



No. 56

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2003

WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH, BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

Contents

Chairman's Notes	front cover
AGM at Bishops Wood	2
Charity saves Ancient Watermeadows in Herefordshire	2
Countryside Stewardship at Saltwells Nature Reserve	3
Well it was well worth all the effort - Field trip report Anchor Meadow	5
Trip to Monkwood 23 May 2003.....	6
Trip to Hungary 28 June to 11 July 2003	6
West Midlands Branch on tour	7
Flying down into Rio.....	7
Baggeridge Country Park - Field Trip Report 31 May	9
Book Review: Warwickshire's Butterflies	10
Notes of West and East Midlands Regional Conservation Day.....	11
Website Update.....	14
Moth Identification: the Streamer.....	14
Conservation Corner.....	15
Regional Officers' Update	16
Request for Information for Brown Field Sites Dossier	18
Obituary: Gareth Barton	18
Instructions for Contributors.....	19
Dates for your Diary	20

Chairman's Notes Autumn 2003

I hope you have all enjoyed the glorious summer weather and the resultant large numbers of butterflies. On my local patch, **Common Blue**, **Small Copper**, **Essex Skipper** and **Small White** have all had record years. I spent a week in Scotland in August and I have never seen so many butterflies there before. Clearly there are some really positive benefits to global warming.

The large numbers of butterflies and moths obviously attracts the interest of the general public and raises awareness. I have had lots of telephone calls, particularly about **Hummingbird Hawk Moths** which also seem to have had an exceptional year.

Following on from my appeal to new members in

the last newsletter, I am pleased to say that the events organised over the summer, for new members and beginners, were very successful. Thanks to Jane Ellis for organising the butterfly event, Dave Grundy for his introduction to moth identification course and to Neil Gregory for running the butterfly transect day. We hope to run similar events next year. If you would like to know more about butterfly and moth identification and recording please get in contact with me or any committee member.

More moth recorders would be particularly welcome as Butterfly Conservation has received funding to investigate the feasibility of a national macro-moth recording scheme. The intention would be to map the distribution of all the UK macro-moths. The end

result would be an atlas based on the very successful Millennium Atlas for butterflies. Please watch the national newsletter for more details. We will need all the records we can get to ensure that the West Midlands region is covered fully.

Good progress is being made on the third and last volume of the atlases covering the distribution of all the Lepidoptera in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. This volume will cover the Tortricidae, Alucitidae, Pyralidae and Pterophoridae and should be available for purchase early in 2004.

Richard Fox, Surveys Manager of Butterfly Conservation as our guest speaker. Richard was the driving force behind the Millennium Atlas for Butterflies and he will give a talk on "Using Records to Conserve Butterflies". This will be a very interesting talk and will review the multitude of enterprises in which your butterfly records are being used. This will range from local conservation to national policy and international research. He will also cover the importance of ongoing butterfly recording and the plans for an update to the atlas. Don't miss it!

• Ian Duncan

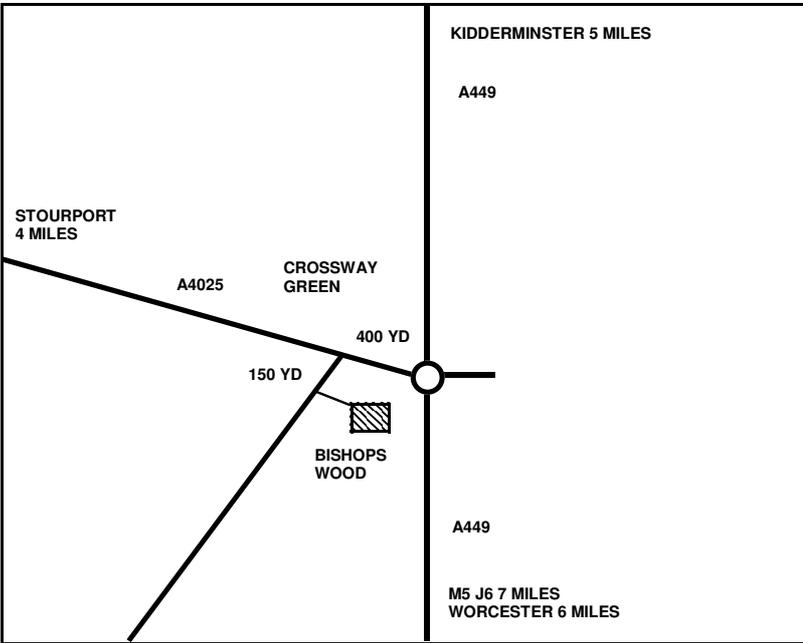
At this year's AGM we are very pleased to have

AGM at Bishops Wood, 11 October 2003 2.00 pm

The Branch AGM will be at Bishops Wood Environmental Centre, near Crossway Green on the A449 at the junction with the A4025, halfway between Worcester and Kidderminster. GR SO835683.

There will be a talk by Richard Fox (BC Surveys Manager) on "Using Records to Conserve Butterflies".

Tea and coffee will be provided.



Charity saves Ancient Watermeadows in Herefordshire

The recent purchase of the 247 acre Turnastone Court Farm in Herefordshire, assisted by way of loan finance from The Triodos Bank, has enabled the Countryside Restoration Trust (CRT), a registered charity, to save ancient hay meadows and pasture land from almost certain destruction.

In addition to this heritage landscape, some potential purchasers would have viewed the listed farmhouse, listed barns, listed black and white cottage and village shop with its 1930's style petrol pumps as ripe for residential development.

This unique area of species rich water meadows adjacent to the River Dore, the haunt of the curlew and yellow wagtail, which are claimed not to have been ploughed for 400 years, would have been lost forever through a change to intensive potato growing if the Trust, following active publicity in the national press, had not intervened.

The farm is a fine example of the Golden Valley's agricultural heritage. It contains part of the Trench Royal, a three-mile long, ten-foot wide and four-foot deep irrigation project completed by Rowland Vaughan during the late sixteenth Century. It may also have served as a canal to transport goods around the Golden Valley. Vaughan's irrigation system tapped into streams which ran from the

foothills of the Black Mountains.

Sluices and carraiges (leats) brought water and minerals onto the meadows and in this way they were 'drowned'. Drowning the meadows in early Spring drove out the frost and encouraged an early 'bite' for livestock; later drownings encouraged crops of hay. Vaughan claimed that the productivity of his land increased six fold by this method. He described this system in his book *'Most Approved and Long experienced Water Workes containing The Manner of Winter and Summer drowning'* published in 1610.

The CRT, was founded in 1991 as a response to the over-intensification and industrialisation of agriculture. It is dedicated to protecting and restoring the countryside by using farming methods that encourage wildlife and produce quality food. It has and retains strong links with Butterfly Conservation. One of its founding members was the late Gordon Beningfield, the butterfly artist. Another Trustee and present Director, Robin Page, has recently written a book *'The Great British Butterfly Safari'*, where he describes in his racy style his quest to see every species of British butterfly in a single year. The proceeds are aimed at raising money for The Gordon Beningfield Appeal, to acquire a CRT farm for butterflies in Dorset.

The CRT will run Turnastone Court entirely along the lines of its aims and philosophy, which have seen profitable farming returns, major species gains and premium values on Trust farms. The 400 year old species rich meadows will be carefully managed to enhance their diversity; grazing and haymaking will run in harmony with livestock and wildlife considerations. Traditional Hereford cattle, a feature of the farm during the last 100 years by the former owners, the Watkins family, will be included and the farm restocked from the CRT's other Herefordshire farm at Awnells, near Much Marcle.

Preliminary base-line surveys undertaken this year have revealed a number of interesting

species and habitats both on the watermeadows and elsewhere. The number of butterflies already recorded on the farm number 17. It includes a colony of **Common Blue** on a south-east facing slope of species rich pasture adorned with ant-hills underlain by cornstones (limestone). Here are also found **Six-spot Burnet** moths where their foodplant, bird's foot trefoil is abundant. Moth recording has only just begun. One of the highlights this year was the discovery, at dusk on a warm evening in early July, of a 'colony' of about one hundred **Ghost Moths** 'dancing' eerily on one of the watermeadows.

The Countryside Restoration Trust will employ ground-breaking conservation and traditional farming methods at Turnastone Court Farm. It will conserve those habitats which are sensitive and seek to improve other areas for the benefit of wildlife. One idea being currently investigated is to make the watermeadows wetter. This would enhance the habitat for breeding curlew and hopefully attract other waders such as lapwing and redshank. Traditional management of the hay-meadows, upland grassland and wood pasture should improve the habitat for invertebrates.

The CRT receives much of its funding through membership 'Friends', for its land purchases and conservation work. Donations and legacies are also vital to the continuation of the CRT's conservation farming work. A major funding Appeal for £1.5m has just been launched to repay The Triodos Bank loan finance. The former Bishop of Hereford, The Right Reverend John Oliver has kindly agreed to be the Patron of the Appeal. If you would like to make a donation to the appeal and/or help with the conservation work at Turnastone Court Farm please contact the CRT office at Barton Cambridge, CB3 7AG Tel 01223 262999 or telephone Ian Hart on 01981 510259. The CRT website can be found at www.crtbarton.org.uk.

• Ian Hart

Countryside stewardship at Saltwells Nature Reserve

Cows slowly moving across the hillside, gently foraging the grassland. Elsewhere, new hedges have been planted alongside sturdy stock-proof fences. Down in the flower meadows a tractor collects herb rich hay that will go to feed the cattle over the winter... Saltwells Local Nature Reserve, lying in the industrial heart of the Black Country, is not the first place you would expect to stumble across such a rural scene; however in October 2001 Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council who owns and manages the site, signed up to a

Countryside Stewardship Agreement. This scheme, administered by the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), aims to encourage farmers and other landowners to manage their holdings in ways to improve the natural beauty and diversity of the countryside. It does this through payments, either annual payments for ongoing management of grasslands, heathland etc. or through one off payments for capital items such as fencing, pond creation and access improvements. The scheme also lays

down rules regarding good general farming practices that anyone signing up to the scheme needs to adhere to. These include maximum stocking rates, specifications for fencing and rules about when to cut grasslands and hedges.

At Saltwells an area of approximately 25 ha, one quarter of the entire reserve, was included in the agreement. This encompassed the area of Netherton Hill and surrounding pastures and meadows. Like many areas in the Black Country Netherton Hill was once open cast coal mined. Once mining finished in the early 1980s, the area was re-graded and hydro-seeded with gorse. This action has been a victim of its own success in a way. The gorse quickly colonised and spread and twenty years later a thick, monotonous swath of rank gorse covered the hillside, only broken up by firebreak tracks installed to limit the often-witnessed infernos that local youths seemed intent on creating, often at bird nesting time.

Following consultation with local people, representatives from DEFRA and other interested parties, an agreement was written up that aimed to meet the objectives of DEFRA as well as the objectives of the site, local biodiversity action plan targets and local people. Its main objectives were to reduce the coverage of gorse and associated scrub on Netherton Hill and revert some of the area to heathland, to fence several of the meadows and pastures to reintroduce traditional management techniques and to plant hedges along several of these new boundaries. The plan was approved by DEFRA and in April 2002 (following inevitable delays caused by the foot and mouth crisis) we had final written confirmation to go ahead with the works.

There then began an intensive programme of fencing on Netherton Hill. From April to September 2002 wardens installed over 1000 metres of stock fencing by hand. A decision was then taken to employ contractors using a heavy-duty forestry-mulching machine to tackle the otherwise mammoth task of cutting the gorse. This work was undertaken in December 2002 and the results were startling. What would have taken wardens using chainsaws and brushcutters weeks to complete was literally smashed to nothing in hours.

It became clear that to fulfil the requirements of the agreement, and our own objectives, then a small herd of cattle would have to be introduced to the area. Cattle were chosen as they graze in such a way that they pull the grass, often roots and all, rather than nibbling like sheep or horses. This creates a diverse sward and means that coarse, vigorous species are unable to dominate. Despite an extensive search we were unable to

find anyone who was willing to graze a small number of beasts in the middle of Dudley! At this point the decision was taken to investigate buying our own cattle and to undertake their husbandry ourselves. There then began a long process of paper work, training, registration, more paper work and convincing Councillors and Senior Officers that it really was a good idea!

Following this process, and a further 1000 metres of fencing, we took delivery of six Murray Grey steers in early June 2003. Murray Grey's were chosen as they are a docile breed (important where the public have access), easily handled when necessary, like to eat coarse vegetation and they fatten well on 'poor' quality grass. This last point is important because although the cows are principally in residence to undertake management of the grassland for conservation purposes they are still part of the food chain. Our plan is to keep these six cattle until they are 'finished' and sell them at a premium as good quality, extensively reared beef animals.

The cows quickly settled down to a routine of grazing during the morning and evening and resting in the remaining gorse during the day. Despite fears to the contrary, there has been little interference from local youths and, apart from the occasional complaint about cowpats, the public have been quick to hail the cattle a successful and a popular addition to the Saltwells community.

So, how has this work benefited butterflies? There seems to be several benefits to butterflies as a result of our exploits. Firstly, by ensuring that the hay meadows are cut at an appropriate time, we hope to ensure the continued survival of various food plants whilst also providing over-wintering shelter on uncut areas. By negotiation with DEFRA we were able to write into our plan that a 10 metre strip (rotated annually) remained uncut on one meadow where **Marbled White** and **Dingy Skipper** occur. We have also noted an increase in food plants such as Bird's Foot Trefoil, Fescue spp. and Common Sorrel. Another 'Saltwells special' is the **Green Hairstreak**, which feeds on Gorse. It is hoped that by regenerating the gorse, and providing a more open habitat, this species will thrive. We have also considered butterflies in our hedge planting schemes. As well as the usual Hawthorn we have inter-planted with Blackthorn, Wild Plum and Oak amongst others to add to their appeal to butterflies and other wildlife.

Although Countryside Stewardship is not a specific scheme to target certain species it does have the 'whole farm' principle of wildlife conservation and landscape enhancement. By

entering into the scheme Dudley Council has shown its commitment to enhancing the area for wildlife and people. What we now have is a working landscape, one that almost earns its keep whilst still meeting its objectives as a nature reserve. The cattle graze all summer, they are fed over the winter on hay collected at the proper time from our own meadows and will hopefully bring

further revenue back onto the site when they are sold. Surely that is what sustainable conservation management is all about?

• Jonathan Preston
Saltwells LNR Senior Warden
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

So many trips to report at home and abroad

Please read on - ed.

Well it was Worth All the Effort Field Trip Report - Anchor Meadow 31 May

Just over two years ago 50 people objected to the proposed property development at Anchor Meadow in Aldridge. Not all were local Branch members since Val Weston also asked some of her colleagues at Barclays Bank to object if they lived nearby, and they did. This set the wheels in motion within the council, and after involvement from members such as Peter Newell, Dave Jackson, Mike Williams and myself, along with Walsall Countryside Services Department an equitable compromise was reached with Bryant Homes PLC. Peter, as the local man, and the person who first identified Anchor Meadow potential had the honour of leading the walk.

The day was sunny and hot but because the season was so early I was concerned the **Dingy Skipper** flight period might be over. I need not have worried as we saw 20 over the whole complex, the highest numbers ever. Twelve were recorded in the spare ground adjacent to the Health Centre where the Managing Partner, Dr Denys Wells is most supportive and has left the area free from the curse of laid lawns. Another three were on the actual nature reserve that will need the bramble cutting back this winter as it is crowding out the habitat. Any local volunteers to help Peter Newell please approach me for contacts, your offer will be gratefully accepted. And brilliantly, another eight were identified on a patch of ground that Walsall Council's Recreation Department gave up to extend the potential habitat.

Loads of **Common Blue** were seen, along with a few **Small White**, **Speckled Wood** and two **Large Skipper**, which at the time of writing, are season firsts in the branch. Almost equalling the **Dingys** in importance were the day-flying moths that are relatively common in this urban area unlike in the rural countryside within our branch.

There were swarms of **Burnet Companion**, good numbers of **Latticed Heath** and the odd **Cinnabar**. Alan Prior identified the micro moth **Light Brown Apple** and another with an impossible Latin name which he phoned me with a day later to correct the spelling. I was totally lost by this stage so it will remain a mystery. We even had a few **Silver Y** that had decided to come over from the continent to see what the fuss was all about on this site. Damselflies were represented by the Blue-tailed.

Like so many of my articles I would like to end on a personal note. I was delighted to meet two new faces. They were so enthused at seeing so many new things for the first time that one has volunteered to help with any scrub bashing, whilst the other from Perry Barr is now going to get involved with moth identification and recording after a suggestion from Val Weston. I say this as a challenge to the large numbers of new members who have recently joined the Branch in the Birmingham area probably after publicity from Alan Titchmarsh. Do get to see some of the amazing butterflies and moths that exist, you will never conserve until you have appreciated. Do phone committee members for advice or assistance. How many of you will lapse your membership by the end of the year if you have not done anything?

Finally, thanks to all those who wrote to the council, have a pint on me! Please also approach your employers to ensure that they create habitat around the back of factories or offices conducive to wildlife. Its quite possible as the new leaflet from Butterfly Conservation on brownfield and urban sites informs. Please contact the Regional Officers if you would like some to circulate.

• Richard Southwell

Trip to Monkwood 23 May 2003

My wife Sue and I were anxious to see **Wood Whites** and after an email to Richard Southwell we were told that Monkwood East would be the best place for us to see them on our way down to spend a week in Wiltshire.

We entered the East side of the wood, took the path for about 100 yards (I haven't gone metric yet) and where the path divides we took the left hand fork and followed it until we reached the fields that border the wood; from here we went right and took a path off to the right-hand side which led to a rather large glade.

Within seconds, we were looking at our first **Wood Whites** and eventually we saw 9 specimens together with **Brimstone**. The **Wood White** is such a delicate butterfly that we watched them for nearly half an hour; we reluctantly had to leave to make our way down to Wiltshire.

Thanks to Richard's expert directions we were able to see a wonderful butterfly for the first time.

Monkwood is a superb habitat and with such lovely butterflies it should be treasured.

How did we get on in Wiltshire - well these are some of the highlights, **Marsh Fritillary**, **Small Blue**, **Adonis Blue**, **Pearl Bordered** and **Small Pearl Bordered Fritillaries**, **Painted Lady**, and **Grizzled** and **Dingy Skippers**. The **Small Blues** at Martin Down in Hampshire are so people friendly that two of them landed on one of my shoes!!!! (I think I will start a shoe list).

All in all an excellent holiday started off in great style with those **Wood Whites**.

• Brian and Sue Roberts
Butterfly Conservation-North Wales Branch

Trip to Hungary 28 June - 11 July 2003

This was another successful trip run by Mike Williams on behalf of the West Midlands Branch of Butterfly Conservation. We spent four days in SW Hungary around Lake Balaton and the Bakony Hills; four days in the White Carpathian Mountains in Slovakia and the Czech Republic and four days in NE Hungary in the Bukk Hills, Aggtelek and Hortobagy National Parks.

Full lists of all the butterflies, moths and birds, seen on the trip, can be obtained from Mike. If I say that we saw 105 species of butterfly, 259 species of moth and 119 species of bird, you can get an idea of how rich and diverse the wildlife still is in this part of Eastern Europe.

For me, highlights included:

Bakony Hills

-**Purple Emperor** (*Apatura iris*) **Lesser Purple Emperor** (*Apatura ilea*), **Common Glider** (*Neptis sappho*) with lots of **High Brown** (*Argynnis adippe*) and **Dark Green** (*Argynnis aglaja*) **Fritillaries**.

-Over 100 species in the moth trap one morning, including 100s of **Rosy Footman** (*Miltochrista miniata*), **Privet** (*Sphinx ligustri*) and **Pine** (*Hyloicus pinastris*) **Hawk Moths**.

-At least 5 species of "**Red Underwing**" (*Catocala* spp.) moth.

-Stumbled on a roadside verge where **Mountain Alcon Blue** (*Maculinea rebeli*), a globally

threatened species, found in good numbers.

Carpathians

-Stunning views of **Apollo** (*Parnassius Apollo*).

-Lots of **Blues** - **Mountain Alcon Blue** again, **Scarce Large Blue** (*Maculinea telejus*), **Reverdin's Blue** (*Plebejus argyrognomon*), **Geranium Argus** (*Eumedonia eumedon*), **Meleager's Blue** (*Meleageria daphnis*) etc.

-At least 6 species of **Burnet Moth** (Zygaenidae).
-**Scarce** (*Lycaena vigeureae*) and **Large** (*Lycaena dispar*) **Copper**.

NE Hungary

-Aggtelek National Park - "clouds" of **Yellows** (*Colias* spp.), **Skippers** (*Hesperiidae*), **Blues** especially **Silver-studded** (*Plebejus argus*), **Wood White** (*Leptidea sinapis*) and **Scarce Swallowtail** (*Iphiclides podalirius*) by the stream.

-Lots of **Fritillaries** including **Pallas's** (*Argynnis laodice*), **Queen of Spain** (*Issoria lathonia*), **Marbled** (*Brenthis daphne*), **Lesser Marbled** (*Brenthis ino*), **Weaver's** (*Clossiana dia*), **Heath** (*Mellicta athalia*), **False Heath** (*Melitaea diamina*).

-Days birding in the Hortobagy National Park (a major wetland) saw Roller, Red-footed Falcon, Imperial Eagle, Black Stork and Saker.

-**Mountain Alcon Blue** again!

In the evening, talking with the guides Gabor Orban (overall tour leader from Ecotours) and Rob de Jong of the Farm Lator Nature Centre, we discussed what could be done to help conserve the great diversity of butterflies and moths in Hungary. With Hungary due to join the EU in the

next few years, now might be a unique opportunity to preserve some of the richness of this country.

What role could Butterfly Conservation play in a project of this nature? Fortunately Butterfly Conservation is currently modifying its Memorandum and Articles of Association to allow it to participate in projects outside the UK. Approval of these revised articles will be sought at the national AGM this year. We will also be discussing BCs future role internationally at Council meetings later in the year.

Obviously the main focus of BC must remain in the UK however it seems essential that some effort be directed towards overseas projects. Countries such as Hungary, would be an ideal place to start.

Butterfly Conservation could become involved in numerous ways such as:

1. Conservation – Priority should be given to (a) globally threatened species and (b) species rare in the UK but still common in continental Europe.
2. Organisations- BC could provide support and encouragement to Lepidoptera conservation organisations which have little or no support in their home country.
3. Co-ordination- BC could assume a co-ordinating role similar to that adopted by the RSPB in BirdLife International, bringing together like-minded bodies and individuals willing to share their knowledge, lobby at an international level etc.
4. Individuals-BC staff would benefit from experience in a wider context while opportunities would arise for volunteers. They could provide assistance with monitoring, recording and practical conservation.
5. Fund Raising-Funding may be available through the EU and other bodies, willing to support conservation co-operation between EU member states.

This is a potentially exciting new area of activity for Butterfly Conservation. I would welcome any views that members may have on this subject.

• Ian Duncan

West Midlands Branch on tour Another Holiday abroad anybody?

After various excursions to different parts of Europe, the Caribbean and South America in recent years, I am looking at organising a trip to the Altai and Tien Shan mountains of Kazakhstan next year. These mountains, bordering Siberia, Mongolia and China, rise to around 15,000 feet and are really an extension of the Himalayas. The scenery will be spectacular with snow-capped peaks, vast forests, tundra and desert boasting a pretty amazing flora and fauna including Brown Bear, Siberian Ibex, Marmots, Jerboas and some hugely impressive birds. Butterflies abound in the unspoilt mountain pastures with masses of **Fritillaries** not found in western Europe and up to five species of **Apollo**

(including a yellow one and one with blue spots!). **Yellow-legged Tortoiseshell**, **False Comma** and **Poplar Admiral** are all fairly widespread and, this far east, there are good numbers of Asiatic species including **White Admirals**, **Blues** and **Erebias** that do not occur in Europe. Departure date is likely to be around 9th July for around 18 days. If people are interested please contact me by phone or email and I can supply further details.

• Mike Williams

email: mike@stagborough.fsnet.co.uk
tel. 01299-824860

Flying down into Rio

Twelve hours on a long-haul British Airway Boeing 777-200 flight wasn't so bad as my expectations were high on my long-anticipated trip to Brazil, although my primary purpose was to witness the world's biggest and most famous carnival in Rio de Janeiro; (and I was not disappointed!), there were plenty of other distractions.

My ten day sojourn in Rio was spent at the splendid Rio Sheraton, which is situated at the LeBlon end of Rio's famous five mile stretch of beaches with their evocative names of LeBlon,

Ipanema, Arporador, Copacabana, Leme, Botafogo and Flamengo.

As I arrived towards the end of February and the final stage of carnival was from 2nd to 4th March, I had plenty of time to explore and absorb local colour and culture. Foolishly ignoring the potential dangers of carrying and displaying valuables around with me, (at least in public places); resulted in me being, (superficially) stabbed by an 11 year old and his 7 year old accomplices, from one of Rio's many favelas (shanty towns). These

youngsters, obviously attuned to looking out for a "mug" like me, had seen me using my camera. Fortunately they didn't succeed and I'd only been in Rio for three hours!

Notwithstanding all this trauma, I was able to appreciate the vast blueness of the Atlantic that sweeps up to the magnificent white sands of Rio's famed beaches. A couple of visits to the top of Corcovado mountain to view the magnificent statue of Christ Redentore (Christ the Redeemer), took me, via local transport, from LeBlon, cross-city to the suburb of Cosme Velho, an older part of Rio. Ascending Corcovado by tram car, it became quite clear that one was in the midst of the surrounding Tijuca Forest; basically reclaimed land through the former over-cultivation of sugar-cane. Ascension is possible on foot, whereby it would have been ideal to have examined more closely, the flora and fauna. The statue of Christ dominates the city, it represents the all-embracing protection given by Christ's outstretched arms to the cariocas below. On one visit, as dusk drew nigh, I was able to note a considerable number of large, inert moths around the floodlights that, when switched on, illuminate this fantastic symbol that radiates to all parts of the city - it is always visible and is quite awesome.

Despite enquiries at several of the better bookshops in downtown LeBlon and Botafogo, I was unable to find any natural history books, specific to lepidoptera in Brazil - indeed it was branch committee member, Richard Lamb who subsequently put me on to a suitable source of South American butterfly books upon my return home. I was determined, however, to observe some butterflies during my two week stay and was quite surprised as to how I achieved this. Most mornings I would walk along the coastal Oscar Niemeyer (renowned for being the architect of the capital city of Brasilia), highway, towards Sao Conrado, for about one mile, walking, along the way, in close proximity to one of the notorious favelas. My first contact occurred early one morning, as I looked out from the roadside towards the blueness of the vast expanse of the mighty Atlantic below. Shrubs and wild flowers abounded the top of grey, spume-battered boulders below. I managed to identify Lantana, a shrub, that I was already familiar with as a nectar source. The time was around 0930 hours and the temperature a relatively warm 29 celsius and very sunny. A flurry of butterfly feeding was in progress, as I watched, spellbound. There were around six species that I observed, but unable to, (at the time), identify. I did, however, on subsequent visits to this site, manage a few photographs. The location did not particularly lend itself to the welfare of my safety, so close-up shots were not really viable.

The most striking species, since identified, using D' Abrere's 1984 volume *Butterflies of South America*, were: *Papilio androgeus androgeus* - a very large **Swallowtail**. Basically, black underwings, with a broad, yellow band over the central areas of both upperwings. By far the largest species on show and reasonably easy to photograph, even without a macro lens. It fed voraciously from Lantana, disappearing down towards the base of the rocks below - before returning to feed again. Its feeding behaviour demonstrated a rapid fluttering movement as it imbibed from the shrub flowers.

Size-wise, the next largest species, was *Papilio sesostris sesostris*. Again a black predominating base colour to the upperwings, but with a cream blob on the basal end of the median and post-median areas of the upperwings and two, dark pink areas covering the outer margins of the costa and apex areas of the hindwing with a more substantial pink area near the anal angle. The feeding pattern appeared similar to the **Swallowtail**, however, there were three specimens probing nectar, again from Lantana. Feeding activity was constant and frustratingly frenzied for detailed observation, with butterflies seemingly feeding for a couple of seconds before moving on to the next spray of Lantana flowers.

On another occasion, at the same site and with similar weather conditions prevailing and the aforementioned species still in evidence; supplementary butterflies included: a single *Agraulis Vanillae macaulaea*, common name, the **Gulf Fritillary**. I did manage a photograph of this large, handsome beast. Not heavily veined on the upperwings, as might be expected with typical **Fritillaries**, but having a couple of eye spots on each costa. The undersides hindwings had large silver patches that looked quite spectacular. This was the only butterfly that readily had a common name and again, it fed on Lantana. Less spectacular butterflies of the *Dismorphia* family (Pierids) were seen, the whites I was not able to detect any diagnostic feature, as they were too fast and not within easy focal range to identify - suffice to say that they looked quite plain. From the same family leuce leuce, a medium-sized, bright yellow species was often seen flying rapidly over the shrubs.

Perhaps the most vivid species seen along this coastal highway, where the Lantana seemed like a magnet for feeding purposes, was the *Heliconida*, **Dryus Julia**. What a splendid, vivid fiery red colouring of the upperwings. There were up to three at any one time, displaying a loping, gliding approach when nearing the Lantana - very

quickly moving from one flower to another; their wing coloured brilliance almost mesmerising me, for sheer brilliance and colour definition, this vividness would not have been out of place in the spectacular colours used in the flamboyant costumes worn at carnival!

A short walk further on, in the direction of Sao Conrado; whilst desperately trying to secure a view of an unidentified butterfly; I turned round suddenly to see a superb view of a metallic green feathered Hummingbird, probing shrub flowers. I was so stunned at my good fortune that I completely disregarded the opportunity for taking a photograph - but what a sight!

Prior to my carnival attendance, (which was, quite honestly, the most Stunning extravaganza that I have ever witnessed), I explored other areas of this vibrant city. On my first Saturday in Rio, I ventured to the Jardim Botânico. Of special interest at this extensive site, was the trees grown from all over the world- a veritable arboretum. All trees suitably labelled and, seemingly, flourishing. The Botanical Gardens also featured a collection of over 600 species of orchids .and it was in one of the orchid hot-houses that I espied another butterfly. This species, once settled, was quite easy to photograph, albeit only with its wings closed. A large species, family unknown, it featured on the undersides, (I did not get an upperwings view), cream/grey base colouration and marked with black and red wavy lined markings, predominantly on the hindwings. Two

medium sized eyespots occupied an area around the post median and subapical on the forewings, near to the anal angle. I did get a couple of good photographs, but its identity still remains a mystery.

I encountered one other free flying butterfly, (or was it a moth?), at the Botanical Gardens. I saw this medium-sized species near Lake Frei Leandro. There were some torn wing areas in evidence but, I think, sufficient photographic, evidence to make identification possible, eventually. Pale blue/grey base colour on the upperwings, with light brown veins across the three media segments on the upperwings and light tan markings along the wing edges, forming the basic wing pattern. Two pupil-less eyespots were featured at the junction of the post median and sub median, with smaller, but similar spots featured near the anal angle.

As at least two thirds of Rio has the Parc Nacional Da Tijuca, (Tijuca Forest), for a very close backdrop, (best viewed from the summit of Corcovado) I would dearly like to return to explore the forest and the wildlife delights waiting there. I am left, in the meantime, to reminisce in the sheer brilliance and blaze of colourful costumes of the amazing carnival-costumes worn by the exuberant "cariocas" and the hypnotic samba-sounds and dancing.

• Phil Hopson

Baggeridge Country Park - Field Trip Report - 31 May

A nice warm and sunny day and a trip that lasted for four hours, bringing together Branch members and members of the Wolverhampton R.S. P.B group.

The spoil heaps at this former colliery site, now covered with Birdsfoot Trefoil, were scoured for the target species of **Dingy Skipper** and **Green Hairstreak**. Small numbers of both these species were seen, with the latter proving the more elusive. **Common Blues** of both sexes danced over the legumes and were the most numerous butterfly of the day; whilst **Small Heath**, (that has not enjoyed good seasons generally over the last few years), were spotted flitting close to the ground and then camouflaging themselves in a most diverting manner. Pleased to note a couple of female **Brimstones** – not seen regularly at this site, so they may have been vagrants. Nine species seen in total. **Common** and **Latticed Heath** and **Burnett Companion** moth seen in pleasing quantity.

• Phil Hopson

New Local Book

Warwickshire's Butterflies: Their Habitats and Where to Find Them

Edited by Keith Warmington and Margaret Vickery

Published by Butterfly Conservation Warwickshire Branch

July 2003

Copies of the book can be obtained from Margaret Vickery, 3 The Deer Leap, Kenilworth CV8 2HQ (£12.50 + £1.50 p&p, cheques to be made payable to Butterfly Conservation Warwickshire branch).

Book Review

“Warwickshire's Butterflies: Their Habitats and Where to Find Them” by Keith Warmington and Margaret Vickery. Published by Warwickshire branch of Butterfly Conservation at £12.50 (+ p&p)

County books on butterflies tend to follow a fairly standard formula. After some introductory chapters on the history of recording and perhaps something on geology and habitats, most of the space is taken up with species accounts with perhaps a photograph of the butterfly in question and a distribution map. Excellent examples abound and serve as an important record of the distribution of butterflies within a county at a particular point in time. The best offer a historical perspective showing the expansion and decline of species at a local level and offer insight into the conservation problems affecting the butterfly. Certainly a fair few have earned their space on my bookshelf over the years but there lies the rub. Many of these volumes tend to appeal to a very specialist market and do little to promote butterflies to a wider audience.

Congratulations then to Warwickshire branch for taking a very different course. Their new book, while still containing plenty of hard information for the already converted, takes on a much more populist style. Very attractively designed in paperback, the book, which has lots of photographs of habitats as well as butterflies (and moths!), is written in a very readable manner which adds to its appeal. Instead of organising butterflies into their respective families and looking at each in turn, the book focuses on the main habitats in which butterflies are found and recommends sites that members of the public can visit. A number of these site accounts are contributed by different branch members which introduces a variety of tone and a note of informality which add to the success of the book. The report of a July day at Oxhouse Farm back in 1976 by John Roberts reminded me of my own introduction to the wonders of butterflies at the same site a few years later. It is good to remember sometimes that for most of us it was this 'wow factor' that got us hooked in the first place, rather than the prospect of yet more scrub bashing on a cold February morning – delightful though this is of course! The book is sprinkled

with a number of such personal reflections, including quotations from literature, which all encourage the reader to explore the book further. I will leave purchasers of the book to enjoy John's second contribution about a visit to Print Wood for themselves!

It will come as little surprise to West Midlands branch members that the largest section of the book is devoted to man-made habitats: hedgerows & roadside verges, field margins and headlands, disused railway lines, gardens, parks & urban habitats, churchyards and industrial & post-industrial habitats. As Stephen Falk from Warwickshire Museum points out in his Foreword, this fact demonstrates forcibly the blinkered approach of government with respect to so called brownfield sites. In Warwickshire, as elsewhere in the region, the majority of our scarcer butterflies are found on disused railway lines, in quarries and on other post-industrial sites.

Last, but certainly not least, is the chapter on moths contributed by the county moth recorder, David Brown. This section, again divided up by habitat type, focuses on day-flying species and serves as an excellent introduction to moths for beginners. Some useful appendices provide a quick snapshot to Warwickshire's most widespread species, a list of butterfly plants, grid references to all sites mentioned in the book, where to obtain further information and even a checklist for readers to complete of where and when they see each species. Again, all information of value to complete butterfly novices and of broad appeal.

As people may have detected by now, I am a big fan of this book which deserves to succeed. Well done to Warwickshire branch for daring to be different.

• Mike Williams

Notes of West Midlands and East Midlands Regional Conservation Day

Saturday 29 March 2003, Brocks Hill Environment Centre, Oadby Leicestershire

Attendees: Dr Nigel Bourn (Head Office), Jane Ellis (WM Regional Officer), Tony Ludlow (Lincolnshire Branch), Barry Prater (East Midlands Branch Organiser), Mike Bradley (Gloucestershire Branch Moth Officer)

1. Welcome & Introduction – Dr Nigel Bourn

Nigel Bourn thanked everyone for attending and then described how the yearly Regional Conservation Day is an opportunity to discuss different approaches to conservation and the roles of staff, volunteers and external organisations. RAP reporting by branches is a crucial method of sharing knowledge and assessing progress. He explained that West and East Midlands had unfortunately missed out last year on this event and were a step behind other regions and that the day would be a chance to introduce the RAP reporting forms and the RAP reporting process for implementation next year.

2. Report from Branches on work and achievements in the last year

East Midlands – Barry Prater

East Midlands Branch has a small number of active members most of whom are on the branch committee. Most conservation work is mainly either indirect, such as raising awareness, field trips, giving talks or reactive, for example where there is a threat to a lepidoptera site. There is a lot of behind-the-scenes input to Local Authorities and other agencies, mainly by the three county recorders, to try and make sure that adverse developments are avoided and that the needs of lepidoptera are taken into account. **Grizzled** and **Dingy Skipper** have been identified as key priority species for action. They aim to get volunteers to scan all the sites of the past 25 years. If funding can be obtained they want to focus on the management priorities on the sites where they occur. JE agreed to share relevant West Midlands knowledge with EM Branch. Currently the branch is active as part of a larger team at Bingham Linear Park using a JCB for scrub removal. Sycamore had been shading out Wych Elms and some of these were planned to be removed to promote **White-letter Hairstreak**.

Gloucestershire – Mike Bradley.

Gloucestershire Branch has been through a rough patch when the Branch Committee lost a lot of members and this led to less direct conservation work especially as numbers of branch members attending work parties fell sharply. One of the retired committee members previously managed the BC Bill Smiley Reserve which is now managed through Head Office. One committee member has formed the Friends of Cleeve Hill along with some ex-committee members to raise the profile of the area. New members have joined the committee who are keen to raise the profile of the branch and BC through talks etc. The branch has some good transects on the Cotswolds and is trying to encourage one estate owner to carry out some scrub clearance etc for **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** etc. The branch has offered to contribute towards fencing costs. The branch co-sponsored a survey of the Forest of Dean for **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary**, **Wood White** etc. with FE who will be incorporating the results into their management plans.

Herefordshire Much work has been carried out in FE owned Haugh Wood using work parties. Forestry commission cut areas and BC clear scrub. Herefordshire County Moth recorder (Michael Harper) has been involved with coppicing in Dimmock Woods. Wigmore Rolls is a good site managed by FE Ludlow Office. Good site for **Wall Brown** and the only Herefordshire site for **Dingy Skipper**. A **High Brown Fritillary** transect for Chase End Hill is being set up, HBF has not been seen at this site for 3 years, but **Dark Green Fritillary** seems to be returning. Malvern Hills have an Action Group.

Lincolnshire – Tony Ludlow

Very active branch involved with monitoring, recording and practical conservation. Lincolnshire has the most northerly colony of **Brown Hairstreak** in the UK, at Chambers Farm Wood. Active management of blackthorn is undertaken throughout the wood. Have had problems with unauthorised egg collecting at a nearby site which, compounded with unauthorised releases, is affecting the reliability of monitoring programmes established to assess the success of habitat work. Mike Bradley reported that an interesting cutting regime has been set up at a site next to Chambers Wood where the meadow is cut in quarterly rotation using a sickle-bar mower and BTCV volunteers. The seeds from each section are collected onto

a polythene sheet for re-sowing. The Lincolnshire branch has had incredible success with records of **White-letter Hairstreak** (all on Wych Elm), with an increase from 2 to 14 sites - most probably the result of previous under-recording. Branch volunteers also undertake management for **Grizzled** and **Dingy Skippers** and for **Green Hairstreak** at Twyford Wood. Also, considerable effort put in to further improve habitat for the **Chequered Skipper** at Chambers Farm Wood - ride-widening, encouraging nectar sources (Bugle, Ragged Robin etc.), cross-linking 'good' areas, and promoting larval foodplants. The branch is hoping for favourable attitudes from Head Office to continue with the reintroduction programme. BTCV have been providing some management free of charge.

3. The RAP annual species update form and guidance notes

The exercise of filling in the RAP species update forms has proven to be extremely useful as a means of reviewing progress, identifying successes and failures and planning the way ahead where it has been used last year in other Regions. The idea of the forms is provide a framework for discussion at the Conservation Day regarding progress in the last year and to help set priorities for work in the coming year. The forms will also help to improve and standardize the flow of information from local to regional to national level.

Nigel handed out a guidance note, which contains a copy of the standard RAP form for duplication and details of how to fill in the forms. Each attendee took away 4 copies for circulation to relevant Branch members. RAP forms are also available electronically from Tom Wigglesworth at Head Office.

The timetable for the forms is as follows:

<u>Autumn</u>		
Forms filled in by Branch Volunteers – overseen by ROs and RAP co-ordinator		
<u>Summer</u>	<u>Winter</u>	
Planning for the next year		Forms collected and collated by HO and analysed by ROs
<u>Spring</u>		
Information circulated		

4. The Works of the West Midlands Regional Officers

Jenny and Jane have produced a detailed and extremely full work programme which has been approved by the Branch Chairmen and Nigel.

Work of West Midland Regional Officers – Allocation of Time (%)

JE explained that the current work programme actually accounted for 110% of the ROs time and that no

Objective	Jenny	Jan	Job as whole
A. Conserving Butterflies, Moths and Their Habitats	63	32	47.5
B. Supporting Volunteers	14.5	14.5	14.5
C. Membership / Volunteer Growth	1	14.5	7.25
D. Raising Awareness of BC and its aims	2	14.5	18.25
E. Increasing Income	2	10	6
F. Developing the scientific basis of BCs work	3	0	1.5
G. Core services and management of the charity	14.5	14.5	14.5

doubt further opportunities for work would materialise during the course of the year and therefore some of the activities would carry over until 2004. The following gives a taster of some of the current work of the ROs but is by no means comprehensive.

Some key butterfly and moth conservation projects for the next year include:

- targeted monitoring and management of Warwickshire populations of **Small Blue, Chalk Carpet, Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper** and **Argent and Sable**.

- **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** in Wyre Forest
- Survey for Large Heath on Whem and Wixhill Mosses
- Survey for **High Brown Fritillary** and **Grayling** in the Malverns
- Development of a brownfield sites leaflet and begin to compile a dossier of brownfield sites for Lepidoptera to input into development plan process.
- Work on reserve acquisition including Prees Heath and Ryton Landfill Site
- Work on RAPs including annual RAP review and RAP update. Involvement in the LBAP process e.g. encouraging the production of moth action plans.

Supporting volunteers:

- Organisation of training events including **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** in the Wyre, **Green Hairstreak** at Sutton Park, use of transect walker.
- Advice and support to BC branch members in the Region as appropriate
- Support for branch events e.g. Warwickshire Book Lunch, WM New Members Day
- Liaison with County Wildlife Trusts to encourage staff and volunteers to be more involved with butterfly monitoring.

Raising awareness of BC and its aims

- Sitting on the WM Biodiversity Partnership and LA21 Partnership
- Production of press releases e.g. new RO posts, national moth night.
- Production of a regional display
- Attending the NEC Gardeners world live

Increasing Income

- Success achieved with funding for **Wood White** through Herefordshire LBAP
- Develop links with companies with environmental policies e.g. British waterways, Water Companies
- Production of a dossier of potential funding sources

5. The Work of BC National Species Team – Dr Nigel Bourn

Heath Fritillary – Exmoor. This species occurs in sheltered coombes on coppice.

Quantification of habitat quality for this species is problematical due to the complex dynamics of Cow-wheat, Bilberry and Bracken. However, a comparison of 1989 and 2000 survey data shows sites that had become extinct by 2000 had thicker vegetation, were smaller in size and were more isolated than the occupied sites. BC continues to work with the National Trust and other landowners on urgently needed habitat restoration, but more research into appropriate management techniques is required.

High Brown Fritillary This species is mainly found on Dartmoor with some on Exmoor and in Herefordshire in Bracken dominated Habitats. A HBF Action Group has been set up in the West Midlands. Species fact sheets are available from Head Office.

Pearl-bordered Fritillary. BC has been working closely with Forest Enterprise on an Action Plan for butterflies within their woodlands. BC has also had input to Forest design Plans.

Marsh Fritillary Good populations on Salisbury plain. Work has been undertaken here on taking out plantations, targeted trampling by tanks and restoring grassland. On Dartmoor studies are being undertaken on the impacts of pulse grazing. Agreement holder days have given training on management. An HLF bid is being prepared for Goss Moor.

Large Blue – work on this species is sub-contracted. A big project is planned for south of Tintagel looking at gorse control / management in a large area which is 40% National Trust owned.

Moths A lot of work in 2002 on **Argent and Sable** at Haugh Wood in Herefordshire. Survey of **Four-spotted** in Northants, Oxon, Beds and Lincs. A survey of **Marsh Moth** in Lincolnshire found 2 adults. A larval hunt was carried out for **Square-spotted Clay** in Cambs and **Common Fanfoot** in the Wyre. In 2003 there is a continuation of the **Four-spotted** work and a moth training event has been organised in the Wyre forest.

Website Update

A major re-working of the Branch website was undertaken last winter and has continued throughout 2003. Unfortunately the proposed new format from BC Head Office did not become available and the website continued to develop in what was supposed to be a temporary format.

The current layout is largely text based which has the advantage of fast page downloads for those of us still on dial-up connections. I will be adding more pictures over the coming winter, but these will be in discrete sections of the site so that speed of access to the main pages is not impaired. A gallery of members' photographs would be nice so please send me your pictures with a few details of where and when taken.

One of the aims of the website is to form an accessible archive for the Branch Newsletters. In the early part of 2003, after a considerable struggle, Ian Duncan managed to assemble

copies of all of the Newsletters, although some pages are missing from a few of them. To date 28 out of the 55 Newsletters have been made available online and they make for very interesting reading; regarding both the development of the first Butterfly Conservation local Branch and the status of Midlands Lepidoptera since the summer of 1979.

There are currently over 230 pages available on the site and over the summer there have been on average about 660 "page-views" per month. There is a site search facility on the Home page and good use has been made of this also.

I would be grateful to receive any comments from members about improvements and changes they would like to see, and any ideas for additional topics would be most welcome.

• Nigel Stone

Moth Identification: The Streamer (*Anticlea derivate*)

The Streamer is a very well marked and beautiful moth which flies from late March to early May. It is a fairly common species that feeds mostly on dog rose. The adult has been found in over half of the 10 km squares in VC36 (the old county of Herefordshire) and VC37 (Worcestershire).

It is well worth looking out for this species and it can be attracted to light and found on fences in the day-time.

• Neil Gregory

Photo taken by Neil Gregory at Snowhill Manor in 2003.

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

- *Larger moths and butterflies of Herefordshire and Worcestershire: An Atlas*, Michael Harper and Tony Simpson (2001)

- *Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and*

Ireland (2003), Waring and Townsend



Conservation Corner

It is really good to be able to write a conservation corner at a time when so many people's attention is being caught by all the butterflies and moths they are seeing. Comments such as 'my garden is alive with butterflies for the first time in years' are a regular occurrence and we see the evidence for ourselves every time we pass by the buddleia bushes outside my children's school which are teaming with **Red Admiral**, **Painted Lady** and **Comma**. More surprisingly perhaps, Peter Boardman recently gave a talk to a group in Bridgnorth, Shropshire and found that a staggering 28 out of the 35 people there had recently seen a **Humming Bird Hawk-moth**. Hopefully these kinds of figures together with the higher prominence butterflies have recently been given in the media (unfortunately including Damien Hirst's latest work!) will renew people's interest in butterflies for years to come.

This year has been very good but very different for me. Becoming a Regional Officer has meant that all my free time is now used up and I have very little time to give to BC in a volunteer capacity. This is unfortunate as we really do need more Branch members to be active in all aspects of our conservation work whether it be attending Branch work days, carrying out survey work or looking to see whether your local site is in the development plan. So if you have any free days this winter or are slightly tempted to do something but have just not yet got round to it before please do contact one of the branch committee members - all offers of help very gratefully received.

2003 has been an excellent year for survey work on a number of priority moth and butterfly species in the region. Specific searches for **Argent and Sable** have been carried out in Herefordshire, Staffordshire and Shropshire. Although these searches have largely been unsuccessful, Peter Boardman did get three sightings (two in Shropshire and one in Wales) and Craig Yates recorded several more at a second Shropshire site. These results are encouraging as the national picture overall was very bleak with no sightings being reported on some well known sites for this species. Dave Grundy has continued with his excellent work on the **Common Fan-foot** in the Wyre Forest and in the last week has also confirmed the presence of this species in Staffordshire. This is fantastic news and the result of a lot of hard work. Moth trapping has occurred on a number of Shropshire Wildlife Trust reserves with Peter Boardman reporting **Devon Carpet** on one site - this is another exciting discovery as **Devon Carpet** was

unknown in Shropshire prior to some records from the Wyre Forest last year.

The Wyre Forest has continued to be one of the main focuses of my survey work in 2003 with searches for **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** breeding areas being one of the early targets. Expectations of finding high numbers of larvae during the amazingly warm March weather were soon dashed by Matthew Oates saying 'this is all wrong for larvae hunting as they adopt feed and retreat mode and they won't be easy to find at all'. So you learn something new all the time - I always thought warm sunny days were the best for finding all stages of butterfly and moth life cycles (with the exception of night time feeders of course!). Fortunately in the end we located 14 **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** larvae in six different parts of the forest (see Joy, 2003a). An additional six sites were classed as probable breeding sites on the basis of characteristic feeding damage being found with a further 11 sites classed as possible breeding sites on the basis of suitable habitat being present but no characteristic damage being found. Breeding patches varied tremendously in size from tiny (e.g. 5x1m) to much larger (e.g. 75x2m). In general, the meadows along the Dowles Brook did not support much if any breeding habitat and are most likely to be utilised by **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** for nectaring. Larval locations in the Wyre Forest were characterised by a large amount of litter (most commonly being oak leaf and bracken litter), a small amount of common dog-violet, and varying amounts of grasses, bare earth/moss and other plant species such as bramble and bilberry. The adult **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** monitoring programme carried out in April/May 2003 (Joy, 2003b) identified a further three breeding areas within the Wyre Forest on the basis of egg-laying. This monitoring programme also revealed that not all areas supporting apparently suitable habitat were occupied. The lack of occupation of apparently suitable coppice coupes together with the fact that these coppice coupes are only likely to be suitable breeding sites for a very short period of time makes the positioning of future coppice coupes (and FE scallops, see Joy, 2003c) all the more critical. One very clear picture to emerge from the 2003 work on the **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** in the Wyre Forest is that this species is thriving in areas which have been managed in a variety of ways. As a result of this work a number of management options have been identified for various sites within the Wyre Forest. These options will need further discussion and liaison between Butterfly Conservation, English Nature and Forest Enterprise.

Silver-washed Fritillary appear to have had a fantastic year. Although attempts to get the Wyre Forest well surveyed for this species in 2003 were not very successful they do appear to have been widespread here. I also for the first time had a report of **Silver-washed Fritillary** in Telford and Mike Slater has reported this species to be present on at least three sites in Warwickshire in 2003. One further recent observation from Mike Slater is the finding of four fresh **White Admiral** at a site in Warwickshire from 7th - 16th September 2003. While a second brood for this butterfly species appears to be unknown, it is perhaps not surprising given the unusually warm September weather we are currently experiencing. If this good weather continues who knows what we might be reporting in the January newsletter.....?

References:

Joy, J. 2003a. Searches in the Wyre Forest for **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** (*Boloria euphrosyne*) Breeding Areas in Spring 2003. Contract report to English Nature, Hereford and Worcester Team.

Joy, J. 2003b. **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** (*Boloria euphrosyne*) in the Wyre Forest 2003. Adult Monitoring Report. Contract report to English Nature, Hereford and Worcester Team.

Joy, J. 2003c. Report on the survey of Forest Enterprise Scallop in the Wyre Forest for their suitability for the **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** (*Boloria euphrosyne*). Unpublished report.

• Jenny Joy

Regional Officers' Update

Jenny Joy and Jane Ellis have now been in post from January 2003. The initial plan was for Jenny to take the lead in developing research and survey priorities and opportunities, to encourage conservation work directed at key species and in key areas and to ensure implementation of the RAP. Jane was to work in a more co-ordinating and enabling role by seeking funds for specific projects (as well as for the continuation of the Regional Officer posts), by raising awareness of Butterfly Conservation regionally through the media and by liaison with local organisations. It was also envisaged that Jane would identify and develop volunteer capacity and encourage new volunteers to fill in gaps in survey and monitoring needs. So far the job split seems to have worked very well and in the following paragraphs we give some examples of the way we have spent our time to date:

Conserving Butterflies, Moths and their Habitats

For Jenny, the emphasis for the past nine months has been liaison with organisations and individuals in key areas (e.g. the Wyre Forest, the Malverns and in the North Staffordshire Moorlands). In the Wyre Forest, EN has continued to fund projects on the **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** and the **Common Fan-foot** and FE have allowed us to use their visitor centre and education facilities for a number of key events such as the West Midlands Fritillary Action Group (May 2003), a training course on BAP moth species (June 2003) and a transect training day (July 2003). Jenny has also advised both FE and EN staff on various aspects of

management and will continue to be involved in meetings over specific sites. Three reports written as a result of the 2003 work in the Wyre Forest are already available (see Conservation Corner). Another key area for Jenny in 2003 has been helping to assess the status of the **High Brown Fritillary** in the region. Contact with the Malvern Hills Conservators has been established with two West Midlands Branch events in the Malverns being organised (in late June and early July) to search for **High Brown Fritillary** to see if they could be found away from the established transects. Although these searches were partially successful in the Malverns the overall picture here is very depressing. Searches for **High Brown Fritillary** were also carried out in other parts of the region. At Bringsty Common, a meeting with the Bringsty Common Manorial Court (local group of commoners) and the Countryside Stewardship advisor resulted in increased local effort to try to record the **High Brown Fritillary**. Unfortunately no **High Brown** sightings could be confirmed at Bringsty Common although several large fritillaries were seen (both by local resident Jim Powell and by Jenny Joy). A similar picture has emerged from Bircher Common in Herefordshire which has been specifically managed by the NT for the **High Brown Fritillary** for a number of years. The overall conclusion therefore must be that **High Brown Fritillary** are currently faring very badly in the region. One of Jenny's jobs in the autumn will be to set up a **High Brown Fritillary** crisis meeting involving a number of organisations and individuals to decide where we go from here.

Jenny has also met with the Staffordshire Wildlife

Trust and the Shropshire Wildlife Trust to try to encourage them to increase the level of monitoring on their reserves, organised a couple of training sessions on timed counts and has undertaken liaison with Russel Hobson (BC Wales) to organise a meeting about the importance of Lepidoptera in the Oswestry Uplands (on the Shropshire/Powys border). Sites visited by Jenny have included a Stiperstones site supporting the largest **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** colony in the region, Wem Moss (Shropshire Wildlife Trust reserve for the **Large Heath**), a privately owned **Wood White** site in south Shropshire, two visits to Haugh Wood (Forest Enterprise site which supports **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** and **Argent and Sable**) a couple of visits to **Wood White** sites in north Herefordshire, several visits to the Consall area of north Staffordshire and a visit to the Flits NNR (in Herefordshire).

Jane has mainly concentrated her conservation and survey work in Warwickshire and Worcestershire. She has drawn together all the information available on the Warwickshire LBAP species and developed a programme of action to further their conservation. She has visited and assessed 3 **Small Blue** sites, 1 **Wood White** site and 2 potential **Wood White** sites. Jane has encouraged a number of new species transects for **Dingy Skipper** and **Grizzled Skipper**. She has organised site visits with EN, RMC and the Wildlife Trusts as well as organising a training day at Sutton Park on the **Green Hairstreak** which was very successful. Jane advised on Species Action Plans for **Small Blue** and **Dingy Skipper** for Warwickshire and also organised a **Small Blue** egg count. In Worcestershire, Jane has held meetings with volunteers, FWAG and DEFRA regarding revitalising conservation effort for **Brown Hairstreak** and is preparing an Awards for All Bid to fund the work.

Membership growth and volunteer development

Jane organised volunteer cover and attended 2 days at Gardeners World Live where BC gained 17 new members. Jane also organised a New Members Day event at Birmingham Botanical Gardens to harness and develop the interest of new members (many of whom joined through the Garden Butterflies Count). This was a very successful event. 26 members attended and there were many requests for a similar / follow up event next year. The Botanical Gardens are very keen to build links with BC. They are planning a Butterfly Garden with interpretation and they need volunteers who are prepared to help with planning the garden as well as carrying out

regular surveys. Jane has recently organised two 'Beginners Moth' workshops in Warwickshire as part of the National Macro Moth Recording Scheme. The first event was attended by 16 people and the second by more than 30. Both were very successful and hopefully will be followed by more similar events next year. Jane has produced a number of articles for other organisations including one about BC's works on the regional LBAP butterflies for the West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership Newsletter and one for the FWAG newsletter regarding management of disused railway lines for key LBAP species. Jane also ran an event at Sutton Park to encourage new recorders. Six attendees registered their interest in undertaking survey work on their own.

Raising Awareness of Lepidoptera Conservation, the Society and its Goals

A review of our display resources for the region highlighted the need for Jane to produce a set of high quality display panels to raise awareness of the role of BC in the West Midlands. The 6 new panels went on display for one month in the foyer of Birmingham Botanical Gardens (the display was advertised in an article in their Member's newsletter). The display was also loaned to FWAG for a display at the Town and Country Show with a different display on forestry management for butterflies being put together for an NT event at Dudmaston in Shropshire. Jane attended the English Nature Reception at the Stoneleigh Show and also gave a talk to the Coventry Organic Gardeners Association about the role of BC. Both Jane and Jenny have distributed leaflets including Farmland Leaflet, Brownfield Leaflet, Garden Butterflies leaflet and membership leaflets via direct mail and at other outlets across the region. Jane has organised meetings with various staff from the following organisations across the region: Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, English Nature, DEFRA, National Trust, Woodland Trust, FWAG. Jane has represented Butterfly Conservation at various regional meetings: Forestry Commission Regional Strategy Day and West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership, Regional LA21 Co-ordinators Meeting, Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group. Five press releases have been generated by Jane regarding BC events and activities in the region.

Jenny has attended a Hereford Biodiversity Partnership meeting in Hereford, prepared a poster for a NT conference on the Long Mynd at Wolverhampton University, has made contacts with individuals from a variety of organisations such as the Woodland Trust, Hereford Nature

Trust and Forest Enterprise. Jenny has also recently met with the Shropshire AONB Conservation Officer to discuss how we could have maximum impact on a regional scale. This meeting was very productive and has already

resulted in Jenny agreeing to doing two training days in 2004 for wildlife site owners in Shropshire as well as arrangements already being made to use their 'flying l6ck' on one of our key sites in the AONB area.

Request for Information for Brownfield Sites Dossier

Jane Ellis and Jenny Joy are starting to try to gather together information on brownfield sites that are important for Lepidoptera in the region. The aim is to compile a dossier of these sites which BC could use to raise awareness amongst local planners, county ecologists and Wildlife Trusts etc. We could also use this information to try to protect threatened brownfield sites against future development. The definition of a brownfield site is any previously developed land such as former quarries, coal pits disused railway lines, spoil heaps and urban derelict land that have become naturalised over a period of time. These brownfield sites can be in either urban or rural location and can consist of a mosaic of habitats such as grassland, heathland, wetland, scrub and woodland. Around 30 species of butterfly are associated with brownfield sites including many common and familiar ones such as the **Red Admiral**, **Peacock** and **Small Tortoiseshell**. Brownfield sites are also key habitats for scarce and declining species such as the **Dingy Skipper**, **Grizzled Skipper** and **Green Hairstreak**. Many species of moth are also found on brownfield sites including **Burnet Companion**, **Mother Shipton** and **Latticed Heath**.

think may be important brownfield sites for Lepidoptera please let us know. The table below gives an indication of the sort of information that would be useful to us. If you don't know all the details for a site this doesn't matter. Even if all you know is the name, species present and grid reference for the site this will be useful for us to follow up.

Site Name
Grid Reference
Site status (SSSI, Local Nature Reserve etc.) and owner (if known)
Butterflies and Moths Present
Recorded by (contact details)

One other piece of information which would be useful for us is a site plan (marking key areas and habitats for the key species present if this is known). An e-mail version of this form is available from Jane. Many thanks for helping with this very important process

Please send any brownfield site information you have to Jane Ellis, 111 Grosvenor Road, Rugby, CV21 3LE (or contact Jane directly on 01788 543809) by the 30th November.

If you know of any sites in your area which you

• Jenny Joy and Jane Ellis

Obituary: Gareth Barton

It is with sadness that we have to report the death of one of our very active Branch members, Gareth Barton.

Gareth had been an active campaigner for wildlife within the Borough of Dudley and was a leading member of the Pensnett Wildlife Group over the last sixteen years. He only joined Butterfly Conservation fairly recently to support our influence with the local council and was involved with the current campaign against the extension of the Dudley bypass. He and his wife, Celia, were also very involved with Dave Grundy's Garden Moth recording project.

Gareth was a generalist regarding his interest in wildlife. However I particularly noted his involvement with recording and breeding the

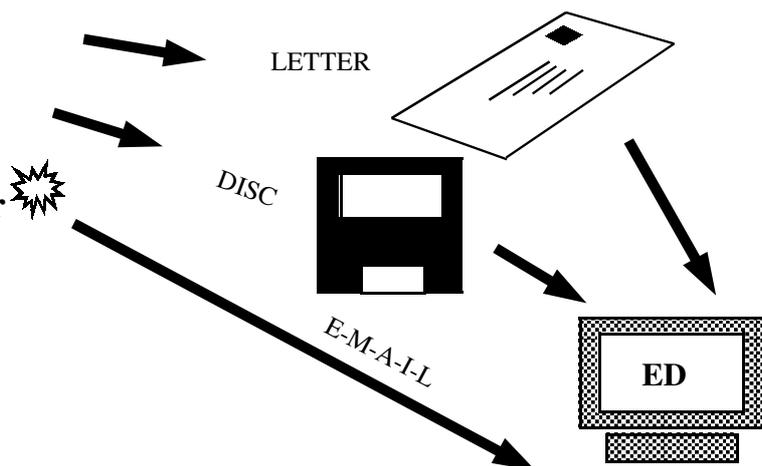
Great Crested Newt at the Fenns Pool nature reserve by Pensnett, a site that has one of the largest and most important colonies of this amphibian in Europe. He retired early and apart from his massive contribution to local wildlife took many safaris across all corners of the world to marvel at this planet's natural heritage.

He will be sadly missed by many; as a dedicated and single-minded advocate of conservation who was always willing to share his knowledge and enthusiasm with others. Our thoughts are with his family but let his memory inspire all of us to take an active interest in local wildlife issues.

• Richard Southwell

Instructions for Contributors

Deadline for Autumn Newsletter contributions is Saturday 31 January 2004



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.

v Christine Chance
harbornchristine@aol.com

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."

Dates for your Diary

Winter work days and other events

September to April: Herefordshire Work Party
Every Thursday from September to April
Mike Harper leads a group of volunteers to carry out work to improve the habitats for moths and butterflies in Herefordshire. Various sites are visited, mostly Queen's Wood near Dymock but also other areas such as Vinesend near Mathon and Dead Woman's Thorn near Ledbury. The work usually lasts from 9.30 to 13.30. Help with transport might be possible. If you are interested in participating please contact Mike on 01531 632030.

OCTOBER

- 11 **October (Saturday) AGM; Bishops Wood.** Speaker Richard Fox (Millennium Atlas results). Please see page 2 for more details.
- 11 **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
- 12 **October (Sunday) Conservation Task, Grafton Wood.** Meet 10.00 am at Three Parishes Hall, Grafton Flyford (next to church). Just off the A422 the Worcester—Stratford Rd. OS map 150 GR SO963557.
- 26 **October (Sunday) Conservation Task Trench Wood.** Meet 10.00 am at reserve entrance on Sale Green—Dunhampstead road. OS map 150 GR SO929588.

NOVEMBER

- 2 **November (Sunday) Conservation Task – Monkwood** Meet 10.00 am in the reserve car park just off the Sinton Green—Monkwood Green road. OS map 150 GR SO803603
- 9 **November (Sunday) Conservation Task - Grafton Wood** Meet 10.00 am Details as 12 October. Brash clearing.
- 15 **November (Saturday) Conservation Task - Haugh Woods** - meet 10.00 am at main car park GR SO593365
- 23 **November (Sunday) Conservation Task - Trench Wood NR** - meet 10.00 am Details as 26 October.

DECEMBER

- 7 **December (Sunday) Conservation Task - Monkwood NR** - details as 2 November.

- 14 **December (Sunday) Conservation Task Grafton Wood** Details as 12 October.
- 27 **December (Saturday) Conservation Task - Haugh Woods** - meet 10.00 am at main car park GR SO593365
- 28 **December (Sunday) Conservation Task - Trench Wood** Details as 26 October.
- 28 **December (Sunday) Grafton Wood join us for our annual Brown Hair Streak egg hunt (full training will be given !!!)** . Meet 10.30 am Details as 12 October

JANUARY 2004

- 4 **January (Sunday) Monkwood Conservation Task — Whitbread Action Earth Event.** Meet 10.00 am. Soup and mince pies on offer. Management for the Wood White. Details as 2 November
- 11 **January (Sunday) Grafton Wood—Whitbread Action Earth Event.** Details as 12 October.
- 17 **January (Saturday) Conservation Task - Haugh Woods** - Details as 15 November
- 25 **January (Sunday) Conservation Task - Trench Wood.** Details as on 26 October.

FEBRUARY

- 1 **February (Sunday) Conservation Task - Monkwood—**details as 2 November.
- 8 **February (Sunday) Conservation Task - Grafton.** Details as 12 October. Ride and glade management.
- 15 **February (Sunday) Conservation Task - Prees Heath** Meet 11.00 am (note later start time) at parking area east of A49. OS Map 126 GR. SJ558367. Heather management for the **Silver-studded Blue**. Travel expenses can be paid.
- 21 **February (Saturday) Conservation Task - Wigmore Rolls.** Meet 10.30 am at the edge of the southern end of the woods, turn left opposite school in Wigmore if coming from Hereford. GR SO397688
- 22 **February (Sunday) Conservation Task - Trench Wood** Details as 26 October.

MARCH

- 7 **March (Sunday) Conservation Task –**

Monkwood Details as 2 November. Glade management.

**28 March (Sunday) Conservation Task
Trench Wood.** Details as 26 October

**14 March (Sunday) Conservation Task -
Grafton Wood** Details as 12 October.

**20 March (Saturday) Conservation Task -
Haugh Woods** - meet 10.00 am at main car
park GR SO593365

Committee Members:

Corinna Gregory
6 Thames Drive
Droitwich Spa
Worcs WR9 8TP
tel. 01905-771623
droitwich@btinternet.com

Mike Williams
2 Dewberry Close
Stourport
Worcs DY13 8TB
tel. 01299-824860

Ron Hatton
45 Delabere Road
Bishops Cleeve
Cheltenham
Glos GL52 4AN
tel. 01242-673923

Digby Wood
Jasmine Cottage
2 Upper Ferry lane
Callow End
Worcester WR2 4TL
tel. 01905-830391

John P Brayford
7 Coton Mount
Coton Hill
Shrewsbury
SY1 2NN
tel. 01743-270481

Phil Hopson
7 Woodhall Rd
Penn
Wolverhampton WV4 4DL

Dave Haslam
166 Waddens Brook Lane
Wednesfield
Wolverhampton WV11 3SJ
tel. 0121 360 9464

Anita Ferguson
14 Glendale Drive
Wombourne
Wolverhampton
WV5 0HD
tel. 01902-892187

Regional Development Officers

Dr. Jenny Joy (Shrops)
The Croft, off Haygate Rd
Wellington, Telford,
Shrops TF1 2BW
tel 01952 245684

Jane Ellis
111 Grosvenor Rd
Rugby
CV21 3LE
tel 01788 543809

Conservation Reserve Wardens

Grafton Wood
John Tilt
9 Meadow Close
Flyford Flavell
Worcs WR7 4DE
tel. 01386-792458

Monkwood
Paddy Harrison
Moorcroft Barn
Sinton Green
Hallow
Worcs WR2 6NW
tel. 01905-641523

Trench Wood
Neil McLean
10 Hammond Close
Droitwich
Worcs WR9 7SZ
tel. 01905-795381

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION



WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH COMMITTEE AND OFFICERS

Chairman :

Dr. Ian Duncan
Midway Cottage
Upper Welland Rd
Malvern WR14 4LD
tel. 01684-568415

Vice-chairman:

Ian Hart
Laurel Cottage
Newton St. Margarets
Hereford HR2 0QN
01981-510259

Treasurer:

Tony Hatton
24 Loxley Drive
Mansfield
Nottinghamshire NG18 4FB
tel. 01623-659998

Newsletter Editor:

Dr. Christine Chance
65 Wentworth Rd
Harborne
Birmingham B17 9SS
tel. 0121-427-1706

Conservation Officers:

Dr. Jenny Joy (Shrops)
(Coordinator)
The Croft, off Haygate Rd
Wellington, Telford,
Shrops TF1 2BW
tel 01952 245684

Trevor Bucknall (Worcs)
26 Vine Street
Northwick
Worcester WR3 7DY
tel. 01905-755757

David Jackson (Staffs)
11 Hyperion Drive, Penn
Wolverhampton WV4 5QW
tel. 01902-344716

James Hill (N Staffs)
15 Parkside Drive
Maybank
Newcastle
Staffs ST5 0NL
tel. 01782-610377

Andy Nicholls (Hfds)
2 Auckland Close
Hereford HR1 1YE
tel. 01432-275834

Branch Recorder:

Jim Chance
65 Wentworth Rd
Harborne
Birmingham B17 9SS
tel. 0121-427-1706

Branch Organiser:

Richard Southwell
Sandilands
48 Whitehall Rd
Stourbridge DY8 2JT
tel. 01384-397066
(after 4pm only)

Webmaster

Nigel Stone
8 Grove Lane, Keresley End
Coventry CV7 8PN
tel. 02476 335189

Branch Secretary:

Vacant

Moth Officers:

Jeff Andrews (Herefordshire)
Meadow View
Dinedor
Hereford HR2 6LQ
tel. 01432-870301

Peter Boardman (Shropshire)
7 High St
Weston Rhyn
Shropshire SY10 7RP
tel. 01691 773026
(after 6pm please)

Neil Gregory (Worcs)
6 Thames Drive
Droitwich Spa
Worcs WR9 8TP
tel. 01905-771623
droitwich@btinternet.com

Education Officer:

Richard Lamb
Stratford-on-Avon Butterfly Farm
Tramway Walk, Swan' s Nest Lane
Stratford-on-Avon
Warks CV37 7LS
tel. 01789-299288



**Please see overleaf
for more Committee members RDOs & Conservation Reserve Wardens**



HEAD OFFICE: MANOR YARD, EAST LULWORTH, WAREHAM, DORSET BH20 5QP
THE BRITISH BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION SOCIETY LTD. (tel 01929 400209)

REGISTERED IN ENGLAND No. 2206468 REGISTERED CHARITY No. 254037