



# Worcestershire Wildlife Trust

## Southeast Worcestershire Local Group

Your local news Winter 2021

### Indoor Meetings

Whilst some Local Groups have opted to continue with the popular format of online talks via Zoom, others have resumed Indoor Meetings in their local venues. The availability and suitability of indoor venues in light of all the precautions that need to be taken has had a strong bearing on the decision of whether to continue with online talks or resume indoor meetings. SEWLG felt that for the well-being of all, online talks remained the optimum option for the time being.

Online talks continue to be well received.

Professor Helen Roy gave a fascinating talk on ladybirds with amazing insights into her study of their effects on biodiversity and ecosystems. Her depth of knowledge on the impact of different ladybird species enlightened us all. As a proponent of Citizen Science Helen emphasised just how invaluable all reported records are in building the bigger picture. Every record submitted contributes to the constantly evolving understanding of our ecosystem, which in turn can help each one of us to make wiser and more beneficial decisions.

Doctor Anjana Khatwa delivered a most interesting talk, 'Time travelling on the Jurassic Coast', explaining clearly the unique resource that lies within the open cast tableau of geological history along that special stretch of our coastline. Her enthusiasm and deep-rooted knowledge of her subject with her beautiful slides made for a fascinating evening.

Visit [www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk](http://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk) for more talks and to book your place. The next one is...

### Thursday 16 December 2021 7:00pm - 8:00pm Rewilding Q&A

Join our panel of experts to discuss different ways to rewild.



### Right Spot, Right Moment

I happened to be in the right spot at the right time walking across the top of Bredon Hill on 7<sup>th</sup> July. It was a very hot day and as I approached some thistles there were 20, maybe even more, narrow-bordered five-spot

burnet moths clustering on the thistle flowers. I can only assume they had just emerged as there were a couple whose wings were still a little wrinkled, not quite taut. I do not claim to have identified them myself but rather one far more knowledgeable than I provided the 'spot-on' identification.

Janet Morris



## Tiddesley Wood nr Pershore

### Logs & woodchips

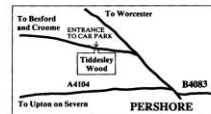
Sale dates

Sat & Sun 4th & 5th Dec 2021  
Sat & Sun 8th & 9th January 2022  
Sat & Sun 5th & 6th Feb 2022  
Sat & Sun 5th & 6th March 2022  
Sales 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. each day

Logs £6 a bag  
Loose without bags £120 per cu metre (250-350 logs)  
Loaded loose into trailers, car boots etc - any amount.  
Chips if available £3 a bag - quantity discount and for loose.

- Pay by card if possible
- Please adhere to current Covid-safe restrictions

[www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk](http://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk)  
[www.tiddesley.org.uk](http://www.tiddesley.org.uk)



Follow main road (B4084) out of Pershore towards Worcester. Turn left at top of Allesborough Hill following signposts to Bestford & Croome. After c500 yds look for signs. WR10 2AD will get you near for Sat Navs.

What3words quits acrobats. lease

Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Lower Smithe Farm, Smithe Hill, Hindlip, Worcester, WR3 8SZ tel. 01905 754919  
Charity no. 256618 company no. 929644

### Firewood Logs and Woodchip Sales

The winter 2021-2022 log sales are now under way. Safety features introduced last year to keep everyone safe from Covid are still in force. The sales are managed with social distancing by volunteers using face coverings and we ask customers to follow our one-way systems. Please pay by card whenever possible as the system is now working well and is much easier and safer. We will, of course, still accept payments by cash and cheque.

A big thank you to our band of volunteers who help to run the sales and come along between sales to do the endless job of filling thousands of bags with logs. Volunteers are always welcome!

We have many regular customers and their continued support is very much appreciated.

### Home delivery of logs

Our volunteer John Holder is able to make some local deliveries of logs. There will be a delivery charge. If you are interested, please contact John on 07583 907636. We cannot promise to meet every request and whether or not a delivery can be made is entirely at his discretion.

### Websites

Don't forget to check our website for up to date information about events and log sales [www.tiddesley.org.uk](http://www.tiddesley.org.uk) Events and log sale information can also be found on the Trust's main website [www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk](http://www.worcswildlifetrust.co.uk)

We are looking for a volunteer who can help maintain our local group website, if you would like to help out with this please contact our webmaster Bob Gillmor tel 01386 556685 or email [robert.gillmor@btinternet.com](mailto:robert.gillmor@btinternet.com).

## **Volunteers**

The log sales are run entirely by volunteers. We are always very pleased to welcome new helpers. Log sales certainly give you plenty of exercise - stuffing logs into bags or loading them into trailers! If you would like to join the happy gang please contact either Harry Green 01386 710377 email [zen130501@zen.co.uk](mailto:zen130501@zen.co.uk) or Bob Gillmor 01386 556685 email [robert.gillmor@btinternet.com](mailto:robert.gillmor@btinternet.com) for more information.

## **Purple Emperor Butterfly**

The purple emperor butterfly has always been a legendary creature to me, one I'd heard much about but never seen. It is a large but short-lived beautiful butterfly with many followers who go to extraordinary lengths to see one. Although the wings of the males are mainly black with white bars and specks, at certain angles when light catches the wing scales the viewer is treated to a wondrous flash of bluey-purple.



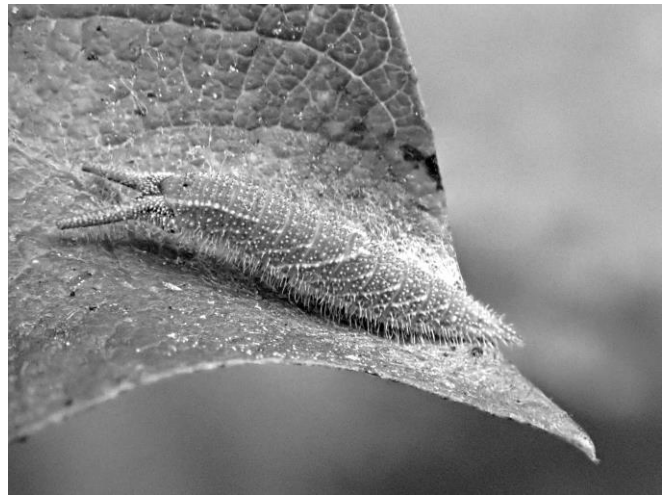
Male purple emperor butterfly

As they tend to be found high in the canopy of mature oaks their fans have been known to provide a putrid picnic to lure them down to a more observable level. Such delights as carrion, animal droppings and oriental fish paste are on offer in the hope that they will be a tempting treat, offering some of the salts and minerals that the butterflies seek. They are also partial to sap bleeds on trees but finding these can be somewhat challenging.

In early July I spotted my first purple emperor at Knepp in West Sussex. (Information about the Knepp rewilding project can be found in Isabella Tree's book *Wilding*). One of Knepp's many successes is that it now has one of the largest populations of purple emperors in the country and each year a trail is set up highlighting the best places to spot them. As the purple emperor flight season was delayed a little this year due to the weather, the butterflies were not as abundant as we'd hoped. However, we were delighted to see several males performing feisty flights at the top of the oaks as they saw off competing rivals (and anything else that popped into their flight path) in territorial battles.

With my appetite whetted, when Harry Green mentioned that sightings of purple emperors had been reported in Tiddesley Wood and the West Midlands branch of Butterfly Conservation were planning a larva hunt at the end of September, I was keen to join them. Suggested tools to assist in the hunt were a pair of binoculars and a pole with a hook on the end or Shepherd's crook. I improvised with a mop handle into which the metal hook from a broken coat hanger was screwed.

Our intrepid group of volunteers gathered at Tiddesley Wood and, although keen, we were not too optimistic of success as searching green leaves for green larvae up to 1cm long is not easy!



Purple emperor larva. Jean Young.

The female butterflies lack the flashy colouring of the male as they need to be a little more discreet while laying eggs on sheltered, semi-shaded ride-side willows (pussy willows). The larvae position themselves at the tip of the leaf facing towards the stalk and feed either side of the vein leaving the midrib intact, creating distinctive feeding signs. Binoculars were used for looking for feeding signs on the higher leaves where we anticipated finding the larva, the hooked pole was for pulling likely branches closer for inspection.

One of our group, Sam, had spent some time with Matthew Oates who has been studying purple emperors for over 50 years (read more in *His Imperial Majesty* by Matthew Oates). Sam learnt well from the expert as within five minutes he found our first larva. We were thrilled to see our target so quickly and to spot the feeding signs at head height, much lower than expected. Despite much searching only one more larva was found and that did require the use of binoculars and pole.



Purple emperor larva feeding damage. Jean Young

Now that we have seen evidence of purple emperors breeding in Tiddesley Wood, maybe next year will be the year that you see a purple emperor? If you do the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre would love to know. [records@wbrc.org.uk](mailto:records@wbrc.org.uk)

Jean Young

### **LOCAL GROUP CONTACTS**

**Useful phone numbers and your local committee:**  
Harry Green 01386 710377 (Chairman, Tiddesley Wood, logs and chips, work parties, general information, etc). Bob Gillmor 01386 556685 (Treasurer, Tiddesley Wood Open Day and log sales organiser). Liz Stone, Jayne Bache, John Holder & Pam Holder (log deliveries), Sue Chandler (bird food and Christmas card sales), Janet Morris (organiser local indoor events). Newsletter edited and stuck together by Jayne Bache.