

CORNISH OBSERVATIONS BY ROB FOSTER – JUNE 2007

SX1062 - I found **elm in the tetrad**, but I found **none in the target km square** although I searched most of it reasonably thoroughly. I identified **no WLH caterpillars pupae or butterflies**.(7-6-07)

SW7634 - I found **elm in the target km square**. I identified **no WLH caterpillars pupae or butterflies** (9-6-07).

Note 1: Many of the elms found were **Cornish Elms** which are very small-leaved (leaf body often only about 1 inch long) and, since the mature leaves are often smooth, easily mistaken for poplars at first glance. Most occurred in small clumps suggesting they may have come up as suckers from a tree which has been lost - generally they were 20ft -35 ft, but of trunk diameter no greater than 6 or 7 inches, suggesting they were not that mature. I saw **no seed clusters** on any of these trees, nor on the slightly larger (3-4 inch) leaved trees (on Carsew farm which are presumably Cornish elm hybrids even though one of these was over 40 ft tall and had a trunk over a foot in diameter. **I saw only one tree with seed clusters** (and these quite sparse). This was by the footpath by the river at SX100 634. It was an elm with large soft leaves with scarcely any surface hairs and was clearly of a type totally unrelated to the Cornish elm.

Note 2: I watched promising trees for about 15 minutes in hot sunny conditions. I saw no butterflies. It was, admittedly, a bit early to see them at the beginning of June, even though, in Cornwall, it might be reasonable for the flight period to be earlier than in the rest of the country. I did however scare-up several medium/small brown butterflies from sunny glades whilst In wandering about km square SW7634. These invariably flew into the canopy and I did not get a good look at them. They were probably Speckled Wood, but seemed a bit smaller. In both areas, oak is a predominant tree, so confusion with Purple Hairstreak is also a possibility.

More detailed Accounts

SX1062

The km Square

General Description

The kilometre square is mostly farmland with hedges with the occasional small tree in them. The land is owned by the National Trust, but is leased by Keith Bailey living at Polmaugan Farm (SX112 623). In the centre of the km square is a rented house (SX103 625) marked Brown Queen on the map. This is accessed from the north along a drive passing through a wood of large beeches and oaks. There is also access into the kilometer square from Polmaugan Farm (SX112 623), along a farm track (not shown in the map), which broadly follows a line of pylons to Brown Queen. A farm track runs down from this through a small hollow to a farm building by a copse which is used a a pheasant coup then on towards the railway track and river (which crosses the NW corner of the square beyond.. A sunken road passes though woods on the north east corner of the square for a few hundred metres.

Access Issues

My initial approach into the km square from the lane leading towards Brown Queen was stopped by a sign saying "Private Beware Large Dog". Access following the far side of the river along

footpaths was also stopped by "Private - No Access Except for Fishermen" signs. I had much better luck approaching from Polmaugan Farm. Kieth Bailey, the farmer, was interested in what I was doing and helpful. He said there had been an elm just outside his house, but his had been killed by Dutch Elm Disease. He pointed out two small Cornish elms on the farm drive (which I had walked by without recognising them). These however fell just outside km square SX1062. He could not think of any elms in the farmland falling within the km square, but gave me permission to search his fields and pointed out the farm track leading to Brown Queen. He said it was not necessary to get further permission from the occupant of Brown Queen and not to worry about the dog which was well controlled. However, as I passed the cottage, the occupant Michael Howarth (and his indeed very large dog) came to the gate, so I introduced myself. He was suspicious and guarded, but gave me permission to carry on through the wooded lane back to the road looking for elms and even grudgingly to come back a few days later.

Areas searched

Most of the farmland and its hedgerow trees were inspected from the farm tracks. Also the copse SX103 621 and Brown Queen Woods a viewed from the lane to Brown Queen. The wooded sunken lane SX109 629. The only area not searched was the railway track and river bed SX101 621 in the extreme SW corner of the square.

Elms found and WLH seen

No elms were Found. (Although there was a hornbeam covered with seed clustered doing a very fair imitation at SX108 628).

Extended search of the Tetrad

Routes searched

On foot - Footpaths leading SW from the bridge SX100 635 through beach and oak woods along the river and railway line; the lane from the bridge up to the drive to Polmaugan Farm and the farm drive itself.

By car - all the lanes in the tetrad.

Elms found and WLH seen

SX1063

SX100 634 : on upper footpath between railway and river about 30 metres from road. **Closely-spaced group of about 6 slender elms**, greatest trunk diameter only about 7 inches, but the tallest reaching up to about 45 ft. Large soft leaves with scarcely any surface hairs. Sparse seed clusters (brown). Over-topped by ash trees, but canopy still quite sunny. *Lower branches inspected for caterpillars and pupae none found. Canopy watched in sunny conditions. No butterflies seen.*

SX101 634 : road side east of railway bridge. Two Cornish elms largest about 35 ft on the south side of the road and a tight group of **3 slender Cornish elms** going up to 30ft on the north of the road. Also on the north side of the road about 100 metres further east on the corner of drive into a house a closely spaced line of about **6 slender Cornish elms** (max 35 ft 6 inch diam). No seed clusters

Lower branches inspected for caterpillars and pupae none found. Canopy watched in sunny conditions. No butterflies seen.

SX1162

SX112 624 By the side of drive leading to Polmaugan Farm where electric pylons cross. **Two Cornish elms** largest about 25 ft. Very small leaved. No seed clusters.

Lower branches inspected for caterpillars and pupae none found. Canopy watched in sunny conditions. No butterflies seen.

Extended search of the 10 km square

This was not attempted.

It should be noted that the position of the target km square on the extreme western edge of the 10 km square precludes inclusion an area of neighbouring woodland and parkland which otherwise would be quite promising. This includes Coombes Farm where mature elms reportedly are still standing unaffected by Dutch Elms Disease.