

MI NUTES OF BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION WARWICKSHIRE BRANCH
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
2.00 p.m. – 27 November 2010
NFU Mutual, Tiddington, Stratford upon Avon

Keith Warmington opened the meeting by welcoming those who had braved the cold to attend the AGM and also thanked the NFU for the use of their facilities.

1. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Margaret Vickery, John Reeve, Nigel Stone 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

John Liggins, Nigel Stone and Keith and Heather Warmington were to stand down from the Committee by rotation and were entitled and willing to offer themselves for re-election. Mike Slater proposed and Richard Lamb seconded the re-elections which were carried unanimously.

4. Chairman's Report

Keith Warmington reported that branch membership now exceeded 200. The Branch would like to expand membership further and to this end, he reported that Butterfly Conservation are currently running a half price membership with a free identification book offer until 10 December 2010. He urged the meeting to take advantage of the offer with friends and family.

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 2011 meeting will also be held at Cubbington on 17 April 2011.

The Ryton Wood Meadows annual Open Day was again blessed with good weather and over 30 people enjoyed the good company, good butterflies and good food – once again provided by Val Weston. The butterflies all performed well including the Wood Whites in Ryton Wood.

Nine butterfly walks and five moth nights took place during the year with the weather being kind to us throughout the season.

The first visit was to Strawberry Bank in Gloucestershire for the Marsh Fritillary and our visit coincided with the highest count ever of the butterfly. In June a mid week visit to Nelson's Quarry attracted good attendance. We also scoured Woford Wood in June for evidence that the Wood White was still present but unfortunately, despite suitable habitat, we were unable to find the butterfly.

A visit to Glapthorn Cowpastures in Northamptonshire was successful for the Black Hairstreak although being an important site for this butterfly did mean that there were many other visitors at the same time.

The Oxhouse Farm visit in July was very well attended and we were treated to exceptional numbers of Dark Green Fritillaries. A mid week walk in Weston & Waverley Wood was followed by another on Ryton Wood Meadows. In August we returned to Shenton for a walk round the farm (this time no umbrellas were required) which culminated in another wonderful cream tea in the barn. Finally, our last outing for the year was to Rodborough Common in Gloucestershire where our photographers got to grips with both Chalkhill and Adonis Blues. This day ended with us joining the queues to buy homemade icecream from the dairy on top of the Common.

Keith then listed some of the walks and events being considered for 2011.

Public events attended by the Branch were the two day Bird Fair at Middleton Hall and an Environment Day event in Kingfisher Park, Birmingham.

We attended the LBAP Conference at Bishops Itchington and Mike Slater and Keith led walks across the Yellow Lane and Bishops Hill to highlight the work done for butterflies; particularly the Small Blue on the site.

The Branch publishes one magazine, an annual moth trapping report and two newsletters a year. Keith expressed his thanks to Steve and Debbie Cheshire and Alan Prior and Val Weston for their efforts. The next magazine is due out in January and Keith encouraged the meeting to send in articles. He also reported that the Branch intend to produce an annual report beginning with 2010 and in 2011, this will be linked to a summary of the previous ten years.

With regard to the Warwickshire website, Keith thanked Steve for maintaining an excellent site which continues to be the envy of many other conservation bodies.

In respect of the future Keith reported that we are always looking for potential new reserves and have two sites currently of interest; Purley Quarry in North Warwickshire and Bubbenhall Meadow near Ryton. Both sites are being monitored for butterflies and moths.

With regard to moths, the National Moth Night will not be taking place in 2011 so the Warwickshire Branch would like to run their own for the county with a proposed date of 30 July 2011. It is intended to encourage anyone with a trap to run it on this night with a number of traps out and about in different sites and habitats so that anyone interested but without a trap can come along to a site local to them.

Finally, Keith reported the sad news of the death of Bob Dunnett who had been a stalwart member of the Branch and who championed the Purple Emperor in Oversley Wood.

6. Treasurer's Report

The financial report had been circulated with the recent newsletter. John Liggins reminded the meeting that because 2009's last quarter's subscriptions were not received until after 2009 year end, this figure appears in the 2010 accounts thus distorting the figures.

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.

Keith reported that volunteers have been found to carry on the transects at Harbury North and South and Ufton Fields. We have also added transects at Stockton, Welches Meadow in Leamington and Dean's Green Meadow has become a full transect.

Nine Wider Countryside surveys were completed for a second year.

Finally, Keith gave his top five butterflies for the year as Common Blue, Silver Washed Fritillary, Dark Green Fritillary, Brown Argus and Small Copper.

8. Branch Website

Steve Cheshire reported that all records submitted were vetted before being released for public viewing to filter out any 'spam' and confirmed that records on the website were always up-to-date. He showed various graphs of the records submitted in 2010 compared with those in the previous year. It was noted that the Small Tortoiseshell seemed to be on the increase.

9. Moth Recorder's Report

David Brown's report covered the various Clearwings found in Warwickshire.

He reported that the Raspberry Clearwing, although common in Europe, had not been recorded in the UK until 2007. To try to discover the spread of this moth in Warwickshire, David encouraged everyone to report sites of wild or garden raspberry canes so that these can be studied for the presence of the Clearwing. He also suggested that anyone interested should obtain the Hyle pheromone which attracts the moth, stating that the last week in July to the third week in August is the best time.

David reported that Current Clearwings are quite common in Warwickshire (last week in June is the best time.) Orange-tailed Clearwing has been found in Cubbington (June and early July) and the Red-tailed Clearwing is common at Brandon Marsh. Yellow-legged Clearwing is common in Ryton Wood in June and a good site for the Hornet Clearwing is Malpass.

10. Ryton Wood Meadows Report & Conservation Review

Mike Slater reported that 7500 whips have been planted on the Ryton Wood Meadows Reserve including 3000 blackthorn and 1000 buckthorn. It noted that because of this, the Brimstone has had its best year ever. More fencing has been installed dividing the site into six meadows. This is to allow grazing rotation. A 100 metre of hedgerow has been laid along the boundary with the Country Park and this will be extended in 2011. There was also a planting of Devil's-bit Scabious supported by Barclays and HSBC.

Mike then gave an update of the Small Blue Project. The butterfly has declined by 38% nationally and there are now only 3 colonies in Warwickshire. Mike then explained the importance of the Landscape Scale Projects to create links to enable the butterfly to spread.

11. Finally, the meeting was entertained by a delightful talk by Steve Cheshire and Debbie Hibbitt on their holiday in the Sierra Nevada, Spain.