

# 2000 WEST MIDLANDS BUTTERFLY AND MOTH ANNUAL REVIEW

## Introduction

This is my first annual review and I would like to begin by thanking all those who have helped make this report possible. In particular, I am indebted to all the transect walkers who have spent many hours gathering the data. I would also like to thank all those who have sent in casual records. I am most grateful to Mike Averill for supplying the weather information.

This review is based mainly on the transect data. For those of you not familiar with the method, it basically consists of walking a fixed route (transect), through a selected habitat, once a week from 1 April to 30 September, in favourable weather conditions and counting the butterflies seen. At the end of the season an abundance index is calculated for each species at each site. For the purposes of compiling the transect data regionally, Gloucestershire is included in the West Midlands and is therefore included in this review.

In 2000, 37 transects were walked in the area. Three new transects started at Penny Hill Bank (Ed Leszczynski – Worcs.), Croft Farm (Colin Dolding - Hfds.) and Wigmore Rolls (Gunter Petters – Hfds.). Two of the transects, at Bircher Common and Chase End are not full transects and are for specific species (fritillaries) only. The Brotheridge Green transect (Worcs) was discontinued in 2000. A complete listing of all the transects can be found in Table 1.

More details of the transects are as follows:

### Location

Worcestershire	18
Herefordshire	10
Gloucestershire	7
Shropshire	<u>2</u>
Total	<u>37</u>

We very much need some coverage in Staffordshire.

### Main Habitat

Woodland	17
Grassland	10
Bracken	6
Scrub	2
Lowland Bog	1
Derelict Site	1

There are 2 habitats where we would like more recording – urban sites and farmland.

### Years Recorded

16+ years	5 – Well done Terry Knight at Cleeve Prior and Windmill Hill; Garth Lowe and Cherry Greenway at the Knapp ; Phil Williams at Perry Wood and all those who have walked Wyre Forest East.
11-15 years	9
5-10 years	12
<5 years	11

We are looking for new recorders all the time. Please contact me if you would like to start.

## Weather Report

Supplied by Mike Averill on page AR8

## First and Last Sightings- see Table 2

The first butterfly of the year (**Red Admiral** and **Peacock**) was seen on 31 January by Phil Williams at Perry

**TABLE 1**

**2000 TRANSECTS WEST MIDLANDS**

<b>Transect</b>	<b>Recorder</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Main Habitat</b>
Bircher Common *	Beryl Petters	Herefordshire		Bracken
Bredon Hill	Charles Morgan	Worcestershire	1987	Grassland
Bringsty Common	Paul Healy	Herefordshire	1991	Bracken
Castlemorton Common	Ian Duncan	Worcestershire	1998	Grassland
Chaddesley Wood	Steve Harper	Worcestershire	1989	Woodland
Chase End *	Michael Harper	Worcestershire	1992	Bracken
Cleeve Prior	Terry Knight	Worcestershire	1984	Grassland
Common Hill	Jeff Andrews	Herefordshire	1995	Woodland
Coppett Hill	Wendy Innes	Herefordshire	1993	Bracken
Crickley Hill	Julian Bendall	Gloucestershire	1995	Grassland
Croft Farm	Colin Dolding	Herefordshire	2000	Grassland
Ewyas Harold Common	Sue Young	Herefordshire	1999	Bracken
Fenn & Whixall Moss	Peter Boardman	Shropshire	1994	Lowland Bog
Grafton Wood	John Tilt	Worcestershire	1998	Woodland
Haugh Wood North	John Pembroke	Herefordshire	1987	Woodland
Haugh Wood South	Jeff Andrews	Herefordshire	1987	Woodland
Hawne Colliery	Dave White	Worcestershire	1999	Disused Site
Knapp & Papermill	Garth Lowe	Worcestershire	1984	Woodland
Lineover Wood	Paul Arnold	Gloucestershire	1991	Woodland
Malvern Hills North	Colin Dolding	Worcestershire	1999	Scrub
Malvern Hills South	Digby Wood	Worcestershire	1987	Bracken
Miserden	David Perkins	Gloucestershire	1988	Scrub
Monkwood 1	Claire Turner	Worcestershire	1986	Woodland
Monkwood 2	Dave White	Worcestershire	1996	Woodland
Penny Hill Bank	Ed Leszczynski	Worcestershire	2000	Grassland
Perry Wood	Phil Williams	Worcestershire	1984	Woodland
Rodborough Common	Matthew Oates	Gloucestershire	1993	Grassland
Stinchcombe A	Chris Wiltshire	Gloucestershire	1991	Grassland
Stinchcombe B	Chris Wiltshire	Gloucestershire	1991	Grassland
Trench Wood	Ken Thomas	Worcestershire	1987	Woodland
Uffmoor Wood	Dave White	Worcestershire	1996	Woodland
Wetmoor	Chris Wiltshire	Gloucestershire		Woodland
Wigmore Rolls	Gunter Petters	Herefordshire	2000	Woodland
Windmill Hill	Terry Knight	Worcestershire	1984	Grassland
Wyre Forest West	Frank Lancaster	Worcestershire	1988	Woodland
Wyre Forest East	Terry Higgins	Worcestershire	1984	Woodland
Wallbrook Wood	Jeff Andrews	Herefordshire	1999	Woodland

\* specific species transect

**TABLE 2**  
**FIRST AND LAST BUTTERFLY SIGHTINGS 2000**

	<b>FIRST</b>	<b>LAST</b>
<b>Small Skipper</b>	16/6 Castlemorton (ID)	11/9 Ripple(CD)
<b>Essex Skipper</b>	26/7 Cleeve Prior (TK)	17/8 Ryall Farm (CD)
<b>Large Skipper</b>	8/6 Perry Wood (PW)	19/8 Malvern (CD)
<b>Dingy Skipper</b>	14/5 Doward (MH)	10/6 Croft Farm (CD)
<b>Grizzled Skipper</b>	3/5 Stinchcombe (CW)	28/6 Stinchcombe (CW)
<b>Wood White</b>	6/5 Monkwood (CT)	16/8 Wigmore (GP)
<b>Clouded Yellow</b>	19/6 Perry Wood (PW)	4/10 Perry Wood (PW)
<b>Brimstone</b>	9/3 Queens Wood (ID)	12/10 Ripple (CD)
<b>Large White</b>	6/4 Perry Wood (PW)	13/10 Perry Wood (PW)
<b>Small White</b>	13/3 Perry Wood (PW)	6/10 Perry Wood (PW)
<b>Green-veined White</b>	2/4 Perry Wood (PW)	6/10 Perry Wood (PW)
<b>Orange Tip</b>	7/4 Common Hill (JA)	17/6 Wallbrook (JA)
<b>Green Hairstreak</b>	19/4 Penny Hill (DW)	27/6 Malvern (CD)
<b>Brown Hairstreak</b>	2/9 Grafton (JT)	1/10 Grafton (JT)
<b>Purple Hairstreak</b>	27/6 Perry Wood (PW)	9/9 Perry Wood (PW)
<b>White-letter Hairstreak</b>	6/7 Perry Wood (PW)	5/8 Perry Wood (PW)
<b>Small Copper</b>	6/5 Malvern (CD)	8/10 New Hawne (DW)
<b>Silver-studded Blue</b>		
<b>Small Blue</b>	21/6 Stinchcombe (CW)	9/8 Stinchcombe (CW)
<b>Brown Argus</b>	22/5 Ryall Farm (CD)	27/9 Stinchcombe (CW)
<b>Chalkhill Blue</b>	2/8 Stinchcombe (CW)	20/9 Stinchcombe (CW)
<b>Common Blue</b>	20/5 Castlemorton (ID)	26/9 Ryall Farm(CD)
<b>Holly Blue</b>	7/4 Perry Wood (PW)	10/9 Monkwood (CT)
<b>White Admiral</b>	25/6 Grafton (JT)	12/8 Perry Wood (PW)
<b>Red Admiral</b>	31/1 Perry Wood (PW)	4/12 Ryall Farm(CD)
<b>Painted Lady</b>	9/6 Perry Wood (PW)	16/10 Pudding Brook (DW)
<b>Small Tortoiseshell</b>	2/2 Perry Wood (PW)	6/12 Ryall Farm (CD)
<b>Peacock</b>	31/1 Perry Wood (PW)	4/12 Ryall Farm(CD)
<b>Comma</b>	9/3 Queens Wood (ID)	4/11 Perry Wood (PW)
<b>Small Pearl-b Fritillary</b>	4/6 Ewyas Harold (SY)	6/7 Wyre (TH)
<b>Pearl-b Fritillary</b>	6/5 Wyre (TH)	7/6 Haugh Wood (JA)
<b>High Brown Fritillary</b>	3/7 Malverns (DW)	17/7 Malverns (DW)
<b>Dark Green Fritillary</b>	30/7 Miserden (DP)	
<b>Silver-washed Fritillary</b>	2/7 Shelfheld Coppice (RW)	24/8 Shelfheld Coppice (RW)
<b>Marsh Fritillary</b>	12/5 Gloucestershire	12/6 Worcestershire
<b>Speckled Wood</b>	18/3 Perry Wood (PW)	23/10 Perry Wood (PW)
<b>Wall</b>	27/4 Bredon (CM)	15/8 Bredon (CM)
<b>Marbled White</b>	16/6 Penny Hill (DW)	16/8 Croft Farm (CD)
<b>Grayling</b>	19/8 Malverns (CD)	
<b>Gatekeeper</b>	6/7 Perry Wood (PW)	3/9 Coppett Hill (WI)
<b>Meadow Brown</b>	15/6 Ryall Farm (CD)	30/9 New Hawne (DW)
<b>Ringlet</b>	17/6 Perry Wood (PW)	27/8 Malverns (CD)
<b>Small Heath</b>	15/5 Bredon (CM)	18/9 Ripple (CD)
<b>Large Heath</b>	21/6 Whixall (PB)	19/7 Whixall (PB)

ID Ian Duncan  
CT Claire Turner  
PW Phil Williams  
CD Colin Dolding  
DW Dave White  
MH Mike Harper  
DP David Perkins

PB Pete Boardman  
CW Chris Wiltshire  
KT Ken Thomas  
GP Gunther Petters  
JT John Tilt  
TH Terry Higgins  
RW Rosemary Winnall

CM Charles Morgan  
SH Steve Harper  
TK Terry Knight  
JA Jeff Andrews  
WI Wendy Innes  
SY Sue Young

Wood (Worcs). The last butterfly (**Small Tortoiseshell**) was seen by Colin Dolding on 6 December at Ryall Farm (Worcs).

New records in 2000 included the earliest **Red Admiral** sighting by Phil Williams on 31 January and the latest **Meadow Brown** sighting on 30 September by Dave White at Hawne Colliery. It is interesting that in 2000 there was not much evidence of species appearing earlier than usual due to climate change!

## West Midlands Top Ten

(1999 position in brackets with 1999 totals)

1.Meadow Brown	13185	(1) 13256
2.Gatekeeper	11049	(3) 7787
3.Ringlet	10815	(2) 7839
4.Speckled Wood	6543	(4) 5612
5.Green-veined White	3672	(5) 2462
6.Marbled White	3260	(7) 1618
7.Peacock	2538	(6) 2056
8.Large White	2054	(9) 1163
9.Large Skipper	1920	(8) 1079
10.Small White	1712	

Lost Small Skipper.

Due to the many changes in transects between 1999 and 2000 and in particular the inclusion of Gloucestershire again it is difficult to interpret too much into the changes in the numbers. However, in a general sense it is clear that the Browns and Whites had a good year while the Skippers did less well.

## Butterfly of the Year Awards

<b>Butterfly of the Year</b>	<b>Comma:</b> Above average at all major sites with <b>record numbers at Perry Wood (Worcs) , Uffmoor Wood (Worcs) and Grafton Wood (Worcs). This is the first time the branch emblem has actually been our butterfly of the year.</b>
<b>Runner-up</b>	<b>Green Hairstreak:</b> Above average at most major sites.
<b>Wooden Spoon</b>	Multiple award to 3 fritillaries – <b>Dark Green, High Brown and Silver-washed.</b> When will they have a good year again?
<b>Migrant of Year</b>	<b>Clouded Yellow:</b> Great year with good numbers all over the area from mid-August onwards.

## Species Accounts

> number of transects showing increase over previous year  
< number of transects showing decrease from previous year  
= same total as previous year

### Skippers

#### **Small Skipper** >8 <11

Numbers still well below those recorded 1991-97. Declined at most major sites.

Notable increase on Castlemorton Common (Worcs) may be due to the large amount of scrub clearance in recent years. **Typical flight period.**

#### **Essex Skipper**

Now being regularly recorded each year on a handful of transects in Worcestershire. This year at Chaddesley Wood and Cleeve Prior. **Has been established in Gloucestershire for some years.**

#### **Large Skipper** >10 <9

Below average at most major sites and as with **Small Skipper** , numbers well down on those in the mid 90s.

However record high at Perry Wood (Worcs). **First sighting almost two weeks later than usual with typical last sighting date.**

#### **Dingy Skipper**

Now monitored on 7 transects (5 Glos) . Declined at most sites. New transect started at Croft Farm (Hfds.) for this species. Numbers well below those seen 94-97.

**Short season, first record later than usual and last record several weeks early.**

#### **Grizzled Skipper**

Recorded on 6 transects. At main site in Gloucestershire above average year. Elsewhere, only ones and twos seen. **Typical dates for the flight period.**

## Whites and Yellows

### Wood White >2 <1

In Herefordshire recovery from the previous two very poor years. New transect started for this species at Wigmore Rolls (Hfds.). Continued decline at Monkwood (Worcs). **Typical flight period.**

### Clouded Yellow

Fantastic year. First sightings in the UK in late April with the first West Midlands record on June 19 at Perry Wood (Worcs). Numbers really started to build up from mid-August onwards and during September **Clouded Yellows** were recorded on 19 transects. The highest numbers were recorded at Perry Wood, Monkwood and the Wyre Forest. **The last of the year was seen at Perry Wood on October 4.**

### Brimstone >9 <10

Generally below average, notable exceptions Perry Wood and Cleeve Prior.

**Both the first and last sightings were almost a month later than usual.**

### Large White >17 <2

Good year, above average at most sites. Particularly good showing at Bredon Hill (Worcs), Windmill Hill (Worcs) and Malvern North (Worcs). Typical flight period.

### Small White >14 <5 =1

Good year, above average at most sites. Strong performance at Perry Wood (Worcs), Windmill Hill (Worcs) and Malvern North (Worcs). However below average at Bredon Hill (Worcs) and Monkwood (Worcs). **Typical flight period.**

### Green-veined White >14 <5

Good year, above average at most sites. Did well at Castlemorton (Worcs) and Windmill Hill (Worcs) but below average at Haugh South (Hfds) and Uffmoor Wood (Worcs). **Typical flight period.**

### Orange Tip >8 <10 =1

Average year. However record totals at Castlemorton (Worcs), Grafton Wood (Worcs) and Uffmoor Wood (Worcs). **Typical flight period.**

## Hairstreaks, coppers and blues

### Green Hairstreak >4 <3

Good year, well above average at major sites. Especially good numbers at Rodborough (Glos) and Malvern North (Worcs). **Typical flight period.**

### Brown Hairstreak

Egg counts in January 2001 at Grafton Wood (Worcs) suggest the species did better in 2000 than in the previous year.

### Purple Hairstreak >6 <5 =1

Notoriously difficult to assess based on transect walks. Below average counts at most of the major sites. Perry Wood (Worcs) the exception with a record high of 614. **First record one week ahead of average with a typical last date in early September.**

### White-letter Hairstreak >3 <2

Another species difficult to assess based on transect walks. Below average counts on most transects.

**First record 1 week later than average with a typical last date in early August.**

### Small Copper >9 <4 =1

Numbers still well below those of the early 1990s despite a small improvement over 1999. Still doing well on the North Malverns. **Flight period several weeks shorter than usual. First record not until May with last record several weeks early.**

### Brown Argus >4 <2

Despite slight improvement over 1999 below average at all major sites. **Typical flight period.**

**Common Blue** >11 <7

Bit of a recovery but numbers still very low. Nationally on the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology transects, the **Common Blue** index was the lowest ever in over 15 years. **Flight period several weeks shorter than usual.**

**Chalkhill Blue**

Good year. Above average counts on the Gloucestershire transects.

**First sighting not until August (several weeks late) with a typical last date in late September.**

**Holly Blue** >1 <12 =1

Continuing decline from the 97/98 peaks. Well below average at almost all sites. This butterfly follows a 6-7 year cycle between boom and bust. As we have now had 2 years of major decline it will be interesting to see if 2001 marks the start of the revival again. **Typical flight period.**

**Duke of Burgundy**

Very good year on the Gloucestershire transect where it is monitored.

**Vanessids****White Admiral** >6 <4

Poor year, below average at all major sites. **Typical flight period.**

**Red Admiral** >10 <9 =1

Poor year, generally below average counts.

**Earliest ever record January 31 from Perry Wood (Worcs) also last sighting later than usual into December.**

**Painted Lady** >16 <1 =1

Good year. Recorded widely and in good numbers however, much lower numbers than in 1996. Numbers peaked in the second half of August. **First record not until June 6 at Perry Wood with typical last sighting in mid-October.**

**Small Tortoiseshell** >11 <7 =2

A year of mixed fortune. Still at low numbers but exceptions at Perry Wood (Worcs) and Uffmoor Wood (Worcs) where record numbers were recorded. **Typical flight period.**

**Peacock** >10 <8 =1

Average year with **typical flight period.**

**Comma** >18 <1

Very good year. Above average at all major sites. Record numbers at Perry Wood (Worcs) Uffmoor Wood (Worcs) and Grafton Wood (Worcs). **This is a national trend with the highest index ever for the Comma on the national ITE transects. Makes the branch emblem the butterfly of the year for the first time. First record March 3 several weeks late but usual last record in early November.**

**Fritillaries****Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** >2 <2 =1

Another poor year. Below average at all sites. Fared particularly badly on the Wyre Forest West (Worcs) and Shelfheld Coppice transects (Worcs). On the positive side slight recovery noted at Coppett Hill (Hfds).

**Shorter flight period than usual – 1 week late at the start and finished several weeks early.**

**Pearl-bordered Fritillary** >2 <2

Poor year with another cold and wet May. Below average at all sites including the strongholds at Wyre Forest (Worcs) and Haugh Wood (Hfds). Has now not been recorded on the Malvern Hills (Worcs) since 1997.

**Typical first date in early May but last sighting several weeks early on 7 June.**

**High Brown Fritillary** >1 <2

Poor year with further declines at the Herefordshire sites. Slight recovery on the Malvern Hills (Worcs) but still well below average. Not recorded again at Chase End (Worcs) (1998 last record). **Shorter flight period than normal.**

**Dark Green Fritillary** <4

Another terrible year. Below average at all sites. **Insufficient information to comment on the flight period.**

**Silver-washed Fritillary** <4 =1

Poor year. Below average at all sites. Several sites lowest ever counts including Shelfheld Coppice (Worcs) and Haugh South (Hfds.). **Flight period about 1 week less than normal at beginning and end.**

**Browns**

**Speckled Wood** >13 <7

Good year, continuing to do well. Above average at most sites. First sighting now regularly mid-March compared with early April in the early 1990s. **Typical last sighting in late October.**

**Wall Brown** >2

Slow recovery continuing.

Very early first record of 27 April at Bredon (Worcs). **Early last sighting suggests no third brood.**

**Marbled White** >8 <6 =1

Mixed Year. Above average at most major sites with record numbers at Windmill Hill (Worcs) and Rodborough (Glos). In contrast, worst ever year at Bredon (Worcs). **Typical flight period.**

**Grayling**

Only record on transect on the North Malverns (Worcs).

**Gatekeeper** >14 <5 =1

Continuing to do well. Record numbers at Castlemorton (Worcs) and Windmill Hill (Worcs). **Typical flight period.**

**Meadow Brown** >11 <8

Slight decline from the excellent year in 1999. However, record numbers at Castlemorton and Windmill Hill. It is interesting to note the impact of scrub clearance and increased grazing at these two sites. Clearly the grass feeding caterpillars are benefiting. **Typical first sighting but latest ever last sighting on 30 September.**

**Small Heath** >4 <3 =2

Still at low numbers with the decline which started in the mid-90s continuing.

One of the remaining strongholds is on the North Malverns. Lowest index ever recorded on the ITE national transects. **Typical flight period.**

**Ringlet** >13 <7

Good year with above average counts at most sites and record numbers at Chaddesley Wood (Worcs) , Wyre Forest East (Worcs) and Castlemorton (Worcs). Highest index ever recorded on the ITE national transects. **Typical flight period.**

**Large Heath**

At Whixall Moss improvement over last 2 years but still below average.

Ian Duncan

## 2000 Weather Summary

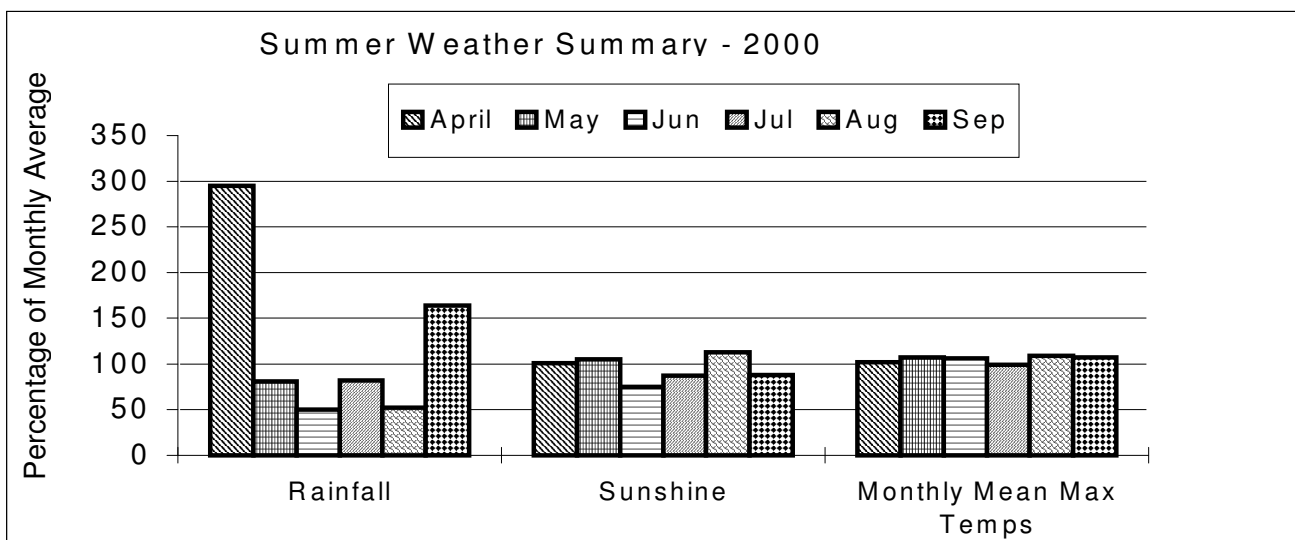
2000 was a repeat of 1999 in that it was generally very wet. The annual total was very close to that of 1999 and was the fifth wettest year this century. **April, October, November** and **December** were particularly wet and who will forget the floods of those last two months. Fortunately, the summer months were somewhat drier than in 1999 except, that is, for **April**. Temperature-wise it was a fairly average year with most months up to **March** being somewhat above normal. As regards sunshine, the year was above average overall.

Weather Summary for the Summer 2000 (Values expressed as a percentage of monthly average)								
		APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	
Monthly Rainfall		295	81	50	82	52	164	
Monthly Sunshine		101	105	75	87	113	88	
Monthly Mean Maximum Temp		102	107	106	99	109	107	

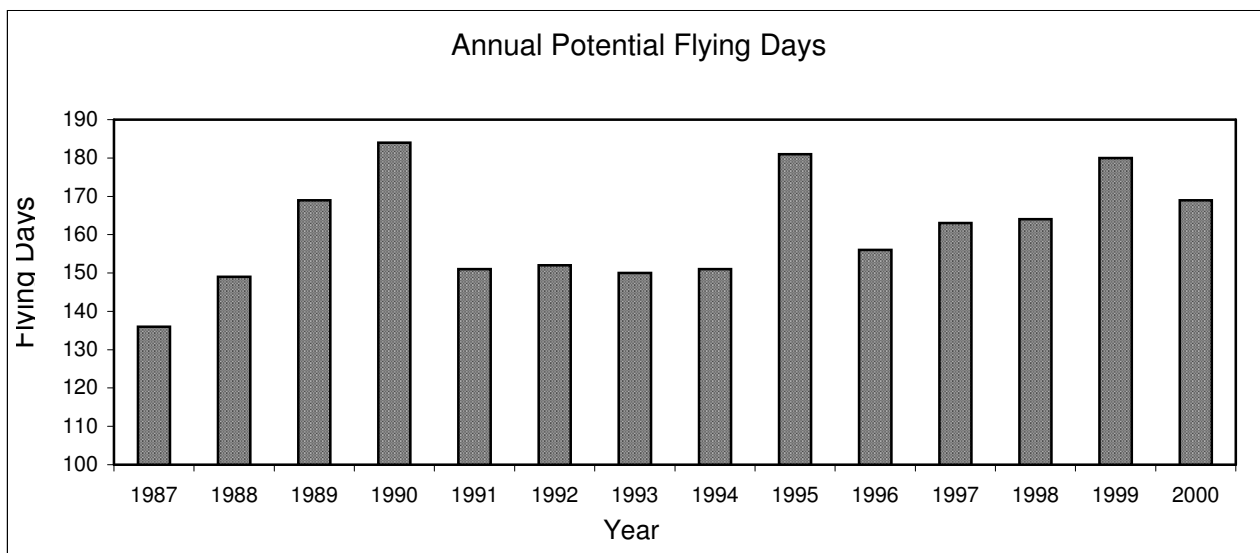
**April** was a complete washout, being the second wettest since 1880 but sunshine hours did manage to creep up to average. There then was a succession of dry months through **May, June, July** and **August** until the

Table showing the number of Rainfall and Sunshine days as well as the number of Potential Butterfly Flying Days - 2000 (WEST MIDLANDS)									
	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	
Days with >1.0mm rainfall	3	17	9	7	11	8	13	14	
Days with >1.0mm rainfall 1000-1700 (BST)	2	8	4	2	5	2	8	6	
Days with >1.0mm rainfall 1000-1700- weekends	0	2	1	1	2	0	1	2	
No of days with at least 1 hours sunshine	21	19	26	22	23	26	21	22	
No of days with at least 1 hours sunshine & 13 °C or dull & 17 °C (Potential adult flying days)	7	13	24	27	27	30	25	16	

really wet autumn started in earnest in **September**. While the summer months might have been generally dry, **June, July** and **September** were disappointingly dull with only **August** showing above average sunshine. These months proved to be frustrating for butterfly watchers with total flying days being reduced.







As a reminder about the last 14 years, the final table summarises the total number of potential butterfly flying days given the usual criteria of each day reaching at least 17 °C or 13 °C with one hour of sunshine.

Mike Averill

## Garden Butterflies in the Midlands, 2000

### Not a good year

The first year of the new Millennium (or the last of the old, depending on your point of view) was not a good one for butterflies. In fact the midlands saw decreases in 19 of the regular garden visitors (see tables) with only **Painted Lady** showing a massive increase from 47% of gardens in 1999 to 81% in 2000. This influx of migrants was accompanied by **Clouded Yellows** giving 21% of midlands gardens a visit. After hopeful signs in 1999 the **Wall** showed a devastating decline of 12% and was only recorded in 7% of gardens. **Holly Blue** also declined further, but hopefully we have now reached the nadir for this cycle and more will be seen this year. Although midlands butterflies made a poor showing they were in general better than the picture for the whole country and I have included comparative results in the tables.

### The Peacock, a Midlands speciality

I suggest that with 2000 results added to those from the four previous years, there is no doubt that midlands gardens receive more visits from this species than gardens elsewhere and that probably our area is a stronghold for this species. The **Small Tortoiseshell** also did much better (95% of midlands gardens had a visit compared with 84% nationally). Declines of this species in the south have become almost catastrophic, with only 68% of gardens reporting a visit in the south-east. It seems the **Small Tortoiseshell** is following the garden Sparrow in its disappearance from our gardens, and it could be that in years to come the midlands will be an important refuge for what was, until very recently, considered to be one of our commonest butterflies.

**Table 1 The most common garden butterflies**

Species	% total number of gardens in the midlands and nationally		
	1999	2000	2000 nationally
Large White	96	94	92
Small White	91	88	88
Red Admiral	89	89	94
Small Tortoiseshell	96	95	84
Peacock	99	97	94

### The less common garden butterflies

All species except the **Painted Lady** showed declines compared with 1999, but **Brimstone**, **Orange Tip**, **Speckled Wood** and **Gatekeeper** did significantly better than nationally.

**Table 2 The less common garden butterflies**

**% of total number of gardens in the midlands and nationally**

<b>Species</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2000 nationally</b>
Brimstone	75	72	63
Green-veined White	70	66	63
Orange-tip	89	83	79
Common Blue	37	27	33
Holly Blue	63	37	57
Painted Lady	47	81	76
Comma	86	80	82
Speckled Wood	85	82	74
Gatekeeper	82	79	74
Meadow Brown	86	77	76

**The least common garden butterflies**

The **Marbled White** did not have a good year, as far as garden visits were concerned, but the midlands did slightly better than nationally. In fact most of the rarer visitors fared badly with only the **Large Skipper** remaining unchanged. Hopefully, it was the cool, wet weather preventing flight which was the reason, rather than a lack of butterflies in the wider countryside. As already mentioned the **Wall** is giving real cause for concern, which has also been noted by the Conservation staff at Lulworth.

**Table 3. The least common garden butterflies**

<b>% of total number of gardens in the midlands and nationally</b>			
<b>Species</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2000 nationally</b>
Small Skipper	31	24	20
Large Skipper	23	23	19
Small Copper	30	25	27
Wall	12	7	19
Marbled White	19	10	9
Small Heath	11	9	7
Ringlet	36	28	25

Altogether midland gardens recorded 33 species in 2000 compared with 35 species in 1999. Rare visitors included **Dingy Skipper**, **Essex Skipper**, **Brown Argus**, **White Admiral**, **Silver-washed Fritillary**, **Dark Green Fritillary**, **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary**, **Chalkhill Blue**, **Wood White** and **Green and White-letter Hairstreak**. Thank you to all midlands recorders who make this garden survey possible. Let us hope for a better season this year.

Margaret Vickery

## Worcestershire Moth Report 2000

### Macros

#### 1 Resident species

The highlight of last year was the discovery of the **Pauper Pug** (*E. egenaria*), when two worn males came to light at Shrawley wood on 3 June. Attempts to find it amongst the Small-leaved Limes there on three previous occasions had failed, perhaps because flowering Limes on which it feeds are local in the huge area of lime coppice. This is an RDB3 species only otherwise found in the U.K. in the Wye Valley and in Norfolk.

**Dotted Chestnut** (*C. rubiginea*) was recorded again at Malvern Wells by Peter Holmes, and for the first time at Upper Welland by Ian Duncan. Mike Southall had a single **Barred Hook-tip** (*D. cultraria*) at Crossway Green, a local species in the county. Kevin McGee photographed a Sycamore (*A. aceris*) on a tree trunk at Drakes Broughton on 24 August. This is the first confirmed record this century, although there have been three other unconfirmed records since 1970. Ian Duncan had a **Tawny Pinion** (*L. semibrunnea*) at light at Upper Welland on 2 October, a rare moth with only four other records since 1970. **Buff Footman** (*E. deplana*) continues to spread, with records in Shrawley Wood, Wyre Forest, Malvern Wells, and at Bredon Hill. A single **Red-necked Footman** (*A. rubricollis*) was found in the bottom of a moth-trap as the county moth group was rushing to pack

things up in torrential rain at the end of a night at Shrawley Wood, and was almost missed! This could have been a migrant or possibly a resident as it was in the middle of the wood close to some conifers, which I am told is a favourite habitat of this species in Northern Ireland.

The County 'Mothers' Group, as it likes to be called!, had a regular light-trapping programme at various sites throughout the county last year, and Neil and Corinna Gregory have an even more ambitious programme planned for this year. Rosemary Winnall organised regular light-trapping meetings at Park Farm in Wyre Forest which recorded most of the Wyre Forest specialities (e.g. **Alder Kitten**, **Satin Lutestring**, **Bilberry Pug**, **Lead-coloured Pug**, **Great Oak Beauty**, **Angle-barred Sallow**) in good numbers, and has planned another recording programme based around the Lodge Hill Farm area for this year.

## 2 Migrants

Last year was better than usual in our landlocked county for passing visitors! There was an influx of migrants from early June, with good numbers of common migrants such as **Silver Y** and the Pyralids *Nomophila noctuella* and *Udea ferrugalis*, and a **Small Mottled Willow** (*S. exigua*) at Bransford on 20 June, and Mike Southall had a **Bordered Straw** (*H. peltigera*) at Crossway Green on 3 July. There were a number of **Vestal** (*R. sacra*) recorded from 20 to 29 August; Rosemary Winnall at Bliss Gate, Mike Southall at Crossway Green, and by me at Bransford, including several flushed from arable fields in daylight. Then I had a **Scarce Bordered Straw** (*H. armigera*) at Bransford on 10 October, and Mike Southall another at Crossway Green on 5 October. There were at least six **Humming-bird Hawk-moths** (*M. stellatarum*) records scattered throughout the county, and David Green had a **Convolvulus Hawk-moth** (*A. convolvuli*) at Little Comberton in September, and Harry Green was called to see another at Longdon in the same month. Finally on 18 December Peter Gamer noticed an unfamiliar moth in his house, some four days after leaving open his upstairs windows in the unseasonal warm wet weather. This turned out to be a new county record. At first thought to be a Tunbridge Wells Gem, we finally decided it must be a female **Golden Twin-spot** (*C. chaleites*), which although not as rare, is still a very nice record for our inland county. This species may now be breeding in heated greenhouses in the U.K., but this moth came to us at the end of a long spell of warm southerly winds which might well have brought it up from the Canaries where it is common.

## Micros

There were seven new microlepidopteran species recorded in V.C.37 last year; *Opostega erepusculella*, *Metzneria lappella*, and *Piniphila bifasciana* at Tiddesley Wood, *Pammene albuginana* at Wyre Forest and Shrawley wood, *Acrolepiopsis assectella* at Bransford (possibly a migrant or adventitious on *Allium* spp.), *Cochylis dubitana* at Kingsheath (specimens collected by Dave Grundy), and *Plodia interpunctella* infesting a bag of birdseed in my garage.

Other records of note were: *Incurvaria praelatella* in Wyre Forest (second county record), *Triaxomera fulvimitrella* in Wyre Forest (only previous record by Stuart Carlier also in Wyre Forest in 1929), *Elachista luticomella* in Wyre Forest (last records in 1800's), and *Schoenobius forficella* amongst *Glyceria maxima* in a marsh at Stourport (only second modern county record).

Dr. A.N.B.Simpson.

## Lepidoptera Report Herefordshire for year 2000

The season of the year 2000 started with a cold and wet spring and early summer until mid-June, followed by a short summer and then a mild but dismally wet early winter and autumn. A truncated season with some of the poorest trap catches I have ever known. Both numbers of moths and species diversity appear to be affected.

However, at Haugh Wood, moth lighting with the Midland Branch of Butterfly Conservation on 12 May did attract several moths, the best being the **Lesser Treble Bar** (*Aplocera efformata*), the **Grey Birch** (*Aethalura punctulata*), several specimens of **Small White Wave** (*Asthena albulata*) seen at dusk in the large new area of mixed coppice, and finally a single **Tissue** (*Triphosa dubitata*). Most of these species are either only seen in low density or are decreasing locally.

Several expeditions to the Western side of the County to two under-recorded woodland sites, one at Brilley and the other at Chanstone Wood near Peterchurch, a woodland SSSI. Neither site revealed any rarities, except perhaps the **Waved Carpet** (*Hydrelia sylvata*) a "BAP" species which appeared at actinic light at the former site and *Argyresthia ivella* at the latter site. I have not seen the last species for over twenty years now and it may be

associated with hazel here, rather than crab apple, the more usual food plant.

Another expedition to the Herefordshire Black Mountains with Mike Bradley on the night of 2-3 July, failed to see any further sightings of the **Silurian** (*Eriopygodes imbecilla*); this despite reasonable weather conditions and running lights until 4 – 5 am in the morning. Equally frustrating was the failure to record the **Grey Scalloped bar** (*Dyscia fagaria*) on the high moorland plateaux during the same night, surely a species which has yet to be recorded for the County.

On the 13 May 2000, Phyllis King had her second **Peacock Moth** at light at Little Dewchurch. Her first record occurred in 1998 and this was the first record since 1975 for this County.

One of the Coppice nature reserves within the ancient woodland of Queens Wood, Kempley has been developing small amounts of heather within the coppice of mainly birch. On 7 July, a single plume moth appeared at light, *Capperia britanniodactyla* which is new for the County and was not recorded even in the last century. The food plant is wood sage which is also colonising this site with other heathland associated plants. The attractive grass moth *Agriphila latistria* was also recorded here on 16 August 2000, another local lowland heath speciality, but one which does migrate occasionally probably from other English heathland sites.

There were several uncommon migrants which appeared at light during the year 2000. Ray Birchenough recorded single moths of the **American Wainscot** (*Mythimna unipuncta*) on 2, 7, and 14 October at his home near Dorstone. This species is a sporadic migrant to southwest England and possibly a transient resident there. This is new to Herefordshire. Another Wainscot moth, the **Delicate**, (*Mythimna vitellin*), and a rare European migrant, was recorded at light during the same week (12 October 2000) at Little Dewchurch by Phyllis King. Yet another rare migrant moth, the **Scarce Bordered-straw** (*Helicoverpa armigera*) appeared at my light in Ledbury on 11 September 2000. Finally as late as 18 December 2000 Peter Garner found a fresh example of the **Golden Twin-spot** (*Chrysodeixis chalcites*) in his house in West Malvern, "a first" for this part of the Midlands.

Michael Harper

### Lepidoptera in Staffordshire 2000

Before his death in 1999, Richard Warren started work on a new atlas of the larger moths of the county. I have now completed this and would like to take this opportunity to thank the West Midland Branch of Butterfly Conservation for their financial support. The book is currently with the printers and will be out very shortly.

Staffordshire, one of the largest counties, has a wide range of habitats and a rich flora and fauna. Unfortunately it has a dearth of entomologists. There is a cluster of lepidopterists in the south of the county - an area once under-recorded - and very few elsewhere. Should any members feel like visiting the county then I would be pleased to receive their records.

The highlight of the year was undoubtedly the influx of Clouded Yellows. The first record came from Branston Gravel Pits then, on 28 August, we counted 20 along the dam at Blithfield Reservoir! The dam is south facing and has a well cropped grassy bank with plants such as Birds-foot Trefoil. This also attracted 10 Small Coppers, numerous Common Blues, one Red Admiral and a Painted Lady. It must be one of the best accumulations of butterflies that I have seen in the county for some time.

Of moths, the following are of note:

**Small Emerald** *Hemiostola chrysoprasaria*: a single record from Norton, Stourbridge on 30 July, D N Friday is a new county record. Although this record is not supported by a voucher specimen, the species has been recorded in Warwickshire and is not uncommon in parts of neighbouring Worcestershire. It is also fairly recognisable. It is more common on the chalk grasslands of the south of England where it feeds on Traveller's Joy.

Other sightings of note include:

*Schiffermuellerina grandis*: Oakwood Pastures (Needwood Forest), M. Bloxham. This species has only once been found in the county - in Needwood Forest 1883. It is a nationally scarce brown and orange "micro" whose larvae live in rotten oak and beech and has long been thought extinct in the county. It is also a good indicator of ancient woodland.

**Hummingbird Hawk-moth** *Macroglossum stellatarum*: Knypersley, 22 June, J. Johnson

**Scarce Footman** *Eilema complana*: Keele University, 8 August, M. Sutton

**Meal Moth** *Pyralis farinalis*: Little Stoke, 2 August, DWE

**White-letter Hairstreak** *Strymonidia w-album*: Little Stoke 30 July, DWE; Keele University, N. Pomionkowski.

**Crescent Dart** *Agrotis trux lunigera*: Norton, Stourbridge 24 July, D N Friday. This is the second county record of what is a coastal species. It obviously moves more than people thought.

**Vestal** *Rhodometra sacraria*: Eccleshall, 27 August, G and S. Moss. To be expected, given the influx of Clouded Yellows.

**Currant Clearwing** *Synanthedon tipuliformis*: One was found on a fly paper hanging in a greenhouse at Meir in 1999, J. Korysko.

David Emley

## Lepidoptera in Shropshire 2000

During 2000 moth survey work was undertaken at varying sites throughout Shropshire with some interesting species encountered. **Blomer's Rivulet** was found by both Jenny Joy, at The Ercall, and Adrian Miles, on the Dudmaston Estate. Other highlights were the continued presence of **Northern Footman** at Fenn' s, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses along with **Birch Mocha and Purple-bordered Gold. Dingy Mocha**, a UK BAP species is a target of the newly formed **Shropshire Moth Group** for later this year at the site after sightings during the late nineties.

**Red-necked Footman** were seen in good numbers at Llyncllys Common and Llanymynech Rocks, amongst other sites whilst searches for **Small Eggar** were less successful. Previously this moth had turned up at Llyncllys Common and just across the Welsh border at the Llanymynech Golf Club, both sightings as larvae within their " caterpillar tents ". Other good records for Llyncllys during 2000 were **Coronet, Small Yellow Wave and Beautiful Hook-tip**.

Sue Lewis recorded a first for the county with a **Ni moth** at her rural garden at Dudleston Heath, North Shropshire. Sue trapped extensively throughout 2000 and drew my attention to a number of local or unusual species for an area not seemingly regularly trapped before.

An **Old Lady** was found dead in the office of The National Trust at Cardingmill Valley - of course this is not as brutal a statement as it may seem and there was no police involvement !

The previously mentioned **Shropshire Moth Group** was formed at the end of 2000 and a list of species drawn up by Godfrey Blunt and Jenny Joy of priority interest in both national and regional contexts. The following tables show the last records we have for the species and so anyone who can fill the gaps .....

Species of Potential National Importance		
Species	Location	Recorder
Small Eggar	Llyncllys Common ( also just over the border in Montgomeryshire )	Jackie Pedlow ( found larval nest )
Kentish Glory		
Satin Lutestring		
Light Orange Underwing		
Small Grass Emerald		
Dingy Mocha	Fenn' s, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR	Craig Yates
Lace Border		
Cloaked Carpet		
Argent & Sable	Fenn' s, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR	Craig Yates
Bleached Pug		
Thyme Pug		
Bilberry Pug		
Waved Carpet		
Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk Moth		
Scarce Vapourer		
Dew Moth		
Northern Footman	Fenn' s, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR	Craig Yates , Peter Boardman
Union Rustic		
Obscure Wainscot		

Species of Potential Regional Importance		
Species	Location	Recorder
Hornet Moth		
Mocha	Fenn' s, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR	Mervyn Newstead (1988)
Birch Mocha	Fenn' s, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR	Peter Boardman / Ian Cheeseborough ( 2000 )
False Mocha		
Clay Triple-lines		
Rosy Wave	Fenn' s, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR	Peter Boardman ( 1998 )
Smoky Wave	Fenn' s, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR	Craig Yates
Purple-bordered Gold	Fenn' s, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR	Peter Boardman ( 2000 )
Dwarf Cream Wave		
Red Carpet	Pontesbury	Dave Smith
Striped Twin-spot Carpet		
Beech-green Carpet	Pontesbury / Pennerley	Dave Smith, Dave Poynton
Scarce Tissue		
Brown Scallop		
Small Autumnal Moth		
Sloe Pug		
Manchester Treble-bar	Fenn' s, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR	Craig Yates
Blomer' s Rivulet	The Ercal / Dudmaston	Jenny Joy / Adrian Miles
Welsh Wave	Pennerley	Dave Poynton
Little Thorn		
Large Thorn		
Orange Moth		
Bordered Grey	Fenn' s, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR	Via Adrian Riley ( 1991 )
Brussel' s Lace		
Brindled White Spot		
Yellow Belle		
Broad-bordered Bee Hawk Moth	Fenn' s, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR	Craig Yates
Small Chocolate-tip		
Brown Tail		
Red-necked Footman	Llyncllys Common / Llanymynech Rocks / Pennerley	Jackie Pedlow, Peter Boardman, Ian Cheeseborough, Dave Poynton
Buff Footman	Dudmaston	Adrian Miles
Water Ermine		
Archer' s Dart	Pontesbury	Dave Smith
Plain Clay		
Northern Rustic		
Pale Shining Brown		
Striped Wainscot		
Golden-rod Brindle	Pennerley	Dave Poynton
Feathered Ranunculus		
Marbled Green		
Haworth' s Minor	Fenn' s, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR / Pennerley	Keith Redshaw / Dave Poynton
Lempke' s Gold Spot	Fenn' s, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR	BEHNS ( 1992 )
Marsh Oblique-barred	Fenn' s, Whixall and Bettisfield Mosses NNR	Craig Yates ( 1998 )

Records within this report came from Peter Boardman, Ian Cheeseborough, Caroline Uff, Sue Lewis, Jenny Joy and Adrian Miles. If you would like further information about the Shropshire Moth Group please contact Peter Boardman, 7 High Street, Weston Rhyn, Shropshire, SY10 7RP - peperouda@btinternet.com

Peter Boardman