

The Comma



No. 69, Winter 2007/2008



Cinnabar moth larvae Photo: © Patrick Clement

This issue includes:

- New chairman's message
- Charles Darwin on the Beagle
- Winter event listings
- Countdown 2010 reports
- Chaddesley Wood mothing
- Shropshire Group news

**NEWSLETTER OF WEST MIDLANDS BRANCH,
BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION**
Registered charity ... No. 254937



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Editorial

Thanks especially to photographer Patrick Clement, who provided all three cover photos.

Unfortunately my email address given in the last issue was blocked as I hadn't used it for ages, so if you sent an article in and it does not appear here, please assume I never received it. Apologies for this, but if you resubmit it to the address given below I will use it in the next issue. This may explain why this issue is a little light. (To compensate, I'm including copies of the Herefordshire Butterflies leaflet produced by Bernadette Noake as part of her project.)

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

The deadline for contributions to the next issue is 1st May 2008. 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, but they must be free of copyright restrictions.

The address for contributions is:

Dean Fenton
Little Bury Farm, Luston, Leominster HR6 0EB
Tel. 01568 611575

(my new email is simply "fenton" @littleburyfarm.co.uk)

Chairman's Notes - New Chair on the Block

David Jackson

It is a real privilege and a pleasure to represent the West Midlands Branch as your new Chairman, especially so as it's the 40th Anniversary year of Butterfly Conservation's inception, or should I say emergence.

Firstly, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our previous Chairman, Richard Southwell, whose dedication and commitment to furthering our conservation aims was unstinting.

Richard's people finding skills are the stuff of legend, his expertise being honed from a previous job as a 'head hunter', in private industry. So it came as no real surprise that almost half the Branch Committee, including myself, were invited onto it by Richard. I personally suspect that the Branch has not yet seen the last of Richard, who wishes to be a 'backbencher', at least for the foreseeable future.

I am very pleased to announce that Michael Southall has agreed to take over my previous role of Branch Conservation Officer. Mike is a Worcestershire farmer and avid naturalist. He will be on hand to help co-ordinate the Landscape Area Champions, amongst other continuing objectives.

I also have the pleasure of informing you that one of our Committee members Dr. John Dover was recently nominated by Branch to serve as a Trustee, and was duly elected onto full Council at the national AGM. John also serves on the national Reserves Committee.

My own tasks in the next couple of years will be to publicise the aims of Butterfly Conservation, especially in this our National Anniversary year and the next, as 2009 will see the 30th Anniversary of the formation of our Branch.

Branch Membership (families/joint households inclusive) currently stands at 616, made up as follows:

- Herefordshire 70
- Shropshire 86
- Staffordshire 94
- Worcestershire 132
- Birmingham and the Black Country 133
- Members from other regions 70.

Your Branch Committee is tasked with arranging the management of reserves owned by BC and part/ owned with partner Wildlife Trusts. We arrange work parties, recording initiatives and identify vulnerable species and landscape sites for protection or management work, to benefit scarce Lepidoptera.

If you would like to get involved in any way please do not hesitate to contact either Mike Southall, myself or any Committee member listed inside the back cover. We are all volunteers and any assistance would be gratefully received.

For the time being at least, Butterfly Conservation's day to day objectives continue to be promoted and undertaken by two salaried Regional Officers, Dr. Jenny Joy and Jane Ellis, as can be seen from the summary of their achievements and ongoing projects reported periodically in *The Comma*.

Further funding for these two posts has its uncertainties, being subject to successful grant application funding. We eagerly await the news from Head Office that their roles can be continued for another term, and in the meantime I would like to extend grateful thanks for the fantastic work undertaken by them to date.

Together we will continue to raise awareness of the plight of our fragmented, damaged and vanishing habitats and work to protect our treasured butterfly and moths.

Data Protection

Data sharing is a major tool in assisting wildlife conservation. To this end, and on behalf of the Branch, I have recently agreed the terms for a draft Data Sharing Agreement with the Data Records Centre officers for Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire and Birmingham and the Black Country, with the intention that there will be a yearly transfer of our respective Lepidoptera records.

This is an important development which will enable records submitted by both Branch and County Wildlife Trust members to be exchanged and used for the purposes of conservation.

County Wildlife Trusts/Eco Records Centres are usually the main port of call for developers and local authorities when planning developments – and we will be partnering ECO Records Centre Officers in providing this valuable information, which will inform decision making in the planning process, development control and local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) initiatives.

It is our intention that the Agreement will be signed on 1st May 2008, with an exchange of data planned shortly thereafter.

I fully appreciate that some recorders may have submitted records for rare species or sensitive site information e.g. if special/limited access has been granted to survey. Specific records should only be released to 'legitimate' enquirers, e.g. local authorities/developers, but if you wish any of your records to be excluded from the information exchange please let me know as soon as possible, before the proposed signature date.

Situation Vacant – Branch Secretary

We are looking for a volunteer Secretary to attend up to four meetings each year and assist by taking and word processing/e-mailing Committee minutes.

We meet at the Worcester Woods Country Park Visitor Centre, signed just off the A40/A4440 roundabout, Worcester WR5 2LG, and we would very much welcome anyone who is interested.

The Spring Members' meeting and the AGM usually rotate around the Counties. Please phone or e-mail me if you can help.

Our next Committee meeting is on Saturday 9th February, commencing at 10.30 a.m. Why not come along and see what we do before deciding whether or not to take the plunge?

AGM report, December 1st

Here are some of the main points (based on Andy Littlely's minutes)

- Richard Southwell has tried to establish local leaders for each of the Landscape Scale projects within the Branch's area. Since we have 12 of the 67 national schemes, this is a significant commitment and is the essence of good conservation work.
- It had been an unusual year: highlights include **Peacocks** in Trench Wood which were better than last year and the opening of the Prees Heath reserve which, in spite of the ongoing problems with one local objector, was a major step forward for the Society. Anyone wanting to visit the reserve was encouraged to contact Stephen Lewis to arrange it. It had also been a good year for **Dingy Skipper** in the Birmingham/Black Country area, but not for **Green Hairstreak**.
- The Branch had tried to encourage an increase in recording activity this year but due to the weather, it was not certain that this would have succeeded. On the subject of membership, the Branch has increased its membership during the year and there is no doubt that the subscription represents good value for money for those who get involved. Also, it is apparent that retention rates for members are very good demonstrating a high degree of loyalty.
- Going through some of the main events of the past year, Richard Southwell mentioned the **Welsh Clearwing** on Cannock Chase, including the well supported event organised by John Bryan. Before our involvement, the Council was going to remove the birch trees which support these moths and it was only due to Jenny Joy's intervention that they were saved. As a result, the Council is now liaising with us before making any decisions which could impact butterflies and moths. Jenny had arranged regular workdays at the

Stiperstones and other locations in Shropshire while Stephen Lewis has done tremendous work at Prees Heath supported by members.

- Work is continuing on the development of green links at Feckenham while there has been a major success with the **Brown Hairstreak** which used to be so rare that its location was kept secret. Mike Williams has re-written history and there are now 140 sites around Grafton Wood where eggs have been found.
- The 'West Midlands First' policy has been re-launched with the objective of supporting wildlife, specifically butterflies and moths. Its focus has been on work with the Forestry Commission in Wyre Forest where **Pearl-Bordered Fritillary** numbers have been the best in living memory according to John Tilt.
- The Branch continues to be heavily involved in overseas projects with Mike Williams and Nick Williams both prominent in a range of initiatives.
- Nigel Stone commented that there seems to be a decline in the amount of recording taking place. There were around 5,500 records this year which came mainly from two people though about 30 people submitted some records.
- In the future there are a range of developments including the work being done by Adrian Miles in Shropshire. There are also challenges such as the need for funding agreements to be finalised for the local Regional Officers.
- Jenny Joy is working in Wyre Forest where 22 projects have been identified under a Heritage Lottery scheme for development over the next three years. In the Back to Orange Project, SITA have removed 2 hectares of conifers in order to improve habitat.
- Liz Goodyear and Andrew Middleton gave a presentation on *Recording the Invisible - Emperors and Hairstreaks*. Mike Southall gave an illustrated talk on the moths of Hartlebury Common.

Butterflies in Literature 1, Darwin's The Voyage of the Beagle

Peter Branson

There are countless references to butterflies in literature. The butterfly is often seen as a metaphor for freedom, bliss, paradise even, and much more besides.

But let me start with the great man himself, Charles Darwin, a West Midlander, nay a Salopian. His five year journey around the world was one of the most important events in the history of science. It was instrumental in transforming man's perception of himself and his world; on this voyage the Theory of Evolution was developed. Darwin's visit to the Galapagos islands was pivotal.

The Beagle, a naval vessel under the command of Captain Robert Fitzroy, was scheduled to survey the coasts of South America, then proceed from there to circumnavigate the earth. Darwin was invited to join the Beagle as a "naturalist", the invitation coming through his botany professor at Cambridge University.

Darwin was 22 years old when the ship left Plymouth in December 1831. They were to return in October 1836. Throughout, Darwin had repeated clashes with Fitzroy, only four years his senior. The latter was conservative politically and believed in the literal truth of the Bible. Darwin was a liberal. They quarrelled bitterly over slavery and many other matters.

Throughout the trip Darwin sent letters and extracts from his journal, plus geological, plant and animal specimens, home. But such were his frustrations at times that he wrote to a sister that he would in a short time "make a bolt across the ocean to good old Shropshire". Fortunately, it was not to be.

In December 1833 the Beagle sailed from Rio Plata, Argentina, for Port Desire on the coast of Patagonia. On several occasions off the coast of Argentina, Darwin had noted that they were "surrounded by insects". He goes on to say "one evening, when we were about ten miles from the Bay of San Blas, vast numbers of butterflies in bands or flocks of countless myriads extended as far as the eye could range. Even by the aid of a telescope it was not possible to see a space free from butterflies. The seaman cried out it was 'snowing butterflies' and such in fact was the appearance. More species than one were present, but the main part belonged to a kind very similar to, but not identical with, the common English *colias edusa*. Some moths and hymenoptera accompanied the butterflies; and a fine beetle (*calosma*) flew on board The day had been fine and calm we cannot suppose the insects blew off the land. We must conclude that they voluntarily took flight. The great bands of the colias seem at first to afford an instance like those on record of the migration of another butterfly, *Vanessa cardii*, but the presence of other insects makes the case distinct, and even less intelligible. Before sunset a strong breeze sprung up from the North, and this must have caused tens of thousands of the butterflies and other insects to have perished."

By July 1834 Darwin was in Valparaiso, Chile. He recounts two amusing anecdotes involving a German collector of natural history called Renons.

Renons visited Darwin in the company of an old Spanish lawyer. Alluding to Darwin, Renons asked the lawyer what he thought of the King of England sending a collector to their country to pick up lizards and beetles and to break stones. The lawyer thought for some time then said "It is not well – 'hay un gato enceirrado aqui' (there is a cat shut up here). No man is so rich as to send out people to pick up such rubbish. I do not like it; if one of us were to go and do such things in England, do you not think the King of England would very soon send us out of the country?"

Some years previously, Renons had left some caterpillars in his house, under the care of a servant girl with instructions on feeding them so they might develop into butterflies. Rumours spread throughout the town and eventually the priests consulted with the governor and agreed it must be some heresy. Accordingly, when Renons returned he was arrested.

In *Origin of the Species* Darwin gives an account of the mimetic behaviour of certain South American butterfly species.

Both works remain inspirational. Darwin lacked nothing in courage either; in March 1835 he crossed the Andes from Chile to Patagonia via the Portillo Pass at an altitude of 14000 feet, re-entering Chile by the Uspallate Pass at a similar height. His account of the expedition has a wonderful epic quality.

If you are interested in natural history and South America, I recommend *Idle Days in Patagonia* (1893) and *Far Away and Long Ago* (1918) by W.H.Hudson, a writer now sadly neglected. A more contemporary work is *In Patagonia* by Bruce Chatwin (1977).

Quotations are from *The Voyage of the Beagle* by Charles Darwin, edited by Millicent Salsam (1959).

Financial summary

Andy Littley

The Branch receives a contribution of £6 per member from Head Office and also seeks to raise funds from a variety of other sources to finance local conservation work and the local expenses of running the Branch including the production of this magazine. It is required to produce Accounts for Head Office each year and the audited accounts for the year ended 31 March 2007 are shown here. They include movements and balances on both our Current and Deposit Accounts and also adjust for some accrued income and expenses. They were submitted to Head Office and consolidated into the Society's full accounts which were also audited and approved in July 2007.

The Accounts show a surplus for the year of £4,081 (2006 : £1,325). The increase of £2,756 was mainly due to an increase in grant income of £2,148

(including a one-off contribution of £2,000 from Restore UK for work at Grafton Wood), higher subscriptions (+£910) and improved fundraising (+£650) offset by increased expenditure on conservation work of £914. The funds that we raise locally finance local conservation work and so it is important that we try to make the most of the money we have and try to raise additional funds wherever we can. Each new member we recruit locally gives the Branch an extra £6 per year making it a very valuable way of increasing the funds we have available as well as introducing more people to the varied and fascinating world of butterflies and moths."

Letters

Dear Sir,

I read with interest and respect in *The Comma 68* of the efforts of members to protect and develop habitat for butterflies, but I'm prompted to write because of what I feel is incompatible behaviour in respect of air travel and conservation.

Recent scientific findings confirm the major impact flying has on climate change. I can understand a desire to visit far off exotic places and butterflies, and how flying may be seen to be necessary for such visits, but I was amazed to see the report of members flying between Birmingham and Glasgow. There is an excellent train service between these two places.

I am used to people being either ignorant or uncaring about how our behaviour is destroying the habitat of other species, but I find those who both behave in destructive ways and take the moral high ground about loss of species even more disturbing and unacceptable. I believe those of your members who took this flight to be in this group.

Maybe they too are ignorant of the facts or maybe, like many others, do not yet connect their own individual behaviour with its environmental impact. Either way, I believe your organisation could help by promoting the importance of individual actions and not tacitly accepting such mutually incompatible behaviours.

Yours sincerely,

Catherine Humphreys (a member living in Shropshire)

Moth recording at Chaddesley Wood

Alan Prior

As last year, we made 14 visits to the wood. The first, in late January, was made to try and record the **Spring Usher** moth in good numbers. This was achieved, with over 200 seen. The added bonus was recording an **Early Moth**, which was new for the wood and my first for 12 years!

Overall, around 350 species were found during the year, 47 of these being newly recorded for the site. A very respectable effort, considering the awful weather experienced during the "summer".

Highlights amongst the micro moths were **Cosmiotes freyerella**, **Pseudatemelia josephinae**, **Neosphaleroptera nubilana** and, in November, **Acleris literana** and two individuals of the scarce tortrix moth **Exapate congelatella**.

New macros included **Grey Pug** (finally confirmed!), **Barred Hook-tip**, **Small Scallop**, **Muslin Moth**, **Double Dart**, **Light Brocade** and **Olive**.

As always, a big thank you to all who attended the recording sessions. Hopefully, we'll see you all again in 2008. The dates for this year are:

- Saturday 1st March 17:00
- Saturday 3rd May 19:00
- Saturday 5th July 20:30
- Saturday 6th September 19:30
- Saturday 1st November 16:00
- Saturday 5th April 18:30
- Saturday 21st June 21:00
- Saturday 2nd August 20:00
- Saturday 4th October 18:00

Meet as usual at the Jubilee Gate (GR: SO 914736).

On **National Moth Night**, Saturday 7th June, we've decided to visit **Pepper Wood**. It's within five minutes of Chaddesley Wood and all are welcome. Meet in the car park there at SO 938745. For details contact Mervyn Needham (01562-777461) or myself (0121-7782973).

Dates for your Diary

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

General events

What do we know about the Wood White?

A national conservation event aimed at bringing together current knowledge about the habitat requirements of this butterfly and the management regimes currently being undertaken for the benefit of **Wood White** on sites across Britain. There are two parts, which must be booked in advance:

- Indoor Meeting on 15th March near Worcester.
- Outdoor meeting at a Wood White site in Herefordshire on 17th May.

email jjoy@butterfly-conservation.org for a booking form.

Saturday 31/05/2008 Moth trapping, Shropshire

Meet at Ford Hall (organic) Farm, Market Drayton, at 20.30pm. The farm is on the A53 Newcastle-under-Lyme to Shrewsbury road very close to the Muller factory. Booking essential (20 places) ring John Bryan 01782-518900.

Sunday 27 April Moors and Emperors, Staffordshire

Meet 11.00am at The Winking Man pub (Upper Hulme) on the A53 Leek-Buxton road. This is a very weather dependent trip so please phone on the Saturday to check that it's still on. John Bryan 01782-518900.

Work parties

Monkwood

First Sunday of each month. Meet at the car park (SO 804606) at 10a.m. Contact Paddy Harrison 01905-641523.

Grafton Wood

Second Sunday of each month. Meet at 10:00am at Grafton Flyford Church car park (SO 962557). Tools are supplied but bring lunch/drinks and gardening gloves. Contact John Tilt on 01386-792458.

Walsgrove Hill, Great Witley

Scrub clearance work this winter continues on the third Sunday of each month. It's a beautiful site on the Worcestershire Way with great views, as far as Wales. Meet at 10a.m at the Hundred House at Great Witley (SO 752662).

Hartlebury Common, Stourport

The Hartlebury Common Local Group programme continues on the first Sunday and third Saturday of each month. Meet at 9:30 am in the "goalpost" car park, opposite the Sandy lane industrial estate on the A4025 Stourport - Crossway Green road.

Contact 01299 877275 or enquiries@hartleburycommonlocalgroup.org.uk

Grizzled Skipper work, Throckmorton, 30th March

Work party for **Grizzled Skipper** at Throckmorton landfill site, which is a lot more scenic than it sounds, with lakes, etc. Meet at 10 a.m just inside the landfill site on the access road (grid ref SO 970/480). Contact Trevor Bucknall 01905-755757.

Shropshire Butterfly Group

Sunday February 24th

Work day on Forestry Commission land at Pound Green Coppice, Wyre Forest to improve the habitat for **Pearl-bordered Fritillary**. It is envisaged that the work will involve bracken raking and scallop creation. Please again wear stout shoes/boots and bring packed lunch. Meet at the entrance to the site just off the B4194 at Buttonoak (SO750783) at 10am.

Prees Heath

Wednesday 13th February, 10.30am – 3.30pm

No previous experience required – you will be shown how to use hand tools, and you can work at your own pace. All tools and gloves provided.

Meet on the access track off the A49 opposite the Steel Heath turning. Let me know if you need a lift – I will help if I can.

Please let me know if you wish to come, so that I know how many tools to bring. Stephen Lewis, Prees Heath Warden, Tel: 01743-340721 Mobile: 07900-886809 email: slewis@butterfly-conservation.org

Saturday 8th March, 9.30am – 1.00pm

This is a special event to coincide with Butterfly Conservation's 40th Anniversary. Note the earlier start time. The work party finishes at lunchtime, when all the volunteers are invited to enjoy a free lunch courtesy of Butterfly Conservation at The New Raven Café near the northern end of the reserve. Booking essential.

Wyre Forest Volunteers

This group usually meets on the last Sunday of each month, right through the year. On average we have about 20 people come to each session and we always have a BBQ lunch. The next date is Sunday 24th February 2008.

For further details contact Phil Rudlin, Forestry Commission Wildlife Ranger: 01299-266302, 07711-239428 phil.rudlin@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

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.

The Countdown Project: Shropshire



Jenny Joy (joy.croft@btinternet.com or 01952-245684)

Countdown 2010 is coming to an end. Butterfly Conservation's Countdown 2010 landscape project in the Midlands has been very ambitious. It has involved three members of Butterfly Conservation staff (Jane Ellis, Anna Jordan (replaced by Bernadette Noake) and Jenny Joy) as well as a range of contractors (including Sue Clarke, David Green and Dave Grundy) who have helped to implement a targeted programme of action in priority landscape areas across the Midlands.

One of the main aims of the Countdown 2010 project has been to work in collaboration with partnership organisations to improve the management of sites supporting our nationally important species. Key work areas have included the South Shropshire Woodlands where substantial work has gone into extending open south-facing areas for the **Wood White**, the Malvern Hills where the **High Brown Fritillary** at last appears to be increasing in numbers in response to a range of management techniques, the North Shropshire and Staffordshire Woodlands where research work has been focussed on identifying the habitat requirements of the **Argent & Sable** so this knowledge can inform site management, and Cannock Chase where management recommendations have been made as a result of survey work on **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** and **Welsh Clearwing**. Close liaison has also been maintained with the Herefordshire Community Commons Project which is being run by the Herefordshire Nature trust as this project involves key sites such as Ewyas Harold Common.

Trial restoration work has also been undertaken during the past two years on brownfield sites ranging from restored collieries to active quarries. In the Notts/Derbyshire border area, features for **Dingy Skipper** have been incorporated into widespread restoration of colliery sites. Good progress has been made with a number of companies including Network Rail, St Modwen Plc, the Coal Authority and Cemex, all of whom are starting to implement habitat improvements on their land.

Another recent development has been the Back to Orange Project, currently underway in the Wyre Forest area. The Project is currently being funded by the SITA Trust to help conserve the fritillary butterflies for which the Wyre Forest is still so well known. While the Back to Orange Project stands alone, it is also part of the larger Heritage Lottery Funded 'Grow with Wyre' scheme which will help to deliver 22 very varied projects in the Wyre Forest area over the next four years.

The Back to Orange Project will enable a three year survey, monitoring and research programme to be focused on key Lepidoptera such as **Pearl-**

bordered Fritillary, Common Fan-foot, Silver-washed Fritillary and Wood White. It will allow essential restoration work in six special areas to maintain fritillary strongholds for future generations and, it will hopefully result in many more local people being involved in Lepidoptera survey and monitoring work in the future as a result of training events set up through the 'Grow with Wyre' scheme.

So although the Countdown 2010 funding is now coming to an end, both Jenny and Jane will continue to work for Butterfly Conservation for six months post March 2008. During this time, their main work area will be developing funding applications to enable more vitally important project work to continue in the region for at least the next three years. Jenny will also continue to help the Forestry Commission manage the Back to Orange Project and develop additional funding bids to help to implement the Forestry Commission/BC Conservation Strategy 2007-2017 that was launched last year.

Herefordshire Butterfly and Moth Group

Dean Fenton

We are setting up a group in the county this year to organise more recording, occasional social meetings, etc. Attendance at group events is not restricted to BC members and we hope to see interest from other naturalists, members of the HNT, Herefordshire Ornithological Society and others.

The inaugural meeting is at 7:30pm on February 19th in the Swan Inn at the bottom of Aylestone Hill, Hereford (by the roundabout where the Worcester Road comes in.) If you cannot make that, but want to hear about other events email me or ring 01568-611575. We will use this meeting to work out what people want and to organise our programme.

As we have no specific budget, all our main communications will be by email.

The Shropshire Butterfly Group

Jenny Joy

The group is now in its second year and still going strong. Four events have been held this autumn with another three planned for the next few months. We recently held a very successful work day at a **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary** site in the Stiperstones area.

As the work involved cutting and dragging gorse (uphill!) we were very pleased to see a tractor arrive on site for the last few loads. However, the effect of the work was clear to see with additional habitat for this butterfly immediately created.



The tractor in action
© Jenny Joy

We also recently held two indoor meetings. The annual meeting was held at the Preston Montford Field Centre and a very successful event. A Telford sub-group meeting was held at the Green Wood Centre, Coalbrookdale.

We also joined Adrian Miles for a work day at the Haycop in Broseley in November. The Hay Cop used to be a good site for **Dingy Skipper** and **Common Blue** but it is has been deteriorating since cattle grazing ceased and the bramble took over. As Adrian appears to have now motivated most of Broseley to become involved in the restoration of this site in one way or another, the Shropshire Group were only too pleased to contribute by holding a work party there. It also gave Stephen Lewis a chance to practise his brush cutting skills somewhere other than Prees Heath!



Stephen enjoying the challenge
© Jenny Joy

Last weekend Rob Thorne led a field trip to show us how to find **White-letter Hairstreak** eggs. Much to my amazement we were successful in every location searched and I think we all went away determined to have a go in our local area. Mark Eccleston has a great description of the event on his blog <http://thegreenfingeredphotographer.blogspot.com>



© Mark Eccleston

Thanks to all Shropshire Butterfly Group members have started to make the Shropshire Butterfly Group work by carrying out targeted survey work and attending events. Thanks also to the Field Studies Council for allowing use to have use of their room for our annual meeting.

“Hands Free”? Better make that “Hands on”

John Bryan

So, the Yuletide and New Year festivities are well and truly behind us. Everyone has got what they wanted, except those of us with an increased agreement with their local banking organisation. Presents galore are now stacked in the back confines of every cupboard never to be played with. Top of the list for many, was the latest in mobile phone technology. Phones nowadays, not only have to look good, but they also have to do everything bar walk the dog and run a bath for you.

It's estimated (I don't know who does the counting) that there are 30 million old mobile phones sitting around in draws/cupboards etc. Mobile phones collecting dust, whilst their value depreciates.

Mobile phone recycling is now a huge money-spinner for many charities and The West Midlands Branch of Butterfly Conservation isn't afraid to admit it's jumping on the bandwagon. You have, or your wife/brother/grandmother/son /uncle /next door neighbour/daughter/father put in that 'junk draw' every house has, an old mobile phone you no longer use, because you've 'upgraded'.

Well, we want that phone to boost our coffers, a valuable source of funds in order that we can continue our work in all of our region.

How can you help? First, contact me with the name and model (you'll usually find the model type under the battery) of the phone, I can then find out it's value and then get a Freepost envelope to you and then you just put it in the post. If you have larger amounts of phones I can arrange a courier to pick it up.

To contact me either email Johnpbryan15@aol.com, phone 01782-518900 or write to 15 Patrick Place, Brindley Ford, ST8 7RF.

Committee members

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

Chairman	David Jackson Jacksongrus@btinternet.com	01902-344716
Conservation Officer	Mike Southall michael_southall58@hotmail.co.uk	01299-251467
Treasurer	Andy Littley andylittley@supanet.com	01562-887117
Webmaster pro-tem	Nigel Stone Njstone@hotmail.com	02476-335189
Branch Recorder		
Mapmate database	Jim Cresswell jim.cresswell@talk21.com	08702-401435
Co-ordinator/South Staffs Advisor		
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Vapourer moth egg laying and caterpillars emerging



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