



Newsletter

No. 12 October 2021

Herefordshire Newsletter October 2021

As I mentioned in my opening address of the new Autumn Comma the Senior Leadership Team at head office have now announced Butterfly Conservations 2021-2026 Strategy.

The Vision: A world where butterflies and moths can be enjoyed by everyone everywhere.

The three ambitious goals are: Halve the number of the UK's threatened species of butterflies and moths: Improve the condition of 100 of the most important landscapes for butterflies and moths: Transform 100,000 wild spaces in the UK for people butterflies and moths. The challenge for the BC branch members is to try to turn these goals into a reality.

You may also have read the good news about the Butterfly Mosaics project funded by Severn Trent. The three-year £300,000 project will enable habitat management across 60 Midlands sites, 30 of them in the West Midlands. The bad news is that Herefordshire is not included because it is not part of the Severn Trent catchment. Hopefully though the extra resources to the region should bring benefits to the whole area. The branch has funded the cutting and removal of material from Bringsty Common for the second year in succession. A new Midlands Landscape Officer has been appointed by BC who will start work full time from early November. Natalie Norton is currently working for Birmingham and Black Country Wildlife Trust as the Senior Conservation Officer.

Unfortunately, despite announcing Peta Sams as our new branch treasurer in the Comma, a change in her circumstances has meant she has decided to not take up the role. Peter Seal has kindly offered to continue with the role this year, until a new treasurer can be found. It was apparent at the recent Chairs online meeting that we are not the only branch having issues with filling committee posts, a sign of the times perhaps. Hopefully our "Give Something Back" campaign will encourage someone to step forward.

Early indications are showing that butterfly transects are showing poor results for 2021. The long cold Spring weather will have had a lot to do with this result. My Garden Moth Scheme records showed that numbers recorded were exceptionally low until the end of May when temperatures rose. I was very successful with my new set of Clearwing pheromone lures and two traps. I recorded six species in my garden and two more locally. Lovely to see these beautiful day flying moths for the first time, and surprising that they can live under our noses without being noticed. The Emperor moth lure was also





Small Timber Clothes Moth,
Triaxomasia caprimulgella,

effective and I was able to add sites for this species too. The lures are also capable of attracting other species some of which are seldom seen by other methods. One of these is the elusive Small Timber Clothes Moth, *Triaxomasia caprimulgella*, a potential Red Data Book species one, pRDB1, meaning that it is endangered. This moth was last recorded in Herefordshire in 2004 and 2005 by Michael Harper in the Ledbury and Eastnor area, associated with hollow trees. These were the only Midland records at the time. I found one on a Common Clothes Moth trap in my house this summer, which is the first Worcestershire record. It is apparently

attracted to the new Lunar Hornet Moth lure, leading to new records for it in other parts of the country.

The Branch's West Midlands Moths new online moth atlas continues to grow and be both useful and inspirational. The 2020 records have just been uploaded keeping it as up to date and accurate as possible. Thanks to all the County Recorders for verifying the records. If you use this site, then please consider becoming a Golden Cinnabar member. You will gain more detailed information about yours and others records and contribute to the running costs of the site. The worry is that without enough private contributions the Branch may be asked to make up the shortfall in running costs.

The Comma has details of work parties for all branch Counties which includes those for Herefordshire at both Ewyas Harold, and Haugh Wood, so please help if you can. The next committee meeting has been arranged for January 15th at Grafton, Worcs, and all being well, I hope to see some of you there.

All the Best,

Michael Southall WMBC Chair

Editor's Ephemera

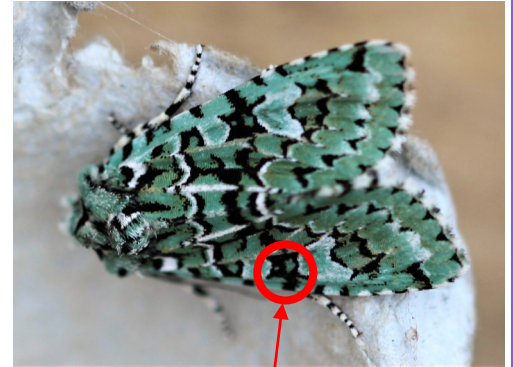
Welcome to your 2021 autumn Herefordshire Newsletter, I hope that this finds you in good heart and that you have at least enjoyed some lepidopteral sightings over the past year. I always look forward to seeing the first Orange Tip around the end of March followed closely by Holly Blues, both of these turn up in good numbers in our garden inside the city boundary. In that respect I saw some and so I looked forward to the rest of the summer with hopeful feelings. What a disappointment it turned out to be, poor weather, cold at times and wet at others resulted in low numbers of the usual species and no, or very few, representatives of the less common species. Pearl-bordered Fritillaries on Ewyas Harold Common were down as the article from Ian Hart shows and my Elephant Hawk-moth marking started late and the numbers were down by over 60% compared to the previous 2 years. However, September and October were warmer than usual and there seemed to be plenty of Red Admirals around then and even Holly Blues well into September; I also saw a Speckled Wood in the first week of October. What figures will be like next year remains to be seen but it is worth remembering that Butterflies and Moths are living creatures and that all species be they plants, animals, fungi and viruses have evolved and are still evolving to survive changes in conditions so that their species can survive and, when conditions allow, prosper.

Two other events have encouraged my hopes for the future and both involve young ladies! As a teacher of secondary school children for 35 years I know only too well of the interest the natural world engenders in many of them and I have had many examples in my career. However this year I have seen two further examples of how young children, none of them teenagers, can be excited by Lepidoptera and it is to some extent up to all of us to encourage this interest. There are two articles further on that look at this aspect of conservation and any ideas on things that we could do to encourage it further locally would be welcome.

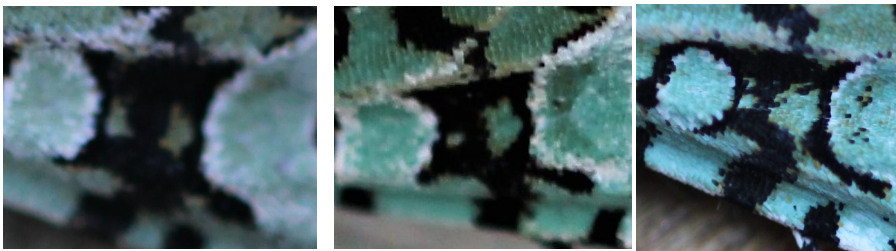
My own time this year has been curtailed somewhat by the pandemic and a new responsibility, nothing to do with conservation, that I have taken on, however, I have run the moth trap in my garden on 134 nights this year and hopefully on a few more to come before 31st December. The best night with

42 different species in the trap was on 16th July and the night that yielded the most moths was the 7th September when there was 171 individuals of 25 different species. If you have thoughts about running a moth trap but haven't taken the plunge yet, then can I encourage you to think again and have a go? You do not have to run it every night and in fact one scheme, The Garden Moth Scheme asks you to run it once a week from dates in March to September and specifies a Friday night so that you can check the contents on a Saturday morning when many people have fewer work commitments. There are many useful books available to help with identification including "Moths of the West Midlands" produced by the West Midlands Branch of BC and also two very good web-sites including www.westmidlandsmoths.co.uk

One of my favourite moths is the Merveille du Jour - *Griposia aprilina*, Merveille du Jour translates from the French as "Marvel of the Day" and its colouration certainly means that it is well named. I wondered this year if a. would I trap any and b. would any that I did trap reappear in the garden later? So when I trapped one in October I photographed it and let it go as is the norm. Later I trapped two more. photographed and released them but then spend some time studying the photographs to see if either of the second or third caught or a fourth one caught later were recaptures. As you can see from the photographs below the pattern is intricate and checking for differences is not easy, but I think I may have found one part of the pattern that shows some variation and I will spend some time working on this through the winter with photographs off the internet or from fellow trappers.



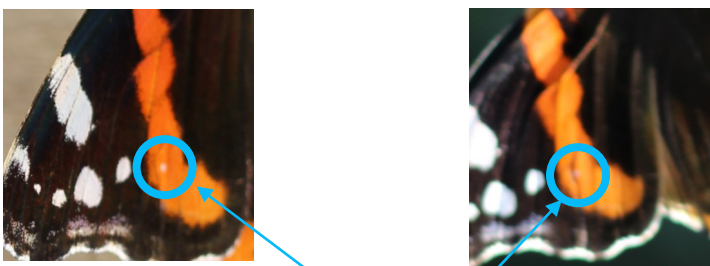
It is the mark outlined in red which appears to be variable, there may well be others or combinations of marks which could be used to identify individual members of the species.



The photographs to the left show the same marks on three different specimens trapped in my garden, all are different individual moths!

The very rare Bilateral Gynandromorph Poplar Hawk-moth I caught last year was another example of how it pays to look closely at things.

The extra white spot on the red band on the Red Admiral or the differences in the white spot on the forewing of the Elephant Hawk-moth is another.



Red Admirals with the white spot left without right



Male

Female

Differences in wing shape, wing colour and the antennae are visible.

The first time I saw the Small Copper with the extra blue spots, a variety called "caerulopunctata"

was when I had some photographs back from the developer and realised I had photographed one. I had failed to notice at the time!!! You might find it interesting if you have time and enough specimens to photograph individuals of one species to see if they reappear in your garden once or more, or are they different individuals every time.



Small Copper on left is the normal form whereas the specimen on the right is "caerulopunctata" (blue spotted).



Finally please don't leave it up to my regular contributors, if you have some interesting personal anecdote, observation or memory please tell us so we can include it in our newsletter. What is it that has aroused your interest in Butterflies and or moths? In the past I have included poems and paintings these have always been well received usually with comments such as "I wish I could do that". Your favourite Butterfly photograph and why. I would like to include them in the next issue. My sincere thanks to all who have contributed to this newsletter.

Martyn G Davies

Herefordshire Butterfly Records 2021

This has been another strange year. Cold weather in April was followed by cold and wet conditions for most of May This impacted on butterfly numbers early in the season and so emergence was 2/3 weeks later than in 2020.

Skippers

Dingy Skipper and **Grizzled Skipper** are still both very restricted in their distribution, with records for Dingy from The Doward and Bringsty Common while Grizzled has been found at The Doward and Wellington G.P . **Small Skipper** had a maximum count of 20 from Mathon. **Large Skipper** are quite widespread in the county. A few records of **Essex Skipper**, but this is almost certainly under-recorded on account of difficulty in identification.

Whites

There were very few early records of **Brimstone** , but plenty of **Orange Tips**. There was a large count of 36 **Large White** from Haugh Wood South. **Small White** and **Green Veined White** were quite common with a max count of 17 Green Veined White from Netherton Pools and a high count of 11 Small White from Tony Eveleigh at Tretire. **Wood White** have had a poor year even in their strongholds of Wigmore Rolls (17 max) and Haugh Wood (25 max). There was a partial second brood of Wood White in Haugh Wood.



Wood White nectaring on Ragged Robin

Papilionidae

Trevor Hulme recorded a single **Swallowtail** from the Monkland area in September. Was this a release or had some thatching work been carried out in the

area? (This was definitely the case with the Swallowtail recorded on Venns Lane in the 1980 where a cottage had been re-thatched and the insect had emerged to an enthralled audience of thatcher(s) and a neighbour - ed)

Browns.

Gatekeeper (max 100 plus from Moccas Hill NNR) , **Meadow Brown** (max 44 from Bodenham Lake) and **Ringlets** all had good breeding seasons. There were good counts of 20 plus **Marbled White** from Mathon, Nupend HWT reserve, Urishay Court Farm and Yarkhill. **Speckled Woods** were late emerging but then were seen in larger numbers in September with a maximum count of 15 from Common Hill HWT reserve. There was a single record of **Wall** from Richards Castle. Low numbers of **Small Heath** records from Christopher Cadbury reserve, Malvern Hills and Urishay Court Farm.

Nymphalidae

Fritillaries.

There was a maximum count of 12 **Dark Green Fritillary** from Hergest Ridge. **Pearl bordered Fritillary** numbers were down even at Ewyas Harold Common with counts of 40 and 60. There were only 2 records from Haugh Wood. A record of **Small Pearl -bordered Fritillary** was received from Anthony Furness from the Olchon valley in the Black Mountains. **Silver Washed Fritillary** had a good season with a high count of 21 from High Vinnals and plenty seen in Haugh Wood.

Other Nymphalidae

There were few early records of either **Comma** or **Red Admiral**, but numbers picked up in mid summer, with a high count of 10 Comma from Haugh Wood and 7 Red Admiral from Devereux Park. With the mild autumn weather, **Red Admirals** were seen well into October. **Small Tortoiseshell** numbers too were generally low except for a fine count of 24 from the Bunch of Carrots Stank and 16 from Sutton Hill House, Fownhope. 28 **Peacocks** were recorded from Haugh Wood in late July and 17 from Sutton Hill House. Fownhope. **White Admiral** were recorded again in Haugh Wood South , a welcome return for this elusive and fast flying insect. **Painted Lady** records were mostly individuals but were well distributed.

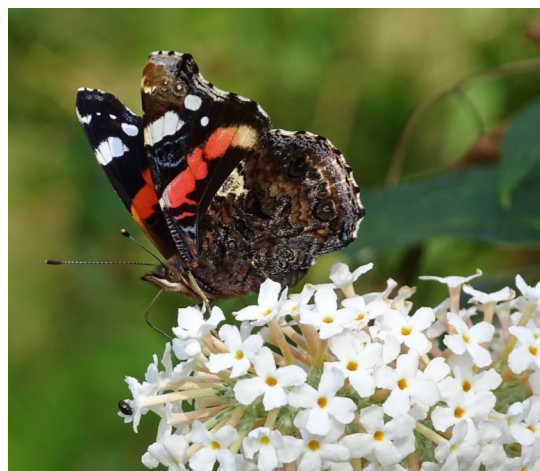
Lycaenidae

Blues.

There were plenty of early records of **Holly Blue** and a partial 2nd brood. **Common Blue** had a poor year with a high count of 10 from Urishay Court Farm. There were 3 records for **Green Hairstreak** from Coppett Hill, Hergest Ridge and the Malverns. **Purple Hairstreak** were recorded from Haugh Wood and Newton St Margarets mostly in late afternoon or evening . Dr Richard Kippax counted 27 one evening in Haugh Wood. **White letter Hairstreak** were again seen in Haugh Wood and White Rocks, nectaring on Hemp Agrimony or high up in elm trees with a maximum of 4. There were two records of



Swallowtail—I couldn't pass up the opportunity to include a picture of this beautiful insect. I don't often get the chance in the Herefordshire Newsletter.



Red Admiral nectaring on Hemp
Agrimony

Brown Argus from The Doward and Bodenham Lakes. **Small Copper** were seen in small numbers in late summer.

An HOC walk in Haugh Wood on August 3rd produced a fine list of 24 species, a remarkable total, given that the Herefordshire list is about 36 species, and at least 6 of those are very rare.

Acknowledgements.

This summary has been compiled with records from these recorders : Liam Bunce , Sarah Cadwallader, Ian Draycott, Tony Eveleigh, Dean Fenton, Toby Fountain, Anthony Furness, Bob and Penny Hall, Peter Hall, Gail Hampshire, Ian Hart, Trevor Hulme, Mike Kimber, Dr Richard Kippax, Jimmy MacDonald, Rachel Mailes, Tom Oliver, Catherine Ponting, Viv Quinn, Jeremy and Katherine Soulsby, Daniel Webb and Richard Wheeler.

Recording. The West Midlands branch of Butterfly Conservation adopted iRecord for submitting records in 2017. The iRecord website is hosted by the national Biological Records Centre.

To use iRecord :

1. Go to www.brc.ac.uk/irecord
2. Register user name and password.
3. Click on the Record tab.
4. Select the type of record you wish to submit.

A record must contain 4 essential pieces of information : who, which species, where and the date seen.

All records are then checked by verifiers for each county. For Herefordshire the verifiers are currently Ian Draycott and myself.

Website - www.westmidlands-butterflies.org.uk

Bob Hall Herefordshire Recorder Butterfly Conservation Papilionidae

During the Summer Jeremy Soulsby and I joined Bob Hall, his daughter and granddaughter who were carrying out the Haugh Wood South Transect. At the end of the walk I asked Esther if she would write a piece for the next Newsletter and she agreed; here it is! The photographs illustrating the article are her own as well - Thankyou Esther - Ed)

HAUGH WOOD TRANSECT

A beautiful morning in Haugh Wood, where the sun was beaming down on us, blessing us with it's warm rays – a PERFECT morning for butterflies!



Small Copper

I am very interested in nature and butterflies and love going to Haugh Wood with my Grandpa and Mum to spot butterflies and moths.

Hello! My name is Esther Walker and I am 12 years old. This morning however, we went on a walk with Martyn and Jeremy, and it was absolutely stunning, due to all the beautiful butterflies we saw or caught glimpses of.

One of the first butterflies we saw where the common Whites, most commonly mistaken for a 'cabbage white.' We saw the Large White and the Small White which can be defined by the spots on

their wings. Later on we saw a Green-Veined White.

Next, (one of my personal highlights) we saw the majestic Small Copper which are my favourite type of butterfly. I love them because I always think 'oh another Meadow Brown....' but then the ecstatic excitement when you realise that it is indeed, a Small Copper! I just love the vivid orange in their wings and the small but mighty factor to them, and how just generally distinguished they are!!

Also, on the walk we saw the very under – recorded Purple Hairstreak. I just loved the way the sunshine's rays bounced off the wings of it, creating a striking flash of purple that made me feel so privileged to see. I found that if I just waited and was patient enough, I would see it come out from the Oak.



Peacock

Next, we managed to have a fleeting glimpse of a Silver-Washed Fritillary, which I was extremely lucky to photograph! It was the current of a river, speeding through the woods , never stopping, restless. Again a hidden gem of Haugh Wood!!

I really feel that more and more children my age are losing interest in butterflies and nature, due to too much screen time and electronics, which is extremely sad, as when the generation above us is gone, who will look after the butterflies and the species which are dying out?! There will be no one here to see the beauty that Herefordshire has to offer. That is why its so crucial children who live in the city or don't get opportunities to see nature (that I am so lucky to have) need to come into the countryside and experience - the badger watching, the identification of birds and butterflies, experience that thrilling feeling of pride when you finally identify a rare species or type and so much more. I also think it is so important for children and adult's mental health, just to have a peek into the world of nature, and to spend a quiet moment in contact with it. And maybe one day people will realise how much this world really is in danger , and will help in the fight to protect it.

We spotted a whopping total of 75 ringlets that day, which I thought was quite a staggering total!! You find butterflies have there own sort of personality, being the ringlet quite a bouncy, optimistic butterfly, to the drooping, depressed wood white, beautiful, but sad. You get to know each butterflies flight pattern, where they like to feed and once you have your eye in the 'game' you just keep on spotting them! But this year, we noticed the wood white drop considerably in numbers, and compared to last year when I was seeing loads of wood white, there was barely any. We only saw a withering two, which just goes to show that you should never take butterflies for granted. Last year I was saying ' Oh its just another wood white' this year I was hoping to see one.

We saw lots of just amazing butterflies, far too many to write about! All of them uniquely special and beautiful.

We were trying very hard to spot the declining White Letter Hairstreak, which is becoming very rare now, due to habitat loss. This makes me feel quite disappointed and really sad, knowing that this is happening to these majestic butterflies. So when we did spot one it was a glimmer of hope in a clouded sky of change. Not only did we see one that day, but we saw 4 white letter hairstreaks in total!! Now I find these butterflies truly entrancing, the way they have a whole letter on their wings just baffles me. You can



White-letter Hairstreak



Brimstone

In total today, we saw 279 butterflies which were recorded, and saw 20 species!

Esther Walker

never quite describe the feeling when you see one of these, its a sort of mixture of excitement, empathy and awe. They are beautiful beyond compare, not to mention some of the other butterflies as well! I was extremely lucky that day, and the White Letter just sat close enough to me so I could take a picture. No camera can truly capture what I felt in that moment or the true beauty of the butterfly. I just hope that every child in the world can experience just once in their life the day that I had today.



Large Skipper

Ewyas Harold Common and the Pearl-bordered Fritillary

The results for this year were disappointing, but this was largely due to the main breeding area being subject to unwanted cutting during the larval overwintering period and it is hoped that this will not be repeated in future years. Work on the Common and the adjacent butterfly reserve has been restricted by Covid and much work needs to take place to ensure that the main breeding areas are in good condition. Unfortunately we have now lost our Reserve officer Lucy Morton and for the time being she is not being replaced. The freehold of Ewyas Harold Common has now passed to the Ewyas Harold Common Trust and it remains to be seen how the Trust is going to address the large volume of management work to keep the Common in good condition not only for the butterflies but for other important wildlife.



Pearl-bordered Fritillary

Ian Hart

Dean Fenton has now taken over as the co-ordinator of the workparties, his address is fenton@littleburyfarm.co.uk

The work party dates for the Autumn and Winter 2021/22 (all Saturdays) are:

23 Oct, 20 Nov, 18 Dec, 22 Jan, 19 Feb, 19 Mar.

Ewyas Harold Common - Pearl-bordered Fritillary Counts

Maximum number recorded in each compartment - 2012-2021

Cpt	2012	2013	2014	2015a	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
A	8 (22/05)	2 (22/05)	4 (14/05)	4 (12/05)	3 (12/05)	3 (07/05)	10 (19/05)	4 (12/05)	10 (26/04)	13 (11/05)
B	14 (22/05)	7 (22/05)	12 (14/05)	48 (12/05)	21 (16/05)	10	17	20	31 (26/04)	10 (16/05)
C	5 (22/05)	0	1 (14/05)	7 (12/05)	0	1	3	8	1 (26/04)	11 (11/05)
D	7 (22/05)	2 (22/05)	5 (14/05)	14 (12/05)	8 (16/05)	7	3	6	12 (26/04)	1 (11/05)
E	7 (12/05)	9 (22/05)	9 (14/05)	1 (12/05)	4 (12/05)	3	9	16	12 (26/04)	13 (16/05)
F	7 (12/05)	3 (22/05)	4 (14/05)	2 (12/05)	1 (12/05)	1	1	3	3 (26/04)	3 (16/05)
G	10 (22/05)	3 (22/05)	5 (14/05)	6 (12/05)	4 (16/05)	4	4	9	19 (26/04)	4 (16/05)
H	3 (12/05)	1 (22/05)	1 (14/05)	2 (12/05)	0	0	0	6	6 (26/04)	1 (16/05)
I	5 (08/05)	0	0	0	1 (12/05)	1	4	6	4 (26/04)	0 (16/05)
J	6 (22/05)	1 (22/05)	2 (14/05)	4 (12/05)	2 (12/05)	2	4	10	11 (26/04)	4 (16/05)
K	3 (08/05)	2 (22/05)	1 (14/05)	4 (12/05)	0	55	5	15	12 (26/04)	1 (16/05)
L	8 (12/05)	7 (22/05)	4 (14/05)	5 (12/05)	7 (16/05)	7	5	16	11 (26/04)	7 (16/05)
Area 2						1	6	0	n/a	0
Area 13				13 (12/05)	32 (12/05)	58	148	71c	48 (06/05)	7 (11/05)
Area 14					12 (12/05)	3	0	0	n/a	0
Area 15						14	127	34	28 (06/05)	4 (16/05)
Herp				2	0	n/a	n/a	n/a		n/a
Totals	83	37	48	112	95b	120	346	224	208d	79

Note: Prior to 2011 the peak flight period from the records occurs from 12 May to 20 May in each year, with 9 of the 12 compartments having peaks in the period 14-15 May. In 2011, however, the peak occurred early on 28 April, whilst in 2012 and 2013 the peak occurred on 22 May due to a cold and late Spring. In 2020 the peak was very early, approx. 26-27 April.

- a) Counts undertaken by Wessex Environmental Services (Clarke & Green) under contract.
- b) Over 100 individuals counted by BC South Wales Branch Members.
- c) Area 13 part-cut by Commoner for bedding in winter 2018/19.
- d) An under-estimate. There were many more butterflies in Areas 13 and 15 at the peak period, but the weather intervened to undertake a count.

Records compiled by Ian Hart.

(Ian attached the results of the count that was undertaken in the Pearl-bordered Fritillary monitoring (breeding) areas in 2021 and in the previous years. It shows how the numbers vary in the different areas and in different years. All of this emphasises the need to keep on top of the conservation work year on year. Any help on the work party days would therefore be much appreciated. Ed)

Moths from under the Black mountains

It is difficult to say whether the general moth population has increased or decreased, as so much depends on the weather, predation etc., but except for the Brimstone Moth which had an exceptionally prolific year, there seems to have been an overall decline in specie numbers and volume. Highlights of the year in seasonal order were --

15 **Red-belted Clearwings** to a pheromone trap on the BC reserve at Ewyas Harold. And then two weeks later, Peter Hall and I went looking for the **Welsh Clearwing**, a Red data-book moth, in the Black Mountains. We found it at one of the 4 pheromone traps just over the border into Wales. The moth seems to be specific to ancient Birch trees. Next year I hope to find it in Herefordshire!

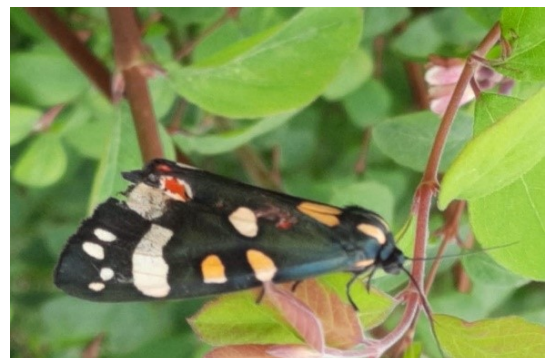


Red-belted Clearwing



Welsh Clearwing

There were 2 separate **Scarlet Tiger** records in early July. This is a moth expanding its range. We have a large patch of the larval foodplant – Comfrey, so I will be keeping a close eye for larvae next year.



Then a **Double Dart**, a few days later, a much declined species in Herefordshire

Double Dart



Then over the three nights of 23rd, 24th and 25th of July, **Large Twin-spot Carpet**, **Gold Spangle**, **Willow Ermine**, **Sharp-angled Carpet** and **Least Carpet**, made their appearance. The latter, one of our smallest Macro moths, has been slowly spreading over the last century outwards from London.



Large Twin-spot Carpet (Left) & Gold Spangle (Right)



Willow Ermine (Left) & Least Carpet (Right)



Clifden Non-pareil (Left) & L-album Wainscot (Right)



September brought a rather tired Clifden Non-pareil to the trap - the third record here. This beautiful and very large moth has recently been spreading across England after many years absence and then a few weeks ago an L-album Wainscot appeared - another recent arrival in Herefordshire.

An eventful year the highlight was finding the Welsh Clearwing.

Paddy Matthews

You Never Know

You never know what you will find when you open your moth trap, but one thing you can almost guarantee is that there will be something interesting in there. Some of you will have heard me say this

before but it is true, the only problem is that you have to look very carefully sometimes to find it. For instance I have recorded some 340 species in my garden in the last 5 years, not a large number when you think there are over 2,500 species in the country of which 1700 have been recorded in the West Midlands so I still have a long way to go. Of that some have never been recorded in Hereford because their habitat requirements are not met in our part of the country, others are restricted to areas such as the upland areas to the west of the county. So far this year I have added 42 species to my list most of which are common and I have simply not run the trap often enough to have trapped them in the past. Some were micro-moths less than 2mm long so I could have easily overlooked them, some you couldn't miss such as the Clifden Nonpareil (see separate article) or the Mocha but some you can see easily and be conned into thinking they have just a slightly different colouring to the normal species you see in large numbers. So it pays to look carefully and if in doubt ask!

On Tuesday, 13th July I found an unusually coloured Footman; now I am use to finding Common Footman, Scarce Footman, Dingy Footmen and even Rosy Footmen but this one looked slightly different, most like a Common Footman but not quite! Photographs are a permanent record so I took a few to look at more closely later and was still slightly uncertain so next thing is to ask the CMR (County Moth Recorder) – Peter Hall. Send Peter a photograph attached to an email and you often get a reply by return and you rarely have to wait anytime at all. This I did and back came the reply that it was a Four-spotted Footman which is a rare moth in Hereford, only the fifth ever location; however, another look at the photograph had me wondering – I couldn't see one spot let alone four! So out with the books "Moths of the West Midlands" p160 and all was revealed, only the female has the spots, my specimen was a male. So the mystery was solved; it was different as I decided when I found it and, thanks to Peter's help, it was identified.

As I said earlier you never know what you will find when you open the trap in a morning, but that is part of the fun.

Martyn G Davies



Four-spotted Footman—*Lithosia quadra*

A Blue-letter Day

"Granddad, what's that big moth tucked up in the corner there?"

"Which moth?"

"Oh whatever you do don't touch it I will go and get a pot to put it in."

So my two Granddaughters (10 & 7) saw it before I did, because of the angle at which it was resting. The Clifden Nonpareil or Blue Underwing as it used to be called is one of those moths that all people who trap regularly hope to have visit their trap. Probably incorrectly, I always associated it with more countryside haunts so to say that I was surprised to find it in my Hereford City garden was an understatement and although I hoped I might trap one at sometime I was not expecting it that morning, especially as it was the first record in the West Midlands for this year. A few hasty photographs were taken and then it was persuaded into a pot and placed in the fridge for more photographs later that evening.



"Tucked up in a Corner"

Now the important thing about this event is not the trapping of what is still a comparatively rare and spectacular moth in this part of Britain although it does seem to be increasing in numbers and range, but the interest that opening the moth trap has for my granddaughters. Whenever they come and visit, weather permitting, I run the moth trap! In the morning there is an enthusiasm to get down and see what the night has brought in and then to show Granny what they have seen before I let them go.

That's the moths not the granddaughters. In a former life I taught at an 11-16 high school in Hereford and just occasionally I would take the moth trap into school so that the students could see what was flying about in their gardens as well as mine overnight. Very quickly I would have 40+ students craning their necks and peering over shoulders of other students to see what was in there. They showed lots of interest and asked many questions for the next couple of days as well. Also I would then use the contents of the moth trap to illustrate evolution and camouflage, etc., to some of the older classes to help them further understand those topics which helped with their GCSE's. The moths would then have another ride back to my garden and be released. The moral of all this is quite simple we must encourage the next generation of conservationists, professional or amateur, in the development of their interest in this subject if the opportunity arises.



Clifden Nonpareil—*Catocala fraxini*
Upperside above Underside below

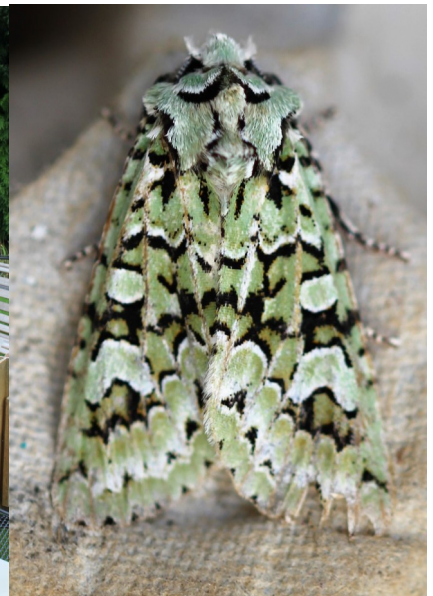


Postscript

The granddaughters visited today 26/10/21, and yet again continued the theme of interesting moths in the trap.

The great “offering” this morning was a Merveille du Jour. Not rare but how can you not be impressed by the colouration!

Martyn G Davies



Your Local Officers and Work Party Organisers.

The following are officers of the West Midlands Branch and have specific responsibilities for Herefordshire.

Conservation Officer & Ewyas Harold Reserve Mgr Ian Hart yellowrattle4@aol.com 01981 510259

Moth Officer Robin Hemming robinhemming@btinternet.com 01568 797351

Butterfly Recorders Bob Hall & Ian Draycott randphall@gmail.com 01432 850623

Moth Recorder Peter Hall peter.herefordcmr@gmail.com

Newsletter Martyn Davies martyn.davies808@gmail.com 01432 266703

Regional Officers Rhona Goddard rgoddard@butterfly-conservation.org 01746 762364

Conservation Officer Lucy Morton lmorton@butterfly-conservation.org

These people are working to help the conservation of lepidoptera in Herefordshire - Thankyou

Ewyas Harold Work Party Dates

Dean Fenton has now taken over as the co-ordinator of the Ewyas Harold work parties, his address is fenton@littleburyfarm.co.uk

The work party dates for the Autumn and Winter 2021/22 (all Saturdays) are:

23 Oct, 20 Nov, 18 Dec, 22 Jan, 19 Feb, 19 Mar.

Haugh Wood Work Party Dates

For those of you that have the lovely West Midlands Butterfly Conservation publication, the Comma, Sue pointed out that the a couple of the dates are incorrect in the magazine.

Dates for Haugh Work Parties this winter are all on Saturdays, the first one of the month ,except for January as we didn't feel working on New Years Day was ideal!

6th November

4th December

8th January

5th February

5th March

Contact Kate Woollen (07786 526280),
kate.wollem@forestryengland.uk

Or

Robin Hemming(07501 020605) robinhemming@btinternet.com

Happy Christmas

**And a
Good New
Year**

Bolivia

November
2019

There are at
least 8
species in this
single group,
some groups
had more
than 8
species.

