

Wednesday August 4th afternoon walk report

5 of us parked at Hornby's Corner at the junction of Tarn Road and Skippool Road, Thornton and proceeded up Woodhouse Lane which leads to the last bit of Thornton's countryside not yet devoured by the developers.

Passing through the field gate at Thornton Hall Farm we were greeted by a pair of Gatekeeper butterflies. From the top of the rise we had a superb view over the Wyre Estuary and Shard Bridge with a background of the Bowland Fells, Parlick and Beacon Fell. We could make out the whale back of Longridge Fell but Pendle was lost in the mist.

A steep short drop to the Estuary where at low tide the exposed mudflats were occupied by a multitude of gulls – Great and Lesser Black-backed and Herring, plus a number of lapwing, curlew and shelduck. Barry persuaded the group to make a detour to the north to search for purple hairstreak in the old oak trees. Alas we found none but he did spot a male Greater Spotted Woodpecker high up in the canopy. There was a purple patch of Common Sea-lavender (*Limonium vulgare*) which was alive with insects including 3 small Coppers and 2 Short-winged Coneheads (*Conocephalus dorsalis*).

Towards the Yacht Club the umbels of the poisonous Hemlock Water-dropwort (*Oenanthe crocata*) had gone to seed but those of the Wild Celery (*Apium graveolens*) were still fresh. We found both Greater Sea-spurrey (*Spergularia media*) and Lesser (*S. Marina*) and a female Meadow Brown.

Past the Yacht Club and hidden by the bright yellow flowers of Perennial Sow-thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*) was the footpath which led up to the field with a greenfinch singing in the hedge and then back to Woodhouse Lane.

A gloriously sunny afternoon

Howard



Short-winged Conehead
(*Conocephalus dorsalis*)



Wild Celery
(*Apium graveolens*)



Perennial Sow-thistle
(*Sonchus arvensis*)