



Newsletter

No. 13

March 2022



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Dear Members and Friends

As I write this the latest Spring edition of the Comma magazine is at the printers and should be posted out next week. As usual it is a colourful mix of news and articles from around the West Midlands branch. Nothing directly from Herefordshire this time, so maybe consider writing an article for the next edition. In the Comma there are a good selection of events to attend during the season this year. One of the first is the Members Day and AGM scheduled for May 14th 11am-1pm. This is again a two hour zoom event with the second hour being a talk by Dave Goulson on the "Plight of Insects and what we can do for them". There are three events planned for Herefordshire all taking place at Haugh Wood. They are being led by Martyn and Bob and scheduled for the 21st May, 16th July, and 2nd August. Please have a look at the Comma, or the website, to find more detail. The Comma includes articles on the Brown Hairstreak, Orange-tip, Making it Happen, and much more besides. How do I know? - well I am one of the proofreaders. It is noticeable that in these inflationary times the costs of production and postage of the Comma are creeping up. Although an electronic version is available and is a cheaper alternative option, I still think that most people would prefer to receive a hard copy. The West Midlands branch proposed budget has taken account of Herefordshire not being included in the Severn Trent Project and has therefore allocated funding to Haugh Wood, Siege Wood, the Woolhope Dome Wood White site, and Bringsty Common.



Convulvulus Hawk-moth

Butterfly Conservation have recently defined goal three of the new strategy. This is about the vision to transform 100,000 wild spaces in the UK for people butterflies and moths. A wild space is defined as any area where butterflies and moths can complete their lifecycles. It needs to enable them to feed, breed and shelter. It is recommended that the area should also be pesticide free, using peat free compost if required, and be of a permanent nature. A good place to start is in your own garden or window box. I believe this newsletter will contain an article on gardening for butterflies. I have again planted Nicotiana seeds which have already emerged. I do this

every year so that later the heavily scented flowers might attract the spectacular Convolvulus Hawk moth. Although not guaranteed, this method has helped attract the rare migrant to my garden in Worcestershire in six of the last seven years. The more frequently seen Hummingbird Hawk-moth, another migrant moth, can also be attracted by growing plants such as Verbena, Valerian, and Salvias. There is more information on gardening for moths in the Moths of the West Midlands book should you have it.

Hopefully the warmer Spring weather will return soon, and we have a great butterfly and moth year.

Mike Southall—Chairman West Midlands Branch, Butterfly Conservation

(I was once asked by a neighbor down the road to come and see some small bats feeding on a plant in her garden, when I got there they turned out to be Hunningbird Hawk-moths - Ed)

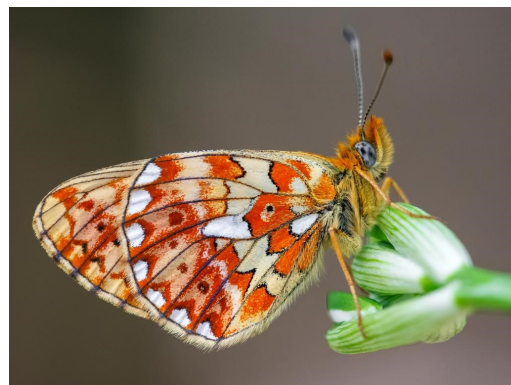
Editors Bit

Firstly an apology! This newsletter is going to be late it will say “March 2022” on the front but in reality it will be April before I complete it let alone send it out and that is down to me solely so I apologise. I also suspect that with the continued existence of covid on a large scale and thus a lack of activity on my part and some others there is less to report on although I know that work parties have happened and no doubt will have achieved some useful work to help conserve the butterflies on Ewyas Harold Common and in Haugh Wood. This work is aimed at helping conserve two rare species the Pearl-bordered Fritillary on Ewyas Harold Common and the Wood White in Haugh Wood.

It is worth mentioning at this point for new members that another group, part of the West Midlands branch are trying to reintroduce the Pearl-bordered Fritillary onto parts of the Malvern Hills and that Wood White butterflies from Shropshire and Herefordshire have been used to re-establish the Wood White in Worcestershire

Recording Butterflies is a very important part of conservation, you can only conserve them if you know where they are and as Hereford is a large county with a low population density, we need all of the records we can get. Bob Hall and Ian Draycott spend a lot of time putting records onto the Butterfly Recording Database and Peter Hall, who has now moved up to Scotland, has added thousands of records to the moth database. But we could still do with more, the butterfly hot-spots in the county get many visits and we get a lot of records either from visitors sending in records of what they saw on an occasional visit or the records from the transects that are walked weekly from March – October (roughly!). They are all vital and we are extremely grateful for them but there are lots of other sites that you could visit from time to time and send in those records. If you are a member of the Hereford Wildlife Trust or the RSPB and you visit their reserves, let us know what butterflies you saw on your visit. Even your back garden is important, as many of you know I live inside the city boundary and run a moth trap, I have now recorded over 340 species of moths in my garden including some of national importance because their occurrence is going down or occasionally because their range is expanding. So please if you manage to get out even only into your back garden send us in those records.

A simple recording form: I set one up on Excel but hand drawn would be fine; it might have the following headings. Grid Reference would be useful but an accurate location will be sufficient if you do not have



Pearl-bordered Fritillary, the 7 pearls can be seen clearly round the margin of the front wing underside.



Wood White a national rarity but with a stronghold in the West Midlands.

Species	Date	Number	Location	Habitat	Grid Ref
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A table based on the above headings will be a useful starting point for sending in records



Clifden Non-pareil what was until fairly recently a rare moth only found in some of the Home Counties has now spread up to the West Midlands. This one taken in Hereford City on 30th August 2021 was the first in the county last year. Obviously attracted by the bright lights of the city.



Small Tortoiseshells feeding on Michaelmas Daisies.

Over the years Butterfly Conservation have repeatedly encouraged people to plant their gardens with some Butterfly friendly plants. These are plants which provide nectar for visiting butterflies and moths or plants which are used as food-plants by the caterpillars. Later in this issue I have included some lists of plants that you may wish to plant in your garden. Sometimes these are plants which we may consider to be “weeds”, but the best definition of a weed is a plant growing in the wrong place so that a rose bush in a vegetable garden or the Leylandii 6 inches from my fence could be considered weeds! The range of plants used by moth caterpillars is very long indeed so you might wish to concentrate on butterflies to start!

Later in the year we are hoping to hold a “Gardening for Butterflies” Day at Radway Nurseries on the Worcester Road 3 miles out of Hereford. If we can get this set up we may be able to repeat it at other garden centres and nurseries around the county. I shall be asking for volunteers to help man the stand for an hour or so. The idea is two-fold, 1. To spread the word and show people how they can help and 2. To increase membership. More on this later but you can let me know if you are interested to help by letting me have

your name and contact details straight away!! I will try and prepare a little pack of information for you to read beforehand. Knowledge of Butterflies is more useful than knowledge of gardening or specific plants.

Identification of some butterflies can be a problem for many people especially those who have a new but developing interest in these animals. As a former teacher I would often have students come up to me and say something like I saw a “Red Admiral” yesterday, careful questioning would then confirm that it was a Peacock as both have red on them! There are some good books available which will help greatly without being very expensive and BC produce some good posters from time to time. However I thought that I would put together a small number of pages which could be printed off separately to the rest of the newsletter to help new members. These you will find at the back of this issue.

Your Local Officers and Work Party Organisers.

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

Moth Officer Robin Hemming robinhemming@btinternet.com 01568 797351

Moth Recorder Peter Hall peter.herefordcmr@gmail.com

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

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-c0nservation.org

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

Haugh Wood 2021 Season.

The recent warm weather in March 2022 has produced a whole raft of records for those butterflies that hibernate through the winter as adults : Brimstone, Comma, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and Red Admiral. Perhaps this will herald a good summer ahead.

We can all hope that 2022 will be a better season than 2021. Cold weather in April 2021 was followed by cold and wet weather for much of May. This impacted on butterfly numbers and emergence dates for many species. Many of the double brooded butterflies fared badly with Green Veined White, Comma, Common Blue and Holly Blue all experiencing their poorest seasons since 2010. This is also thought to be linked to the poor spring weather. Even Wood White numbers were down in Haugh Wood.

On a positive note, there were plenty of Ringlets and Silver Washed Fritillary records in 2021, and even fleeting glimpses of the elusive White Admirals on the south side of Haugh Wood. On 3rd August a HOC walk produced a remarkable 24 species of butterfly, including the rare Purple and White letter Hairstreaks, although most species were found only in small numbers.



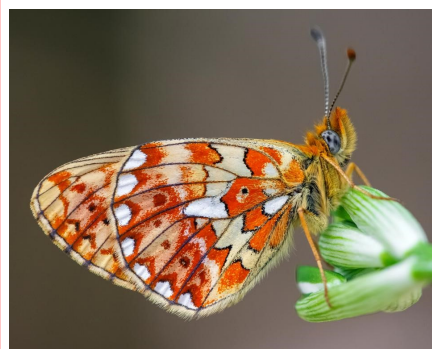
On the north side of Haugh, there were no records of Small Skipper and a sharp decline in Orange Tip sightings. On the south side of Haugh, there was a slight recovery in Small Tortoiseshell numbers, but plenty of Peacocks and good numbers of Hairstreaks.

Pearl bordered Fritillary are just hanging on in small numbers in Haugh Wood. More habitat work has been carried out on the South side of the wood and a new deer fence erected in the same area.

Bob Hall—County Butterfly Recorder

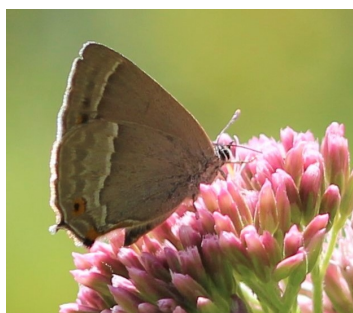
Looking for something to do one day during May? A walk down to "Butterfly Corner at the bottom of the South side of the wood searching for Pearl-bordered Fritillaries will provide a happy but possibly frustrating activity. The rides in this area are the best places to find the butterfly. Even if you do not find the Fritillary you should see a number of other species of butterfly.

The Pearl-bordered Fritillary is a national rarity and the population in Haugh Wood is hanging on by a thread so if you have the time to look and then pass on any sightings and locations to Bob it would be appreciated.



Later in the year, throughout July, this is the best area to find the rarely seen White-letter Hairstreaks and you may find Purple Hairstreaks down feeding on sources of nectar such as Hemp Agrimony, Ragwort and Creeping Thistles with them. There are a number of Dutch-Elm disease resistant Elm trees down at this end of the wood planted in the mid 1980's and other planted more recently by the foresters, these are the foodplants for the White-letter Hairstreaks whilst Oak serves the same purpose for the Purple Hairstreaks. Any records for either of these species are important.

Purple Hairstreak



Hemp Agrimony flowers being used by both Hairstreaks as nectar source



White-letter
Hairstreak





Herefordshire Butterflies - a course for beginners

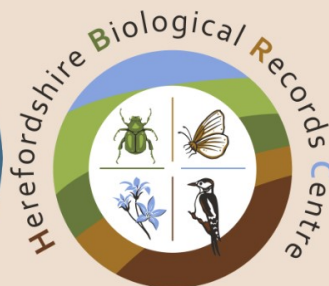
Tutors; Martyn Davies and Bob Hall

This is an ideal way to discover butterflies that can be found in the county. Under the expert guidance of Martyn and Bob we will learn about the lifecycles of the species found in wood and meadow and how to identify them in the field. On the 21st May we will search for spring species and later in July for summer ones.

21st May &
10th July
2022
10 to 3pm

Location:
Haugh Woods

To book or for more info
tim@clan-cic.org
www.hbrc.org.uk



CLaN CIC registered company 10153234

It doesn't have to be a Buddleia in a sunny corner !

The idea for many people that Gardening for Butterflies means sticking a Buddleia in a sunny Corner of their garden is about as far as it goes but it is not the "be all and end all" of the idea. There are a host of garden plants which will not only attract butterflies and moths into your garden to enjoy but also enable you to have a garden you can enjoy as well.

To my way of thinking there are a number of ways you can arrange you garden to suit your family and the local

Lepidoptera:

1. Only plant Butterfly friendly plants (BFPs), there are plenty to choose from but some are better than others
2. Plant a sunny part of your garden with those BFPs and use the rest of the garden for other purposes including plantings of your favourite non-BFP plants
3. Spot plant BFPs in amongst other plantings
4. Not do anything at all (I don't like this one!!!), but there are many gardens around me probably the majority where this is the case

My own back garden faces north that means part of the garden is in the shadow of the house and gets little or no sun, therefore, there is little point in filling it with BFPs as they wont be used by the local butterflies who will migrate to the sunny part of the garden. However the corner which is farthest from the house gets lots of sun in the late afternoon and evening and has Holly and Ivy growing there, as a result I get as many as 6 Holly Blues flying around at the same time during their flight periods.

When we talk about BFPs we usually mean those plants which provide nectar for adult insects but there are a number of attractive plants which are use as what we call Larval Foodplants, ie the butterfly's caterpillars use them as a food source, which means they eat the leaves and sometimes other parts of the plant. It does not necessarily mean that the plants won't also provide nectar to adults insects as well.

So keeping that in mind the next few pages give you a few hints and tips and a selection of photographs of some of the plants which are suitable. After that it is down to individual choice

Tips on how to attract butterflies:

1. Butterflies like warmth so choose a sunny, sheltered spots when planting nectar plants.
 2. Choose different plants to attract a wider variety of species.
 3. Place the same types of plant together in blocks.
 4. Try to provide flowers right through the butterfly season.
- Spring flowers are vital for butterflies coming out of hibernation



Dwarf Buddleias may solve a problem in smaller modern gardens



Verbena bonariensis grows into a striking spot plant reaching well over a metre in height



Red Valerian a useful BFP reaching 60-70 cms but might some containment as it can spread.

- and autumn flowers help butterflies build up their reserves for winter.
5. Prolong flowering by deadheading flowers, mulching with organic compost, and watering well to keep the plants healthy.
 6. Don't use insecticides and pesticides - they kill butterflies and many pollinating insects as well as ladybirds, ground beetles and spiders.
 7. Don't buy peat compost. Peat bogs are home to many special animals and plants, including the Large Heath butterfly, which is declining across Europe. There are now good alternatives to peat available from garden centres.

Below is a chart showing the flowering times and the range of colours that the plants can produce, the range is increasing each year. Other plants are shown in picture format

Plants to grow for Butterflies and Moths												
	jan	feb	mar	apr	may	jun	jul	aug	sep	oct	nov	dec
Buddleia davidii												
Buddleia weyerana												
Buddleia Buzz (Dwarf)												
Oregano (Marjoram)												
Verbena bonariensis												
Perennial Wallflower Bowles Beauty												
Lavender												
Dahlia Coltness Hybrids												
Heliotrope												
Holly												
Ivy												
Willow												
Aubretia												
Cuckoo Flower / Ladies Smock												
Honesty												
Heather - Calluna vulgaris												
Heath - Erica spp												
Primrose												
Thyme												
Sedum - Hylotelephium spectabile												
Michaelmas Daisies												
Forget me not												
Dandelion												
Cosmos												
Honeysuckle For Moths												
Nicotiana For Moths												
Centranthus ruber "Red Valerian"												



Cosmos



Erysimum—Perennial Wallflower



Lavender



Heliotrope



Buddleia globosa



Buddleia weyerana



Buddleia davidii



Dahlia Coltness Hybrids

The best plants for summer nectar:

Buddleia (The butterfly bush). Very easy to grow in almost any soil. Different varieties will flower in pink, red, purple, and white. Usually in bloom through July and August. These shrubs need pruning well in Spring as they can grow 5' to 8' from the ground in a single season.

Verbena bonariensis. Stems up to a metre tall support heads of lilac-purple flowers from August to October. Easy to grow from seed, plant March to April in well-drained soil. These can provide useful height at the back of a border. Only half hardy so can be a short-lived perennial.

Lavender. Flowers are a purplish-blue in colour and grow on spikes through the summer. Plants can be used for edging beds or grown to form an attractive, low-growing hedge. It thrives in a sunny, sheltered position in well-drained soil. Lavender should be planted in April or May and pruned back to encourage bushy growth.

Perennial Wallflower (Bowles Mauve). Produces a profusion of sweet-scented purple flowers from April all through the summer. Wallflowers make great bedding plants and will grow well in full sun or light shade. Plant in well-drained soil.

Marjoram (Oregano). A perennial herb, growing from 20 to 80cm tall. White, pink or purple flowers grow on spikes from June to September. A good edging plant and useful ground cover, requiring little maintenance. The smaller varieties also do well in rock and alpine gardens.

There are plenty of other plants and you will find lot of information on the internet including on the public access part of the RHS web-site. As a rule of thumb if you buy modern hybrids then they may not produce as much nectar as older hybrids. Sedum spectabile is still the best "Ice Plant" not the hybrids.



Marjoram and Oregano are also good plants for butterflies



Don't forget the moths!

Moths are no different to Butterflies, they need two types of plant to survive their larval food-plant of which there are thousands some very common others rare, which obviously determines where the moth is found to a large extent. The other is the adults nectar source. One guide to plants which may be useful as nectar sources for night flying moths is their scent. If they smell best at night such as Honeysuckle or Nicotiana (Tobacco Plant) then there is a good chance they will moth friendly.

← Nicotiana

← Honeysuckle

Humming Hawk-moth on V. bonariensis



We have over previous editions of this newsletter featured photographs by a large number of people which as well as illustrating the articles also illustrate the skill of the photographer. We have had examples of poetry by different writers and also artwork in different media. Hopefully you enjoy these essays into the world of art. In the last issue we had an article by a young lady still in secondary school who wrote expressing her thoughts on some aspects of conservation. There is nothing more that I would like but to have too much material for the next issue so please what ever your talents put them to use now for our benefit. Unfortunately I cannot find the origin of these photographs and thus the creator of these beautiful moths. I think they are stunning, if they are yours please let me know and I will give them credit in the next newsletter. My apologies to their creator and can you let me know the identity of the third moth.

Martyn Davies



← Elephant
Hawk-moth

Clifden
Nonpareil →

Moths in Herefordshire 2021 - Well one small part of it!

First a piece of serious news that I hope will spark a response somewhere if not straight away. Herefordshire will need a new moth recorder at sometime in the next two years as the current recorder, Peter Hall has left us and moved from Bringsty Common to the Black Isle in Eastern Scotland. Peter probably won't thank me for this but if you are interested I suggest you contact him directly in the first instance. (E-mail Local Officers—Page 3). Peter has done a fantastic job in bringing the Hereford Records up to date but the time it takes to move house has meant that he has had precious little time to write the sort of report he would like for this newsletter.

Last year I recorded 46 new species of moth in my small back garden which lies within the city limits on a 1960's built estate; that takes the total for the last 6 years up to 345 and I can add one new species to that list already this year (Dotted Border). Two of the records I have added were of importance locally and one of them, the Clifden Nonpareil I wrote about in the newsletter last year. The second was a male Four-spotted Footman that turned up on 13th July. Since 1900 this was only the 7th record in 120 years. Why is it called the Four-spotted Footman I can hear you ask? Well only the female has spots the male does not but it does have the bright yellow/orange patch on its "shoulders".



Four-spotted Footman

Other new species included Common Swift, Golden Argent (a Micro-moth), Least Black Arches, Lichen Button (a Micro-moth), Mocha, Phoenix and Tawny-barred Angle. I guess non of these are rare but it was a pleasure to record each of them as a new species last year. Another point is that having recorded the macro-moths for 6 years I am now a little more able to start to identify (with help) more of the micro-moths that turn up, some of these are stunning when see via an enlarged photograph in books.

My thanks to a number of people who helped run a project into some aspects of the Elephant Hawk-moth a more full report on your efforts will be circulated later but anyone who reads this and has not taken part so far and who would like to join us this year please contact via email. The more people involved the better it will be.

Martyn Davies



Common Swift
Mocha



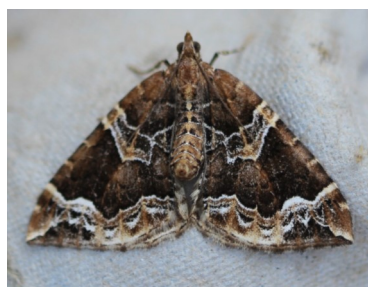
Golden Argent
Phoenix



Least Black Arches



Lichen Butt
Tawny-barred Angle



Butterflies of Herefordshire



Common
Blue
Male
Female



Brown Argus



Holly Blue



Green Hairstreak



White-letter Hairstreak



Purple Hairstreak



Small Copper

Lycaenids Blues, Coppers & Hairstreaks



Butterfly
Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

West Midlands Branch
Herefordshire Group

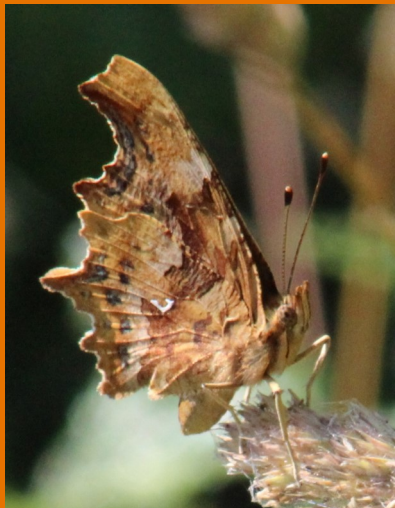


Butterflies of
Herefordshire

Nymphalids including the
Fritillaries



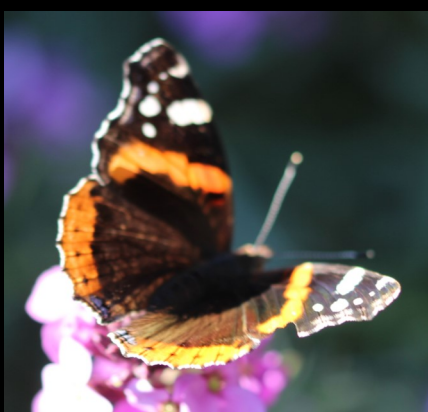
Comma



Peacock



Red Admiral



White Admiral



Painted Lady



Silver-washed Fritillary



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary & Pearl-bordered Fritillary



Dark Green Fritillary



Butterflies of Herefordshire

Nymphalids - "Brown Butterflies"



Meadow Brown



Gatekeeper



Ringlet



Marbled White



Speckled Wood



Small Heath

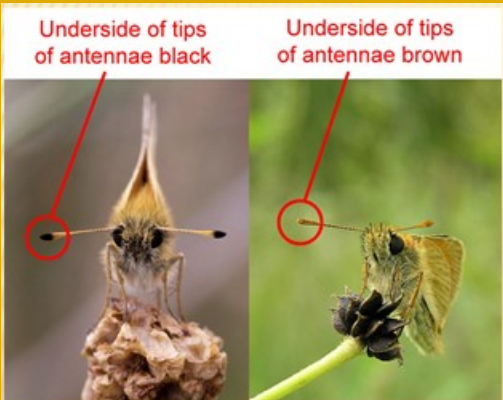


Wall (Brown)



Grayling

Butterflies of Herefordshire
Skippers



Underside of tips of antennae black

Underside of tips of antennae brown



Butterflies of Herefordshire - Skippers



Large Skipper



Grizzled Skipper



Dingy Skipper

Butterflies of Herefordshire

Pierids - "White Butterflies"



Brimstone (Male)



(Male) Orange Tip



(Female)



Large White



Small White



Green-veined White



Clouded Yellow



Wood White

