



No. 52

# NEWSLETTER

Summer 2002

## WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH, BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

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## Chairman's Notes Summer 2002

### Regional Development Officer (RDO)

It is very pleasing to be able to announce that the bulk of the funding has been obtained for a Regional Development Officer to cover the West Midlands and Warwickshire Branches. Head Office has secured funding from DEFRA for this position and along with the branches is seeking the additional funds required. Ian Hart has kindly agreed to coordinate the money raising efforts on behalf of the West Midlands Branch. The committee has agreed that up to £5,000 of Branch funds be made available to support this very important development for the Branch.

As you will have read in the national newsletter, four RDOs have already been appointed throughout the UK covering SE England, Greater London, the North of England and Northern Ireland. The role of the RDO varies from region to

region but essentially involves the following:

- Implementing the policies of Butterfly Conservation particularly with regard to conservation.
- Encouraging, supporting and recruiting volunteers.
- Developing good links with other bodies and organisations.
- Raising awareness of moth and butterfly conservation.

The appointment of a RDO will be an enormous step forward for the West Midlands Branch and will enable Butterfly Conservation to progress in a manner which could never be achieved by volunteers only.

Following a recruitment campaign (widely advertised) it is hoped to make an appointment

during the summer. The RDO will require a base in the area . Does anyone know of any free or subsidised office space which might be suitable?

### Committee Changes

#### Branch Organiser

I am pleased to report that Richard Southwell has taken on the position of Branch Organiser. This role is all about communication both within and outside the branch and is therefore critical to the smooth running of the Branch. Please help Richard in this task by keeping him informed of all events, activities etc.

#### Treasurer

I am also pleased to announce that Tony Hatton has agreed to become Branch Treasurer. Tony is an accountant by profession so is ideally suited to be Treasurer. Tony lives in Stafford. We are delighted to have him join the committee.

Jan and Terry Smith and Mark Farmer have all asked to stand down from the committee. I am sure you will all join with me in thanking them very much for all their efforts over the years and wishing them all the very best for the future.

#### Atlas

We have already sold over 100 copies of "The

Larger Moths and Butterflies of Herefordshire and Worcestershire" - not bad in less than 6 months. All the reviews of the atlas have been very favourable and if you have not got a copy I suggest you get one soon while stocks last!

#### Winter Work Parties

Led by Trevor Bucknall the winter work parties have had another successful season. Over 1,000 volunteer hours have been put in at Grafton Wood alone. If you have not been there recently it is worth a visit to see how much the wood has been opened up, with the rides widened and large areas of coppice created, ideal for moths and butterflies.

Many thanks and well done to Trevor and all those who helped over the winter.

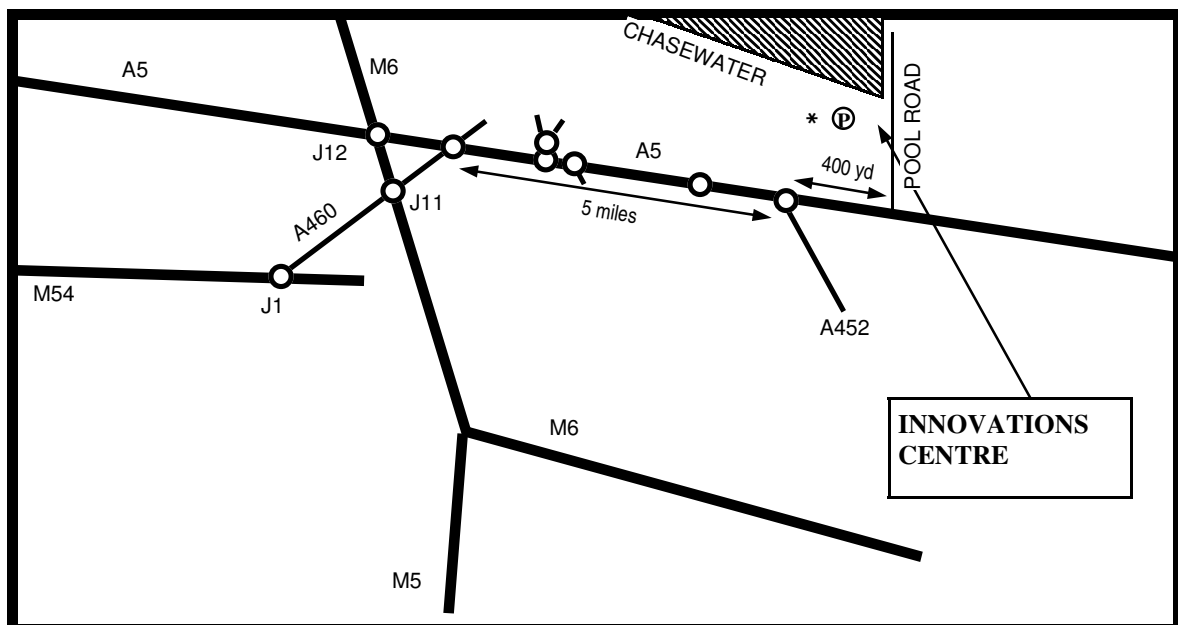
#### Records

The butterfly season got off to a promising start with good numbers of **Orange Tip** and **Holly Blue**. The favourable early spring weather (for once) also led to good numbers of **Pearl-bordered Fritillaries** and the **Grizzled Skipper** doing better than for many years. Unfortunately the good weather has not continued and early June finds butterflies in low numbers.

• Ian Duncan

## Coming Events

Advance notice Branch A.G.M. Saturday 16 November



AGM continued

The venue for the A.G.M. on November 16 will be in Staffordshire at the new Innovations Centre, Pool Road, Brownhills. Please see map above. The building is distinguished by its turf roof and very large windows looking out over

Chasewater. There is a large car park.

The subject of the talk will be "The butterflies of Costa Rica" the guest is David Smith reputed to be an excellent and entertaining speaker.

## Obituary for John Norton MBE

You may have seen the notice in the Times June 20 of the death of John Norton MBE whose drawings have appeared in many West Midlands Branch Newsletters over the years. Two longstanding members give their personal memories.—Ed



My involvement with John was during my ten years as newsletter editor for the West Midlands Branch. It was during this time that he produced numerous illustrations, not only for the Newsletter but also for various other Butterfly Conservation publications, both nationally and regionally, including the annual West Midlands Butterfly and Moth Report.

His knowledge and perception of butterflies and moths was immense and was portrayed in his skilful and detailed drawings. It was seldom just the insect alone, each drawing would be a work of art, including larval and nectar plants. Many of

the illustrations John produced for the front covers of the newsletters from 1987 to 1997 were true landscapes with detailed backgrounds derived, I guess, from his native Shropshire. Even rural buildings such as cottages and churches were included!

There are many butterfly and moth illustrators but John was a true artist, his drawings took you into the countryside and you were there with the butterflies he so obviously loved.

Margaret Vickery

John Norton, who has recently died, was best known to West Midlands Butterfly Conservation members for his illustrations which graced the front cover of the branch newsletter for some ten years. John's pen and ink drawings were truly works of art, displaying a rare talent of combining a very pleasing overall composition with a very accurate depiction of the particular butterfly or moth together often with its larval foodplant. The inspiration for John's drawings came from his immediate surroundings, the village of Bromfield where he lived for many years and the surrounding Shropshire countryside. One of his 1995 drawings which appears on the front of newsletter 34 is typical of his style: three **Commas** flying high against a backdrop of Ludlow Castle with the parish church and hills behind. John's talents as an artist became increasingly widely recognised over the years in BC circles and beyond and his illustrations appeared in a number of national publications as well as local. One of my personal favourites was the cover John designed for the West Midlands Butterfly & Moth annual review which was also used as the frontpiece for a number of conservation reports produced through the Branch. Nothing was ever too much trouble for John, a request for a drawing was never refused however short the notice and, over the years, he

must have produced illustrations featuring every single British butterfly and many moths as well. Before his official retirement, although he continued for many years afterwards in a voluntary capacity, John was the Curator at Ludlow Museum. An eminent geologist, he was the recognised expert on the limestones of Wenlock Edge and the Mortimer Forest producing several books and guides on their geology and fossils. Visitors to the Museum were always made to feel welcome and there would always be some new discovery or information to be shared. In his capacity as Museum Curator, John was also responsible for the county Biological Records Centre and he worked hard to improve recording in Shropshire, especially of invertebrates. In fact, it was through the setting up of the Shropshire Invertebrate Group that I first got to know John and benefited, like so many others, from his never flagging enthusiasm and wise counsel. Incredibly modest, never one to complain, with an impressive breadth of knowledge of all aspects of the natural history of his beloved Shropshire, John will be sadly missed by all his many friends.

Mike Williams

## Spring Meeting 27 April 2002

I was asked by our Chairman to host this meeting since he was abroad on business. I was worried as the committee had previously decided the programme was to revolve around members giving slide presentations but since we had not done this for some years I harboured a premonition that I might have to do a lot of in-filling due to a lack of material. I need not have worried.

We had four slide shows – Dave Porter on Spanish butterflies – Digby Wood on the life cycle of the **Comma** in his garden – Thelma Irving describing her Shrewsbury riverbank – John Reeve stunning us with pictures from the recent Branch trip to Trinidad. If the other presenters will allow me to give a special mention to Thelma, she joined the Branch less than a year ago, so it must have been daunting to say the least. However, the sounds of amazement at her picture of a **White Plume Moth** leads me to think the branch could well have found a potential winner for the national photography awards, well done. Slides were also

used throughout the traditional quiz where Dave Porter asked us to identify everything from eggs through to butterflies. It was won by Phil Hopson who in time-honoured tradition will be quiz-master next year. And there was more.....

Dave Jackson explained the most impressive initiatives that Stoke City Council is taking to protect its natural heritage and pleaded for more recording effort from members living in the area to support this policy. Dave Grundy showed everyone the results of his moth trapping the previous night outside the RSPB Centre. It had been cold so there were only a few species but I was particularly taken by **Small Phoenix**, **Shuttle-Shaped Dart**, and the variations between a number of **Lunar Marbled Brown**. And more again....

There was a display and short presentation on Alan Titchmarsh's Garden Butterflies Count, including a video from his television programme Gardeners World where he promoted this project. However, this must be the only spring

meeting that had effectively two quizzes. Beryl and Guenter Petters also showed us a video of many butterflies from some of their French holidays and asked us to identify many of the species that really put our memories to the test. The stock answer seemed to be, 'It must be a **'False Heath Fritillary!'** And more.....

Neil and Corinna Gregory helped throughout the afternoon, not least by helping to sell Val Weston's superb cross-stitching greetings cards. Val has been busy with her needle this winter and her employer, Barclays Bank will match pound-for-pound, any money raised by this means. Does your employer have such a scheme? And finally, I am coming to the conclusion that the branch is totally hooked on Beryl's wonderful cheese scones that disappeared in seconds at teatime, maybe we will have to expense her to ensure she attends every meeting.

Twenty eight attended, including 3 new faces from the Birmingham area but what a shame there were not more, you missed a treat. However, with so many contributing I do hope this will encourage similar involvement throughout the year recording, enjoying field trips and attending winter workdays. A big thanks to you all, in particular the RSPB for letting us over-run and Dave Jackson for organising everything. My day started by rescuing a lost hedgehog in our neighbour's car port and leaving it by our compost tip and ended with the inimitable Phil showing us four roosting **Orange Tips** outside the centre that were on the flower-heads of Jack-by-the-hedge. To my way of thinking, the day was not a bad way of starting the Branch season.

• Richard Southwell

## National Moth Night 15 June 2002, a Provisional Summary

This year's National Moth Night, organised by Atropos, proved to be a cool and rainy event. Results are still coming in, but outlined below is a summary from the region. 38 people attended the advertised events in Shropshire, Worcestershire and Herefordshire. A total of 372 records have been counted so far with 155 species totalling 643 specimens. In total 14 sites were recorded.

There was only one migrant, **Silver Y**, but three other good records. **Blomer's Rivulet** and **Bilberry Pug** are both on the National B list and *Schiffmuellerina grandis* is a provisional RDB1 species. All of these were recorded at Ribbesford Wood, North Worcestershire. The *Schiffmuellerina grandis* has not been recorded for many years and only near Bewdley. This was originally picked up by Jenny Joy a few days

earlier. Other species regarded as being nationally local were **Beautiful Hook-tip, Beautiful Snout, Birch Mocha, Brindled White-spot, Gold Swift, Grass Wave, Light Knot Grass, Maiden's Blush, Plain Wave, Poplar Kitten, Rufous Minor, Scorched Wing, Shuttle-shaped Dart, Treble Brown Spot.**

Despite the poor weather conditions it was a reasonable night in place, although this didn't compare to the 30 lights at Rutland water or the 27 **Elephant Hawk** moths in a trap in Lincolnshire! Let's hope that next year's events draw more species. If you would like to submit any moth records from this night to me I would be pleased to receive them.

• Neil and Corinna Gregory

## Welcome to New Members, who are listed below

Mr D Bayliss	Worcester
Mr N Savigny	Stafford
Mr P Plunkett	Malvern
Ms M Ruscoe	Wombourne
Mr M J Chester	Dudley
Mr H Sandells	Wednesbury
Mr P Tooth	Solihull
Mr L A Wiles	Leominster
Mr P Hollis	Dudley
Mr Jones	Whitchurch
Mr P Moule	Bromsgrove
Mr & Mrs Waddicot	Burton on Trent
Mr N A Wright	Birmingham
Dr K Fletcher	Ross-on-Wye

Mr & Mrs M Butt	Wolverhampton
Mr Hill	Newcastle
Mr & Mrs Barker	Newent
Mr & Mrs Miller	Hemel Hempstead
Mr M Fisher	Solihull
Miss K Holland	Market Drayton
Miss S Moore	Birmingham
Mr G P Phillipson	Evesham
Mr & Mrs Price	Bilston
Mr R Heeley	Birmingham
Ms M Armstrong	Stourbridge
Mr & Mrs Senior	Alvechurch
Mr A Nolan	Birmingham
Mr D Bows	Leominster

## Trinidad and Tobago or 101 Ways to Cook a Banana

Attached to the South American mainland during the Ice Age, Trinidad and Tobago form the southernmost islands of the Lesser Antilles chain, the islands only became separate entities when movement of the Caribbean tectonic plates submerged the Orinoco Delta. The result is an astoundingly rich environmental diversity that includes both mainland and Caribbean flora and fauna. With over 600 butterfly species 430 birds, 100 mammals and equally impressive invertebrate and botanical statistics. Our first base was at the Asa Wright centre, a former plantation set in the Northern range, overlooking the Arima valley. Waking up for the first time in the Neotropics you recognise a distinct difference in the dawn chorus, as invertebrates compete with amphibian and feathered songsters. As soon as there is sufficient light for me to venture out, I grab some clothes and my camera, out the door, up some steps, turn left and down a grassy slope to the herb garden, narrowly avoiding tripping over one of the black and yellow small dragons (tegu lizards) that lumber round the place. Good numbers of **Skippers** flit about in the early morning sunlight, mostly long tailed of which there are two sorts, *Eudamus catillus* and *E. proteus*, some small **Whites** that we later identified as **Little Yellowie**, one or two **Blues** that taunted me by keeping well out of reach and several rather interesting crickets and beetles.

Time for breakfast, one of the features of this trip, we ate well. I have to confess at this stage that I am not a serious birdwatcher, although this trip has certainly whetted my appetite. If I were, I guess waking up in this place and sitting on the verandah before and after breakfast, it would be easy to think one had died and woken up in heaven. Hummingbirds dart back and forth among the feeders, literally right in front of your nose, accompanied by Bananaquit, a colourful little sparrow like bird abundant throughout our trip. Below the verandah, feeding trays stocked each day with fruit etc., attracting such delights as White-necked Jacobins, Red-legged and Green Honeycreeper, Motmot and the Chestnut Woodpeckers that reminded me of my grandson, slinging more food on the floor than they appeared to eat, much to the delight of the Agouti, a brown, muntjak sized rodent, resembling a long-legged guinea pig. Trees and bushes around the verandah were alive with even more ornithological tick-list candidates. Beyond down the valley and in the upper canopy, binoculars assisted sightings of such goodies as Swallow-tailed and Double-toothed Kite, White Hawk, Orange winged Parrot etc., in fact the longer you sat there the more you would see.

Asa Wright had several trails to explore, one such route led down to the nocturnal Oilbird roost. The trails started in an area of open glades, surrounded by colourful shrubs and trees, several of our earlier butterfly species were noted in these sun-traps. Most notable catch being *Callicore aurelia* or to give it its colloquial name the **Eighty-nine**, describing the unmistakable markings on the lower underwing. There was much to see as we made our way down the ravine on our first trail. Looking up occasionally to catch sight of butterflies in the canopy, we noticed bats on the wing. Having almost reached our quarry, we encountered our first snake, Fer-de-lance no less. It obligingly paraded on an area of flat rock just below us. It transpired, it also had a mate watching us from the bushes, within a few feet from us as we looked down in fascination, whilst a Brown-knee Tarantula hid in the end of the hand rail we had been clinging too. A few yards further down, we took turns to edge forward, to peer up at the large brown birds roosting on ledges above us. Such a contrast to the vibrant tiny hummingbirds that we had been watching from the verandah a couple of hours earlier. Manakins were on another trail we followed, top of my list in terms of entertainment value. The males hang around together in a Lek, the moment a female appears, they start shouting and leaping up and down, making complete twits of themselves, trying to impress the birds, nothing new there then.

We also went on trips beyond the estate. Waller Fields a former U.S. Army base, a relatively flat area, rich in species not requiring rainforest habitat. Our visit to Trinidad and Tobago was towards the end of the dry season, except that they had not experienced a very dry, dry season this year; as if to underline this unseasonable deviation we experienced a series of short showers, at Waller Fields. Very refreshing, more importantly, it encourages activity, many species becoming active after the rain. New species on our list that day included **Donkeys Eye**, **Biscuit**, **Small banded-yellow**, **King Page**, **Monarch**, **Little Soldier**, **Bamboo Page**, and **Handkerchief**, yet more **Blues** and **Skippers** to puzzle us, plus numerous new birds and bucket loads of grasshoppers. At Monte Blue we came across a small colony of **Rare Blue Transparent** generally confined to high ground, a delightful little butterfly. By contrast *Dynastes Herculese*, weighing in at several ounces, was one heck of a ferocious looking beetle; equally impressive was a large locust perched on the perimeter fence of the radio station, both measured in excess of six inches. Before moving on to Pax we increased

our list at Las Lapis, the Arima Blanchisseuse road and the North coast road, adding **Zebra** to our list (butterfly not mammal of course).

Pax was our second base, a partly converted monastery set in the hillside overlooking the capital Port of Spain. Exploring the immediate area we were introduced to the inappropriately named Bird-eating spider, **Bamboo Page** a stunning *Nymphalid* with bright green marking, netted by Neil at great risk to life and limb, an amazing Blue Morpho, an obliging (willingly posing) **Flambeau**. Also a remarkable *Katalyd* convincingly disguised as a green leaf and several Geckos (Jane and Tony had one as a room mate) posers! Tried to make out that no self respecting Eco-tourist accommodation would be complete without one. A nocturnal visit to watch Leatherback Turtles laying, the emotional nature of this experience was heightened by a wonderful display from nature's mobile fairy lights, Firefly beetles. A further surprise that night was the appearance of **Rare Bark** a butterfly that thinks it is a moth.

My favourite destination whilst we were at Pax was Brigand Hill, where we had a distant glimpse of Howler monkey; butterflies were numerous here, giving us more new species. This mega moth trap, a Lighthouse no less, set on a hilltop amidst quality rainforest, left me daydreaming about frequent visits to the place searching the walls each morning for the treasures from the night before. On this particular occasion it surrendered an exquisite **Hawk Moth**, as yet unidentified. The most extraordinary monster of a moth with wings like a Chinese junk, plus a large member of the Silk moth family which took off at a 100 mph when I tried to coax it to display the magnificent eye spots on the underwing. Other site visits included Manzanilla beach, No one could get over how warm the water was, Jenny rescued a **Small Lacewing** butterfly *Actinote pellenia* from the sea, amazing thing was, after making a home made wind tunnel to dry it off I was able to release it. Then mile upon mile of Coconut palms, as we make our way to Nariva swamp, more birds including Pinnated Bittern, Great Egret, Osprey, Savanna Hawk, Wattled Jacana, etc. On the way back to base we watched Red-bellied Macaw coming in to roost in tall Palms. On the other coast facing the Gulf of Paria, a visit to Waterloo with its amazing Temple built out to sea by Seedas Sadhu, an Indian labourer, after the state owned sugar company bulldozed the original Temple he built on the shore in 1947. Several **Whites** nectar around blossom bushes alongside more unidentified **Blues**, Brown Pelican sit on moored boats on a sea that looks calmer than your average park

lake. We watch with great amusement as Fiddler Crabs perform for us.

On to Point-a-Pierre Wildfowl Trust, more birds of course, a delightful little ginger dragonfly on the copious Lily beds. Perhaps I should not mention the Neotropical Cormorants and the Anhinga that, I swear, sat grinning at us as we huddled for what seemed an eternity under a tin shelter whilst it rained and rained. Caroni swamp was reminiscent of a slowed down version of a certain James Bond film. As we cruised along channels in the mangrove, stopping from time to time to observe indigenous crabs, birds and a Two-toed Sloth, looking like a moribund bundle of matted ginger knitting wool wrapped round a branch. As we edged our way into the open area of water, facing the Scarlet Ibis roost, we see flocks of varying size coming in to land. A great deal of jostling is taking place, parking up for the night alongside the Snowy Egret, who appear to have arrived earlier in order to secure satisfactory perches. The sight of some 500-600 bright red birds interspersed with splashes of white, crowded onto one small island of overburdened greenery, is an image etched deep in ones memory.

Next day we are in for a bit of flying ourselves. On a proper airplane with propellers. We arrive in Tobago and drive across the island to stay at Blue Waters Inn, Speyside. Trips in and around the rainforest are very much on our doorstep here and the list of birds and butterfly grows. We stop for a picnic lunch at a high point, with views across the island, I photograph a **Hairstreak** which I call a push-me-pull-you, since the back end looks more like the front end, if you get my drift. This irreverent lack of scientific accuracy reflects the difficulty we have experienced on this trip. Our main reference book being Barcant's "Butterflies of Trinidad and Tobago" published in 1970 with *Lycaenids* showing upperside only, mostly in black and white photographs of poor quality. On the other hand I quite like some of the quaint, highly descriptive colloquial names, like **Donkey's Eye, Postman, Lady Slipper, Tiger, Sweet Oil** etc., Coolie or Red Anartia is common on the verges throughout Tobago, showing a great deal of variation in colour from deep crimson to orange. Dawn at Speyside and Rufus-vented Chachalaca scream at each other, above the sound of waves lapping on the beach just a few yards from our front door. Our trip to Little Tobago across the bay from Speyside in a glass bottomed boat, provides a glimpse of another form of habitat for which Tobago is famous, coral reef, with fish of every shape, size and colour. Climbing up to the top of the Island to see Tropic birds sail on the wind and watch Magnificent

Frigate swoop and swerve. As Tony remarked on one occasion "Some birds think they can fly, these guys really can". I photograph *Synargis mycone* bringing our list of *Riodininae* up to three. At the end of this trip we have seen well in excess of 60 species, 52 of which we have identified, less than 10% of the 600 species list. On the other hand 175 birds out of a possible 430 does reflect the fact that, local knowledge is so much greater in this field and seasonal factors are not so influential.

This is one destination I would desperately like to visit again. Any rich sponsors out there? I would love to research and illustrate a meaningful up to date guide. Last morning, we have to depart mid-day. So one last walk along the Starwood trail

that runs along the hillside above Blue Waters, it rained last night so it should be good. Netted **Grey Handkerchief**, new one for the list, lots of them about. By this time it is getting quite hot. **Red Rim** *Biblis hyperia* puts in an appearance, what a relief, one of the species I was hoping to see, really good numbers are on the wing now, several desperate attempts to catch a very large blue, almost end in disaster. Everyone but Mike and I have returned to the hotel, so before I burn to a frazzle I decide to call it a day and end on a high. Before signing off I must express the thanks that we intrepid travellers owe to Mike-globetrotter-Williams, for yet another excellent trip.

• John Reeve

## Butterfly Transect Walking

### What are Transect Walks?

Transect Walks are a scientifically grounded method of recording butterflies (and day flying moths if people can) that are used to track changes from year to year. The walks are fun and quickly produce interesting data. They reflect changes to management as well as trends over the years. In the region we have just over 100 transects, of which about half are currently active. We have some specially written software called "Transect Walker" (free to BC members) which is used as the electronic data collector and site analyser. Each walker's data is then fed to me so that it is possible to look at changes using the Regional Coordinator. This is in turn fed into the National Coordinator. The trend nationally is then very easy to see and comment upon.

### Do you want to do a Transect Walk?

The walk, of about 1 mile, starts at the beginning of April and is undertaken weekly for 26 weeks. Some walks are for single species (e.g. **High Brown Fritillary**) and others count everything within a given distance from the path.

The walks do become addictive, but are very valuable tools. I do one in Droitwich, starting from my own doorstep, where there are many of the brown butterflies and one in urban Birmingham where there are two places of interest in the urban environment. If you have a walk you would like to monitor I can provide you with as much detail as you like.

### Contact Me

If you know anything about existing transects and haven't made contact with me I would be like to hear from you. We are trying to get as much historical data into the software as possible. This entails entering every record from every section on every walk. Presently we have over 60,000 records out of a possible 100,000 entered and are waiting for more data to come in. This year if you could send all your data to me at your earliest convenience it will help with this data entry process. My details are on the contacts information at the back of the newsletter.

There is now a web based discussion group for Transects. To join the group, send a blank email to:

[UKTransect-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:UKTransect-subscribe@yahoogroups.com)

Or simply visit:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/UKTransect/>

I look forward to hearing from you and start counting!

• Neil Gregory  
Regional Transect Coordinator



## Slide Library

I have recently inherited about 400 colour transparencies that comprise the West Midlands Branch Butterfly Conservation Slide Library. I have just finished organising and cataloguing this excellent collection. Obviously most of the pictures are of butterflies, every British species except the **Holly Blue** is represented, there are even a few continental species included. There are only four species of moth however and only one slide of an adult, a **Lime Hawk Moth**. The number of slides of any one species seems to be proportional to the rarity or distance from the West Midlands, hence we have nine **Chequered Skippers**, seven **Silver Spotted Skippers**, six **Lulworth Skippers** and four **Swallowtails**. We do not have any slides of adult **Large White**, any adult **Hairstreaks** and no **Holly Blue** whatsoever.

400 slides may seem a lot but when I organised them into Male, Female, Upper side, Underside, Egg, Larvae, Pupae, Behaviour, Food plant and Habitat categories there are an awful lot of gaps. If anyone is interested in finding out what we have, or more especially for the photographers what we do not have, then please write to me and I will send you a copy of the catalogue. The Branch would be most grateful to anyone who would like to donate their second best slide of any subject, especially if it fills one of the gaps in the collection.

With some of the pictures I am not sure of the identification, turning a slide over to check the underside does not work. Some of the slides are very well labelled others are not labelled at all.

The basic information needed on the mounting is the name of whatever has been photographed. Other very useful information is; where the photograph was taken, who took it and when was it taken.

Other slides in the collection include Title images about Butterfly Conservation and sub-section images, all with black script on a green background. Some of these are missing, there are only two habitat sub-section titles and four good slides of the family sub-sections. If anyone has borrowed slides from the library then I would be pleased to re-integrate them back into the collection.

There are also a few slides of some of the Butterfly Conservation events such as Operation Butterfly and Land Rover Butterfly Check. There are no slides however of Field Trips, Indoor Meetings, Survey Work or Habitat Management. If anyone needs to borrow any slides for presentations, etc. then please contact me and I will try to supply the necessary images. I have been known in the past to photograph a picture from another medium on to slide film. This was to illustrate a particular point that I needed for a talk if no other source was available. With access to a growing slide library this should no longer be necessary for anyone in the West Midlands.

In conclusion this is an excellent resource for the Branch; it deserves to be used as much as possible and it could be even better with the help of our generous photographers.

• Richard Lamb

## Electronic Recording, a Personal Perspective

I have been using computer-based recording for some while and wanted to share some of my thoughts with you.

Most people interested in wildlife record what they see in the field on pieces of paper. This is fundamental to recording, but often this data simply sits there and any analysis can become a long-winded process.

Since computers have become widely available people have started to extend the use of their paper based recording into the digital medium. The simplest form is to use a word processor (e.g. Word) where the lists are written in a convenient form that is easy to read and distribute

to others. However, analysis can still be relatively difficult. The next stage is to use a spreadsheet (e.g. Excel) where you can start to work out species lists for sites and numbers of certain species seen.

The real power of computers starts when using a database (e.g. Access) where huge volumes of data can be quickly grouped and manipulated with only a few lines of code. However, it helps to understand how this code works.

There are therefore various commercial databases available (e.g. Levana, Biobase, DMap, Recorder 2000) that are already pre-programmed, some of which are specific to taxonomic groups. Each of the systems above

have their merit, but from personal experience I have found MapMate to be currently the most widely used and praised in the recording network. It is a biological recording package with 34000 taxa listed. The analysis is very flexible and powerful with a lively discussion group responsively correcting errors and improving it to the needs of the recorders. Once records are accumulated then the map plotting aspect comes into its own. I would encourage people to use software such as MapMate to increase the potential of the biological records we produce. I personally have over 9000 moth and 2000 butterfly records in my database from various sources.

MapMate can be found at: <http://www.MapMate.co.uk> If you would like more information please contact me.

• Neil Gregory

**Email:** [droitwich@btinternet.com](mailto:droitwich@btinternet.com)

**Volunteers needed for scanning BC Newsletters:** Is anybody prepared to undertake the scanning of some past Newsletter articles into a computer. If so I would be most glad to hear from you - Neil Gregory (see above or back cover for contact details)

## **Only Humans Conserve**

If I learned one thing as organiser for the Millennium Atlas project it was that having good numbers of people recording across all types of habitat near to their house or place of work was the only way to get coverage. The issue then was 'how to get you to record'. Those members in Worcester and Shropshire might recollect receiving local maps asking you to record inside the marked squares. It worked as well over 50% of members in those areas participated. But why? My theory is us Brits are usually loath to commit ourselves, we rarely react positively to general pleas for help unless the request is personalised and specific. In other words, knowing the level of input and commitment makes all the difference.

My abiding memory from this project wasn't the recording success, nor was it about the level of technical competence. No, it was your level of enthusiasm and how it inspired me. I quickly realised what a remarkable band of characters we have in this Branch, many of whom have since become friends. Many people asked to do more and if you ever wondered why our committee is so large I do believe this project was the catalyst for members involvement. We are all volunteers so it is obvious that you were enjoying getting involved in all this conservation activity.

Time marches on, I am now the new Branch Organiser and I would encourage you to get

involved again. There are many ways you can help as a cursory glance at this, and previous, newsletters will show. However, looking to the future I do feel this large geographical branch needs to encourage local members to form similar friendships and groups throughout our District and Metropolitan Councils. This should be possible as there are at least five members in each of our local authorities, with the exception of Newcastle-under-Lyme in Staffordshire.

Therefore, please take the initiative and contact me to see how you can help. Ideally I am looking for five individuals in each county, including Birmingham and the Black Country to help our County Conservation and Moth leaders on a more localised basis. Butterfly Conservation and our branch is all about comradeship. I still remind myself about Digby Wood's Chairman's Message in our Spring 98 edition which concluded: "It is quite amazing what the West Midlands Branch achieves each year through the activities of significantly less than 20 per cent of its membership. Just think what could be done if 50 per cent of our members became active instead of passive. What is more, experience shows that those who do put more into the Society get more out of it."

How true and one of the best examples of this is Ian Duncan our retiring Organiser. Ian only started in moths a few years ago but I marvel at

the amount of activity within the branch these days where he has been the catalyst for others. A big thanks to Ian from me and the rest of the committee.

- Richard Southwell

## Letter

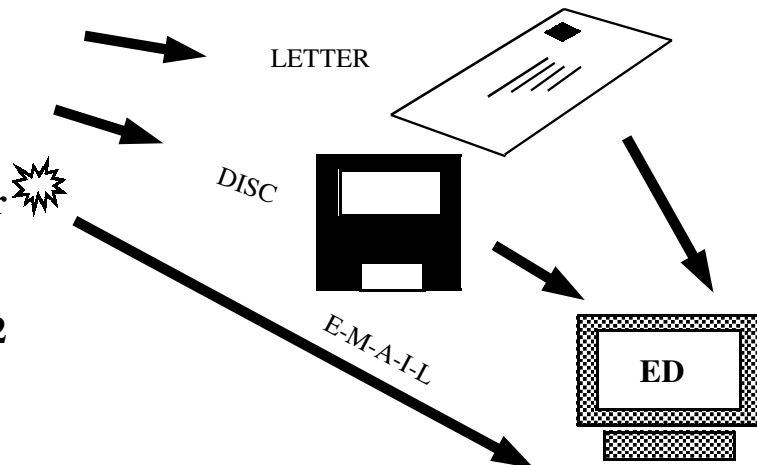
5 April 2002

Had a nice record today, a **Painted Lady** on top of Walsgrove Hill, two **Red Admirals** also. Has anyone else seen a **Painted Lady** as early as this, they seldom come alone. It was very fresh indeed.

- Trevor Bucknall

## Instructions for Contributors

**Deadline for Autumn Newsletter contributions is Monday 30 September 2002**



**Hand-written articles** will be transcribed and returned for checking. Printed documents are less prone to transcription errors and can often be scanned in. Laser printed 14 point copy usually scans perfectly, 12 point is OK but 10 point is hopeless. **Text on 3.5" disc is best of all but please send or attach to your email as plain text (e.g. "save as" a ".txt" or ".rtf" file under MS Word, not as a ".doc" file) as some formatted texts received recently, especially by email, have proved to be totally unreadable and, unlike a .txt or .rtf file, could contain viruses**, which frighten me to death. Newer software often produces files which are incompatible with older software even of the same name.

**Pictures** will normally be scanned in and should be black and white. (The final reprographic

process for printing off the newsletter does not do justice to 'grey scale' or colour). Note that, unlike text, pictures cannot be modified by me (except for size adjustment).

**Copyright:** Pictures for publication must of course be free of copyright restrictions.

**Spelling:** I will try to correct obvious spelling mistakes unless this affects the writer's style but, in the cause of achieving a consistent format, will use the Word UK dictionary spelling where there are several options.

**email:** v Christine Chance  
harbornchristine@aol.com

## Moth Traps on loan

So you want to see moths in your back garden but can't afford all the expensive books and equipment!?

Well all this has changed now thanks to your Branch of Butterfly Conservation. We've arranged a special deal for our Branch members with equipment suppliers to lend us the latest state of the art moth trap complete with instructions on safe use, field guide for identification, and a list of extra helpful advice on moths, addresses, websites etc., complete with carrying bag.

So as a Branch we will be offering this trap on loan to beginners at moth-watching, in blocks of 2 to 4 weeks, then it will move on to the next member. This is not a deal for existing moth-trappers for them to have a second trap! The deal is; you look after the trap for the period and use it as often or as little as you wish. Of course details of any moths that you do record, we hope will be sent to the county moth recorder for your area, so that we can build a better picture of where even the commoner moths are found in the West Midlands.

The moth trap is a Skinner 125 watt MV trap, which has a light about as bright as the average security light, but doesn't annoy the neighbours by going on and off all the time. Underneath the bulb is a funnel over a box. The moths are attracted to the light, drop down the funnel into the box, where

they roost for the rest of the night. Then in the morning, or at a time convenient to you, you empty the trap of moths seeing what species have been caught and letting them all fly away again unharmed. In a typical West Midlands garden you may catch as many as 300 different species in a year, or in the best month - July you may catch over 50 species in a night. Yes, some moths are small, dull, and grey or brown, but they

can also have s t u n n i n g camouflage, or be bright green, yellow, orange, silver, gold or red. The largest are h a w k m o t h s (nearly as large as your hand), while the smallest are barely larger than a pin-head.

So, do you want to have a go at this the latest fashion in wildlife study (this is the n e w b i r d watching!), then get in touch now to book or for more details - contact me, address and phone number on the back of this newsletter or email address see below.

Booking will be on a first come first served basis with preference given to those with greatest need, ie. first timers. A waiting list will be kept. We want to pass the word so



### ANGLIAN LEPIDOPTERIST SUPPLIES

ALS

[www.angleps.btinternet.co.uk](http://www.angleps.btinternet.co.uk)

#### Moth Trapping..... ever wondered what's involved?

ALS specialise in moth traps and related equipment so why not visit us on our web site of phone for further details.

- Professionally made Skinner Moth traps
- Light sensor units for portable actinic trap
- Fully waterproof, fully wired control boxes
- Electrical kits from £37.00
- 15w portable and mains traps
- Specimen pots for moths to butterflies
- Full range of MV bulbs
- Honda EU10 Generators £620.00
- Custom made dissecting and compound microscopes
- Butterfly/moth Nets
- ALS Carrying bags (for all equipment)
- Bat Detectors & Pond Dipping Equipment
- Mammal Traps

Watch out for our new design, ultra lightweight moth traps to be launched later this season!  
New light weight (2.6kg) dry cell battery to run portable traps on the way. Keep in touch with us!!

Visit us at our web site for full details or send a SAE to  
PO Box 232, Northwich Delivery Office, CW8 3FG.  
For friendly advise phone us on 01263 862068/01606 783371  
or e-mail [jon.clifton@btinternet.com](mailto:jon.clifton@btinternet.com)  
Proprietors: J Clifton & A Wander

that the greatest number of members can have a try at moths, who knows you may get so keen that you rush out and buy your own trap to look every night in the back garden. It makes the perfect activity for summer garden parties!

Lastly we must thank the equipment suppliers, without their generosity in gifting the kit this would not have been possible.

• Dave Grundy

**email:** Dave@dgcountryside.freeserve.co.uk

**Anglian Lepidopterists Supplies (ALS)**, PO Box 232, Northwich Delivery Office, CW8 3FG or phone 01263 862068, or email; [www.angleps.btinternet.co.uk](http://www.angleps.btinternet.co.uk) (for buying moth traps and other equipment for study of lepidoptera)

**Atropos Bookshop**, 1, Myrtle Villas, Sussex Road, New Romney, Kent, TN28 8DY or phone 01797-367-866, or email; [www.atroposuk.co.uk](http://www.atroposuk.co.uk) (for buying moth and butterfly books)

## Tiger Hunting

Having studied moths and butterflies during my teens in the 1970's in and around Catshill, Worcestershire, there was one very common moth that stood out from the crowd as my all time favourite – the **Garden Tiger**.

Although I could not afford an MV light trap, or for that matter know where to obtain one, the adult moths were readily found sitting around our garden, true to their name, and were a vivid childhood memory. The long haired “woolly bears” were a very common sight running around on hot sunny days as if burning their feet on the hot ground, and were easy to grow on to pupate. When freshly emerged the moths were fantastic creatures, which always seemed to have unique markings. Sometimes, for reasons I could not explain, the moths would emerge with the most wonderful variation of markings and one year a moth with pure brown un-marked forewings was my pride and joy. I now understand that the temperature range the pupae were exposed to probably caused these effects, as I never saw these extreme variations in wild moths.

Over the next 20 years due to family and work commitments moths and butterflies were a distant memory, yet every now and again I pictured the **Tiger** moth and its beauty.

Having settled down with the family in the rural village of Stoke Prior, Worcestershire, I noted the bathroom light was attracting a lot of moths most of which I was still able to identify. My daughters were amazed when I showed them such wonders as **Swallow-tail** and **Light Emerald** and were intrigued when I explained there would be “Tigers” roaming the garden at night. My memories and interest in moths rekindled I was determined to once again hold in my hand a **Garden Tiger** moth and let my own

children see at first hand one of nature's wonders...A year of hunting around the garden passed with no sign of the moths or “woolly bears” prompting the decision - buy a moth trap and catch a “Tiger”.

My trap arrived in early June 2001 ready for the “Tigerhunt” and was immediately put into action, just in case an early emergence occurred. I anticipated catching up to a dozen Tigers a night during July and bought Skinner's excellent “Moths of the British Isles” to show the kids a picture of what was about to be caught! Imagine my surprise and horror when moth after moth visited my trap but not a sign of the common **Garden Tiger**, and of course the sense of failure grew.

There were thankfully still big hairy and cuddly **Poplar** and **Elephant Hawk** moths around to marvel at, and even a couple of **Oak Eggar** females, but the nearest to a **Garden Tiger** was a plentiful supply of **Ruby Tigers** – unfortunately not as impressive although the youngest daughter thinks they are beautiful.

During my light trap search for the elusive **Garden Tiger** there were several moths new to me and one in particular I was sure was very significant, along with several that defied identification, so with the help of Neil and Corinna Gregory I got in touch with Tony Simpson the county recorder for Worcestershire. Tony was exceptionally helpful and friendly offering to identify my moths and I think I convinced him I wasn't about to drop off a pot full of **Large Yellow Underwings!!!** Each moth I had found difficult to identify was carefully labelled in a pot, ready for release where possible, and dropped off on Tony's doorstep.

A rather excited Tony Simpson phoned a day later to inform me I had caught “something very exceptional” which had been confirmed as a **Cloaked Pug** (*E.abietaria*) and a new macro species for Worcestershire.

Just what I thought!! but on cross reference with my records I had marked up this moth as “strange wave” and put it forward as an afterthought to my own “rarity” which turned out to be a not so rare (nowadays anyway) **Dusky Sallow** (*Eremobia ochroleuca*) – so much for my knowledge of current moth status.

I thanked Tony for his expert help and asked why I was having difficulty finding a common old **Garden Tiger** moth yet had somehow caught a county first? He then gave me the very sad news that this once abundant moth is now uncommon and has been in decline over the past ten years.

During subsequent discussions, and with reference to, the excellent publication of “Larger moths and butterflies of Herefordshire and Worcestershire – An atlas” by Tony and the Herefordshire county recorder Michael Harper, I am amazed at the change in fortunes of our local Lepidoptera over the last 20 years.

Other moths that I caught regularly, beat as larvae or dug as pupae and considered very common 20 years ago but appear to be very

uncommon now were: **Ghost Moth, Lackey, Buff Tip, Oak Eggar, Figure of Eighty, Phoenix, Spinach, September Thorn, Lunar Thorn, Eyed Hawk-moth, Puss Moth** and **White Satin**.

Looking back over last year my interest in moths has grown and grown, particularly thanks to Tony Simpson for his expert guidance (especially the little jobbies) and tireless assistance.

Hopefully this year will see a modern day “Tiger” turn up in my trap. In the meantime I have caught many other moths that are totally new to me and during the half year trapping in the garden managed 179 macro species from June to December and 103 micros including another county first Pyralid *Loxostege sticticalis*. The thrill of turning the egg cartons over each morning to discover what lies beneath adds an excitement to the start of the day.

Who knows, hopefully, this year I will catch the elusive “**Tiger**” and realise a twenty year old dream and of course fulfil my promise to the kids and let them look and then retain memories of this wonderful insect - but I suppose it wasn't a bad season....

• Jeff Rush

## Using Moths as Indicators of Heathland Quality

### Summary:

*Biodiversity, i.e. the quantity of species of both flora and fauna is all the rage these days. I believe that a good indication of the quality of heathland can be measured by using the selected results of moth-trapping sessions. The latter are very quick to obtain and much less labour intensive than a full biological survey. Please read on for results of some preliminary work.*

### Introduction

‘A sea of heather (*Calluna vulgaris*) as far as the eye can see - that's quality heathland,’ or at least that's what I used to think. The best wildlife heathland consists of a matrix of different habitats including heather, true heaths (*Erica* spp.), bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), gorse (*Ulex* spp.), birch (*Betula* spp.), bilberry (*Vaccinium myrtillus* and other *Vaccinium* spp.), plus adjacent acidic grassland, acidic bog, and bare sandy ground. How can you best assess the quality of this varied habitat for wildlife, - do you simply list and map the flora of the site? Maybe a better measure of all round wildlife quality of heathland

would be an assessment of its invertebrate communities. Invertebrates are too diverse as a group to be easily measured for each site. Alternatively a much simpler measure would be to assess the quality of moth fauna as an indicator of the general invertebrate quality of the site.

### Methods

This is an attempt to make a simple test of heathland site quality that can be used for comparing any West Midland heath, using the skills of any moth-trapper. This system is to trap and record all moths seen on site for 4 to 5 hours



quality heaths will achieve a higher score. The species I have selected are as listed in the results table below, and simple doubling of figures gives an index score out of 100. All trapping dates in the table were in 2000.

## Results

See table below. The 50 species selected have all occurred on West Midland heathlands. Interestingly of these 50 have occurred in the old vice county of Staffordshire, 46 in Warwickshire, and 43 in Worcestershire. This represents the approximate quality of each county for heathland with Staffordshire having by far the most, and Warwickshire having the excellent site of Sutton Park.

Two samples were taken from a south Birmingham garden in Kings Heath with an index of 0 both times. In Walsall, Barr Beacon had an index of 6, Pelsall North Common had 12, and Brownhills Common had 20. Wyre Forest in Worcestershire scored 26, while Kingsford Country Park, Worcestershire and Sutton Park, Birmingham both scored 30.

## Conclusions

This is a very small sample, but already it indicates comparative heathland quality of sites.

The Kings Heath site was in a traditional heathland area with neutral / acidic soils, but it has been developed with housing since about 1900. Nearest remnant heather is about 2 kilometres away, while nearest birch is at about 100 metres. It is therefore expected that the site would receive an index score of 0.

Barr Beacon is a remnant heathland site that was connected to the much larger Sutton Park, until 200 years ago. Though heathland restoration work has started at the site, the nearest heather is about 1 kilometre away, with the nearest gorse, birch, bracken, and acidic grassland within 100 metres. So the site is small and impoverished, but better than Kings Heath. Species recorded were 2 birch and 1 bracken feeder.

Pelsall North Common and Brownhills Common are much larger (35 hectares plus), with some quality heathland habitat present. Although quite close together they interestingly have some different species with the heather feeders; **Ling Pug** at Brownhills Common, and **Heath Rustic** at Pelsall North Common. Both sites contain good quality heather, so is the difference due to small populations being present at each site and therefore local extinctions can occur easily? One

of the major differences between these two sites is the much larger area of birch scrub / woodland at Brownhills yielding 4 birch feeding species to Pelsall's 1 species.

Wyre Forest has some excellent heathland areas within a very large ancient semi-natural site, but they are definitely a small proportion of the total site which is mostly acid / neutral broadleaf woodland. Understandably the high total of 6 species were birch-feeders (which can cross-over between heathland and acidic woodland).

Sutton Park, as expected, had the top score, as it is an excellent large heathland site, with a higher proportion of heather feeders than the smaller sites.

Surprisingly Kingsford had the equal top score, as it is a very small heathland site within a much larger oak / birch / pine site. It contrasts with Wyre though in that Kingsford is part of a large ancient semi-natural site that was traditionally heathland, and has colonised with woodland in the recent past. In contrast Wyre has always been predominately woodland with small areas of heathland.

Comparing index scores with site status, we find that index scores fit in well with current site status. Kings Heath with 0 score has no wildlife status, Barr Beacon is currently a Site of Local Importance for Nature Conservation. Pelsall and Brownhills both have average scores with Site of Importance for Nature Conservation status (and in fact both are close to achieving the next higher status of SSSI). The best 3 sites; Wyre, Sutton Park and Kingsford are all SSSI status. In addition the first two are National Nature Reserves, could further research reveal that the larger Kingsford / Kinver Edge site should also be a NNR site?

This Heathland Indicator Species (HIS) system is quite simple and currently is only based on a small sample, but it appears to work well as a method of showing heathland quality. This is just the first stage in assessing a site's quality (for example the Kingsford score was a surprise for such a small heathland), but it shows well where more work is required. At Kingsford management work is urgently needed to preserve the area of heathland still existing and to try and link it to nearby heathland pockets. In addition further surveys are required to look at the status of the rarer nationally notable species present on site.

Also I would like to encourage other moth-trappers to test their local heathlands against this Index to see how they compare. Larger well known sites such as Hartlebury, Highgate and



Cannock Chase need surveying. In addition can you survey smaller local sites near where you live and discover another Kingsford? This could be your way of helping to preserve and manage these relict heathland sites.

- D. Grundy

## Reference

[1] Bradley J.D. (2000) "Checklist of Lepidoptera recorded from the British Isles" - D.J. Bradley & M.J. Bradley

## Bibliography

Goater, B. (1986) "British Pyralid Moths" - Harley Books, Colchester, Essex.

Skinner, B. (1998, 1984) "Colour Identification Guide to Moths of the British Isles" - Viking, London.

## Moth Identification Guide:

### Small Magpie (*Eurrhynx hortulata*)



This very common and distinctive pyralid moth is one of the easiest to identify. It flies from June until early August, so look out for it now. You will often find this night-flying moth in your garden since its larva feeds on the

rolled leaves of nettles and less commonly on labiates (such as woundwort and mint). With a wing size of nearly 3.5 cm it is one of the biggest

micro moths. It has white wings with black patches and a black border, and a yellow and black body. This is not to be confused with the much larger Magpie Moth (*Abraxas grossulariata*) which also has a yellow band across the middle of the wing.

#### Bibliography:

British Pyralid Moths, Barry Goater (1986)

Collins Pocket Guide: *Insects*, Michael Chinery (1983)

Colour Identification to Moths of the British Isles, Bernard Skinner (1984)

- Neil and Corinna Gregory

## Conservation Corner

When will the weather improve? Everybody keeps reassuring me that June has been a bad month for the past few years and it does not necessarily mean that the later summer species will be a wash out - I hope not as we are certainly well over due a few weeks of sunny weather! It seems to me that the sun is playing tricks on me - as soon as I get to a site the sun goes in and then when I give up and return to the car the sun comes out as I am driving home. Still, as this is the one thing I can do absolutely nothing about there is no point getting worked up about it.

Despite these poor weather conditions, the Wyre Forest survey for the **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** and the **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** has produced excellent results. A very big thank you to everybody who has turned up at any of the three organised recording days or who has made a point of visiting the forest at another time. The recording forms are beginning to come back to me and it is looking like very positive news for both species. The **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** is present in virtually every open clearing in the main section of the forest, frequently in areas

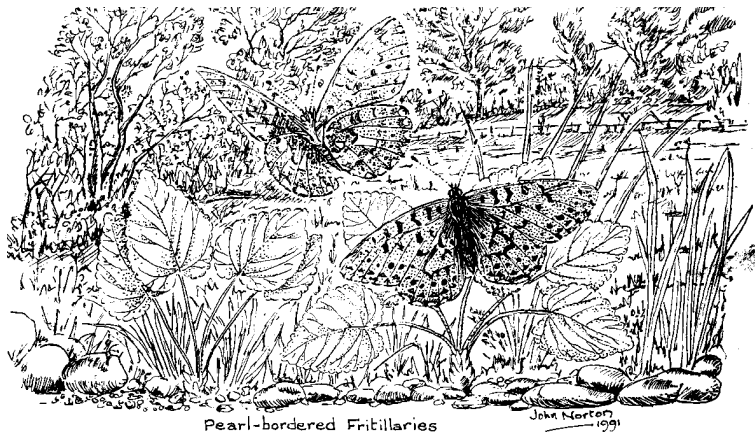
where the violet densities appear to be very low and in a variety of habitats (deer lawn areas, pipeline, IMI area, open areas of clear fell, former coppice plots and track edges). Initial results from the **Small Pearl-bordered** survey are just as encouraging. While this species tends to be present in smaller numbers, it is on many of the sites where the **Pearl-bordered Fritillaries** were recorded, most frequently in areas which have small damp patches. I also think the 2002 results suggest that the **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** in particular, is very mobile within the Wyre Forest as there are few sites where they can regularly be seen in similar numbers. This finding makes the identification of potential breeding sites a much more difficult task. The next stage of the project will be to pull together all the results and plot them on maps, to liaise with Forest Enterprise, English Nature and other landowners and to try to relate past management to current occupancy levels and to suggest any areas where additional management or slight changes in management may be beneficial to this species. Another aim of the project will be to set up a long term monitoring project to visit a set number of

sites (although the sites themselves may change) on an annual basis. This will hopefully ensure we continue to be in a good position to determine how these species are doing in the forest away from the existing butterfly transects. This Wyre Forest survey was also targeted at the day-flying **Argent and Sable** and **Drab Looper** moths.

Unfortunately neither of these species have been recorded at the Wyre Forest during 2002 to date although it now looks as though we were perhaps searching for the **Drab Looper** too early! Searches for past records have recently revealed July rather than June sightings so we may be able to report a positive outcome yet! Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to particularly thank Phil Rudlin and Rosemary Winnall of Forest Enterprise for all their enthusiasm and efforts towards this project. They have both been involved from the start and without their support (and delicious cappuccinos!) I am sure this project would not have been so successful.

It has also been a good year for **Wood White** on its Shropshire sites. Bill Davidson recorded an impressive 66 at Bury Ditches (the highest number ever recorded here) and 9 at nearby Radnor wood. These are both sites where Forest Enterprise is now aware of the presence of this species and has introduced a sympathetic rotational ride mowing regime. There is also good news of another Shropshire site for the **Wood White** which is privately owned. Following our advice, the estate has widened the main ride next to the colony which has greatly improved conditions. Hopefully, this work, combined with a reduction in the amount of road-side verge mowing, will increase the size of this colony.

On the subject of **Wood White** - I was driving along in my car yesterday going up to the Kerry Ridgeway to look for **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** when I noticed what I thought was a **Wood White** by the side of the road. I stopped the car and got a good look at it and sure enough it was. This sighting is some way from known colonies and again adds weight to the theory that it is a much more mobile butterfly than we have thought in the past.



Pearl-bordered Fritillaries

Another project which is currently taking place is some moth trapping on six woodlands managed by Telford and Wrekin Council. This has certainly been a project with a difference with the main emphasis being on finding urban trapping locations where we do not attract unwanted attention! Two weeks ago Peter Boardman and I arrived on the road beside one site at dusk and were just about to start unloading our traps when a group of lads appeared promptly followed by three police cars with lights flashing. Having waited for around 30 minutes to see what would happen as we were not surprisingly now uncomfortable at the thought of getting out, I then went and asked the police if they thought it was a sensible idea for us to proceed.

They did much to our surprise and we ended up with a reasonable number of moth species although there seemed to be constant sirens and we were perhaps not quite as relaxed as we would normally be! We followed up this experience with being locked in 'Wonderland' the following week which for those of you who don't know is a children's adventure land in Telford Town Park which has all the nursery rhyme characters and lots of large plastic animals. Trapping here at night is slightly bizarre (as Peter so rightly suggested it could be the location for a horror movie and after he had said that I was not too keen to let him out of my sight) but still much more preferable to being out in the Town Park itself. I could certainly not say this year that my experiences working on butterflies and moths have not been variable and interesting!

Finally, we are hoping to undertake a project to determine how important human elements are in the landscape for the **Grayling** butterfly on the Shropshire/Welsh border in the next few weeks. The plan is to visit all sites where this species has been recorded since 1990 and then to sample any other potential sites in the immediate area. As we have quite a number of sites to visit we are still looking for volunteers to help us with this project and to agree to visit one or two sites. These site visits would involve carrying out timed counts, identifying the approximate flight area and recording information on land use. We hope to write the results up in a paper for a journal and anybody who contributes to the project results will be included in this. If you think you can help

please contact me at

Joy.croft@btinternet.com or on 01952 245684 or write to me at The Croft, Off Haygate Road, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire, TF1 2BW.

- Jenny Joy

## Dates for Your Diary

### Workdays and Butterfly Walks

**20 July (Saturday) Linton Woods (near Dymock)** target species **White Admiral** and **Silver-washed Fritillary**. Meet at 11.00 am at car park on minor road past Ross Golf Club GR SO668265 for details contact Jeff Andrews tel. 01432 870301

**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 870301

**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)

**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

## Health and Safety

Guidelines for health and safety during activities organised by Butterfly Conservation will be received from Head Office in due course - in the meantime we reproduce those adopted by the Devon Branch:-

“There are important responsibilities laid upon us to do what we can to ensure your safety at events organised by Butterfly Conservation. Please take a little time to read, consider and act upon the following points at any of our events:

- Wear appropriate foot wear for the conditions expected underfoot.
- Wear appropriate clothing for the conditions to be expected. Protect yourself against Cold, Heat, Sun, Rain, Wind and Thorns.
- Consider what precautions you should take to prevent being bitten or stung by insect, plants, snakes or animals.
- Children must be adequately supervised by an

adult.

- Dogs must be kept on a lead. Seek permission from the leader before bringing your dog.
- Listen carefully to instructions given by the leader at the beginning of the event.
- Beware of branches swinging back onto you after being passed by the person in front.
- Beware of carefully dug rabbit holes, dug to twist your ankle.
- Inform the leader if you intend to leave early.
- Keep up with the party.
- Carry a drink - you may be away from your car for several hours.
- Observe the country code at all times.
- Enjoy yourself.

Site specific hazards will be outlined by the leader at the start of the field trip.”

Digby Wood  
Jasmine Cottage  
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Callow End  
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#### **Conservation Reserve Wardens**

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# BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION



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**Please see overleaf  
for more Committee members and Conservation Reserve Wardens**



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