

# The Comma

No. 66, Winter 2006/2007



Yellow-tail Moth larva Photo: © Rosemary Winnall

## This issue includes:

- Green lane butterflies
- Chaddesley Wood moths
- Spring event listings
- Sycamore moths
- Transect reports
- Shropshire BC group
- Regional Officers' reports
- Biodiversity Training Project

**NEWSLETTER OF WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH,  
BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION**

Registered charity ... No. 254937



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## Editorial

This issue features the results of transects in 2006, also articles on green lanes, Sycamore moths and a number of new initiatives in our region. Special thanks to all who have provided articles and photographs.

This issue lists all events planned for the spring. If you've never attended one, why not make 2007 the year you try it?

The branch website is <http://www.westmidlandsbutterflyconservation.org.uk>. It has a lot of information including past newsletters.

The deadline for contributions to the next issue is 7<sup>th</sup> April 2006. Hand-written articles, typed documents and text in any standard text editor format are welcome. Articles may be edited for reasons of style and space. Pictures in most formats are fine. Pictures for publication must be free of copyright restrictions.

The address for contributions is:

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## Chairman's Notes

*Richard Southwell*

Well we seem to be doing something right. Branch membership is for the first time over 600.

There are 10 large branches in Butterfly Conservation and in this millennium only Yorkshire and West Midlands branches have bucked the trend by consistent membership growth. Not only that but our low attrition rates are the best in the society. It appears most of our growth is by word-of-mouth or local publicity where people have demonstrated that local action brings quantifiable results. Think about it; it is a virtuous circle since those that join are more likely to be active and this in turn encourages other like-minded people. I live in Dudley where we have more than doubled our numbers from six years ago. I might have been the initial catalyst but since then many others have become involved, not least Nick Williams and his cohorts in Stourbridge College or Linda Dukes and her rapidly expanding volunteers at Norton Covert. People like joining success and, by being involved in whatever manner, also get more out of the society.

The task that faces us is to encourage you, wherever you live, to do the same in your patch. Is this idle talk? The rest of my notes, I trust, will demonstrate the accuracy of these views.

### National Branch Leaders

I was overjoyed at the last National AGM when Frank Lancaster was awarded Society Volunteer of the Year. This irascible rogue is my tutor; he didn't take no for an answer many years before I joined BC when told to get lost by Severn Trent PLC as he tried to save the **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** in Wyre Forest. He was the original catalyst for what has become a national programme by the Forestry Commission to make our woodlands conducive to butterflies and moths. Wyre Forest has arguably the most sustainable colony of **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** within the UK these days.

Frank is not alone. Mike Williams originally set up the branch network, Andrew Pullin of Birmingham University is BC's National Conservation Officer, Dave Grundy has set up the Garden Moth Scheme which is revolutionary; I strongly feel it should be supported financially by BC nationally. In addition we have John Bacon who Chairs BC's Reserves Committee, which also has John Tilt as a member who has made such a success of our Grafton Wood reserve. In passing it is worth noting **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** is sanctioned by the new Natural England to be re-introduced there this year. Also Simon Spencer is the Leader for the European Conservation Committee whilst Neil Thompson has just joined National Council. Apologies to any I have missed and space doesn't permit me to mention the many who are active locally but do not have the eye of head office admiring their efforts.

Such effective and consistent presence over many years has had its rewards. The society has about 60 landscape-sized projects in the British Isles and it is no surprise to me that six of them are in our patch.

### **Branch Member Survey**

I have been delighted by the response that has approached 30% in Herefordshire and Shropshire, areas where we are particularly looking to develop. In particular the numbers of you wishing to get involved in conservation work parties or recording was very refreshing and, as I or the County Leaders follow up your offers, it is looking very promising that these counties will shortly start getting the attention they deserve. You should see evidence of this in our May newsletter. A great many thanks.

### **Prees Heath**

Well done all, that's Commoners, local residents and branch members. The turnouts to work parties have been excellent. I also want to make Stephen Lewis blush by giving him a special plaudit for the impact he is making in North Shropshire.

Details of the grand opening are in the final throes and will be reported in the May newsletter but it is certain we will have a high profile national figure there, along with the BBC.

### **Calling all Landowners**

It is apparent that a number of our members are landowners with more than active interests in converting their holdings into friendly habitats for butterflies and moths. Five of you have become known to me over recent times and I am wondering whether we should encourage a forum between yourselves so you can discuss issues and experiences. Do get in touch with me if you think this is a good idea. Anonymity will be guaranteed if requested.

### **Fantastic agreement from St Modwen Properties PLC**

This company is the largest brownfield developer in the UK. We approached them at Chairman level a year ago and this resulted in a trial project to evaluate the presence of, or potential for, locally rare species such as **Green Hairstreak**, **Grizzled Skipper** and **Dingy Skipper** to breed at three of their sites – Berry Fields in Stoke, Coombswood in Halesowen and Long Marston in South Warwickshire. Volunteers did the legwork and I wrote the report that was expertly edited by Jane Ellis, who accompanied me to a review meeting with their executives in November.

The outcome was a total acceptance of our landscaping recommendations and more. They want advice on more of their sites in Stoke and when the landscaping work is being carried out at Long Marston they are prepared to continue it along the Honeybourne railway line on the Worcester side of the

border. Our recommended contactor, JP Brayford, has already surveyed the Coombswood site and is awaiting confirmation to proceed.

We immediately have a capacity issue in Stoke and I am looking for volunteers to assist John Bryan. Please call him.

St. Modwen are also giving a page of their Annual report to this project so the impact should be enormous and get national and local media interest. I am also confident our branch coffers should be helped in the process.

My thanks go to Keith Warmington, Mike Slater, John Bryan and Jane Ellis for their support and involvement.

### **Butterfly Conservation Recognition**

In 2006 BC nationally officially became classified a large society by having a revenue exceeding £2million. We now come under scrutiny and in a comparative analysis were deemed the seventh most effective charity in the UK in using donations for their intended uses. We were first in the Environment and Biodiversity sectors. It only seems to get better.

### **2007 'The year for Fun'**

I don't mind admitting it's been a bit tough dealing with all the issues the branch committee has had to handle over the last two years. There is definitely light at the end of the tunnel and, do remember, we are volunteers just like yourselves.

Therefore we feel this is to be the year of fun which will involve some different events in new locations but overall a return to local recording which so many of you found so enjoyable for the Millennium Atlas. Dave Jackson, Branch Conservation Officer will be doing a major piece on this in the May newsletter.

### **Committee posts vacant**

There are several committee posts unfilled currently. Anyone wishing to apply for these, or simply find out more about what they entail, should contact Richard Southwell initially. The posts are:

- Branch Secretary
- Shropshire Leader
- Worcestershire Leader
- Birmingham & Black Country Leader
- Recording Co-ordinator
- Publicity Officer

## Butterflies in Green Lanes

John Dover

Over the last ten years or so Tim Sparks from the Centre of Ecology and Hydrology (CEH Monks Wood) in Cambridgeshire and I have been looking at the value of green lanes to wildlife – and all our work to date shows they are very good.

But what are green lanes? Well there is no hard and fast definition. The one I use as the archetype is an unmetalled track (i.e. not made of tarmac or concrete) with a 2m-high hedge either side. Even this simple definition is sub-dividable: is the track grassed or bare ground, are the 'hedges' evergreen, deciduous, or even made of dry stone walls? Hedge height can vary with, at the extreme, shrubs and trees arching over to form a green tunnel! I'd even accept as a green lane an unmetalled track with no hedges, but high boundary banks – this often happens as erosion cuts a track into the landscape over hundreds of years. The photo on page 8 shows a typical green lane.

Green lanes can be quite recent in origin or very old: perhaps hundreds of years and in some cases possibly thousands of years.

How wide is a green lane? Good question: I used to reckon that if I could drive my old Vauxhall Nova down a track it was a green lane, anything less was a footpath - not a very objective measure though! But when does a green lane cease to be a lane and become a long thin field... again no real answers. What we see as green lanes now may have originated as drove roads or ancient trackways. As the conditions became difficult due to trampling and rain, an adjacent bit would tend to be used (just like today, look at how people use muddy footpaths) – before fields became enclosed a drove road might be very wide indeed.

A survey of 46 Cheshire green lanes in 2000 showed them to have an average width between the hedges of 4.0 metres, the narrowest being 1.7m and the widest 8.6m.

Those interested in Green Lanes in general should get hold of a copy of:

- *The Green Lanes of England* by V. Belsey (1998) Green Books Ltd, Totnes.
- For a history of tracks: *Roads and tracks for Historians* by P. Hindle (2001) Phillimore & Co., Chichester.

I remember reading Belsey's book with great interest until I got to the section on wildlife. There was nothing there specific to green lanes, it was all information from studies of single hedgerows. Over the years we have managed to fill in a few of the gaps.

I first became interested in green lanes in the mid-1980s. I was working on a farm in Hampshire carrying out quite detailed studies on the factors which affected where butterflies were found in the field boundaries of an intensive arable farm – there was a really great green lane there which I included in my studies, though I didn't use the data at the time. The ground vegetation was only cut once a year, the track was grassy with only a few areas of bare soil, and it was warm and sheltered – and it was full of butterflies.

My study showed that two really important factors governed butterfly abundance on arable farmland, the nectar resources and the amount of shelter. In the paper I published on the work I suggested that a green lane would be better than a single hedge for butterflies because it provided more shelter, and that a small glade would be even better.

Tim Sparks and I, with Nick Greatorex-Davies, gave a paper at a Butterfly Conservation Conference in Warwick that followed up the shelter issue and provided additional evidence to show shelter was important to butterflies in the wider (farmed) countryside. I remember chatting to Tim during that meeting and saying 'What next?' he replied 'Green Lanes', I said 'Good' - and that is how science can work, colleagues following a trail that interests them.

The first result of that conversation was a paper merging three studies:

- A re-analysis of my Hampshire dataset but this time including the information we had on green lanes and some woodland rides and glades as well as on the hedgerows and grass banks separating fields.
- A study comparing the value of single dry stone walls, green lanes made of two parallel dry stone walls, and grass banks to butterflies in the upland Yorkshire Dales.
- A study from, literally, behind my house. I live in Cheshire and over the boundary in Trafford there is a great network of green lanes and hedges on the edge of the village of Warburton. Here we compared butterflies 'inside' the green lanes, 'outside' the green lanes, along grass banks and along single hedgerows acting as field boundaries.

The data was pretty conclusive: the green lanes, whether composed of shrubs or stone, are better than all other field boundary types in terms of numbers of butterfly species and butterfly abundance (Tables 1-3). In all the tables data are standardised to numbers per 100m.

The Hampshire study (Table 1) also showed that green lanes and the woodland rides were similar in species richness and abundance.

**Table 1 Butterflies in Hampshire in 1987 and 1988**

Year	Grass bank	Hedgerow	Woodland	Green lane
1987	4.5	8.7	28.5	32.7
1988	7.4	11.4	21.9	19.3

**Table 2 Butterflies in the Yorkshire Dales in 1997**

Grass bank	Stone wall	Double stone wall
1.3	6.2	26.5

**Table 3 Butterflies at Warburton in 1997**

Grass bank	Hedgerow	Outside green lane	Inside green lane
7.2	6.7	16.5	24.4

Since that time Tim's group have shown, using data from a small study of butterflies in Snettisham in Norfolk, that:

- Green lanes contain more bumblebees and plant species than single hedges
- It really does matter that the track is not metalled.

Tim, Shelley Hinsley (also at CEH) and I have been supervising Mike Walker's PhD on birds in hedges and green lanes in Cheshire. Mike's first two papers confirm that there are more plant species in green lanes than single hedges but also demonstrate that they are excellent habitat for breeding birds with more territories, more species and greater abundance than single hedges.

Why are green lanes so good? Well there is more shelter; they are managed less intensively than adjacent farmland: hedges are cut less frequently inside green lanes than on hedges that bound fields; they have low agrochemical inputs (pesticides, inorganic fertiliser); they have more structural diversity (trees, long grass, 'habitats').

If you think about what has happened to farmland over the decades it has been 'simplified': large fields managed intensively, usually with only one crop. Green lanes are not simple, but complex. But there are threats to green lanes: lack of use turns them into thin strips of woodland; over use can denude them; sealing the surface with concrete or tarmac reduces their value. The good news is that they are easy to create, but nobody knows how long it will take for them to become special – best to keep the ones we have and make new ones as well.

**A typical green lane**



Photo: © John Dover

**Shropshire BC Group**



Photo: © Stephen Lewis

## Moth Recording at Chaddesley Wood during 2006

*Alan Prior*

A further 14 visits were made to the wood between February and November 2006. A huge difference was made to the access to the wood when the warden, Mervyn Needham, and his work party cleared all the drains on Jubilee Ride. Getting around was much less stressful so a big vote of thanks goes to the work party from the moth recorders.

Unfortunately, one of the best areas of the wood was inhabited by hornets and they made it unrecordable.

The weather was also challenging at times, but all the effort proved worthwhile as almost 100 new species were added to the site list. The recording sessions were again well attended and thanks go to all who contributed to some entertaining evenings. Over 370 species were recorded during the year and some of the highlights were the micro moths **Pseudosciaphila branderiana** and **Catoptria falsella**.

Among the macro moths **Tissue**, **Satin Beauty**, **Red-necked Footman**, **Blackneck** and **Dark Dagger** (confirmed by dissection) were all new for the wood. Among migrants which put in an appearance were **Rusty-dot Pearl**, **Rush Veneer** and **Small Mottled Willow**.

Everyone is again welcome at the recording sessions in 2007. The dates and times are as follows:

- Saturday March 3rd 17:00
- Saturday April 7th 18:30
- Saturday May 5th 19:30
- Saturday June 2nd 20:30
- Saturday July 7th 20:30
- Saturday August 4th 20:00
- Saturday September 1st 19:30
- Saturday October 6th 18:00
- Saturday November 3rd 16:00

On these dates there will always be someone at the Jubilee Gate (GR: SO914736) to meet you, whatever the weather. We look forward to seeing you.

For more details call either Mervyn Needham 01562-777461 or Alan Prior 0121-7782973.

## A new era for Butterfly Conservation in Shropshire

Jenny Joy ([jjoy@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:jjoy@butterfly-conservation.org))

An inaugural meeting of a new Shropshire BC Group was held on Saturday 11th November at the Field Studies Council Centre (Preston Montford) near Shrewsbury and attended by 20 people. It was great to meet many new people from various parts of the county all obviously very interested in the idea of getting more of a group going in the county.

The morning was largely taken up by three presentations

- Jenny on the huge scope Shropshire has to offer butterfly recorders and why we need a Shropshire group of Butterfly Conservation.
- Stephen Lewis with a talk on Prees Heath - Butterfly Conservation's newest nature reserve.
- Peter Boardman finishing with two case studies (the **Large Heath** and **Pearl-bordered Fritillary**) on the conservation of butterflies in North Shropshire).

In the afternoon Jenny led an open discussion to consider the formation of the Shropshire Butterfly Group and what it should focus on. The main outcomes of this discussion were that:

- members were keen to have more local events (particularly work parties).
- members would be very happy to help with the essential monitoring of important Shropshire butterflies, particularly if more training in butterfly identification and recording techniques could be provided.
- the best way to keep everybody in touch with news would be by setting up an e-mail newsletter like that set up by Peter Boardman for the Shropshire Moth Group (which could be posted to those members who do not have email).

Jenny has initially agreed to take the lead in setting up this e-mail newsletter but will be looking for somebody else to take it on in the future. Since this meeting Jenny, Pete and Stephen have been busy putting together a programme of events for summer 2007 (see the events diary in this newsletter) which we hope local members will support. Your first opportunity is something that the majority of you wanted - the first ever Shropshire BC Group work day at Shelve Forestry on 3rd February – thanks very much to Alan Reid (Forestry Commission) for agreeing to lead the event and Stephen Lewis for agreeing to be the first aider - we look forward to seeing you then!

If you are interested in joining the Shropshire BC Group e-mail newsletter to keep you in touch with local activities, please contact Jenny.

We are very grateful to the Field Studies Council (Sue Townsend and Peter Boardman) for not only hosting the meeting but helping us to organise it as well. Thanks also to Stephen Lewis and Peter Boardman for their great presentations which stimulated so much interest.

## Butterfly Transect Recording

John Tilt ([john.tilt2@btopenworld.com](mailto:john.tilt2@btopenworld.com))

Transect recording is our main method of monitoring butterfly populations. In the West Midlands we currently have 27 transects being walked. The method involves individuals or groups of people walking a fixed route for 26 weeks from the beginning of April to the end of September, counting and recording butterflies from a variety of habitats.

For the first time this year the BC scheme has joined with the national UKBMS which will make results more significant.

In 2006 we counted 29891 butterflies and 43 species, excluding day flying moths which can also be recorded.

The highest counts were from:

- Grafton Wood - 2557
- Haugh Wood - 2411
- Tedmere - 2305
- Knapp and Paper Mill - 2305

The top 10 species and their numbers were:

<b>Peacock</b>	675	<b>Small White</b>	1333
<b>Large White</b>	759	<b>Speckled Wood</b>	1471
<b>Green-veined White</b>	872	<b>Gatekeeper</b>	4556
<b>Marbled White</b>	958	<b>Ringlet</b>	4708
<b>Silver-studded Blue</b>	1042	<b>Meadow Brown</b>	6618

The bottom 10 species were:

<b>Grayling</b>	1	<b>Grizzled Skipper</b>	14
<b>Small Blue ***</b>	3	<b>Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary</b>	17
<b>Dingy Skipper</b>	5	<b>Essex Skipper</b>	22
<b>Brown Hairstreak</b>	9	<b>Clouded Yellow</b>	25
<b>White-letter Hairstreak</b>	10	<b>Green Hairstreak</b>	26

\*\*\* These may have been introductions

### The Rarer Species

- **High Brown Fritillary** for the second year running was not found on the Malvern Transect. However 15 were found on the Malverns using timed counts, so the species is still holding on.

- **Grayling** re-appeared on the new Malvern West Transect this year, the first Transect recording of this species for some years in the West Midlands.
- The three **Small Blues** at Trench Wood are probably an “unofficial introduction”.
- The **Brown Hairstreak** count at Grafton was the highest to date. Despite the fact that this species is not really suitable for this type of survey, nine were seen on the transect. Many more were observed when walking round the area.
- **White-letter Hairstreaks** had the best year for some time, being recorded on four transects. The best was in Haugh Wood.
- **Grizzled Skipper** is still hanging on at the Honeybourne railway site despite a considerable drop in numbers.
- **Small Pearl-bordered** was now found at only two sites in the Wyre Forest, it has been lost from a further three sites.
- **Dingy Skipper** was recorded at Knapp and Papermill and Wigmore Rolls.
- **Clouded Yellow** had the best year on Transects ever, 25 records on 10 sites.
- **Green Hairstreak** – a better than average count, 26 on four sites.

### The Common Species

- **White Admiral** had a record year, 241 records on 8 sites including 129 in Grafton Wood. We even had a second brood in September.
- **Silver-washed Fritillary** – 334 in 11 sites, again a record on transects.
- **Marbled Whites** continue to expand their range and are now found at 15 sites. The core site is still on Windmill Hill, Evesham.
- **Brown Argus** – numbers have increased considerably due to figures obtained from Grafton Wood, 35 in the year compared with nine last year.

### Conclusion

In conclusion 2006 was generally a good year although spring butterflies were poor; however the great weather in summer made up for it.

We need more transect walkers to monitor our key species. If anyone would like to start a Transect we would be pleased to hear from you. Do email me.

We would also like to thank all the dedicated Transect Walkers who put so much time and effort in to make all this possible.

## **Book Review**

*Discover Butterflies in Britain* by D.E. Newland (2006) published by WILDGuides and available via Butterfly Conservation at £19 inclusive of post and packing

*Mike Williams*

Many years ago when I first became interested in birdwatching, my second purchase (after a good field guide) was a book by John Gooders called "Where to watch Birds". First published forty years ago, it provided an invaluable resource to beginner birdwatchers such as myself on where to actually find many of those elusive birds that I was keen to see. Butterfly enthusiasts have had a long wait for their own 'John Gooders' but I am pleased to report that it has at last arrived. David Newland's beautifully illustrated book provides a detailed guide to some of the best butterfly sites in Britain from Devon to the Highlands of Scotland. Each of the 66 main locations included has a detailed double-page site description, directions on how to find the nearest parking areas and a very clear map.

For each location, a list of target species is provided together often with pointers as to the ideal time of the year to visit. The sites chosen, as the author recognises, are essentially personal but if you visit them all at the right season and in the right weather conditions you should have a good chance to see all 58 of the butterflies to be found in Britain. To be fully comprehensive even the Dutch site for the Large Copper, now sadly extinct in the UK, has been thrown in for good measure!

Grafton Wood and the Wyre Forest are the two West Midlands sites to receive star billing but a secondary list also includes our other BC reserves in the region plus Cannock Chase and Chaddesley Wood NNR. If you are keen to see a particular butterfly but not sure where to go, then the second half of the book provides a species by species account with a list of hotspots where the less widespread species might be seen. A final gazetteer provides an excellent summary including every site mentioned by county, a full six-figure grid reference and a list of target species. While the book is ideal for beginners and the second section can also double up as a field guide, even the more experienced butterfly buff will almost certainly be pointed to sites with which they are not familiar. Indeed, there is enough here to plan a series of butterfly holidays for at least the next ten years.

The book is well referenced and includes a number of very useful website addresses. Apart from the valuable information it contains, the publishers are to be congratulated on the design of the book which is generally very pleasing. One minor niggle from an aesthetic viewpoint are the montages of butterflies included on the inside front and back covers which are completely out of keeping with the rest of the book. Something which hopefully might be addressed if there is ever a reprint.

The quality of the photographs, all taken by the author, is consistently high and the landscape images included, certainly for the sites I know, give a real feel for the places visited. There are few books which manage to be both informative and also a pleasure to look at and it is a credit to all concerned that this book manages to be both. Inevitably, in a book of this nature, the geographical spread of sites is a little uneven and no doubt some readers will complain that some good butterfly sites in their area have been excluded. While there are nine sites included, for example, in glorious Devon, poor old neighbouring Cornwall misses out completely. Closer to home, our colleagues in Warwickshire branch may feel miffed that there is apparently nowhere in their county worthy of inclusion. The book, however, serves as a reminder that there are still some great places to watch butterflies in Britain and perhaps the I'm sure overwhelmingly positive response from reviewers will encourage the author to produce a second volume at a later stage and include many more of these fantastic sites.

This has been clearly a labour of love on the part of David Newland and his enthusiasm for butterflies and enjoyment of the countryside stands out on every page. The conservation message also comes across very strongly and purchasers have the added satisfaction of knowing that a donation will be made to Butterfly Conservation for every copy sold. Definitely a book which should find its place on every butterfly enthusiasts' bookshelf and one which I guarantee will be well used.

## **Activities – Health and Safety Guidelines**

Guidelines for health and safety during Butterfly Conservation activities 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 act according to the following guidelines at any of our events:

- Wear appropriate footwear for the conditions expected.
- Wear appropriate clothing for the conditions 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 leads. Ask leaders for permission before bringing dogs.
- Listen carefully to instructions given by the leader before starting.
- Beware of branches swinging back after the person in front passes them.
- 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.
- Site-specific hazards will be outlined by the leader at the start.

## Dates for your Diary

Please remember that further dates may be added to the website at short notice during the summer. Check <http://www.westmidlandsbutterflyconservation.org.uk>

### February

#### **Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> Herefordshire Woodland Project Review and Celebration 6.30pm -9.30pm The Watershed, Hereford**

A celebration of the first year of the Herefordshire Woodlands Project, with a short presentation and buffet, and a chance to sign up for the 2007 survey season. For an invitation please contact Anna Jordan 01531 635234.

#### **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup>, Shelve, Shropshire**

First work day for the new Shropshire Group at Shelve Forestry (SO 328995) starting at 10 am. For further details contact Jenny Joy on 01952-245684.

#### **Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> Litter and path clearance at Prees Heath**

Start at 10.30am and finish around 3.30pm Come for half a day if you wish. Meet on the access track off the A49 opposite the Steel Heath turning. All tools and gloves provided. Let me know if you need a lift – I will help if I can. Stephen Lewis, Mobile: 07900 886809.

#### **Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> Monkwood Firewood Sale**

From 10-12.30 at the car park at SO 803603. All proceeds go towards conservation work in the wood.

#### **Monday 12<sup>th</sup> Talk on the Moths of Hartlebury Common**

Mike Southall is talking on the Moths of Hartlebury Common at 8.00 pm at Stourport Working Men's Club, Lickhill Road, Stourport. This is an event organised by the new Friends of Hartlebury Common group.

#### **Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> 10.00am Woodland Work Party, Herefordshire**

Haugh Wood (SO 592365) Contact Kate Wollen 07786 526280

#### **Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> Scrub clearance at Prees Heath**

Start at 10.30am and finish around 3.30pm Come for half a day if you wish. Meet on the access track off the A49 opposite the Steel Heath turning. All tools and gloves provided. Let me know if you need a lift – I will help if I can. Stephen Lewis, Mobile: 07900 886809

## **March**

### **Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> Scrub clearance at Prees Heath**

All details as for the February 24<sup>th</sup> event. Stephen Lewis, Mobile: 07900 886809

### **Saturday 17th 10.00am Woodland Work Party, Herefordshire**

Haugh Wood (SO 592 365) Contact Kate Wollen 07786 526280

### **Sat 24th March Butterfly Identification Workshop, Herefordshire**

10.00am – 4.00pm Woolhope Village Hall/Haugh Woods. Details sent with booking BOOKING ESSENTIAL. Contact Anna Jordan: 01531 635234

### **Sat 31<sup>st</sup> March National Recorders' Conference, Birmingham**

Starts at 10.30am All welcome - a great opportunity to meet enthusiasts from other branches. Contact Head Office at Lulworth for details

## **May**

### **Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> Pearl Bordered Fritillary walk, Shropshire**

A walk to show MWT & BC members and others these rare and beautiful butterflies on Middletown Hill. Meet at 2.00pm outside the Breidden public house on the A458 in Middletown (SJ301124). Contact Jenny Joy on 01952-245684.

*This fritillary only flies in sunny weather and they are almost impossible to see in cold cloudy conditions. The walks will only be cancelled if the weather is very poor but you are unlikely to see them. The flight season can vary considerably from year to year so it is difficult to guarantee seeing them on a particular date. Please phone 01691 648339 beforehand if you are coming. The ground is uneven and steep. Stout walking boots and suitable clothing are essential. Please do not bring dogs. Each event will involve about an hours walk.*

### **Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> Pearl Bordered Fritillary walk, Shropshire**

All details as for Saturday 5<sup>th</sup>. Please read the above note.

### **Friday 18<sup>th</sup> Pearl Bordered Fritillary walk, Shropshire**

Y Frochas Common (SJ194083). Meet at 2.00pm outside the Raven public house on the A458 at the western edge of Welshpool and travel to this new CCW reserve between Guilsfield and Cyfronydd near the Dingle Nurseries. Please read the above note. Contact Jenny Joy on 01952-245684

### **Saturday 12<sup>th</sup>**

Grafton Wood - Bird Song Walk 2007 - From Grafton Flyford Church Car Park. Start 6:00am - Booking necessary - Cost £3 Adults - £1.5 children including breakfast. Ring 01386 792 458.

### **Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> general moth recording at Monkwood, Worcestershire**

Meet at 19.30 in the reserve car park, OS map 150 SO 804606. Contact Mike Southall 07970 449353

### **Saturday 19th Butterfly Identification Workshop, Herefordshire**

10.00am – 4.00pm Woolhope Village Hall/Haugh Woods. Details sent with booking BOOKING ESSENTIAL. Contact Anna Jordan: 01531 635234

### **Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> 2pm Llanymynech Rocks guided walk**

A joint walk with the Oswestry Branch of Shropshire Wildlife Trust. The target species will be **Grizzled Skipper**, **Dingy Skipper**, **Green Hairstreak** and **Wall**. Meeting point is the reserve car park. Contact Stephen Lewis on 07900 886809.

### **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> at Stoke-on-Trent**

#### **Dingy Skipper Ecology and Habitat Assessment Training Day**

This event is aimed at encouraging more volunteers to survey for this species in the Stoke-on-Trent area.

It will also enable participants to undertake habitat assessment and timed counts under BC's standard methodology. This technique enables effective monitoring of changes in key features of the habitat and how they affect butterfly numbers. For more details and a booking form contact **Jane Ellis** on 01788 510695.

### **Note on Winter sightings**

*Mike Williams*

I suspect that Red Admirals these days are reported 12 months of the year. I have heard about a number of winter sightings locally including one at the Knapp & Papermill NR as late as 16th December (Becky Lashley). Other unseasonal reports of other species include Peacock on 28th December in the Forest of Dean (Rob Mabbett) and Comma on 17th Dec at the Walsgrave Hill work party (Trevor Bucknall).

Two more 1<sup>st</sup> Jan butterfly records: another Red Admiral this time in Gloucestershire at Prestbury Allotments near Cheltenham at 11.30 am seen by Rose Mabbett and the same day around 1 pm a Peacock seen at Charlton Kings by Bryan and Louise Mabbett.

### **Back copies of The Comma**

I have a few back copies of The Comma, numbers 61 to 65. If you joined recently and would like one or more of these to extend your collection, contact the editor (see page 1 for details). They are available in return for an SAE and a few second class stamps.

## West Midlands Biodiversity Training Project

*Pete Boardman*

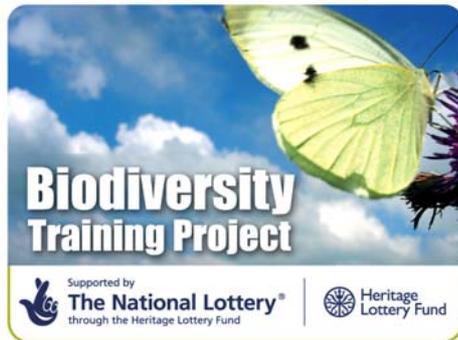
This five year project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and the Field Studies Council and is aimed at promoting, enhancing and encouraging biological recording in Shropshire and the wider West Midlands region. We hope to achieve this by offering up to 40 training events per year aimed at existing volunteers, but new people are always welcome. These training days will be focussed around BAP habitats and species, as well as offering introductions to a varied number of subject groups, and the vast majority are free of charge to participants.

We aim to cover a large range of taxonomic groups combining the more well known subject areas with those where obvious gaps in recording (and recorders) exist. We also aim to support existing recording and community groups by providing free training for specific training projects, as we are doing with Butterfly Conservation during 2007.

The project will be launched with a biodiversity open day at Preston Montford Field Centre on February 24th 2007, at which volunteers will be invited to take part in taster sessions, participate in guided walks, network amongst other volunteers and organisations and book on our 2007 training events. Refreshments are provided.

Our free training kicks off on March 17th with a bird monitoring techniques course and will continue throughout the year. Details of the courses are available on the website and if you would like to receive our newsletter please drop me a line and I will add you to the list.

The Biodiversity Training Project can be contacted at 01743 852100, via the website at [www.field-studies-council.org/biodiversity](http://www.field-studies-council.org/biodiversity), or write to Pete Boardman, Biodiversity Training Project, Preston Montford, Montford Bridge, Shrewsbury, SY4 1DX or email [pete@field-studies-council.org](mailto:pete@field-studies-council.org)



*Jenny Joy adds* - In 2006, Pete was able to help Butterfly Conservation by providing a large number of FSC butterfly field identification charts (some of which have already been given out to new recorders in the Malvern Hills and sent to the Newport in Bloom committee) and by agreeing to produce 50 drop disks for measuring sward heights (production over the 2006/2007 winter).

These drop disks are a very important tool for undertaking habitat assessments for key regional lepidoptera so if any of you have been thinking about undertaking some habitat assessments in the past but have not yet got round to doing them please make them happen in 2007 (and contact Jenny for one of these disks).

Pete was also a huge help in setting up the inaugural meeting of the Shropshire BC Group (see separate article) which we hope will continue and enable more local volunteers to become involved in vital survey and monitoring work on key Shropshire lepidoptera.

In 2007, further collaboration between Pete and Jenny is planned both in Shropshire and elsewhere in the region (e.g. by training events, see the events listing).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Pete very much for his efforts on behalf of Butterfly Conservation. We have already hugely benefited from his Biodiversity Training Project and I very much hope we can continue to do so for the next few years.

## **Update on Conserving Butterflies and Moths at a Landscape Level**



*Jenny Joy*

As the last issue had a fairly detailed account of Butterfly Conservation's ongoing Countdown 2010 project in the West Midlands region, only a brief update of my current activities is included here.

One of my main recent work areas has been the compilation of reports resulting from field work carried out during the summer of 2006 or commenting on draft reports written by contractors who have carried out specific contracts commissioned by BC. As a result of this work the following reports have been produced:

- Survey report on **Argent & Sable** at Cannock Chase (by David Green).
- Survey report on **Welsh Clearwing** at Cannock Chase (by David Green).
- Survey report on **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** at Cannock Chase (by Jenny Joy).
- Survey report on **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** in the Wyre Forest (Jenny Joy).

Several other reports are now nearing completion. These include:

- Survey report on Grayling in the Malvern Hills (by Susan Clarke).
- Survey report on **Argent & Sable** in Shropshire 2006 (by Peter Boardman).
- Survey report on **Dingy Skipper** in the Telford & Wrekin area (by Stephen Lewis).
- Survey report on butterfly and moth survey on the Herefordshire Community Commons 2006 (by Susan Clarke and David Green).

This list still omits several reports only in the early stages of production which I will mention in the next newsletter! Some of these reports have already been invaluable and formed the basis of discussions in meetings with key land managers in several landscape areas over the past few months (e.g. Cannock Chase, the Wyre Forest and the Oswestry Uplands).

Another key work area has been to publicise what BC has been doing in the region and to make people more aware of good news stories. A joint press release with Staffordshire County Council on the huge numbers of Welsh Clearwing found on Cannock Chase in 2006 resulted in lots of newspaper articles and even a slot on Midlands Today (and the BBC website). A joint press release with the Malvern Hills Conservators on the numbers of Graylings seen on the Malvern Hills in 2006 was also successful. There are so many opportunities for good publicity these days it is sometimes difficult to decide where to prioritise effort – especially as it is sometimes difficult to predict what will be successful.

Two other highlights of the past few months have been:

- The formation of a Shropshire BC Group (see separate article).
- The very recent news (January 2007) of a successful bid to the SITA Trust (which allocates funding through the Landfill Communities Fund) for a Lepidoptera project called 'Back to Orange' (based on the conservation of the Wyre Forest fritillaries amongst other species) which is part of a larger Wyre Forest Project being led by the Forestry Commission. As a bid for funding for the larger Wyre Forest Project has now been submitted to HLF (with the outcome not being known until March 2007), further details of this partnership project will be given at a later date if it is successful. Suffice to say for now that the 'Back to Orange' project will enable some important management work to take place in specific parts of the Wyre Forest as well as a three year programme of research, survey and monitoring on key Lepidoptera so obviously this SITA Trust funding is fantastic news!

## Brownfields Project Update

*Jane Ellis*

Steady progress is being made in a number of the key landscape areas for brownfields using information collected from contract and volunteer survey work undertaken during spring and summer 2006.

As a follow-up to John Dover's **Dingy Skipper** survey report and records from John Bryan, a meeting was held with Stoke City Council to discuss how they could help to improve **Dingy Skipper** sites they own or manage. A training day for Council staff and local volunteers has been organised for May (see the Events page).

Also in Stoke on Trent, a meeting with St Modwen PLC organised by Richard Southwell has highlighted some exciting opportunities for enhancing a number of St Modwen development sites adjacent to the north-south railway corridor including incorporating south-facing bunds seeded with Bird's-foot trefoil.

In the Cannock area the results of surveys and habitat assessments by volunteer Pete Johnson has resulted in the Coal Authority undertaking the creation of a number of trial scrapes for **Dingy Skipper** at their Huntington site near Cannock where **Dingy Skipper** were first discovered in 2006. These will be monitored over the coming year to determine their success. Staffordshire County Council has also agreed a programme of habitat creation and management works for **Dingy Skipper** and **Green Hairsteak** at Cannock Chase. This picture shows a scrape under construction:



In the East Midlands, a lot has been happening in the Notts/ Derby coalfields area. In November a stakeholder meeting was held in Shirebrook area to determine opportunities for **Dingy Skipper**. This highlighted a number of imminent projects which could be turned to the Dingy's advantage, including the chance to recreate railway bed habitat along a 7km stretch of disused and overgrown railway-line which will help to link two existing known colonies and imminent destruction of a colony at Silverhill which was speedily averted.

The potential to involve local communities in appreciating their local brownfield sites was highlighted by a **Dingy Skipper** mobile building event at Warsop Vale Nottinghamshire as part of a youth activity programme in the school holidays. I hope to build on this enthusiasm with a practical training event on **Dingy Skipper** and more commons species in the May half-term.

A themed BC staff meeting on brownfields initiated the development of a Butterfly Conservation brownfields policy which will be aired at the next Conservation Committee meeting at the end of January. This includes policy on when BC should oppose a development, guidelines on the minimum requirements for Lepidoptera survey of a proposed brownfield development site, and how BC should get key sites recognised through the planning system.

One thing that has certainly been highlighted over the last few months is that there are plenty of opportunities which BC can latch onto and owners and managers are usually very keen to oblige. At the moment it is a matter of BC being in the right place at the right time, but as awareness of the potential value of brownfield sites for Lepidoptera becomes more widespread and the planning system has easy access to information on key sites it is hoped that many of these opportunities will start to come to fruition of their own accord.

If you would like more information on the brownfields and butterflies project or perhaps you would like to help with some brownfield species survey work or habitat monitoring then please contact Jane Ellis on 01788 510695 or email [jellis@butterfly-conservation.org](mailto:jellis@butterfly-conservation.org).

Sycamore Moth larva



Photo: © Mike Williams

Identification board at Newport, Shropshire



Photo: © Viv Green

## Newport, Shropshire in Bloom

*Jenny Joy*

Wildflowers and butterflies have won Newport a gold prize in the regional round of Britain in Bloom 2006 and a silver gilt in the national competition. The local Britain in Bloom committee expended great efforts on diverse subjects such as flower and perennial planting, local environmental quality and litter control. They also carried out a series of projects to put wildlife at the heart of the town. This involved planting nine kinds of wild flowers including red and white campion, ox-eye daisy and devil's bit scabious along the bypass and taking over the running of a strip of land along the canal. With advice from Butterfly Conservation, the group also planted shrubs such as alder buckthorn and sowed seeds of other plants useful to butterflies next to the canal. This canal area was also the location for a butterfly panel (see the picture on page 23) which was installed in 2006 and should help local residents to identify their butterflies. Congratulations to Carol Murphy and the rest of the Newport in Bloom Committee for their well deserved success.

## More on Sycamore moths

*Mike Williams*

The small piece in the Autumn issue of "The Comma" about the discovery of **Sycamore moth** caterpillars in Stourport and the Malvern Hills prompted several further records. Firstly, Robert Tunstall reported that Sandra Aston, a member of the Worcestershire Camera Club, photographed one in September outside her home at Winnall caravan site, on the River Severn between Stourport and Holt Fleet. Secondly, Camilla Smith found a caterpillar on 20th September at Northycote Farm on the northern edge of Wolverhampton (SJ 929032).

Nationally, the **Sycamore moth** is described as *Local*, being most frequent in urban areas where horse chestnut is often the main foodplant, although it has been recorded on a wide variety of trees. It is most frequent in the south, with particularly good populations in the south-east, central southern England and East Anglia. Small saplings as well as mature trees are utilised, indeed the five found by my son Robert on 6th August were all on a small maple still sitting outside his school in a pot waiting to be planted.

As far as Herefordshire & Worcestershire are concerned, the most recent atlas (Harper & Simpson, 2001) shows no records at all for the former county since 1892 and only two records for the latter: a larva at Bewdley in 1972 and an adult in Drakes Broughton in 2000, so these new records are of considerable significance. Dave Grundy says the moth appears to be spreading into the Midlands from the south-east with the earliest records from Warwickshire, then Worcestershire, the West Midlands county, Staffordshire and finally Shropshire and Herefordshire. The earliest sighting was 1955 with then two records from

1970s, two more in the 1980s and then 21 in the 1990s. Since the turn of the century, the moth appears to have really taken off with as many as 91 sightings in just a single year in 2004 which is pretty phenomenal considering the paucity of records before.

Altogether, the number of records for the region has now reached 283 with a further 2006 records still to be added. The total number of records for Worcs now stands at 107 (only 4 prior to 2002) while the first modern day record for Herefordshire was not until 2004. While this increase in records is, I am sure, in part a reflection of greater recording effort, there is clearly something going on.

Perhaps the neglect of much urban woodland which has resulted in a considerable spread of sycamore, while detrimental to much of our native flora and fauna, has brought some benefits to the **Sycamore moth** or perhaps this is another example of a species of Lepidoptera responding to climate change. Interestingly, most of the new records are of adults at moth traps with only 4 records of larvae before 2006.

I find this surprising, given how striking and unmistakeable the caterpillars are (see photo on page 23) and I would certainly encourage members to keep a look out this summer. The moth flies from mid-June to early August but September is probably the best month to spot larvae when they are fully grown prior to pupation. I am indebted to all recorders who have submitted records and also to Dave Grundy for the additional information on which much of this article is based.

### **County moth recorders**

These are independent of the Branch, but may be worth a mention:

**Herefordshire** (VC36); Mike Harper 01531-632030.

**Worcestershire** (VC37); Tony Simpson 01886-832637

**Warwickshire** (VC38) macro-moths Dave Brown 01789-840295,

**Warwickshire** micro-moths Nigel Stone; Njstone@hotmail.com

**Staffordshire** (VC39); Dave Emley; d.w.emley@esci.keele.ac.uk

**Shropshire** (VC40) macros Pete Boardman; pete@field-studies-council.org

**Shropshire** micro-moths Godfrey Blunt; A.G.Blunt@wlv.ac.uk

## Where there's a Will or, How the Glanville Fritillary got its name

David Jackson

*(David Jackson relates another tale of an historic figure, who was one of the most influential pioneers in entomology.*

*Her remarkable story takes us back over three hundred years, when it was then the norm for entomologists to collect specimens. This practice occurred up to recent times, but is now totally unacceptable and in some cases illegal.)*

No one 'not deprived of their senses should go in pursuit of butterflies' (Wells Assizes 1712).

Fritillaries are not only nationally rare but exquisitely beautiful butterflies. One such species initially named by early entomologists as the Lincolnshire Fritillary, is known to us now as the **Glanville Fritillary** (*Melitaea cinxia*) and to my eye, has the most lovely underwing pattern of any British butterfly.

Its distribution once extended as far north as the shire of its original name, but it was seemingly always rare, and is now limited to one site in Hampshire and its main colonies along the exceptionally warm southern coastal cliffs, undercliffs and chines on the Isle of Wight.

Attempts to introduce this butterfly on the English mainland at certain sites have usually failed, though a population at Brean Down in Somerset still survives.

This delightful butterfly can usually be seen on the wing from mid-May to the end of June. Its caterpillars feed on Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) growing in short sparse sward surrounded by expanses of bare soil.

The **Glanville Fritillary** was named forty years or so after the death of and in memory of Eleanor Glanville c.1654 -1709, who as Bristowe remarked '*Hers is a sad story of a great entomologist, who gained happiness from natural history in the midst of sorrow.*'

'Lady' Glanville's story has been pieced together with great skill by R.S. Wilkinson and W.S. Bristowe, from her surviving correspondence with Petiver and from other contemporary documents.

She was born in Yorkshire in about 1654, daughter of Richard and Muriel Goodricke, still remembered by horticulturalists for their cultivation of the Ribston Pippin apple. From them she inherited considerable property, including Tickenham Court in Somerset, which later became her home.

Eleanor Glanville was not however a titled lady as implied by Moses Harris who referred to her as 'the ingenious Lady Glanvil' (his spelling of the surname) in *The Aurelian*. Nonetheless she was held in high esteem by fellow entomologists. It was often custom in those days to prefix a noun with a capital letter. All Harris appeared to mean was that she was a respectable woman of good family, in fact a lady.

Eleanor Glanville's interest in entomology seems to have begun in her maturity after the breakdown of her second marriage to Richard Glanville, a violent man who once, 'presenting a pistol loaded with bullets and cock't top her breast', threatened to shoot her dead!

In a letter to a friend, written in 1703, William Vernon mentioned a chance meeting in London with a remarkable lady from the West Country '*with the noblest collection of butterflies, all English, which has sham'd us*'.

That an important collection existed, unknown to Vernon and his contemporaries, was remarkable enough in that pioneering age, but that they had been collected by a woman, and a woman of property at that, was apparently astonishing to them.

She corresponded with James Petiver, who may be considered the 'Father' of British butterflies and who she counted a dear friend, also with Ray, Vernon, Dandridge, Buddle and other early collectors.

Some of her letters accompanied cases of butterflies, among them specimens of what was to become the Glanville Fritillary, which she herself captured in Lincolnshire, of all places, around 1702. She reared butterflies and moths may have been the first person to refer to Geometrid larvae as 'loopers'.

An incredulous bystander, one John Brewton, later described how '*she and her two female apprentice girls would carry a sheet out under the hedges and bushes and with a long pole beat the said hedges and catch't a parcel of wormes*'.

She also described the early stages of the **High Brown Fritillary** and **Green – veined White** in one of the first detailed references to rearing butterflies.

On the other hand she found it difficult to maintain her collection. In one of her quaint, wildly misspelled letters, she told Petiver that mites had done their worst that year and had eaten up a hundred of her best specimens.

Her 'noble' collection perished a long time ago, but recently three specimens she gave to Petiver, a butterfly and two moths, were re-found in the Sloane collection in the Natural History Museum.

It would not have been surprising, but doubtful in the extreme, had she become a little unhinged by the appalling behaviour of her parted husband, who among other things had organised a plot to kidnap one of her sons, his object being to persuade the lad to disclaim property he stood to inherit and transfer it to him and his new mistress.

Eleanor Glanville's story is even more remarkable in that following her death her love of entomology sparked an embittered family dispute over her Will!

No doubt because of her ex-husband's machinations, Eleanor's will favoured her second cousin, and she is best remembered when desperate relatives cited her interest in butterflies as an obvious sign of madness!!!

Eleanor Glanville had arranged to leave her estate in the care of trustees. By the terms of her will the principal legatee would have been her second cousin, Sir Henry Goodricke.

When the will was published her eldest son Forest entered a writ seeking to set it aside on the grounds that his mother had gone mad, and had wrongfully disregarded the rights of her children, believing, he alleged, that they had all been changed into fairies!

The case was brought to the Judge at Wells Assizes in 1712. 100 witnesses were examined. Apparently either Petiver or Sloane appeared as character witness for Eleanor, though no trace of their affidavits have been found.

Villagers however were full of stories of Eleanor's apparent entomological eccentricities, which were eagerly ceased upon by her relatives. Accounts of her being observed on the downs '*without all necessary cloathes*', and on occasion being seen to have been '*dressed like a gypsy*' were regaled in court as corroborative evidence attempting to discredit her.

The written verdict has not been traced, but the upshot was that the will was indeed upset in Forest's favour. Over two hundred years ago Moses Harris added a postscript which would I am sure have been to the amusement of Lady Eleanor:

*" This fly took its name from the ingenious Lady Glanvil, whose Memory had like to have suffered for her Curiosity. Some Relations that was disappointed by her will, attempted to let it aside by Acts of Lunacy, for they suggested that none but those who were deprived of their Senses, would go in Pursuit of Butterflies".*

It appears to some if not all, including myself, that the verdict given at the hearing at Wells Assizes in 1702, might fall into the category of ass like lawfulness.

#### **Acknowledgements and References:**

Very special thanks to Dr. Michael A. Salmon author of *The Aurelian Legacy – British Butterflies and Their Collectors*, for granting me permission to extract and adapt these remarkable accounts from his book.

Thanks also to Annette Harley of Harley Books – the publishers;  
harley@harleybooks.co.uk

*The Butterflies of Britain & Ireland* by Jeremy Thomas and Richard Lewington published by Dorling Kindersley, 1991.

## **Mike Williams Tours, 2007**

*Contact Mike quickly if you're interested – only a few places remain.*

A number of you have expressed an interest in going to Europe early in the year. We have come up with the idea of a week's holiday to southern Spain staying in the Sierra Nevada mountains. This is an excellent area for butterflies and has some pretty stunning scenery. The proposed dates are 29th May – 5th June, 2007. We shall be flying to Granada probably from East Midlands airport and using two hotels, one at Berchules which is on the south side of the Sierra Nevada and the second at Guejar Sierra. Both hotels have been well recommended and being located on opposite sides of the mountain will reduce daily travel times to different sites. We will pick up a vehicle(s) at the airport and Neil and myself will share the driving. Target species include **Greenish Black-tip, Sooty Orange Tip, Aetherie & Spanish Fritillary**, Spanish & **Western Marbled White, Lorquin's Blue** and **Spanish Festoon**. Weather should be pleasantly warm but not too hot and, in addition to all the butterflies and birds, this time of year should be good for wild flowers, including many species of orchid. Not yet sure about costs, which will be as always dependent on numbers and the price of air fares, but should be in the range of £800-850 per person all in. In order to gain the benefit of cheaper air fares, it is in our interest to book as early as possible so I would be grateful if people could get back to me by 15th January at the latest if they would like to join the trip. I am looking for a group of 10-12 people.

A bit closer to home, is what seems to be becoming our annual long weekend in Scotland (this will be our third successive year). After the Cairngorms in 2005, Mull last year, we thought we would give Skye a try! The dates are 5-10th July, 2007 and we will be based in bed and breakfast accommodation in Portree. B&B is likely to work out around £30-35 per person per night but evening meals and picnic lunches if required will be additional. Target species for the weekend are the scotica form of **Large Heath** (very different to the ones we are familiar with at Wem and Whixall Mosses) and the so called **Talisker Burnet** (*Zygaena lonicerae jocelynae*) which is only found on the Isle of Skye. Like previous years, Neil will be bringing his moth trap and we plan to target one or two interesting additional species. We are also planning a boat trip to the Isle of Rum which should enable us eagle spotting opportunities and good views of seabirds. If people are driving up, one can either head for Mallaig in order to pick up the ferry (tel. 08705 650000 [www.calmac.co.uk](http://www.calmac.co.uk)) or further north to Kyle of Lochalsh to use the new road bridge. There is also the option of flying from Birmingham to Inverness (costs around £100 return) where we will pick up a minibus and, if you would be interested in this, please let me know. In order to keep things manageable, we are restricting numbers to a maximum of 20 people so, if you would like to reserve a place, please confirm as soon as possible. Again, like Spain, if people can confirm their interest by 15th January that would be great.

## Committee members

This list gives members you are most likely to want to contact; for other committee members see the branch website or January newsletter.

<b>Chairman</b>	<b>Richard Southwell</b> Sandilands@yesit.co.uk	01384-397066 (after 4pm)
<b>Conservation Officer</b>	<b>David Jackson</b> Jacksongrus@btinternet.com	01902-344716
<b>Treasurer</b>	<b>Andy Littley</b> andylittley@supanet.com	01562-887117
<b>Webmaster pro-tem</b>	<b>Nigel Stone</b> Njstone@hotmail.com	02476-335189
<b>Branch Recorder</b>		
<b>Mapmate database Co-ordinator/South Staffs Advisor</b>	<b>Jim Cresswell</b> jim.cresswell@talk21.com	08702-401435
<b>Transects</b>	<b>John Tilt</b> John.tilt2@btopenworld.com	01386-792458
<b>Research Officer</b>	<b>John Dover</b> jdover@nymph.demon.co.uk	01925 752905
<b>Brown Hairstreak Champion</b>	<b>Mike Williams</b> mike@stagborough.fsnet.co.uk	01299-824860
<b>Regional Development Officers</b>	<b>Dr. Jenny Joy</b> joy.croft@btinternet.com	01952-245684
	<b>Jane Ellis</b> jellis@butterfly-conservation.org	01788-510695
<b>Reserve managers:</b>		
<b>Grafton Wood</b>	<b>John Tilt</b> John.tilt2@btopenworld.com	01386-792458
<b>Monkwood</b>	<b>Paddy Harrison</b>	01905-641523
<b>Prees Heath</b>	<b>Stephen Lewis</b>	07900-886809
<b>Conservation officers:</b> (for Shropshire see Jenny Joy, above;		
<b>Worcs.</b>	<b>Trevor Bucknall</b> trevor.bucknall@virgin.net	01905-755757
<b>Herefords.</b>	<b>Ian Hart</b> yellowrattle@compuserve.com	01981 510259
<b>Moth officers:</b>		
<b>Worcestershire</b>	<b>Mike Southall</b> michael_southall58@hotmail.co.uk	01299-251467
<b>County leaders:</b>		
<b>Staffordshire</b>	<b>John Bryan</b> johnbryan15@aol.com	01782-518900
<b>Herefordshire</b>	<b>Dean Fenton</b> dean.fenton@malvern.com	01568-611575

***White Admiral***



Photo: © John Tilt

***Brown Hairstreak***



Photo: © John Tilt