

Chair's Report for 2014 AGM

Last year gave us a better summer than in recent years. It was drier than average, but only July had higher than average temperatures and sunshine. Nevertheless it was a good year for butterflies overall, as you can read in Bill Shreeves' report which is at the back of the room.

We had our normal active summer including our own guided walks and events at our reserves and other good butterfly sites, attendance of the display and sales stall at various fairs around the county, and butterfly identification courses. Our regular programme of workdays to improve and maintain our sites continued as usual.

Moving away from outdoor activities, we have been active on many fronts:

WEBSITE Our branch website has been subject to an ongoing programme of improvement, as anyone who is a regular visitor will have noticed. Our new online butterfly reporting facility was particularly successful, with about 3000 individual records being submitted. The website is continuing to evolve and develop.

SOCIAL MEDIA Whilst on the subject of on-line access, the Branch now has both a Facebook account, and a Twitter account, both of which can be accessed from the home page of our website. Usage of social media is very important to us, particularly to communicate with younger people, and both are an excellent way of finding out quickly about new sightings etc.

NEWSLETTERS You will be aware that last year we decided to publish only 2 newsletters each year (previously 3). This has obviously reduced expenditure by the branch, and this year we have decided to fill the gap between the Spring and Autumn newsletters

with a Butterfly Report, to be published in early summer. This will be a collaborative effort between Bill Shreeves and Lyn Pullen.

I'd like to take a straw poll from you on 2 issues:

The first is, should we incorporate colour in our newsletters? This would add to our costs by about £100 per issue for a cover in colour on one side, increasing production costs by 40% (£200 for 2 sides or 70% increase).

Second, should we be more proactive about persuading you to receive you newsletter through electronic access only (thus substantially reducing branch expenditure giving more funds available for conservation)?

ELECTIONS Two members of the committee are retiring at the end of their 3 year term of office.

- Mark Spencer is President of the Bournemouth Natural Science Society, and also chairs the Entomology Section of the BNSS Council. He was elected to the Branch Committee to foster closer working with the Branch. We hold joint meetings with an invited speaker, and sometimes hold joint events. As Mark is unable to come to our committee meetings he is not standing for re-election. We thank Mark for supporting the branch, and look forward to continued joint meetings.
- Gordon Hopkins has been our Moth Coordinator, but has recently suffered from health problems, so has decided not to stand for re-election. He will continue to support the work of the Branch as much as he is able to. We are sorry to lose Gordon's expertise and humour on the committee, and thanks him for all his hard work. His role on the committee will be carried out by Bob Steedman, who was coopted onto the committee last June as Moth Events Coordinator, and he is standing for election

today. Also standing for re-election as their terms of office are completed are Allan Higgin (Branch Treasurer), Lyn Pullen (Website Coordinator), Bill Shreeves (Records Officer), and myself (Branch Chairman).

It just remains for me to thank all my fellow committee members, the non-committee members who carry out particular roles (Guy Freeman our Newsletter Editor, Arthur Bryant our Meetings Coordinator and Kathie and Richard Clarke who manage the purchasing of items for the sales stall). They are all key to making Dorset Branch one of the more active branches of BC.