



Herefordshire
Biodiversity
Partnership

Biodiversity

Action

November 2009

www.herefordshire.gov.uk/herfordbap

Welcome

Welcome to the November edition of Biodiversity News. It has been a busy time over the past few months, what with one consultation after another, a glut of meetings and concentrating on developing the new partnership website. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone in assisting me in this, be it for letting me use photos, writing project updates or consulting upon the design and functionality of the site. It is pretty well near completion and now live so it can be viewed at the following address.

<http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/herfordbap>

Please take a few minutes to have a look through it and if you have any comments, please email me with them or call me for a chat – I am open to any criticism, or suggestions you may have.

We have tried to make it user friendly, therefore trying to limit the amount of levels of navigation you have to trawl through to get to a certain page and we have

also made it visually attractive as I wanted the pictures to highlight the beauty and diversity of the wildlife in Herefordshire.

As well as creating the website, we have designed a new logo which I hope you will approve of. Doing this has been a steep learning curve in graphic design, but I hope that you agree that it reflects the character of Herefordshire as well as being simple and clean. Feel free to comment.

This edition of the newsletter is once again full of articles submitted by local people including updates on projects, features, diary dates, species discoveries and funding information.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all a merry Christmas and a very happy New Year. I hope you all have a good break and I look forward to working with you all in 2010. Enjoy!

Nicky Davies

(Herefordshire Biodiversity Partnership Co-ordinator)



Herefordshire
Biodiversity
Partnership

Home

News

Plans

Funding

General Info

Partnership

Gallery

Contact

You are here: Home



Beautiful Demoiselle

© Photo: Phyll Buckley

Latest News

Welcome to the homepage of the Herefordshire Biodiversity Partnership website. This new and exciting site provides information on the Herefordshire biodiversity process and its partners, species and habitats, project details as well as showcasing some of the county's superb wildlife.



Background to the process view >

An overview of the local biodiversity process from global to local



Local BAP functions view >

The role of local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) and their functions



What is biodiversity? view >

A few definitions



Our unique biodiversity view >

Why we need to conserve biodiversity

International Year of Biodiversity (IYB)

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2010 to be the International Year of Biodiversity (IYB). It is a celebration of life on earth and of the value of biodiversity for our lives. The world is invited to take action in 2010 to safeguard the variety of life on earth: biodiversity

It is an opportunity to:

- Stress the importance of biodiversity for our well-being
- Reflect on our achievements to safeguard biodiversity so far
- Encourage a redoubling of our efforts to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss

Have a look at their website which was launched in Montreal last week which includes some very strong messages, a list of events and celebrations, lists of partners involved, case studies of success, the value of biodiversity, biodiversity losses, why we need to take action and a background to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Visit the pages to find out:

- The important role biodiversity plays in our lives and what is happening to it.
- What people are doing around the world to combat biodiversity loss
- How people are celebrating the International Year of Biodiversity
- Some of the resources available to you in your celebrations

The website can be found at

<http://www.cbd.int/2010/welcome>



BARS User survey

This autumn we will be undertaking a review of the BARS system and how it is used. As part of this we will be launching an online survey which we hope as many of you as possible will complete. We will be contacting BARS users using the contact details contained in BARS, please ensure these are up to date. If you would like to take part and are not a registered BARS user or if you have any questions please contact: info@ukbap-reporting.org.uk

Thank you,
The BARS team



Note from Nicky:

A meeting is being held shortly between East & West Mids LBAP Co-ordinators and the BARS team to propose changes and attempt to resolve user issues and make sure that the site is easier to use. We would like the system to be used more widely to track progress of BAP delivery but understand that there are problems that need to be sorted before this can happen. Updates on this will be given in the next edition of Biodiversity Action.

HBRC

Rachel Price will be returning from her secondment to rejoin Emma in December to continue the good work of the Records Centre.

Herefordshire Biological Records Centre will be holding its annual indoor recorders and naturalist meeting on the 6th February 2010. Further details will be released at the end of November.

If you are not already on HBRCs mailing list and would like to receive information regarding this event please contact HBRC directly at:

hbrc@herefordshire.gov.uk or 01432 261538



HEREFORDSHIRE
BIOLOGICAL
RECORDS
CENTRE

Butterfly Conservation (Herefordshire Group)

This year we shall be running Winter Work Parties at Haugh Wood and Ewyas Harold. I'd encourage you all to try and attend some of these parties as this work is important and it can be fun! Last winter's work at Ewyas Harold appears already to be paying dividends with new growth emerging and an expansion in the usable ground for the butterflies.

Haugh Wood Dates December 19th (this will be our Christmas Party!), January 16th and February 20th. This will mainly be Coppicing work. Meet at 10.00 am at FC Haugh Wood Car Park grid ref SO592366. Contact *Kate Wollen* on 07786 526280 or *Robin Hemming* on 01568 797351.

Ewyas Harold Common Dates A working weekend on November 28th-29th, December 5th, February 6th, and March 6th. Meet at 10.00 am by the cattle grid at the entrance at the Northern end of Ewyas Harold Common grid ref SO382302. This is approached from Abbey Dore off the B4347 at grid ref SO 384306. Contact *Ian Hart* on 01981 510255 or *Robin* on 01568 797351.

Do try and come. Stay for the day or just come for a while. It's a great way to make friends, to keep fit and above all to do some good for the butterflies. Haugh Wood and Ewyas Harold are both superb sites.

WANTED: LEPIDOPTERA RECORDS

Does any one have any records of Grizzled or Dingy Skipper or Wood White from anywhere in Herefordshire for 2009. The only Grizzled Skipper record I am aware of was one at Ewyas Harold reserve in the pouring rain when we opened the reserve. I am aware of Wood Whites at Haugh Woods, Wigmore Rolls and Lords Wood but would basically welcome records from anywhere.

Please contact Robin with any records at robinhemming@btinternet.com

Robin Hemming

Traditional orchards - Winter Workshops in Gloucestershire

The Conserving & Restoring Traditional Orchards, England Project is pleased to offer a series of orchard management workshops in winter 2010.

These one day workshops are aimed at all staff and volunteers connected with the Orchard Project and offer a great opportunity to ask questions, make contacts and receive some practical training and guidance in a range of topics including planning, planting and formative pruning, restoration of neglected orchards and management for wildlife. Our workshops will be held at a mixture of National Trust properties, community orchards and cider/juice farms. There will be some 'class room' work but plenty of opportunity to get hands on.

Places on the workshops are free, but spaces are limited and booking is essential. We will accommodate as many as possible but initially we must limit bookings to two places per project/property.

Thursday 14th January
Tuesday 2nd February

For full details of venues, itineraries and a booking form please email orchards@nationaltrust.org.uk with the subject as 'Orchard Workshops' followed by the location you are interested in. Or, call Kate (Orchards Project Officer) on 01458 253 752.

The autumn edition of the newsletter from the Conserving & Restoring Traditional Orchards, England Project "Orchard Matters" is available from Kate.

HOC/BTO Herefordshire Bird Atlas 2009 Update

We are now entering the third winter period for survey work and are having to look seriously at the coverage completed along with the remaining time left to complete the outstanding tetrad squares still to go as the early results of your hard work are as follows;

The latest figures show that 229 winter tetrads and 201 summer breeding tetrad squares have been fully completed. This represents about 38% completed coverage of the County. We have had 211 observers contributing 55,633 records for just Herefordshire since we first started the project in November 2007.

Summary maps showing the coverage completed for twelve bird species can be seen on the BTO Atlas website: <http://www.bto.org/birdatlas>

The summary maps show how much of the county has been surveyed over the last couple of years of tetrads for the Atlas period, and just how much there is left to cover to complete the picture. Nevertheless, these summary maps help inform us about the early successes of the survey. You can also see for yourself the effort that many observers across the county have entered by using the link for Herefordshire from the BTO page called Bird Atlas Key Statistics.

County 2km Tetrad squares

The uptake since we started in November 2007 has now moved on to about 68% requested for allocation or 413 - 2km squares out of a possible 550 tetrads to do. Why not offer your time to help visit new tetrads away from home that will help this project complete our goal of 100% coverage by the summer of 2012!

Remember once you have completed a tetrad - winter and breeding visits, you will not have to cover that

tetrad again during the Atlas survey period.

Winter survey 2009/10

We still have plenty of tetrad squares to offer for the new third winter's season if you're looking at helping us for the first time or adding more squares to the ones you have already completed! If you are using paper forms to record your results and need more, please contact us to provide you with new sheets, tetrad sheets or Roving records.

Roving Records

This is a very simple survey method that is easy to use and if you use the internet the BTO has now developed a facility (spreadsheet) to help individual birdwatchers upload their own records. These types of records will greatly support the tetrad survey work by proving breeding success of some species which are difficult to find sometimes with tetrad working. They can be used to record any species which you see and throughout the year while you're out walking, or better still why not find those nocturnal species such as owls which we are missing!

HOC would like to thank everyone for all of the hard work that you have made, in making this a very successful halfway point for both our County and the National Atlas. We still have a long way to go but we are confident that with your support and enthusiasm we will achieve our goal of a full County Atlas by 2012!! If you want to help or find out more please contact me on the details provided below.

*Nick Smith
HOC Chairman
nick@asnw.fsnet.co.uk*



Noble Chafer discovered at Brockhampton Estate

The nationally scarce and UK BAP Priority species the Noble Chafer (*Gnorimus nobilis*) has been discovered in large numbers on the National Trust's Brockhampton Estate, near Bromyard.



Noble chafer © Laura Hunt & Anita Burrough

This large, attractive beetle is particularly associated with old orchards, where its larvae develop in the decaying wood of fruit trees, especially plum, cherry and apple. It is no coincidence that its national stronghold is within the Three Counties of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire, a traditional orchard 'hotspot'.

Because the Brockhampton Estate has such a rich resource of old orchards it long has been assumed that the Noble Chafer 'must' be present within them. However, all attempts by National Trust staff to provide proof of this assertion had proved unsuccessful. Therefore, the NT decided to call in 'the professionals', in the form of Laura Hunt and Anita Burrough of the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES). The PTES is the Lead Partner for the Noble Chafer under the UK BAP.

Laura and Anita spent two days on the Brockhampton Estate in July. They surveyed 12 traditional orchards and found evidence of Noble Chafer in no less than 9 of them, proving the value of specialist survey expertise. Mostly the presence of Noble Chafer was detected by finding the distinctive larval droppings or 'frass', although some larvae were found too. All the records were from damson or cherry trees.

The PTES survey was funded from Natural England's Countdown 2010 grant fund via the Conserving & Restoring Traditional Orchards project managed by The National Trust.

Simon Barker
Regional Nature Conservation Adviser
The National Trust

Discovery

While visiting at the weekend and looking for Hemiptera around Mordiford and Fownhope, I found one specimen of Lesne's Earwig. According to NBN there are no Herefordshire records since 1996, and those were both further south.

October, 2009. *Forficula lesnei*, one adult female. Beaten from grass and low vegetation on the roadside verge at Mordiford.

At the same location there was also a specimen of the dipteran *Coremacera marginata* - also relatively uncommon and perhaps worth knowing about.

The most interesting Hemiptera of the day were from the old orchard near Fownhope, and included *Pinalitus viscicola* and *Cacopsylla visci* (from mistletoe) and *Muellerianella fairmarei* from the long grass.

Joseph Botting

Digital help with identification is now at hand!

How good are your wildlife identification skills? How often do you see something when you are out and about and can't identify it? If you have a digital camera with you then help is now at hand.

The Open Air Laboratories (OPAL) Project has recently set up an on-line forum to help improve identification skills and provide confidence to those who are starting to record wildlife or those who are tackling a new taxa to them.

The website has links to national website, news items of surveys and national projects and helpful tips on taking good photographs. It also has a number of group forums which you can join to upload photographs to either ask for someone to confirm your identification or help of where to start.

The website is still relatively new, but new users are signing up every day!

www.ispot.org.uk

iSpot beta

The Midlands Fritillary Project

Butterfly Conservation started a new project in the West Midlands Region in 2009 when the 'Midlands Fritillary Project' got fully underway. The project aims to direct effort on practical conservation measures to improve habitat for five fritillary species on 168 individual sites in nine areas of the West Midlands region and the Forest of Dean over the next 3 years. In addition to the focus on the High Brown Fritillary, Pearl-bordered Fritillary and Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, the work will benefit a further 11 UK BAP Priority Species of butterfly and moth, and two other fritillaries, the Dark Green Fritillary and Silver-washed Fritillary.



Dark Green Fritillary © Steven Cheshire

One of the key elements of this project was to derive match funding from landfill applications to implement practical conservation work. Two landfill applications have already been prepared and we have just heard that both of these have been successful. The Biffaward funded Princethorpe Woods Habitat Restoration Project in Warwickshire will create 112 ride-side clearings as well as creating some coppice and butterfly banks, with the work due to be completed over the 2009/2010 winter. A second project "Conserving the Wood White Butterfly in the South Shropshire Woods" will be funded by SITA Trust to implement an extensive ride-side



Wood White © Dave Grundy



Midland Fritillary Project - habitat assessment training © Jenny Joy

widening and conifer removal programme on seven sites starting in 2010. So if you hear about any of the three projects mentioned above they are really all part of the same one.

In Herefordshire, the Midlands Fritillary Project will focus on the Herefordshire Commons (several of these being within the Herefordshire Community Commons Project being run by the Herefordshire Nature Trust), the North Herefordshire Woodlands (where we are currently working closely with the Forestry Commission



Pearl-bordered Fritillary © Mark Eccleston

but hope to expand our work onto other nearby sites) and the Malvern Hills (where we have been working closely with local partners for a number of years).

In 2009 there were three major strands to our survey and monitoring work: The first of these was habitat assessment and survey for Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary in the Forest of Dean. Two training days were held for local volunteers resulting in timed counts and habitat assessments being carried out on 16 sites. These results have already formed the basis of our management advice. The second strand was undertaking a targeted survey for Small Pearl-bordered

Fritillary in the South Shropshire Hills where this butterfly is still relatively widespread and occurs in rush pasture habitats where marsh violet is present. A training day resulted in a number of monitoring counts and we are now working closely with other organisations in the area to build on these results in 2010. In the Malvern Hills, over 20 people were licensed to help with a Dark Green Fritillary/High Brown Fritillary ratio estimate. This was undertaken as it is difficult to distinguish between these two butterflies in flight and Dark Green Fritillary appeared to be becoming more frequent in the Malvern Hills (compared to the High Brown Fritillary). Sadly, the weather deteriorated shortly after this ratio estimate got underway and while it is still too early to draw firm conclusions, it looks like few potential High Brown Fritillary were seen.

The Midland Fritillary Project is being managed by Jenny Joy with Nick Williams being the project officer working two days per week. One of the most important parts of Nick's job is to work with volunteers, encourage new recorders and provide training in survey and monitoring techniques. Involving local people is therefore an essential part of this project and one we want to particularly focus on in 2010.

One of the most positive things about the Midland Fritillary Project is that it has enabled us to continue working on key fritillary sites where we have already had previous input. As we all know it takes a long time to build up effective working relationships with partner organisations whereas continuing with established relationships can be much more productive.

If you have a site in Herefordshire which you think supports fritillaries and where you think we might be able to help with management or monitoring advice please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Jenny Joy
01952 249325
jjoy@butterfly-conservation.org

Nick Williams
0121 550 9853
nwilliams@butterfly-conservation.org

This Project is funded by Countdown 2010 and the Tubney Charitable Trust with match funding from Biffaward and SITA Trust



OPAL Lichen survey

Are you interested in learning more about the air quality near you? If so you could learn lots by participating in the OPAL air survey. It is encouraging people to study lichens found on trees and also look for tar spot fungus on sycamore leaves. Both act as bio-indicators and can tell us a great deal about local air quality.

Levels of sulphur dioxide pollution have decreased from historical levels thanks to clean technology now used in industrial and urban areas. In the past, when the air in many places was highly polluted by sulphur dioxide, few lichens could survive but now they are returning to British towns and cities. I recently had the pleasure of looking at some mature trees on the campus of Birmingham University with Ivan Pedley of the British Lichen Society. Ivan found a species which hadn't been recorded in the city for over a hundred years.

In the survey OPAL is interested in nitrogen pollutants. These include ammonia and oxides of nitrogen (nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide). The highest ammonia concentrations are found in the countryside particularly associated with agriculture. Although nitrogen is essential for the growth of all living organisms, too much nitrogen can cause problems.

There is a free pack with fold out lichen identification chart and recording sheets which can be downloaded from www.OPALexplorenature.org. The 9 bushy and leafy lichens chosen for the survey may be found growing on tree trunks and twigs and have been picked for their relative ease of identification and relative sensitivity to nitrogen. Each survey activity should take no more than 60 minutes once familiar with the guide.

Jo Hackman
Principal Ecologist, Herefordshire Council

A note from Bugs & Beasties

There are some things that I still can't involve little hands in, but by enlarge practically everything I do in school grounds can include enthusiastic amateurs. Recently I spent a couple of days at Llangrove pre-school. I find myself more and more involved with work in preschools and I've never ceased to be amazed by the latent competence of your average 4 year old. The week before last I had miniature man tucked under my right arm with my left hand gripping timber and acting as a protective guard, whilst my right hand guiding a handsaw and two other hands attached to my excitable



Burley Gate © Richard Fishbourne

apprentice. Whilst I have to have my wits about me at all times and the cut edges and angles of some of the finished products aren't as good as they might be, I feel that the extra effort of nurturing often tricky skills in children often as young as 3 is so worthwhile. The flat bed wormeries that now adorn the grounds of Llangrove pre-school and Llangrove primary are there through collective input and will serve as a constant reminder of what the pupils can achieve.

It is true however that whilst it is so much easier to build without the 'help' of apprentices its no where near as much fun. Buildings requiring structural assurances and features such as sedum roofs are something that I still haven't been able to involve children in, but here the rewards come with the finished product. I love the rustic finish of a green roof supported on a framework of locally coppiced chestnut. Chestnut posts are so wonderfully soft on the eye and oh so very strong, and if left with their skins on provide lots of casual bark peeling opportunities for the incumbents. Green roofs, whilst expensive replace the habitat lost beneath them and shower those using the grounds with an ever changing, above eye level, array of colour and height. I have recently built an outdoor classroom and walkway

at Burley Gate Pre-School and surrounded the shelter with hazel hurdles. I'm pleased with the way its turned out and whilst the sensation of grit trickling down my neck, whilst teetering up my ladder, from the not to be sneezed at weighty sedum turfs was far from pleasant, the elevated rolled out living fabric looks the business.

Richard Fishbourne
Bugs and Beasties



UK BAP targets update

Results have recently been announced from the 2008 UK Biodiversity Reporting Round. You may remember that in November 2008, Local BAPs and UK leads for the Habitat and Species Action plans were asked to report of progress towards the UK targets.

Eight habitats and 40 species were reported to be increasing, 19 habitats and 88 species were reported to be declining. For nine habitats and 28 species the decline was slowing. Eight species had been lost completely from the UK since 1994. For example, the wryneck has been lost as a breeding bird species.

A summary report is due to be produced soon, but in the meantime the results from the various LBAPs and lead partners for the UK habitat and species action plans can be seen at www.ukbap-reporting.org.uk/news/details.asp?X=55

UKBAP Newsletter - Autumn Edition

The Autumn Edition of the UK BAP newsletter is now complete and available online at: <http://www.ukbap.org.uk/library/bn47.pdf>

This newsletter has information on biodiversity projects from across the UK as well as updates from the UK BAP teams, the PTES Great nut hunt for Dormice (surely we can find some more in Herefordshire) the new Biodiversity Action Manager at Buglife which is a new position focussed on developing and delivering species conservation projects and action plans, the Hedglink website, Reedbeds and maximising biodiversity in wetland treatment systems, and a whole lot more.

Tidnor Wood Orchards CIC

Close by Hereford City in leafy Lugwardine, Tidnor Wood Orchards CIC (Community Interest Company) is beavering away saving varieties of cider apples for the benefit of future generations. Operating in 26 acres of orchards on the beautiful southerly slopes of the Lugg Valley we are home to a National Collection® of over 400 U.K., Eire and Channel Islands varieties as full half standard trees. Having exhausted our indigenous sources we are in the process of collecting the more numerous French varieties, centring this collection at our orchard land in Calvados, Normandy.

We are a fully signed up partner in the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity as our contribution has been recognised in many quarters. Certified as organic we also operate as a Nature Reserve and, by resisting the claiming of grants or subsidies or other forms of public money we class ourselves as “self-sustaining” with some pride.

Now in our eighth year we have achieved a great deal so far but we are ready and anxious to step up a division. We need to associate with people in Hereford and beyond in order to tap into their skills and talents.

In this age of electronic communications distance is no great disadvantage – our CEO resides in Scotland...

We are not talking working parties to cut our grass – we have sheep that do that. Nor apple pickers with hessian sacks - because we use a contractor. But we would like to meet someone who will turn some of our apples into a bio-fuel to use in the contractor’s tractor.

We are looking for people who can spare a few hours and might know about computers, or botany, or archives, research, chemistry, marketing, general management, cider making, tractors, history – anything really, with eccentrics being especially welcome.

Please find the time to look at our website at www.tidnorwood.org.uk or contact our CEO direct at henrymay@tidnorwood.org.uk.

Or if you are happy in the steam age, please write to Knockmoyle, Strone, Dunoon PA23 8TB. You are guaranteed a swift response.

Henry May



Conference invitation

FLOODPLAIN MEADOWS **A THREATENED HABITAT**

**Floodplain
Meadows
Partnership**



Wednesday 21st April 2010

The Open University Campus, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes, UK

Speakers from across Europe on species-rich floodplain meadows: research, management, policy, and restoration.

Posters are invited on monitoring and restoration in meadows.

Early bird fee (registration before 26th February 2010) £20
Standard fee (registration after 26th February 2010) £25
Students £10

Contact Michelle Duke (m.duke@open.ac.uk) for registration form
Further details available soon.



Prospects for ancient woodland conservation in Herefordshire

It was almost a quarter of a century ago that 'ancient woodlands' were recognised by statutory authorities as a subset of woodlands whose biodiversity, plant genetic resources and cultural significance were irreplaceable and required protection with special measures for their management. The Forestry Commission introduced the 'Broadleaves Policy' in 1985 with a commitment to 'ensure continuance of the special features of ancient semi-natural woodland' and latterly local authorities have a duty to include ancient woodland within planning policy. While the broadleaves policy was a landmark for native woodlands there were three problematic issues which remain unresolved to this day.



Newly felled coppice coupe in Glowsons Wood © David Lovelace

1. What is ancient woodland?

The working definition of 'ancient woodland', formulated at the time by the then Nature Conservancy Council (NCC, now Natural England), is that it must have been continuously woodland since at least 1600. The reasoning was that such woodland is likely to have existed much earlier, that the biological



Newton St. Margaret wood from the air showing GPS location for Lime tree © David Lovelace



Two small candidate ancient woodlands missed by the AWI OS Master Map polygons on modern air photo © David Lovelace

characteristics of such woodland, having developed over many centuries, will be reflected in its biodiversity and that once lost it cannot be recreated. In advance of the broadleaves policy the NCC started drawing up Ancient Woodland Inventories (AWI) for all English counties, that for Herefordshire being published as a draft in 1984. Now digitised and on the web, that draft AWI remains virtually unaltered. Historical research on individual woodlands is time consuming and only



Two small candidate ancient woodlands missed by the AWI as they appear of the tithe map for Castle Frome © David Lovelace

a proportion will have documentary evidence to prove their status. County maps of sufficient detail were not available until the early 19th century, for as a short cut, the AWI used the first edition 1" to the mile Ordnance Survey maps published around 1830 as the basis for deciding ancientness. Despite the late date these maps have proved reasonably accurate for larger woods however small woodlands of less than 2 hectares were omitted entirely so that many surviving fragments

of ancient woodland will be unclassified. The Native Woodland Restoration in Herefordshire project has been reviewing the AWI by using the large scale and more accurate parish Tithe Maps surveyed in the late 1830's. The project has digitised and geo-rectified the county's tithe maps as well as earlier estate and other maps when available. Over 500 previously unclassified



Ancient woodland indicator Lime trees growing in a small unclassified ancient woodland in Newton St. Margaret © David Lovelace

candidate ancient woodlands have now been identified in this way, mostly under 2 hectares in size. Meanwhile documentary research and archaeology demonstrates that Herefordshire's ancient woodland included significant areas of wood pasture and even arable cultivation pre-1600. Parkland, wood-pasture, veteran trees and old orchards remain outside the remit of current forestry policy and the broadleaves policy in particular.

2. Plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)

Perhaps the most serious defect in ancient woodland policy remains the failure to include those damaged by plantation forestry. Although mapped on the AWI as ancient the broadleaves policy allows PAWS to continue

to be drowned in new conifer plantations. The worst offender in this regard is, extraordinarily, the Forestry Commission itself which has continued to coniferize large areas of ancient woodlands in Herefordshire ignoring the huge potential for restoration in these woods which are supposed to be managed for public benefit. Two hectares of Haugh Wood which is also SSSI were planted with conifers in 2006. Only very recently has the Forestry Commission reversed this policy on the public estate, although ancient parks, chases and old wood pasture areas continue to be coniferized even in 2009, for example, in the Mortimer Forest.

3. Management of ancient woodland.

'These woods are irreplaceable and should not lose their natural characteristics'. So says the policy, but what silvicultural systems are to be used to achieve this end remains contentious even though natural regrowth after felling has supplied wood and timber from native woodlands for many hundreds of years. Immediately following the introduction of the broadleaves policy the Forestry Commission in Herefordshire promoted the planting of a formula mix of oak, ash and cherry into private ancient woodland and even advised owners to poison hazel stools! This policy has thankfully been changed and in recent years grant aid and advice favours restocking by natural means. The natural ability of woodlands to regenerate themselves, taken for granted for millennia by our forebears, is now more difficult for several reasons. These include large populations of browsing deer and the universal presence of bark-stripping grey squirrels. Another problem is the recent trend in forestry and landscape fashion to oppose felling coupes of a decent enough size for light demanding regeneration. On the positive side, demand for native woodland products from firewood to building timber is healthy and likely to increase especially as it is an inherently carbon neutral activity. We still have much to learn about Herefordshire's unique resource of native woodland whose conservation, study and wise management is likely to keep future generations busy for hundreds of years to come. The project will be presenting its findings on Herefordshire's ancient woodland in at conference scheduled for April 2010.

David Lovelace
david@tilia.org.uk
Website www.bosci.net

Fungi at Lower House Farm



White bracket fungus © Sheila Spence

Back last year, for the first time to my knowledge, a large white bracket fungus appeared on one of the old apple trees in the orchard at the back of the farmhouse which is now the offices of Herefordshire Nature Trust.

These large white brackets, some 4 – 5 inches across, were seen growing in tiers up the trunk of the tree. It was fairly easy to take a small sample of the soft juicy flesh of these remarkable fruitbodies with my tiny penknife. I had not seen the fungus before, but thought I knew the genus to find it in, so armed with the small sample I returned home to try and identify it. It appeared to be a fairly rare species so I sent a dried sample off to Kew for checking and Peter Roberts responded with confirmation that it was *Spongipellis spumeus*. This rare species has been recorded in Herefordshire before, back in the 1800's.

On a recent visit to Lower House Farm to attend a meeting I was pleased to see the same fungus, again looking in tip-top condition on the same tree. It might not be doing a lot for the tree but in the greater scheme of things it is an interesting and rare addition to Herefordshire's fungal diversity. Where better to have come across such an exciting find – on the Herefordshire Nature Trust's own back door step!

Sheila Spence

Keep Britain Tidy competition for young people

Keep Britain Tidy is calling on your young people to customize their own bin bag to liven up the old dreary sacks. We're looking for an exciting new design that's creative, fresh, funky and innovative. So whether you're 4 or 16, a budding designer or just want some fun then visit our website www.keepbritaintidy.org to enter your design. It is so easy to do.

You're already well aware of the importance of making sustainable practices as part of our school life and if you're out in the winter months tackling a project then this is a new, fun way to make it even more colourful. The top five designs voted by you will be judged by our panel of experts headed up by our new celebrity ambassador Kristie Allsopp.

The great news is that the winning design will see their bag produced and put into our Big Tidy up kits (www.thebigtidyup.org) - helping volunteers across the country clean up their area where they live. And who knows - we may even get a manufacturer on board to print them too!

This exciting competition is a great way to get you thinking about what type of bag you want to see on England's streets! And who knows we soon could see a sea of Polka dots or bright pink bags in the town where you live.

So what are you waiting for? Get creative – and let's Keep Britain Tidy!

Antonia Fitch



Funding news

The Sainsbury Family Charitable Trusts is the operating office of 18 grant-making trusts established by three generations of the Sainsbury family. The trusts' donations to charitable causes over several decades represent one of the leading examples of sustained philanthropy in Britain.

Each trust works autonomously as an independent legal entity with a separate board of trustees, actively led by an individual member of the family with keenly-followed interests.

The Mark Leonard Trust

The trustees' grant-making focuses on environmental education in the UK, particularly projects finding practical ways of involving children and young adults; sustainable agriculture and bio-diversity; and sustainable transport, energy efficiency and renewable energy.

There does not seem to be anything in the way of geographical restrictions either so take a look at the link

http://www.sfct.org.uk/mark_leonard.html

UK BAP news

The UK Biodiversity Partnership held its seventh Conference 7-8th October in York. This year the event was combined with the annual LBAP conference, an event designed for LBAP officers to get together and the latest on UK habitats and species.

This year the event was themed around valuing biodiversity and the links with economics. Some inspiring speakers presented findings from a variety of studies looking at the problem of biodiversity can be valued in economic terms.

One presentation was on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) study, which is a major international initiative to draw attention to the global economic benefits of biodiversity, to highlight the growing costs of biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation, and draw together expertise from the fields of science, economics and policy to enable practical actions moving forward.

Information and TEEB reports can be viewed at www.teebweb.org.uk.

Copies of all the presentations can be viewed and downloaded from <http://www.keystone-group.co.uk/biodiversity/index.php>

Contact Details

If you require any further information please contact [Nicky Davies](#):

Landscape and Biodiversity Department
Herefordshire Council
Conservation
PO BOX 4
Plough Lane
Hereford
HR4 0XH
Tel.: 01432 383026

Email: ndavies2@herefordshire.gov.uk

Website: www.herefordshire.gov.uk/herfordbap

The Biodiversity Partnership Management Group

The group consists of the following representatives:

- **Chair** - Juliet Wheatley - Team Leader - Landscape & Biodiversity - Herefordshire Council
- **Antony Muller** – Natural England
- **Joanne Hackman** – County Ecologist – Herefordshire Council
- **Nick Smith** – Forestry Commission
- **Francesca Griffith** – Herefordshire Nature Trust



The closing date for submitting features for the next edition of Biodiversity Action will be Friday 29th January and the following one will be Friday 30th April 2010. Please send word documents and supporting pictures (high resolution) in .jpeg/.tiff format with picture credit details.

If you have to display logos with your article, please send these as .jpegs also.

Thank you

Nicky

The Herefordshire Biodiversity Partnership Co-ordinator post is joint-funded by Natural England and Herefordshire Council.

Nicky would like to thank all partners that contributed to the production of this newsletter.