

Visit to 5 Herefordshire reserves:

***Crow Wood & Meadow, The Parks, The Christopher Cadbury Reserve,
Cethins & Littlee Marises Meadows, Canon Tump Common.***

19 June 2025

John Denham

On probably the hottest day of the year, twelve intrepid members of the Malvern Local Group visited five of Herefordshire WT's sites, near the Welsh border and the Black Hills. All were hay meadows and largely unimproved grasslands, bordered by coppices of trees and fed by brooks. The sites were all within 5 miles and ranged in size from one to forty acres. We were treated to abundant wildflowers, burnished sun and glorious views as far as the Golden Valley. There were large numbers of meadow browns, ringlets and five and six spot burnet moths on the meadows, with smaller numbers of marbled whites and silver washed fritillaries.

Of most interest, however, were several tiny black chimney sweeper moths, virtually unknown in our part of the world. Masses of common spotted and marsh orchids were in every meadow. We picnicked under the welcome shade of a spreading oak tree.

In the afternoon, a sharp-eyed member of our group spotted an owl with two young fly to a near-by tree. We were treated to a close and sustained view of an adult male tawny in bright sunlight, although the young were too well hidden to see. Well spotted, Karen!



Tawny Owl. *Karen Wade*

We ended the day with a brief visit to Dore Abbey, founded in the 12th Century by Cistercian monks from France. The church was rebuilt in the 17th Century, but extensive surviving ruins of the earlier monastic buildings gave a good idea of the layout of the original abbey.

A stop for fish and chips in the village of Ewyas Harold on the way home was much enjoyed.

Lyndon, as ever, delivered us safely home after a very hot, but thoroughly enjoyable day.