

EUROPEAN CONSERVATION ACTION NETWORK

EuCAN

Leonardo da Vinci Funded Placement 2009

AGGTELEK NATIONAL PARK – HUNGARY

MAY 9th – 29th 2009



Ann Collier

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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PART 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1.1 Introduction

Within Europe there operates a system called the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP). The LLP is a European funded programme which supports education and training across Europe for all stages of lifelong learning be it in schools, colleges, universities, in the workplace or in the community. The programme is made up of several different sections offering a variety of opportunities of which the Leonardo fund is one. This section of the programme is aimed at building a skilled workforce across Europe. The EUCAN project is just one of many projects within this section and is involved in conservation.

The EUCAN project is open to people who are residents in the UK and over the age of 18, retired, employed or out of work but not available to those still in full time education. 2009 is the 3rd year that this EuCAN programme has been organized by the Kingcombe Trust in association with the Dorset Branch of the Butterfly Conservation and led by Nigel Spring. It will be fully financed by the Leonardo da Vinci section of the LLP until 2010 with a possible extension to 2013.

The European partners are:-

- La Ligue pour la Protection des Oiseaux, France
- Aggtelek Nemzeti Park, Hungary
- Zdanice Town Council, Czech Republic
- Pro Nature
- Mazowiecki Landscape Park, Poland
- Kampinowski National Park, Poland

During 2009 there will be 7 trips organized by the co-coordinator Nigel Spring to France, Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic. The work will involve either practical conservation work or the recording of butterflies and moths

Feb 6 -22	Practical conservation work in La Brenne, France *
Mar 3-21	Practical conservation work in Aggtelek, Hungary +
May 9-29	Recording Butterflies and Moths in Hungary **
July 31-Aug 18	Practical work and recording in western Poland **
Aug 19-Sept 5	Practical conservation work in the Czech Republic+
Sept 6 -23	Practical conservation work in eastern Poland +
Oct 9-24	Practical conservation work in La Brenne, France

Applicants do not have to be already involved in conservation work but obviously the aim of the project is to encourage people to become actively involved both now and in the future. A nominal amount is required to be paid by the applicant in advance, however, when all the criteria have been met this is refunded. Full details of how to apply can be found on the Kingcombe website at: <http://www.kingcombecentre.org.uk/>

If accepted you will also be expected to attend a preparatory weekend at the Kingcombe Centre which will involve meeting fellow participants, details of the work involved, contract signing and clarification plus conservation work on a local Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) and a Butterfly Conservation (BC) reserve.

Both my husband Richard and I were accepted as participants on the trip to Hungary on the 9th May.

1.2 Preparation Weekend January 23rd -25th

Richard and I were allocated an end-suite room in Beech Cottage, a property owned by the Kingcombe Trust, just a short distance from the main building. In view of the fact that we expected communal bunk bed type accommodation this was a very good start to the weekend.

The weekend actually started late Friday afternoon and as the people all shared common interests the formal introductions were soon over and people were discussing past and future visits. The attendees came from very diverse backgrounds, covered a wide age range and had varying degrees of knowledge about conservation and wildlife, some people already heavily involved for others this was more of an initiation. Richard Belding, a previous volunteer, gave a very informative talk about the Aggtelek Park in Hungary which I am visiting in May.

Saturday commenced with a short walk round the Kingcombe reserve led by Neil Croton, Dorset Wildlife assistant warden. He provided information about the current and future plans for the reserve which covers 177 hectares. This area is special as it has never been farmed using modern technology, that is, no pesticides, artificial fertilizers or advanced agricultural methods. It is, therefore, important that this area is sensitively managed to maintain this environment. As a result this area has an exceptionally high number of flower species, 430 having been recorded, over 50 species of birds and of the 60 resident or regular immigrant butterflies 36 have been recorded here. A short presentation by Kathy Henderson about visits to France and the Czech Republic ended the morning sessions.

In the afternoon we headed off to another DWT reserve at Powerstock Common where we spent the afternoon cutting down scrub, brambles and gorse to enable the undergrowth to regenerate. Powerstock is 115 hectares

and its main features are the ancient woodlands and disused railway line. This is a major site for butterflies so the conservation work here is extremely important. It is an important site for the Marsh Fritillary which breeds on damp grassland and feeds on Devil's Bit Scabious. Vast areas of the land were covered by conifer trees planted in the 1960's by the Forestry Commission but thanks to the work of the DWT these have been removed thus enabling the land to revert to grassland which helps protect the environment for some of the scarcer butterflies.

In the evening we all went to Toller Porcorum Village Hall where a public barn dance had been organized. Music was provided by Teasing the Cat, a supper was provided and all profits from the evening were to be donated to Birdlife Hungary towards the purchase of land in the vicinity of Aggtelek National park.

After a most enjoyable evening Sunday saw us all enjoying for breakfast a very hearty typical Hungarian dish the main ingredients being eggs, onions, tomatoes & of course paprika pepper. We were then out again to work on another reserve at Lankham Bottom owned by Butterfly Conservation. There we were back to shrub clearance and joined by the volunteers who had yesterday gained their Brush cutters certificate. This is an area of chalk grassland which is being managed not only for butterflies but other wildlife wherever possible.



Kingcombe Meadows DWT Reserve



. Beech Cottage



Powerstock Common DWT Reserve



Old railway line Powerstock



Lankham Bottom Dorset Butterfly Reserve

1.3 Hungary

Hungary is a landlocked country and borders with 7 other countries. The river Danube cuts its capital in to two, Buda on the west bank and Pest on the east bank. Budapest has been classed a World Heritage Site, one of eight sites in Hungary. On this trip we were lucky to visit two other sites, that is, the caves at Aggtelek and Lake Fertő which are described in more detail later.

The population is somewhere between 10 /11 million people and approximately 20% of the population live in Budapest. The vast majority of the population are ethnic Hungarians or Magyars (Magyar means man), a race about who very little is known. Minorities are only 3% of the population and include Germans, Romanians and Slovaks. Hungary is also home to many Romanies and Jewish people. The Magyars are central Asian in origin and their language is unrelated to the Slavic people who dominate Eastern Europe. As a result the language is very different and reportedly one of the most difficult to learn as I quickly discovered.



1.4 Aggtelek National Park (NP)

The park is situated in the Gomor-Torna Karst region in Northern Hungary on the Slovak-Hungarian border. It was created in 1985 and was the first national park in Hungary to be formed. The primary tasks of the park are to explore, protect and preserve the natural and cultural assets and also to develop ecotourism. It consists of an area covering 198.9sq km and since 1995 it has been part of UNESCO World Heritage giving it even greater protection and funding.

Within the national park and stretching well into Slovakia is the largest stalactite cave system in Europe. Over tens of millions of years 712 caves have been formed within the total complex some of the larger ones being World Heritage sites. The caves which are included are:-

- Baradla Cave is the largest and stretches some 25.5km of which 8km is in Slovakia.
- Rakoczi Cave, 650metres in length underneath Esztramos Hill, protected since 1982.
- Domsica Cave which is in the Slovak part of this enormous complex and 1700 metres long.
- Gombasek Cave was made available to the public in 1955 and due to the constant temperature of 9 degrees centigrade and its high humidity it has been used as a sanatorium.
- Dobsinka Ice Cave which was included in the World Heritage site in 2000. This cave is most famous as it was the first one in Europe to be illuminated by electricity in 1887. Between May and September about 494 metres which represents one third of its entire length is open for public viewing.
- Ochtinska Aragonite Cave; is special as it is only one of 3 caves in the world that have been discovered to have the rare aragonite. Aragonite is a carbonate mineral and it is distinctive as it shines like the stars.
- The Jasovska Cave which is located in Slovakia was opened back in 1846 and of its total length of 2148m; more than a third is now accessible to the public.

1.5 Hungarian Butterflies

In the UK we have 58 species and occasionally the very rare immigrants that come in will boost the number of species for that year. Over the last 100 years or more we have seen some butterflies become extinct due mainly to insecticides and over farming by adopting modern agricultural methods.

Luckily in this part of Hungary the old methods of farming prevail and as a result there are probably more than 170 species of butterflies of which we identified approximately 72, more were seen but not long enough to be

identified. Hungary still has many of the species that have been lost or now becoming very rare in the UK. Changes are probably inevitable in the future but with the conservation work through EuCAN and other conservation organizations hopefully any damage can be limited, contained and controlled and species will not be lost. The people we met working in the National Park were all very dedicated and committed to protecting this part of their country.

1.6. Aggtelek NP Flora

The park has special geographical conditions due to the microclimate, the variety of habitats, the limestone, and protection provided by the parks status and of course the land which is not and has not been intensively farmed.

Although the prime purpose of our visit was butterfly surveying I knew I would not be able to resist taking photographs of the flowers.

The park has several rare flowers and the Austrian Dragonhead (*Dracocephalum austriaca*) has its only population of Hungary in the rocky grasslands of Aggtelek NP. The Yellow Pheasant's-eye is also found on the rock grasslands and we were lucky to be there when both types of these flowers were in full bloom. There were many other flowers in bloom in the grasslands and meadows and I have included a photograph of a few of those seen in section 3 of my report.

PART 2. Trip Notes

2.1 Preparation

Camping gear was gathered, clothes for all weathers and eventualities chosen plus train tickets purchased and we were ready to go. Stephanie from Bridport asked to travel with us from Wool, so that she could leave her car on our drive, so by the 9th we were ready to go.

In view of Aggtelek National Parks location on the Slovak-Hungarian border our journey in a mini bus was scheduled to take us 5 days and what an interesting journey it proved to be, details to follow.

2.2 The Trip

➤ Saturday 9th May

I live in Wool and the journey started today. I was travelling with my husband Richard and Stephanie. The first leg of our journey was by train to Basingstoke where we were collected by Nigel Spring and Kathy Henderson (the trip organizers). More people joined us there and by the time we reached Selsted in Kent all 15 participants plus Kathy & Nigel were ready to prepare for an

overnight camp. The erection of the tents proved to be one of the first laughs as some people had never camped, some tents were new, one person had a double blow up mattress to fit in the equivalent of a single tent and so it continued. Amazingly, all tents were finally erected and off we went to the Jackdaw pub in Denton for what turned out to be a superb meal.



Campsite at Selsted, Kent.



Jackdaw Pub, Denton, Kent

➤ **Sunday 10th May**

Tents were packed up, the trailer loaded and we were on our way to Calais via the 8.30am ferry, arriving 90 minutes later after a perfect crossing with good visibility. Already records were being kept of the birds spotted on the trip.

Our first camp in Europe was in Germany at Haus am See, Dreifelder Weiher and once again the fun with the tents commenced. After a quick meal a bonfire was prepared, the moth trap laid and we all relaxed. It started to rain and this weather stayed with us most of the time across Europe.



Dreifelder Weiher camp site

➤ **Monday 11th May.**

The moth trap was opened, many species identified, photographed and listed. The weather was still poor and the planned walk around this beautiful area had to be cancelled. The trailer was packed and once again we were on our way. The minibus was "cosy" and people regularly changed seats along the way so that they could chat and learn more about their fellow travelling companions.

After torrential rain, thunder and lightning we finally arrived at our next campsite in Passau, Germany near the Austrian border. Our arrival was slightly delayed due to the bad weather and the fact that we were stopped by the

police who were looking for Romanian travelers who have it seems developed a poor relation with the German police.



Passau campsite

➤ **Tuesday 12th & Wednesday 13th May**

After another long journey we arrived at Ferto-Hansag National Park. The park is located in Austria and Hungary and Lake Ferto is the third largest in middle Europe with a length of 35Km and a width of 7-15 Km, the majority of which is in Austria. This is a magnificent area for birds watching especially due to the shallow standing water which covers a great deal of the area and because of this thousands breed here or use the area as a stopping off area during their migration. As a result in 1977 the Hungarian section of the lake was declared a protected landscape and by 1979 under the UNESCO program it became a Biosphere Reserve. Here the Hungarian Racka sheep and the Grey cattle, both with their magnificent horns, are kept and used to graze the land which is called biotop maintenance. The wells in this area were particularly interesting.

Here the plan was to stay in the National Park HQ lodge but due to a change we were located to the Fertoujlak hostel at Fertod. A shortage of suitable rooms had Richard and myself volunteering to camp for another night whilst the remainder of the group were located rooms within the hostel. After a very pleasant evening meal at Granatos restaurant in Etterem, where we tasted some of the local delicacies, we crossed the road and had a brief photo stop outside the grand Esterhazy Palace, a National Trust property. We then went with Andreas Ambrus, a local guide, to some nearby woods for moth trapping until late in to the evening returning to the hostel to check and list the contents of another moth trap that had been set earlier that evening.



Ferto-Hansag National Park, the spectators & players.

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Esterhazy Palace



Typical Farm



Grey Cattle



Local Well

The following morning day we were out early checking the moth trap, dismantling the tents, bird watching, and a brief visit to the NP HQ and then all too soon leaving this extremely interesting area.

After passing through a rather dismal looking Budapest, not as inspiring as I had expected, we finally arrived at Miskolc, the nearest large town to Aggtelek. Here after a quick food shop at Tesco's (sad but true), we arrived late in the evening at Szalamandra Haz, our home for the next 2 weeks. The majority of the tents were now quickly erected, a BBQ prepared, bottles opened and the celebrations to mark our arrival at the NP commenced.

Szalamandra Haz was to be our base whilst we were in the Aggtelek NP and we were lucky to have this hostel all to ourselves. 19 people were distributed between the 9 rooms and Richard and I had a huge room suitable for 7 people. This hostel, that sleeps approximately 70 people, is extremely popular during peak holiday periods and bookings have to be made a year in advance. The hostel is very much like a Youth Hostel in the UK.

We were, however, very fortunate to have a lovely lady called Ester from the local village who came daily to prepare all our meals including the picnics plus do all the washing up for us. Ester was usually assisted by either her son Istvan or daughter Diana. The food was excellent and we were served many specialties one that I especially enjoyed was a cold yoghurt type of soup served with fruit and of course the scrambled egg with onions and paprika was also a very tasty breakfast dish.



Szalamandra Haz

➤ **Thursday 14th May**

The day started with a brief check of the moth trap and yet again more species added to the ever growing list. Then after breakfast we had our first views of the park walking up through woods to the ruins of the Szadvar Castle, which was one of the largest castles in Hungary. The views from the castle across the park were magnificent. Numerous stops were made to photograph the butterflies and flowers or to listen to and view the birds.



Walk up to the castle



Ruins of Szadvar castle.

The purpose of this visit to Hungary for our team was to assist Janos Toth, an entomologist at Debrecen University who is working for a PhD, monitor and recapture a particular butterfly *Melitaea Telona*. Later that day we had a meeting arranged with Professor Vargo Zoltan, a professor of Entomology at Debrecen University, to explain his work and how we could assist Janos, who works for the professor, provide important data.

Thursday afternoon and we all met the eminent Professor and after a slide show and discussion we were all ready to face our task. The talk was very informative but when it came down to differences in the butterflies genitals, biology never being my strong subject, I did wonder if I had volunteered for something way out of my comfort zone. Luckily, this information was not necessary to do the surveying work so I started to relax again. Below is a

photograph which highlights the main differences between the two butterflies.



The talk was followed by a meal in the Tengerszem Hotel and our first view of a Fire Salamander which was found nearby.

Arrangements were made for the following day to meet with the Professor again at one of the survey sites to demonstrate the work we would be required to do. Janos, who was also staying in the hostel, was to be helped by his friend from the university, Dr Judit Bereczki, later to be known affectionately by the name Dr Stinky (no reflection on her personal hygiene).



Tengerszem Hotel



Fire Salamander

➤ **Friday 15th May**

The weather was poor today so our plans were changed and we had a morning of culture rather than a working one. A visit to the Rakoczi caves and a local church were arranged for the group.

The Rakoczi caves are as previously mentioned a UNESCO World Heritage site and were fascinating as they were only 650 m long yet still entered through the old mine working tunnels. The original discovery date is unknown; however, the caves were used in the 1920's for the dumping of waste material from the mines. The tour lasted one hour and our guide was Istvan,

son of Ester our cook. The caves are magnificent with varied coloured stalactites and stalagmites and as a geology student at school (quite a while ago!) I thoroughly enjoyed this trip up and down ladders and through the old tunnels.



Rakoczi caves



Richard in the caves



Rakoczi caves



Mine trunks in the caves.

Lunch was to be in the pretty village of Tornakapolna, the smallest parish in the area, around the village well.



Picnic at the BBQ site in Tornakapolna village

At lunch we met up with Professor Zoltan and Attila Huber (a Zoologist & NP guide) ready for work just outside the village. He reiterated the importance of the work we were to do and along with Janos, Judit and Attila we were shown how to capture and mark the butterflies without harming them, this being an initiation process for many of the group who had never undertaken this work before. This site was to be one of the four selected by Janos for the

surveying to be done but unfortunately due to burning of the grasslands we were reduced to working on three sites.



Professor Zargo Zoltan & Nigel



Marked Telona

During the afternoon the group was split in to smaller teams and as there were too many people for the survey work a small team including myself was able to enjoy and photograph all the flora and fauna around us, a very busy and informative day.

➤ **Saturday 16th May**

My first day of real survey work and after the comments from those involved yesterday this was to be no easy task. Fortunately I was with Tim and Wendy who had been on one of the survey teams yesterday so they were relative "experts" and after netting a few my confidence started to grow.

Our task was to mark both the Telona & Melitaea Phoebe (Knapweed Fritillary) with a capture number and letter for that particular site. We then noted on a Record Sheet which species had been captured, what it was doing at the time, that is, was it flying, feeding or sitting. Also, if feeding we had to note the plant name. The Telona only feeds on the Dianthus whereas the Phoebe feeds on several plants. The butterfly was marked on both sides of one wing using a felt marker pen with the relevant details.

We were lucky in that our site was obviously a favourite site for the Telona and Phoebe as we marked and released 27 butterflies. Work finished about 3.30pm, not a long but quite taxing day as the butterflies can fly faster than I can run! On future days if one of these marked butterflies was recaptured on the Record sheet we would show the letter and number plus what the butterfly was doing when recaptured. The recapture shows how much if any the butterfly has travelled.

During the evening we had a talk by Attila about the Aggtelek National Park. Over 77% of the park is forested and 92.1% of the total land is state owned. A mere 2.6% is owned privately which means that any changes to the landscape have to pass through huge amounts of very slow moving bureaucracy. There are three outstanding endangering features to the semi-dry grasslands and they are the burning of the land, bushes or trees that are

grown without management and thirdly the spreading of alien invasive plant species e.g. pine & spruce.

➤ **Sunday 17th May**

I had an early start with the moth trap monitoring. For a person now retired and used to leisurely rising I found myself regularly up and about by 5.30/6am, I really hope this doesn't become the norm when I return home.

A transect walk to Acsko, was arranged for those interested and we saw many butterflies, damselflies and flowers including Reverdin's Blues, Duke of Burgundy, Chapman's Blue, Painted Lady and Birds Nest Orchid.

During the afternoon we visited a beef farm at Komjati owned Joseph Szallo, a wealthy local farmer, to see his farm flowed by a visit to the beautiful old church at Tomanszentandras with its spectacular murals. The views from the high position of the church show the colourful strip farming that still operates in the area.



Tomanszentandras Church



Mural on the church balcony



Church painting



View from church yard.

➤ **Monday 18th May**

Today was a full day of surveying working with Karen. Despite the heat, 30c at least, we still managed to capture and mark a number of Telona plus I was

able to take numerous photographs of the flowers and butterflies on our patch including a spectacular Ladybird spider.



Ladybird Spider (*Eresus cinnaberinus*)

During the evening Janos led a review session in which he advised the group he expected to have a 90% success rate with the identification. After initial problems overall people he thought the group were indentifying the species correctly.

➤ **Tuesday 19th May**

Today's survey work had to be cancelled due to bad weather so during the morning I was looking through books trying to identify species I had photographed. Luckily the weather improved and arrangements were made for us to go with Roland to a new area to do some "one off" survey work of the plants and butterflies on the fields above the village of Szin. On the way there at the side of the road was a carpet of mainly Silver Studded Blue butterflies, a slight none of us had previously witnessed. Estimates varied greatly; however, several suggested there had been more than a thousand.



Silver Studded Blues by the roadside on a damp patch

After dinner we were all taken up in to the loft above Szalamandra Haz by Sandor Boldogh, Director of Conservation in the NP, to view the Lesser

Horseshow Bats which roost there. We then went down the road to a stream where Sandor erected a net to catch the bats.



Sandor removing the bats from his catch net

➤ **Wednesday 20th May**

Today the group was divided into two teams, one to do survey and recapture work and the other building storks nests, I chose the former. Late afternoon we were all reunited at Aggtelek where we had lunch and then a quick dash to buy souvenirs especially books and postcards and then moved on to the lovely village of Gomorszolos.

Gomorszolos is now almost a living museum and is the smallest and oldest village in the area. One of the residents, Laslo Kovaks decided to collect all the old equipment and tools and now has his own museum. Laslo has received many prizes for the work he and his wife have done to show the old ways of life. His wife is one of the few people who still weave the traditional cloth on the old wood looms. Unfortunately, as happens in many villages, the young move away and of the 75 people remaining the majority are elderly. This was a fascinating place to look round and with a local guide named David Varnagy we were able to get a real feel for the ecological work undertaken here.

I love cooking and was very lucky to purchase the last copy of the "Tastes of Gomor" which includes such recipes as "Old Woman's Soup" and "Legless Hen Soup", still yet to be tried.



Museum at Gomorszolos



Laslo Kovaks

➤ **Thursday 21st and Friday 22nd May**

Both days were survey and recapture days. Yet again I took time out to photograph the many flowers to be found in the area whilst on day one my partner David took time off to watch and enjoy the bird life. As I was partnered with Richard, my husband, on the second day we took it in turns to do the chasing around.

During the evening we had a visit from the beautiful Katalin, Mayor of the local village of Szogliget, who gave us a talk about the area and a sample of the local Palinka. In Hungarian, Palinka is a strong brandy-like liquor distilled from fruit. Pálinka is a very social drink: just as the English drink tea, the Hungarians, especially in rural areas, will offer Pálinka to guests upon arrival. Katalin then took orders for the locally distilled Palinka and local honey should we wish to take it home. I ordered two jars of honey which turned out to be huge litre jars which really added to my rucksack weight on the return journey.



Views of Szogliget



Katalin Mihalik, Mayor of Szogliget

➤ **Saturday 23rd May**

This was our first full day of leisure so as you might have guessed Richard and I went walking, taking photographs of butterflies and flowers, nothing new there. Some enjoyed a day chilling out but when Richard and I travel our motto is see and experience as much as you can as you may never return to that area. So, as we had previously purchased a copy of the Aggtelek tourist atlas and travel guide we followed the marked tracks around the back of the Szadvar Castle and headed towards the Slovakian border. The maps and

route marks were much better than we anticipated and both Richard and I thoroughly enjoyed the day.

In the evening we all enjoyed a BBQ with our new friends, yet again marvelous food prepared by Ester, Istvan her son and daughter Diana.

➤ **Sunday 24th May**

Hangovers were order of the day for many but just for once I had my sensible hat on last night and avoided one. Luckily for many this was to be an easy day with a trip to Martonyi monastery ruins and the Baradla Caves.

The monastery was built in 1383, destroyed by fire two centuries later by invading Turks and still lies in partial ruin today. Some restoration work has taken place but due to the lack of funding, work as now stopped although a new roof is in place. Whilst here we were fortunate to see three Tawny Owls in a tree near the ruins.

From the monastery we moved on to the Baradla Caves. The cave system is 25.5km long and the longest in Hungary. We had yet another spectacular short tour and in the huge hall within the system we were given an amazing light and sound display which really highlighted some of the stunning features. If you visit Aggtelek you must visit the caves. These are much more commercialized than those at Rakoczi yet still have their own attraction.



Dragons Head



Dripstone Walls



Stalagmites in Baradla Caves & group

We then wandered down to a small lake at Voros to photograph and see spectacular flowers, dragonflies, damselflies and butterflies plus listened to the Fire-bellied Toads.

➤ **Monday 25th May**

Today was to be our final mark and recapture day. I was working on the Josvafo site with Richard. An excellent day for photographs but our count was low as at 30 plus degrees it was a bit too hot for the butterflies.

As we had to kill time waiting for the horse riders a short walk was taken through a new area where yet again we saw new flora and fauna. The walk ended in the beautiful village of Teresztenye where I saw my new home complete with swimming pool and probably costing no more than £20K. A small house in the local village could be purchased for a little as £3K.

Within the local communities we were advised that unemployed people had to work on local projects to earn their benefit money, a very good idea in my opinion. The work undertaken was usually to smarten up the village by cleaning out the drainage ditches, constructing flower beds and collecting rubbish. In this particular village there was a mini park with benches and flowers and it likely this was one of the projects.



Teresztenye.



Teresztenye village green

During the evening Janos provided a brief yet hilarious language lesson. Luckily his friend Judit was there to help as even he seemed to struggle with the Hungarian alphabet so what chance did we have!

➤ **Tuesday 26th May**

Today Richard and I were fortunate to be able to go to a new area with Roland Farkas, a NP botanist, Janos & Judit to survey a new area for flora. Within the next two years Roland hopes to produce a book about the Flora of the NP. We were extremely lucky to have three specialists with us for a full day and this was for both of us one of the highlights of the trip. We saw and recorded several new species of flora and fauna including the Purple Shot Copper, Red Underwing Skipper plus the Ragweed plant (*Ambrosia elation*) and a Mountain Chafer.

The day ended in a local supermarket while Roland did some last minute food shopping and I of course purchased some typical Hungarian foods to take home. A visit to the local Ice Cream shop followed and finally a visit to the local bar in Szogliget so that Richard and I could thank our hosts with a few drinks.

➤ **Wednesday 27th May**

During the morning Janos provided an analysis of the survey and recapturing work we had undertaken.

Even though we had only been able to work 7 out of the 8 days required Janos was pleased with the effort we had all put in and thanked everyone as he could not have undertaken the work without the volunteers. He explained that in the latter days of the survey work the numbers captured had dropped as the dry weather had badly affected the life span of the Telona. Despite this he was able to show the movement of the recaptured Telona and the possible reasons for the lack of movement. Janos will in due course be providing a full and accurate report of the surveys.

During the afternoon we had a short walk near Josvafo and saw the spectacular Poplar Admiral Butterfly. After following it up and down a clearing and only catching a glance of it I decided to remove my rucksack and camera case. The butterfly obviously enjoyed the salt on these two items and stayed there for at least 5 minutes to enable us to take photographs.

2.3 Return Journey Home

➤ **Thursday 28th & Friday 29th May**

Richard and I had been given the task of ensuring the team of 14 made it safely home to London. After a brief meeting with Nigel we realized this would not be an easy task as we would be travelling back to London on 7 trains, two of which only had a break of 12 and 14 minutes between them. As backup we engaged Jonathan to assist and he became the front runner with me while Richard became rear guard. Due to the late arrival of two trains we had a mere 5/6 mins to change trains, not a relaxing journey at all.

Our worst nightmare came true when on the first train from Szin to Miskolc two people got off the train at the wrong station and I virtually man handled them back on, how could we have explained to Nigel we had lost 2 people in the first hour!

From Miskolc we travelled to Budapest, Vienna, Munich, Koln, Brussels and London. After 32 hours and 45 minutes, 8 trains and 2 London underground

trains and a few dramas we stepped onto the platform at Wool station, Dorset, England.

We were home, the task then began of editing and naming over 1500 photographs and writing this report.

Part 3 Photographic Record

This is a collection of photographs depicting the Hungarian villages, landscape and natural history which were taken during my trip. I have endeavored to name all the flora and fauna, however, 100% accuracy is not guaranteed. Should you spot any errors in my naming of the photographs I am quite happy to be informed.



Ferto-Hansag NP



Tinder or Horse Fungi



Tomanszentandras Church



Grey Cattle Ferto-Hansag



Tornakapolna



Mural in above church



Canal Ferto-Hansag



Tornakapolna



Tomanszentandras



Beware of Greylags



Nr Szalamandra Haz



Josvafo



Szalamandra Haz from Szadvar Castle



Old Fire Engine in Joseph's Farm



Typical Hungarian Meadow



Phone Box Gomorszolos



Toilet Gomorszolos museum



Martonyi Monastery



Gomorszolos Local Art



Gomorszolos museum



Martonyi Monastery



Gomorszolos Local Art



Old Workers shelters



View to hillside Salamander



Oldest house Gomorszolos



Strip Farming Gomorszolos



Teresztenye Village



Local dress circa 1950's



Gomorszolos museum



Carving at Teresztenye



Adonis Blues Mating



Bag Worm Moth



Bag Worm Larva



Black Hairstreak



Black Veined Moth



Black Veined Whites Flirting



Caterpillar unknown



Caterpillar unknown



Caterpillar unknown



Chequered Blue



Chestnut Heath



Clouded Buff



Common Heath Moth



Duke of Burgundy



Fox Moth



Giant Peacock Moth



High Brown Fritillary Chrysalis



Lesser Spotted Fritillary- Trivia



Granville Fritillary



Hypercallia citrinanlis moth



Lime Hawk Moth



Green Hairstreak



Large Blue



Mazarine Blues Mating



Green Oak Tortrix



Large Copper



Melitaea Telona



Grizzled Skipper



Large Coppers Mating



Mottled Umber caterpillar
(*Erannis defoliaria*)



Heath Fritillary



Large Skipper



Pearly Heath



Poplar Admiral



Rhodostrophia vibicaria moth



Small Heaths Mating



Poplar Admiral



Safflower Skipper



Speckled Yellow Moth



Purple Shot Copper



Scarce Swallowtail



Burnett (*Zygaena brisa*)



Purple Tiger Moth Caterpillar
(*Rhyarria purpurata*)



Silver Studded Blues



Weavers Fritillary



Red Underwing Skipper



Silver Studded Blues Mating



Wood White



Reverdin's Blue



Slow Hairstreak



Caterpillar unknown



Anemone sylvestris



Birds Nest Orchid



Burning Bush (Dictamnus Albus)



Austrian Dragonhead



Birthwort



Common Toadflax (Linaria Vulgaris)



Bastard Balm



Broom Rape (Orobanche)



Dusky Cranes-bill (Geranium Phaeum)



Dog Rose



Dianthus Carthusianorum



Iris Variegata



Field Cow Wheat



Red Vipers Bugloss



Milkwort



Hounds Tongue (*Cynoglossum officinale*)



Sainfoin (*Onobrychis viciifolia*)



Yellow Woundwort (*Stachys Recta*)



Lady Orchid



Sedge (*Cyperaceae*)



Narrow Leafed Helleborine



Red Dead Nettle (*Lamium purpureum*)



Opium Poppy



Yellow Pheasants-Eye (*Adonis vernalis*)



Acupepeira Ceropegia Spider



Large Red Damselfly (Pyrrhosoma nymphula)



Beautiful Demoiselle (Calopteryx virgo)



Assasin Bug (Rhinocoris iracundus)



Ladybird Spider (Eresus cinnaberinus)



Mountain Chafer



Green Lizard



Bee Beetle (Trichius fasciatus)



Italian Stink Bugs Mating



Robin Pincushion



Crab Spider



Paper Wasp & Nest



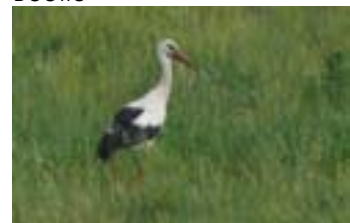
Wood White Prey of Robber Beetle



Bush Cricket (Tettigoniidae)



Shield Bugs (Pentatoma rufipes)



White Stork

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This was a marvelous trip and I would like to thank all the people involved in making this possible especially our hosts at the Aggtelek NP who showed immeasurable patience with a bunch of people with varying knowledge and expertise.



Istvan (Eszter's son)



Roland



Szolt



Sandor



Judit



Attila



Eszter (our cook)



Diana (Eszter's daughter)

And thanks to the group for the good laughs we had along the way



David, Jenny (who left the trip early), Jess, Jonathan, Karen, Linda, Rachel, Richard, Sam, Stephanie, Tim, Wendy, Tim and of course my husband Richard.



Janos & husband Richard (standing)



Janos

Thanks to Janos for sharing his knowledge, his humour and his friendship. Without Janos and his project I may not have been there.

Following the Hungarian Language Lesson I do think perhaps he needs to brush up on his knowledge of the Hungarian alphabet!

And without any doubt a very special thank you to both Nigel and Kathy.

Nigel was the sole driver and having driven across Europe he still managed to be one of the last to bed and first to get out of bed most days, always bounding with energy and *loud* enthusiasm.

And finally, thanks to Kathy, who provided immeasurable backing and support to Nigel. She regularly produced tea and coffee when the group was flagging at the campsites across Europe. Kathy was also exceedingly helpful when it came to naming the flora of the area. She was always beavering away in the background in a very *quiet* yet efficient manner.

The combination of all their skills and mannerisms made the trip run smoothlywell most of the timedon't want them to get too bigheaded!

It really is a shame we are only allowed one trip but many thanks to you both for this one. I apologise to anyone who I have omitted to thank.



Nigel Spring



Kathy Henderson



Was Nigel checking we were all still working????

The European Conservation Action Network was established in 2007 by The Kingcombe Trust, a charity based at The Kingcombe Centre in west Dorset, dedicated to conservation and environmental education (Reg. Charity no. 1054758), in association with the Dorset Branch of Butterfly Conservation. The project is funded through the Leonardo da Vinci section of the European Union Lifelong Learning Programme and has partners in France, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Poland. Further information can be obtained from www.kingcombecentre.org.uk or from Nigel Spring (tel: 0044.1963.23559; email: nigelspring@yahoo.co.uk).