drive the wagons and the pattern of small strip fields in many areas bode well for Lepidoptera.



Danube Clouded Yellow (*Colias myrmidone*)  
©Maurice Avent

Finally we arrived in **a village** close to Cluj Napoca where dolomitic limestone mountains formed a glorious backdrop to an attractive and virtually unspoilt village. We opened the bathroom window and left the light ablaze overnight and thus were able to enjoy a wide variety of moths, the most unusual for us being an iridescent Orache, shining green. Our enthusiasm for an early morning start to visit the peasant fields a few miles from our accommodation at

**Torockcszentgyorgy** Castle was richly rewarded with at least 50 species. Several were new species for the trip such as the Grizzled Skipper (*Pyrgus malvae*), Knapweed Fritillary (*M. phoebe*), Geranium Argus (*Eumedonia eumedon*), Green Underside Blue (*Glaucosyche alexis*), Eastern Baton Blue (*Pseudophilotes vicrama*) and a late but distinctive Large Blue (*Phengaris arion*). Alcon Blue (*Phengaris alcon*) eggs were spattered clearly over Gentians and a Danube Clouded Yellow (*Colias myrmidone*) was reported but not confirmed on camera. A beautiful site, rich with species.

On the following day we reluctantly departed this special valley in the Transylvanian Alps to set off eastwards once again towards the Carpathians, fortunately just a few miles to the east was a magnificent limestone gorge where we stopped to wander for a couple of hours over the South West facing side of the gorge. In an area of rough terrain grazed by cattle, suffering some scrub and even tree encroachment in the sheltered side valleys, more than 40 species were recorded. Amongst these trees a Southern White Admiral (*Limenitis reducta*) was swooping and several Bath White (*Pontia daplidice*), a few Nickerl's Fritillary (*Mellicta aurelia*) and an Oberthur's Skipper (*Pyrgus armoricanus*) were added to the trip list. The large bare limestone stones were ideal for Wall (*Lasiommata megera*) butterflies.

Sadly the weather closed in as we approached the mountains of Dracula so a couple of stops in the high foothills revealed very few species, however on the Thursday after rain overnight we were to enjoy a warm but humid 22C day and set out to a small town east of Cluj where a local enthusiast guided us on a short road journey to a damp stream valley, grazed by cattle wandering with mountain bells around their necks where rich green pasture was in evidence. The site was approximately 750m above sea level with pine trees a little higher up the slopes. The grazing areas were quickly disappearing beneath hazel scrub creeping down from above and scrub clearance will be required in future years to maintain the alpine like meadows. The area was well stocked with Danube Clouded Yellow (*Colias myrmidone*) butterflies and Pale Clouded Yellows (*C. hyale*), the first time that we had seen and photographed both species and in approximately 90 minutes the writer noted about 35 DCY. The distinctive lemon yellow dots on the upperside of the lower wing in the female seemed the key indicator while in the male the black tips in the upperside forewing were solid, exhibiting no 'vein' marks through the black. The site also boasted several Camberwell Beauties (*Nymphalis antiopa*) (already viewed in Slovakia) but Scotch Argus (*Erebia aethiops*), Mountain Ringlet (*Erebia epiphron*) and a Lesser Marbled Fritillary (*Brenthis ino*) were new species to the visit.

Finally on the Friday we set off up the road towards a well known beauty spot The Red Lake some kilometers to the East and diverted into a couple of side feeder stream valleys; it was a beautiful morning and during the day new species again transpired including Pearl Bordered Fritillary (*Boloria euphrosyne*), Niobe Fritillary (*Argynnis niobe*) and large numbers of Marbled Whites (*Melanargia galathea*); higher up the valley Large Ringlets (*Erebia euryale*) and Marbled Fritillary (*Brenthis daphne*) were noted too.

The Saturday proved most interesting, planned as a drive back towards Cluj Napoca and its airfield the writer with Vera decided to try to find the direct route **to our target site provided by a dirt track**. This attempt by hire car finally had to be abandoned after twice getting stuck on deeply rutted wet tracks, however the route across low hillsides reminiscent of flattened downland or even the steppes that Marian referred to earlier, were entirely farmed by medieval strip systems. Unsurprisingly such fields of hay being cut intermittently by peasant families gave rise to glorious butterfly territory. Many Camberwell Beauties (*Nymphalis antiopa*) feasted on dog mess and amongst the many butterflies were several Danube Clouded Yellow (*Colias myrmidone*). Thus the Danube Clouded Yellow seems reasonably secure in its remote Romanian hideaways, living higher above sea level because co-operative farms have taken the valley bottoms, perhaps affected to by global warming?

**Marian Thomas and Maurice Avent**

## EIG trip to Montenegro and Croatia June/July 2011

Montenegro was part of the former Yugoslavia becoming a separate state in 2006 with the Euro as currency. It lies north of Albania and has an Adriatic coastline and mountain interior. Few butterfly records are available so improving on this was an objective for a visit by 14 B.C. European Interest Group members. Photography in the natural habitats also adds pleasure to personal records as well as future diagnostic information..

Starting in the walled Croatian city of Dubrovnik we walked down the Plaza with pale stone buildings tastefully restored after the 1990's war. A ferry took us a short distance on the Adriatic to Lokrum Island Nature Reserve to be greeted by a flutter of newly emerged Cleopatra (*Gonopteryx Cleopatra*). Their rich yellow and orange complemented the blue Agapanthus they were nectaring on. In sizzling heat we climbed to the island's peak to be rewarded by Two-tailed Pashas (*Charaxes jasius*) flying and sitting near their Strawberry Tree (*Arbutus*) foodplant at a challenging distance for my photographic skills. On the mainland we visited Trsteno Arboretum where Cardinal and Balkan Marbled White (*Melanargia larissa*) posed on flowers. This was an oasis in a tourist developed narrow coast belt.

Travelling in our 2 minibuses we stopped at a rocky cattle grazed meadow in Vilusi, Montenegro. Immediately Large Blue (*Phengaris arion*) and Alcon Blue (*Phengaris alcon*) were found, soon followed by Reverdins (*Plebejus argyrognomon*), Turquoise (*Polyommatus dorylas*) and Eastern Baton Blues (*Pseudophilotes vicrama*). Thyme, sedum spp, rock cress spp., Shining Scabious (*S. lucida*) plus other scabious spp and vetches were present in a sward varying from 3cm to 15cms plus rocky outcrops. High Brown (*Argynnis adippe*) and seven other fritillaries were gliding round the deciduous wood scrub edge and nectaring briefly (too briefly for some cameras) on a range of flowers.

Going north past Niksic we stopped near Vidrovan and visited rocky grazed meadows edged with trees. Great Sooty Satyr (*Satyrus ferula*), Large Tortoiseshell (*Nymphalis polychloros*) and Spotted Fritillary (*Melitaea didyma* var. *meridionalis*), the female var with grey forewings replacing the bright orange of the normal form, basked in the hot sun. Many hectares of hayfields were being cut by hand-operated mechanical cutters. The hay is left on the ground to dry in traditional fashion allowing caterpillars to crawl off to the grass and herbs below. 45 species were recorded here in one hour.



Eastern Large Heath (*Coenonympha rhodopenensis*)©Lawrie de Whalley

Into the mountains at the ski resort of Zabljak our Russian style spacious hotel laid on a splendid buffet with many locally farmed delicacies. The bar rang to peals of laughter as Mike Williams stood on chairs to pursue a moth round the ceiling lights for it finally to be potted from his nose. Identification revealed it to be Bordered Gothic (*heliophobus reticulate*) lost to nearly all UK sites..

After heavy overnight rain we set out to explore Durmitor National Park now a UNESCO World Heritage Site which was a Princes Reserve as early as 1870. From 1600 metres the Tara canyon drops to 300 metres, on this occasion a misty bottom. We walked through a native conifer forest to flower-filled alpine meadows where (*Coenonympha rhodopenensis*) were just climbing up the herb stems. Its hind wing polygon patch was the consistent diagnostic as its hindwing spots varied from zero through to five large ones. Flowers here included Cow-wheat, Bladder Gentian and Yellow Wood Violet set in a yellow sea of greenweed.



Balkan Copper (*Lycaena candens*) ©Lawrie de Whalley

A fresh Balkan Copper (*Lycaena candens*) posed in the cool conditions as our whole party gathered for photographs. Marsh Fritillaries (*Euphydryas aurinia*) and Olive Skippers (*Pyrgus serratulae*) graced the moist meadow. Grazing by cattle and hay-cutting management were both in evidence.

Another sheep ranch farmed area on the mountains was herb rich grassland, rocks and scree slopes stretching for many kilometres and had Oberthurs Grizzled Skipper (*Pyrgus armoricanus*) and Olive Skipper (*Pyrgus serratulae*) with 15 other species.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> July we climbed to 1840m at a pass near Sedlo mountains still in Durmitor National Park. The dramatic folded limestone rocks were host to Bright-eyed and Woodland Ringlets. Descending to 1660m we found Osiris (*Cupido Osiris*) and Turquoise Blues (*Polyommatus dorylas*) with Pearl-bordered Fritillary (*Boloria euphrosyne*). A rock cutting through a copse of trees had 6 Apollos (*Parnassius apollo*) flying at once, those close to my legs were big, bright and fresh. Then off they went to an aerobatic display in front of hot rocks. Ottoman Ringlets (*Erebia ottomana*) needed verification by Safi to separate from the very similar Common Brassy Ringlet (*Erebia cassioides*). The careful checking of key species is one of the many excellent features of EIG events. The whole area was sheep grazed giving many areas of short sward (3 – 7cms) but frequent (every 10 metres) patches of flowers and grasses (3 – 20cms). Rocky crevices sustained Sainfoin, Saxifrage, Pale Clover and Pale Fleabane. This wonderful habitat stretched for 10 plus kms in each direction.

Heading south through a tunnel (3 miles long?) with its construction staging still in evidence we descended to 1230m. In a dry, rocky valley with hay meadows we found Blue-spot Hairstreaks (*Satyrium spini*), Alcon (Phengaris alcon) and Amanda's Blue (*Polyommatus aAmanda*), Purple-shot Copper (*Lycaena alciphron*), Balkan Copper (*Lycaena candens*) all busy nectaring on daisies, bistort, etc. Water bottles were essential in the heat and our drivers carried a good water supply for top-ups.

Down to sea level at Virpazzar on Lake Skhodra we received a warm and happy welcome at the Hotel Pelikan. Their boat took the party on a lake tour next day and had a Camberwell Beauty (*Nymphalis antiopa*) fly close over to add to the Purple Heron and Black Kite from the many birds reported. Back on land Grecian Copper (*Lycaena ottomana*) and Southern Comma (*Polygonia egea*) were near seasonally wet, rushy meadows. On a very dry mountain road (230 m) Mountain Small White (*Pieris ergane*), Scarce (*Iphiclides podalirius*) and Common Swallowtails (*Papilio machaon*), an emerging Cicada and a Short-tailed eagle raised our eyes.

Back down at sea level on the lake edge partially drained marshes Short-tailed Blue (*Everes argiades*) and Oberthurs Grizzled Skipper (*Pyrgus armoricanus*) rewarded the sharp sighted. Suitable celebrations took place in a Virpazar bar as the party was lured in by a lovely local.

5<sup>th</sup> July started wet above Cetinje at 1000m but Turquoise Blue (*Polyommatus dorylas*), Marbled Whites (*Melanargia galathea*) and Silver-studded Blues (*Plebejus argus*) were all roosting in the rain on grasses. After coffee and open fire braised lamb the adjacent field had swarms of Great Sooty Satyrs (*Satyrus ferula*) and Great Banded Graylings (*Brintesia circe*). Twin-spot Fritillary (*Brenthis hecate*), Pearly Heath (*Coenonympha arcania*) and Purple Hairstreak (*Favonius quercus*) added to the variety.

On to a mountain pass Broad-bordered Bee Hawk was nectaring with High Brown (*Argynnis adippe*) and Niobe Fritillaries (*Argynnis niobe*) flashing between the rocks. Overnight in Kotor, a medieval walled town was throbbing with tourists but the buildings original from medieval merchants' palaces to very narrow passages peopled by others. No war effects were noticed in Montenegro. This sea port is about 20 miles up a fiord inland.

Back into Croatia via a ferry and a stop on the Adriatic coast found a Nettle tree butterfly in a tree over hot rocks near olive groves. Our final stop near Ploice on a farm track close to a vineyard and rocky stream bed produced Lang's Short-tailed Blue (*Leptotes pirithous*) and Escher's Blue (*Polyommatus escheri*).

The 101 Dalmatia(ns) aim for verified species in the 7 ½ day trip left Mike Williams a happy leader. A big thank you must go to Lajos Boka who organised all the itinerary (see <http://greeneye.org.uk>) including his selection of wonderful habitats to visit. Szabolcs Safian (Safi) shared his wonderful knowledge of butterfly ecology with all of us as well as organising many details which contributed to a very happy tour, to him we are very grateful. Impeccable driving by Thomas and Martin made the journeys safe and a pleasure, thank you. Mike Williams and Mary, the inspirations behind so many EIG tours have scored yet another triumph. A proportion of the tour receipts will go to help the Hungarian Naturalist Trust which owns and manages wet lands in west Hungary for butterflies and moths.

Postscript: Now Montenegro is in the European Union the temptation of subsidies and cheap fertilizers for farmers will be a threat to all these meadows. How can we persuade the EU to find a way of rewarding the traditional land managers? Managing traditional animals is a 365 day a year task and the hayfield work is hot work. I can vouch for the flavour of meat from the herb-rich farms as a superior product.

**Bridget and Lawrie de Whalley**

## Four Blues Tour Hungary July 2011



Wet Meadow Kerczsomor © Lawrie de Whalley

The Hungarian National Heritage Trust organised a butterfly and habitat visit to the far west of Hungary. Their own land is at Kerczsomor in the Orseg National Park. 2 sites near Lake Balaton were also included.

July 8<sup>th</sup> Staying in local accommodation a Camberwell Beauty, (*Nymphalis antiopa*), passed as we breakfasted. Then we stepped straight onto Trust managed land, c.5ha with Scarce Copper, (*Lycaena viguranae*), Great Banded Grayling, (*Brintesia circe*), and Purple Hairstreak, (*Favonius quercus*). The field was abandoned arable in 2008 infested with dense Golden Rod. Hard machine cutting has reduced this to small plants with some vetches and daisies coming back to encourage invertebrates. Oak trees fringe the field. Next a Trust owned field, c.1ha, with thyme and other dry habitat plants has been transformed from 95% scrub to 95% grass and herbs by volunteer work over a 3 year period. Two sheep have just started to graze. Mazarine Blue (*Cyaniris semiargus*), Marbled Fritillary (*Brenthis daphne*), Sloe Hairstreak, (*Satyrrium acaciae*), and Silver-studded Blue (*Plebejus argus*), were present. In the adjacent lane Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon*), Wall (*Lasiommata megera*), Duke of Burgundy (*Hamearis lucina*), Marbled Fritillary (*Brenthis daphne*) and Short-tailed Blue (*Cupido argiades*), were recorded and photographed.

Still in Kerczsomor half a kilometre away a 0.8ha wet meadow is under offer for the Trust. A wonderful sight of *Sanguisorba officinalis* (larval food plant for the Scarce Large, (*Phengaris* = *Maculinea telejus*) and Dusky Large Blues (*P. nausithous*) among a mass of other flowers met our eyes. Over 25 Scarce Large Blue were flying, nectaring and mating. A photographer's dream! Scarce Swallowtails (*Iphiclides podilaris*), Spotted Fritillaries (*Melitaea didyma*), Marbled Whites, (*Melanargia galathea*), and Common Blues

(*Polyommatus icarus*), were in profusion in this meadow. At the lower end Willow, Oak and Sallow marked a transition to forest. Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*), larval host plant

Devils-bit Scabious is present in small patches. A female Large Copper (*Lycaena dispar*) was found basking in the damper part of the meadow.

Our guide, Szabolcs Safian (Safi), Director of the HNH Trust, explained how this meadow is unspoilt due to no spraying or ploughing in its history, with a late May hay cut now.



Dusky Large Blue (*P. nausithous*) © Lawrie de Whalley

A few hundred metres along the road flanked by forest a Lesser Purple Emperor, *Apatura ilia*, raised the excitement level while Common Gliders (*Neptis sappho*), settled in wood edge sun shafts on *Spiraea* flowers. At the border, marked by a peace seat, the Hungarian National Park forest gives way to intensive maize fields in Slovenia. Large Chequered Skippers (*Heteropterus morpheus*), bobbed along over grasses with Wood Whites (*Leptidea sinapis*), for companions.

The forest gave way to more meadows. The first was privately owned and had been cut but the mulch left behind making a species poor area. The National Park pays owners to cut but removing the material is not always done. Next a c4ha Trust meadow with a huge amount of scrub recently cut by a Trust volunteer in temperatures of 30 degrees and more. A local contractor takes away the woody material to make briquettes for house fires. Some brushcutter work had been done in the grass/sedge part of the meadow and these patches showed increased herb species including Marsh Gentians with Alcon Blue (*Phengaris alcon*), eggs. The final meadow for our first day is named after the lady who owned it before selling it to the Trust. This is 1 ha of wonderful habitat carefully cut to match the historical hay cut with scythes in late May/early June. Alcon Blue, Scarce Large Blue, Weavers Fritillary (*Boloria dia*), and High Brown Fritillary (*Argynnis adippe*), were flying en masse. Key larval foodplants *S. officianalis*, Marsh Gentian, Devils-bit Scabious, Sanicle and *Astragalus vesicularius* were present as well as a range of nectar flowers in use.

The five EIG members of our party found 49 butterfly species on Day 1 of the visit within 2kms of our accommodation. An essential stock of beer was much appreciated. A 7 minute minibus ride took us to the Hatarcsarda Restaurant at Bajansenye where traditional Hungarian food was enjoyed. There is also accommodation at this address.

Overnight moths included *Catocala fulminea*, *Perizoma flavofasciata* and *Thalera fimbrialis*.

July 9<sup>th</sup> started with a Hungarian Glider (*Neptis rivularis*), at the town park while our guide bought lunch materials. Martin Strauss, our guide for the day, took us to Nyriad, north of Lake Balaton, near an ex-military training ground where Safflower Skipper (*Pyrgus carthami*), Eastern Bath White (*Pontia edusa*), Sloe Hairstreak (*Satyrrium acaciae*), Dryad (*Minois dryas*), Bergers Clouded Yellow (*Colias alfacariensis*), and Green Hairstreak (*Callophrys rubi*), were identified. The habitat was dry and sandy with a high proportion of bare ground and minimal shelter at an altitude of 175m.

Nearby, at Svenbekala, Chequered Blues (*Scolitantides orion*), perching on grass heads was a new species. Huge bare rocks made this a very hot site but there were still enough daisy family nectar flowers to attract 10 species. Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon*) and Great-banded

Grayling (*Brintesia circe*) swooped around us pausing for pictures. A final stop for the day at Balaton-henye had a stream with puddling Small and Silver-studded Blues. Wood edge bramble had Meleagers Blue (*Polyommatus daphnis*), and Purple Hairstreaks (*Favonius quercus*) posed low down for a great photo opportunity. A sad aspect of the site was a hectare of Japanese Knotweed in a quarry and spreading. Mountain Small White (*Pieris ergane*), added to the 16 species seen here.

Much of the days travel was past intensive Maize and other cereal fields, all outside the National Park.

Overnight moths at Kerczsomor included *Cyclophora linearia*, *Scopula nigropunctata*, *Lomaspilis marginata*, *Angerona prunaria* and *Ligdia adustata*.

July 10<sup>th</sup> Back in the Orseg National Park we visited Szalafo and meadows (about 20ha) cut in June for hay removed under National Park Management. Records for NP records were verified



Scarce Laræ Blue (*Phengaris teleius*) ©Lawrie de Whalley

by our guides while our party added to the search width. One dry meadow showed Scarce Large Blue, Scarce Copper, Dark Green Fritillary (*Argynnis aglaja*), High Brown Fritillary (*Argynnis adippe*), Marbled Fritillary (*Brenthis daphne*) and Silver-spotted Skipper (*Hesperia comma*), among 13 species in 30 minutes. Another cut field added Large Copper (*Lycaena dispar*), and Silver-washed Fritillary (*Argynnis paphia*). In all these fields a scattering of nectar flowers and larval host plants were growing back to 10-15cms. Our post-lunch forest tracks and meadows yielded Short-tailed Blue (*Everes argiades*), Lesser Purple Emperor (*Apatura ilia*), Scarce Large Blue (*Phengaris teleius*), Marbled (*Brenthis daphne*) and Lesser Marbled Fritillary, (*Brenthis ino*), Dingy Skipper (*Erynnis tages*), Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon*), Dusky Large Blue (*Phengaris nausithous*) (3<sup>rd</sup> of the 4 targets!). In spite of this 25 species there was no meadow management here due to ditches being dug which prevented tractors and cutters getting onto the land. The resulting dense stands of sedges choking out the herbs and grasses were a solemn reminder how important it is to have management in place for the medium term survival of butterflies and moths. Some National Park cattle were grazing on nearby meadows.

Moths *Hecatera bicolorata*, *Chloris viridata* and *Idea muricata* came to veranda lights.

July 11<sup>th</sup> took us to Ketvology for more National Park surveying and was an instant success with Lesser Purple Emperor close to us on low trees and then on the ground. With our guide Martin recording we found over 100 Scarce Large Blues in 45 minutes. Dusky Large Blue (*Phengaris nausithous*) was seen at the start of its flight period. I was the only one of the party not to photograph a Camberwell Beauty (*Nymphalis antiopa*) - it sat on my back imbibing! Then a Purple Emperor (*Apatura iris*), on the ground maximised camera use and the white spike on the underwing hindwing band was used to separate it from the Lesser Purple Emperor (*Apatura ilia*) nearby. The site was a few tens of hectares valley and slopes cleared in the mixed forest. Some fields are abandoned agriculture and the survey work done contributes to National Park discussions on where to use scarce resources for management. One Large Blue (*Phengaris*



arion), was spotted by Maurice to make the 4 Blues Tour target complete. A dry bank in a wood was the habitat with a closely cut meadow nearby.

At our final stop Martin our guide used his research skills to show us Large Copper (*Lycaena dispar*) 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> instar larva and a hatched ova on Dock. The site is arable land with fallow as part of the rotation. The Large Copper area was about 20m higher than the valley bottom – drier than our English expectation for the species.

Moths overnight at Kerczsomor included *Idea serpentina*, *Lasiocampa quercus*, *Selenia dentaria* and *Hada plebeja*.

July 12<sup>th</sup> took us near Nagyvazsony in the Bakony Hills on very dry 50% bare ground cattle grazed site, many 100s of ha in area. Lesser Clouded Yellow, (*Colias chrysotheme*), was the target species which was duly caught after a great sprint downwind by our guide Safi. Photographs were taken of this the only specimen identified and new to our party. Reverdin's Blue (*Plebejus argyrognomon*), Meleager's Blue (*Polyommatus daphnis*), Eastern Short-tailed Blue (*Cupido decloratus*), Green Underside Blue (*Glaucopsyche alexis*), and Brown Hairstreak (*Thecla betulae*) were among the 32 species identified here. Larval host plants and nectar flowers grew mainly in sheltered very hot gullies. A belt of deciduous trees including Oak covered about 4ha and gave shelter. In late afternoon we retired to a vineyard to celebrate with wonderful Hungarian wines grown on a volcanic cone. Memorable!

July 13<sup>th</sup> Within the National Park we surveyed 10 plus ha of fields mostly cut for hay and fringed by scrub including Blackthorn. On the headlands a huge range of wild flower species were present. In one field cowslips and *Gentiana pneumonanthe* were present in a band of about 2% of the field length. A thoughtful comment is that the herbicide sprayed on most of the fields was not used at one end. Alcon Blue eggs were on the gentian and also in a nearby damp woodland ride. Woods are a mix of deciduous including oaks. Forestry plantations included Corsican and Scots Pine, Norway Spruce, Sitka Spruce, managed for timber within the Park area.

39 species were recorded for Park records on this day. A breezy day made photography challenging but many retainable pictures were achieved from High Brown Fritillary (*Argynnis adippe*) to Scarce Copper (*Lycaena vigaurae*) and *Papilio machaon* Swallowtail.

July 14 we spent revisiting all the Trust fields near to Kerczsomor studying the wonderful flower meadows and their butterflies. 54 species were recorded in 2 days within a 3km diameter circle of the Trust managed land.

It is encouraging to have the Hungarian National Heritage Trust being so successful with their habitat management in this important area. Our thanks go to Safi and Martin for guiding our tour and sharing their expert knowledge of ecology and land management with us. 80 butterfly species were sighted during our 7 days and our guides explained their habitat requirements to us.

Our thanks go to our fellow tour members who shared their finds, knowledge and humour all the time.

BC European Interest Group members have made a contribution from a proportion of several tours costs going to the Trust. BC EIG have also helped with butterfly surveys in the Trust and Park lands over a 4 year period.

**Lawrie and Bridget de Whalley**

## SAMOS, JUNE 2011



Oranged Banded Hairstreak (*Satyrium ledereri*), © Nigel Peace

My wife Liz and I, and Simon and Anne Spencer, visited the Greek island of Samos in the third week of June 2011 in the hope of finding a few species which are at the western limit of their range in the eastern Aegean. Our main target was Orange-banded Hairstreak (*Satyrium ledereri*), which in Europe is found only on Samos. We were joined for part of the week by Lazaros Pamperis, who received the Marsh European Award in 2010 for his magnificent book on the Butterflies of Greece, and who was our enthusiastic guide.

The main logistics were as follows. We flew to Samos by Thomson Airlines, who run weekly charters to Samos on Thursdays from Manchester and Gatwick. We stayed in some very pleasant and reasonably priced apartments at Limnionas, at the western end of the island. The relevant website is [www.studiosioanna.com](http://www.studiosioanna.com). And we hired a Suzuki Jimny jeep, which was essential for negotiating the steep unmade mountain roads.

As noted in Tolman, Orange-banded Hairstreak is found on Mount Kerkis (= Mt Kerketefs) at 1000m to 1400m. On our first morning we set off up the said mountain in search of our quarry. We were able to take the jeep to about 800m. From there we followed a path towards the summit and after a couple of hours of rather energetic hiking we reached some sheltered slopes at the requisite altitude. There we found several nice specimens of our target species.



Eastern Brown Argus (*Plebejus eurypilus*) © Nigel Peace

We continued to about 1200m and found another target, Eastern Brown Argus (*Plebejus eurypilus*). We only found one or two specimens of this species but we did not explore the top slopes immediately below the summit

Other notable species that we saw on the mountain included Samos Grayling (*Hipparchia mersina*), White-banded Grayling (*Pseudochazara anthelea*), and Eastern (Aegean) Meadow Brown (*Maniola telmessia*).

With the main targets secured on the first day, we settled down to make the most of our stay on this unspoiled island. We enjoyed secluded bays (perfect for undisturbed bathing), superb views, and traditional restaurants. These were interspersed with butterfly watching which became steadily less energetic as the week progressed. *Telmessia* turned out to be rather common, but *mersina* and *anthelea* we only found on Mt Kerkis, and we failed to find Freyer's Grayling (*Hipparchia fatua*) at all. We were quite late for Southern Swallowtail (*Papilio alexanor*) but found a few nice specimens to photograph.

All in all, an excellent destination for those looking to combine butterflies with a holiday in the Mediterranean.

**Nigel Peace**

## The Transylvanian Turquoise Blue



Transylvanian Turquoise Blue (*Polyommatus dorylas magna*) © David Dennis

It's not often that you come across a distinctive subspecies of a butterfly that's not mentioned in the common literature, but the Transylvanian Turquoise Blue (*Polyommatus dorylas magna*) is one such example.

*Magna* was described by Balint in 1985 but references can be found going back to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and examples can be found in collections made throughout the 20<sup>th</sup>. As its name suggests, *magna* is distinctive because of its size, which is similar to that of a typical Large Blue (*P. arion*). However, the males are also a brighter, more shining blue than the nominate form of *dorylas* and they have a very powerful, determined flight, often it seems patrolling distinct patches of habitat. In general, the colouration and marking of both males and females is distinctive

when compared to the nominate form.

*Magna* is a single brooded, montane sub-species. This is however common phenology in *dorylas*. In the Carpathian Mountains where *magna* is found, it tends to replace the nominate form at higher altitudes, although there is some overlap of distribution (and hybridisation has been reported). *magna* flies on grassy slopes, generally above the forest belt, on both limestone and volcanic bases. Apparently it is sometimes common, but never found in large numbers like the nominate form and females are rarely seen.

To me there seem parallels between *magna* and the Phalakron Blue (*Polyommatus andronicus*, which is often considered a subspecies of the Common Blue, *P. icarus*). Both butterflies are relatively large, brightly coloured, single brooded, montane forms of their nominate species. It also seems that they share some behavioural traits, particularly that they have distinctive and more powerful flight (see Matt Rowlings observations at [www.eurobutterflies.com/species\\_pages/andronicus.htm](http://www.eurobutterflies.com/species_pages/andronicus.htm)). Maybe what we are seeing with *magna* and *andronicus* is the part-finished work of the evolution of new species?

**Neil Thompson**

## Taxonomy Update Polyommatae (Blues) by Bernard Watts

Editors Note: This update was produced in response to recent developments in taxonomy relevant to chapters 5.1 to 5.16 in version 1 of *EUROPEAN BUTTERFLIES: A PORTRAIT IN PHOTOGRAPHS (EBPP-v1.)* by Bernard Watts. As we often include a species account from this important work as a supplement to EIG Newsletters I thought that including these notes would help to illuminate what for many of us is an exasperating subject. I am very grateful to Bernard Watts for allowing me to include this.

### Taxonomy Update - Preamble

In recent years, there have been a number of studies of European Butterflies using molecular (genetic) methods which have led to some re-evaluation of their taxonomy.

There are several areas of change, including:

- (1) **Rank inflation**, where a former subspecies is elevated to the rank of species;
- (2) **Rank deflation**, where formerly distinct species are recognised as the same species, either as different subspecies or, in some instances, not separated at subspecies level;
- (3) **Rearranged cladistics**, where familiar genera become amalgamated or divided or where species are transferred between existing genera. In this 'game', concepts such as subgenera and supergenera may be introduced. This area of taxonomic revision is very interesting, but altogether more complicated and less certain than the species/subspecies revisions.

New names may also appear as a result of:

- (4) **Taxonomic precedence**, in which the first published name must be used for a taxon. So this is often a matter of history rather than biology, e.g. the Purple Hairstreak is referred to as *Favonius quercus* in the BCE list mentioned below, but was formerly *Quercusia quercus* or, in some publications, *Neozephyrus quercus*. The status of the Purple Hairstreak *vis a vis* other species, however, is unchanged.

A current provisional list of European butterfly species is available from Butterfly Conservation Europe (go to [www.bc-europe.eu](http://www.bc-europe.eu), then [Gateway to data](#) and the downloadable file [Taxonomy of European Butterflies](#). See also Martin Wiemers' comments in the European Interest Group Newsletter of Butterfly Conservation, autumn 2010). The list is the result of several experts pooling their wisdom and arriving at an agreed position, and should be viewed as containing, possibly, some compromises. For, although molecular measurements are made in a consistent and objective way, the results may be inconclusive in that they can bear different interpretations, especially when dealing with allopatric sibling-species. And, at the present time, there are still some pairs of sibling-species for which molecular measurements are unavailable.

It should also be recognised, I think, that any decision to have an *a priori* prejudice in favour or not of splitting at species level is 'user dependent'. For example, in a publication such as *EUROPEAN BUTTERFLIES: A PORTRAIT IN PHOTOGRAPHS*, which takes an overall view of European butterflies, it is arguably convenient to view and treat two morphologically identical (or almost so) taxa flying in different regions as subspecies, unless molecular or other measurements are clear-cut to the contrary, for such a stance emphasises the similarity of such sibling taxa in the field while leaving open the possibility of an easy mental transition if the taxa do turn out really to be different species. On the other hand, a list of endangered taxa would benefit from treating sibling taxa as distinct species, so that the plight of a declining population of one taxon does not go unrecorded because it has been lumped in with a flourishing population of the other.

In the introductory part of each Group Chapter and each Species Section in *EBPP-v1.*, I give a summary of the views held at the then time of writing about whether to regard various closely related taxa as distinct species or as subspecies. I also review any other observations that I feel are relevant, and then exercise my judgement, with reasons given, about which taxa to treat as species and which as subspecies. In this, as implied above, I have an *a priori* prejudice in favour of non-splitting.

Some of the tricky assignments made in *EBPP-v1*. turn out to be right and some wrong when compared to the BCE list. Some of my 'wrong' attributions are justifiable, I think, in the light of the comments in the paragraph before last.

In the following subsection, I mention all instances where the rank of a taxon in the BCE species list conflicts with *EBPP-v1*. There are quite a few such conflicts in chapters 5.1 to 5.16 because many of the recent molecular studies have been concerned with Polyommatae (Blues) species, but in most cases I feel my introductory comments in *EBPP-v1* are fair and balanced, so the reader only needs to note the changed status of some taxa, as appropriate. The pictures and text are otherwise fully relevant.

Name changes resulting from (3) and (4) above are not discussed, the former because it is a more conjectural area, and the latter because it is relatively uninteresting and alternative names are often mentioned in my Section Introductions.

A few other related remarks are also made about taxonomic matters that are not otherwise obvious from the BCE list.

### Changes in Rank and Related Taxonomy

I list below, systematically chapter by chapter, all species and a selection of subspecies and forms recognised in *EUROPEAN BUTTERFLIES: A PORTRAIT IN PHOTOGRAPHS*. The subspecies and forms are selected because they have been subject to rank inflation in the BCE list compared to my text or because I wish to comment on them for some other reason.

The taxa discussed are highlighted, as follows: **in red**, species subject to rank deflation in the BCE list; **in blue**, subspecies subject to rank inflation in the BCE list; **in green**, taxa in *EBPP-v1* which concur with the BCE list, but have commonly been assigned to a different rank elsewhere; and **in purple**, other taxa discussed.

#### Ch. 5.1 Common Blue Group

*Polyommatus icarus* (Common Blue)

**f. *celina***

***P. andronicus* (Phalakron Blue) now *P. icarus***

***P. eroides* (False Eros Blue) now *P. eros***

*Polyommatus eros* (Eros Blue)

*P. e. eros*

***P. e. menelaos***

**Taxon *andronicus*.** Recent molecular studies have shown that taxon *andronicus* is in fact the same species as *P. icarus*. This possibility is foreshadowed in my commentary in *EBPP-v1*.

**Taxon *eroides*.** I describe *P. eroides* (False Eros Blue) as a distinct species in *EBPP-v1*, but molecular studies now show that it is conspecific with *P. eros* (Eros Blue) - one of the big surprises in the BCE list. For now it is unclear whether to treat taxon *eroides* as *P. e. eros* or as a Greek/Balkan subspecies, *P. e. eroides*.

In *EBPP-v1* there is not much discussion of the relationship between *P. eros* and '*P. eroides*' because their distributions were reportedly non-overlapping, or almost so, and in consequence there was no likelihood of confusing them. In one instance, however, I do analyse the appearance of an insect on the Rila Massif, Bulgaria (see ch. 5.1 p. 38) since some authors thought that *P. eros* and '*P. eroides*' might fly together. Within the mindset that there were two species I come to the conclusion the appearance is ambiguous. With hindsight, this is to be expected.

**Taxon *menelaos*** is confirmed as a subspecies, contrary to the view of some recent authors.

**Taxon *celina*.** Apparently *P. icarus* (Common Blue) is replaced in North Africa and the Canary Islands by *P. celina*, formerly regarded as a subspecies.

My text is not concerned with North Africa or the Canary Islands, but, following Tolman (1997), I treat the form of *P. icarus* in Europe with dark submarginal spots on the upw as f. *celina*, as these spots are one of the characteristics of true *P. celina*. With hindsight, the possibility of confusion would have been avoided by using a different name.

#### Ch. 5.2 Amanda's Blue Group

*Polyommatus amanda* (Amanda's Blue)  
*Polyommatus thersites* (Chapman's Blue)  
*Polyommatus escheri* (Escher's Blue)

The above list concurs with the BCE list.

#### Ch. 5.3 Turquoise Blue Group

*Polyommatus dorylas* (Turquoise Blue)  
*Polyommatus golgus* (Nevada Blue)  
***P. g. sagratrox***  
*Polyommatus nivescens* (Mother-of-Pearl Blue)

There are no definite changes down to subspecies rank, and the status of **taxon *sagratrox*** has not been revised.

#### Ch. 5.4 Chalk-hill Blue Group

*Lysandra coridon* (Chalk-hill Blue)  
***L. c. philippi***  
*L. c. asturiensis*  
***L. c. caelestissima***  
***L. c. gennargenti***  
hybrid *polonus*  
hybrid *caerulescens*  
*Lysandra hispana* (Provence Chalk-hill Blue)  
*Lysandra albicans* (Spanish Chalk-hill Blue)  
*Lysandra bellargus* (Adonis Blue)  
*Meleageria daphnis* (Meleager's Blue)

**Taxon *caelestissima***. The discussion of *L. coridon* subspecies in *EBPP-v1*, as listed above, recognises that some may turn out to warrant rank inflation. Apparently, however, limited molecular data from taxon *caelestissima* are nearly identical to those from other members of the *coridon* complex. Thus, from the non-splitting stance adopted in *EBPP-v1*, I see no reason yet to regard taxon *caelestissima* as a distinct species, despite its BCE listing. In any case, it would be wise, I think, to sort out as far as possible the genetics of all *coridon*-like taxa and then make a complete revision of the whole complex. I suspect that if it really turns out that taxon *caelestissima* should be elevated, then other subspecies of *L. coridon* in the *EBPP-v1* list will deserve the same rank inflation.

**Taxa *philippi* and *gennargenti***. These taxa have been regarded by other authors as a distinct species. Their ranking in *EBPP-v1* agrees with the BCE list, but the comments in the previous paragraph should be noted.

#### Ch. 5.5. Anomalous Blue Group

*Agrodiaetus ripartii* (Ripart's Anomalous Blue)  
**f. *agenjoi***  
*A. r. pelopi*  
**taxon *exuberans***  
**taxon *susae***  
*Agrodiaetus fabressei* (Oberthür's Anom. Blue)  
***A. f. violetae***  
*Agrodiaetus humedasae* (Piedmont Anom. Blue)  
***A. galloi* (Gallo's Anomalous Blue) now *A. ripartii***  
*Agrodiaetus admetus* (Anomalous Blue)  
*Agrodiaetus aroaniensis* (Grecian Anomalous Blue)  
**f. *eleniae***  
*Agrodiaetus nephohiptamenos* (Higgins' Anom. Blue)  
*Agrodiaetus dantchenkoi* (Rhodope Anom. Blue)  
***A. d. orphicus***

**Taxon galloi.** *A. galloi*, from an isolated region of southern Italy, is conspecific with *A. ripartii* according to a 2010 molecular study. This is another of the big surprises, but not incorporated in the BCE list, being too recent I assume.

**Taxa agenjoii, exuberans and susae** have all been found, like *A. galloi*, to be conspecific with *A. ripartii*, as is anticipated in *EBPP-v1*. They are variously recognised as distinct species elsewhere.

**Taxon violeetae.** In *EBPP-v1*, I describe four zones in Spain where Anomalous Blues can be found, and assert, for what seem to be good reasons, including chromosome number, that *A. fabressei* does not fly in the northern zone, but does fly in the east-central zone, the southeastern zone and probably in the far-southern zone. The first two assertions are still apparently correct. However, new and different genetic evidence seems to show that a distinct species flies in the southeastern and far-southern zones, despite the chromosome number not being distinctive. Thus, what I treat as a subspecies of *A. fabressei* should be regarded as *A. violeetae*. The pictures and text in *EBPP-v1* are 'correct' if the reader adjusts to the idea that ssp *violeetae* is really a full species, though the situation may be further complicated by there being different subspecies of *A. violeetae* in the southeastern and far-southern zones.

**Taxon eleniae.** This taxon is extremely localised in the region of northeastern Greece and although it is regarded as a species in the BCE list, the comments I make in my text are still relevant. Its separation as a distinct species relies on its appearance, which may not be a reliable basis, and on the chromosomes. The latter are arguably distinctive in terms of appearance (size distribution) but arguably not so in terms of number.

**Taxon orphicus.** This taxon is very localised in and near southern Bulgaria. The taxonomy presented in the BCE list is anticipated as a possibility in *EBPP-v1*. The comments made under ch. 5.13 about taxon *taygetica* apply equally to taxon *orphicus*.

#### Ch. 5.6. Furry Blue Group

*Agrodiaetus damon* (Damon Blue)

*Agrodiaetus fulgens* (Forster's Furry Blue)

***A. f. fulgens***

***A. f. ainsae***

*Agrodiaetus dolus* (Furry Blue)

***A. d. dolus***

***A. d. vittatus***

***A. d. virgilius***

*Agrodiaetus iphigenia* (Chelmos Blue)

The above list concurs with the BCE list.

**Taxon ainsae and fulgens**, almost always, and **taxa dolus, vittatus and virgilius**, commonly, have been treated as distinct species in many publications to date, but in *EBPP-v1* their ranking concurs with the BCE list. The background to the status of these taxa is described in *EBPP-v1*.

#### Ch. 5.7. Mazarine Blue Group

*Cyaniris semiargus* (Mazarine Blue)

**f. *parnassia***

***C. helena* (Chelmos Maz. Blue) now *C. semiargus***

*Neolysandra coelestina* (Pontic Blue)

The ranks of **taxon helena** and **taxon parnassia** have not been established by molecular studies. For the moment it would be wise, I think, to keep an open mind. One thing is clear: *C. helena* in southern Greece looks very different from all races of *C. semiargus* in other parts of Europe. For this reason, and others mentioned in *EBPP-v1*, I treat it as a distinct species.

#### Ch. 5.8. Brown Argus Group

*Aricia agestis* (Brown Argus)

***A. a. cramera***

*Aricia artaxerxes* (Mountain Argus)

*A. a. allous*

***A. a. montensis***

*Aricia morronensis* (Spanish Argus)

*Aricia anteros* (Blue Argus)

*Aricia nicias* (Silvery Argus)

*Aricia eumedon* (Geranium Argus)

*Aricia psylorita* (Cretan Argus)

*Aricia eurypilus* (Eastern Brown Argus)

The *Aricia* complex is generally acknowledged to be extremely complicated, as discussed in detail in *EBPP-v1*, where I choose to treat taxa *cramera* and *montensis* as subspecies.

**Taxon *cramera*.** The type location of taxon *cramera* is the Canary Islands, and molecular studies seem to confirm that it is a distinct species there, i.e. not *A. agestis*. In Europe, a single sample studied from Spain was similar genetically to the Canary Island samples. Thus it seems probable that there is a distinct species, *A. cramera*, in Spain. At present, however, it is unclear what the distributions of *A. agestis* and *A. cramera* are and whether they overlap or not. And field observations record *cramera*-like insects outside Spain and *agestis*-like insects in Spain, as illustrated in *EBPP-v1*.

**Taxon *montensis*.** Much the same remarks may be made about *A. montensis*, except it is absent from the Atlantic Islands.

Ch. 5.9. Glandon Blue Group

*Plebejus glandon* (Glandon Blue)

***P. g. zulichhi***

***P. g. aquilo***

*Plebejus pyrenaicus* (Gavarnie Blue)

*P. p. asturiensis*

***P. p. dardanus***

*Plebejus orbitulus* (Alpine Blue)

**Taxa *zulichhi* and *aquilo*.** The possibility that most of the subspecies of *P. glandon* and *P. pyrenaicus* listed above could be regarded as distinct species is raised in *EBPP-v1*. Limited molecular data show that taxa *zulichhi* and *aquilo* are very close to *P. glandon*. Thus, from the non-splitting stance of *EBPP-v1*, I would be reluctant to treat them as distinct species yet, despite their rank inflation in the BCE list.

There is a spelling error in *EBPP-v1*: there should be no umlaut on the *u* of *zulichhi*.

**Taxon *dardanus*.** The genetic relationship of taxon *dardanus* to *P. pyrenaicus* is very close, apparently. So the comments made above about the ranks of taxa *zulichhi* and *aquilo* apply also to taxon *dardanus*.

Ch. 5.10. Silver-studded Blue Group

*Plebejus argus* (Silver-studded Blue)

*Plebejus idas* (Idas Blue)

*P. i. nevadensis*

***P. i. bellieri***

***P. i. bellieri f. villai***

*Plebejus argyrognomon* (Reverdin's Blue)

*Plebejus pylaon* (Zephyr Blue)

***P. p. hespericus***

***P. p. trappi***

***P. p. sephirus***

*Plebejus optilete* (Cranberry Blue)

*Chilades trochylus* (Grass Jewel)

The possibility that the subspecies of *P. pylaon* listed above and one or more of the subspecies of *P. idas* could well be distinct species is envisaged in *EBPP-v1*.



**Taxon bellieri.** There are no molecular studies, so there seems to be no compelling reason yet to regard it as a distinct species as in the BCE list.

The relationship between **taxon villai**, on Elba, and **taxon bellieri**, on Corsica and Sardinia, is discussed briefly in *EBPP-v1*. Any change in the rank of **taxon bellieri** would have a knock-on effect on the rank of **taxon villai**.

**Taxa hespericus, trappi and sephirus.** There is limited molecular data for **taxon sephirus**. Apparently, some, but *not all*, samples from supposed **taxon sephirus** are very close to other *pylaon* taxa, including ssp *pylaon* found in southern Russia. Possibly there is an undiscovered species! The limited molecular data for **taxon hespericus** is also similar to other *pylaon* taxa. There is no molecular data for **taxon trappi**. On the whole, these observations suggest to me there is no harm in treating them all as subspecies, especially if one has a non-splitting stance.

#### Ch. 5.11. Baton Blue Group

*Scolitantides baton* (Baton Blue)  
*Scolitantides vicrama* (Eastern Baton Blue)  
*Scolitantides panoptes* (Panoptes Blue)  
*Scolitantides abencerragus* (False Baton Blue)  
*Scolitantides barbagiae* (Sardinian Blue)  
*Scolitantides bavius* (Bavius Blue)  
*Scolitantides orion* (Chequered Blue)

The above list concurs with the BCE list.

#### Ch. 5.12. Large Blue Group

*Maculinea arion* (Large Blue)  
*Maculinea alcon* (Alcon Blue)  
***M. a. alcon***  
***M. a. rebeli***  
*Maculinea telejus* (Scarce Large Blue)  
*Maculinea nausithous* (Dusky Large Blue)

The above list concurs with the BCE list.

**Taxa alcon and rebeli.** These taxa have been treated as distinct species elsewhere. The reasons for regarding them as conspecific are discussed in *EBPP-v1*. It should be noted, however, that ecological considerations may in the future elevate them to specific rank again.

#### Ch. 5.13. Green-underside Blue Group

*Glaucopsyche alexis* (Green-underside Blue)  
*Glaucopsyche melanops* (Black-eyed Blue)  
*Glaucopsyche iolas* (Iolas Blue)  
*Turanana endymion* (Odd-spot Blue)  
***T. e. taygetica***

**Taxon taygetica.** The inflation of **taxon taygetica** in the BCE list has the effect of separating the European **taxon** from the non-European **taxon** at species level. As before, there remains one **taxon**, now named *taygetica* rather than *endymion*, flying in Europe.

#### 14. Little and Short-tailed Blue Group

*Cupido minimus* (Little Blue)  
*Cupido lorquini* (Lorquin's Blue)  
*Cupido osiris* (Osiris Blue)  
*Cupido argiades* (Short-tailed Blue)  
*Cupido decoloratus* (Eastern Short-tailed Blue)  
*Cupido alcetas* (Provencal Short-tailed Blue)

The above list concurs with the BCE list.

15. Holly and Grass Blue Group  
*Celastrina argiolus* (Holly Blue)  
*Zizeeria knysna* (African Grass Blue)  
*Z. k. knysna*  
***Z. k. karsandra***

**Taxon *karsandra*.** The slight difference in the genitalia which leads some authors to treat taxon *karsandra* as a distinct species is mentioned in *EBPP-v1*. The distributions of *Z. knysna* and *Z. karsandra* do not overlap and they are said to be externally indistinguishable. I am not aware of any molecular studies to support the rank inflation of taxon *karsandra* in the BCE list.

16. Tiger and Long-tailed Blue Group  
*Tarucus theophrastus* (Common Tiger Blue)  
*Tarucus balkanicus* (Little Tiger Blue)  
*Lampides boeticus* (Long-tailed Blue)  
*Leptotes pirithous* (Lang's Short-tailed Blue)  
*Cacyreus marshalli* (Geranium Bronze)

The above list concurs with the BCE list.

### Identification Confirmation

#### Ch. 5.4. Chalk-hill Blue Group

In chapter 5.4 of *EBPP-v1*, pages 27-28, I show pictures taken on 3 July of what I assert is probably *Lysandra hispana* (Provence Chalk-hill Blue) from northeastern Spain. I revisited this site on 5 June 2010 and found a number of fresh males, which I think confirms their identification beyond reasonable doubt, at least in the terms set out in *EBPP-v1* where *L. hispana* and *L. coridon* (Chalk-hill Blue) are taken to be double- and single-brooded respectively.

### Acknowledgments

I am grateful to Miguel Munguira, Felipe Gil-T and Martin Wiemers for very useful correspondence about many of the foregoing taxonomic matters, but what I have actually written has been selectively edited and misjudgements are mine alone.

### Bernard Watts

#### Author's note

This supplement was written in March 2011, and does not include work published since the end of 2010.

For example, I have learned that the molecular data supporting *Aricia cramera* as a distinct species is considerably more general than stated above. And, apparently, the species *Polyommatus celina* actually flies in southern Spain, making it a new species for Europe.

**Free PDF copies for home printing can be obtained from me at: [butterflyeurope@btinternet.com](mailto:butterflyeurope@btinternet.com)**

## Butterfly Year

Sometime ago Otakar Kudrna suggested that we ran a little section in the EIG newsletter with reports from around Europe about the butterfly season. It would be useful to note unusual events such as Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*) migrations. Though several people have mentioned a poor summer with lots of rain in the Alps I have had few such reports. I would like some for next year please.

One interesting point of interest was the appearance in southern Finland of lots of Lesser Purple Emperor (*Apatura ilia*) butterflies. This species is not supposed to occur in Finland according to the Distribution Atlas of Butterflies in Europe (Kudrna. O. et al 2011) (see page 36) but was recorded last summer from all over southern Finland. With global warming it might turn up in the UK!

**Simon Spencer**

**New page**

**Requests for Information etc:**

***BC Europe is asking for a volunteer to help with its website***

BC Europe is looking to upgrade its website. BCE is going to use the framework of the Dutch BC website and populate it with its own information. This will simply involve the use of a content management system and so does not require any website development experience. However, BCE unfortunately does not have the time or money to do this website upgrade itself, so it is asking if there is a volunteer who would be interested in this carrying out task? If you are interested, please email [webmaster@bc-eig.org.uk](mailto:webmaster@bc-eig.org.uk)!

There are no pressing timescales within which the work has to be done. For an enthusiastic and capable volunteer there would also be the opportunity to further develop the BCE website – it doesn't have to be limited to entering some text and pictures

Stefanescu Constanti [[canliro@gmail.com](mailto:canliro@gmail.com)] would like any information on Painted Lady (*Vanessa cardui*) from Southern Europe or North Africa particularly for winter records and breeding records in winter. He is doing research on the biology of this migrant species.

Ray Sandiford is researching the life history of The Red Admiral Butterfly and would like to know more about its over-wintering, migration and breeding over the winter period, though it over winters in England it only survives in certain areas. He would also like any recent sightings of the Red Admiral butterflies in Europe and Great Britain, particularly if someone anyone has kept records for a number of years. Ray Sandiford, 42 Crompton Ave, Bolton BL26PQ England, Telephone 01204 398548, Email, [raymondsandiford@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:raymondsandiford@yahoo.co.uk)

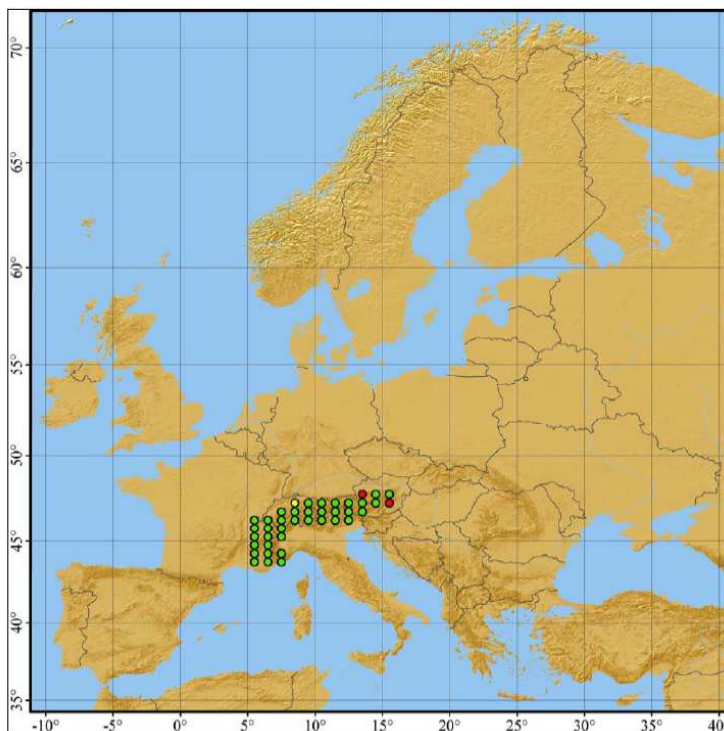
## Book Reviews

**Distribution Atlas of Butterflies in Europe by Otakar Kudrna, Alexander Harpke, Kristian Lux, Josef Pennerstorfer, Oliver Schweiger and Martin Wiemers published in 2011 by Gesellschaft Für Schmetterlingsschutze e. V. ISBN 978-3-938249-70-3. 65 Euros. Available in the UK at £58.**

This is a second edition of Otakar Kudrna's The Distribution Atlas of European Butterflies published in 2002 but with much more information, better coloured maps and updated for changes in taxonomy. It covers Europe west of the Urals and includes the Canaries, Azores and Madeira. The scale, as in the original, was deliberately chosen so that the 9145 reference localities appeared as a small circle on 15cm square printed map. These localities are 5 degrees of latitude by 5 degrees of longitude. This corresponds approximately to a 50km square. Colours indicate 3 time periods – pre 1950, 1950-1980 and post 1980. The coverage of this enormous area is 95%. Distribution maps of all but a few of the 441 butterfly species in the 655000 records database are printed together with notes on their zoogeography and conservation status. These maps have been the basis of most field guides since 2002 and the data have been used for a number of scientific studies including the Climatic Risk Atlas of European Butterflies of European Butterflies (Settele, J. et al 2008). It is hugely valuable for studies on climate change and it is interesting to note that the huge influx of *Apatura ilia* into Finland this summer (Jaakko Kullberg pers. comm.), where it was not formerly recorded, will mean that future editions are already required. English readers will look in vain for common names and though published in Germany the text is entirely in English. The project was a huge collaboration with butterfly experts all over Europe and has a high reputation for accuracy. Otakar Kudrna for whom this project was his life's work was BC's first European Marsh Award winner in 2009. The book is also valuable for the comprehensive bibliography and the notes on taxonomy. I note with interest that though several of the authors were part of a committee of 'experts' that revised taxonomy for the Europe Red List (Swaay et al. 2010) there are significant differences with a tendency to 'lump' not 'split'.

### Simon Spencer

*Parnassius phoebus* (FABRICIUS, 1793)



## **The Butterflies of the Iberian Peninsula. A Photographic Field Guide by Paul Browning**

This excellent field guide in English is a must for anyone interested in butterflies that visits Spain or Portugal regularly or lives there. It is packed with excellent photographs, some as identification charts with the key features to aid the separation of difficult species e.g. *Pyrgus* indicated by lines and notes. It is completely comprehensive covering all species of the Iberian peninsula and nearly all the photographs being taken by the author. It must have been the product of a lifetime's research. It follows the taxonomy of the 1999 Red Data Book (Warren and van Swaay) with a few sensible alterations. *Pyrgus malvoides* the Southern Grizzled Skipper replaces *Pyrgus malvae* (Grizzled Skipper) and is given specific status as it is in the 2010 Red List. We had a lot of trouble with *Pyrgus* skippers in the Pyrenees this summer and this book would have been invaluable. *Aricia cramera* (Southern Brown Argus) replaces *Aricia agestis* (Brown Argus). Indistinguishable in the field this follows Garcia-Barros et alia 'Atlas de las Mariposas diurnas de la Peninsula Iberica e Islas Balearas' which is the standard distribution atlas for Spain and Portugal. There are no distribution maps in Paul Browning's book but the existence of the separate distribution atlas makes these less necessary as the two books are complementary and follow very similar taxonomy. There are distribution notes for each species which would be easier for people familiar with Spanish geography but the maps of provinces and principal mountains is adequate. There are adequate clues for finding scarce and local species from captions of landscape photographs. Combined with the distribution atlas and a good map the casual visitor should have enough clues for that elusive tick. The simple table of flight period for each species would ensure that you got there at the right time.

This book has been published by Paul Browning and is available from Paul Browning, Pehale Jakes Farm Annexe, Main Road, Ashton, Helston, Cornwall TR13 9SD. price £20 + £4 p&p. The print run was only 200 copies so grab one while stocks last. Paul was selling it at the AGM from the EIG stand and EIG has made a small contribution to the cost of printing.

### **Butterfly DVD by Brigitte and Pieter Kan (Not yet published)**

I have been sent a DVD with four short butterfly films: Swallowtail (*Papilio machaon*), Southern Festoon (*Zerynthia polyxena*) Camberwell Beauty (*Nymphalis antiopa*) and Spanish Purple Hairstreak (*Laeosopis evippus*). In each case they film the entire life history from egg to adult in the natural environment including courtship, mating, egg laying, pupation, hatching etc. Absolute magic! Their work on *L. evippus* is particularly ground breaking and is the subject of a recent paper that I was sent. Each film must have been the result of many hours of patient observation in the field.

The DVD is not yet released to the market & I have no price tag. I have suggested a special EIG offer. I have also suggested a UK showing as an EIG event. The quality is superb and the voice over is in English. They intend to work through the 140 species in their part of France and I suspect that they will eventually produce a long series of films.

**Simon Spencer**

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**Registered office:  
Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset. BH20 5QP.  
Tel: 01929 400209  
Email: [info@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:info@butterfly-conservation.org)  
[www.butterfly-conservation.org](http://www.butterfly-conservation.org)**