

MI NUTES OF BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION WARWICKSHIRE BRANCH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
2.00 p.m. – 26 November 2011
NFU Mutual, Tiddington, Stratford upon Avon

Keith Warmington opened the meeting and welcomed the attendees. He also thanked the NFU for the use of their facilities.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Steve & Debbie Cheshire, Molly Kearns, Phil Pain and Mary Lindsey.

2. Minutes

The Minutes from the previous meeting had been circulated and were approved by the meeting.

3. Re-election of Officers

David Brown, Steve & Debbie Cheshire, John Reeve and Terry Southgate were to stand down from the Committee by rotation and were entitled and willing to offer themselves for re-election. Gill and Geoff Thompson had joined the Committee during the year and required to have their election formalised. Mike Slater proposed and Richard Lamb seconded and the re-elections which were carried unanimously.

4. Chairman's Report

Keith Warmington reported that branch membership now stood at 238 which is 36 up on last year. The target is now 300 members and he asked that the meeting encourage as many people as possible to join the branch.

He then reviewed the events that had taken place during the year.

The Spring Meeting was held at Cubbington village hall with excellent refreshments provided by Val Weston. Keith advised that the 2012 meeting will also be held at Cubbington; the date has yet to be fixed.

Nine butterfly walks and five moth evenings were held during the year. The first butterfly outing was to Tottenhoe Quarry where, due to the weather conditions we failed to find our target species, the Duke of Burgundy. We made up for it, however, with some interesting plants including Man Orchid. Also in May we had the usual Ryton Wood Open Day which although blustery, did produce some good butterflies. This was followed by a New Members' Day at the Reserve in June which had a small attendance.

A mid week visit to the private Bishops Bowl site was enjoyed by quite a large group. The site produced good numbers of Small Blue in its diverse habitats. In June we also visited Cannock Chase for the Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary. Again, the weather was not ideal but one or two fresh specimens were found at rest.

In July we had visits to Oversley Wood and Snitterfield Bushes. Over 50 people attended Oversley as this site is one of the most northerly places to see Purple Emperor and many came quite a distance to join us. Snitterfield Bushes gave us good views of Silver-washed Fritillaries including a number of the Valesina types.

Later in the month we had the Warwickshire Moth Blitz which replaced the National Moth night for one year. We managed to run traps at 29 sites in the county, covering 19 10K squares. In all we trapped 6178 moths of 350 different species. A separate report is currently being written about this night.

The last butterfly event of the year was a visit to Ryton Wood Meadows to look at the Brown Hairstreak eggs being recorded. This was followed by a visit to Bubbenhall Meadow to find the 3 Clouded Yellow butterflies that had been reported.

Public events attended by the Branch included the usual two day Bird Fair at Middleton Hall. This actually became a 1.5 day since the wind was so strong it was affecting the awning. Unfortunately, this event will not take place next year. The Branch was also asked to take a stand at Blooms Garden Centre near Rugby as part of the Butterfly Awareness project. Again, the weather was not good and unfortunately, few of the Garden Centre's customers were interested in butterflies or suitable plants.

We also hosted the national Small Blue Action Day at Bishops Itchington. This was attended by BC members from as far afield as Scotland and was followed by an egg search on Bishops Heap. Mike Slater and Keith rang their usual butterfly workshop for Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and also took part in the Cemex Open Day at Southam Quarry where local school children were introduced to the Small Blue and fossils.

Keith then thanked all the volunteers and attendees for all the help and support the Branch have received throughout the year.

The Branch publishes a magazine and moth report each year and Keith thanked Steve & Debbie Cheshire and Val Weston and Alan Prior for their efforts to produce these documents. This year an Annual Report has also been produced and any comments on the content would be welcome in order that it can be improved in future years.

The web site is maintained by Steve Cheshire and Keith thanked him for his work on it.

6. Treasurer's Report

The financial report had been circulated with the recent newsletter. There is approximately £15K in the account, £10K of which is the Stewardship funds in respect of Ryton Wood Meadows. The funding for the Annual Report came from Cemex and Keith reported that overtures are being made to persuade them to fund the report for 2011. Mike Slater reported that much of the Reserve funding is currently being used to line various ponds and to purchase new mowing equipment.

The proposal to accept the accounts was made by John Reeves and seconded by Richard Lamb and the meeting voted to confirm acceptance.

7. Butterfly Recorder's Report

Keith Warmington thanked everyone for sending in their records whether online or on paper. The deadline for records is 31 December and he asked for any outstanding records to be submitted as soon as possible.

Steve Cheshire had provided a graph of butterfly records from the website. There were 86 different recorders and the graph reflected the warm weather in April by the number of records it produced. Since we began recording on line in 2007, 18 species had their best year ever. The most numerous species recorded were Ringlet, Meadow Brown and Common Blue and those causing concern include White Admiral, White Letter Hairstreak, Essex and Small Skippers.

8. Moth Recorder's Report

David Brown gave a summary of the larger moths' year in Warwickshire. Many species had a good year because of the warm March/April weather and these included the Light Orange and Orange Underwings which were recorded in many woods for the first time ever. The first migrant of the year arrived in April (Bordered Straw) and was the earliest ever sighting.

One Balsam Poplar at Halford Hill Farm produced a large number of Hornet Clearwings. There had only been a handful of sightings previously and these included some in the 1800's and the 1970's. The species normally emerges in June/July but was seen on 11 May. A Pauper Pug was trapped in Weston Wood. This is a new species for Warwickshire and is a Red Data Book species and the only one in the county. David will be running traps next year to search for a population. The Orange-tailed Clearwing was reported at more sites this year and the Six-belted Clearwing records were also good. Chalk Carpet, a nationally scarce species, was found at Bishops Bowl which is a new site.

Other features were that the Scarlet Tiger is definitely moving north, Cloaked Carpet was found in Chase Wood which is a new site for the county and the first Bedstraw Hawkmoth was found for nine years.

9. Conservation Report

Following a tea break Mike Slater gave a very interesting talk on the butterflies lost from the county in recent times but also those gained and the measures being taken to ensure fragile populations are given the chance to spread naturally by management of the local habitat and by larger projects such as the Small Blue Project.

The meeting closed at 5.00 p.m.