

IAN RIPPEY 1.7.2014

16th June

Ballyeighter Wood and Lake, Co. Clare (R3392/R3493)

4 Green Hairstreaks (2 groups of 2 around scrub North of lake); 1 Small Blue, probably female, on rocky ridge with some Kidney Vetch at R3365492865; c. 6 Common Blues; at least 2, probably 3, Pearl-bordered Fritillaries, somewhat faded; c. 6 Speckled Woods; 2-3 Meadow Browns; unidentified white, but surprisingly no Dingy Skippers or Small Heaths though weather was excellent and both species occur.

Potentially this site could have among the highest total of any site in Ireland, as Dingy Skipper, Wood White, Brimstone, Green-veined White, Orange-tip, Small Copper, Green, Purple and Brown Hairstreaks, Small and Common Blues, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock, Pearl-bordered, Dark Green, Silver-washed and Marsh Fritillaries, Speckled Wood, Wall Brown, Grayling, Meadow Brown, Ringlelet and Small Heath have been recorded from this area; it is also likely that Large and Small Whites, occur as all 3 have been seen around the former Burren Holistic Centre within a few hundred yards north of Ballyeighter Wood. This makes 26 species, or 29 if all 3 regular migrants (Clouded Yellow, Red Admiral, Painted Lady) were added, which compares with 27 recorded at "Mullaghmore" - the latter has not recorded Green Hairstreak or Purple Hairstreak out of the 29 species shown. R39 has recorded 31 species, 28 "residents" and 3 migrants, differing from M40 in having recorded Gatekeeper (apparently genuinely, at Cooiloorta in 1996 and 2002) but not having recorded Cryptic Wood White or Large Heath (though these are just about possible). See also under Castlequarter/Newtown/Coole Park, S.E. Galway, below.

17th June

Leagh South near Kinvara, S.E. Galway (M316203): 1 Common Blue; 1 Speckled Wood

Scrub on rocky limestone south of road at **Newtown/Castlequarter** near Gort Golf Club, S.E. Galway (M4202):

3 Dingy Skippers (worn - none seen at Ballyeighter the day before despite excellent weather); 1 or 2 Wood Whites *Leptidea sinapis* (a few years ago a specimen taken here was proved by genital examination, I think by Ken Bond, to be this species as one would also expect from the habitat); female Brimstone seen twice, probably the same one, flying around Purging Buckthorn, though not seen laying eggs, presumably a hibernated specimen; 1 Green-veined White; 5-7 Small Blues, apparently

all males, in 3 or 4 different areas - see below; c. 8 Common Blues; 1 Speckled Wood; 1 Meadow Brown; c. 8 Small Heaths (like Dingy Skipper, not seen at Ballyeigher the day before although weather was excellent and both species occur there).

This is the 1st record I am aware of for the Small Blue at this site. It was first recorded in this 10 x 10 km. square, M40, in 2013, when about 20 were seen at Cahercarney east of Kinvarra, also S.E. Galway (M4109/M410), most of these being in M40, although it had previously been recorded from another site in M41. Kidney Vetch was found only patchily at the site, from near the boundary wall of Gort Golf Club's land eastwards for a couple of hundred yards, mainly close to some power lines. Potentially if this site is included with nearby Coole Park/Garryland Wood, it would have among the highest total of any site in Ireland, as Dingy Skipper, Wood White, Brimstone, Purple and Brown Hairstreaks, Small, Common and Holly Blues, Comma, Pearl-bordered, Dark Green, and Silver-washed Fritillaries, Wall Brown, Grayling and Small Heath as well as the expected common species have been recorded from this area; it is also possible that Green Hairstreak and Marsh Fritillary could also occur, although so far, along with Large Heath, they have been recorded in this 10 x 10 km. square only at Islandmore Bog near Gort (indeed the only species out of the 32 recorded in 10 x 10 kilometre Grid Square M40 which would not occur in this area is the Large Heath, a bogland specialist), so potentially this site could have 31 species, 28 residents and 3 migrants. 10 X 10 km. Grid Square R29 (including Clooncoose and Kilnaboy) has recorded 30 species, with Cryptic Wood White and Purple Hairstreak not reported (probably both unlikely or very unlikely).

Cut-over peat bog and adjacent rough grassy field at **Islandmore, Gort**, S.E. Galway (M4805):

c. 6 Cryptic Wood Whites, 2 males and 1 female identified (a specimen taken here a few years ago was proved by genital examination to be this species, by Ken Bond, I believe); 2 Green-veined Whites; 1 Marsh Fritillary, on Meadow Thistle in rough grassy field at western edge of bog; Speckled Wood; 1 or 2 Meadow Browns in same grassy field. This is the 1st time I have seen it here or in Grid Square M40, although I have looked several times for adults or larvae. Devil's-bit Scabious is widespread at the edges of the bog but the leaves are often overgrown by rank vegetation, so the site is not ideal. This made 31 species recorded in M40 and only left the Large Heath as a possible further resident. In fact I did see what looked like a butterfly on the bog from some yards away, but by the time I got to the spot there was no sign of the butterfly, which I considered could have been a Large Heath

or a Meadow Brown (see under 21st June!).

Bog west of Derroogh Lakes South between Gort and Crusheen, Co. Clare (R4290): 1 Speckled Wood; c. 12 Large Heaths (new site and new 10 x 10 km. square record for R49).

Lane a little west of new motorway at **Sheeaun**, S.W. of Gort, S.E. Galway (R433992); 1 male Brimstone, presumably a hibernated specimen

Lane at **Ballysheedy**, Gort, S.E. Galway: 1 male Orange-tip, and possible Small White though it could have been a Green-veined White

Roadside at **Doon** north of Crusheen, Co. Clare (R4491): 1 male Orange-tip

Poulataggle, Boston, Co. Clare (M3801): 1 Dingy Skipper; c. 4 Wood Whites *Leptidea sinapis*; 1 Speckled Wood; 1 or 2 Wall Browns near a Wall; 1 Small Blue (I have not seen it here before); c. 12 Common Blues; 2 Meadow Browns; c. 25-30 Small Heaths

Roadside at **Cappamore, Kinvarra, S.E. Galway** (M3505): 1 Small White (only identified as I hit it with the car). The only one seen all week apart from a possible earlier that day at Ballysheedy near Gort above. The Large White was almost as scarce.

18th June

Roadside with Red Valerian in flower on wall at Finvarra at N. end of Burren, Co. Clare (M2611): 1 Large White; 1 Small Tortoiseshell (fresh, 2nd brood), the 1st of these species I saw during 16th to 22nd June (bringing the total to 20 species, although eventually 24 species were to be seen, as Small Copper, Peacock, Dark Green Fritillary and Ringlet were to be added).

Shortly afterwards a probable Large White was seen several miles west of **Ballyvaughan** on the road to Black Head.

Rough upland grassland and moorland at **Doonagore** (R075945), south of Doolin, Co. Clare: 1 Small Heath, possible Meadow Brown.

Western outskirts of **Lisdoonvanna, Co. Clare** (R1298): 1 Large White.

Rocky upland grassland at **Lislarheenmore** east of Slieve Elva, Lisdoonvanna, Co. Clare (M1704): 5-6 Dingy Skippers (the fact that I saw

more Dingy Skippers here than at any other site during 16th to 22nd June may be due to the higher altitude and hence later emergence); 2-3 Small Coppers; c. 15 Common Blues; c. 20 Small Heaths

2 small patches of Kidney Vetch were seen but there may have been more as I only explored part of what is a very extensive area of rocky limestone grassland covering many hectares. Though weather was warm and sunny, there was no sign of Small Blue, though it may occur. Incidentally even more care needs to be taken than is normal on limestone grassland here; there are frequent small narrow crevices between the ridges which are usually partly covered with vegetation and it would be easy to trip up or get one's foot caught in these.

On another occasion a few years ago, on a different part of the same site (further north-east and further uphill) I temporarily lost my bearings before eventually finding my way back (even though this is an open area; this is however an occupational hazard in the Burren where I suppose one dry stone wall or patch of hazel scrub looks much like another. I would always recommend carrying a map, compass, GPS, Mobile phone and emergency supplies). I also noticed an abundance of Mossy Saxifrage, which otherwise I have seen only sparingly in the Burren.

Roadside at **Derrynahavagh**, Upper Caher River Valley, Co. Clare (M1706): 6 Wood Whites *Leptidea sinapis*.

Roadside at **Formoyle East**, Caher River Valley, Co. Clare (M1806): 1 Wood White *Leptidea sinapis*.

Both sides of road at **Carha Bridge**, Caher River Valley, Co. Clare (M1608): 3-5 Dingy Skippers; 3 Wood Whites *Leptidea sinapis*; 1 Small Blue (on north side of road); c. 15 Common Blues; 1 Peacock (faded); 3 Meadow Browns; c. 20 Small Heaths, also possible Small Tortoiseshell or Dark Green Fritillary

Roadside NW of **Carha Bridge**, Caher River Valley, at about M155087. 1 Wood White *Leptidea sinapis*

Roadside near "**Little Corkscrew Hill**" at about M2203: 1 Wood White *Leptidea sinapis* (N.B. "Little Corkscrew Hill" is not shown on 1:50,000 Map No. 51 or on Tim Robinson's large scale map of the Burren, but I saw the name in a paper in my possession on the Lepidoptera of the Burren by J.D. Bradley and E.C. Pelham-Clinton the Entomologists Gazette, I think around 1967. This says that Little Corkscrew Hill is about a mile east of Corkscrew Hill.).

Green Road at Clooncoose, from Creevagh Crossroads to near Knockaunroe crossroads, Co. Clare (c. R2795): 2 Dingy Skippers (1 female in good condition); 4 Wood Whites *Leptidea sinapis*; 2 Small Coppers; c. 12 Common Blues; 1 or 2 Dark Green Fritillaries (possibly same one seen at different times in 2 adjacent small fens at about R286952); c. 6 Meadow Browns; c. 12 Small Heaths.

I seem to recall hearing of a Marsh Fritillary colony at Clooncoose; however there appears to be no Devil's-bit Scabious in any of the 3 small fens near the house at about R286953, although I noticed it on rocky ridges above. There is however a small colony of Marsh Fritillary in damp ground at Rinnamona, a mile or two to the east and it may also occur around Lough Gealain below Mullaghmore, about a mile NE of Rinnamona.

19th June

Ballyclery north of Kinvarra, S.E. Galway (M3812): 1 Meadow Brown; 1 Small Heath

From **Lough Skeardeen** near Boston, Co. Clare, eastwards along outlet stream (R3999): c. 6 Wood Whites *Leptidea sinapis*; 1 Brimstone larva on a low bush of Purging Buckthorn; 2 Common Blues; 1 Small Heath

Castlequarter Kilkeedy/Poulroe, south of Lough Bunny (both sides of road, R3795): 2 Wood Whites *Leptidea sinapis*; several eggs of Small Blue on Kidney Vetch on west side of road (There was more Kidney Vetch on the east side of the road but I could find no eggs or adults here, although weather was favourable; c. 8 Common Blues; 1-2 Small Tortoiseshells; 2 Meadow Browns; c. 12 Small Heaths

Rinecaha/Barracks, south of Lough Bunny, Co. Clare (R3693): several Common Blues; 1 Pearl-bordered Fritillary along rocky lane; several Small Heaths

20th June

Quarry and woodland at **Sheeaun** south of Gort, S.E. Galway (R4299/M4200)
N.B. It is not possible to tell which species which were in which 10 x 10 km. square in most cases, although Meadow Browns were seen in both R49 and M40.

2 Small Coppers; 2 Common Blues; 2-3 Speckled Woods; c. 12 Meadow Browns; 2-3 Ringlets (the 1st I saw in ROI in 2014, although interestingly in Northern Ireland I saw 2 Ringlets in Co. Fermanagh on 11th June, 1 day before my 1st Meadow Brown, on 12th June in Co. Fermanagh (though there was an earlier record of Meadow Brown on 6th

June in Co. Down, as well as another record of Ringlet on 11th June in East Belfast, i.e. in Co. Down).

Rinecaha/Barracks, south of Lough Bunny, Co. Clare (R3693): 1 Large White; 1 Common Blue; 2 Marsh Fritillaries; 1 Small Heath. A small area of cut-over bog here looks just possible for Large Heath.

Lane at **Cuילוdooish, Ballinderreen**, S.E. Galway (M396151): 1 male Brimstone, near house close to main road.

Rocky limestone grassland, scrub and Schoenus fen south of lane at **Cuילוdooish, Ballinderreen**, S.E. Galway (M4015):

1 Dingy Skipper; c. 4 Wood Whites *Leptidea sinapis* including 1 female laying on Tufted Vetch *Vicia cracca*; 2 adult Small Blues together near dry stone wall, with 2 hatched eggs a little to the south on Kidney Vetch at about M4060915373; c. 6 Common Blues; 1 Speckled Wood; c. 15 Meadow Browns; c. 5 Ringlets; c. 10 Small Heaths

21st June

Attyslany east of Lough Bunny, Co. Clare (R3896): 1 Small Heath west of road; Common Blue east of road near marshy pond (I think I may have seen a Wood White *Leptidea sinapis* here but if so forgot to write it down!)

South of road at **Lough Bunny**, Co. Clare (R3896): 1-2 Dingy Skippers; 2-3 Common Blues; 1 Speckled Wood; 1 Grayling (1st I have seen this year); 1 Ringlet; 3-4 Small Heaths

Cut-over peat bog and adjacent rough grassy field at **Islandmore**, Gort, S.E. Galway (M4805): c. 4 Cryptic Wood Whites; 5-6 Meadow Browns; 5-6 Ringlets. 1 Large Heath, possibly a female as it looked light in colour, although it may have been somewhat faded (a possible one was seen from a distance a few days earlier, although it could have been a Meadow Brown, one of which was seen on the bog fairly close to the same spot on 21st June).

This is a new record for the Large Heath in Grid Square M40 (following the recording of Marsh Fritillary for the first time in the same square a few days earlier), bringing the total for this 10 x 10 km. square to 32 species, the maximum for any 10 x 10 km. square known in Ireland, and 1 more than R39 (Lough Bunny square) with 31 species (R39 has recorded Gatekeeper, but M40 has recorded Cryptic Wood White and Large Heath, otherwise the species are identical. It is however just possible that Cryptic Wood White and Large Heath might occur in R39. Grid Square

R29 has 30 species, but Cryptic Wood White and Purple Hairstreak are possible.

Track into bog north of **Lough Cullaunyheeda**, Co. Clare (R483753): 2 Meadow Browns

Peat Bog at **Derrymore East**, north-east of Lough Cullaunyheeda, Co. Clare (R4975/R5075)

R47: 1 Green-veined White; 2 Large Heaths. R57: 1 Green-veined White; 4 Large Heaths

Peat bog at **Ayle Lower**, Feakle, Co. Clare (R5382): 2 Ringlets; 6 Large Heaths

Enagh West, Kilmurry, Co. Clare (R4869/R4870): R47 - 1 Ringlet. R46 - 2-3 Meadow Browns; 2-3 Ringlets

22nd June

Field at **Leagh South** near Kinvarra, S.E. Galway (M316203): 3 or 4 Small Blues and 3 eggs on Kidney Vetch; 2 Speckled Woods; 3 Meadow Browns; 1 Ringlet; 2 Small Heaths

Funshin Beg near Kinvarra, S.E. Galway (M3307): c. 14 Small Blues; c. 6 Common Blues; c. 6 Meadow Browns; 3 Ringlets; c. 4 Small Heaths

Killeglan Grassland, Taghmaconnell, Co. Roscommon, west side of road (M8642): 1 possible Dingy Skipper; 15+ Small Blues; 50+ Common Blues; 1 Dark Green Fritillary (probably male; 1 was seen here a few years ago in August but on the other side of the road); c. 5 Marsh Fritillaries; 2 Speckled Woods; c. 50 Meadow Browns; c. 10 Small Heaths; probable Green-veined White

Esker at **Eskerbeg, Castlesampson**, Athlone, Co. Roscommon (M9440): 1-2 Dingy Skippers; 1 Cryptic Wood White *Leptidea juvernica*; c. 6 Small Blues and c. 18 eggs on Kidney Vetch; c. 5 Common Blue; 4-6 Graylings; c. 8 Meadow Browns; c. 4 Ringlets; c. 8 Small Heaths

Quarry and Bog **north of road at Castlesampson**, Athlone, Co. Roscommon (M9441): 1 Common Blue; 2 batches of Peacock caterpillars, 1 of large and other of smaller larvae, totalling 200 or more; 1 Speckled Wood; 2-3 Small Heaths; 4 Large Heaths; 1 Ringlet