



No. 51

# NEWSLETTER

Spring 2002

## WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH, BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

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## Chairman's Notes January 2002

### Landmark Publication by the Branch:

"Atlas of the Larger Moths and Butterflies of Herefordshire and Worcestershire-An Atlas".

After a tremendous effort by the authors Tony Simpson (moth recorder for Worcestershire) and Mike Harper (moth recorder for Herefordshire) and the compilers and editors Jim and Christine Chance, the atlas was published on schedule just before Christmas.

Tony and Mike have been recording for over thirty years in the two counties and they made available all their records for the atlas. They kindly agreed that all the proceeds from the sale of the atlas should go to branch funds.

Jim Chance was responsible for designing the map

format and, together with Christine, input all the data into the computer -an enormous task. Together they also designed, edited and printed the atlas. On behalf of the branch I would like to thank them all very much for all their hard work and congratulate them on producing a first class, high quality atlas.

This atlas represents the first time that ALL the records for the larger moths and butterflies (since recording began) have been compiled for the two counties. For the larger moths (590 species) there are three maps for each species showing (a) sightings pre-1914 (b) sightings 1914-1969 and (c) geographical distribution 1970-2000. For the butterflies (54 species) it was decided to incorporate the butterfly surveys of 1995-99 and 1970-82. As a result, the butterfly maps cover the periods pre-1970, 1970-94 and 1995-1999.

The atlas discusses the major changes over the period under the headings: significant changes, extinctions, new arrivals, newly recognised species, transient residents, migrants, increasing and declining species.

The atlas achieves the three major objectives of:

1. Providing a baseline data set on the status of the lepidoptera in the two counties in the twentieth century.
2. Assisting conservation by identifying species of concern and assigning conservation priorities.
3. Encouraging further recording.

The atlas has 211 pages plus 4 colour plates of moths and butterflies. It is wire bound with a colour cover with paintings by Richard Lewington. We have been able to secure the publication of the atlas with the generous assistance of English Nature, The Becket Bulmer Charitable Trust, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Butterfly Conservation and Faithful Limited. We have tried to keep the price as low as possible. As a result, we are able to sell to members for £7.50 per copy plus £2 P&P. Copies may be

obtained from Christine Chance (details below).

I strongly recommend this atlas to anyone with an interest in the lepidoptera of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. We now move on to the next challenge, even bigger and better, an atlas of the micro-moths.

#### 2. Committee Changes

I am delighted to tell you that Anita Ferguson has agreed to join the committee. It is good to have another representative from Staffordshire.

#### 3. Transect Coordinator

I am also very pleased to tell you that Neil Gregory has agreed to become the new transect coordinator for the branch. Neil and Corinna are currently inputting into the Transect Walker software all the historical transect data for the area. Once this is in place, it should be possible to provide much better feedback to transect walkers and site owners. Please address all queries on the transects to Neil and also send all future records to him.

• Ian Duncan

## **NEW MOTH ATLAS from the West Midlands Branch**

### **“The larger Moths and Butterflies of Herefordshire and Worcestershire” by Michael Harper and Tony Simpson**

This Atlas includes the results of over 30 years of moth recording by both authors as well as historical and other records. It contains maps of distributions and sightings for 650 species (3 maps for each), including those which are now extinct; 211 pages plus 4 colour plates of moths and butterflies, including uncommon photographs of the Small Purple Barred, Yellow-legged Clearwing and Pale Pinion. The volume is intended as the first of two. The second will describe the “smaller moths of H & W”. The whole is wire bound and has a colour cover with paintings by Richard Lewington.

#### **Prices are as follows:**

Special price for Butterfly Conservation members.....£7.50 + £2.00 post and packing  
Special price for Hfds. & Worcs. Wildlife Trust members.....£7.50 + £2.00 post and packing  
Normal price.....£10.00 + 2.00 post and packing

Orders should be sent to  
Dr. Christine Chance  
65 Wentworth Road  
Harborne  
Birmingham  
B17 9SS

Cheques should be made out to “**West Midlands Branch Butterfly Conservation**”  
To whom all proceeds will be donated.

## **Coming Events**

**Spring Meeting – 2 pm Sandwell Valley  
RSPB Nature Reserve  
Saturday 27 April 2002**

Great Slide Show!

The Spring Meeting will be an opportunity for everyone to bring and show their slides to other members. Suggest not more than about 15 slides. This has proved very popular in the past and will take the place of a formal talk. The usual quiz will be provided by last years winner Dave Porter. There will also be a raffle.

## Summer Coach Trips

### Saturday 1 June

A mini-bus trip has been arranged to Stroud Valley - Rodborough Common and Frome Valley. The target species are **Duke of Burgundy, Small Blue, Dinky Skipper, Grizzled Skipper, Marsh Fritillary** and **Pearl-bordered Fritillary**. See diary and enclosed booking slip for coach details and price. Members wishing to travel by car can rendezvous at the Bear Public House, Rodborough Common at 10.30 am.

### Sunday 14 July

Coach trip to Fermyn Wood, Northamptonshire. Target species **Purple Emperor, White-letter**

**Hairstreak** and **White Admiral** see enclosed booking slip for details of pick-up points and price

These trips will be lead by Jeff Andrews tel. 01432-870301

## Advance Notice Branch A.G.M. Saturday 16 November

This autumn the venue for the A.G.M. will be in Staffordshire. The Innovations Centre, Pool Road, Brownhills is a new building close to Chasewater and should prove an excellent setting for our meeting.

# High Brown Fritillary on the Malvern Hills

The best laid plans..... Who was to know that before any site management work could be done either by the sweat of our collective brows or by the Malvern Hills Conservators' tractor drawn bracken breaker, all access to the Hills would be forbidden by the F & M Regulations. It soon became clear that the Recording Transect would not be able to start on time, and as the months dragged by and the 19th June (the date that you can expect to see the first **High Brown**) approached, it was vital to try and find some legal way to record **High Brown** numbers.

Castlemorton Common was closed, but a call to Eastnor Park Estate Office met with a ready response to find a solution so that 14 years of records would not be interrupted. Eastnor Park was a "clean" area, and by granting us access via a private estate road, providing us with the necessary keys and organising a system of boot changing and disinfection, recording was carried out for the 5 week flight period. We restricted ourselves to 3 sections, these were the only 3 sections where **High Browns**

have been seen for the last couple of years and we were delighted to see a total of 12 during the season. This compares with 2 in 2000 and 2 in 1999, and is the biggest number since 1997.

Clearly the improved numbers are not down to site management (unless of course our management has an adverse effect!). The probable reason was the better spring weather this year after three cold, wet springs in a row. Now with the lifting of all restrictions, we can look forward to seeing the beneficial effects of the programme of controlled grazing and bracken breaking that will now be starting, albeit a year late.

We would like to record our grateful thanks to Christopher Lyons of the Eastnor Estate for finding ways around problems and for organising the support that enabled us to do the job.

• Digby Wood

# Convolvulus Hawk-moth

Early last September I was cutting the verges outside my cottage when my neighbour's children called to me to say that there was a large moth resting on the back of their gate. Curious, I went over to discover indeed a large moth, its forewings a mid brown colour with these dark grey markings. My immediate thought was Hawk-moth, perhaps it was its shape/size and bulky body. I am familiar with some of the larger Hawk-moths but this one was a puzzle.

Needing to see the hindwings I gingerly grasped the moth expecting it to try to escape but instead it firmly grasped my fingers allowing me to gently part and examine its hindwings and body. The moth was in pristine condition and after examining it I returned it to its resting place.

Straight home to my Richard South moth books where without any doubt I identified the moth as a Convolvulus Hawk-moth. The wing markings and colour were the same but the final confirmation was the bright pink and black horizontal bars and grey vertical stripe down the middle of the body.

South records this moth as sporadic in these isles, could one of our moth experts satisfy my curiosity i.e. is this moth uncommon or do modern recording methods show otherwise?

• Mike Joiner

*The recently completed "Atlas of the Larger Moths and Butterflies in Herefordshire and Worcestershire" (see page 2) describes the Convolvulus Hawk-moth as a rare migrant. Ed.*

## Shropshire Moth Group

### name change

Due to many enquiries from members within the Welsh borders, the Shropshire Moth Group has been renamed the Shropshire and Borders Moth Group, and coverage extended to parts of Montgomeryshire, Denbighshire and Flintshire.

• Peter Boardman

## Let there be Light

Why don't you get to know your garden moths? Well, I can't afford an elaborate trap and I could never identify them all anyway. Excuses! Excuses! You really don't need an expensive moth trap to enjoy recording the moths that are visiting your patch.

We've found that a shadeless table lamp placed on the window sill works just fine. We've never been overwhelmed by a huge number of unidentifiable moths, normally between three to six species a night seem to turn up. This has proved to be a brilliant way of becoming familiar with what's out there. Armed with a copy of Skinner and a bug box, we can take our time in getting the correct ID before putting the moths back where they belong. This all helps to build your confidence as you see the same species regularly and so get better at picking up the particular features needed for correct identification. Of course, you'll always get some surprises which will add to your enjoyment. In the end you may become hooked and wish to find out what all the small moths are too.

Over the last couple of years, our light bulb has helped us record many species of moth that we

didn't know were in our garden. In the year 2000 we managed to identify 34 species, of which ten were new for our garden. Included in our highlights were, seeing what a lovely shade of green the **Small Emerald** is, being amazed at the sheer size of the **Old Lady** moth that landed on our kitchen floor one wet night, looking at the superb patterns sported by the **Gothic** and **Silver Arches** through a magnifying glass and being totally surprised when we identified a **Straw Underwing**.

This year we've managed to get up to 43 species, including a fantastic **Lime Hawk-moth**, our first since 1996. Other favourites have been **Dusky Brocade**, **Swallow-tailed** moth, **Common Emerald**, **Dark Arches**, **Yellow –barred Brindle** and a superb **Grey Chi**.

So if you're not able to get hold of a sophisticated moth trap don't worry just put a light in your window and wait and see what turns up.

• Alan Prior and Val Weston

## Break-down brings time for butterfly sightings

It was a hot sunny day July last and I was on the B4224 travelling towards Hereford when my car broke down approximately 3 miles from Fownhope. With a wait of at least an hour before assistance would arrive I decided to kill time to wander over to the nearby verge. At its widest part, the verge had a dry ditch on the roadside perimeter, a cultivated field with a hawthorn hedge and a small slope coming down to the verge on the other. At first glance the area did not seem very promising, looking dry and parched, covered in parts with tall grasses with large areas close cropped by rabbits as evidenced by their droppings. As I started to slowly walk the area

dozens of grasshoppers jumped to escape my feet, then I saw my first butterflies.

**Meadow Browns** and **Ringlets** flying in the long grasses near the sloped area and then one of my favourites, a **Marbled White**, with its slow lazy flight, such a striking insect which always reminds me of summer days. Around a dozen were seen in an hour, so hopefully a small but thriving colony.

Two showy daytime moths were flying, **Burnets** (whether five or six spotted I am not sure as I couldn't get close enough to see), together with

**Cinnabars.** Buzzing over the grasses were several **Small Skippers** but only one **Large Skipper** was seen.

Growing on the roadside were brambles with the not unexpected colony of **Gatekeepers** *in situ*; nearby three **Commas** basked in the hot sun.

Whilst walking the area three whites visited i.e. **Green Veined, Small** and **Large White**, the late years female summer brood I think is one of our most attractive butterflies, beautifully marked, but I feel often underrated. A couple of **Small Heaths** were seen flying around the grassy areas, a butterfly I don't see much nowadays; a **Peacock** alighted on a thistle and quickly departed.

The cropped and bare areas produced their own surprises as I saw **Small Coppers** basking wings

outstretched in the sun looking like perfect living jewels accompanied by Small **Tortoiseshells** and **Common Blues**. Odd but all the **Common Blues** seen were females, but these were not typical females, brown with a hint of blue, but a bright mid blue fore and hind wings, so making the orange marking show vividly against the blue. I don't think I have seen prettier females of this species.

Passing motorists must have thought they were seeing a nutter, a guy with a suit and tie walking on a baking hot day around a roadside verge. Anyway I counted fourteen species of butterfly on what I initially thought not a very promising site; I was really sorry to see the breakdown truck arrive.

• Mike Joiner

## BC developing new garden survey

Recording and monitoring the changing fortunes of our butterflies and moths is what Butterfly Conservation does best. Many members take part in projects such as the existing Garden Butterfly Survey (co-ordinated by Dr Margaret Vickery), Butterflies for the New Millennium or transect monitoring. Not only does all this effort produce information that is the cornerstone of efforts to conserve butterflies and moths, but recording schemes also provide an important method of raising awareness and getting new people involved with BC's work.

We have identified a clear need for a colourful, easy, accessible project aimed at the general public and one focused on recording common butterflies and moths in gardens is an obvious choice. The survey would raise awareness, inform, stimulate and allow the public to participate directly in scientific studies. Interest in wildlife gardening has never been higher. A recent offer of a BC Garden Butterfly ID chart in the Daily Telegraph resulted in 2000 requests, and illustrates the potentially huge audience for a high profile UK garden butterfly survey.

The new garden survey will begin in April 2002 and will be run centrally, imposing no additional demands on Branch volunteers. Although it is a huge undertaking, we are confident that it will attract the attention that it deserves, giving us the opportunity to communicate with many thousands of new people. It will also build upon the Millennium Atlas in raising awareness of the plight of butterflies and their role as indicators of the health of the countryside and urban areas. Not least, it will encourage people to think about their gardens as habitat for butterflies and

moths and encourage them to grow larval foodplants and good nectar sources.

The survey (which does not yet have a title) will be promoted via the media, with features and news articles appearing from April 2002 onwards. Alan Titchmarsh, BC Vice-president and celebrity gardener has kindly agreed to be the public face of the survey, ensuring a high profile in the media. BC will also be promoting the survey at various major events next year, such as the Chelsea Flower Show and 'Gardeners' WdrLive' in Birmingham. The free survey pack will include information on butterfly gardening, a survey form, colour identification chart and information about other BC recording projects. We hope that the survey will be a useful tool for Branches to engage members of the public at events, shows, talks, guided walks etc. Posters and flyers promoting the survey will be circulated to Branch committees for use at such events.

Although aimed primarily at the general public, we would be happy, of course, for any BC members to take part in this new survey. However, we are conscious of the enormous amount of work already undertaken by Branch volunteers and would not like this new project to distract from other activities. The existing garden butterfly survey, which has generated a wealth of useful information over the past ten years, will continue along side the new scheme.

• Richard Fox  
(BC Surveys Manager)  
& Beverly Evans  
(BC Membership Development Officer)

# Linear Open Space – better than a Nature Reserve?

Does your local district council have a policy of linear open space? Have you asked your councillor or phoned the Planning Department to find out? Have you gone down to the library and asked to look at the current (or draft) **Local Plan or Unitary Development Plan**? If not please do so, then you will be well on the way to becoming more effective in your conservation activities, particularly if you convert this knowledge into the form of a well drafted letter for the attention of the Chief Planning Officer.

Dudley is an urban area with a lot of industrial history; it is therefore going through the rigours of regeneration as old smokestack industries are replaced by brownfield sites that eventually get developed into retail complexes or modern technology parks. Compared to a rural district council there is precious little open land. However, why is Dudley the only area within our branch that has recorded **Common Blue** in every tetrad and where good species habitat indicators, such as the **Small Heath** butterfly and day-flying moths, (**Burnet Companion** and **Latticed Heath**), are common? Water Voles still exist in good numbers and I recently had the experience of watching a Kingfisher fly over a manhole cover factory, quite surreal.

Put simply, there are a huge number of wildlife corridors in this urban setting. They are not called that, here they are called railway lines (used and disused), canals, brownfield sites and even gardens. Many of us grow nectar and food plants following prompts from Alan Titchmarsh. Last, but importantly not least, Dudley Council has developed a strategic policy called **Linear Open Space** to give us a sense of well being which also has wildlife benefits. Therefore any habitat, small or large in size, is almost always connected to another. The nature reserves that exist appear to flourish and species rarely die out from in-breeding or natural disaster as happens too often in the rural countryside where reserves are often too small and too isolated. In general large-scale farming appears far more effective at imitating a concrete blanket than an industrial or housing estate. I cringe when making this comment since I know some of our most important and effective members are farmers. They have become experts at balancing commercial and conservation needs and have learned the reality of sustainable development. If only their numbers were greater.

In the countryside these days it is only places like the Wyre Forest or Cannock Chase that are potentially sustainable, but even there micro-habitats have been lost and species have died out. JJ Day \* has just completed a stunning analysis of Worcestershire natural habitats where he argues against nature reserves in favour of wider landscape conservation

measures. In the Wyre he states “54 taxa have been lost through land use changes within the forest as a result of the cessation of coppicing, peripheral encroachments and enclosures, successional changes, loss of bogs and pools, deer grazing and last but not least coniferisation. The story here is one of steady degradation and a continuing attrition as special micro-habitats are lost one by one. Even within areas of high wildlife value, the need for conservation of minor landscape features is necessary.” This statement highlights the work of Frank Lancaster over the last ten years, without him the situation would have been much worse. His initial efforts in Wyre have been developed on a national basis by Martin Warren and it now appears Forest Enterprise are fully on board with an effective strategic plan for wildlife conservation over all their land. Anyone who doubts this statement should contact David Jackson who attended a joint meeting with Forest Enterprise and three local councils, the joint landowners, to discuss the future land use map for Cannock Chase. He only had to suggest where open land and wide wildlife corridors should be located and it was agreed; his case was supported by data from the Millennium Atlas project. An example how individual effort can eventually have a national impact.

The future for some of our **Fritillaries** therefore is promising. But the Millennium Atlas clearly shows many other species are already in crisis and suggests that even common ones, such as **Small Copper**, are approaching danger levels. It is unrealistic to expect the human species to give up economic activity in favour of wildlife. However, as Dudley appears to be proving, it is quite possible that conservation and commerce can successfully coexist so long as forethought is given to the planning process followed by appropriate habitat management. Matters should get even better since the advent of the LA21 Policy as the borough's hedges and their margins get less cutting and spraying whilst municipal parks are also to get wildlife corners. Of course things are not perfect in Dudley otherwise we would not have the Hawne Colliery situation. I do find it ironic that an urban council with its correspondingly high rateable values encourages **Linear Open Space** that is giving the area excellent biodiversity. Telford and Redditch are further urban examples of good practice.

If only this were the case with rural district councils where there is not only ‘set aside’ but now many acres of unprofitable farmland. Why can't some of this land be converted into wildlife corridors linking together the various nature reserves? Indeed why couldn't these corridors be surrounded by ‘extensive’ farming practices that would encourage the reappearance of natural grasslands and flower rich

meadows? If this happened then rural Trenchwood might be as effective as urban Saltwells!

My hope is that this article will encourage you to look at your local patch in a way that will persuade decision-makers in councils, commerce and agriculture to accommodate wildlife into their approach to business. It will rarely cost them much. As the British Aerospace PLC executive said on the BBC Countryfile item on the Wyre Forest conservation success story of the **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** and **Grizzled Skipper** "It's been no hassle. After an approach by a volunteer from Butterfly Conservation we have easily adapted our grounds maintenance regime and are delighted at the

outcome." Yes, I think we all are.

If everyone does as suggested the prognosis for butterflies will be good. However, we must also hope that John Prescott recommends housing and commercial estates should be built in corridors starting from town centres and going through the Green Belt into the rural deserts rather than trying to eliminate all wildlife on brownfield sites! Now that would be 'joined up' thinking.

• Richard Southwell

\* Natural Areas of Worcestershire, J.J. Day, Worcestershire Record 10, April 2001

## Transect Walking Update

We are currently busy transferring data into the Transect Walking Software from all the transects within the region. Fig 1 shows the present state of play with this rather large task:

Number of recorded transects: 92
Total number of years walked: 607
Number of full weekly data sets on the database: 85
Number of annual summary data sets on the database: 211
Number of records presently held: 51541

FIG 1

We are very grateful to all the recorders for spending all this time recording, and we hope to bring a more detailed picture of the data as more is entered into the computer. The analysis will include the number

of sites where increases and decreases in numbers occurred, regional flight periods and various other results. We will be contacting the various recorders throughout the year to obtain the full weekly data sets for all the transects, so if these haven't already been sent in then we would be very grateful for them.

Do contact me if you would like more information about Transect Walking and the Transect Walker Software (available from the butterfly conservation web-site: <http://www.butterfly-conservation.org>). We are still looking for a walker for Perry Wood in Worcester as this is an excellent walk that has been walked since 1985 and would like to hear from any interested party to start on 1st April.

• Corinna and Neil Gregory

## Leaf Miners - 6 October 2001

Following Tony Simpson's practical guidance on Pyralid Moths, we were privileged to be given a talk on Leaf Miners by Michael Harper (Herefordshire Moth Recorder). This was an eye-opening demonstration of what the miners look like, where to find them and how to distinguish them from fly miners. The talk was accompanied by various detailed slides showing select examples of the many hundreds of species. Following this, Michael led a practical session in the Wyre Forest itself, where we were able to find some miners ourselves and to put

our new-found knowledge into practice.

Next October, Tony Simpson will be leading another practical session about leaf miners, again in the Wyre Forest (see Diary for details). We would encourage people of all levels of experience to attend, as this is a fun way of beginning to look at a very interesting insect.

• Corinna and Neil Gregory

## Brown Hairstreaks by the hundred!

Searching for adult Hairstreak butterflies or, even worse, trying to photograph them, can often be a frustrating business, as anyone who has tried will confirm. **Green Hairstreaks** sit around on Hawthorn bushes for most of the day and remain infuriatingly invisible. **Purple Hairstreaks** hang about for hours at the top of Oak trees only deigning to fly when everyone has gone home. **White letter Hairstreaks**

only ever descend to ground level while you are changing the film in your camera or when your back is turned. **Black Hairstreaks** are found miles away and, whenever you decide to set off to try to see them, it always rains. And as for **Brown Hairstreaks**.....well they are just next to impossible. The late Jack Green, who rediscovered the butterfly in Worcestershire in the late 60s, once told me that

he had kept a **Brown Hairstreak** in view for a whole hour during which time it was in flight for less than forty seconds. Our own annual **Brown Hairstreak** days, usually centred on our reserve at Grafton Wood, attract enthusiasts from far and wide (this year's is on 1st September) and is conducted like a military operation. After an initial roll call, orders for the day are issued and crack teams are sent out to all points of the compass fully armed (with a mobile phone!), under instruction to ring in to central command when the quarry is sighted. At this point, a general alert is sounded and all troops head for the rendezvous point by the shortest possible route and in the quickest achievable time. Over the years, we have fine tuned our campaign to such a degree that the **Brown Hairstreaks** now give themselves up at the earliest opportunity so that we can all go away happy and they can be left in peace to crawl around blackthorn bushes, and whatever else they get up to, for the rest of the day. On our last open day, a long suffering female was even prepared to stay put on a small oak tree while it was bent double to bring it within camera range.

If this sounds just too much like hard work or perhaps a little too silly, there is an alternative – you could search for **Brown Hairstreak** eggs! **Brown Hairstreak** egg hunting it must be admitted is not to everyone's taste and requires serious levels of patience and a good eye but success can be guaranteed which is more than one can say about searching for the adults. It also has a serious purpose in that it gives us a good indication of how the butterfly is faring and, in the context of Grafton Wood, whether our management is benefiting the butterfly. The Worcestershire colony is almost certainly the best monitored in the country with annual egg counts dating back to 1970 and continuing to the present day. In the early years, relatively few eggs were recorded but, since management around the wood started in earnest in the 90s, numbers have been much higher. In good years, we have recorded well over 500 eggs just around Grafton Wood itself. The basic methodology of counting has remained unchanged throughout the past thirty years and we now hold an impressive data set. Basically, each section of blackthorn is given a code letter and is allocated a search time (person

hours) which is kept to each year irrespective of how many volunteers are involved. For each egg found, a height measurement is taken and it is also noted whether the egg has been laid singly or whether it is part of a larger cluster. Over the years, this has given us a good insight into the ecology of the butterfly and we have been able to develop management prescriptions based on this knowledge. We are fortunate that most of the key area falls within the Grafton Wood SSSI and we have been able to secure annual funding from English Nature to pay for cutting of blackthorn stands on rotation by contractors. This has been supplemented by our own volunteer work teams and, from time to time, various outside groups such as Stourbridge College. Female **Brown Hairstreaks** find young regenerating blackthorn very attractive for egg laying and these areas generally produce good counts for the first couple of years after cutting but then begin to decline as the blackthorn thickets again mature. Within the nature reserve itself, we are also opening up new glades, as well as reintroducing coppice management, to encourage blackthorn and, over the past two years, we have been delighted to record eggs within the main body of the wood as well as along the woodland edge. Once the core area has been monitored in this way, and if we have time, we have undertaken egg searches of a wider area and have slowly built up a picture of the total distribution of the butterfly in the county.

All this, of course, takes time and resources and there is no doubt even more could be achieved with extra help. Do come along on 1st September and join in all the fun but also think about making a commitment to help with the winter egg searches (which can be fun too!). Full training is on offer and there is the added incentive of hot soup in the local pub at lunchtime. This year's count is now well underway and it looks as if 2001/2 is shaping up to be a record year. By the time this newsletter is published, the core area count should near completion but we will still need help in targeting new areas. Please get in touch with Trevor Bucknall for full details. You too can see **Brown Hairstreaks** by the hundred!

• Mike Williams

## Book Review

**Les Papillons de jour de France, Belgique et Luxembourg et leurs chenilles** by **Tristan Lafranchis**. Published by Collection Parthenope, 2000, paperback £28 (+ £4.50 postage)\*

After the relatively impoverished butterfly fauna of the British Isles, a visit to continental Europe can be both amazing and bewildering to the unsuspecting holidaymaker. All those look-a-like Fritillaries and Blues, to say nothing of up to fifteen species of Grizzled Skipper – where does one begin? Up to

now, there has not been an easy answer to this question. Obviously there are some good European guides – Tolman, Chinery and Whalley perhaps the best of those currently available – but you cannot beat a guide specific to the country you are visiting. France is perhaps the no. 1 destination for British butterfly buffs but up to now a good identification guide has been lacking. This new book by Tristan Lafranchis more than fills this gap. Nearly 450 pages of text covers every single species found in France with the Benelux countries included as a

bonus. Introductory chapters cover the morphology and biology of butterflies and this is supplemented by a section on butterflies and man. This section makes interesting reading and it is perhaps depressing that the same pressures on the countryside that we have witnessed in the UK are beginning to be felt in France. As in Britain, man can be seen as “ennemi numero un” whether through agricultural intensification, increased urbanisation or improvements to infrastructure. Part of the new Paris – Toulouse motorway, for example, was built through an area where 82 species of butterfly had been recorded. Nevertheless, France remains a fantastically rich country for butterflies as is witnessed by the chapter on butterfly gardening which refers to an area of land in the Cevennes of less than three hectares which supports 125 species. The heart of the book, however, is the species accounts which provide detailed information on ways of identifying the butterfly, historic and recent distribution (to department level in France), life cycle and habitat. The photographs are of an extremely high standard often showing both upper and underside and supplemented in the majority of cases by excellent paintings of the caterpillar stage. The detailed distribution maps are a real aid to identification enabling one to see clearly what

species are likely to occur in the particular region visited. Just as in Britain, there are a number of species in France which are very geographically restricted and the book should help in planning any expeditions targeted at particular butterflies. Particularly helpful and innovative is the inclusion of keys for each family and sometimes sub-family which help to distinguish differences between superficially similar species. These keys provide a lot of new pointers to identification that I have not seen in other guides. For those who struggle with the French language, a general key in English is included as an appendix. In short, this is a brilliant book setting new standards for butterfly field guides at a European level. However limited your French, this is a book well worth obtaining but, given the number of UK visitors to France, I am sure there would also be an even bigger market for an English translation if one could be produced.

• Mike Williams

\* Available from Hillside Books, 1 Hillside Avenue, Canterbury, Kent CT2 8ET (tel. 01227 769924 or email: [ir@insects.demon.co.uk](mailto:ir@insects.demon.co.uk))

## Dowles Brook is no Amazon

Where is Dowles Brook you may well ask! Geographically it flows west to east through the heart of the Wyre Forest into the River Severn. O.S. Map 138 GR 779763. At sometime in history it was decreed that the north bank be recorded as the Shropshire boundary and the corresponding south bank be Worcestershire. For the past twelve years I have walked a section of the northern bank – Shropshire in accordance with the criteria applicable to transect recording. I am lead to believe that my transect records relevant to Shropshire have been encompassed in those of Worcestershire. **The thin blue line:** Butterflies have a complete disregard for man made bureaucracy and no doubt each and every butterfly species recorded on the

aforementioned transect has transgressed the county boundary. I would venture to suggest that many sightings within Wyre Forest by members over many years have misquoted the county – if at all. **Ring Fenced:** Without wishing to be pragmatic, might I venture and propose that Wyre Forest be Ring Fenced and quoted in isolation – without reference to county. This principle was adopted by the Wyre Forest Society in the 1980's. For the record I photographed a pristine **Monarch** butterfly in 2001 in a garden adjacent to Wyre Forest, Worcestershire – last recorded in Worcestershire 1995.

• Frank Lancaster

## Letter

With interest I noted the last Newsletter observations concerning the success of particular species/families of butterflies in 2001. Whilst I mostly agree with the comments regarding the whites, blues, browns and skippers my observations regarding the nymphalidae were in complete contrast. I would point out that my observations were in my own area – Herefordshire.

**Red Admirals** and **Peacocks** – very good numbers and fair to good numbers of **Commas** and **Painted Ladies** , but the highlight was the greatly increased

number of **Small Tortoiseshells**; I saw more in 2001 than probably the previous five years.

Going back to the browns, I saw more **Small Heaths** than for some time, but in contrast **Holly Blues** for the last two years have been scarce, only two observed last year when before this they were plentiful. Hopefully 2002 will see a resurgence.

• Mike Joiner

# **Butterfly Conservation West Midlands Branch**

## **Minutes of the AGM**

### **Dinedor, Hereford, 20th October 2001**

The chairman, Ian Duncan, opened the proceeding by welcoming everybody to the first AGM to be held in Herefordshire. Apologies were received from Ian Hart, Digby Wood, Jenny Joy, Ron Hatton, Richard Lamb, Dave Grundy and Martyn Davies. The minutes of the previous AGM were approved and there were no matters arising. The following committee members were re-elected after 3 years office: Ron Hatton, Richard Lamb, Jeff Andrews, Mark Farmer and Dave Jackson. The co-opted members were Anita Ferguson, Dave Grundy, Ian Hart and Dave Haslam.

In his Chairman's report Ian Duncan highlighted the successes for the branch over an active past year year:

- There are now 472 branch members (with 25 new members since the last AGM), bringing the total ever closer to the target of 500. We now receive £6 per member from Head Office, so this is a substantial source of income.
- Despite reduced recording due to Foot and Mouth Disease restrictions, 60% of the 37 transects have been walked this year. Many thanks to all Transect Walkers.
- The excellent Millennium Atlas of butterflies has been published, and the publication of the atlas of butterflies and larger moths of Herefordshire and Worcestershire is imminent. This will be followed by the publication of an atlas of micro moths in 2002. All proceeds from the atlas will go directly to the branch. Many thanks to the authors, Tony Simpson and Michael Harper, to Jim and Christine Chance for inputting all the data and preparing it for publication, and also to the sponsors of the publication: English Nature, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Butterfly Conservation, Faithful Ltd and the Bulmer Beckett Trust.
- Moth recording continues to go from strength to strength. English Nature has again provided funding for a generator, which will be used mainly for recording in Herefordshire. We welcome any new moth recorders to attend moth nights.
- The Haugh Wood butterfly trail is now open and is well worth visiting.
- The following money was given to branch projects: £500 for the Haugh Wood butterfly trail, £500 towards the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Moth and Butterfly Atlas, £500 towards the Staffordshire Moth Atlas and £600 for a chain saw.
- A future project will be to raise funding for a Regional Development Officer.

The chairman ended his report by stating that all of this work has been carried out by volunteers and he expressed his thanks to the committee and other members.

#### **Treasurer's Report**

Terry Smith said that the branch remains in profit, with an increase in subscriptions since last year. Donations and grants have also increased, although fundraising has decreased. Newsletter costs have increased, although travel costs have decreased now that we no longer own the van. A balance of £11,893.17 has been brought forward. The accounts were approved by the members present.

Ian Duncan added that the finances are looking healthy, and expressed his gratitude on behalf of the branch to Jancis Smith, who will be standing down as Treasurer.

#### **Conservation Officers' Report**

Trevor Bucknall (Worcestershire) said that there was not a lot to report this year due to Foot and Mouth Disease restrictions. However, progress has been made in relations with local landowners. The owners of the Solden Estate (near Grafton Wood) are monitoring Brown Hairstreak. The owners of Ranscombe Coppice (near Abberley) are undertaking positive management for Wood White and Dingy Skipper, although are still looking for grants for this work.

Andy Nicholls (Herefordshire) reported that Herefordshire had been affected badly by Foot and Mouth Disease, with many areas only being opened to walkers the day before the AGM. On a more positive note, strong links have been forged with Forest Enterprises, (especially in Queens Wood and Haugh Wood) and the farmers stewardship scheme (Bircher Common).

Pete Boardman (Shropshire) reported that recording of Large Heath has been up and down this year due to weather conditions. Management continues at Whixall Moss, with the area becoming wetter and richer in food plants. Two new sites for Dingy Skipper and one for Grizzled Skipper have been discovered in an active quarry (with no public access) in the Oswestry Uplands. Positive links with the quarrying company are currently being sought.

Richard Southwell reported that Green Hairstreak has increased in many urban areas this year, although Meadow Brown, Small Heath and Orange Tip have had a poor year.

Ian Duncan expressed his thanks to Jenny Joy for writing the reports and stated that the next RAP review will be in 2002.

## Moth Report

Neil Gregory (Worcestershire) echoed Ian Duncan's sentiments that moth recording is progressing well. He noted that there have been around 25 events in Worcestershire, with approximately 450 species of macro moth recorded. The joint event with the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust at the Knapp and Papermill was a successful evening, with over 40 local people attending. The two 'education' events (about Pyralid Moths and Leaf Miners) held in the Wyre Forest were very interesting, and we would encourage people of all levels of knowledge to come to such events next year. Details will be on the moth website (<http://www.droitwich.btinternet.co.uk/moth/index.html>), which so far has received over 1000 hits and has attracted new members. Jeff Andrews (Herefordshire) reported that there has been little moth activity in Herefordshire due to Foot and Mouth Disease restrictions.

Pete Boardman (Shropshire) reported that Satin Lutestring and Cloaked Carpet have been recorded. The newly-formed Shropshire moth group held six public events, all of which were well attended.

There being no other business, the meeting closed and was followed by an interesting talk by Nick Greatorex-Smith about the Butterfly Monitoring Scheme.

Thanks go to Jeff Andrews and Andy Nicholls for organising the event and Beryl Petters for providing the delicious baking.

**BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION  
WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH  
INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT  
FOR THE YEAR TO 30TH JUNE 2001**

	2001		2000
	£	£	£
<b>INCOME</b>			
	2,686.00		2,180.00
SUBSCRIPTIONS	7,232.46		5,365.65
DONATIONS, GRANTS ETC.	139.96		82.57
INVESTMENT INCOME	256.19		461.07
FUND RAISING	<u>10,314.61</u>		<u>8,089.29</u>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>	1,162.39		988.67
POSTAGE, PRINTING ETC.	1,034.79		1,926.09
TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ETC.			393.60
ADVERTISING, PROMOTION	5,799.83		4,590.61
CONSERVATION	480.51		390.35
OTHER	147.92		277.71
VAT	<u>8,625.44</u>		<u>8,567.03</u>
	<u>1,689.17</u>		<u>- 477.74</u>
<b>EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE</b>			
(2000 EXCESS EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME)	<u>10,204.00</u>		<u>10,681.74</u>
<b>BROUGHT FORWARD FROM LAST YEAR</b>			
	<u>£ 11,893.17</u>		<u>£ 10,204.00</u>
<b>TOTAL BRANCH FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>			
<b>FUNDS ARE REPRESENTED BY:</b>			
CURRENT ACCOUNT-	3,821.91		993.13
DEPOSIT ACCOUNT	7,800.76		9,379.87
STOCK OF GOODS FOR RESALE	270.50		207.50
LESS: MONIES OWED BY THE BRANCH			<u>- 376.50</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<u>£ 11,893.17</u>		<u>£ 10,204.00</u>
<b>FREES HEATH APPEAL FUND</b>	£ 31,810.58		£ 30,789.36

These Accounts have been prepared from the returns submitted to the main society's auditors and are in accordance with the Branch's books and records.

JANCIS SMITH  
HONORARY BRANCH TREASURER

## Instructions for Contributors

Please see the last Newsletter for instructions for contributors (Space is scarce in this Newsletter)

**Deadline for Spring Newsletter contributions is  
Monday 1 July 2002**

# Butterfly records for 2001

As most of you will know, so-called 'casual' records of butterflies are kept separately from the Transect records and sent to Head Office at the end of each year. The 2001 records were sent to Jim Asher in early January. Most butterfly spotters took note of my request last year to send the records in early December, many thanks. This made life much easier for me when entering them to the Levana computer program. Unfortunately, another thing that made it easier to save the records, is that there were so few of them. There were 2476 sightings for 2001, compared to 4017 for 2000. I am sure that Foot and Mouth disease was largely responsible for this as many people recorded from just one location, presumably as their travelling was curtailed. By the

way, those who have used Levana may be interested to know that a new version has been written which runs properly under the Windows operating system and is currently being tested. I will keep you posted on progress via these pages.

A recording form is enclosed. Please photocopy the 'business side' before use so that you always have a blank form. Perhaps I can also remind everybody that it is IMPOSSIBLE to enter records with no Grid Reference to Levana and so such records cannot get put onto a computer.

- Jim Chance (Branch Recorder)

## Conservation Corner

I used to find the English winters long and slightly depressing but since I am become involved with Butterfly Conservation they have flown by. This is largely because I have always got a long list of things I would like to do (contacting site owners about important colonies, going on visits to see site owners, maintaining contact with recorders, liaison with organisations such as Forest Enterprise, English Nature and the Wildlife Trusts, applying for funding for projects for the following year and so on....) and by March I am usually only part way down the list! This winter is no exception and I can already see that I am not going to achieve a fraction of the things I wanted to.

I find that letters and records from butterfly recorders commonly arrive just before Christmas. One letter I have regularly received at this time of year for a number of years is from John Brown who lives at Shifnal in Shropshire. John has been carrying out butterfly counts on a field at Kemberton which his son-in-law has "permanently set-aside" since 1997 and which was planted with wild grasses. The aim of John's counts have been to look at the effect of this area of "permanent set-aside" on butterfly populations. The main conclusion from this study drawn by John is that meadow browns have definitely benefited from the set-aside scheme. The numbers John counted on each walk in July increased from 3 or 4 in 1997 to 7 or 8 in 1998 to 40+ in the next three years. In contrast, the numbers of **Gatekeeper** stayed fairly constant. Projects like this one undertaken by John are a very valuable way of collecting data as they do actually show whether or not these schemes are working. It is particularly important at the moment as the amount of money available under various agri-environmental schemes is on the increase and as a society I would like to see us more involved locally in monitoring their effectiveness. In this context I was very pleased when one of the local DEFRA (formerly MAFF)

officers recently approached us to see if Butterfly Conservation could visit a privately owned site which was being considered for Countryside Stewardship. It is a site which is likely to support fritillaries and DEFRA wanted advice on a bracken management plan for the site. In the latest national butterfly news a short article entitled 'new report on the future of agri-environment schemes' (number 79, p21) states 'the budget for England's agri-environmental schemes in 2001 was around £200 million, a fraction of the total 2.9 billion paid to farmers in the UK every year through the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)'. Although this article also draws attention to the way BC is helping to monitor these schemes through our butterfly transects, I currently know very little about the sites involved in agri-environmental schemes in Shropshire (or in any other West Midland county) or whether or not they are monitored. David Grundy reports that the Countryside Stewardship scheme has been 'invaluable in Walsall as it has paid for major restoration work on two important heathland sites (Brownhills and Pelsall North) and has definitely benefited the specialist moth fauna. Other recent schemes in Walsall include creating a 2 hectare wildflower meadow using hay from Motte Meadows in Staffordshire, and creation of over 4 hectares of additional heathland at Barr Beacon using local seed sources'.

One area of Worcestershire which has recently come under the media spotlight is the Wyre Forest. This was the result of English Nature contracting in a specialist machine to clear the rides and remove tree stumps over a large section of the NNR. As **Pearl-bordered Fritillaries** had virtually disappeared from this part of the forest over the last few years, they are likely to benefit from this extensive ride clearance work as it will provide additional flight corridors, links new areas of coppice and could also provide suitable breeding habitat. As the current status of both the **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** and the

**Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** is not currently known throughout the Wyre Forest complex, one of the main aims for the branch this year is to carry out a large survey of the forest. While we do have the data from the butterfly transects which have been carried out here for a number of years, the problem with these transects is that they are static and that the falling numbers of **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** records may simply reflect the fact that these butterflies have moved on to different parts of the forest (i.e. have moved from one clear felled area to another). For this reason, we hope that future monitoring of the forest will involve both butterfly transects and targeted survey of recent clearings. As we are keen for branch members to become involved in the survey of the whole Wyre Forest complex, we have already organised two survey days during May for **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** and one in June for the **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** (for dates and times see the back of this magazine). On the two dates in May we shall also be surveying for the **Argent** and **Sable** and **Drab Looper** moths. These are both nationally high priority species which are day-flying and have been recorded in the Wyre Forest in the past. They have also been chosen as two of the main moth species for West Midland Branch members to target during 2002. Those of you who know the Wyre Forest will know what a huge job

this survey will be. So please do come and join us for a day as we will need all the help we can get and you may even see a moth you have never seen before.

Other things happening during 2002 include a special study by Peter Boardman to mark the 10th year of transect recording at Fenn's, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses. Peter reports that these ten years of data will help to identify any trends and changes which have resulted from the bog restoration work which has been carried out here since large-scale commercial peat extraction ceased in early 1990. Key species such as **Large Heath**, **Green Hairstreak** and **Dingy Skipper** occur on the transects, as well as a good selection of more common ones. It is also important to monitor butterflies away from the transect areas as it may be that **Large Heath** colonies have moved in response to the rise in water levels during the early stages in bog restoration.

Thanks to John Brown, Dave Grundy and Peter Boardman for the information which made this piece possible.

• Jenny Joy

## Pearl-bordered Fritillary in the Wyre Forest

During 2002, in collaboration with Forest Enterprise and English Nature, we hope to cover a large part of the Wyre Forest in an extensive survey for the **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** (see conservation corner). We urgently need to ascertain its current status as this is largely unknown outside the existing butterfly transects yet this is one of the most important areas for this species in the West Midlands area. As two regionally high priority day-flying moth species are also on the wing at this time (**Argent and Sable** and **Drab Looper**) we also aim to record these species as part of this survey. Later on in the summer, we will also be surveying the Wyre forest area for **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary**. We therefore need as many volunteers as possible to join us in this search. Travel expenses can be applied for (please contact Jenny for further details). So please do come along and help us search for butterflies and moths on one

or all three of the following dates see diary for details.

- **Sunday 19 May** - Target species **Pearl-bordered Fritillary**, **Argent and Sable** and **Drab Looper**
- **Sunday 26 May** - Target species **Pearl-bordered Fritillary**, **Argent and Sable** and **Drab Looper**.
- **Tuesday 18 June** - Target species **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary**.
- Anyone who would like a form to join in the recording of the **Argent and Sable** and the **Drab Looper** please contact Neil & Corinna Gregory 01905 771623 email [droitwich@binternet.com](mailto:droitwich@binternet.com)

## Dates for Your Diary—Workdays and Butterfly Walks

### FEBRUARY

- 17 **February (Sunday) Conservation Task Great Whitley (Walsgrove Hill)** Meet at 10 am at Great Whitley OS map 150 GR SO752662, leader Trevor Bucknall tel 01905 755757.
- 23 **February (Saturday) Conservation task at Ounsdale School, Ounsdale Rd. Wombourne.** School grounds need management. Bramble cutting and hedge lopping. Meet 11.00 am at the school. GR

SO866931. Details contact Anita Ferguson tel 01902 892187.

- 24 **February (Sunday) Conservation task – Trench Wood NR.** Meet 10.00 am at the reserve entrance on Sale Green – Dunhampstead Rd. OS map 150 SO929588.
- 24 **February (Sunday) Conservation task – Witney Wood.** Meet 10.30 am at the entrance to the walled garden at rear of Dulas Court. Coppicing with hand tools. Map 149 GR SO

**MARCH**

- 3 March (Sunday) Conservation task Monkwood.** Meet 10.00 am in the reserve car park just off the Sinton Green – Monkwood Green Rd. Glade management. OS map 150 GR SO 803603.
- 10 March (Sunday) Conservation task Grafton Wood.** Meet 10.00 am at three Parishes Hall Grafton Flyford (next to the church). Just off the A422 the Worcester – Stratford Rd. OS map 150 GR SO 963557.
- 16 March (Saturday) Haugh Wood working party.** Meet at 11.00 am in the car park. Map 149 GR SO593363. Details Jeff Andrews tel 01432 870301.
- 24 March (Sunday) Conservation Task Trench Wood NR** Meet 10.00 am at the reserve entrance on Sale Green – Dunhampstead Rd. OS map 150 GR SO929588

**APRIL**

- 27 April (Saturday) Spring Meeting Sandwell Valley R.S.P.B. Nature Reserve.** Members slides, quiz and raffle – refreshments. Details page 3
- 28 April (Sunday) Grafton Wood open day.** 11.00 am – 5.00 pm park at Three Parishes Hall, Grafton Flyford (next to church). Just off the A422 – the Worcester – Stratford Rd. OS map 150 GR SO963557. Guided bluebell walks. Crafts, Children's competitions. Wildlife displays, delicious home-made refreshments. Free admission. For further details contact John Tilt on 01386 792458

**MAY**

- 19 May (Sunday) Wyre Forest - target species Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Argent and Sable and Drab Looper.** Travel expenses can be applied for (please contact Jenny for further details). Meet at the car park by the Wyre Forest Visitor Centre at 10.00 am. GR SO750739. Contact Jenny Joy for further details tel 01952 245684
- 26 May (Sunday) Wyre Forest – target species Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Argent and Sable and Drab Looper.** Travel expenses can be applied for (please contact Jenny for further details). Meet at the car park by the Wyre Forest Visitor Centre at 10.00 am. GR SO750739. Contact Jenny Joy for further details tel 01952 245684

**JUNE**

- 1 June (Saturday) Abberley Hill target species Wood White and Dingy Skipper.** Meet at Hundred House PH 11.00 am map 150 GR SO752662 details Trevor Bucknall tel 01905 755757
- 1 June (Saturday) Mini-bus trip to Rodborough Common and Frome Valley.** Target species

**Duke of Burgundy, Small Blue, Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper, Marsh Fritillary and Pearl-bordered Fritillary.** Details page 3

- 2 June (Sunday) Bury Ditches.** Meet at the car park at 11.00 am. Turn right up the hill at Clunton sign-posted Bury Ditches GR SO334839 Target species **Wood White** and **Green Hairstreak**. Contact Bill Davidson 01588 640727
- 18 June (Tuesday) target species Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary.** Travel expenses can be applied for (contact Jenny for details). Meet at the car park by the Wyre Forest Visitor Centre at 10.00 am GR SO750739. Contact Jenny Joy tel 01952 245684
- 19 June (Wednesday) BBC Gardeners World Live** National Exhibition Centre 19 June – 23 June
- 22 June (Saturday) Cannock Chase – target species Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary.** Meet 11.00 am at the Cannock Chase Visitor Centre, Marquis Drive map 128 GR 023151 details David Jackson tel 01902 344716
- 30 June (Sunday) Highgate Common.** Meet 2.00 pm Bircher Coppice car park White House Lane GR SO841900 Staffordshire Wildlife Trust invite Butterfly Conservation to join them on this wildlife walk. Further details contact Anita Ferguson 01902 892187

**JULY**

- 13 July (Saturday) Grafton Wood , White Admiral Day.** Meet 11.00 am at Three Parishes Hall, Grafton Flyford (next to church). Just off the A422 – the Worcester – Stratford Rd. OS map 150 GR SO963557
- 13 July (Saturday) Baggeridge Country Park near Sedgley.** Target species **White Letter Hairstreak**. Meet at the visitor centre car park 11.00 am. Joint walk with Wolverhampton R.S. P.B. 1.5 miles each way to Himley Hall and back. Bring packed lunch. Café and toilets on site. From A449 Kidderminster to Wolverhampton Rd take the A463 Wodehouse Lane to Baggeridge Country Park on right. Follow track to centre car park. Map 139 GR SO896937 details David Jackson tel 01902 344716
- 14 July (Sunday) Coach trip to Fermyn Wood – Northants.** Target species **Purple Emperor, White Letter Hairstreak and White Admiral.** Details page 3
- 14 July (Sunday) Dudmaston Estate.** The National Trust is holding a day focusing on butterflies and moths, the target butterfly species is the **White Admiral**. Moths—9.30 am **White Admiral** 1.00 pm. Park in the main car park by the Hall. OS map 138 SO748887 Lead by Adrian Miles tel 07721 236074
- 21 July (Sunday) joint walk with the Dragonfly Society and Wild life Activity Centre** in the Smestow Valley – Wolverhampton. Meet at 2.00 pm at the iron gates of the former Central

Plant Nursery off Westacre Crescent, Compton.  
GR SO879983 details David Jackson tel 01902  
344716

- 28 July (Sunday) The Bog.** Meet at the car park at 11.00 am. Target species **Grayling**. GR SO357977 contact Bill Davidson tel 01588 640727

#### AUGUST

- 18 August (Sunday) 10.00 am Blackthorn management for the Brown Hairstreak.** Meet at Grafton Church promptly to drive in convoy to work site. Lunchtime refreshments provided. OS map 150 GR SO535366. For details contact Trevor Bucknall tel 01905 755757

#### SEPTEMBER

- 1 September (Sunday) 11.00 am Hairstreak**

**day, Grafton Wood.** Meet at Grafton Church (see 13 July for details). Led walk in search of adult **Brown Hairstreaks**. Further information from Mike Williams on tel 01299 824860

#### OCTOBER

- 12 October (Saturday) Monkwood a Fungal Foray with Diane and Tim Bateman.** Meet in the car park 10.30 am (probably lasting until about 1.00 pm) OS map 150 GR SO804606

#### NOVEMBER

- 15 November (Saturday) 2.00 pm Annual General Meeting, The Innovations Centre, Pool Road, Brownhills, near Chasewater.** Further details next Newsletter.

### Dates for your Diary — Moths

**It is essential to contact the leader if you wish to attend these events. We often go on from the meeting place and would hate to leave you behind!**

**Contact details:**

**Jeff Andrews:** 01432 87030; **Pete Boardman:** 07968 331346 (after 6pm); **Ian Duncan:** 01684 568415;

**Neil and Corinna Gregory** (also for **Michael Harper** and **Tony Simpson** as leaders): 01905 771623

**Dave Grundy:** 0121 3609464 (day) 0121 4465446 (eve); **Jenny Joy:** 01952 245684

**Mike Williams:** 01299 824860; **Rosemary Winnall:** 01299 266929 (day) 01299 266489 (eve)

#### APRIL

- 19 April Wyre Forest 19.30.** Meet car park for Wyre Forest Visitor Centre off A4117, west of Bewdley. NB exact location to be decided later. OS Map 138, SO749740. Leader: Rosemary Winnall

#### MAY

- 11 May Haugh Woods 20.00.** Meet in car park. OS Map 149 SO593365. Leader Jeff Andrews
- 17 May Wyre Forest 20.00.** Meet car park for Wyre Forest Visitor Centre off A4117, west of Bewdley. NB exact location to be decided later. OS Map 138, SO749740. Leader: Rosemary Winnall
- 18 May Wigmore Rolls 10.30.** Target species: **Argent and Sable and Drab Looper.** Meet at the Compasses public house in Wigmore. OS Map 137 SO415690. Leader Michael Harper
- 19 May Wyre Forest 10.00.** Target species: **Argent and Sable, Drab Looper and Pearl-bordered Fritillary.** Meet car park for Wyre Forest Visitor Centre off A4117, west of Bewdley. OS Map 138, SO749740. Leader Jenny Joy
- 25 May Trench Wood 20.00.** Meet in reserve car park OS Map 150 SO928589. Leaders: Neil and Corinna Gregory
- 25 May Whitney Woods 20.00.** Meet next to walled garden at rear of Dulas Court OS Map 149 SO371297. Leader Jeff Andrews
- 26 May Wyre Forest 10.00** Target species: **Argent and Sable, Drab Looper, Pearl-bordered Fritillary.** Meet car park for Wyre Forest Visitor Centre off A4117, west of Bewdley. OS Map

138, SO749740. Leader Jenny Joy

#### JUNE

- 8 June Tiddesley Wood 21.00.** Target species: **Sciota hostilis.** Meet in reserve car park west of Pershore. OS Map 150 SO929462. Leader: Tony Simpson
- 15 June National Moth Night Haugh Woods 21.00.** Target species: **Common Fan-foot.** Meet in car park. OS Map 149 SO593365. Leader Jeff Andrews
- 15 June National Moth Night Ribbesford Wood 21.00.** Target species: **Common Fan-foot.** Meet on the Heightington Road just south of Bewdley - No access onto this road from Bewdley by-pass. NB this venue may change due to weather conditions, therefore it is essential to contact the leader prior to the event. OS Map 138 SO779738. Leaders: Rosemary Winnall/Corinna and Neil Gregory.
- 15 June National Moth Night Whixall Moss, NNR 21.00** Meet at north side of Morris' s bridge crossing at track to Furber' s scrapyards. OS Map 126 SJ494355. **Essential to bring a torch.** Leader: Pete Boardman
- 15 June National Moth Night Rough Wood, Walsall 20.30.** Target species: **Common Fan-foot, Hawk Moths.** Joint event with Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust and Walsall MBC. Meet at Hunts Lane Car Park, Short Heath, Walsall. A to Z page 31,3E or OS Map 139 SJ981008. Leader: Dave Grundy
- 21 June Wyre Forest 21.30.** Meet car park for Wyre Forest Visitor Centre off A4117, west of

Bewdley. NB exact location to be decided later. OS Map 138, SO749740. Leader: Rosemary Winnall

- 22 June Pepper Wood 21.00.** Meet at Woodland Trust car park on minor road west of Bournheath, near Bromsgrove. OS Map 139 SO938744. Leader: Dave Grundy
- 22 June Hanley Dingle 21.30.** Target species: **Waved Carpet** Meet where track goes off minor road, 1 mile north of Stanford on Teme. OS Map 138 SO698666. Leader: Dean Fenton 01584 711407
- 29 June Kingsford Country Park 21.00.** Target species: **Red-necked Footman.** Meet at lay-by east of minor road north of Wolverley, near Kidderminster (the lay-by is the other side of the road from and slightly south of the car park with public toilets). OS Map 138 SO824819. Leader: Dave Grundy

### JULY

- 6 July Chaddesley Wood 20.30.** Target species: **White-line Snout** and **Great oak Beauty** Meet by gate off the road OS Map 139 SO915736. Leader: Tony Simpson
- 6 July Bircher Common 21.00.** Meet at Highwood End gate at bottom of lane. OS Map 149 SO 458658. Leader Jeff Andrews
- 13 July Sandwell Valley RSPB Centre 21.00.** Joint event with RSPB. Meet at the RSPB centre, Tanhouse Avenue, Great Barr, signposted off the A4041 Newton Road west of Scott Arms. A to Z page 81 1H or OS Map 139 SP035928. Leader: Dave Grundy
- 14 July Wyre Forest 10.00.** Target species: **Argent** and **Sable larvae** Meet car park for Wyre Forest Visitor Centre off A4117, west of Bewdley. OS Map 138, SO749740. Leader: Rosemary Winnall
- 19 July Wyre Forest 20.30.** Meet car park for Wyre Forest Visitor Centre off A4117, west of Bewdley. NB exact location to be decided later. OS Map 138, SO749740. Leader: Rosemary Winnall
- 20 July Linton Woods 21.00.** Meet at car park on minor road off B4221, past Ross Golf Club OS Map 162 SO668265. Leader Jeff Andrews
- 27 July Penorchard Farm (WLT) 20.30.** Target species: **flower meadow specialists.** Meet on minor road opposite St. Kenelms Church, off Uffmoor Lane south of A456, near Halesowen. OS Map 139 SO945807. Leader: Dave Grundy

### AUGUST

- 3 August Grafton Wood 21.00.** Meet at 3 Parishes Hall by the church, Flyford Flavell, off A422 Worcester to Stratford road. NB strong boots essential as there will be a walk to the site. OS Map 150 SO963557. Details from Corinna and Neil Gregory
- 10 August Old Hills 20.30.** Target species: **White-**

**spotted Pinion.** Meet in car park off B4424 Powick to Upton-upon-Severn road, south of Callow End. Leader: Tony Simpson

- 10 August Sandwell Valley, Park Farm 20.30** Joint event with Sandwell Naturalists. Meet in car park for visitor centre, off Salters Lane, West Bromwich. A to Z page 80, 4D or OS Map 139 SP018913. Leader: Dave Grundy
- 16 August Wyre Forest 20.30.** Meet car park for Wyre Forest Visitor Centre off A4117, west of Bewdley. NB exact location to be decided later. OS Map 138, SO749740. Leader: Rosemary Winnall
- 17 August Sutton Park, National Nature Reserve 20.00.** Target species: **Angle-striped Sallow.** Meet **promptly** at Boldmere Gate, Sutton Coldfield. We will drive together beyond locked gates, so late arrivals will have difficulty finding us! A to Z page 69, 2F or OS Map 139 SK107953. Leader: Dave Grundy
- 24 August Monkwood 20.00.** Meet in reserve car park. OS Map 150 SO803603 Leader: Neil and Corinna Gregory
- 24 August Haugh Woods 20.00.** Meet in car park. OS Map 149 SO593365. Leader Jeff Andrews

### SEPTEMBER

- 14 September Lickey Hills 19.00.** Target: **Heathland species.** Meet by visitor centre, Warren Lane. A to Z page 157, 6H or OS Map 139 SO998754. Leader Dave Grundy
- 20 September Wyre Forest 19.30.** Meet car park for Wyre Forest Visitor Centre off A4117, west of Bewdley. NB exact location to be decided later. OS Map 138, SO749740. Leader: Rosemary Winnall
- 31 August Whitney Woods 20.00.** Meet next to walled garden at rear of Dulas Court OS Map 149 SO371297. Leader Jeff Andrews

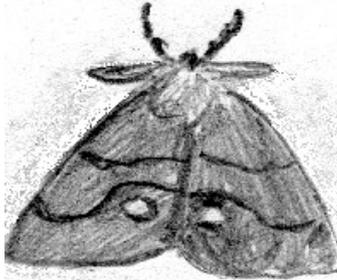
### OCTOBER

- 5 October Wyre Forest 19.00.** Target species: **Orange Upperwing** Meet car park for Wyre Forest Visitor Centre off A4117, west of Bewdley. NB exact location to be decided later. OS Map 138, SO749740. Leader: Tony Simpson
- 12 October Wyre Forest 10.00.** **Leaf Miners** daytime practical session in conjunction with the Wyre Forest Study Group. Meet car park for Wyre Forest Visitor Centre off A4117, west of Bewdley. OS Map 138, SO749740. Leader: Tony Simpson

# Moth Identification Guide:

## Vapourer Moth (*Orgyia antiqua*)

This rather pretty tussock moth can be found flying in the day time from July to September. Sometimes though, it is attracted to lights. Only the males fly, since the females are nearly wingless. The male is a rusty brown with two distinct white dots towards the rear of the forewing.



The caterpillars are rather interesting, having an assortment of coloured hairs, ranging from yellow clumps on its back to long grey spikes all over its body. It feeds on various deciduous trees and shrubs.

for in the day time, often in urban areas.

### Bibliography

1. Insects, Collins Pocket Guide, ISBN 0-00-219137-7
2. Colour Identification Guide to Moth of the British Isles, Skinner, ISBN 0-670-80354-5
3. Larger Moths and Butterflies of Herefordshire & Worcestershire, An Atlas. By Michael Harper and Tony Simpson. ISBN 0-9519749-1-2

It is common and widespread, worth looking out

• Neil Gregory

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