



LAPWG Newsletter, end of April into May 2019

Our last event, the AGM & Luckett walk was reported on last month so am saving space for all the other news and future events!

Lots of firsts although my first sighting of swallows was at the Pennygillam roundabout last Tuesday ~ not the most beautiful location but they were flying strongly towards the north-east. Over the last ten days, several of us have been reporting swallows and Lionel's house-martins returned last week. He saw wheatear up on the moor the week before and 3 redpoll feeding on new pine cones with siskin in the woods up above here on the edge of the moor. Pete saw a fledgling blackbird here in the garden last weekend and the blackcap song was deafening this morning; I think that several of 'us gardeners' are enjoying their song now they are settling in. But no cuckoo yet...

Hedgehogs at Rezare (good size but struggling through an inch or two of hailstones on 2nd April) and Little Trekenner. No signs here of dormice yet but the monitoring season has only now officially begun so we shall see.

The oil beetles are up and about, Mary counted 7 during a recent bat box check at Armstrong's Wood and we're beginning to see more of the spring butterflies like orange-tip & speckled wood; Gill's seen a common blue. If anyone sees small pearl-bordered fritillary up on the moor, please note the date/location because Simon Phelps from the All the Moor Butterflies project would like to know more about their flight period.

Onto our future events:

**For all our events, please dress for the weather, walking boots recommended, sometimes wellies are necessary. Always useful to bring notebook, camera/phone, binoculars, drink & a snack. Specific requirements are listed in event details.*

Sunday, April 28th. Early Beetle Hunt in Stara Woods!

Meet at 11am in the parking area next to the bridge which is between Bathpool and Rilla Mill on the river Lynher. For a map and directions see the website which is www.starawoods.co.uk/location/ Map ref is SX289738.

We'll walk up the hill to the top entrance by the mine, then work our way through the conifers and down to the footbridge. Over and up to the barn and on up to explore the very top where I found the minotaur beetle last autumn. Back to the barn to eat our packed lunches (there might be a bit of extra cake & a hot drink) and then on into Treovis Wood and finally back down along the river.

We should find oil beetles and other dung & ground beetles. I will bring some ID sheets, containers, magnifiers and a close-up camera so we'll do our best but I hope that we'll have some more expert advice. Some paths are steep and uneven; bring packed lunch if you wish to stay into the afternoon. I would expect to finish before 3pm but that depends on interest, speed & the weather!

Thursday, May 16th will be our **Grasses Day** with Ian Bennallick from Botanical Cornwall. Meet to start with in Lezant church hall, just south of the church PL15 9PPor SX339790. We will start at 11am with coffee etc then about an hour's worth or so from Ian on grasses, structure and key ID skills. I think we could all bring examples for a identification table. After an early lunch-break, we'll drive up to Trekenner to park then walk out & about to find and attempt to name, grasses in the hedges and fields around. Back for a cup of tea and summing up, finishing by 4pm at the latest. Bring an eyeglass/magnifier and don't forget your packed lunch. *In June we hope to run a first aid with CWT, date to be confirmed. LAPWG will partially subsidise.*

Thursday, June 27th, Boat trip to Looe Island from 11am with 2 hours on the island, self-guided walk but directions will be given. Cost is £11, *payable in cash*, £7 to the boatman, £4 landing fee to the wardens. But only **LIMITED PLACES!** Two have already been booked so there are 9 places left. Please book with Jen B ASAP. There is another boat at 11:30am but we'll see if we can fill the one first.

Many thanks to Rowena for organising this. More details nearer the time to those who book.

September 18th Visit to the **Cornwall Beaver Project**. Cost to our group members will be £5 and we will try to arrange car sharing. It will be an evening event; wellies necessary, probably torches but further details given nearer the time. There are only 5 places left; if you would like to book a place, *please let me know as soon as possible*. I have a list and payments can be made at meetings.

Events run by other groups:

Saturday, April 27th. Cornwall Butterfly Conservation day at St Erme village Hall, all welcome. £7 inc. food etc. Dan Hoare will be the main speaker.

Saturday, May 11th Dawn Chorus at Stara Woods with Derek Spooner. Meet at 4:30am in the car park at SX289738. Wear extra warm clothes and walking boots; bring a torch/headlamp to start with and binoculars will be useful. Followed by breakfast from 6:30am in Upton Cross village hall. Please book for breakfast with Anne Hughes email annhugstara@gmail.com. There will be a small charge to cover the hall hire.

Sunday, May 12th. Armstrong's Wood 2:15pm Join the bat group and Robbins family for the bat & dormouse box checks and enjoy a walk around this CWT reserve in spring. We, (LAPWG) will provide refreshments at the end as usual. Meet by the entrance at SX322774 which is just off the road where you can park on the hill. Steep in places with uneven ground so walking boots recommended.

And the rest.... If anyone else can help with hedgehog surveys, there is training down at Heligan on Tuesday April 30th and a few of us are going. Please contact Dave Groves if you are interested at cornwallmammals@btinternet.com Dave is organising a spraint workshop soon as well. Check out www.cornwallmammalgroup.org for details of their events.

And Abigail Caine from South Petherwin has been in contact to say that their churchyard group are now Cormac Volunteers so they are able to have a say in the maintenance programme. They would like surveys done so if anyone is interested please contact Abi, spcakeandrakers@gmail.com. I think they have a rookery in the trees by the church and I wondered if we could organise a moth & bat evening for them later on. It's a pity that they haven't got someone more local who could do a walk/survey each week to note down any observations because a single survey is only 'of that moment'. A hedgehog footprint tunnel survey might be possible later in May?

WHAT'S IN A NAME? From Tony Atkinson.

"I saw a beautiful little ringed plover the other day. It was beautiful; it was little; it was ringed; and I'm certain it was a plover. When I looked it up I found it was a Little Ringed Plover. So I leave you in no doubt as to what I saw. Which might not have been so if I'd not capitalised the initial letter of all its vernacular names, because we use so many adjectives to name things.

There would have been that element of doubt if I'd left out any of those capitals knowing that there are both Ringed Plover and Little Ringed Plover. Large White: Great Black-backed Gull: Smooth-stalked Meadow Grass: Small Copper: the list is endless, isn't it? But isn't it being elitist to expect the reader to know that cream-coloured courser is the name of a species, and not the description of a bird. So what audience are we aiming at?

If I'm writing a nature note for a parish magazine it would be unfair to burden the readers with a scientific name, so the reader needs to know exactly what I'm talking about. They need to know that a Dipper is a bird, not an action.

So if we recognise that we have a convention for writing the scientific name in italics, with the initial letter of the generic name capitalised, and the specific name starting with a lower case letter (*Rhinolophos hipposideros*), why can't we start the convention of capitalising ALL the initial letters of the vernacular name."

So what do others think about this? I have a unpleasant feeling that not all are in agreement over this but I understood that one shouldn't use capitals in common names but cannot remember who told me that.

Proper nouns and names use capitals but is the common name a 'proper' name....?? ? A butterfly might not be but perhaps a Brimstone is?

Moths to be Seen in May from Mary Atkinson

Brown Silver-lines (*below left*) Mostly seen by day, disturbed from vegetation as one walks especially in unimproved grassland, or on the coast or moorland. This moth is one of the Geometers, about 1" from wing-tip to wing-tip and sits with flat wings. It flies earlier than the superficially similar Lead and July Belles and has only one generation.



Chinese Character (*right*) shows the cunning camouflage adopted by some insects.

This smallish moth resembles a bird dropping when sitting with tent-shaped wings, on foliage. Comes quite readily to light. A second generation appears in late summer.



Flame Shoulder (*left*) This two-generation species appeared several weeks early this year. It comes readily to light and I find later in the season it will also feed greedily on a saucer of gin-soaked sloes retrieved from a previous vintage of sloe gin! Its name is apparently because of the strong buff streak along the edge of its forewing.



(A larger, later, Immigrant form now recognized as a separate species, Radford's Flame Shoulder may be looked out for in October.)

The other bees... I think it was a mistake to ask for the Steven Falk book on bees because it undermines any confidence in the ID of any bee species apart from the most obvious and even those can bewilder at times. But it is so difficult to resist! Two photos of different and very small bees found foraging in the garden last week. I suspect mining bees but? The males are often much smaller anyway. Just look at the pollen

(see left) on the one feeding from the primrose; the usual load carried by the hind legs but more packaged in, underneath close to the body. I assume this is a female.



And an even smaller bee (*right*) on the dandelion with a broader head like a helmet. *Andrena bucephala* Big-headed Mining bee fits but book measurements are for the length of fore-wing, not the head to tail.....



Smaller still was a bee with a white face ~ can hardly bear to open the book now!

Thank you to all for news, contributions etc., the best time of the year is upon us!