



Newsletter

No. 14 November 2022



**Butterfly
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

Dear Members and Friends

It was good to be able to hold a face-to-face branch committee meeting again at the beginning of October. This was the first since just before lockdown in 2020. The meeting was held at the refurbished Grafton Parish room in Worcestershire. Herefordshire was well represented by Martyn Davies. Robin Hemming sent his apologies, but his very useful update was read to the committee. He reported that work parties had continued successfully at Haugh Woods and Ewyas Harold Common which had been mostly well attended. Of our key species he was sad to report that Pearl-bordered Fritillary had not been recorded at Haugh Woods for the first time in living memory and hoped that they were not lost. P-b Fs had an average year at Ewyas Harold Common. Wood Whites fared a bit better at Haugh though it seemed a small second brood. He was not sure if drought or if the ever increasing Muntjac population had reduced the amount of food plant. The committee commented that a substantial fence had been erected at Haugh Woods to help prevent further degradation to the environment by Muntjacs. Robin believed that Wood Whites had another good year at Wigmore Rolls.



Robin had held three moth breakfasts during the year which were well attended. He added that there is a lot of new interest in moth recording in the county and Peter Hall and himself had been helping people with their many queries. He added that the West Midlands Moth Atlas is an absolute triumph for which we should all be very grateful and the product of a united branch. Peter Hall has recently informed me that the 2021 verified moth records have been added to the Atlas keeping it as up to date and relevant as possible. An annual subscription to the site will give users more information about theirs and others records and help pay for the sites running costs. There is more information on the otherwise free to access website. As many of you will know Peter Hall is now living on the Black Isle in Scotland. His recent article in the Autumn edition of the Comma explains why he moved and also why he is remaining as the Herefordshire County Moth Recorder. The well-illustrated article tells us what moths he is finding at his new home. He ends by saying that he is already looking forward to 2023 and hopes to see some of you when he returns to Herefordshire for more socialising and moth trapping or if you decide to venture north.

Natalie Norton the BC Midlands Landscape Officer gave an update to the committee. In

Herefordshire site visits were made to Herefordshire Wildlife Trust nature reserves, Siege Wood and Haugh Wood where Wood Whites were recorded at both. An undergraduate research project had been completed at Bury Ditches and Wigmore Rolls with the report not received yet. The student completed egg searches and adult surveys, as well as looking at available Wood White habitat in scallops created between 2016 and 2021, and verges adjacent to scallops.

Branch funds were requested to complete habitat management works at Haugh Wood to benefit Wood White as the Severn Trent Water project does not cover Herefordshire. At Siege Wood the landowner was happy for BC to fund targeted management works again this winter using branch funds. The question was added would Ledbury Naturalists be interested in holding a work party at Siege this winter?

The Herefordshire Wildlife Trust sites manager was to be contacted to discuss management. At Ewyas Harold Meadows a Local Wildlife survey was undertaken by Sue Holland of Herefordshire Meadows Group in June to assess the site against the local site criteria. The reserve is considered a really wonderful site with many good species and should easily reach the standard for a local wildlife site.

I am just settling after returning from a fortnights holiday to the sauna like Peruvian Amazon which included Herefordshire's own Martyn Davies and others from the West Midlands Branch. We saw some truly amazing wildlife including many butterflies and moths and their habitat. I am not sure if I dreamt it, but we did hear reports of an exceptional period for moth migration during our absence which included the rare and beautiful Crimson Speckled moth to Herefordshire. As my wife reminded me, I didn't have to go away.

Mike Southall—Chairman West Midlands Branch, Butterfly Conservation

Editor's Ramblings

Once again I must start with an apology for what will undoubtedly be the late arrival of this Newsletter. It is nothing to do with Butterfly Conservation but my own personal circumstances which have changed and have held up both the collection of information and then the production of the Newsletter - my apologies. I hope you think it is worth the wait!.

I am going to start my piece taking you back to 2014/5. The then West Midlands Branch Committee decided to try to start five local groups within the umbrella of the West Midlands Branch; this was to have been one for each of the five counties Herefordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, West Midlands and Worcestershire. After a period of thought and wondering! Some of us tried to comply with this committee decision and start a Herefordshire Group. We organised a Member's Evening which the then branch chairman, Peter Seal, chaired for us, we organized a walk in Haugh Wood which was open for anybody to join and we started the newsletter, the latter has been going now for 7 years. COVID put paid to Member's evening's although we did hold them in 2017/8/9, and we have not restarted them since; perhaps next year? An attempt to start a local group was made in Staffordshire and I found out recently that an attempt was also made in Shropshire which likewise did not make a lot of progress. Now to October 2022; the branch committee met face to face for the first time since pre-COVID and the policy of establishing local groups was highlighted and it was agreed to start again where it had not happened before and to try



to improve the Herefordshire Group in particular in our ability to communicate with members. The data protection act makes that far more difficult than it should be. To this end there will hopefully be an article in the next edition of the Comma about this matter and the local branch will attempt to find a better method of communication for all members whether they have an email address or not. In the meantime it would be helpful if those of you who receive this email (or read it on the West Midlands Branch website) could get in touch with me address, tel number or email with your thoughts on what you would like to see a local group do. Remember that Branch events wherever they are held are open to all members whether there is a local group or not. Thankyou in advance for your help with this matter, please have your say or pass on your ideas. One area it would be good to work on would be activities for younger people. There will be more on this topic I feel sure.

We are about to purchase some display boards on which we will display material on Gardening for Butterflies, these will then be available to loan, display or take to Garden Centres and Nurseries, both to spread the word and hopefully recruit. If you know of any "suitable material" out there please let me know.

Have you any butterfly or moth records that you have not yet passed on or recorded. Butterfly records should go to Bob Hall or Ian Draycott, and Moth Records should go to Peter Hall if you have a photograph and, as you know, those of you with camera phones can get very good images from them, forward your records with a photograph. All records are of value both for keeping the database up to date but also for identifying movements in different species. Records have shown a change in the areas of Herefordshire where Marbled White can now be found. Our recording efforts have enabled us to track those movements.

Earlier in the year Bob Hall and I led a two-day course on butterflies, during the first morning we looked at Butterfly Identification as usual but we also included some aspects of Butterfly biology which from feedback we received was well received. Tim Kaye who organised the course through the "Cultivating Learning in Nature" Programme is organising a follow up day next year and Bob and I will again be leading the event, but I wondered if members might like a day with some more identification for beginners and also some more biological and ecological input, any thoughts please contact me.

A number of moth trappers in and around Herefordshire have been looking into one aspect of the life of the Elephant Hawk-moth. The results of our work have been inconclusive but not without some value. I hope to include a full report in our next issue but in the meantime I would like to thank them all for their efforts with this venture. Recording the presence or absence of a species is extremely important for a number of reasons as mentioned above, however, trying to explain those aspects of their life-cycle or absence from what appears to be a good site is just as important especially with the rarer or endangered species. It only leaves me to thank all of you who have sent in records (or are going to do so!); thank the people who have contributed to this newsletter and to wish you all a Happy Christmas and a Good New Year

Martyn G Davies



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

Heritage Fund
Herefordshire Biological Records Centre
Cultivating Learning in Nature CIC
CLAN CIC registered company 10153234

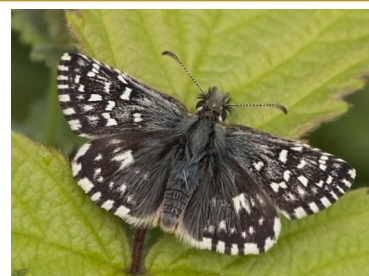
A follow up day is being organised for 2023



Elephant Hawk-moth

Herefordshire Butterfly Records 2022

Skippers **Dingy Skipper** and **Grizzled Skipper** are still both very restricted in their distribution, with 3 records for Dingy only from Ewyas Harold Common while Grizzled has been found at The Doward and Ewyas Harold Common. **Small Skipper** had a maximum count of 30 from Urishay Court Farm and 27 from Garway Common. **Large Skipper** are quite widespread in the county with a maximum of 12 from Haugh Wood. A few records of **Essex Skipper**, but this is almost certainly under-recorded on account of difficulty in identification.



Grizzled Skipper



Dingy Skipper

Whites There were plenty of **Brimstone** records with a highest count of 7 from Dulas. Plenty of **Orange Tips** in April with a large count of 11 from Haugh Wood. **Small White** and **Green Veined White** were quite common with a max count of 30 for Green Veined White from Breinton and 8 Small White from Bull's Hill. Small White had a good summer brood with a remarkable count of 50 plus from Mrs Janette Fulwood at Risbury. **Large White** were again common with a high count of 8 from Haugh Wood. **Wood White** have had a poor year even in their strongholds of Wigmore Rolls and Haugh Wood (10 max). Wood White were also recorded in Seige Wood (max 10). There was a partial second brood of Wood White in Haugh Wood. A single record of **Clouded Yellow** was reported from Bodenham Lake.



Wall Brown (Above & Below)

Browns. **Gatekeeper** (max 48 from Ewyas Harold Common) **Meadow Brown** (max 200 plus from Urishay and 138 from Oak Tree NR) and **Ringlets** (max 60 at Urishay) all had good breeding seasons. There were good counts of 30 plus **Marbled White** from Nupend, Urishay Court Farm and Woodside HWT reserve, but the population at Wessington HWT reserve has almost disappeared. **Speckled Woods** were widespread with a high count of 12 from Devereux Park. There was 4 records of **Wall** from Brampton Wood, Hanter Hill, Old Ashmoor and Merbach Hill (max 2). Low numbers of **Small Heath** records from Hanter Hill (max 18) and other spots near Kington.



Fritillaries. There was a maximum count of 21 **Dark Green Fritillary** from Bradnor Hill. **Pearl bordered Fritillary** numbers were slightly down even at Ewyas Harold Common with a high count of 80. 3 were recorded at Coppett Hill. There were no records from Haugh Wood. **Small Pearl bordered Fritillary** were recorded from Hanter Hill and Ewyas Harold Common with a high count of 8 from Hergest Ridge. **Silver Washed Fritillary** had a good season with a high count of 16 from Haugh Wood. The rare dark form of **Valezina** was spotted in Checkley.

Theresa de la Fuente submitted a record of **High Brown Fritillary** found and identified by her father, Roy Strange, in Brampton Bryan Woods in July 1980.

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 and 15 Red Admiral from Haugh Wood. **Small Tortoiseshell** numbers too were generally low except for a fine count of 26 from Pontshill. 45 **Peacocks** were recorded from Haugh Wood in late July. **White Admiral** was recorded in Checkley but not elsewhere. **Painted Lady** records were mostly individuals but were well distributed. A high count of 8 from Haugh Wood.



High Brown Fritillary

Don't often have chance to put a picture of a High Brown in the newsletter, so here is one for "old times sake".

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 15 from Urishay Court Farm, but there was an improvement in numbers of the 2nd brood. Tom Oliver counted a remarkable 234 in 5 minutes on an uncut piece of field at Urishay in mid August. There were 3 records for **Green Hairstreak** from Hergest Ridge. **Purple Hairstreak** were recorded from Buckenhill, Haugh Wood, The Doward, and Wofferwood Common with a maximum count of 19 from Mick Colquhoun in Haugh Wood at the height of the summer heat in July. They had descended from the oak trees and were sheltering from the sun underneath the oak leaves. **White letter Hairstreak** were again seen in Haugh Wood nectaring on Hemp Agrimony or high up in elm trees with a maximum of 3 from Hoarwithy. There were four records of **Brown Argus** from Colwall, Haugh Wood, Wessington HWT reserve and Sutton Walls. **Small Copper** were seen in small numbers in late summer from a variety of sites.

Acknowledgements.

This summary has been compiled with records from these recorders :

Philip Bauer , Liam Bunce , Sarah Cadwallader, Mick Colquhoun, Ian Curtis, Ian Draycott, Tony Eveleigh, Dean Fenton, Jill Fountain, Toby Fountain, Bob and Penny Hall, Ian Hart, David Hemming, Dr Richard Kippax, Tom Oliver, Viv Quinn, Jeremy and Katherine Soulsby, Heather Walker, Richard Wheeler and Jane Wise.

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 verifier is currently the author.

Website

www.westmidlands-butterflies.org.uk

Bob Hall Herefordshire Recorder Butterfly Conservation

Editor's Note - Records for Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary are getting fewer in number so all records are of value. The area in question is also close to areas where Dark Green Fritillary are found. So if you are out and about in that area next year between May and July those are two species well worth looking out for. Perhaps we can organize a walk in that area open to all?



Silver-washed Fritillary
normal form below
valezina above



Small Pearl-bordered
Fritillary above and
below. Picture s taken
by Richard Wheeler on
Hanter Hill close to
Hergest Ridge.



Notable Moths in 2021

The county database went off to Butterfly Conservation in early June this year with mostly 2021 records submitted. All in all around 41,000 records went over and for that I'd like to say thank you and well done. It was sent over slightly later than usual for a whole host of reasons, but I am still expecting the West Midlands Moth Atlas to get updated around October time with 2021 data. Please renew your subscription to the website to keep it running. I get a mixture of records sent over and I feel my role as your County Moth Recorder (CMR) is to accept records in any format and my challenge is to convert them into Mapmate compliant records in a standard format. So from paper notebooks to iRecord it takes countless hours of work, checking and re-checking and getting your data in. For example, although iRecord now does a Mapmate compliant export of data, and all records have already been verified by myself, it still took me around 10 hours to get the data looking perfect for 2021.

After the last edition where it was suggested that you need to find a new CMR soon, I'd like to say that I announced that I was moving home to Scotland but would carry on as your CMR for at least 2 more years. This was for two reasons. Firstly, to see if you are all happy with a remote CMR and secondly to see if I still wanted to be involved after moving away. The fact that I am still editor of the Bucks Invertebrate Group Bulletin having moved away from Bucks in 2007, suggests that my interest as your CMR should remain. So assuming you are all happy with what I'm doing, then you can all relax and put the trap on more than before. If the situation does change for whatever reason., I'll give plenty of notice.

I did return to Herefordshire in late June this year and managed to run some traps here and there and hopefully this will be an annual event for me and a good chance to meet some of you along the way. Anyone offering Welsh Cakes will get a visit.

The county database is currently showing 573,743 records. I'm sure we'll go well past the 600,000 mark this year. Of that, ignoring aggregates, we have 1629 species recorded in the county. So what's of interest from 2021?

We continue to record a few Kent Black Arches which suggests it is now resident here, and as of the end of 2021 we now have 6 records – thanks to Ray Birchenough finding one last year. Obscure (Gail Hampshire and Rick Benson-bunch) and L-album Wainscot (John Walshe 6 records plus Ian Draycott 2 records, Paddy Matthews and Jill Fountain one each) also continue to be recorded in low numbers each year. The third record for White-point also caught by Penny Richmond in her garden. We also had the second record for Twin-spotted Wainscot after the first in 2020 caught by Richard Clements. John Walshe recorded 2 Marbled Green this year, the first since 1982. Robin Hemming had 2 Scarce Silver Y to his garden trap, this one turns up occasionally. And Ray Birchenough had 2 Ni moth to his garden trap. And the second and third records for Yarrow Pug, this time in Hereford by John Walshe and just goes to show it is worth potting those pugs for me to look at. Cypress Carpet records keep coming in after the first record in 2018. This time from Phyl King and Linda Moseley providing the second and third records in 2021. Richard Clements



Kent Black Arches



L-album Wainscot



White Point



Marbled Green



Scarce Silver Y

had a Juniper Carpet in his garden this year, only the fifth record for the county. And Least Carpet is still turning up. I know towards the home counties this moth can be extremely numerous, so 3 2021 records by myself, Ray Birchenough and Paddy Matthews brings the total to 10 records now. Hawk-moths are also in the news. More records for Privet and Pine Hawk-moths. Well done John Walshe who recorded both, but also Jill Fountain and John Goldrick who both had a Pine Hawk in their garden traps. Migrant Hawk-moths also occurred with a Bedstraw Hawk recorded by Richard Clements and Striped Hawk by Jane Mason in her greenhouse. Toby and Michelle Green had not one but two Lappets to their garden trap last year, the first records for over 10 years on this declining species.



Ni Moth



Yarrow Pug



Juniper Carpet



Cypress Carpet



Least Carpet



Lappet Moth



Bedstraw Hawk-moth



Striped Hawk-moth

The more interesting micromoths (well, for me anyway) also performed. *Eudonia delunella*, which before last year we had a single record from 1971 and before that 1892 turned up in some numbers on a farm in Brilley and also Mowley Wood, not too far away from Brilley. Rob Hemming had the first county record for *Cydia amplana* in his Bodenham garden. And John Walshe again had the first record for *Platyedra subcinerea* in Hereford. And John also recorded the first *Anarsia innoxia* for the county in Whitchurch. One of those clothes moths also turned up, again a county first and also shows it is worth keeping examples of them for me to look over, this one was *Tinea columbariella* which I caught in my garden moth trap on Bringsty Common. All of these micros were confirmed via dissection and I do encourage people to keep micromoths in particular for me to examine over Winter. You never know what you have.

Peter Hall - Herefordshire County Moth Recorder



Eudonia delunella



Cydia amplana



Platyedra subcinerea



Anarsia innoxia



Tinea columbariella

Fritillaries at Ewyas Harold Common 2022

The number Pearl bordered Fritillaries counted by BC volunteers in the fifteen monitoring compartments in 2022 was eighty. This was lower than the average count of 135 butterflies over the past ten years. This was due in part to a late and rather cold Spring but more significantly to the continuing effect of a large area of open bracken which was formerly used as a primary breeding site being cut inappropriately for bedding in the winter of 2018/2019. It is hoped that the Ewyas Harold Common Trust who now manage the site, will not permit this to re-occur in future years.

During the season two gravid Pearl bordered Fritillaries were removed under licence by the Malvern Hills Lost Fritillary Project and Reintroduction. This followed a survey, habitat assessment and report with recommendations undertaken by Sue Clarke and David Green paid for by BC on behalf of the Ewyas Harold Common Trust. Unfortunately copies of this report were not made available to the BC volunteer group working on the Common.

The highlight of the year has undoubtedly been the confirmed sighting of a Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary on Common on 14 May by BC member David Moore. Butterflies were also filmed by Dennis Longmore one month later on 14 June. It is gratifying to know that this species, which has only been recorded irregularly at Ewyas Harold in the past decade, is still hanging on, albeit in very small numbers.

Ian Hart



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary at Ewyas Harold Common. 14th May 2022.

Photographs by David Moore



Editor's Note Records of Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, as I have written earlier have become much less common over the last few years so to have records from two different sites in one spring is really good news. Hence I have no issue with including photographs of both of the specimens.

Ewyas Harold Meadow Work Parties

Tuesday 6th December
11:00-3:00pm

Tuesday 10th January
11:00am-3:00pm

Tuesday 7th February
11:00am-3:00pm

Meeting location:

Meet 11am at the northern Cwm Hill end of Ewyas Harold Common adjacent to the top cattle grid at OS SO382302. Approach from Abbey Dore off the B4347 at OS SO384306.

What to bring: Heavy duty gardening gloves, lunch and a drink. It is advisable to wear sturdy footwear including wellington boots, walking boots or ideally steel-toe capped boots. Wear clothing appropriate for the outdoors in all weather including warm and waterproof clothing. Hand tools can be provided but are in limited supply please contact the work party leader prior to attending the day if you require hand tools.

Contact: Natalie Norton, nnorton@butterfly-conservation.org / 07485372199

If you are interested in attending a work party please contact the work party leader prior to the day so that the work party leader can contact you should the event need to be cancelled at short notice e.g. in the event of poor weather conditions.

The Malvern Hills Lost Fritillaries Project...

The Reintroduction of Pearl-bordered Fritillary *Boloria Euphrosyne*

Spring 2022... We started to plan the reintroduction of Pearl-bordered Fritillary PBF, an endangered species, back on to the Malvern Hills in March 2020 following its local extinction at the end of last century – along with High Brown Fritillary and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Two years later, during April and May 2022, we reintroduced 98 PBF on to two sites - Bromesberrow Estate in Gloucestershire and Eastnor Estate in Herefordshire, the first since 1997.

Prior to release, we provided our captive-bred adults with different nectar sources including bugle but their preferred choice was the wallflower *Erysimum Bowles Mauve*. However, they were reluctant feeders and, despite continual inspection, they were not observed to mate in captivity



The start of the process, mating amongst the bracken

The males emerged up to one week earlier than the females and on release the males soon warmed up to feed in the sunshine, while the females were mated within 5-20 minutes of release on sunny days by previously released males. We observed mating lasting between 35-135min depending on the weather – the sunnier the quicker. It was reassuring to see both males and egg-laying females remaining on the same sites of release over a period of three to four weeks.

Summer 2022... The habitat soon changed from low-lying dead bracken around violets in spring and, by July, a tall canopy of bracken was growing above shade tolerant violets. The fourth instar caterpillars hibernate under bracken litter or dead leaves until early the following spring when they continue to feed on violets, moult to form the fifth instar, then pupate before emerging as the adult butterfly in April-May.

Bathurst Estate, Gloucestershire... Meanwhile we started the next captive breeding cycle in early May 2022 when we collected six gravid females from Bathurst Estate. All started to lay eggs within two days in captivity. The average life in the wild is 6-7 days (Warren M., 2021, *Butterflies*, Bloomsbury Wildlife p79) but one of our female PBF from Bathurst Estate lived for 35 days in captivity and laid approximately 500 eggs - remarkable! Our subsequent caterpillars have eaten 49 large 33cm pots of violets, with over 1900 surviving to form the fourth instar, and by mid July most



were in diapause under microwaved oak leaves.

Ewyas Harold, Herefordshire... Ewyas Harold is an attractive and successful PBF site. Last year I joined the local volunteers to support their habitat management while raising funding to support a detailed survey of the site which concluded... *“the overall condition of all surveyed areas is excellent”*. In late May we collected two gravid females from the site which laid over 100 eggs during their short lifespan of about one week – bringing the total number of caterpillars to over 2,000.

The Pearl Hotel... is an array of sheltered shelving units supporting over 100 breeding pots that surround my bungalow, including several annexes, a mobile unit called the Pearl Motel, and the Pearl Nursery for emerging butterflies in my converted conservatory. Dog violets *Viola riviniana* are grown in 13cm pots, then washed and transferred to 33cm breeding pots made up of sterilised compost, then covered in “noseeum” netting to prevent small parasitoid wasps, predatory insect larvae and small spiders that would kill the larvae very quickly.

Extreme weather July 2022... The hot weather in July could have been a disaster for our hibernating caterpillars. The Pearl Hotel was over 35°C at times in the shade while exposed pots of fresh food plant were over 45°C, but our bathroom remained at a stable 24-26 °C. So, for 3-4 weeks one of our most at risk UK butterfly species had to share bathroom facilities.

Partial Second-generation August - September 2022... Perhaps in response to a very hot summer, similar to a Mediterranean climate, easy access to larval host plants and overcrowding, 41 fifth instars formed prematurely and, eventually seven male imagines emerged (small 38-40mm wingspan, 1-2 weeks lifespan). The remaining 34 fifth instars are now in diapause along with more than 1900 fourth instars.

A Metapopulation... The success of the reintroduction depends on good habitat and on establishing an effective metapopulation where three different colonies can interact between three different sites to overcome the annual changes in weather, predation, and flora – and the unpredictable consequences of a warming climate. To ensure this happens on a larger scale, land managers are modifying their habitat management and grazing regimes while volunteers are helping to create a mosaic of habitat microclimates on individual sites.

The challenge next spring ... 2023 could be a bumper year to reintroduce more PBF on to local sites in Gloucestershire and Herefordshire as well as our third site at Swinyard Hill in Worcestershire. We could be feeding up to two thousand caterpillars when they emerge from diapause next spring 2023, although numbers will be reduced by fungal infection and various invertebrate predators that might slip through the protective netting around the large 33cm breeding pots – so *best not to count your butterflies before they pupate!*

Our first captive breeding cycle 2021-22 suggests that every fifty caterpillars require at least fifteen pots of violet plants, each grown in thirteen-centimetre pots – so we need a total of six hundred pots to ensure all our caterpillars survive until pupation – *this is the challenge!* Fortunately, 21 volunteers from Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire are growing many hundreds of



The residential facilities provided for the “Pearls”



Violets being grown on ready for the voracious caterpillars

Dog Violets *Viola riviniana* in preparation for the emerging fourth instars next spring, and also to support the third captive breeding cycle in 2023-24.

“If you plan to visit the sites please stay on the public footpaths and avoid trampling on the vulnerable reintroduction areas.”

Thanks **Mel Mason – MHLF-Project Leader & BCWM Vice-chair**

I am sure everyone wishes Mel and his team of volunteers every success in 2023 and that the Pearl-bordered Fritillaries will be successfully reintroduced to the southern Malvern sites - Editor



An egg attached to a dead bracken frond.

Calendar

**£8 or
£15 /2**



If you would like a copy send a cheque for £8 (£15 for two) made out to Butterfly Conservation (West Midlands branch) to WMBC, 2 Dewberry Close, Stourport, Worcs DY13 8TB. The price includes postage but don't forget to supply your full postal address. It is possible to pay by bank transfer and if you would like to do this email wmbutterflies@gmail.com The calendar features a selection of images taken largely by our local members and all profits will go towards the conservation of butterflies and moths in the West Midlands.

Collect from 11 Rowland Close Hereford HR1 1XF Phone 01432 266703 Cash or cheque only

Cover image: Chris Stamp.

A Walk on the Wildlife Side

This was a repeat of walks undertaken by the City Branch of the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust in 2021 and again I was honoured to be asked to lead them. The idea was to visit Haugh Wood and wander around the North side of the wood in the morning with the hope of seeing a White Admiral and then visit the South side in the afternoon on a “Hairstreak Hunt” - White-letter and Purple. The walk was open to members of City Branch HWT many of whom are also members of BC. The summer of 2022 has not always been kind to Butterflies so it was with some relief that we eventually reached a total of 21 species for the day; a good total in 2022. The idea is for people to be given tips to help them identify similar species such as the Small and Green-veined Whites, get to know the various species all of which may be encountered in other parts of the county and to find less common species.

White Admiral Safari

The morning hunt for the White Admiral was unsuccessful in finding this butterfly; if it had been there it was probably too late to see at the end of July. It had been widespread throughout the wood in the 1980s but had not been recorded there for a number of years until 2020 when it was recorded on the North side. Its disappearance was probably due to the rides which it favoured becoming shaded out by the trees resulting in its foodplant, honeysuckle, dying out.

However, we were able to see and successfully identify 13 species of Butterfly. Amongst them was a bright yellow male Brimstone, a number of Silver-washed Fritillaries. It was also satisfying to see a number of second brood Common Blues, satisfying because the first brood had not been strong.

Ringlets were the most common species with plenty of Gatekeepers around and Meadow Browns in the more open areas, as ever there were a number of Speckled Woods. Of the Whites Large, Small and Green-veined were all recorded. Some of the brightly coloured and strong flying Nymphalid Butterflies were also seen including Peacock, Red Admiral and Comma: the latter sometimes referred to as the Herefordshire Butterfly from the time one hundred years ago when it was only found in or near the Wye Valley in Herefordshire and the adjoining counties of Monmouth and Western Worcestershire. This area would have been good for the butterfly as its main larval foodplant would have been hop, both wild and probably cultivated.

The afternoon session was more successful in terms of new species recorded as both Painted Lady and Small Tortoiseshell were seen; why we didn't see either in the morning I can't explain other than we just happened to miss them as both could easily have been there. We saw our first Skippers both Large and Essex but no Small Skippers. A study of the underside of the antennae showed black colouring positively identifying the Essex Skipper.

One of my personal favourites is the Holly Blue. We have some Holly trees and plenty of Ivy at the top of our small urban garden in Hereford and thus have plenty to see most years but it is still good to see them out in the countryside and Haugh provided one or two on that afternoon.



White Admiral



Male Holly Blue—thin black edge to upperside of wings

The afternoon had been advertised as a Hairstreak Hunt and that is what it turned out to be at least for one of them. Purple Hairstreaks tend to be up in the canopy during the early afternoon and although they can be seen flying about as little silvery butterflies they are often more active in the early evening. Look at the top of Oak Trees and in particular if there are Ash trees nearby. They feed on Aphid Honeydew so does the use of Ash trees imply more honeydew there than on the Oaks; they will come down to nectar from plants such as Hemp Agrimony but this is less common in my experience. We did, however, manage to see them flitting about in one or two places which was a first for a number of people on the walk.



Purple Hairstreak

The White-letter Hairstreak however proved much more elusive and a visit to the first site "frequented" by these butterflies drew a complete blank, although there was plenty of nectar sources available to them. Were we too late? Back to "Butterfly Corner" and then along the bottom ride to what is the other site you can regularly see them and thanks to one eagle-eyed lady there was one nectaring! Close enough to the path for all to see it well and so a successful conclusion to our walk, just the hill back to the car park!



White-letter Hairstreak. This is a female with four "tails".

Just a minute! What is that? So the final species of the day was a solitary Wood White possibly the last in the wood for this year. But because of its rarity another first for many of the HWT members out that day.

Twenty-one species in a day is a good total for any wood in the Midlands and there is potential for other species although not on 31st July 2022. If you are interested we intend to re-run this walk next year but perhaps a week earlier. Who knows yet?

Martyn Davies

Need the exercise? Too much to eat over Christmas!

Haugh Wood is obviously a good site for Butterflies but even so we have lost species from the wood over the last 40 years. Throughout the winter we organize some work parties to try and encourage better conditions for the butterflies, including the nationally rare Wood White. You can help.

Haugh Wood WP dates for Winter

[Sat December 3rd 2022](#)

[Sat January 7th 2023](#)

[Sat February 4th 2023](#)

[Sat March 4th 2023](#)

In all cases we meet [at 09:30 am](#) at the Forestry Commission car park at SO592365 along minor road between Mordiford and Woolhope.

Contact Robin Hemming [07501020605](tel:07501020605) robinhemming@btinternet.com or

Kate Wollen [07786526280](tel:07786526280) kate.wollen@forestryengland.uk

Under the Black Mountains

A start to the year in March, brings the beautiful micro *Acleris literana* - a lichen mimic and Tawny Pinion. Then April brings Frosted Green and a first Silver Cloud for my home site. [right on the edge of its geographical range]

May;- brings Fox moth [almost confined to the Black Mountains in Herefordshire], Alder Kitten and Broom moth.

June;- a web of Bird Cherry Ermine larvae [on a Bird Cherry in the garden] and trying out some likely pheromones in the garden, brings Currant, Yellow-legged and Red-belted Clearwing on the same day. My search for Welsh Clearwing on the edge of the Black Mountain has so far been unsuccessful but I will try again next year as there are plenty of suitable old Birches along the edge of the Black Mountains.

July;- Scallop Shell, Dotted Clay and Antler moth - though not particularly colourful, a beautifully presented creation of nature, and a first for this site the Hummingbird Hawk moth.

August;- brought Small Mottled Willow a migrant and the European Corn-Borer both male and female in excellent condition. It has been spreading its range northwards and is a pest of maize in Europe. I think it was looking for my Sweetcorn!

A week in Snowdonia brought some new moths for me -White colon, Neglected Rustic, Northern Deep Brown Dart, Crescent, Ashworth's Rustic, and the tiny Marsh Oblique Barred - the smallest of the 'Snout' moths and easily overlooked as a micro.

Late October;- a tired Clifden Non-pareil and Large Wainscot. A few days later a strong northerly wind blew the moth trap into the River Monnow never to be seen again. Despite no moth trap a Buttoned Snout appeared in the front porch along with one of the November moths.

So that's it from here nothing very rare but lots of beautiful, fascinating and interesting moths

Paddy Matthews, Longtown.



Acleris literana



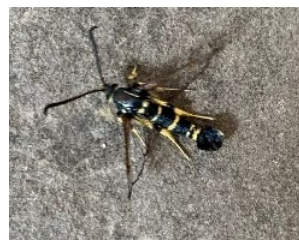
Frosted Green



Fox Moth



Broom Moth



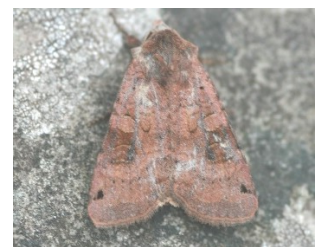
Yellow-legged
Clearwing



Bird-Cherry Ermine



Scallop Shell



Dotted Clay



Antler Moth



Buttoned Snout



Large Wainscot



Clifden Non-Pareil

Many thanks Paddy for the latest news from the far South West of the county. Many of these moths I trap in the city but the area in the Black Mountains brings some moths only found there.—Editor

You never know what you are going to find when you open your trap.



Clifden Nonpareil (Above) &
Cypress Pug (Below)



I run my trap as often as I can weather and absence from Hereford permitting. There is always a sense of anticipation when I and Ebony, the cat, go downstairs in a morning to open the moth trap. The cat is a useful ally as her presence on the chair near the trap keeps the birds away even though she never kills them. The moths are counted, photographed if necessary and then released onto vegetation in the garden to hide for the remainder of the daylight hours. Every now and then something interesting and out of the ordinary turns up, such as half male/half female Poplar Hawk-moth or a species which is increasing its range such as Clifden Non-pareil or a Cypress Pug both of which are fairly new to Herefordshire.

However, some mornings there is something in the trap which even with the books I cannot identify! This year for me it was on the 23rd June! A typical sized and rather insignificant moth turned up and I was stumped! Photographed and released I then went indoors and sent the photograph to Peter Hall the county moth recorder who informed me that I had a Bordered Straw. This was the first record since 2018 in Herefordshire and it

is described on the West Midlands Moth Site as a “A rare migrant. Could turn up anywhere. Comes to light and to sugar and can be found visiting flowers during the day.”

Not the most impressive moth but nice to have something a bit out of the ordinary in my small Hereford City garden. The following day I trapped a second specimen, markings slightly different so not a recapture of the specimen from the previous day and I also discovered that Robin Hemming had trapped one in his garden the same day.

Talking of Robin Hemming who lives out a Bodenham and who is a far more capable moth-er than me. He reported on Facebook on our West Midlands BC page the arrival of a far more spectacularly coloured Crimson Speckled.

“This last 10 days has seen an unprecedented warm air-stream from North Africa and the Mediterranean. Along with it has been an unprecedented influx of immigrant moths. This Crimson Speckled appeared at my Bodenham, Hereford trap this morning. Who says moths are dull and scary?”

Finally I received the following message from Ian Hart

*On 28th October, with the benefit of southerly winds from the Azores, Dilys trapped a striking, rare migrant micromoth **Diasemiopsis ramburialis**. This was a first county record, verified by the County Moth Recorder, Peter Hall.*

Ian added the following - *“I think worthy of a mention!”*

Indeed it is worthy; Ian’s wife Dilys who runs the trap also took the picture opposite, so you are looking at the first *D. ramburialis* to be recorded in Herefordshire. Well done, Dilys!

Martyn Davies



Bordered Straw



Crimson Speckled



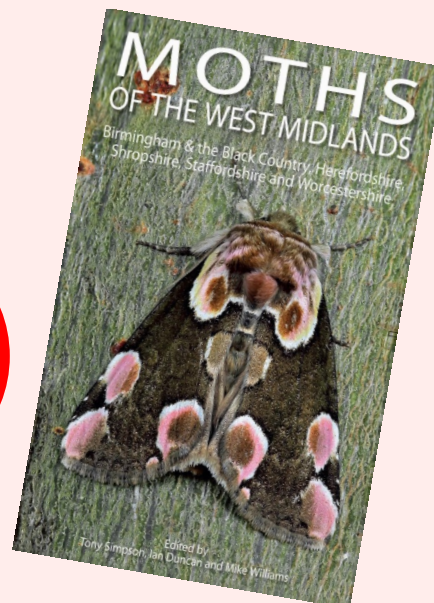
Diasemiopsis ramburialis
- Vagrant China Mark

Special Offer!



£15

£20



I have a few copies of both books available to callers to collect - save the postage next time you are in Hereford. All money direct to Conservation work

martyn.davies808@maol.com

Collection Only

01432 266703

Your Local Officers and Work Party Organisers.

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