

# Herefordshire Newsletter

No. 18

October 2024

**Mike Southall—Chairman**

**West Midlands Branch, Butterfly Conservation**

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September was a busy month for the West Midlands branch with both a committee meeting and the branch Members Day and AGM.

The branch committee meeting held at Grafton Hall, Worcs, came first. Branch membership was confirmed at 1903 households with 2589 individuals. The branch still has the largest membership out of all the 32 branches. It was commented that the branch Facebook group has 2500+ members many of whom are not BC Members. The committee was effectively reduced from 17 to 11 members by creating a non-voting associate committee grade for people unable to attend regular meetings. A sensible budget was discussed and approved by the committee. This included money for habitat management at Ewyas Harold, Haugh Wood and Wigmore Rolls in Herefordshire.

The Member's Day and AGM was held at Pant village hall in North Shropshire. The event was well attended by around 35 people and involved three main speakers. A brief AGM was followed by Ezz Miles who gave a Kentish Glory Project update, followed by Simon Spencer on Farming for Butterflies and local news. After a buffet lunch, the afternoon saw Steve Gray from Butterfly Conservation give a talk called Wild Spaces. He gave some excellent examples from around the country with a particular emphasis on engagement with young members. A butterfly conservation youth panel had been formed which consisted of teenagers and young adults. Comments from the audiences' personal experiences suggested that the earlier children are encouraged to become interested in butterflies and moths the better, with primary school age not too soon. Thanks to the speakers and everyone attending for making it an enjoyable day.

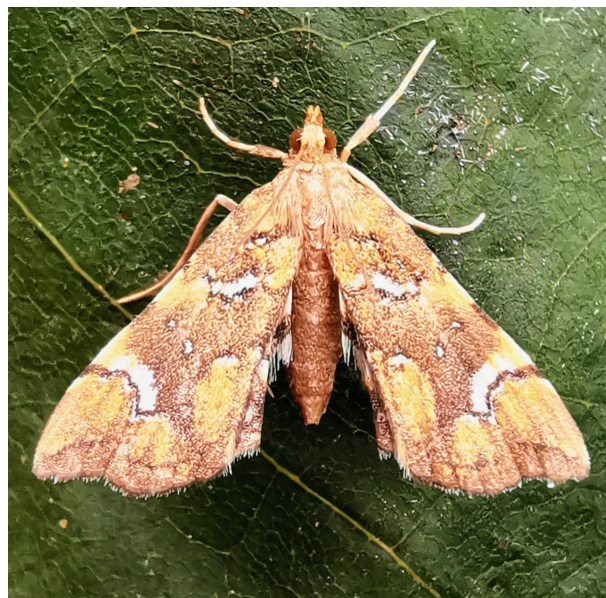


**Butterfly  
Conservation**

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment

I had planned to attend a follow up Branch Chairs Face-to-Face meeting in October, but I caught Covid and had to send my apologies. I am expecting the minutes of the meeting where members of the Senior Leadership Team were due to give updates on several important issues including the new volunteer's registration called Assemble.

The butterfly season has proved to be below par this year partly due to inclement weather leading to Butterfly Conservation issuing a butterfly emergency. Not surprisingly this has also been mirrored by lower-than-average moth numbers. However, interest has been maintained by the arrival of rare visitors including some species not recorded in the region before. This may be down to climate change leading to the Northerly expansion of species range. I did trap a new micro in Worcestershire recently, *Musotima nitidalis* or Marbled Fern is a native to Australia and New Zealand and is thought to have been introduced with tree ferns. It is spreading rapidly across the country and is sure to arrive in Herefordshire before too long.



*Musotima nitidalis* or Marbled Fern

**Mike Southall**

## Editor's Ramblings

2024 will not go down in the annals as one of the great summers for butterflies and certainly not for the early season specialities which tend to be the rarer butterflies anyway. In the March newsletter (Newsletter 17) I asked you to look out for five species whilst you were out and about, these were Green Hairstreak, White-letter Hairstreak, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and White Admiral, as well as the Purple Emperor on the eastern edge of the county. Two of those species are found in the late spring and those in particular will have suffered with the poor weather conditions. Despite that a walk organized for our members along the Hergest Ridge and the adjoining Hanter Hill to hopefully see Green Hairstreak and the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary was successful for both species: it was also good to see large numbers of Small Heath, a far less common species now than years ago. Poor seasons are often greeted with horror by Lepidopterists as they fear, quite rightly sometimes, that the following year will also be poor for butterflies and moths. However, it is important to remember that the different species have developed different ways to insure their survival following bad years. Later in this newsletter I will recount how one of our favourite spring species may use a clever strategy for just such an event - "The Case of the Orange Tip Pupa".



Small Heath

Bob Hall and I are often asked to lead walks for or give talks to local groups of the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, something we are very happy to do. So it was nice to receive a request for a different type of help from one of the trust's officers. Herefordshire Wildlife Trust is carrying out a review of its "Local Wildlife Sites", LWS's for short. These are designated sites which do not meet the requirements to be SSSI's but are non-the-less important for wildlife often providing an oasis as part of a corridor across land less suitable for wildlife. Butterflies have long been used by conservationists as indicator species of illustrating the health of a certain type of habitat. In Europe different assemblages of species are used to illustrate the health of different habitats and Toby Fountain who is HWT officer tasked with this review has sent a set of guidelines to help him in his task. He asked that we should review it for him, so we forwarded it to our Conservation Team at Lulworth and to Rhona Goddard our field officer for comment. Apart from applauding Toby's paper a couple of minor tweaks were suggested which will hopefully lead to better conservation opportunities for Butterflies and other insects.



Toby started his request to us like this -

*"As project leader for the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust Local Wildlife Site (LWS) project and as a keen lepidopterist with a passion for butterflies, I have written a selection of guidelines to enable the designation of LWS in Herefordshire on the basis of their butterflies. I have gone about doing this primarily because currently there are no specific guidelines for selecting sites for their butterflies, only supplementary guidelines if a site hosts a red list species. As a result, I felt it was incumbent upon me to rectify this, not only because of the conservation significance of butterflies but also because of the benefits that such a set of guidelines would provide to my habitat surveying for this project. As an ecologist, I want to have a multi-dimensional approach when surveying habitat. Currently I have been surveying LWS sites primarily on the basis of their flora and avifauna. Being very good habitat indicators with specific ecological requirements, associated habitats, larval food plants and need for habitat connectivity to sustain populations, butterflies can tell you a huge amount about the character and quality of a habitat."*

Well said Toby you are to be congratulated on that, something that BC has been advocating for years, true, not just for the very habitat specific species but often the more common and widespread species. We are indeed lucky that Herefordshire WT will consider Butterflies in more detail when designating sites enabling them to get a picture of the value of sites. Your recording of Butterflies across the county will also help with this project. Ian Hart, who is our Conservation Officer for BC in Herefordshire, sent me the following note *"I have every respect for the work Toby Fountain is undertaking designating LWS sites in Herefordshire. I have personal knowledge of several woodland sites that he has designated as well as the Ewyas Harold Meadows Butterfly Reserve which was designated some 12 months ago. I believe his process is very thorough and encompasses all aspects of the natural components of any site. With regard to Ewyas Harold Meadows much consideration was taken of the ground flora in addition to the lepidoptera and other fauna."*

I now have a set of display boards which can be used anywhere within the West Midlands but which can remain in Herefordshire for local use. I have produced some more information sheets with colour photographs, etc., to make them hopefully more attractive, informative and relevant to Herefordshire and these are available at no charge to be displayed at an event you may have organised or have access to. Just contact me for more details if you are interested: it all helps to spread the word. Whilst we are on the subject of spreading the word again if you belong to a group or organisation and you have a programme of talks then you can always approach Bob or I to come along and give a talk on some aspect of Butterflies (and even Moths!).



Part of the display, the main boards are double sided and there is other material but it was too windy on that day!

Topics that I have given talks on over the years include:-

1. Butterflies of Hereford
2. Biology and Conservation of Butterflies
3. Gardening for Butterflies
4. The World of Lepidoptera
5. All Moths are Brown? (This features moths found in Herefordshire)
6. Butterflies of Bolivia and Peru (The results of visits to both countries with a travelling camera!)

I make no charge for these talks nor ask for travel expenses but I do need access to a microprojector or whatever they call them these days and I ask that you make a donation to West Midlands Butterfly Conservation.

Would some of you like an Identification Day? You have a passing interest, you decide to join Butterfly Conservation and then you get asked to record the species of Butterflies that are turning up in your garden and suddenly you want to know how to tell a Small White from a Green-veined White or what is more difficult how to tell a small Large White from a large Small White, if you see what I mean. A two part session helping you get to grips with Identifying some of the species with only minor



differences between them, followed by a walk around a local site such as Haugh Wood. If that idea interests you then get in touch by email or phone, and if there is enough interest we can organise such an event. It only needs a few of you be interested for me to put it on.

Pre-Covid we had organized an annual evening for members in Hereford, just a chance to hear about the work the society is doing locally and nationally, perhaps have a presentation, a chance to see some nice photographs, as well as learn a little more about the beautiful insects we are trying to conserve for future generations. I will try to organise such an event for April 2025 somewhere in Hereford, any thoughts on its content would be welcome, but just a chance to meet up would be good! No charge and tea and coffee available or maybe meet in a pub.

I have managed to get a few more copies of the books produced by the West Midlands Branch of BC, so if you haven't bought your copies yet you can pick them up from our hose in Hereford to save postal charges, email or phone to pick a time. (See below)

The purpose of Butterfly Conservation is to conserve Lepidoptera by joining the society you are helping that aim, as you will see later in this publication where we are actively conserving we are having some success Ewyas Harold and Eastnor park are two examples. All of this is good for your own health mental and otherwise and the more you get involved the better for you as well as the "Leps". There are opportunities that I have talked about in my "Ramblings" above, there are work party dates later in this issue. We are working to make your membership both valuable but interesting to you, but I am reminded of a famous quote of the late US President—John Kennedy - ***Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country.*** I would like to modify them slightly and say :-



... and butterflies need your help!

**Ask not what your society can do for you - ask what you can do for your society.**

All offers of help gratefully received!!!!

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](mailto:peter.herefordcmr@gmail.com)

**Butterfly Recorders** Bob Hall, Rachel Mailes & Martyn Davies 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***



## Herefordshire Butterfly Records 2024

**Skippers** - **Dingy Skipper** and **Grizzled Skipper** are still both very restricted in their distribution, with 9 records for Dingy only from Ewyas Harold Common while Grizzled has been found at The Doward as well as Ewyas Harold Common. 29 records for **Large Skipper** which are quite widespread in the county. 41 records for **Small Skipper** with a maximum count of 27 from Mowley Valley and 15 from Garway Common. A few records of **Essex Skipper**, but this species is almost certainly under-recorded on account of the difficulty in its identification.



Dingy Skipper (Upperside)



Grizzled Skipper (Upperside)



Grizzled Skipper (Underside)



Dingy Skipper (Underside)

**Whites** - There were over 100 records for **Brimstone**, but the summer brood was low in number. There were plenty of **Orange Tips** in April and May with a large count of **11** from Viv Quinn. There were over 120 records for **Green Veined White** with a max count of 17 from Devereux Park. **Large White** were again common with a high count of 20 from Wigmore. There were over 140 records of **Small White** with a high count of 14 from Wellington. **Wood White** have had a very poor year even in their strongholds of Wigmore Rolls ( max 9 ) and Haugh Wood. Wood White were also recorded in Mowley Wood. There were no records of migrant **Clouded Yellows** this year.

### Which White is Which?

Whenever I lead a walk I get asked how to identify the "White" butterflies. So here they are, test yourself, see how many you get right. The answers are on the back page

A



B



C



D



E

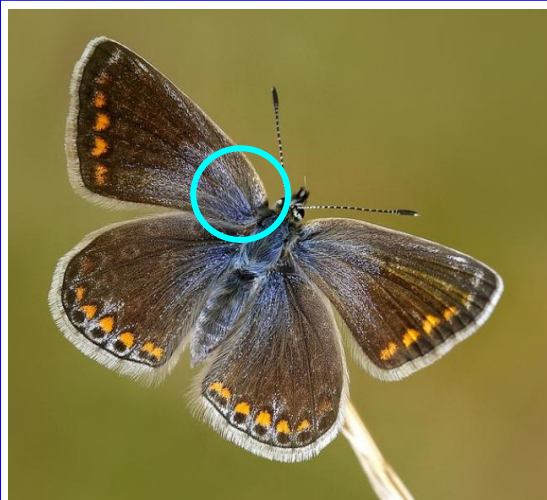


**Browns** - **Gatekeeper** had a good year with over 140 records. There was a high count of 35 from Haugh Wood. **Meadow Brown** also had a good year with nearly 200 records including an astonishing count of 100 from Tom Oliver at Urishay Court Farm. **Ringlets** ( max 25 from Haugh Wood and Mowley Valley ) also had a good breeding season. There were good counts of 35 **Marbled White** from Urishay and 30 from Newton St Margaret's. A Total of 42 records submitted. **Speckled Woods** were widespread with a high count of 18 from Pinnacle Hill Malvern. There was 3 records of **Wall** from Herrock Hill, Mowley Valley and Olchon Valley. Low numbers of **Small Heath** records from Hergest Ridge Hill ( max 30 ) and other spots near Kington .

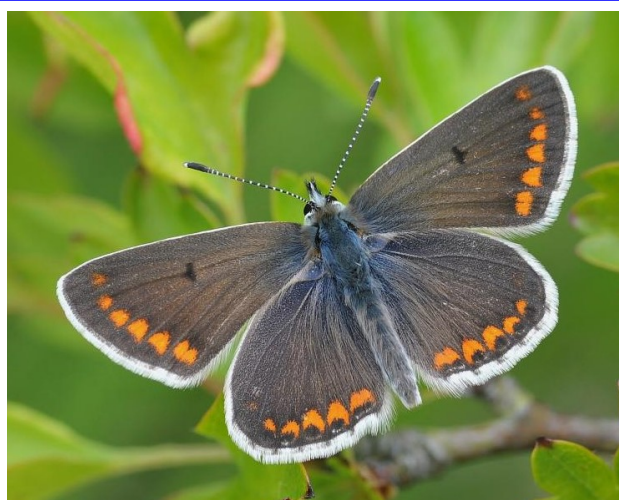
**Nymphalidae Fritillaries** - There was a maximum count of 5 **Dark Green Fritillary** from Hanter Hill, with smaller numbers seen at Ewyas Harold Common. Only 4 records in 2024. 26 records for **Silver Washed Fritillary**: they had a fair season with a high count of 12 from Wigmore Rolls. **Pearl-bordered Fritillary** numbers were good at Ewyas Harold Common with a high count of 168. This is the only site in the county apart from the re-introduction site on the southern part of the Malverns where 27 mating pairs were seen following a further re-introduction. **Small pearl bordered Fritillary** were recorded from Hanter Hill with a high count of 3, (*This colony could have been destroyed by a fire see later article - ed*)

**Nymphalidae** - There were over 100 records for **Comma** with a high count of 5. **Red Admiral** have had a most wonderful late season extending well into autumn with over 200 records. There were 41 records for **Painted Lady**. Plenty of **Peacocks** with a high count of 49 from Robin Hemming at Dymock Woods, 41 from Wigmore and 30 plus in Haugh Wood. **Small Tortoiseshell** numbers too were generally low with only 64 records for the whole season. **White Admiral** only two records this year from The Doward and Dymock Woods.

**Blues** - There were plenty of early records of **Holly Blue** but a poor 2<sup>nd</sup> brood. There was a high count of 8 from Haugh Wood South. **Common Blue** had a very poor year in most places; Tom Oliver had a high count of 5 from Urishay Court Farm, compared with a 100 in 2023. There were 2 records for **Green Hairstreak** from Hergest Ridge and Malvern. **Purple Hairstreak** were recorded from Kempsey, Haugh Wood and Marcle Ridge, but only 7 records all told. **White letter Hairstreak** were not seen in Haugh Wood but 2 were recorded from Holywell Dingle. An egg was seen at Mowley Wood. There were 3 records of **Brown Argus**. **Small Copper** were seen in small numbers in late summer, totalling 26 records.



Female  
Common  
Blue (Left)  
and  
Brown Argus  
(Right)



Female Common Blue and Brown Argus can be difficult to identify, however, the female Common Blue always has some blue scales on the wings near the “root”. Marked by a blue circle on the photograph above. There are usually some on each of the four wings. The Brown Argus has no blue scales.

**Summary** - Undoubtedly, the wet weather in the early part of the year had an impact on insect larvae and adults. Later the continued wet weather in June would have affected the breeding success of at least some of the early butterflies and impacted on the numbers of 2<sup>nd</sup> or summer brood.

These Herefordshire butterflies are in great trouble: Brown Argus, Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper. Common Blue, Green Hairstreak, White letter Hairstreak, Small Pearl bordered Fritillary, Small Tortoiseshell and Wood White.

Butterfly Conservation declared a Butterfly Emergency in September after announcing the results of the Great Butterfly Count. This showed huge declines in many species. The average number



of butterflies seen was down to 7 from 12 in 2023. Suspicion also falls on the continuing use of neonicotinoid pesticides which have major long term impacts on many insects.

**Acknowledgements** - Many thanks to all recorders for submitting their records. There are now too many of you to be mentioned individually!

**Verification** - Thanks to Martyn Davies and Rachel Mailes for their great assistance in verifying records in 2024.

**Website** (*Visit this website and look at the distribution maps for our butterfly species across the West Midlands. John Tilt can also produce a range of other maps to suit your particular requests, and he would be delighted to do so - ed*)

[www.westmidlands-butterflies.org.uk](http://www.westmidlands-butterflies.org.uk)

## Bob Hall Herefordshire Recorder Butterfly Conservation Oct 2024

*(The number of records that come in from the recorders has increased dramatically over the last few years which is absolutely brilliant and not just from the "Hot Spots", the number of recorders has also increased as well. So if you haven't joined in yet please do so and increase our knowledge of our local species where they are and how common in each place - all of this is very useful information and comes in useful when working with Herefordshire WT and Herefordshire Council who have some statutory duties to fulfill - ed.)*

## Hereford Moth Report for 2023

As I write this the annual update of data for the West Midlands Moth atlas gets ever nearer. This year we've had to change how we populate the data so fingers crossed it all goes well. The year is also drawing to a close so I'm expecting datasets for 2024 catches from a lot of you please (and older for some). As per usual I'll accept notebooks and do the data entry for you and return books afterwards. iRecord has been very busy this year and as of mid October some 13,389 records have been uploaded and verified for 2024. So from that you can understand that myself and my co-verifier John Walshe have been rather busy at times. Thanks especially to those who upload photos and use the moth input spreadsheet so we get method and other essential bits of information, rather than have me either guessing or writing off to ask. I also received the moth database from the Hereford Records Centre, after some years of asking. That's an extra job for the Winter, going through their 90,000+ records and removing any that we already have and adding any that we don't, probably one record at a time. So spare me a thought on those cold dark Winter days and evenings. If I manage to add enough to overtake Worcestershire on sheer number of county records, I'll be delighted. I also monitor the iNaturalist website and help verify (or make research grade as they call it) so that records migrate over to iRecord. Some have their settings so that this doesn't happen so I try and encourage them to re-set them. It used to be default on iNaturalist but iRecord managed to get that changed, so more come over now. And I also look at Observations.org website, which is very difficult to extract data from and a chore for me once a year. I don't think many CMR's even look at that one.

The weather up on the Black Isle, where I live these days, has been disappointing this Summer and I understand it has been much the same in Herefordshire also. My week moth trapping with some of you in July reflected that as well. That's 2 years in a row when peak moth time has been damp and cool. Third time lucky perhaps, hope to see some of you next year probably in July again?

Back to 2023 and interesting catches for that year. I'll start with micros. Any new to the county get published in the Entomologists' Record and I've just sent off 2023 newbies for micros. I'd thoroughly recommend subscribing to the publication, it's rarely very technical and always offers something of

Only 3 new moths for Herefordshire in 2023, and here they are!



Monochroa hornigi



Tuta absoluta



Acrobasis tumidana  
- This is the actual specimen trapped in the Hereford Garden at Bodenham

interest: <https://www.entrecord.com/>

Only 3 new. ***Monochroa hornigi*** was one and this was in the Rosamaund Rothamsted trap. I get the identifier of the Rothamsted macromoths to keep the micros for me every 5 years. I'd do it more often but the trap sits in a fairly sterile agricultural field and produces little of interest mostly. This one was dissected by me and the dissection is available to view on the Moth Dissection website here: [https://mothdissection.co.uk/species.php?Tx=Monochroa\\_hornigi](https://mothdissection.co.uk/species.php?Tx=Monochroa_hornigi). It's the third record for the West Midlands and possibly overlooked as it is so small and drab. Then we had ***Tuta absoluta*** from Ross-on-Wye and caught by John Walshe and confirmed via dissection by myself. August 14<sup>th</sup> and a female. It feeds on tomatoes and there's a smattering of records in adjacent Worcestershire and it may be an immigrant or trying to establish itself. Finally ***Acrobasis tumidana*** caught in Robin Hemming's garden in Bodenham on July 8<sup>th</sup> 2023 and also confirmed via dissection by myself and available here: [https://mothdissection.co.uk/species.php?Tx=Acrobasis\\_tumidana](https://mothdissection.co.uk/species.php?Tx=Acrobasis_tumidana). This is a rare immigrant and the first record for West Midlands. Look out for the dot on the mapping when the data gets updated on the Atlas website. Keep an eye out for odd looking Caloptilia moths in your trap. ***Caloptilia honoratella*** has arrived here and will be spreading and if you see any that look like candidates, keep them for me to look at more closely.

On to Macros. Clearwings continue to do well with lures being used extensively. Ones to target next season are **Welsh Clearwing** in the West and **Large Red Belted Clearwing**, last seen in 1997. And do pot up any micros attracted also, the lures can turn up some extremely interesting records.

**Porter's Rustic** turned up. Bodenham on August 21<sup>st</sup> caught by Robin Hemming. That's the third West Midlands record and first for Hereford. **Jersey Tiger** also made another appearance and hopefully this will colonise properly very soon now, following on from the spectacular colonisation of **Scarlet Tiger**. One record in 2023 in Bridstow, making 3 in total so far. The moth was caught by Richard Clements. More records of **Dewick's Plusia**. 7 sightings in 2023 following its arrival in the county the year before. John Walshe, Robin Hemming, Lee Taylor-Wheale and Aaron Woods. I recommend using the Ni or Gamma lures for this one. **L-album Wainscot** continues to show its face also. 21 records last year following on from its first appearance in 2018. **Clifden Nonpareil** continues to spread, 14 records in 2023 beating the 9 in 2022. More **Pine Hawk-moths** turned up. 6 records in 2023 indicating it is establishing itself nicely, thanks to Paul Horswill, Helen Stace, Tim Dixon, Penny Richmond and Robin Hemming. **Thyme Pug** turned up again, only the second record for the county, thanks to Seb Buckton and again found in the Black Mountain area. A good record of **Sloe Pug** too from Cradley caught by Gail Hampshire. **Least Carpet** continues to establish itself. **White-point** had its best year ever in the county since arriving in 2015 with 8 records, thanks to John Walshe, Jim Stevenson and Gail Hampshire. And **Four-spotted Footman** turned up at 3 different moths traps run by Steve Whitehouse, David Griffith and John Walshe in early August on the Doward, an area where it was recorded in 2022 also. 13 in total. Finally good numbers of **Kent Black Arches**, which first arrived in 2016 recorded in many parts of the county and seems firmly established.

Migrants? Of note we had 4 **Convolvulus Hawk-moth** records (thanks to Robin Hemming, Tim Kaye, Jim Stevenson and Penny Richmond). Planting *Nicotinia* plants is always a good way to see them, but you have to remember to pop outside frequently to see if they are there. They do come to light as well. **Vestal** had an exceptional year, ***Palpita vitrealis*** less so but still well recorded. The more common species like **Diamond-back** indicated that it was a good year for immigration with over 70 records.

With best wishes to you all

Peter



Porter's Rustic



Dewick's Plusia—The Hereford Specimen



Kent Black Arches - A Hereford Specimen





Pine Hawk-moth



Convolvulus Hawk-moth



Clifden Nonpareil

Three more specimen all trapped in Robin;s Bodenham Garden

*(As ever I am grateful for Peter's efforts on recording the moths of Hereford as well as dissecting moths from recorders all over the country. Peter happened to be down in Herefordshire when there was a very important meeting of the Herefordshire Council employees tasked with monitoring conservation and biodiversity in July and he was able to help them update their records Bob and I as well as Ian Draycott also attended and we were able to help them with their records of butterflies and some other insect groups.*

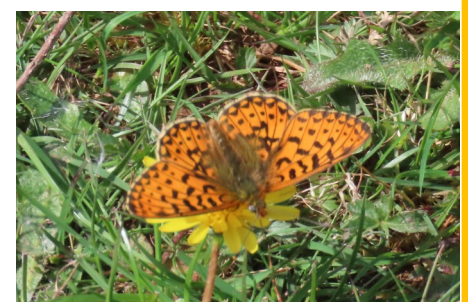
*My thanks also to Robin Hemmings who provided the pictures of "The Hereford Specimens" which were trapped in his garden in Bodenham—ed)*

### **(Ewyas Harold Common and BC Reserve**

If you are new to Butterfly Conservation or have just moved into the area you may not be aware that there is a Butterfly Conservation reserve adjacent to Ewyas Harold Common. A superb series of flower rich meadows which are a mecca for butterflies and moths including the nationally rare Pearl-bordered Fritillary.

The site is monitored by our Conservation department through our local field officers, Rhona and Natalie and also by Ian Hart who is our local conservation officer. To spend time on both the common and the meadows is a worthwhile experience as the views on a clear day are stunning and the wildlife can also be stunning. Being high up you can also see the rain coming in when you are up there. We have had two groups of volunteers who have work parties on either Tuesdays (fewer this year) or Saturdays and dates for these will hopefully appear at the end of this part of the your newsletter. New volunteers are always welcome!!! Ian has provided the table of Pearl-bordered Fritillary counts over the past ten years which appear on the next page, with them he wrote the following note.

*"Although a national butterfly emergency has been declared by Butterfly Conservation after the lowest Big Butterfly Count in 2024 since records began 14 years ago, the return for Pearl-bordered Fritillary in 2024 at Ewyas Harold was at 189 butterflies above the average of 156 for the previous nine years. This was despite the fact that some monitoring compartments were almost devoid of butterflies, while others showed a moderate increase. The reasons for these variations are not clear, but could be due to a combination of factors, including weather, aspect, topography and the condition of the bracken - Ian Hart"*



Pearl-bordered Fritillary photographed on Ewyas Harold Common in 2024.

# EWYAS HAROLD COMMON - PEARL-BORDERED FRITILLARY COUNTS

## Maximum number recorded in each compartment 2015-2024

Cpt	2015a	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
A	4 (12/05)	3 (12/05)	3 (07/05)	10 (19/05)	4 (12/05)	10 (26/04)	13 (11/05)	8 (13/05)	1 (20/05)	1 (12/05)
B	48 (12/05)	21 (16/05)	10	17	20	31 (26/04)	10 (16/05)	11 (13/05)	14 (20/05)	12 (12/05)
C	7 (12/05)	0	1	3	8	1 (26/04)	11 (11/05)	1 (13/05)	1 (20/05)	1 (12/05)
D	14 (12/05)	8 (16/05)	7	3	6	12 (26/04)	1 (11/05)	3 (13/05)	6 (20/05)	6 (12/05)
E	1 (12/05)	4 (12/05)	3	9	16	12 (26/04)	13 (16/05)	5 (13/05)	12 (20/05)	11 (12/05)
F	2 (12/05)	1 (12/05)	1	1	3	3 (26/04)	3 (16/05)	2 (13/05)	0	0
G	6 (12/05)	4 (16/05)	4	4	9	19 (26/04)	4 (16/05)	6 (13/05)	8 (20/05)	3 (12/05)
H	2 (12/05)	0	0	0	6	6 (26/04)	1 (16/05)	1 (13/05)	1 (20/05)	1 (12/05)
I	0	1 (12/05)	1	4	6	4 (26/04)	0 (16/05)	2 (13/05)	3 (20/05)	5 (12/05)
J	4 (12/05)	2 (12/05)	2	4	10	11 (26/04)	4 (16/05)	0 (13/05)	6 (20/05)	1 (12/05)
K	4 (12/05)	0	55	5	15	12 (26/04)	1 (16/05)	4 (13/05)	4 (20/05)	2 (12/05)
L	5 (12/05)	7 (16/05)	7	5	16	11 (26/04)	7 (16/05)	4 (13/05)	8 (20/05)	1 (12/05)
Area 2			1	6	0	n/a	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Area 13	13 (12/05)	32 (12/05)	58	148	71c	48 (06/05)	7 (11/05)	9 (13/05)	40 (20/05)	75 (15/05)
Area 14		12 (12/05)	3	0	0	n/a	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Area 15			14	127	34	28 (06/05)	4 (16/05)	24 (13/05)	42 (20/05)	70 (15/05)
Herp Area	2 (12/05)	0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
<b>Totals</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>95b</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>208d</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>189</b>

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

a) Counts undertaken by Wessex Environmental Services (Clarke & Green) under contract.

b) Over 100 individuals counted by BC South Wales Branch Members.

c) Area 13 part-cut by Commoner for bedding in winter 2018/19.

d) An under-estimate. There were many more butterflies in Areas 13 and 15 at the peak period, but the weather intervened to undertake a count.

Records compiled by Ian Hart



There are still questions to be answered about the conditions which best suit the butterflies on the common, as Ian alluded to earlier, but his monitoring will eventually work out the optimum as long as global warming does not interfere too much. It is also very obvious that the work carried out by the volunteers is having a beneficial effect with the records bucking the trend for most spring species of decline in 2024. So thanks to Natalie, Ian and Dean for organizing the work parties.

Ewyas Harold Meadows & Common Work Parties	
<b>Saturday Work Parties</b> <b>Once a month</b> <b>Start at 10:00am</b>	<b>Tuesday Work Parties</b>  Please read Natalie's report on the conservation and management of the meadows which make up the BC reserve below.
Saturday 16 November 2024	<b>Meeting Location for all groups</b>  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 21 December 2024	
Saturday 18 January 2025	
Saturday 15 February 2025	
Saturday 15 March 2025	
Saturday 19 April 2025	
<b>Contacts</b>  To attend a Saturday work party please contact Dean Fenton <a href="mailto:fenton@littleburyfarm.co.uk">fenton@littleburyfarm.co.uk</a> Ian Hart <a href="mailto:yellowrattle4@aol.com">yellowrattle4@aol.com</a>  To attend a Tuesday work party please contact Natalie Norton <a href="mailto:nnorton@butterfly-conservation.org">nnorton@butterfly-conservation.org</a> / 07485372199.	

## Ewyas Harold Meadows

### Reserve management

I have been working on a reserve management plan for Ewyas Harold Meadows to help guide the management of the reserve in line with BC's 2026 strategy. The management plan incorporates our strategic initiatives to guide reserve management, these initiatives include "*Recover butterflies and moths*", "*Manage land sustainably*", and "*Connect people to nature*".

Recently, BC's Senior Land Use Officer, Julian Bendle, joined myself and Rhona Goddard to discuss solutions to some management issues including scrub encroachment. We are hoping that by tweaking some of the management we can restore and maintain the floral interest of the meadows whilst retaining areas of scrub on the boundary of the meadows for other fauna, as well as the lepidoptera interest.

### Volunteering

It has been difficult to recruit volunteers for work parties at Ewyas Harold Meadows particularly for the



Dingy Skipper - recorded on the BC reserve in 2024.

once-a-month Tuesday work parties. In Autumn 2024/Winter 2025 I intend to run two work parties, one in the Autumn and one in the Winter. I am hoping this approach may encourage a bigger turn out of volunteers and will be more time and resource effective.

Saturday monthly work parties are continuing to be led by volunteer work party leader, Dean Fenton, the volunteers divide their volunteering between managing scrub on Ewyas Harold Meadows Reserve and managing habitat for Pearl-bordered Fritillary on Ewyas Harold Common. All volunteering activities undertaken on BC Ewyas Harold Meadows Reserve and Ewyas Harold Common is greatly appreciated.

Up-coming work parties dates include Saturday 16th November, Saturday 21st December, 18th January, 15th February, 15th March, 19th April. Meeting at 10:00am at the northern Cwm Hill end of Ewyas Harold Common, adjacent to the top cattle grid (SO382302).

### Partnerships

Butterfly Conservation continue to work in partnership with the Ewyas Harold Common Trust in advising on management for Pearl-bordered Fritillary on Ewyas Harold Common.

**Natalie Norton - Midland Landscapes Officer**

## And whilst we are on the subject of work parties ....

### Haugh Wood

#### Work Party dates for Winter 2024-25

2024

Sat 2nd Nov

Sat 7<sup>nd</sup> Dec

2025

Sat 4<sup>th</sup> Jan

Sat 1<sup>st</sup> Feb

Sat 1<sup>st</sup> Mar

Sat 6<sup>th</sup> 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](tel:07501020605) [robinhemming@btinternet.com](mailto:robinhemming@btinternet.com)

or

Kate Wollen

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

### Which White is Which?

How did you do?

A Green-veined White

B Female Orange Tip

C Small White

D Wood White

E Large White

A



B



C



D



E





## Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary colony under threat of extinction?

On Sunday, 2nd June this year Bob Hall led a group of BC members on a walk along Hergest Ridge and onto Hanter Hill, this is on the border of Herefordshire and Radnorshire (now part of Powys) and Hanter Hill is actually just over the border. The purpose of the walk was to seek out Green Hairstreak and the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and the group succeeded in finding both species on their walk. Most of the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillaries were actually on Hanter Hill itself so strictly not in Herefordshire, but when I arrived later in the day I did find them flying on both sides of the border!

The Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary is a declining species as are most Fritillaries nationwide and this is true of Herefordshire as much as any other part of the country so the events of Thursday, 6th June have some significance for butterfly watchers locally -



Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary



*"Firefighters have tackled a large fire on the side of a hill near Presteigne." On June 6th, 2024, a large wildfire broke out on Hanter Hill in the Walton area of Presteigne, near Kington, on the border between England and Wales.*

Now it is possible that the main breeding area for the fritillary was not affected by the fire, but it is just as possible that it was! Only by looking and searching the area round about that we will know if the colony has survived or has been rendered extinct.

### Help Wanted in 2025!

We have a number of members of BC who live both sides of the border and who receive this publication as part of their membership. I would be very pleased if they could make an effort to monitor the area next year especially during the flight period of the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. If any of you can help with this and you are happy to share email addresses (via me!) I can put you in touch with each other so that you can spread the load and also co-ordinate days and times to best survey the area and get the best coverage. (martyn.davies808@gmail.com)



If the colony has survived, and of course we hope it has, it would be useful to know more about it and possibly help with its conservation on into the future. I certainly hope to visit the site next year not just for the Fritillary but also for the Green Hairstreak which was widespread along the ridge and also to enjoy the stunning views afforded by the walk.

**Martyn Davies**

## The case of the Orange Tip Pupa

One of the joys of being a Biology Teacher of 11-16 year olds is their continued interest in other living creatures, so a small breeding cage containing 5 Orange Tip caterpillars with stripes on them was a point of interest when they came into my room for lessons. The caterpillars grew and eventually pupated, so we now had five apparently dead pupa stuck to the cardboard walls or the cheap wooden frames of the breeding cage. Time to put them away for the winter.



Orange Tip caterpillar above and pupa below

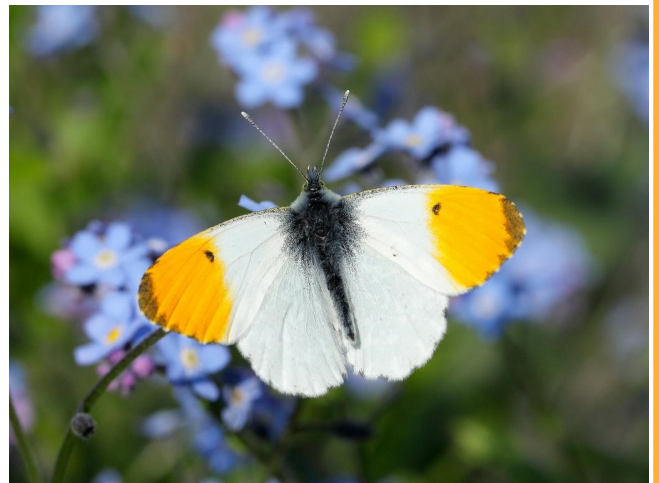


Imagine our surprise when a second adult Orange Tip emerged twelve months after the first! Delayed emergence could be very useful for any species if conditions at the time it should emerge are not suitable, this applied in the prep room behind my lab but could equally apply in a more natural habitat. This could provide an interesting piece of scientific study for someone but they would need to investigate what triggers the renewed development of a pupa after a period of dormancy through the winter.

Just a thought: now where did I leave that old fridge?

**Martyn Davies**

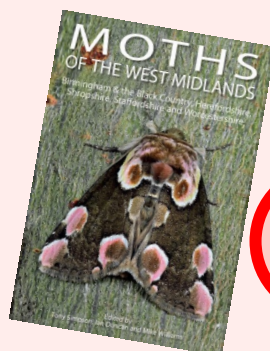
Next spring, and lo and behold a female Orange Tip emerged from one of the pupa, it was duly released and we waited for the others to follow suit. No more emerged but as they had not been looked after particularly well we just shrugged our shoulders and promised to look after them better another year. The top shelf of a prep room was not the best place to keep them but the cage was put back there after a suitable time for the other pupa to emerge and to be honest was forgotten about except to illustrate Complete Metamorphosis in insects.



## 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@gmail.com](mailto:martyn.davies808@gmail.com)  
Collection Only after 19/12/24  
01432 266703**



## Malvern Hills PBF Project

Mel Mason and Liz Lloyd have produced a very thorough and thoroughly interesting report on the work they, and their team of volunteers, have been carrying out on breeding and reintroducing Pearl-bordered Fritillaries to sites on the southern end of the Malvern Hills. They are to be congratulated on their efforts and their successes so far which are very encouraging. The three illustrations have been “borrowed” from their report and illustrate a very important aspect of the preparation work with the bracken prior to, and at the correct time during the following years, to encourage growth of the Dog Violets. Violet growth is vital as it is the larval food-plant of the caterpillar and tends to grow along the edges of the pathways cut through the bracken by Robocutter.

Using information provided by Matthew Oates

*“During Jan & Feb 2024 we hired the robocutter and contractor again to create up to 8km of pathways criss-crossing ten sections covering both sites.”* One of the sites is in Eastnor Park (Herefordshire) and the other is in the Bromsberrow Estate (Gloucestershire), so it is a joy that we will end up with another important site for the butterfly in the county.

I was reminded that in earlier years, c1980's, BC members involved themselves in “Walking or was it dancing a Conga through the bracken on another site not far away in an attempt to create similar conditions for violet growth so that we may have been able to conserve the High Brown Fritillary. Unfortunately we were unable to conserve that very rare species on the Malverns, however, with the advent of that machinery to aid our work it may be possible to reintroduce the species in years to come on the Malverns or on one of the commons throughout Herefordshire that it had previously inhabited. Not an easy task with a lot of hard work to captive breed stock prior to release and only after the necessary licenses have been obtained and funds raised. And obviously a lot of preparation and research. But who knows.

I know, from the report, that a third site is being prepared for another release on the side of Swinyard Hill, again more hard work getting the hillside ready by reducing bracken and thus encouraging violet growth; we can only hope that the release, when it happens, will be as successful as the series of release on the original two sites have proven to be so far. The sites being relatively close together, coupled with the mobility of the adults should produce a population which can withstand changes of land use of one site in the future.

Visiting the sites is possible but you are asked to remain on the pathways and not venture from



Eastnor Estate – southern slopes below the Obelisk stone monument



Clearing thick thatch and creating habitat corridors

Jan-Feb-2024





them for fear of treading on the violet plants housing caterpillars or pupa on the ground. Also damaging nectar sources by trampling prior to them producing flowers at the correct time next year and in subsequent years.

**Martyn Davies**



Just £9 per calendar including postage (£17 for two and £25 for three) Anyone ordering 3 calendars also receives a free Kentish Glory badge. To place an order email ; - [wmbutterflies@gmail.com](mailto:wmbutterflies@gmail.com)



The new Kentish Glory enamel badge is now available for those of you who like these, I do! I have about forty different badges featuring different Butterflies and Moths at home. For details see

[www.westmidlandsbutterflyconservation.wordpress.com](http://www.westmidlandsbutterflyconservation.wordpress.com)