



No. 60

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2005

WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH, BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

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Website: <http://www.westmidlandsbutterflyconservation.org.uk>

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Chairman's Notes Spring 2005

New Chairman

As you know, for some time I have been wishing to stand down as Branch chairman. I have been in the position for 6 years and I feel strongly that it is good for all organisations to have a new chairman every few years to bring in fresh blood with new ideas. I am delighted to tell you that Richard Southwell, at the last committee meeting in January, agreed to take over as chairman. A lot of you will know Richard who brings great enthusiasm and vitality to the Branch. He was responsible for organising the recording for the Millennium Atlas and more recently has been Branch Organiser. He has been actively involved with a number of planning issues in the Birmingham area.

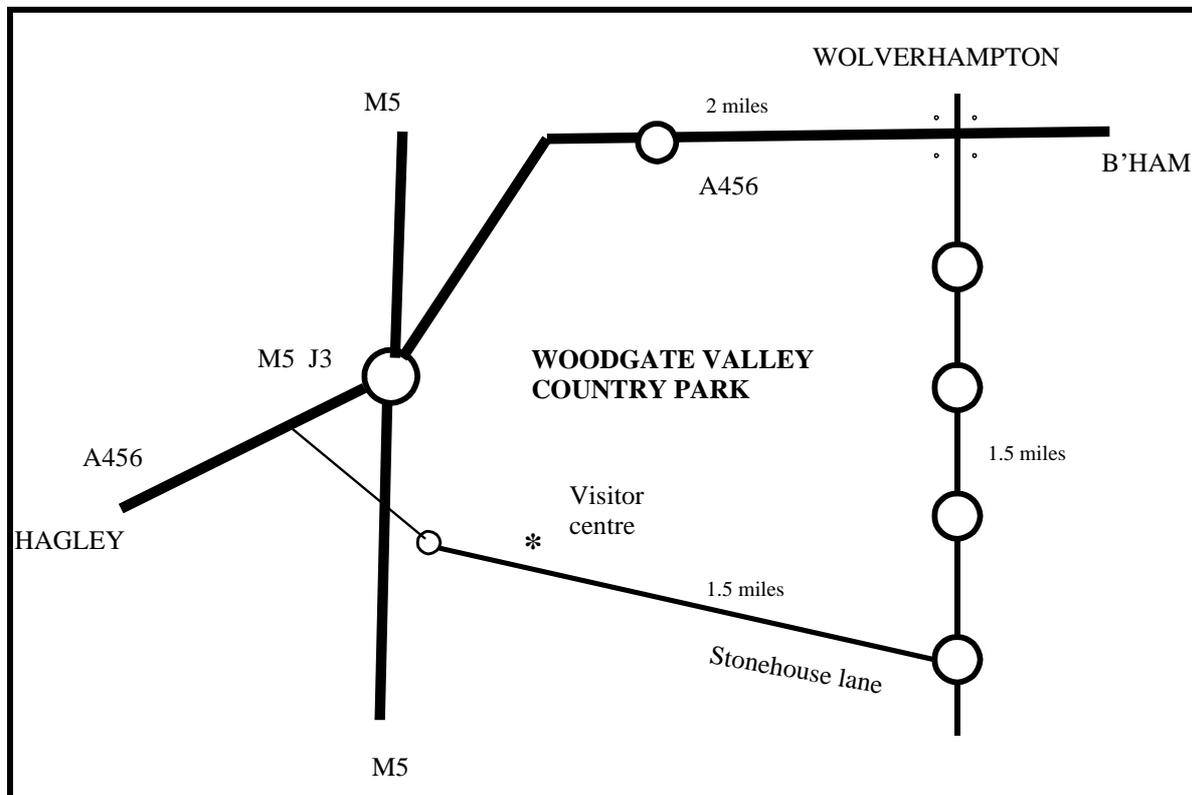
I am sure you will all wish to join with me in

wishing Richard every success as chairman.

I have enjoyed my time as chairman very much. We hosted the national AGM and at the same time celebrated the Branch's 21st birthday. The moth group was founded and moth recording is now a key part of the Branch's activities.

Membership is at record levels and the finances are in good shape.

The appointment of Jenny Joy and Jane Ellis as paid regional organisers has been a great success delivering more conservation in the area. We have published the 3 volumes on the distribution of all the moths and butterflies of Herefordshire and Worcestershire. This was a landmark publication documenting for the first



Spring Meeting 14 May—all are welcome at Woodgate Valley Country Park

The Spring meeting will be held at 2:00 pm on Saturday 14 May at Woodgate Valley Country Park which is close by junction 3 of the M5. OS grid reference SO995829. Everybody is welcome.

Woodgate Valley Country Park comprises 450 acres of meadows. The Bourn Brook runs through the centre of the Park which is host to a large number of species of plants, and many butterflies and birds.

Why not bring the family as there will be a butterfly foray, weather permitting. Our guest speaker is John Reeve who will give a talk with slides on a recent trip to Kazakhstan and the grasslands of the Himalayas compared to the rain forest in Ecuador.

There will also be a quiz. Refreshments are available on site.

We would really welcome a good turn out from Birmingham members—come along and meet members of the committee and fellow enthusiasts.

To get there, come off the M5 onto the A456, towards Birmingham. After 2 miles turn right at major traffic lights. Follow the main road over 3 roundabouts for 1.5 miles. Turn right at the 4th roundabout along Stonehouse Lane. After a further 1.5 miles Woodgate Valley entrance and car park will be found on the right. (If you find a small roundabout, you have just gone past it!)

time the status of the Lepidoptera of the 2 counties in the 20th century.

Most of all I have enjoyed working with Branch members and the organisations helping to conserve our moths and butterflies. Thank you all very much for all your support and encouragement over the past 6 years. I would particularly like to thank all the committee members (past and present) for all their help and hard work.

Ron Hatton

I am delighted to tell you that Ron was awarded Volunteer of the Year at the society's national AGM in November. Ron received the award in recognition of his 25+ years commitment and hard work for Butterfly Conservation.

Ron was involved in setting up the West Midlands Branch and was the chairman for many years. In recent years Ron has been the Branch honorary auditor as well as a regular member of the work parties working on our reserves.

Ron is also a member of the Gloucestershire branch committee and is also very involved with the management of the Prestbury reserve.

Well done Ron on receiving this much deserved award.

Committee Changes:

Jim and Christine Chance

Jim and Christine have decided to stand down as newsletter editors. In all my time as chairman, Jim and Christine have been responsible for the newsletter. They have played a crucial role in the smooth running of the Branch and I am very grateful to them for all their hard work. The newsletter was always on

time, well edited and full of interesting articles.

Thank you Jim and Christine for all your help. I am pleased to say that they have both agreed to stay on the committee and that Jim has agreed to continue as Branch butterfly recorder.

Andy Nicholls

At the Branch AGM Andy stepped down from the committee after serving for many years. Andy was responsible for compiling all the county butterfly records which were used in the Millennium Atlas. He was also county conservation officer for many years.

Thank you Andy for everything you have done for the Branch while on the committee. I am pleased to tell you that Andy intends to remain active in Herefordshire particularly with the work parties he has organised so successfully.

New Positions

I am pleased to report lots of new members on the committee as follows:

- Dean Fenton has taken on the position of newsletter editor. Dean resides in Herefordshire and will start as editor with the summer newsletter. Please see the back cover for contact details.
- Ian Hart has become the Conservation Officer for Herefordshire.
- James Hill, from Staffordshire has become Branch Secretary.
- Mike Southall has become Moth Officer for Worcestershire.

I would like to thank them all for taking on these new roles and wish them every success.

■ Ian Duncan

New Chair's Message

I have penned a number of articles for the newsletter over the last few years but I had to really ponder over this one. The answer came to me after a January walk in Trenchwood, one of our reserves, which was followed by a pint of Hook Norton in the company of my long suffering better half. It came in a flash, start at the beginning.

I joined the society in 1995. My family attended some events that year and we were so enthused by what we saw up to 30 minutes drive from our home. We were also treated in such a welcoming manner by the 'experts' as

they seemed to us as 'beginners', that I went to three winter work parties the following winter to pay my dues back. Jane accompanied me to the 96 Spring Meeting where Margaret Vickery, the Newsletter Editor at the time, asked the audience for some contributions. She hit a chord and I penned my first piece entitled 'Pain and Agony' about a beginners year that appeared in the Summer 96 issue. The concluding sentence read 'The summer of '95 has just proved how little we thought we knew about the countryside and how much variety there is so close to our front door. I just hope I can curb my enthusiasm so my children will

retain and develop their own inquisitiveness. It will be a gift for life'. Still so true, but I now appreciate what threatens it.

One thing has changed over the last few years and that is Branch members seem less inclined to attend butterfly events, though moth nights still bring in the numbers. People also seem more prepared to get involved in actual conservation, particularly over planning consents. Stafford members responded in most encouraging numbers to an opinion survey last year and did comment on a feeling of remoteness. During my tenure as Chairman I will very much encourage the formation of local groups and this is referred to elsewhere in the newsletter. It should alleviate this feeling of isolation but it also requires the local member to become visible.

Finally, I'd like to thank our retiring Chairman, Ian Duncan, for all his efforts over the last six years. An impossible act to follow but I will try to emulate his professionalism at managing meetings and acting as catalyst for so many of our activities. Well done, the Branch is deeply in debt to the effectiveness of your volunteering efforts.

I wish you all a happy and healthy 2005 and look forward to meeting many new faces at our field meetings and other events. If you haven't been to one do join us this year. It matters not a jot whether you are a beginner or expert, there's lots to see and learn in the company of friends.

■ Richard Southwell

A Message from the Branch Recorder

Hello Folks,

This is just a message to thank everybody for sending a host of butterfly records for 2004. Well, not quite! Could I gently rap a few knuckles as well? Some recorders have, this year, omitted to put in the 100 km squares in the grid references, i.e. the letters in the grid reference. Thus, a full grid reference might be SJ456789. If the recorder only puts '456789', it could be almost anywhere. This causes Christine and myself enormous problems. We cover several 100 km squares SJ,SK,SO,SP etc. even in our area, not to mention the far away holiday sightings that come in. Mentioning the Ordnance Survey map is not much help; there are a tremendous number of Ordnance Survey maps, many of which I do not have. It takes about 15 minutes to enter a page of records under perfect conditions, but much, much (sometimes infinitely!) longer without the 100 km letters.

A second point is that the recording system, known as *Levana* will only accept a 'column' of records with ONE grid reference. Sometimes recorders put in a number of grid references for a column of sightings, e.g. when walking a path etc. they might put in SO3456/SO3457 Therefore I must either choose a single GR and accept the inaccuracy, or abandon the record.

By the way, the current *Levana* software accepts quantities of butterflies either as codes (ABCDE) or as straight numbers or mixed. I

personally prefer the numbers, especially in the range of 2-9 butterflies, but either can be entered without difficulty, so do please yourself.

As a matter of interest, I thought that you might like to see the numbers of records for the West Midlands area for the last 3 years (2002, 2003, 2004) and to compare them to the huge effort that was put in for the Millennium atlas during 1997, 1998, 1999.

A preferred butterfly recording form is enclosed

Year	WM records	Levana Columns
1997	14165	3170
1998	17375	3847
1999	17043	4064
2002	5473	2209
2003	3800	1157
2004	7482	2009

with this Newsletter. Old hands may notice that **Adonis Blue** and **Chalkhill Blue** have been replaced by the more relevant (in this area) **Wood White** and **Clouded Yellow**. Obviously, excitements such as **Brown Hairstreak**, **High Brown Fritillary**, **Large Heath** etc. will be happily received under 'other species'.

■ Jim Chance (Branch Recorder)

Recruit a useful Friend

Along with the inserted recording sheet you will find a Membership joining form. It would greatly assist the cause of the society if you know of someone who has a potential interest in butterflies and moths or a passion for wildlife in general. Even better, please pass the form to someone you know if they are the type who like to get actively involved. You might also lend them a Branch newsletter or the national magazine to give them a flavour of what we do.

Over the last few years it has become noticeable that membership has increased where there has been local activity in areas such as Wychavon, Wolverhampton and Dudley. It has also increased in East Stafford and Shrewsbury for reasons that are unclear. Whilst the 'Alan Titchmarsh' Garden Butterfly Garden Survey encouraged many to join across the country it appears the society has not been that successful at retaining members from this source and growth has stalled or declined last year with the exceptions of the three Scottish branches, two from north England, South Wales, Northampton and us in the West Midlands.

Almost uniquely we do seem to have the ability to retain new members better than most other branches. Therefore if this trend continues it will aid the national society and our Branch in terms of financial capability and political 'clout' having more members. We have conclusively proved in

the West Midlands over the last four years that active members do successfully influence our country's decision-makers regarding the conservation of habitat or its sympathetic upkeep, so your efforts should have a benefit.

Many 'birders' have joined our branch in recent years; they also appear to have a greater propensity to record butterflies and moths. Can you think of someone? A work colleague or neighbour are other suggestions but also very valid are those that already have an impact on habitat such as councils or property developers, maybe a farmer or a local school. Our experience is starting to show that commercial interests rarely destroy wildlife knowingly. I can't think of a better way of informing than getting them to join us. Our committee is made up of a cross section of society including industrialists and farmers so we practice what we preach. It is Head Office's and Branch's role to inform decision-makers, and yours as an individual in your local patch.

If you are one of those members who are happy just to pay your annual subscription then passing the membership application form to a potential 'useful' new member is a very simple way of making a contribution. Please do consider this. Thanks.

■ Richard Southwell & Jenny Joy

Local Financial Autonomy – A First Step

There are always upsides and downsides to a branch as geographically as large as ours. Plus points include articles in the newsletter covering a range of lepidoptera, many of which do not occur on our doorstep. Different habitats occur from the wilds of the Welsh borders to the heathlands of Cannock and Kidderminster, the lowland bogs of Whixall and Chartley to the uplands of the Pennines and Malverns, the great forests of Wyre and Haugh to the urban sprawls of Birmingham and Stoke. All these habitats need different conservation approaches and newsletter articles from a range of contributors reflect this diversity. It also makes our Branch the envy of many others in the society. We also have the economies of scale given our large membership, along with an effective committee, that gives us the capacity to do things. And we do, but as with so many

things in life, we could do better.

Branch leaders in Staffordshire undertook a membership survey last year, it was very successful given the response rate, but it did clearly show people have a concern about remoteness. Members there wanted more local articles, many wanted local events whilst a number offered to attend winter work parties or get involved with local councils. To me this is great news since I have witnessed first hand the positive effect local involvement has with local decision-makers in terms of influencing positive conservation outcomes. This was true in Walsall and Dudley and has also been demonstrated by Bill Davidson in South Shropshire where he found a **Grizzled Skipper** colony, approached the landowner who promptly introduced a sustainable land management regime, all within

two years! There are other examples but maybe the first was by Frank Lancaster who approached the various landowners of the Wyre Forest and the local MP. Years later, but starting from this point, Butterfly Conservation head office now have an agreed national policy with the Forestry Commission.

Therefore, to address the joint issues of membership remoteness and effective conservation the Branch committee agreed at our September meeting to allocate £150 per year in each of the five **Local Biodiversity Action Plan** areas in our Branch. This sum can be spent by local members, with the sanction of the LBAP leader without reference to our committee. We do have a track record of agreeing requests but since we only meet twice a year decisions can rarely be made quickly which is often a requirement when a local project needs some financial pump-priming, a time when enthusiasm for the idea is usually at its peak.

It was agreed that spend could cover three areas –

- Organisation – e.g. hiring a meeting venue, local membership survey, encouraging a hands-on land manager such as a local nature reserve manager by offering free membership. This last approach was very successfully tested by Cheshire Branch who view it as a cheap way of influencing habitat management.
- Conserving **Regional Action Plan Species**. The RAP is currently being updated by Jenny Joy and Alison Loram so things might change also some of our endangered species of butterfly and moth are well provided for at key sites. However, new sites for any of our **fritillaries** would be appropriate candidates for financial support as would **Grayling** away from its Shropshire or Malvern strongholds. Probably the most likely species of interest will be **Grizzled Skipper, Dingy Skipper, Green Hairstreak** and **Wall Brown** whilst moths such as **Light Orange Underwing, Argent and Sable, Rosy Wave** or **Blomer's Rivulet** come immediately to mind. Do refer to your LBAP leaders for advice since local priorities do differ.
- Habitat Improvement. Ideally there should be a partner organisation and the opportunity for publicity. There

does not need to be an endangered species on site but improvement to the location could help develop a corridor for them by joining together good habitat, even better they could breed there. David Jackson got a 'waste area' in Wolverhampton planted with birds-foot-trefoil that the council wanted to make amenity friendly. I am considering approaching Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge to get elm planted into the planned natural hedges to surround the amenity for **White-letter Hairstreak**.

Please note all this is referring to additional expenditure where the local person has a direct input so do use this facility by contacting your leader in the first instance.

The local BAP leaders are –

Shropshire – Jenny Joy – 01952 249325
Staffordshire – John Bryan – 01782 518900
Birmingham & Black Country – David Jackson – 01902 344716
Hereford – Jeff Andrews – 01432 870301
Worcester – Trevor Bucknall – 01905 755757

The acid test for any scheme like this is if people use it. The Stafford Survey certainly gives grounds for optimism and, I for one, doubt if their views will be much different than elsewhere in the Branch. The scheme will be reviewed after twelve months and I hope to be in a position to recommend a larger budget. I hope people's willingness to be enthusiastic and involved, has improved since David Jackson was Conservation Officer for Staffordshire when over a three year period he only received one call from an unknown Branch member. In the last two years Stafford members are really starting to get stuck in, well done. Jeff Andrews will be overjoyed if this happens in Hereford, he needs more active members, whilst Jenny Joy in Shropshire would be delighted if a County Leader emerged since it is not really possible for her to do justice to the role, as well as being Regional Officer and mother to a large young family. There is a reasonable amount of activity in the Black Country but you Brummies seem noticeable by your absence. Yet again West Midlands Branch is breaking new ground in the society with this initiative, don't let us down.

■ Richard Southwell

Shropshire Moth Group

Review of 2004

Last year was the first real year of activity for the Shropshire Moth Group and so I have decided to put together a review of 2004 to encompass what happened during the year, summarise the range of species seen, and records received, as well as to act as a spring board into the 2005 recording season.

I must start by again thanking everyone who has contributed towards this review. During 2004 I received over 2000 Macro-moth records from a total of 27 people (so far). By far the most records came from Howard Davies and Caroline Uff at Brokenstones, but all records are welcome, from a single sighting to a thousand records and they all help build up a picture of what is going on. Also at this point I must again thank Godfrey Blunt for volunteering to take on the Micro-moths and all they entail.

2004 records

Records of around 320 species of Macro-moths were sent to me during the year.

UK BAP Priority Species

Dave Grundy has been studying both **Common Fan-foot** and **Drab Looper** as part of a project in the Wyre Forest. Both species were recorded in 2004 within the Shropshire part of the Forest.

Argent & Sable was recorded on, Fenn's, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses NNR by me from late May until mid-June. Jenny Joy also

recorded the moth in both adult and larval forms at another site in North Shropshire. It is hoped that we will be able to look for larvae on Fenn's, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses NNR during 2004 with Jenny's knowledge of the larval requirements.

Butterfly Conservation and Shropshire County Council funded a search for **Square-spotted Clay** during 2004; however the target species remained unrecorded. All known previous records were mapped (see Figure 1).

Priority Targets Within The West Midlands

Angle-striped Sallow was recorded by Dave Grundy at the Wyre Forest on 13 August 2004. I have records from previous years from Fenn's, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses NNR, Pennerley, Quatford and The Ercall.

Blomer's Rivulet as found at Brokenstones (near Craven Arms) by Howard Davies in late July. I have one other record from The Ercall from 2000.

Cloaked Carpet records came from Brokenstones (several between 12/7/04 – 13/8/04), Wyre Forest and Earl's Hill. This suggests it is becoming relatively common within the south of the County.

Devon Carpet was found once more in the Wyre Forest by Dave Grundy. I have one other location for Shropshire (Earl's Hill 2003).

Forester was searched for under the same Butterfly Conservation / Shropshire County Council funded survey as Square-spotted Clay.

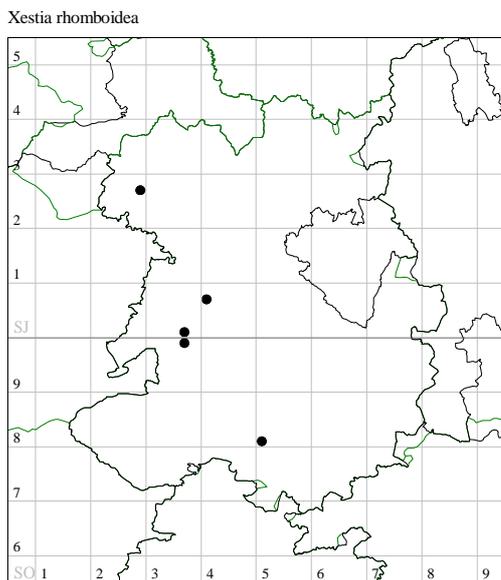


Fig. 1 – Square-spotted Clay *Xestia rhomboidea*

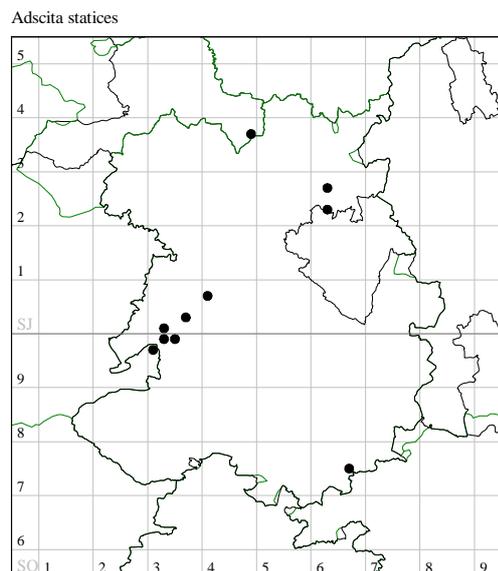


Fig. 2 – Forester *Adscita stances* records for Shropshire

Again all records were mapped (Fig 2). A training day is currently being arranged for anyone who would like to know more about this moth around the Stiperstones area in 2005 – detail. Again if anyone has any further records for this species from VC40 I would be very grateful to receive them.

Manchester Treble-bar was seen by Nick Greatorex-Davies upon Fenn's, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses NNR on 14/7/04. As far as I am aware this species has only ever been recorded from this site in Shropshire. I have 8 records, mostly from the 1970s and 1980s.

Orange Footman was found by Adrian Miles at Dudmaston on 9/5/04. Unless anyone can tell me differently this appears to be a new County record.

Purple-bordered Gold was seen over the period 16/6/04 – 26/6/04 from Wem Moss NNR and Fenn's, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses NNR. It is seemingly becoming a more common sighting upon the Mosses. I do however have a record from elsewhere in the County from 1995 at the same site that **Argent & Sable** was recorded by Jenny but I am unable to name the site due to access reasons.

Satin Lutestring was trapped at Brokenstones on the 28/7/04. I have records from one other site for Shropshire (Earl's Hill 2003).

Six-belted Clearwing was swept from Birdsfoot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus* by Nigel Jones at Maddock's Hill Quarry on 25/6/04. This appears to be a new County record. I was lucky enough to see the same species in Warwickshire during 2004 and so can empathise with Nigel to how pretty this insect is. Other limestone grassland locations might be worth searching!

Other interesting records

2004 seems to have been an interesting year for species of Footman moths with the apparent increase of a few species around the County.

Scarce Footman (Bettisfield Moss seen by Roy Hilton, Brokenstones seen by Howard Davies, Manor House Whixall by me and Ian Cheeseborough and Wyre Forest by Dave Grundy) and **Buff Footman** (Brokenstones, Ipikins Meadow from Caroline Uff, Manor House Whixall, Wyre, Earl's Hill and Shelve Wood by me and Ian Cheeseborough) are the prime movers but also **Dingy Footman** (Earl's Hill) was a nice record, as was **Red-necked Footman** from Dudmaston by Adrian Miles. I had the same species just over the Welsh border on Fenn's, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses NNR, as well as **Beautiful Snout** at the same location in a Malaise trap. **Four-dotted Footman** was found on Bettisfield Moss and in

the Wyre, which represent the traditional haunts for what is a County scarcity.

Two larval-feeders on Wild Clematis *Clematis vitalba* **Pretty Chalk Carpet** and **Haworth's Pug** were noted by Godfrey Blunt on a Shropshire Invertebrate Group field trip at The Greenwood Trust at Ironbridge in mid-July. Ron Douglas had **Svensson's Copper Underwing** at Cleobury Mortimer. **Old Lady** was recorded by Alan Holder from Baschurch and Dave Grundy in the Wyre Forest. The widespread, but uncommon **Smoky Wave** was recorded by Caroline Uff at Roundhill Flush on 12 June. **Blackneck** was recorded by Adrian Miles at Linley in June and July. It is not known whether these represent part of the "native" Shropshire population traditionally centred upon the Wyre Forest, or were migrant moths. Definite migrants were **Pearly Underwing** from Brokenstones and **Hummingbird Hawkmoth** from The Cliffe and Wenlock Edge seen by Ian Cheeseborough, and at Broseley by Peter Branson.

Of the day-flying moths recorded **Burnet Companion** was found at Benthall Edge and two other locations by Peter Branson, at Lawley by Jenny Joy and Rough Park in Telford by me.

Mother Shipton was seen at The Ercall by Stephen Lewis, Granville Country Park by Peter Branson, The Bog Mine by Ian Cheeseborough and me. **Chimney Sweeper** was found by Bill Davidson on Long Pike Hollow and from the Wyre Forest by Dave Grundy. Dave also had **Latticed Heath** and **Grass Wave** from the Wyre, whilst John Bingham had **Wood Tiger** from the same site. The widespread but local **Small Argent & Sable** was noted by Peter Branson at The Dearleap. I noted **Marbled White-spot** from Fenn's, Whixall & Bettisfield Mosses NNR on 16 June, whilst Adrian Miles had it twice from Dudmaston in June and early July. The only other location I know about in the County is the Wyre Forest. **Speckled Yellow** was noted frequently at Shirtlett Common on three occasions in May and one in June by Peter Branson, and from the Wyre Forest by Dave Grundy.

Contributors (in no particular order) Adrian Miles, Alan Holder, Alec Ridge, Bill Davidson, Caroline Uff, Howard Davies, Ian Cheeseborough, Peter Boardman, Craig Yates, Dave Grundy, Godfrey Blunt, Heather Slade, Jenny Joy, Alex Lockton, Sarah Whild, Jenny Streeter, Stephen Lewis, Peter Branson, Ron Douglas, Roy Hilton, Viv Geen, Nigel Jones, John Bingham, Dan Wrench.

Please continue to send your macro-moth

records for VC40 to;

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7 High Street, Weston Rhyn, Shropshire, SY10
7RP
peperouda@btinternet.com

Please send your micro-moth records for VC40
to

Godfrey Blunt, 8 Holmes Orchard, Alveley,
Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WV15 6NX
A.G.Blunt@wlv.ac.uk

■ Peter Boardman
peperouda@btinternet.com

Brown Hairstreaks by the Thousand

Back in 2002 I wrote an article for the Branch newsletter which I entitled "**Brown Hairstreaks** by the hundred!". The title was unashamedly intended to grab the attention of the reader and also to encourage people to get involved in the already well established winter tradition of egg counting. This follow up article is to bring members up to date with progress over the past three years and, yes you've guessed it, encourage more of you to join in this annual sport, together with one or two other new initiatives we have developed along the way..

The **Brown Hairstreak** is a top priority species within our region. It is included in the West Midlands Regional Action Plan and it also has its own species action plan within the Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan. The area around the Butterfly Conservation Worcestershire Wildlife Trust reserve at Grafton Wood is the only area where it is found. Away from east Worcs, the next nearest colonies are in Wiltshire, Oxfordshire or Lincolnshire. So all in all, it is jolly important little beast and well worth all the conservation attention it receives.

The good news about the **Brown Hairstreak** is that, rather like the rest of us, it responds well to a bit of tender, loving care. It is a fairly simple soul and, if one can provide it with the habitat it needs, it generally does well. This we have progressively tried to achieve over the years in Worcs. Firstly, with support from English Nature, we have managed blackthorn around Grafton Wood for some years on a rotational basis to provide a succession of young blackthorn that the female butterflies prefer for egg-laying. Secondly, we have pursued a policy of restoring coppice and ride management within the wood itself which has created new areas of blackthorn and helped to link up populations previously confined to the woodland edge. We have continued to monitor the effects of all this work by carrying out annual egg counts and, this year, our core area count will for the first time exceed one thousand eggs.

This is, in itself, fantastic news but even better has been the development of an extremely good working relationship with local DEFRA staff which has resulted in a number of farmers surrounding Grafton Wood entering Countryside Stewardship schemes. A major constraint on any real population expansion for the **Brown Hairstreak** in the past has been the fact that annual flailing of farm hedgerows which the butterfly uses for egg-laying has resulted in huge egg losses. Countryside Stewardship is a scheme which offers grants to farmers for conservation measures to be put into place and this can include rotational management of hedgerows. DEFRA now routinely consults Butterfly Conservation over every Countryside Stewardship application within the known range of the **Brown Hairstreak**. The result is that, for the first time, many of the key hedgerows in the Grafton Wood area are no longer cut each year and wide field margins have been created to allow blackthorn to sucker from the base of the hedge creating ideal egg-laying conditions. The phasing out of many farm payments based on production and the introduction of a new entry level Countryside Stewardship scheme in March is further good news and should result in even greater take up. Through the sterling efforts of Jane Ellis, we have already held training days for DEFRA staff and also held a very successful and well attended awareness raising day for local farmers. We hope to expand further on this work later in the year.

Awareness raising in the local community has also been an important part of our conservation strategy and, thanks to Jane, we were successful in attracting a grant last year from the Lottery's Awards for All scheme. This has enabled us to fund new display and interpretation boards about the **Brown Hairstreak** but also, more importantly, launch a local Hairstreak Champions scheme. Through this scheme, we have tried to put across the idea that the **Brown Hairstreak** is a very

special insect, unique to this area of Worcestershire and therefore a symbol of community ownership and pride. A very successful day was held in the village hall in early January attended by 24 people where an introductory talk was followed by the opportunity to look for **Brown Hairstreak** eggs in the field. Everyone was successful in locating eggs and, in a single morning, we found more than 500, returning to the village hall for soup and refreshments at lunchtime. We are hoping, now that local residents have been shown how to search for **Brown Hairstreak** eggs, that they will be encouraged to join in our own future egg searches, support our conservation work within Grafton Wood, and also search independently for eggs. We have also used the grant to purchase blackthorn whips which we have given out to people to plant on their own land and in gardens. An e-group has been established to keep everyone up-to-date with developments and if any members are interested in joining this

they should let me know.

As a result of all this effort, we have now established that the **Brown Hairstreak** is breeding in at least 50 1km squares in the wider Grafton Wood area and there is no doubt that this is, by no means, the final number. This already represents almost a doubling of the known range of the butterfly over the past 3 years. A new initiative this year is to try to determine which ash trees are used by the very rarely seen males for breeding and I hope that members will support this work by coming along to the special event planned for the end of July (see Dates for your Diary). I feel we have come a long way since 2002 and it is good to be able to report, when we are still seeing a continuing decline in so many species of butterflies and moths, for once a conservation success story.

■ Mike Williams

BOOK REVIEW

Butterflies of Europe by Tristan Lafranchis. published by Diatheo, 2004 paperback £20

Those who have been with me on some of the West Midlands Branch's excursions to Europe will know that I am a big fan of Lafranchis' earlier field guide on the butterflies of France and the Benelux countries. In fact, I wrote a review of the publication in newsletter No 51 (Spring 2002) which concluded that this was a brilliant book but with one slight drawback - it was written in French! For those who may have, as a result, been deterred from buying the book then I have good news - this new guide is written in English. One of the notable features of "les Papillons de jour de France, Belgique et Luxembourg et leurs chenilles", apart from the stunning photographs, were the keys for each family and sub-family of butterflies and this approach has been further developed in the new field guide. Instead of the normal layout of butterflies being described in their accepted scientific order, Lafranchis' book is presented through a series of identification keys setting out clearly what distinguishes the one species from its close neighbours. The keys are based on a series of choices and for full identification one needs to check out all the characteristics described. I suspect for many readers this may take some getting use to and, for the more impatient, there are accompanying photos with arrows pointing out the key identification feature, an idea borrowed from some bird guides but one I feel

which has great merit. I feel the two approaches together will work well and I look forward to testing the book out in the field this Summer on some no doubt obscure **Blue** or **Grizzled Skipper**.

On a rather different tack, it is interesting to see various changes in taxonomy and nomenclature since the publication of the latest Collins Field Guide in 1997 and a number of us will be able to add new species of butterflies to our European lists without even leaving the comfort of our front rooms. There have been a number of revisions within the **Brassy Ringlets** which particularly affect the Pyrenees. **Spanish Brassy Ringlet** *Erebia hispania* for example has now been split into two species: *hispania* proper which is considered endemic to the Sierra Nevada in southern Spain and *E. rondoui* which is now the Pyrenees **Brassy Ringlet**; while what was thought to be **Common Brassy Ringlet** *E. cassioides* is now *E. arvernensis* **Western Brassy Ringlet**. Hope you are following all this. Those of us who holiday regularly on Greek Islands will need to re-examine any photos of **Meadow Browns** they may have taken in a moment of total boredom, as many islands now boast their own species of *Maniola*. Italy now has its own species of **Furry Blue**. All fascinating stuff. I could go on, but I won't! It reminds

me a bit of all those people who climb Munros in Scotland - they no sooner reach their target than the cartographers recalculate the heights of mountains and all of a sudden there is a new mountain to climb.

Anyway, back to the book. Lafranchis is very anti-collecting which is something that will no doubt win him favours with a lot of Butterfly Conservation members and he makes the case that "almost all the butterflies flying in Europe can be identified in the field and alive". Another

interesting innovation is a section on how to identify very similar butterflies by looking at the male genitalia and releasing the butterfly unharmed. Overall, this book is quite a departure from the standard field guide we are used to and is clearly the result of a huge amount of painstaking research and careful observation over a long period of years. Lafranchis is to be congratulated on its publication and its compact size and freshness of approach means that it will certainly have a place in my rucksack.

■ Mike Williams

Regional Officers' Report

Traditionally the winter months have always been thought of as the quietest for those people involved in the conservation of butterflies and moths. After all, there is no field work to do but only records to write up and future events to plan. Nothing could be further from the truth however, and I think both Jane and I regard the post Christmas period as one of our busiest times of the year, largely because so many meetings seem to occur around about this time. Two events we have recently attended together (which itself is a rare event!) were first a meeting in Warwickshire to discuss the new RAP (see below) and how this links in with a new action plan for Warwickshire (written by Mike Slater), and second, a meeting of various organisations involved in survey and management work in the Wye Valley area of Herefordshire. As Jane has now submitted an application for a Leader+ project to focus on volunteer training and surveys in various parts of Herefordshire including the Wye Valley, this Herefordshire meeting was timely and has helped to get the ball rolling. We are waiting to hear the outcome of the Leader+ application which, if successful, could mean BC employing a part time officer to take the project forward and greatly increase the scope of BC work here.

Another important project just being started by the Herefordshire Nature Trust (HNT) is the Community Commons Project whose long term aim is to bring the selected Commons into more sympathetic management. This is an important project for BC as a number of these Commons support our key species e.g. **Pearl-bordered Fritillary**, **Dark Green Fritillary** and **Silver-washed Fritillary** with a number of commons being in urgent need of positive management e.g. scrub control and grazing. As the initial phase of the Community Commons Project will involve data gathering and surveys, BC hopes to be able to work closely with the HNT and the Local Records Centre (Steve Roe) by undertak-

ing butterfly and moth survey work and by running a number of training events for local people.

In Shropshire, the Shropshire Wildlife Trust has been running a 'Living with Limestone' project in the Oswestry Hills area this autumn and winter. A key part of this project has been to carry out targeted management work on trust reserves to benefit key species such as the **Pearl-bordered Fritillary**. For example, a corridor is being created to link up limestone grassland habitats in Shropshire and Montgomeryshire at Llanymynech Rocks, scrub removal is being carried out at Llyncllys Common, and clearance work is being undertaken at Jones Rough along rocky scree slopes to link up areas occupied by key butterfly species. As the Oswestry Hills support at least six of our regionally high priority butterflies (**Pearl-bordered Fritillary**, **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary**, **Grizzled Skipper**, **Dingy Skipper**, **Dark Green Fritillary** and **Grayling**), continuing to work together with the Shropshire Wildlife Trust to improve the habitat for these species must be a key objective for this area. There are already several events planned for 2005 (including a training day on the **Pearl-bordered Fritillary**) with plans for butterfly surveys in areas of the Oswestry Hills not previously recorded e.g. Crickheath Hill.

Alison Loram and I have now produced a draft version of the West Midlands Regional Action Plan (RAP) update. This RAP is much longer than the original document as it now contains much more moth information including action plans for high priority species as well as notes on key micro-moths. The aim is now to circulate this draft RAP in February for comments and additions before the final version is produced and circulated at the end of March. The regional priority ratings for a number of butterflies have changed since the first version of this plan was produced in 1997 to reflect butterflies which will

be submitted as UK BAP Priority Species for the UK BAP national 2005 review (Nigel Bourn, pers. comm.). If anybody is interested in receiving a copy of the West Midlands RAP once it has been produced please contact me. The RAP is primarily intended to be a document for dipping into to search for particular pieces of information (e.g. regional importance of species, species associated with particular areas etc.) rather than for reading in one go. However, we do want BC branch members to use it to further the conservation of species in our area, so if you think you would find it useful please do get in touch with me so you can receive your copy in due course.

We do now have also some very good BC display boards which we are also keen for Branch members to have access to. During the summer of 2004 the display boards were set up at Con-sall Nature Park in Staffordshire (thanks to the efforts of James Hill) where they were very successful in prompting comments as well as en-

couraging people to leave their butterfly and moth records. So if you can think of somewhere local where you think the display boards could be used please let us know – a visitor centre or field centre would be ideal. If you know the local ranger or warden perhaps ask him or her first and try to gain their interest. We do also have stocks of several BC leaflets (**Grizzled Skipper**, **Brown Hairstreak**, Moths etc.) so again if you know somewhere they could go please do get in touch with me or Jane.

At present we still do not know whether or not the regional officer posts will be funded again after the end of March this year. As BC was asked to re-apply for funding for the posts for an extra year we are fairly hopeful of a positive outcome. For this reason we are continuing to set up training days and field trips for the spring and summer on the assumption that our posts will continue.

■ Jenny Joy

Mapmate Software

Free copies of Mapmate still available to Butterfly Conservation members in the region.

Have you ever considered using Mapmate to put on all your butterfly and moth records directly onto the computer? If you have not yet got to the point of buying it think again. I purchased a Group Mapmate User Licence on behalf of Butterfly Conservation members in the region in 2004 and still have a small number of copies available. The only future costs to BC members may be the annual maintenance costs (but these are less for group users than individual users).

We also do have 'Mapmate Clinic' planned at the Wyre Forest Discovery Centre on 20th March from 10am-4pm where anybody will be able to book a session with Nigel Stone to sort out their own particular Mapmate problem. Very many thanks to Nigel for agreeing to run the clinic – I know I need a session to get to grips with the maps!

If you are interested please contact Jenny on jjoy@butterfly-conservation.org. The remaining copies of Mapmate and the 'Clinic' will be booked on a first come first served basis.

■ Jenny Joy

Call for Volunteers

Here are the details of the two forthcoming events where we urgently need volunteers:

Tiddesley Wood Nature Reserve, Pershore - Sunday 1st May 10am -5pm.

Attingham Park, near Shrewsbury, Shropshire - National Trust Great Countryside Day Out Saturday and Sunday 2nd and 3rd July 10 am - 4pm. The National Trust can provide us with butterfly masks and paint etc to provide an activity to encourage families to the BC stand.

Please contact Jane at jellis@butterfly-conservation.org if you think you may be able to help.

■ Jane Ellis

Conservation Corner: Around the Shires

Staffordshire

Around forty people attended the inaugural meeting of the Staffordshire Moth Group, which took place on Wednesday 29 October at the Staffordshire Wildlife Trust Headquarters, The Wolseley Centre near Rugeley.

Thanks to Dave Emley and the Staffs Trust for organising a very enjoyable night.

I will endeavour to provide dates of future meetings in the newsletter when they are notified to me.

Shropshire

Can I make heartfelt plea to any Salopians out there who might be willing to volunteer to become involved with our Committee?

Your County's lepidoptera urgently needs you, as it is currently under-represented.

We are looking to engage with keen members who are willing to become lead players in organising local networks and recorders and becoming active within the Branch. It's not too daunting a prospect and if you wish to discuss potential involvement further, please phone either Dr. Jenny Joy on tel. 01952 249325 or by e-mail to jjoy@butterfly-conservation.org or contact me on tel. 01902 344716 or e-mail me at davidjjackson@centro.org.uk.

Unfortunately, the planned workday at Prees Heath on 20 February has had to be temporarily postponed – we hope to arrange another day early next year.

The Branch continues to strive for the protection of this site, as it is unique in having one of the few inland colonies of **Silver-studded Blue** in the UK.

Worcestershire

You may recall my previous comments in a past newsletter regarding Mike Southall and his wildlife friendly farm, which is a haven for lepidoptera, odonata and birdlife.

We are pleased to welcome Mike onto the Branch Committee and are sure that we will benefit from his expertise and advice on farming and wildlife.

Trevor Bucknall informs that **Brown Hairstreak** eggs have now been found in 50 O.S. map squares within the County – well done to those eagle eyed egg hunters. Please keep up the good work!

Herefordshire

The same plea goes out to members in your County, as in Shropshire.

We also need volunteers to visit and record at sites, which may hold Regional Action Plan species such as the **High Brown Fritillary**. If you are keen to get involved please contact me.

West Midlands

Come on you Brummies! – I hope we have a good turn out especially from the Birmingham membership, as all members are invited to attend our Spring Meeting which will be held on Saturday 15 May at Woodgate Valley Country Park, Visitors Centre commencing at 2.00pm. Directions appear elsewhere in this newsletter. Hope to see you there.

As it's not long now to the new season I hope members will come forward and volunteer to either join our committee or pledge their availability to help the Society's aims in the region. We would particularly welcome people to volunteer to help to raise funds for the Branch.

If members wish to contact me with regard to either becoming more actively involved or by suggesting new initiatives, I very much look forward to hearing from you.

■ David Jackson
Branch Vice-Chair
Tel. 01902 344716

Minutes of the AGM 16 October 2004 2.00 pm

Butterfly Conservation West Midlands Branch

1) Apologies

Tony Hatton, Jim Chance, Christine Chance, Jenny Joy, Jane Ellis, Andy Nicholls, Richard Southwell, Trevor Bucknall, Jeff Andrews, Richard Lamb and Mike Williams.

2) Minutes of previous meeting

These were accepted and approved as a true account by the committee.

3) Matters arising

There were no matters arising from previous minutes.

4) Election of Committee

i) Thanks were given by the chair to Andy Nicholls who decided to stand down from the Committee due to an increase in workload. Particularly noted amongst his hard work spent whilst serving on the committee was the inputting of data for the Millennium Atlas.

ii) The following officers were up for re-election at the end of the agreed 3 yearly term:-

David Jackson

Trevor Bucknall

Both of the above officers were re-elected by the committee.

iii) John Bryan was formally co-opted onto the committee to serve as conservation officer for Staffordshire.

5) Chairman's report

i) In the Spring good numbers of **Orange Tip** and **Pearl Bordered Fritillary** were recorded. However, Summer was noted for its very low abundance of butterflies and the short period in which they were seen.

ii) **Gatekeeper**, **Holly Blue** and **Green Hairstreak** were recorded as doing particularly well in the Malverns Area.

iii) **Essex Skipper** has continued to spread with a recent record of a single individual in Staffordshire.

iv) Membership has remained stable at 580. This bucks the national trend of a decline in members of local branches.

v) Thanks were given to all members of the committee and volunteers for their hard work during the last year.

The following changes to the committee occurred in the previous year:-

David Jackson- Elected as Vice Chairman.

John Tilt- Elected as Transect Co-ordinator.

Mike Southall- Elected as Worcs Moth Officer.

James Hill- Elected as Branch Secretary.

John Bryan- Elected as Conservation Officer for Staffordshire.

Thanks and best wishes were given to Neil and Corinna Gregory for their work on the committee.

vi) At the September's Committee meeting it was decided to donate £3000 towards the two RDO's. This was due to the increased profile that the society had been given through more consultation with interested parties and an increase in conservation activities.

vii) The Society's bid for Prees Heath was unsuccessful. However, attempts are being made to contact the owner to try and negotiate an agreement over the management of the site.

6) Treasurer's report

i) Treasurer's report given and accepted as a true record by the committee. The report covered the period up until March 2004 and included:-

- Income from subscriptions constant due to stable membership.

- Branch funds totalling £18,000.

- Money to be put towards 3 years operating costs for Grafton Wood.

- £2,000 for trailer for Grafton Wood.

- £3,000 towards RDOs.

7) Conservation report

Dave Jackson gave an informative and interesting slide show on examples of Regional Action Plan Species. This was accompanied by a detailed report on initiatives taken around the region on the following species:- **High Brown Fritillary**, **Pearl Bordered** and **Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary**, **Wood White**, **Silver Studded Blue**, **Brown** and **Green Hairstreak**, **Dingy** and **Grizzled Skipper** and finally the **Large Heath**.

Mention was made of the Staffs Moth Group inaugural meeting which is to take place on 29th October 2004.

Thanks were given to the various recorders who have contributed to another successful year. Also

thanks to all transect walkers and work party members. Congratulations and thanks to Christine and Jim Chance for completing the Atlas of Lepidoptera in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. Thanks to Jenny Joy, Jane Ellis and Pete Boardman who have raised the profile of Butterfly Conservation and the branch.

Dave also requests that if anyone is aware of RAP Species on Brownfield sites, then please contact either himself or Jane Ellis.

8) A.O.B

i) It was noted that there had been some trouble with the printing of the magazine and that not everyone had received a copy. Additional copies could be obtained through Head Office.

ii) A reminder was given that all transect data should be sent to John Tilt who had taken over as the new Transect Co-ordinator. As this was the last year of the current recording project for the Butterflies of the New Millennium, it was important that any records were sent to the County Recorder by the beginning of December for inclusion in the new maps.

iii) General thanks given to committee members and volunteers for their hard work during the year.

iv) Individual thanks to John Bryan for organising the venue.

Tea/ Coffee Break

After the break our invited speaker, Paul Kirkland gave an excellent talk on some of the work done by Butterfly Conservation in Scotland on species such as the **Kentish Glory, Marsh Fritillary** and **Chequered Skipper**.

Meeting Concluded 4:30pm.

WEST MIDS BRANCH INCOME /EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR TO 31/3/2004

	2004		2003	
	£	£	£	£
INCOME				
SUBSCRIPTIONS	3,148.50		3,157.50	
DONATIONS, GRANTS ETC.	14,507.75		3,973.96	
INVESTMENT INCOME	18.03		29.54	
FUND RAISING	574.93		1,007.30	
		<u>18,249.21</u>		<u>8,168.30</u>
EXPENDITURE				
POSTAGE, PRINTING ETC.	1,344.04		2,900.87	
TRAVEL, COMMITTEE ETC.	906.90		1,236.56	
CONSERVATION	2,439.18		4,523.22	
R.D.O. CONTRIBUTION	4,000.00		-	
VAT	19.98		19.59	
		<u>3,710.10</u>		<u>8,680.24</u>
EXCESS OF INCOME OVER EXPENDITURE		<u>9,539.11</u>		<u>511.94</u>
(2003 EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME)				
BROUGHT FORWARD FROM LAST PERIOD		<u>8,706.35</u>		<u>9,218.29</u>
TOTAL BRANCH FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	£	<u>18,245.46</u>	£	<u>8,706.35</u>
FUNDS ARE REPRESENTED BY:				
CURRENT ACCOUNT		7,873.80		2,040.94
DEPOSIT ACCOUNT		11,066.19		6,665.41
ACCRUED EXPENSES		- 694.53		-
TOTAL	£	<u>18,245.46</u>	£	<u>8,706.35</u>
PREES HEATH APPEAL FUND	£	<u>34,073.42</u>	£	<u>33,767.78</u>

TONY HATTON, HONORARY BRANCH TREASURER

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

RON HATTON, HONORARY BRANCH AUDITOR

Retiring Editor's Thoughts

About twelve years ago I decided that I would like to join a wildlife Society, and, encouraged by the dragonflies that came to our small pools, I attempted to join the Dragonfly Society. Several attempts were unsuccessful - nothing was heard – so I turned my attention to Butterfly Conservation and have not regretted it. I read the Newsletter that came twice a year, enjoying it but never thinking about the work that Margaret Vickery had put into it. Some eight years ago, Andy Nicholls rang me to see if I would consider taking over the Newsletter, I agreed (after some persuasion) very hesitantly, to produce one issue. My experience in writing had been confined to a lifetime of producing academic books, papers and reports, and I am sure it shows! Twenty-three Newsletters and seven and a half years later it seems time for a new editor (Dean Fenton) who, I am sure, will bring a fresh approach and a new style.

Very many people have contributed to the Newsletter over the years and I am grateful to all of them. The diversity of articles is what makes the Newsletter interesting and without

the willingness of members to sit down and write articles, reports on trips or the “routine” Chairman’s notes, or Conservation Corner each issue would be the poorer.

Last, but certainly not least, I must acknowledge the untiring support and technical expertise of my husband, Jim, who has been the “behind the scenes” backbone of the Newsletter.

Our wild garden is currently a great deal wilder than intended and that and our allotments will now have priority. The Newsletter and the Moth Atlases have taken over our lives for the past five years! I only hope that I can get our pools into better shape before the annual invasion of frogs and toads. Looking at my last year’s diary I seem to have about two weeks to do this.

Thank you all again.

■ Christine Chance

National Moth Night

Please do not forget, all you moth-ers and maybe innocent enthusiasts who can spot moths, that the annual event of the National Moth Night is on 9 July. The basic idea is that all moth-lovers should try to identify whatever they can and send them to their local recorder or to Atropos, who organise the event. That is a census of moths.

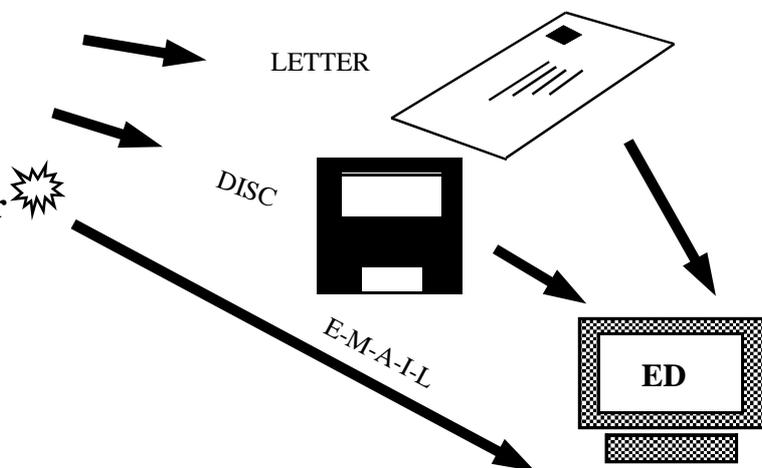
The target species being **Dusky Clearwing** (which may be extinct) **Northern Dart** (found in Scotland and Cumbria), the **Welsh Clearwing** (which has an outside chance of occurring in our region), and other **clearwings** which do occur; these are day time targets of course.

Chalk Carpet which is in Warwickshire and probably north Staffordshire (and can be seen both in day time and night time) and the **Double Line** which is in South West England and south Wales including Gwent and appears to be expanding and so might be found in Herefordshire.

There is a National Moth Night event at Bishops Wood on 9 July (see diary for details). Other events may be found on www.nationalmoth.info nearer 9 July.

Instructions for Contributors

**Deadline for
Summer Newsletter
contributions is
Monday
2 July 2005**



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 in any standard text editor format is OK. Pictures in .GIF or .JPG format are fine, but if possible do not send large bitmap (.BMP) files. 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.

■ Dean Fenton

Newsletter Editor:

Dean Fenton
Little Bury Farm
Leominster
Herefds HR6 0EB
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(after 7pm please)

dean.fenton@malvern.co.uk

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

FEBRUARY

- 6 **February (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
- 13 **February (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. Ride and glade management.
- 19 **February (Saturday) Conservation task Haugh Wood** 10.30 am at main car park SO593365
- 20 **February (Sunday) Conservation Task Prees Heath Cancelled**
- 27 **February (Sunday) Conservation Task - Trench Wood** meet 10.00 am at reserve entrance on Sale Green—Dunhampstead road. OS map 150 GR SO929588. Please contact Neil McLean at 07710 626668 before coming.

MARCH

- 6 **March (Sunday) Conservation Task - Monkwood an Environment Agency Action Earth event** - Meet 10.00 am in the reserve car park just off the Sinton Green-Monkwood Green road. OS map 150 GR SO803603
- 13 **March (Sunday) Grafton Wood, help us complete the annual Brown Hairstreak egg count.** 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 Details Mike Williams.
- 19 **March (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
- 20 **March (Sunday) – Mapmate ‘Clinic’** run by Nigel Stone at the Wyre Forest Discovery Centre (SO749739) from 10am-4pm. Booking Essential. Please contact Jenny Joy on 01952 249325 or jjoy@butterfly-conservation.org.
- 23 **March (Wednesday) Shropshire Moth Group indoor meeting** at the Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury (SJ499123) starting at 10am. Further details from Jenny Joy or Peter Boardman (01691 773026).
- 27 **March (Sunday) Conservation Task - Trench Wood NR** - meet 10.00 am at

reserve car park - entrance on Sale Green—Dunhampstead road. OS map 150 GR SO929588.

APRIL

- 3 **April (Sunday) Conservation Task Monkwood Meet 10.00 am** – details as 6 February.
- 9 **April (Saturday) Conservation Task Anchor Meadow** Meet at 10.00 am in Health Centre Car Park off Westfield Drive that is just north of the bridge over the railway line in Aldridge. GR SK054005. Leader Peter Newell 01922 863488
- 24 **April Grafton Wood Open Day** on Sunday 11am to 5pm. SO963557. Guided walks around this delightful Bluebell Wood, Nature Trail competition for children, Interactive computer programme, exhibitions, crafts, homemade refreshments and lots more. Grafton Wood Open day will be based at the Three Parishes Hall, Grafton Flyford - signposted off the A422 (Worcester to Alcester road)
- 29 **April (Friday) West Midlands and Cumbria Fritillary Action Groups** joint event at the Malvern Hills starting at 11am. David Whitehorne (Malvern Hills Conservators) will be giving us a guided walk and explaining some of the problems they have encountered with trying to graze the area. Please contact Jenny Joy if you are interested in coming to this event as the meeting point has yet to be confirmed.

MAY

- 7 **May (Saturday) Brownfield foray in Dudley.** Meet 2.00 pm by War Memorial just to west of Russell’s Hall Hospital. Park on road up to church on Barrow Hill. This event is joint with Worcester Wildlife Trust. OS Map 139 GR SO917894. Target species – **Dingy Skipper and Green Hairstreak.** Leader – Richard Southwell 01384 397066
- 7 **May (Saturday) – Training day on Pearl-bordered Fritillary** in the Oswestry area organised by the Shropshire Wildlife Trust. Morning session on how to do timed counts (Stephen Lewis from SWT) with afternoon visit to Middletown Hill in Wales (with Simon Spencer) which supports one of the largest **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** colonies in the area. Please contact Jenny Joy if you are interested in attending this event.
- 10 **May (Tuesday) – Wyre Forest butterfly and moth walk.** Search for **Pearl-**

bordered Fritillary and **Drab Looper** with Jenny Joy. Meeting at Lodge Hill Farm (SO758767) at 1pm. Part of Worcestershire Wildlife Week.

- 14 **May (Saturday) Spring Meeting.** 2.00 pm at Woodgate Valley Country Park SO995829. There will be a talk on a wildlife trip and a quiz. See page 2 for more details.
- 14 **May (Saturday) Butterflies of the Staffordshire moorlands.** Meet at The Winking Man Pub, SK026637. A53 Leek to Buxton Road. 11:00AM START. Rough Terrain. Stout boots advisable. Contact Nick Pomiankowski on 01782 849682.
- 15 **May (Sunday) Training day on timed counts methodology** and how to fill in the national habitat assessment forms which are currently being trialled by Tom Brereton for a number of species. Tom will be present to give advice on the day. Meeting at Draycote Water (in Warwickshire) at the Rangers office at 10am (SP467692). Afternoon visit to Wolfhamcote Cutting. Contact Jane Ellis on (01788) 510695.
- 19 **May (Thursday) Training day on identifying Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Drab Looper** in Herefordshire. Meet at Haugh Wood FE car park (SO592366) at 10am. Joint event involving BC, FE and the Herefordshire Nature Trust. Afternoon survey for these two species planned in the Doward area. Contact Jane Ellis on (01788) 510695.
- 21 **May (Saturday) - Dingy Skipper Twitch** Chatterley Whitfield - Other sites in the afternoon optional. Meet Oxford Road, opposite Fegg Hayes Chip Shop, adjacent to the allotments SJ878529. 11:00am Start; Some steep slopes. Good walking shoes/boots advisable. Contact John Bryan on 01782 518900.
- 28 **May (Saturday) – Bury Ditches.** Meet 10.30 am. North of Clunton use car park GR SO334839. Target species – **Wood White, Wall and Green Hairstreak.** Leader – Bill Davidson 01588 640727
- 28 **May (Saturday) - Butterflies of Cannock Chase** Meet at the Cannock Chase Visitor Centre, Marquis Drive. SK004153, 11:00 am start. Stout walking shoes/boots advisable. Contact Jim Cresswell on 01785 712273 or 07860 394959.

JUNE

- 7 **June (Tuesday) Search for the Forester Moth** in Shropshire. Meet at the Snailbeach car park (SO372022) at 10am. A Shropshire Moth Group Event. Further

details from Jenny Joy or Peter Boardman (01691 773026).

- 10 **June (Friday) Monkwood General recording.** Meet at 20.00 in reserve car park. Map 150 GR SO804606. Contact Michael Southall 01299 251467
- 18 **June (Saturday) - Butterflies of Cannock Chase** Meet at the Cannock Chase Visitor Centre, Marquis Drive, SK004153. 11:00 am . Stout walking shoes/boots advisable. Contact Jim Cresswell on 01785 712273 or 07860 394959.

JULY

- 9 **July (Saturday) – Caer Caradoc Hill.** Meet 10.30 am and park car just off A49 on minor road to Hollyhurst GR SO471962. This will be a very scenic walk but there are some steep slopes that will be walked down (not up!). Target Species – **Dark Green Fritillary.** Leader – Bill Davidson 01588 640727
- 9 **July (Saturday) Bishops Wood Environmental Centre - Crossway Green,** off A449 towards Stourport. Meet at 20.00 for **National Moth Night.** Friends of Bishops Wood £3 adult and £1 child. GR SO835683 Contact Michael Southall 01299 251467
- 12 **July (Tuesday) Survey for Dark Green Fritillary and Grayling** on the Long Mynd. Joint event with the National Trust. The Long Mynd and the Stretton Hills were identified as a stronghold for the **Dark Green Fritillary** back in 1997 but this area has not really been targeted for survey since then. Join us to see if this fritillary is still present. Meeting at Carding Mill Valley Visitor Centre (SO449943) at 10.30am-4pm.
- 16 **July (Saturday) - Butterfly Walk - Ladyside Wood, Manifold Valley White Letter Hairstreak** and possibly **Brown Argus.** Meet Wetton Mill Car park, SK096562 at 1:00pm. Sorry no Dogs. Stout footwear advisable. Some steep slopes. **BOOKING ESSENTIAL.** Max 20 people. Contact - Lorraine Fisher 01335 350503.
- 16 **July (Saturday) an introduction to Hoverflies.** Monkwood car park 10.30 am. GR SO804606. A joint event with Worcestershire Wildlife Trust led by Harry Green. Adults £1 children 50p.
- 31 **July (Sunday) meet at Grafton Flyford Church at 10.30 am. Search for Brown Hairstreak assembly trees.** Please bring binoculars or a telescope if possible. GR SO963557 Leader Mike Williams

AUGUST

- 7 August (Sunday) Grafton Wood meet at Grafton Flyford Church 10. 00 am.** GR SO963557 Please be on time as we will be driving on to the work site
- 12 August (Friday) Grafton Wood – General recording.** Meet 20.00 at 3 Parishes Hall by the church Flyford Flavell off A422 Worcester to Stratford road. Map 150 GR SO963557. Contact Michael Southall 01299 251467

SEPTEMBER

- 4 September (Sunday) meet 3 parishes Village Hall 10.00 am Local Champions Day.** Map 150 GR SO963557. Guided walk to see **Brown Hairstreak**. Refreshments available.

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BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION



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for more Committee members RDOs & Conservation Reserve Wardens**



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