

Birmingham
Natural History
Society

Founded 1858

Registered Charity No 500819

President: Mr Bryan Wood

Internet address: <http://freespace.virgin.net/clare.h/bnhs.htm>

NEWSLETTER No 97 – June 2012

Annual General Meeting

At the 150th Annual General Meeting of the Society held on 20 April 2012, Officers and Members of Council and Trustees were all re-elected as had been proposed on the calling notice, and John Reeve kindly agreed to continue as one of the Auditors.

The names on Council are becoming fewer, and some individuals are, with considerably twisted arms, taking on a number of roles.

Once again there was a **plea for members of the Society to consider offering their services on Council**: there are after all only two meetings each year (February and September/October).

The meeting was pleased to accept the audited accounts, but it was noted that Number 20 of the Society's Rules states, 'At the Annual General Meeting two persons, not on the Council, shall be appointed to audit the accounts prepared by the Hon. Treasurer. Exceptionally, in the absence of one of the Auditors the certification of the accounts by a single appointee will suffice'. This second sentence has had to be invoked since with the sad death of John Osborne the Society currently has only one Auditor.

We do therefore need a second Auditor, and members are urged to consider volunteering their services, or to suggest (after asking!) someone not a member of the Society who might be interested in this position. It must be stressed that, while the Auditor's role is crucial to the financial running of the Society, **the work itself does not require specialist financial understanding and is not onerous** (a once-a-year critical review of the figures clearly and cogently presented by the Hon. Treasurer, in consultation with the other Auditor).

Two grants had been made during the year, one to support publication of the *Flora of Birmingham and the Black Country* (edited by Professor Ian Trueman), the other to provide baseline survey data for the Wildlife Trust's new reserve at Rowley Hills.

The 2011-12 lecture programme had seen interesting and well-illustrated talks on a variety of taxa and habitats relating to both the local region and overseas. Suggestions (and offers) of speakers for the 2012-13 programme are, as always, welcome.

The Hon. Secretary would be pleased to receive correspondence concerning any of the above. Contact details are at the end of this Newsletter.

Tom Hubball writes:

I organise the annual Northern Coleopterists' Meeting and wondered whether you could publicise the details of the meeting to your members. I hope that you will be able to promote the meeting . . . we are a friendly bunch and inexperienced coleopterists will be made especially welcome.

Northern Coleopterists' Meeting 2012

Manchester Museum, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL
Saturday 22nd September 2012

- 10.00-10.15 'Welcome' Tom Hubball & Dmitri Logunov
- 10.15-10.45 'Subterranean Beetles: The British Fauna in Context of the World' Graham Proudlove
- 10.45-11.00 Tea/Coffee
- 11.00-11.45 'Beetle Diversity in Dunes and Pine Plantations at Newborough, Anglesey' Dick Loxton
- 11.45-12.30 'The Rediscovery and Current Status of *Cryptocephalus coryli* at Sherwood Forest NNR' Trevor Pendleton
- 12.30-13.15 'Beetles and Buglife: Conservation Work in the UK' Sarah Henshall
- 13.15-14.15 Lunch (Either bring sandwiches or visit the museum's Café Muse).
- 14.15-16.30 Afternoon discussion and identification session in the Entomology Dept.

Attendees are welcome to bring any exhibits, literature or other entomological items to display at the meeting.

The Northern Coleopterists Forum website needs content. If you have any articles, pictures or other content, especially field trip notifications and reports, which you think may be suitable for inclusion, please either post it on the website or contact me to publish it for you.

Tom Hubball Tel: 01535 678334 after 6pm Email: ukbeetles@blueyonder.co.uk Website: <http://pets.groups.yahoo.com/group/northernbeetles>

Vice County 38 Butterfly mapping

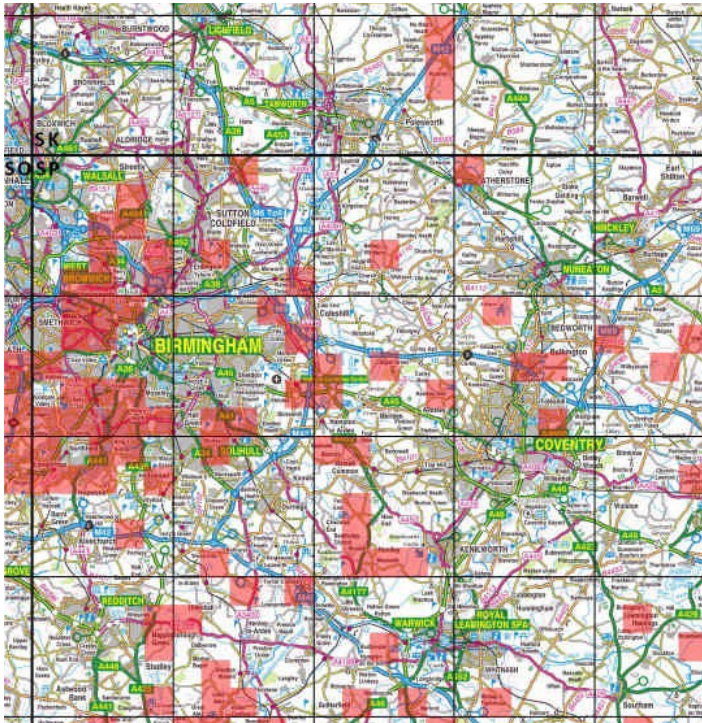
Mike Slater writes:

As part of Butterfly Conservation work Keith Warmington and I have recently reviewed recent butterfly records for Vice County 38. Though our knowledge for rare species and their where about is well known our recent knowledge of widespread species especially in urban areas is not of the required standard. We managed to record at least 10 species of butterfly in every 2 kilometer square in Birmingham between 2005-09, however that is not the recent case now

I wonder if you and your members could help with letting us know of their butterfly sightings in Birmingham especially from gardens and local parks etc. I have attached recent maps for your info

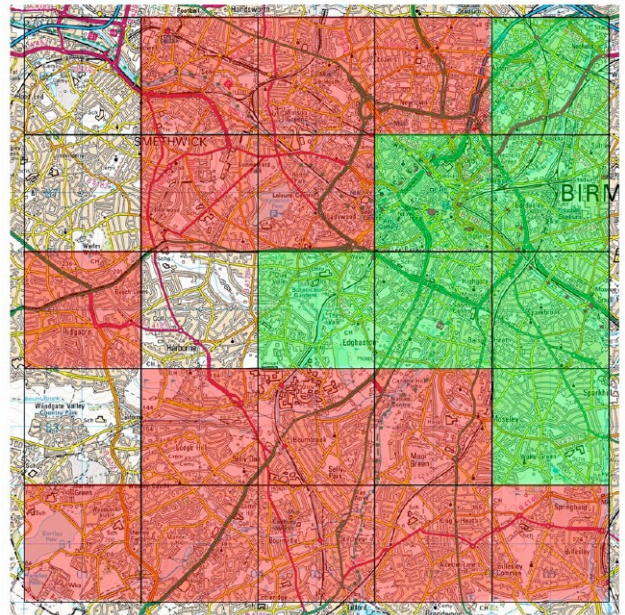
Mike

01788 335 881
michael.slater50@ntlworld.com



Red squares (tetrads) with no butterfly records since 1999

SP08



KEY				Species Recorded	
E	J	P	U	M	Holly Blue, Speckled Wood
D	I	N	T	S	Brimstone, Red Admiral
C	H	M	S	T	Large White
B	G	L	R	W	Small Skipper, Meadow Brown, Ringlet
A	F	K	Q	X	Large White, Small White, Green-winged White, Red Admiral, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock
				Y	Large White
				Z	Large White, Red Admiral
				No Butterfly Records Since 1999	
				Less than 10 Butterfly Species Recorded Since 1999	

Example of gaps in records in part of SW Birmingham

Did you know that according to our records no butterflies have been seen in parts of Warwickshire since 1999? Did you know that common species like Peacock haven't been recorded in large areas of the county? It is our intention, with your help, to remedy this situation over the next couple of years. We need to target the tetrads (2 km squares) marked in red to fill the gaps with records for common butterfly species.

We have available OS maps of each of the 10 kilometre squares that contain missing tetrads showing the exact locations where we need butterfly records from. These maps will be provided to anyone who can help in a particular area. Please take a look at the county map and see if you can help with any squares in your area.

For more information on butterfly recording contact: Keith Warmington (Warwickshire Butterfly Recorder & Transect Coordinator)
 01827 715 873

keith.warmington@warwickshire-butterflies.org.uk

www.warwickshire-butterflies.org.uk

**WARWICKSHIRE FUNGUS SURVEY
Programme for 2012**

Sunday 2 September 2012

10.30 am Tile Hill Wood, VC38, Landranger sheet 140, grid reference SP275789. Park in the lay-by on Banner Lane.
Contact: John Sells. ((02476 543217))

Sunday 23 September 2012

10.30 am Sutton Park Boldmere Gate, VC38, Landranger sheet 139, grid reference SP105955. Park in car-park north of Powell's Pool.
Contact: John Sells. ((02476 543217))

Sunday 30 September 2012

10.30 am Cold Comfort Wood, VC 38, Landranger sheet 150. Turn off the northbound carriageway of the Alcester bypass into Cold Comfort Lane at grid reference SP080578. Proceed beyond Cold Comfort Farm and park adjacent to large modern farm buildings on the left at grid reference SP072579.
Contact: Bert Brand. ((01789 267402))

Sunday 7 October 2012

10.30 am Ufton Fields Nature Reserve, VC38, Landranger Sheet 151, Explorer 221. Park in the car park at grid reference SP378613.
Contact: John Williams. ((0121 745 6395))

Sunday 14 October 2012

10.30 am Arley Wood, VC38, Landranger sheet 140. Meet west of Nuneaton in Old Arley Sports Centre car park, Oak Avenue, at SP282905.
Contact: John Roberts. ((01926 421544))

Sunday 21 October 2012

10.30 am Alvecote Wood, near Tamworth, VC38, Landranger sheet 139, Explorer 232. Meet at the car park in the wood off Robey's Lane at SK249035. Dogs are not allowed, except guide dogs.
Contact: David Antrobus. ((0121 422 8830))

Sunday 4 November 2012

10.30 am Radway Meadows NR, VC38, Landranger sheet 151. Meet south of Radway on minor road below Edge Hill escarpment. Park on verge near the corner where King John's Lane begins at SP365476.
Contact: John Roberts. ((01926 421544))

Sunday 18 November 2012

10.30 am Blythe Valley, VC38, Landranger sheet 139. Park in off road car park at SP 138752. From A34 approach the island of the M42, Junction 4, and follow the signs for the Blythe Valley business park. Proceed along private road to first island and note the security building on your left. Park in the lay-by or in the security 'building' car park, ('not on the road!'), and obtain a day permit, free of charge. You will be given instructions on where to park. A more detailed explanation and map will be sent to our members closer to the date of this foray.
Contact: John Williams. ((0121 745 6395))

Sunday 2 December 2012

10.30 am Kingsbury Water Park, VC38, OS sheet 139. Meet at the Visitor Centre by the main entrance at SP204959. (Parking charge currently £3.50).
Contact: Bill Moodie. ((0121 5546079))

Sunday 6 January 2013

10.30 am AGM.
Contact: John Roberts. ((01926 421544))

If you want to attend a foray, please inform the contact person a few days beforehand. This will ensure that you do not arrive at a foray that has been cancelled or moved to a different location. The contact person will send a reminder by email to group members two days before a meeting. Please reply stating your intention to attend the meeting or not. If the contact person decides to cancel a meeting, he will notify group members by email.

After a foray, please check *A Fungus Flora of Warwickshire* and the additions to the Flora or the contact person to confirm that any of the less-common species that you have collected have already been recorded for the County. If they have not, PLEASE KEEP DRIED MATERIAL for the herbarium.

Please send lists of species that you have found on the forays in Warwickshire to John Sells, 57 Craven Avenue, Binley Woods, Coventry CV3 2JS or David Antrobus. Where possible, please state the habitat and associated trees and plants for each record.

If you find an interesting fruiting of fungi, and think that others would be interested, please ring John Williams at the number below. It may be possible to arrange a foray at short notice. Permission has been obtained from landowners to collect for scientific purposes. In the interests of conservation, please do not collect more specimens than necessary for your personal use. We do not encourage collection for culinary purposes on our forays.

The Warwickshire Fungus Survey is affiliated to the British Mycological Society.

Our web address is:

<http://freespace.virgin.net/william.moodie/wfs.htm>.

Chairman

John Williams
100 Stanway Road
Shirley, Solihull
B30 3JG

Secretary

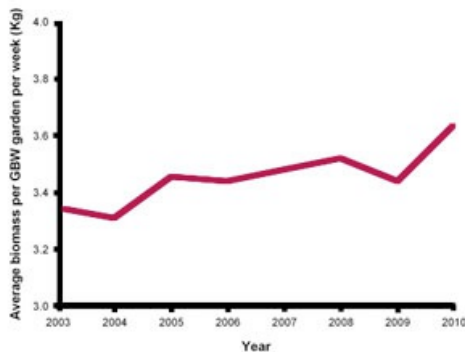
David Antrobus
55 Gower Road
Halesowen
B62 9BX

'Tis the season to be surveyed

The BTO has asked whether you have ever wondered how the birds visiting your garden compare with those visiting other gardens elsewhere across the UK. Some members may have taken part in the 'Big Garden Weigh-in', launched on BBC Springwatch, and covering the period 31 May to 5 June. The survey is part of a wider piece of research being carried out by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) looking at how garden bird communities vary over time and from one place to another. Details can be accessed via www.bto.org.

Through the survey the BTO is collecting records of 60 familiar garden visitors then using these to produce a map showing how garden bird communities vary across the British Isles. The map will display average 'bird biomass' (weight of birds), a measure that allows the BTO to look in greater depth at the communities of birds using different gardens.

By counting numbers of different bird species BTO will be able to calculate a 'bird biomass' score for each respondent's garden, and comparisons can be made with other gardens across the UK. The average garden (=?) in an average week (=?) in 2003 accommodated 3.3kg of bird biomass, a figure which had increased by 10% in 2010 – push from adverse habitat changes in the countryside, pull from an increasing number of bird feeders in the town.



The average bird biomass has increased over the last few years

Add all the UK's gardens together and you end up with an area about the size of Suffolk. Gardens are the main contributors to urban biodiversity. Some 90% of the UK's population lives within urbanised landscapes and gardens provide opportunities for people to connect with nature.

62% of the House Sparrow population, 54% of the Starling population, 38% of the Greenfinch population and 33% of the Blackbird population breed within urbanised landscapes.

A Woodpigeon weighing 400g is four times the weight of a 100g Blackbird, 40 times the weight of a 10g Blue Tit and 80 times the weight of a 5g Goldcrest. While a Woodpigeon will need between 50 and 80g of food per day, a Goldcrest will need 4.5g of food per day. When faced with food scattered on the ground a Woodpigeon can peck at a rate of 70-103 pecks per minute.

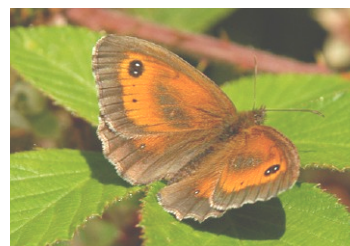
The BTO survey complements two others undertaken by the RSPB. The Big Garden Birdwatch, which took place on 28/29 January, noted declines in a number of species, identifying a particularly pronounced drop in the number of wintering Starlings, even though it came in as the second most commonly seen bird species (after House Sparrow). Not all news was bad: Goldfinch numbers, for example, appear to have been increasing. And a drop in numbers of Blackbirds and Long-tailed Tits in gardens may simply reflect movement of these birds into the countryside with the milder winter we had. Further details, including county-by-county population numbers and trends, are given at rspb.org.uk/birdwatch/results.aspx.

The RSPB also organised a survey by the general public - Make Your Nature Count - where information was sought on *all* wildlife that respondents noted over the period 2-10 June. (See www.rspb.org.uk/naturecount, which also links with results from the equivalent 2011 survey.)

Meanwhile the Mammal Society is involving the public in its Mini Mammal Monitoring and also a National Owl Pellet Survey (www.mammal.org.uk), together with the more specific Hedgehog Footprint Tunnel Survey. This last involves placing tunnels in Hedgehog-suitable edge habitats such as hedgerows and field margins, baited with tinned hot dog sausages (apparently a particularly delicious treat for these animals), and with a floor lining that can pick up footprints of all small mammals passing through.

The Bumblebee Conservation Trust, too, wants information, with a questionnaire-based bee nest survey and a 'bee walk' survey in which volunteers take a fixed 1-2 km route over a number of months, recording each species found. Details are given at www.bumblebeeconservation.org/get-involved/surveys.

Started in 2010 and identified by the *BBC Wildlife Magazine* as 'the world's largest survey of butterflies', this year's Big Butterfly Count runs from 14 July to 5 August (www.bigbutterflycount.org). Counts are made over 15 minutes in bright (preferably sunny) weather, at a single location or during a walk. The web page allows you to find the 2011 distribution records of many species in any area at a variety of scales. Last year's survey listed Gatekeeper as the 'top' UK butterfly, pushing Small and Large Whites into second and third places. Gatekeepers have recently been steadily extending their distribution northwards, and are appearing more frequently in urban areas where gardens and roadsides are not over-manicured.



Gatekeeper © Andrew Brown 2010

To contact the Hon Secretary or to provide copy for the next Newsletter:

Dr Peter Jarvis
23 Crosbie Road
Harborne
Birmingham B17 9BG

0121 427 1010 peterjarvis668@gmail.com

Could members let me know if they would be happy to receive the Newsletter by email.