

East Midlands Branch Members Day & AGM 8th November 2015

Held at Conkers, Rawdon Road, Swadlincote, Leicestershire. DE12 6GA.

Present:

Bill Bacon (Chairman), Simon Jenkins, Max Maughan, Christine Maughan, Geof Adams, Margaret Adams, Willy Lane, Les Purnell, Maurice Heighway, Pat Heighway, Alison Gregory, Richard Penson, John Buckland, Brenda Buckland, Richard Graves, Hazel Graves, Paul Goodwin, Adrian Russell, Colin Bowler, Ken Orpe, Pat Orpe, Ray Walker, Martin Warren, Richard Jeffery, Win Walsh, Jim Steele, David Foulds, Brian Hammon, John Roberts, Al Roberts, Richard Rogers, Andrew C. H. Brown, Ann E. Brown, Sue Martin, Dave Martin, Eliot Taylor, David Gibbons, Margaret Gibbons, Jean Hallam, Brian Hallam, Barbara Overton, Ron Overton, Alison Thornhill, Dorothy Morson, Andrew Bird, Alan Watson, Hugh Middleton, Viv Evans, Michael Glendenning, Sylvia Green, John Green, Jane Broomhead, Joyce Kirkland, Kathleen Randall. (54).

Apologies for Absence:

John Phillips, Gary Atkins, Barry Morson, Karl Proctor.

Minutes of the 2014 AGM:

These were taken as read.

Matters Arising From These Minutes:

There were no matters arising.

Bill Bacon welcomed Dr. Martin Warren, Chief Executive, Butterfly Conservation.

Chairman's Address

Good morning everybody and welcome to the Branch AGM here at Conkers.

Today is Remembrance Day. At 11.00 am I shall pause proceedings when I ask members to observe a two-minute's silence

It is my privilege today to give a warm welcome to Dr. Martin Warren, the CEO of Butterfly Conservation. Following the AGM there will be an illustrated presentation from Martin on "Butterfly Breakthroughs – 50 years of learning to conserve Lepidoptera". In the afternoon Ken Orpe will tell us about "The changing status of butterflies in Derbyshire".

I am pleased to report that during the last twelve months the branch has grown and strengthened yet again. Reports from our committee members will explain more

The past year has seen some important changes to the make-up of our committee. A year ago the functions of Webmaster and Newsletter Editor were separated. Simon Jenkins, as Webmaster, has continued to develop the branch web pages. Immediately following the 2014 AGM our then publicity officer, Eliot Taylor, took over from Simon the function of Newsletter Editor. Then Gary Atkins, who for many years had responsibility for Public Relations at Rolls Royce, joined us as Publicity Officer. Earlier last year Richard Penson had become our first dedicated Conservation Officer (for Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire) and now I am pleased to say that Jim Steele is covering the equivalent role in Lowland Derbyshire. Both Richard and Jim have extensive understanding and experience of planning issues. At the end of the meeting I shall be asking members to ratify these changes to the committee.

Conservation projects are benefiting from our improved financial resources. We hire contractors to fell trees, brush-cut and create scrapes, the latter reducing nutrient levels, so important for some site specialists. This work complements the hands-on efforts by volunteers; incidentally scrub bashing in the field is something that Martin Warren knows all about. Voluntary work has been undertaken by a number of our members with associated conservation organisations. Our progress brings into focus the need for our own dedicated work party organiser. Any volunteers or ideas would be most welcome

Two weeks ago the Office for National Statistics issued a forecast for a likely population growth of around ten million people over the next 25 years. Whatever the actual increase, it seems inevitable that there will be more and more land disappearing under bricks and mortar. In recent months we have lost to a housing development at least one species-rich site in Nottinghamshire and we may lose to an industrial development the locally rare Grizzled Skipper from its only known site in East Leicestershire. Elsewhere in Leicestershire another species-rich site is earmarked for development. Conservation is not going to become any easier.

But it is not all one way. Half a century ago I was working close to a patchwork of farms now under Rutland Water. Two decades later I regularly drove from Stoke-on-Trent to Matlock passing the open countryside where I could look down on the ruins of an ill-constructed dam, a dam that was rebuilt and holds back the water of Carsington Reservoir. These reservoirs and their surrounds, now rich in wildlife including butterflies, exist because of population growth. It is a complex business.

Two years ago here at Conkers in the National Forest, East Malling Research launched its excellent publication 'Realising the Wildlife Potential of New Native Woodland'. There is much nascent and now maturing woodland in The National Forest. It has become an important site for grassland butterflies and there is potential for colonisation by arboreal species. There is a difficulty. Much of the planting has occurred with numbers of saplings, but not nature conservation, as the priority. In places, woodland design and selection of trees leave a lot to be desired. On that day of a couple of years ago, we walked from here to a young plantation where I asked if elm was included in the sapling mix. "No" was the answer. "How about Buckthorn?" This time the answer was "Yes - Sea Buckthorn". Sea buckthorn in Leicestershire! Nevertheless, as with the reservoirs, the National Forest exemplifies the fact that, despite ongoing loss of land, new wildlife areas can be created.

Within the last month, at least one national newspaper featured the results of a survey by DEFRA which revealed that over the last 40 years there has been a fifty percent reduction in butterfly population. A staggering 96% drop in numbers of the White-letter Hairstreak was headlined. It may be that much of this decline happened decades ago because of Dutch Elm disease: be that as it may, it is a jaw-dropping statistic. One of the most important events in our calendar is the National Big Butterfly Count. I suggest that next year we also undertake a Branch Little Butterfly Count, the little butterfly in question being the White-letter Hairstreak. This could give us a better idea about the spread of the aforementioned butterfly with the prime purpose of planting of disease-resistant elms. In Derbyshire a start has been made.

Our challenges are real enough but, as with the Dingy and Grizzled Skippers, we can aim to halt and then reverse the decline of the White-letter and other threatened butterflies.

Now on a personal note I have to advise you that I shall step down as Branch Organiser from early next year, although I hope to stay closely connected to the Skipper conservation projects. I take this opportunity to thank the many members, committee members in particular, for all the support that I have received since I succeeded Barry Prater back in 2007.

Thank you, Bill Bacon
Chair and Branch Organiser

Branch Officer's Reports

Treasures Report AGM 16th November 2015

John Phillips, Treasurer

I present to the AGM the final audited accounts for the year ending 31st March 2015 on behalf of the branch treasurer who is currently out of the country. A copy of the Statement of Account for the last financial year has been handed out, if you require a copy there are surplus copies on the front desk.

The end of year accounts was again in a much healthier position than the previous year that enabled a large amount of the cash surplus to be available for conservation projects, with £5,000 reserved for the following;

£2,000 being allocated for the ongoing Grizzled Skipper project in the Nottinghamshire/Leicestershire borders.

It was decided to allocate £1,000 on Elm trees for Derbyshire.

£2,000 allocated to the purchase of a heavy duty brush cutter, safety equipment and training for workers.

The increase in income is due to two main factors. Firstly as always our main income is from subscriptions which continue to increase with total branch income from subscriptions up 7% on the previous year. Secondly income from sales continues to increase year on year thanks to the sterling efforts of Jane Broomhead with total sales at £2,499 up 27% on the previous year and profit margins remain high from the sale of goods at 37%.

Expenditure for general running costs remains low for the operation of the branch limited to printing of newsletters, postage, AGM costs & insurance. Prices are market tested annually to make sure we are continually receiving best value.

Finally the forecast for this financial year currently shows a similar level of surplus cash available for donations & conservation work with £2,000 already designated for the ongoing maintenance of the Nottinghamshire Grizzled Skipper Project and a further £3,000 for other conservation work.

Jonathan Phillips Branch Treasurer

The Accounts were Approved by Richard Jeffrey and seconded by Geof Adams.

Web Master Report for EMBC AGM

Simon Jenkins

12 months ago I stood down from the Newsletter so I could spend more time on the website. This has happened but not quite as I had anticipated. The continued success of the Derbyshire Updates from Ken Orpe has joined by Nottinghamshire Flutterings and L&R Butterfly Line.

These Newsletters are initially sent out as emails & then reworked as articles on the website. The process is currently a bit over complicated due to the way the website is set up. Resulting in up to 2 or 3 hours a week on my part. This has resulted in the development work I am doing to the rest of the website is taking a bit of a back seat.

Consequently I am looking for ways to speed the process along and improve the accessibility and readability, hopefully increasing the readership. As a experiment I have set up a new section to the website. It consists of some WordPress based pages. There are a

few advantages built in to WordPress that I would find difficult to implement in the current website: strong links to FaceBook & Twitter, all posts are searchable, automatically achieved and keep up to date with changing technology. Plus we can have a number of contributors submitting their own posts with out having to go via a third party.

This is in discussion with members of the committee and if all goes well I hope we can implement this for the start of the New Year.

A increasing number of people are now using smart phones or tablets with smaller screens to access our site. With the current site the pages are difficult to read and barely accessible at all from some phones. So for the other areas of the website I have been redesigning the basic template so that the pages display correctly and readably on as many devices and versions of software available.

I have started to upload new versions of pages and will continue to updates others over time but with over 40 pages this may take a while. Christine is assisting in providing up to date maps for the butterfly pages. I am also hoping we can start to provide more information about the changing circumstances of certain species, Wall Brown, Dingy, Grizzled & Essex Skippers for example.

To help with the monitoring and development of the Website I have installed Google Analytics. This is a very comprehensive tool that gives feed back on the number of page visits and details the type of operating system, browser, length of visit, how the visitor moved around the site and many more features. I have brought some sample pages of the site statistics if anyone is interested.

Some simple statistics:

Total page views last year	22,405
Total Page views last month	1,150
Operating System	
Windows	48%
Mac	20%
iOS	16%
Android	12%
Windows Phone	1.3%
Others (each)	<1%

This data underlines the importance of continuing to develop the web in view of the increasing use of phones.

Sales & Display Organiser

Jane Broomhead

I have done 9 events during the past year. Starting with Burbage in May through to the Grantham Canal in October. There is still one more event to do at Southwell in Nottinghamshire. I try to do events throughout the three Counties the East Midlands Branch represents, so this year there has been 3 events in Leicestershire, 3 in Notts and 3 in Derbyshire and 1 just over the border in Lincolnshire. So far £2041.17 has been taken with £139.50 being plant sales. Some of the events I attend now have quite a large amount of other people selling plants now, although I do try to grow something new. My thanks go to all those who have helped, especially Alison, Pat, Max, Christine, Geof, Margaret, Malc, Richard and Win.

Newsletter Editor

Eliot Taylor

2015 has been my first year as Newsletter Editor. Many thanks to my predecessors, especially Simon Jenkins for his work over the last 10 years.

I have kept the same A5, 20 page format and have brought in the title of "East Midlands Butterfly" to link to the national magazine. The big change has been the introduction of full colour throughout.

As usual 2 issues were produced this year.

The spring edition, delivered prior to the start of the Field Trip programme and the Autumn edition in time for our AGM.

We have had articles on recording, gardening for butterflies, the Vale of Belvoir and Nottinghamshire Grizzled Skipper Projects as well as the Field Trip Programme in the spring issue.

Unfortunately only one recording form was inserted with spring issue instead of two due to a misunderstanding in dispatch.

To prevent this happening again next year, I intend that the 2 forms will be printed on 2 different coloured stock papers.

The autumn edition featured, amongst others, the Field Trip reports, an article by Ken Orpe on the Silver Washed Fritillary in Derbyshire and notice of this AGM and Members Day.

Finally. If anyone has articles or photographs they would like to contribute could they please send them to me at the email address found on the committee page of our latest edition. The copy deadline for the Spring 2016 issue will be 25th March (Good Friday).

You don't have to be on the committee to send in contributions.

Publicity

Gary Atkins

Main external publicity highlights ... We maintained strong liaison with Head Office on press releases (and ensured advance notice to potential local spokespeople with content/messages); also issued our own release on the Grizzled Skipper project. Provided information on local activity for BC's national 2015 calendar of events. Updated local media contact lists (county-by-county) to enable quick e-mail distribution of news items/releases.

By working local story-lines (or local angles for national stories) we achieved coverage in the Bingham Advertiser, Nottingham Evening Post, Newark Advertiser, BBC Radio Derby, BBC website and Nottingham TV

Conservation Officer Report

Jim Steele

I was asked by Bill Bacon and Richard Penson to present the Conservation Report for all of the Branch.

Co-opted as Lowland Derbyshire Conservation Officer (CO) in April following involvement in the very important Stanton Site and drafting the planning application objection in consultation with BCEM in January, 2015.

Support and advice from Richard Penson and Ken Orpe has been invaluable.

Richard P has Branch-wide CO remit, and also is CO for Notts, Leics and Rutland.

I cover Lowland Derbyshire.

Dave Mallon, Cheshire and Peak District, covers Peak District conservation (only).

More COs are needed to help cover all of BCEM Branch ie: at least one per county.

Conservation Officer's role has been scrutinised, leading to liaison with BC Head Office (HO), and also with Cheshire and Peak District Branch.

Branch initiated and hosted a meeting with Dan Hoare, BC Head of Regions, for discussions about conservation and Branch priorities and its future.

Dan also visited possible reserve site and the Stanton brownfield site.

BC Conservation Strategy is being re-developed.

Strategic Review of Regions and how Branches are supported by BC HO Staff.

Regional Officer under consideration for a Midlands Region in the future.

East Midlands Regional Action Plan (RAP) created in 2000 included EMB and Lincs Branch.

Now under revision. Plan to complete in 2016.

Will help define our conservation priorities and projects – blend of HO and Branch priorities.

6 Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species:

Grizzled Skipper, Dingy Skipper, Small Heath, W L Hairstreak, White Admiral, Wall Brown

Existing project Grizzled and Dingy Skipper.

Projects under consideration or being continued:

Skipper Project

Brownfield Site Project – overlaps with skipper project – important in our Branch – threatened habitat for grassland species including BAPs but also common blue, brown argus.

White-letter hairstreak Project – location, monitoring and disease-resistant elms planting

Green Hairstreak Project – lowland – Richard P Species Action Plan project with student

Opportunities for all 6 BAP species – including White Admiral, Wall Brown

Protection of important butterfly sites

Planning system involvement, in liaison with Wildlife Trusts

Planning application comments – representations and objections

Threatened sites advice

Richard Penson. Notts and Leics/Rutland:

Commenting on validity of Ecological Reports for sites eg: Gedling bypass.

Langar site. Grizzled skipper. Habitat advice. Notts Wildlife Trust, Notts County Ecologist.

Cotgrave Colliery Headstocks. Dingy Skipper Green Hairstreak. Liaison w County Ecologist.

Market Harborough Old Orchard. Open space. Moth trapping. Probably lost but representations to County Ecologists, Biological Records Centre.

Myself. Lowland Derbyshire:

Familiarisation with Lowland Derbyshire Biodiversity Action Plan.

Close working relationship with Ken as regards butterfly records and species knowledge.

Developing close liaison with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust.

Contact on butterfly sites under threat via DWT, Ken O, members of public or other bodies.

Planning applications and sites of interest:

Stanton site – objection

Ashbourne airfield – objection

Loscoe Fields – strong representation

Aston Crematorium – representations

Tibshelf – no response to planning application from BC

Findern – in progress

Langley Pit – in progress

Somercotes – in progress

White-letter hairstreak. Much to learn on the subject of disease-resistant elms for WLH!

Planting imminent at six sites local to Ilkeston. Follow on to DWT's 'Elms for Hairstreak' project.

Local monitoring of brownfield and open sites, particularly for dingy skipper, small heath, common blue, brown argus.

Butterfly Conservation Reserves in East Midlands Branch

Reserve(s) considered important for species conservation, publicity, volunteer focus, BC image

Recorder for Leicestershire

Adrian Russell

Adrian reported that the popularity of moths was increasing. He had been identifying photographs sent to him and this now exceeds 1,000. He was quite happy to do this. He summarized what was happening as been "dynamic" at the moment, with a lot of strange things happening. For instance the Hoary Footman moth which Adrian had seen on holiday in Cornwall and is usually a coastal moth is spreading northwards. In 2013 Adrian saw 2 in his garden moth traps, none in 2014, but 6 in his garden trap in 2015 as well as being seen in another garden. Away from Leicestershire things are also changing dramatically. Garden Moth recording is very popular in Leicestershire with 40 to 50 regulars running garden moth traps. Adrian's aim is to now encourage moth recording in the wider countryside and woodland. To encourage this he has been making moth traps at a third of the cost of normal prices. Adrian would like to keep this around the Leicestershire area but was willing to make two traps for people to try in Notts and Derbyshire. It was suggested that an advert could be placed in the Newsletter.

Recorder for Derbyshire

Ken Orpe

(Ken also gave the report for the Nottinghamshire Recorder Richard Rogers and the Leicestershire Richard Jeffrey

Richard Rogers

Nottinghamshire Sightings Table

	Last 20 Years	2015
Small Skipper	20/05/2010-16/09/2003	16/06/2015-04/09/2015
Essex Skipper	14/06/2004-15/09/2012	29/06/2015-08/08/2015
Large Skipper	14/05/2001-16/09/2003	04/06/2015-29/08/2015
Dingy Skipper	24/04/2009-07/07/2013	04/05/2015-08/06/2015

Grizzled Skipper	23/04/2003-26/06/2005	26/04/2015-16/06/2015
Clouded Yellow	07/06/2000-02/11/2006	11/06/2015-17/09/2015
Brimstone	11/01/2005-15/11/2009	01/03/2015-12/11/2015
Large White	22/03/1998-02/11/2010	06/04/2015-17/10/2015
Small White	01/04/1995-31/10/2007	02/04/2015-14/10/2015
Green-veined White	17/03/2011-08/10/2008	10/04/2015-04/10/2015
Orange-tip	17/03/2011-28/08/1998	07/04/2015-08/08/2015
Green Hairstreak	06/04/1997-22/06/2013	27/04/2015-04/05/2015
Brown Hairstreak	11/04/2005-31/08/2005	
Purple Hairstreak	19/05/1997-21/09/1997	18/07/2015-02/08/2015
White-letter Hairstreak	22/06/2010-27/09/2003	30/06/2015-21/08/2015
Small Copper	16/03/1997-09/11/2006	20/04/2015-16/10/2015
Brown Argus	28/04/2007-20/10/2006	04/05/2015-26/09/2015
Common Blue	11/04/2012-14/10/2011	30/05/2012-01/10/2015
Holly Blue	15/03/1998-23/10/2011	06/04/2015-29/09/2015
White Admiral	01/07/2005-27/08/2010	17/07/2015
Purple Emperor	02/07-2014-25/07/2015	15/07/2015-25/07/2015
Red Admiral	25/01/2014-04/12/2006	09/01/2015-12/11/2015
Painted Lady	27/03/1999-15/12/1996	15/05/2015-24/09/2015
Small Tortoiseshell	15/01/1996-24/12/2001	18/02/2015-12/11/2015
Peacock	03/01/2013-24/12/2008	09/01/2015-26/10/2015
Comma	06/02/1998-24/11/2011	01/03/2015-12/11/2015
Dark Green Fritillary	14/06/2011-19/08/2010	03/07/2015-31/07/2015
Silver-washed Fritillary	27/06/2010-04/09/2013	04/07/2015-02/08/2015
Speckled Wood	17/03/2011-05/11/2015	06/04/2015-05/11/2015
Wall	31/03/1997-31/10/1997	
Marbled White	22/06/2002-13/08/1997	26/06/2015-29/07/2015
Gatekeeper	25/04/2001-16/09/2012	24/06/2015-26/09/2015
Meadow Brown	02/03/2004-02/10/2011	25/05/2015-16/09/2015
Small Heath	24/04/2009-29/09/1996	10/05/2015-10/10/2015
Ringlet	10/05/1999-30/09/2001	25/05/2015-07/10/2015

Bill Bacon thanked all the people who had sent records to the recorders.

Field Trip Organiser

Max Maughan

There were 15 day trips and one weekend away to Hampshire/Wiltshire.

The total number of people attending all the day trips was 190 with the average attendance being 14. The highest number of people attending a single trip was 42 at Cotgrave Forest on 4 July. Three of the day trips were joint with either the Derby RSPB Group or Derby Natural History Society, and the Longstone Edge trip in August was again a joint meeting with the Cheshire and High Peak Branch.

The trip to Pleasley Pits on 23 May was specifically for new members and this year 13 people attended, of whom most had recently joined.

The weekend away had mixed fortunes. On Saturday the weather conditions were excellent and 17 people attended, and 19 species of butterflies were recorded. However, Sunday was a complete washout and only two other members braved the dismal conditions and the day was cancelled.

The weather for the majority of day trips was not always perfect but generally the target species were seen. No trips were actually cancelled due to bad weather.

I would like to express my thanks to all the volunteers who led day trips this year. If you fancy leading a walk either locally or further afield please see me. It can be just for common species, or for more specialist ones. I also urge you to attend field trips - you don't have to be an expert - the leaders will help with identification.

Membership

Christine Maughan

Membership Secretary's Report 2015

The following data is based on statistics provided by Butterfly Conservation up to 1 November 2015.

For the organisation as a whole, membership has continued to rise dramatically. The national total now stands at well over 27,600 individual members from over 20,500 households.

Since 1 November 2014, recruitment within the East Midlands Branch has again been very positive with 141 new household members recruited (the 9th highest of all branches nationally), representing a net gain of 65 new households for the period after taking lapsed/cancelled memberships into consideration.

Total branch membership figures at 1 November 2015 were 958 households (an increase of 7% since 1 November 2014), representing 1317 individuals (an increase of 8%). This compares very well with the national increase of 5% in household membership, and 8% in individual members.

The branch has retained its rank as the 8th biggest within Butterfly Conservation by household membership, and is also in 8th place in terms of overall individual membership nationally, a drop from 7th position in 2014.

These figures are very encouraging, and show a great strength of interest.

Finally, we operate an email communication link with our members which is used to notify people of forthcoming events and activities. Hopefully, this helps to keep everyone more closely involved with the branch. If you have not been receiving our regular e-newsletters during the summer and would like to be included on the register, please let me know.

Distribution Maps Co-ordinator

Christine Maughan

Work on updating the distribution maps for the branch website has started, but has not yet gone live owing to a redesign of the website. I am currently liaising with Simon and we hope to display new maps over the coming months. Species distribution maps for historical data will be displayed in blocks of 5 year time periods, with more current data illustrated by maps for individual years.

Election Of Officers

In accordance with the branch rules, the three longest serving members stood down and offered themselves for re-election. These were Max Maughan as Field Trip Organiser, Christine Maughan as Distribution Map Co-ordinator and Adrian Russell as recorder for Leicestershire. These were proposed by Pat Orpe and seconded by Colin Bowler.

Changes to the Committee were proposed by Ken Orpe and seconded by Colin Bowler. These included Jin Steele as Conservation Officer for Lowland Derbyshire, Gary Atkins as Publicity Officer, Simon Jenkins as Web Site Officer and Eliot Taylor as Newsletter Officer.

Any Other Business

Ken Orpe presented a short slide show on the proposed new Butterfly Conservation Reserve at Longcliffe Quarry, Derbyshire.

At the end of the presentation members present were asked if they supported the proposal to push for the quarry as a new reserve by a show of hands. This was supported 100%.

There was also a request for a show of hands for help with the management work should BC decide to go for the NR at Longcliffe – about 20 people responded.

Ken Orpe (Derbyshire Recorder) requested that Derbyshire should be re-united as one County within the East Midlands Branch rather than the Peak District being part of the Cheshire Branch – 95% of the Peak District is in Derbyshire.

Martin Warren said he would come back to us regarding both the above issues ASAP. (the prospect of a new NR at Longcliffe and Derbyshire being re-united).

There being no further business the meeting finished at 11.40am. After a refreshment Break there was an hour talk by Dr. Martin Warren called Butterfly Breakthroughs:50 years of learning to conserve Lepidoptera.

After lunch a talk was given by Ken Orpe (Derbyshire recorder) called Recording the Changing Status of Butterflies in Derbyshire.

This was followed by Member's photographs.

The meeting closed at 3.45pm.

Jane Broomhead.