

Herefordshire Newsletter

No. 16

October 2023

Mike Southall—Chairman West Midlands Branch, Butterfly Conservation



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If anyone was left wondering from the last Newsletter whether the recent October branch committee would run to time, they can rest assured. It ran to schedule and more or less followed the agenda. Herefordshire was well represented by your very own Martyn Davies. The Chair was able to report a continued September rise in branch membership to 1904 households with 2586 individuals. My recent contact with head office has been by every two-month Chair zoom meetings with updates on the 2026 strategy. Threatened species and Landscapes have been covered with Wild Spaces coming up next in December. The Treasurers report included a budget update where several items were added. It was decided to move the AGM to later in the year possibly October or November when audited accounts would be available, and to move its location around the branch area. The meeting also brought up the recurring wish to involve more members from around the branch, starting with a list of county representatives, potentially leading to county- based Members Days and the establishment of a more devolved administrative system.

Money was made available for work on Ewyas Harold Meadows, Woolhope Dome Wood White, Haugh Wood and a Herefordshire Grayling survey. Sadly, it was reported that the Grayling was not observed on the Malverns this year and may be lost from the site. A discussion about habitats for the Grayling around the region then followed. There is obviously still a lot to learn with some habitats, although appearing the same, containing more moss than previously, making them less suitable for the species. The Grayling was featured in the previous Herefordshire Newsletter. Contract work at the above sites is arranged by Butterfly Conservation regional staff Rhona Goddard and Natalie Norton. Details of Herefordshire work parties can be found later in this newsletter, in the recently posted Autumn edition of the Comma, the branch website, and the previous newsletter. Seventeen work parties at two Herefordshire locations scheduled from now until late April is a tremendous commitment and effort by volunteers, so please support them if you can in order to help maintain and improve conditions for our rarer species.



Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

The Herefordshire and Worcestershire Moth blog site, although still available to view, is no longer being used for postings and has been superseded by the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Moth Facebook site. The site was set up by Lee Taylor-Wheal on June 30th, 2022. Lee, a keen moth'er, has recently moved from Warwickshire via Worcestershire to Herefordshire and wanted to emulate the Warwickshire forum. There are currently 127 members of the Facebook group with regular postings which are generating many views and comments. In the files section Lee has added several useful guides which are well worth a look. The BC West Midlands butterflies and moths Facebook group is

another well used site with 2,052 members and multiple files available. The West Midlands Moth online atlas continues to improve with new photographs being regularly posted, and an update in the pipeline. There is a useful easy link to the West Midlands Butterfly Conservation website on the home page of the moth atlas. Amongst many other items the WMBC website hosts the Herefordshire Newsletters.

I remember a few years ago that by looking at social media a large Northern movement of Painted Ladies was taking place. The butterflies had been tracked from North Africa through Europe. I was able to sit in my garden and observe this migration as the butterflies passed through to the North in numbers, a memorable moment! This year during the mild spell in October I drove to a nearby large meadow to see if I could see any Clouded Yellows. I didn't find any, but I noticed Red Admirals flying South at regular intervals at a low level, another memorable moment! It became apparent on social media that other people had noticed this event with movement on the Malvern's. Red Admirals had even been seen flying out to sea on the South coast. Who needs the Serengeti?

Mike Southall



Red Admiral

Editors Ramblings

Every issue now seems to include a reference to "funny weather. Having just spent a week in Bluestone Park, near Narberth in South Wales I have had first hand evidence of it. One minute the sun is shining and it is quite mild then you have what can only be described as a shower of monsoon proportions. One actually found its way into a restaurant causing them to close the kitchens in the middle of the evening rush, thanks to the brilliant staff and roof repairers it was open again the next day! As I write this we are awaiting the arrival of storm "Ciaran" following on from "Babet" with torrential rain and flooding in some areas. The long term affect on moths and butterflies is not yet known but the localised effects of flooding can seriously damage the different life stages of these animals as they are terrestrial not aquatic in life-style.

If you are new to Butterfly Conservation - Welcome! You obviously have a passing interest at least in these beautiful and harmless creatures and would either like to learn more about them or like me not want my grandchildren to grow up in a world without them. When my grandchildren come and stay they love to see what is in my moth trap when we empty it in a morning. Likewise when I used to take my moth trap into the secondary school I taught in, I would often have a large crowd of 11-16 year olds craning their necks to see what was there, enhanced by the statement that these same moths could have been flying over your garden last night.

Whether you are a new member or one of many years standing, we need your help to conserve the local species. On later pages you will find details of work parties which you can attend and burn off some surplus calories, either at Ewyas Harold Common or in Haugh Wood. We will arrange one or two gentle walks where, weather permitting, we may be able to show you some of the less common species found in the county as well as help you to identify some of the more similar, more common species; it won't matter what your prior knowledge is just come along and discover more about these insects. If you have a garden or a walk you do with your children or dog keep a record of what you see and when and send them either to the secretary or the recorders; their details are at the end of this newsletter. There are other ways you can help as well! Not just by donating funds! There are "Transect Walks" where you walk a predetermined route once a week (or as often as you can manage it!) for the Spring to Autumn year and record what you see and then send your records in, if you are able to use a computer spread sheet that will help but a pen and a small notebook also works well!

We need you to pass on your records to our recorders. Whatever it is, whenever you saw it and wherever you were please don't keep it to yourself. If you can get a photograph send that as well. Modern mobile phone photographs are very good.

I have a small band of dedicated people who I rely on for articles for this newsletter, which is produced entirely by volunteers and distributed at minimal cost for what we sincerely hope is your interest in the subject matter. Herefordshire is the only county in the West Midlands that receives this extra publication and its aim is to highlight what goes on here specifically under the help of BC nationally and BC West Midlands. If this is your first Herefordshire Newsletter you can access earlier editions by going to the Butterfly Conservation's West Midlands Branch website. The correct website can be found here - westmidlandsbutterflyconservation.wordpress.com

Having mentioned my reliance on my usual group of contributors let me thank them personally by name Bob Hall and Peter Hall (Not related!) for their work as county recorders, Robin Hemmings for organizing the Haugh Wood work parties and Natalie Norton and Dean Fenton for organizing the Ewyas Harold work parties. Natalie and Ian Hart for their updates on the Pearl-bordered Fritillaries on Ewyas Harold Common and the conservation work there and on the adjacent BC reserve - a lovely place to visit and walk in. Mike Southall as West Midlands Branch Chairman and Mel Mason for the updates on the "Malvern Hills Lost Fritillaries Project" the release sites are in Herefordshire obviously on or by the Malvern Hills. Finally but definitely not last Dr Paddy Matthews for his "Under the Black Mountains" writings and Jeremy and Kath Soulsby for lovely little snippets.

So how can you help? I have mentioned a few ways already:

1. Recording
2. Work Parties
3. Transect Walks
4. Join the events in Herefordshire and the West of the West Midlands details here and in the "Comma"

But there are more ways:

- * If you write poetry and have written something relevant we would love to include it
- * Artwork, Colour or Black & White we will happily include it, perhaps get your children or grandchildren to draw (I will include some more of the late John Norton's artwork later in this newsletter.)
- * Buy one or both of the books "Butterflies of the West Midlands" and "Moths of the West Midlands" at the offer price, I have a few copies of both here in Hereford. There are also the calendars.
- * Spread the word especially amongst friends and neighbours
- * If you belong to a group or organisation who have speakers at their meetings, we can provide one for you, contact me for more details
- * If you have any Violet plants growing in your garden See request later in this newsletter

I am reminded of the TESCO strapline at this point - "Every little helps" and anything that you can do is of value to the society and thus the conservation of these insects.

Martyn Davies

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

County 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

The following two ladies are employed by Butterfly Conservation to work at least part time in the West Midlands

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

Midlands Landscape Officer Natalie Norton nnorton@butterfly-conservation.org
07485372199

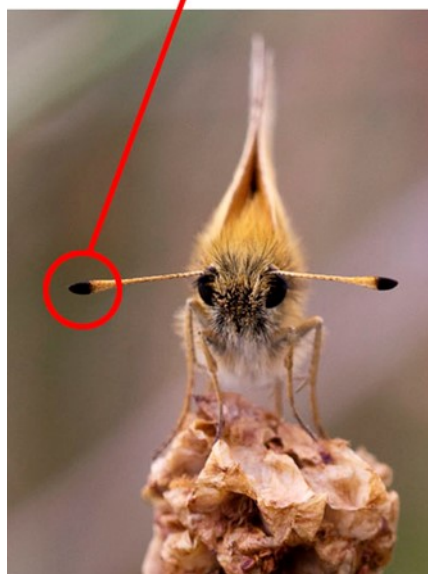
***These people are working to help the conservation of lepidoptera in Herefordshire
- Thankyou***

2023 Butterfly Records : Herefordshire

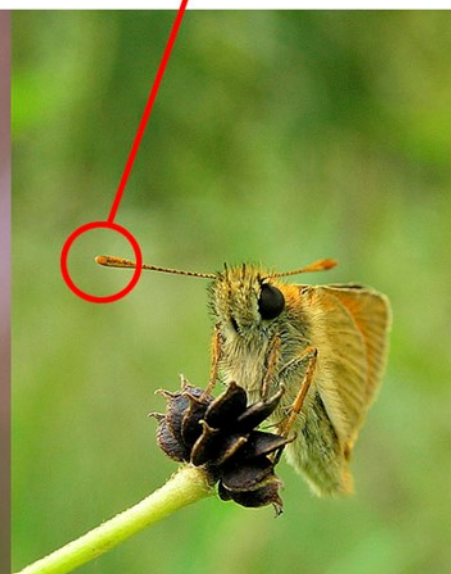
Skippers

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. **Small Skipper** had a maximum count of 18 from Urishay Court Farm and 25 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 the difficulty in identification.

Underside of tips
of antennae black



Underside of tips
of antennae brown



Essex Skipper on the left with black undersides to the antennae. Small Skipper to the right with orange undersides to the antennae

Whites

There were plenty of **Brimstone** records with a highest count of 5 from the Mike Harper reserves. Plenty of **Orange Tips** in April with a large count of 11 from Sarah Cadwallader in Mowley Valley. **Small White** and **Green Veined White** were quite common with a max count of 20 plus for Green Veined White from Risbury. Small White had a good summer brood with a count of 22 from Bodenham Lake. **Large White** were again common with a high count of 10 from the Bunch of Carrots. **Wood White** have had a poor year even in their strongholds of Wigmore Rolls (max 172 on 03/06) and Haugh Wood (10 max). Wood White were also recorded in Shobdon Wood (max 9), Seige Wood (max 6), Mowley Wood as well as smaller numbers in Checkley, outside Fownhope and on the Doward. There was a partial second brood of Wood White in Haugh Wood. There were three records of **Clouded Yellow** from The Doward, Sellack and Towtree Lane.

Browns.

Gatekeeper (39 from Haugh Wood South and 50 plus from Oak Tree Farm) **Meadow Brown** (an astonishing count of 392 from Tom Oliver at Urishay and 100 plus from Oak Tree NR) and **Ringlets** (max 30 from Haugh Wood) all had good breeding seasons. There were good counts of 50 **Marbled White** from Ewyas Harold Meadows and 49 at Urishay) but the population at Wessington HWT reserve has almost disappeared. **Speckled Woods** were widespread with a high count of 15 from Devereux Park and 13 from Putley. There was 3 records of **Wall** from Croft Ambrey Wood, Titley and Old Ashmoor (max 1). Low numbers of **Small Heath** records from Hergest Ridge Hill (max 30) and other spots near Kington. Also found at Swinyard Hill, Eardisley, Colwall and Weymore.

Fritillaries.

There was a maximum count of 21 **Dark Green Fritillary** from Hanter Hill. With smaller numbers seen at Ewyas Harold Common, Brampton Bryan, Bromyard Downs, Croft, Kington, Lucton and Olchon Valley.

Pearl bordered Fritillary numbers were good at Ewyas Harold Common with a high count of 142. In the Malverns, for the Pearl bordered Fritillary Reintroduction Project, 86 were released on site and 20 mating pairs observed. 1 was recorded at Coppett Hill. **Small pearl bordered Fritillary** were

recorded from Hanter Hill and Ewyas Harold Common with a high count of 18 from Hanter Hill.

Silver Washed Fritillary had a good season with a high count of 8 from Wigmore Rolls.

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 7 Comma from Mansel Lacy and Mowley Valley. **Red Admiral** have had a most wonderful season extending well into autumn. Counts of over 20 in Haugh Wood and at Newton St Margarets. **Small Tortoiseshell** numbers too were generally low except for a fine count of 10 from Hereford. 40 **Peacocks** were recorded from Wigmore Rolls with counts of 27 from the Doward and 25 from Haugh Wood. **White Admiral** was not recorded this year. **Painted Lady** records were mostly individuals but were well distributed. A high count of 4 from David Hemming in Haugh Wood.

Blues.

There were plenty of early records of **Holly Blue** and a good 2nd brood. There was a high count of 8 from Haugh Wood South. **Common Blue** had a poor year in most places, but Tom Oliver had a high count of 100 from Urishay Court Farm, and Richard Wheeler counted 52 at Birches Farm. Natalie Norton counted 37 at Ewyas Harold Meadows, and Sarah Cadwallader counted 20 at Birches Farm. There were 3 records for **Green Hairstreak** from Hergest Ridge. They were also found at Birches Farm, Hanter Hill and Malvern Pinnacle Hill. **Purple Hairstreak** were recorded from Brampton Bryan, Haugh Wood, Mowley Wood and Eardisley, where Richard Wheeler counted 5. **White-letter Hairstreak** were again seen in Haugh Wood in very small numbers, with a maximum of 3 from Holywell Dingle. There were records of **Brown Argus** from Bishops Frome, Nupend, Rotherwas and Wessington HWT reserve. **Small Copper** were seen in small numbers in late summer from a Bacton and Colwall, with a high count of 4 from Ian Hart at Bacton.

Acknowledgements.

This summary has been compiled with records from these recorders :

Chris Bandfield, Mike Bradley Liam Bunce , Sarah Cadwallader, Ian Draycott, Tony Eveleigh, Dean Fenton, Mrs Janette Fullwood, Jill Fountain, Toby Fountain, David Griffith, Sue Griffin, Bob and Penny Hall, Dilys and Ian Hart, Paul Hadley, David Hemming, Wendy Innes, William Lambourn, Richard Laney, Robbie Ledlie, Mel Mason, Natalie Norton, Tom Oliver, Stephen Potter, Viv Quinn, Jess Sly, Ang Starling, Jeremy and Katherine Soulsby, Richard Tyler, Heather Walker, Richard Wheeler and Jane Wise.

Bob Hall

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.

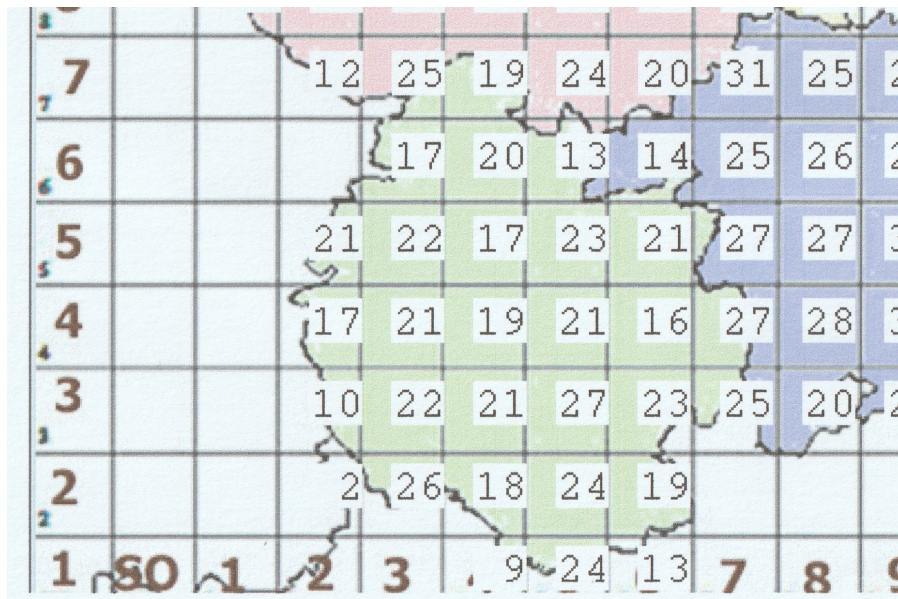
The above is a note from Bob Hall which was on the end of his report above. One of the greatest achievements of Butterfly Conservation is success in increasing the records held on our British Butterflies and moths. It was started in earnest for the Millenium Atlas and has continued unabated ever since. Recording and thus our knowledge of where our butterflies are is vital when considering where

there is the greatest need to spend our hard-earned conservation funds and where to set up work parties to help conserve populations.

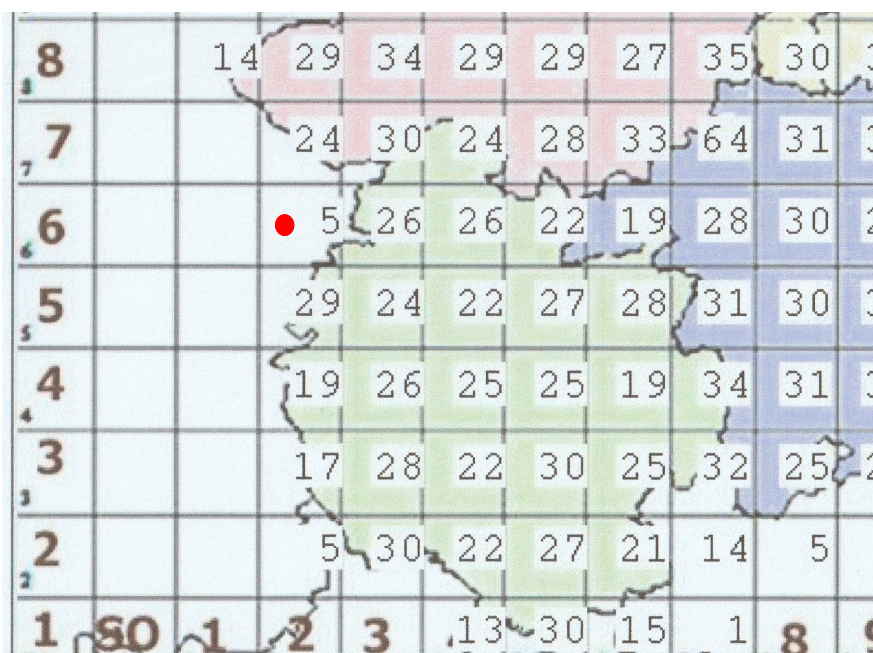
I would encourage all of you to keep a record of the species you see, where and when; then as soon as possible or even the end of each month send your results into Bob Hall for inclusion in his monthly reports. (email address at back of newsletter)

A gentleman by the name of John Tilt oversees the West Midlands records for butterflies and if you want information on a particular site or a particular species he will often be able to help you and is very willing to do so. He has provided the two maps below which show the number of species in each of the 10Km squares which make up Herefordshire, His comment when he produced them for me was that it was *"quite good coverage and numbers."*, but like all these schemes and processes it could be better.

So if you can help it would be much appreciated! Over to you



Species / 10Km squares 2022



Species / 10Km squares 2018 - 2022

The two maps show the number of species of butterflies found in each of the 10Km squares that make up VC36, which equates to Herefordshire. The upper map shows the species recorded in 2022 only. The lower map shows the numbers recorded between 2018 - 2022 inclusively.

To identify a square take the large, bold-typenumber on the bottom line and then the number on the side line, just as you would read an OS map. The red dot I have added is in square 26'

To help you here are the squares for some of our larger towns.

Hereford 43/53 & 44/54

Bromyard 65, Kington 25,

Ledbury 73, Leominster 45,

Leintwardine 47, Ross-on-Wye 52/62

Any reference in this map should begin with the letters SO

If you need help with Grid References I have 1:25,000 maps for the whole of Herefordshire. Send me an accurate description of the site and will usually be able to give you an appropriate grid ref

Martyn Davies

Highlights of 2022 in the Moth World

There's slowly an increasing number of people getting interested in moths and starting to record and as always some interesting finds. I'm grateful as ever to those who send in their records and also to those who spend time trying to identify the micros and especially to those that keep some for me to identify over the long winter months. Many of the county firsts below are from specimens kept back in the freezer. As your County Moth Recorder, I'll never refuse to identify kept specimens.

I'm writing this towards the end of May 2023 and I have just about completed inputting all of your 2022 data that you kindly sent over. Getting everything into Mapmate formatted data lines with correct modern taxon spellings and other detail takes a while to complete and this year has been no exception. But it is just about done and onto the next stage which is data checking. However long I spend on your data, I still miss errors and most of these get picked up when run through a records cleaner programme. We should be on course for an October data refresh for the West Midlands Moth Atlas Website. As I write we have added a fraction under 50,000 new records in 2022. That's approaching a 10% increase in the database.

There were numerous micros of interest this year. Probably the most spectacular one was *Scrobipalpa ocellatella*, the so called Beet moth which until recently has been strictly coastal, but in 2022 it spread all over the mainland and Herefordshire didn't escape it either. 27 records of it, and it was a county first accredited to Helen Stace and Aaron Woods, both from August 13th 2022. I wonder what 2023 holds for this one? Were they migrants or has this species now changed its requirements?



Bohemannia auriciliella was another county first, this time for John Walshe and confirmed by myself via the microscope and from the session at Dymock Forest which I attended, this is a tiny moth with a wingspan of about 9mm (which makes it one of the bigger Nepticulids) and only the second West Midlands record.



Cydia amplana. Robin Hemming had the first county record in his Bodenham garden in August.



Eudonia delunella. 8 county records but half of those have been in the last few years including a surprise arrival in Lorna Price's garden in Bodenham last year, other recent arrivals have been in the far west of the county.



Platyedra subcinerea. Another county first and 3 of them turned up in John Walshe's garden in Hereford and all checked under my microscope.



Diasemiopsis ramburialis. This rare migrant turned up in Ian and Dilys Hart's garden in Newton St. Margarets in October and followed another record in the same year from Staffordshire.



Elachista consortella. This one appeared in Aaron Wood's garden trap in Wofferswood Common in September and was confirmed again under my microscope.



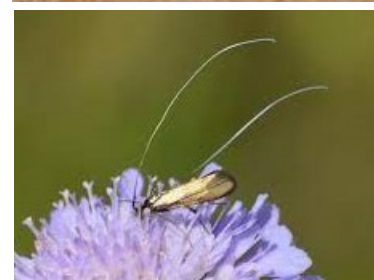
Crociosema plebejana. This Tortrix moth turned up for the second time in Selena Chambers garden trap in October and I could confirm it thanks to a good photograph available on the Observations.org website. The previous record was in 2014 from Little Cowarne (myself).



Caloptilia honoratella. This species has been expected since it was first discovered a few years ago in the east of the country. 2 turned up in Helen Stace and Tim Dixon's garden trap and it means that you should all think about keeping those Caloptilias from now on. They become ever more difficult to separate unless examined very closely.



Nemophora metallica. Sounds like a heavy metal band, but the 6th county record and first for 20 years by Ian Draycott from the Doward. All previous records going back to 1899 are from that area. Nice to know it is still playing its music there.



Diplodoma laichartingella. Only the second record this century, the previous in 2005 by Mike Harper. Gail Hampshire found an adult in Cradley in June last year. Now we have 13 records in total.



Loxostege sticticalis. Another county first, this one was from Hereford and recorded by Robbie Ledlie in her garden.



Oncocera semirubella. This stunning little moth seems to be spreading slowly and it was great to hear that Lee Taylor recorded one in his garden in Colwall last year.



Ochsenheimeria vacculella. This little moth hasn't been seen in the county since 1892, but Lee Taylor potted one up on his wall last year and kept it for me to dissect and I was delighted to confirm the identification.



What about those macro-moths I hear you say? Cypress Carpet continues to be recorded since it first arrived in 2018. John Walsh this time had one in his Whitchurch garden late on in the year making it the 4th record.



Saltern Ear. It just goes to show how worthwhile it is to get your Ears checked out! John Walshe sent me one for checking and it proved to be this species. A first for Herefordshire. Found in July in Whitchurch. John also recorded the second county record for the very similar Large Ear back in 2019.



Jersey Tiger. Another which is expanding albeit at a slower rate than the Scarlet Tiger. It arrived in the county last year with 2 records, one in Colwall by Helen Stace and one in Hereford by John Walshe.



Dewick's Plusia. This used to be a migrant, now established in the UK and slowly spreading out. The first county record was in Whitchurch last year, John Walshe again in July.

All the new micro records will appear in the annual Microlepidoptera review which is featured in the Entomologists' Record publication <https://www.entrecord.com/>

Peter Hall

At the end of each year Peter starts to receive thousands of records in a variety of formats which he then checks and slowly enters onto the national database - a mammoth task and we thank him and the other recorders for their efforts and work. By the time all of this has been done and Peter has checked by dissection (under the microscope!) the identification of the numerous specimens sent to him, for checking and adding them to the database, he is then able to right up a report for 2022. During the year he is out collecting his own records and answering requests for identification by countless recorders (including me!) and nearly always on the same day.

If you find a moth in your garden take a photograph and then try the books first or the West Midland Moths website, there is also a West Midlands Moths Facebook group. Failing all that send your photo to Peter, you will get a photo.

Ed

Moths and more from the Black Mountains.

So far - there are three months of 2023 still to go! Frustratingly a large part of the summer found me without a functioning moth trap. Back on track now and there are those three months of 2023 still to go!

At home in Longtown, although not rare, two new records for me were Mocha and Broom-Tip.



1676 Mocha



1865 Broom-tip

Other less common moths were Shark, Bordered White, a few Old Ladies dressed in Black and a third record for Scarlet Tiger.



2216 Shark



1954 Bordered White [Iain Leach]



2068 Scarlet Tiger

Regular appearances from Fox moth, Lackey, Oak Eggar, and Drinker moths [plenty of larvae on the summit of the Black Mountain]. Very large numbers of Northern Spinach one day at the top of the Olchon Valley and a few weeks later a few Chevron.

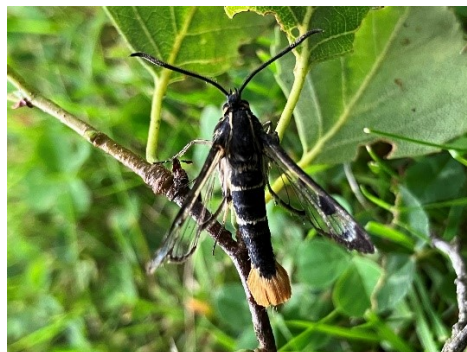


1756 Northern Spinach



1755 Chevron

A further hunt for Welsh Clearwing was successful in the Honddu valley just a mile over the border into Wales but so far no luck in Herefordshire though I have identified almost all the possible trees. I will try again next year.



376 Welsh Clearwing

Dr Paddy Matthews

*For a number of issues now Dr Matthews has been providing us with notes from "Under the Black Mountains" and I really appreciate his efforts as that part of Herefordshire is so different to the majority of the county. As he suggests more records of any Lepidoptera in this area would be welcome. "The Moths of the West Midlands" produced by the West Midlands Branch of Butterfly Conservation is excellent, and contains details of a moth which is only found in this part of the West Midlands, it is called the **Silurian** - Ed*

Pearl-bordered Fritillaries at Ewyas Harold Common 2023

The number Pearl-bordered Fritillaries counted by BC volunteers in the fifteen monitoring compartments in 2023 was 145. This was a number commensurate with the average annual count over the past ten years, despite a rather late and indifferent Spring. Numbers of butterflies emerging from the large area of open bracken which formerly held a large population have still not recovered following it being cut wholesale for bedding in the winter of 2018/2019, but numbers in this area are beginning to show a slow increase. However, there is an urgent need to control the spread of dog rose and bramble if this recovery is to continue.

During the last winter and Spring work parties led by Natalie Norton (BC) and Dean Fenton continued to maintain important breeding areas on the Common for the Pearl-bordered Fritillary by the clearance of matted stands of bracken and invasive scrub.

During the season two gravid Pearl-bordered Fritillaries were removed under licence by the Malvern Hills Lost Fritillary Project and Reintroduction (see report by Mel Mason elsewhere). This followed a survey, habitat assessment and report with recommendations undertaken by Sue Clarke and David Green in 2022 paid for by BC on behalf of the Ewyas Harold Common Trust. **Ian Hart**

Meeting location: 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.

Ewyas Harold Meadows & Common Work Parties

Saturday Work Parties Once a month Start at 10:00am	Tuesday Work Parties Once a month Start at 11:00am
Saturday 18 November 2023	Tuesday 7 th November 2023
Saturday 16 December 2023	Tuesday 5 th December 2023
Saturday 20 January 2024	Tuesday 9 th January 2024
Saturday 17 February 2024	Meeting Location Meet 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. Bring gloves, hand tools, lunch and a drink.
Saturday 16 March 2024	
Saturday 20 April 2024	

Contacts

To attend a Saturday work party please contact Dean Fenton fenton@littleburyfarm.co.uk Ian Hart yellowrattle4@aol.com

To attend a Tuesday work party please contact Natalie Norton nnorton@butterfly-conservation.org / 07485372199.

Malvern Hills - Lost Fritillaries Project

Earlier in this newsletter you will have read a request "Violets growing in your garden and wondered what it was all about. The picture shows volunteer loading the boot of his car with violets grown on and about to be taken to Mel Mason's Pearl Hotel. Mel is leading a project to re-establish the Pearl-bordered Fritillary, one of the modern rarities in Britain, back onto the slopes of the Malvern Hills and adjacent areas. The caterpillars feed on violet plants and as such Mel requires a lot of these. So if you can pot some up from your garden and take them to him in Malvern he will be extremely grateful as will his caterpillar family. One of my tasks when I have finished putting together this newsletter will be to go and search my own garden where I know there are some violets growing which I can pass on.

Background...In March 2020 we started a project to reintroduce the first Pearl-bordered Fritillary *Boloria euphrosyne* on to the Malvern Hills following its local extinction at the end of last century. We are trying to establish three different colonies on three different sites in three different counties on the Malvern Hills.

Life-cycle... The caterpillar emerges from the egg in May and feeds on Dog Violet *Viola riviniana*. It moults three times to form the fourth instar which goes into diapause from the end of July to the end of the following February / early March. It basks and feeds again in warmer spring weather (on south facing bracken slopes in the wild) then moults to form the fifth instar before it pupates and emerges as the imago (adult butterfly) from mid April to early June.

During spring 2022 and 2023 we reintroduced almost 200 PBF from our captive breeding programme and we hope to reintroduce many more over the next few years. This requires the support of four different donor PBF sites in four different counties to provide several gravid females each spring – to lay eggs which form the caterpillars that we care for at the Pearl Hotel in almost 100 large breeding pots (containing clean compost, washed violet plants and durable netting). More importantly, we saw the first PBF to emerge this spring 2023 from our reintroduction last year 2022. **Mel Mason**



Pearl Hotel



Pearl-bordered Fritillary Caterpillar feeding on Violets

Landowners are enthusiastically supporting this project and modifying their habitat management to help the long-term survival of this species. Almost 50 volunteers from five different counties also help to manage the habitat, monitor the sites, and grow thousands of Dog Violets to feed our very hungry caterpillars.

Finance During 2021 and 2022 we raised almost £20,000 from Malvern Hills District Council, Malvern Hills AONB, Bromesberrow Estate Albright Trust, Butterfly Conservation West Midlands, a local supermarket and many generous individuals – to support the captive breeding, facilitate the habitat management and survey the receptor and donor sites.

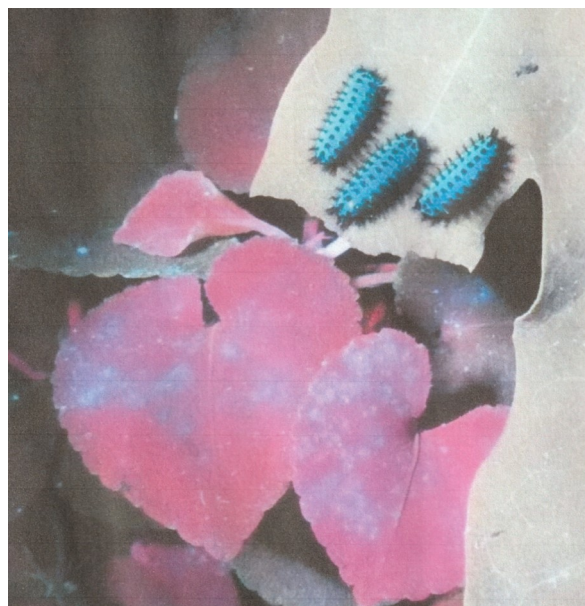
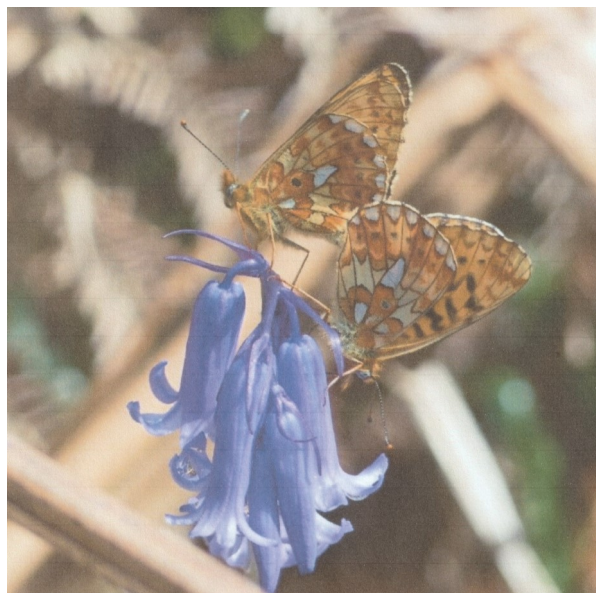
Publicity BBC Midlands Today filmed the mating behaviour of our PBF early in May 2023, and BBC Hereford & Worcester broadcast interviews throughout the morning to celebrate the different stages in the process of this reintroduction – a great follow up to the feature about habitat management and captive breeding on BBC Countryfile in December 2021.

Outlook However, it may take 5-10 years before we know if the habitat and connectivity between our sites is sufficient to sustain the population in the long term.

Visitors are very welcome but please keep to the public footpaths when you visit without a guide.

Release Sites Two of the three release sites are in Herefordshire on the western flanks of Swinyard Hill east of the Obelisk in the Eastnor Park estate. The third is on the eastern side of Swinyard Hill

We wish the project success and look forward to learning from this re-introduction and being able to repeat it in other places.—ed



It is Halloween as I write this caption seems appropriate! 4th instar caterpillars viewed under UV light. It also works with Grayling caterpillars and so presumably with other species.

Haugh Wood

Work Party dates for Winter 2023-24

2023
Sat 4th Nov
Sat 2nd Dec

2024
Sat 6th Jan
Sat 3rd Feb
Sat 2nd Mar
Sat 6th Apr

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 robinhemming@btinternet.com](mailto:07501020605_robinhemming@btinternet.com)

or

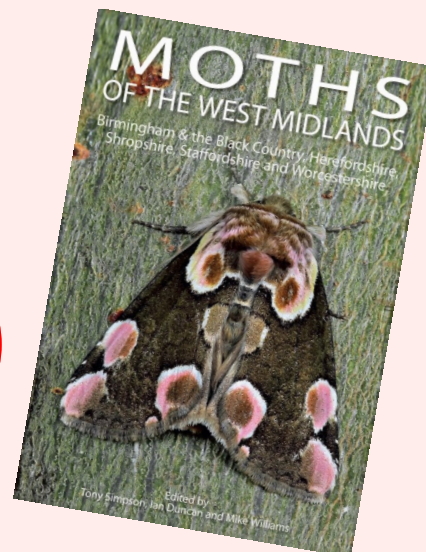
Kate Wollen
[07786526280 kate.wollen@forestryengland.uk](mailto:07786526280_kate.wollen@forestryengland.uk)

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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

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The Rise and Rise of the Box-tree Moth

Not many Butterflies or moths are considered pests but where they are they can be very serious for the foodplant species or other material or fibres the caterpillars feed on. We all know about the Large White and the Small White and their predilection for Brassicas. Out of the 2,500+ species of moths only two actually have caterpillars that feed on clothes; Common Clothes Moth (*Tineola bisselliella*) and the Case-bearing Clothes Moth (*Tinea pellionella*). So when a new species arrives here it is newsworthy if it is a potential pest species as is the Box-tree moth.



Box-tree Moth - *Cydalima perspectalis*

Whilst it is as big as many of the common local macro moths this species is in fact a Micromoth. It was thought that the first specimen was caught in Weybridge, Surrey: it had been attracted to M.V. light on 5th September 2008. Further investigation revealed that this was preceded by a record of one in Kent in 2007. It is Asian in origin and since the 2007 Kent specimen the species has rapidly increased in frequency. It quickly became widespread in London and the south-east and has spread northwards at a considerable rate. It arrived in the West Midlands 10 years later in 2017 but the first record for Herefordshire was not until 26/6/20 near Stretton Sugwas. The moth has a number of generations through the summer and autumn and turned up in my Hereford Garden for the first time on the 19th September in 2022.



The moth is a pest species of box (*Buxus*), and is almost certainly an introduction with imported *Buxus* plants; this means that the famous knot gardens with their intricate designs of box hedging are at risk. The effects on a Box plant is devastating as the photograph to the left shows, and it is caused by the caterpillar which is quite distinctively marked. It would appear that attacks by a single caterpillar are quite rare it is more likely that a female moth will have laid a batch of eggs on one or more adjacent plants and these, because they have been laid together over a short period of days, will all emerge and start devouring the Box plants at the roughly the same time. So it becomes an infestation. The caterpillar has a diapause between the fourth and fifth instar which may last for up to six weeks and then it pupates. The pupa hide in amongst the leaves and branches of the box plants they have been feeding on.



Larva



Pupa

The moth is quite distinctive and not unattractive but on 7th September this year I caught in my trap the moth in the photograph below, and subsequently caught other similar moths. Instead of having white wings with a brown border it was all brown. I decided that it was a dark form of the Box-tree Moth which subsequent investigation proved correct. However when I moved it around to photograph it in the sunlight I noticed that the wings had a distinctive purple sheen, probably caused by refraction as in the Purple Hairstreak wing.



Martyn Davies

Brown Form with Purple Sheen

Wow-How many?

Just when you think you have nearly finished the newsletter the October records for butterflies came into my inbox. It seemed to be a very long list for this month and closer inspection revealed some fascinating figures !!

Meadow Brown and Holly Blue in October will not be common historically and an October record for Holly Blue makes me wonder if this is a third generation adult or a very late, but otherwise representative, second generation adult. Normally there are two generations and females from the first generation lay their eggs on Holly. These develop into adults later in the summer but the females from this second generation lay their eggs on Ivy. Thus you have alternate foodplants for each generation, should in the future we have a third generation what would their foodplant be? Theoretically it should be Holly /but as that plant would not be in a suitable condition to support the larva and Ivy might still be suitable what might a mated female choose. Just a thought!

Now if the Holly Blue and Meadow Brown still flying out of their season wasn't enough what about the Red Admiral records. A large number of people have sent in records of the Red Admiral through the year and it has undoubtedly had a very good year. As well as that friends and neighbours have also said that they have seen one usually in their garden.

At the beginning of October Bob Hall (county Recorder) received this email from Dan Webb

Hi Bob,

"I have observed Red Admirals in the past during visible migration counts of birds. They are extremely easy to detect as migrants for several reasons. Firstly they are all flying on a bearing between south and south west. They fly directly with rapid wing beats (faster than during usual foraging flights), they are also low when there is any form of headwind (usually between 1ft and 4 feet above the ground and only rise to fly over obstacles such as hedgerows). Another thing I have observed is the way that they follow particular lines over an area with one butterfly after another on a similar line.

Many can be seen with the naked eye but I scanned the more distant lines with binoculars and at times my scope. Often they were coming through in loose groups of up to six and there were bursts of activity interspersed by a few quieter moments.

Interestingly on both days I saw one or two Commas definitely moving flying low and fast south. A single Large White and three more distant unidentified whites were also seen.

This link if you click the red admiral entry will show you the details of the times each individual or group went through until the last couple of entries when my phone was running low on charge and I clicker counted them and put bulk inputs into the count."

Dan Webb

His records are below with those of Jess Sly, their comments in the fourth column and in the email are fascinating.

Where are they going? Presumably as far south as they can get or until they reach a point at which they are forced into hibernation or meet an impenetrable barrier such as the English Channel. Using specially modified radar Lepidopterists have monitored Painted Ladies flying south of Britain's

Species	No. of records	No. of individuals
Brimstone	3	3
Large White	2	2
Meadow Brown	2	3
Comma	18	24
Painted Lady	9	10
Peacock	2	3
Red Admiral	66	605
Holly Blue	1	1

October's records for Herefordshire -
Summary

07/10/23	Dan Webb	Caradoc/ Sellack Boat	Red Admiral migrating South	64	
08/10/23	Dan Webb	Sellack	Red Admiral migrating South	301	Over 3 hour period
09/10/23	Jess Sly	Broad Down	Red Admiral migrating South	24	

southern coast, if Painted Ladies can do it why not Red Admirals?

19th Century Lepidopterists seldom recorded Hibernating Red Admirals but towards the end of the 20th Century it was known that they could survive our winters. I once saw one in Haugh wood about 1982 flying around a hut in the wood on a lovely, warm, sunny, February, day with snow still on the ground. There is much more to find out here, something to look out for in 2024. I look forward to

Help Wanted

We need help with entering the fantastic butterfly records you send in onto i-record!

Bob has been doing this for sometime but would appreciate some help. I am going to try to help out but the more the merrier, so if you have some time on your hands, access to a computer and the internet you can help out. We will give you training and support, so you won't be on your own. We will obtain access to the online programme and simple recording tools.

Please, please, please, offer to help if you can.

Phone **Martyn 01432 266 703** or email **martyn.davies808@gmail.com** for more information.

Date for your diary!

We are arranging a field trip to Hanter Hill which is west of Kington along the Hergest Ridge. Visits by members have revealed Small Heath, Dark Green Fritillary, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Green Hairstreak.

Date Sunday, 2nd June 2024

Time 10.00am

Target Species Green Hairstreak &

Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary

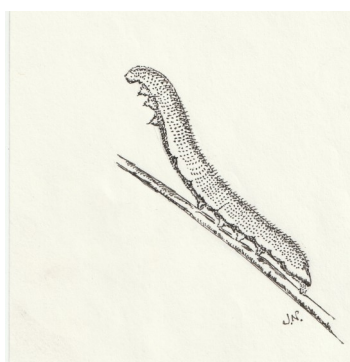
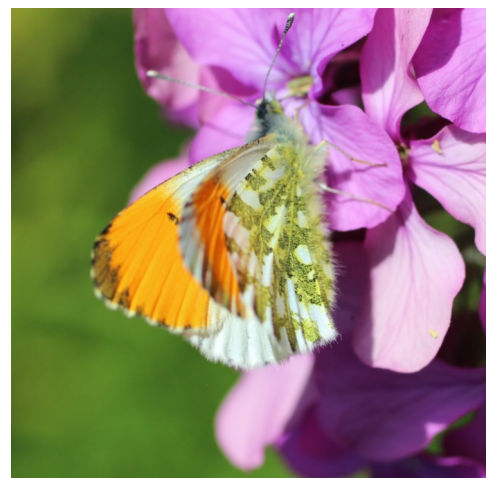
More details in the next Issue, but gentle walk along Hergest Ridge of 3hr and tea at Hergest Croft after. Bring a packed lunch or just a snack.



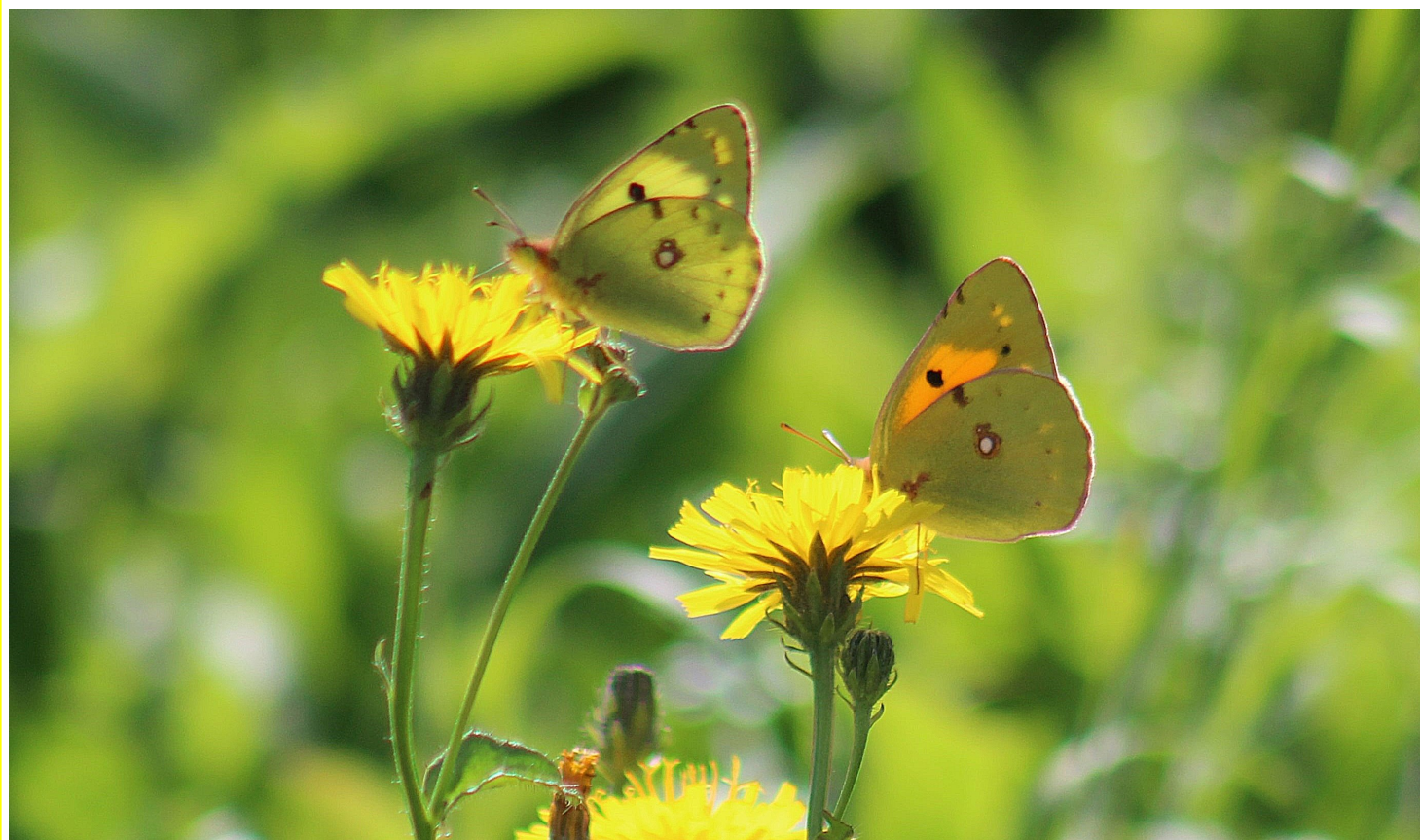
John Norton 1924-2002

“Former curator of Ludlow Museum. An enthusiastic naturalist and curator interested in everything within the natural world. In 1983 he was awarded the MBE for 'services to museums'. He is remembered as a true gentleman and a fine curator. “

Friends of Ludlow Museum



In Newsletter 15 I reproduced some of John's delightful illustrations, here are four more showing some of the life stages of the Orange Tip.



Sometimes you just happen to be in the right place at the right time. Wandering alongside a field left fallow near my son's house in Switzerland in September this year. A pair of Clouded Yellow butterflies enjoying a nectar source. It would be great to see some in Hereford next year. You might if you are lucky!

Martyn Davies