

Aerial spraying against OPM first forecast in April's GI got underway in early May. Within hours it was headline news in The Guardian and The Daily Telegraph. Micron Sprayers confirmed aerial application would be carried out by a Robinson Helicopter equipped with Micronair AU 7000 atomisers.

The target is the 10-hectare Herridges and Broom Copses near Pangbourne (West Berkshire) to be sprayed twice with *Bacillus thuringiensis* subsp. *kurstaki*. Stewart Snape at Forestry Commission (FC) said "We know there could be OPM in the woodland environment because we found a nest last year."

Dr Martin Warren, Chief Executive of the charity 'Butterfly Conservation' said: "Blanket aerial spraying of a designated wildlife site sets a very bad precedent and is an extremely crude control mechanism – the approach is akin to using a 'sledgehammer to crack a nut'. We believe a far better method would be to conduct a detailed survey of the conspicuous nests and spray them individually as they have done in other areas."

The charity is concerned for rare butterflies in this woodland including silver washed fritillary (*Argynnis paphia*) and white admiral (*Limenitis camilla*), as well as the purple emperor

AERIAL SPRAYING ...ON TIME (IF NOT ON TARGET)



(*Apatura iris*) known to be on sites nearby.

Early May featured strong winds and falling temperatures slowing oak re-foliation even more. Calm conditions for accurate deposition of droplets are required. And 40-60 per cent leaf expansion, to ensure sufficiently good leaf coverage and a lethal dose of Bt insecticide through larval ingestion.

Wind turbulence and insufficient tree canopy cover increase chances of droplets landing on non-target plants. Dog violet and honeysuckle both common woodland and hedgerow plants are the food plants of silver washed fritillary and white admiral, respectively.

Pangbourne appears a strange choice of place to begin aerial bombardment with insecticide. After three years of ground spraying only three nests were found last year.

One surprised observer told Greenkeeper International: "If FC wanted maximum impact against OPM they could have closed down Richmond Park for a day to treat the area's high OPM infestation."

This would clearly assist sites nearby. OPM has been successfully controlled on Richmond Golf Course (GI January 2012) but threats from female moths flying in to lay their eggs remain.

Dr Terry Mabbett

FAREWELL JANE JONES

Jane Jones, who left her position as Regional Administrator for the South West & Wales on 31 May, was presented with a series of gifts by everyone at BIGGA House to thank her for eight and a half years of sterling service. She's intending to remain in the golf and greenkeeping industry. Everyone wishes her well and hopefully she will continue to attend events within the industry and keep in touch with many of the members, particularly in her Region.



TORO/LELY MATCH

B,B&O triumphed 4-1 over Kent in the annual Toro/Lely Home Counties Football Final at Upton Park, home of West Ham United.

Kent Section secretary and part-time goalkeeper (!) Rob Holland reports: "It was truly a game of two halves. B,B&O scored four quick fire goals between the 12th and 20th minutes despite the heroic actions of the cat-like keeper.

"We scored a penalty in the second half and relentlessly pressed to narrow the scoreline. Unfortunately time ran out. Well done to Ben Adams, Russ Bain and Adam White who were superb in Kent's rearguard.

"Many thanks to B,B&O for a great game played in a very friendly spirit. Thanks especially to Larry Pearman and Toro/Lely for sponsoring - your generosity was very much appreciated. Thanks too to West Ham and particularly Head Groundsman Shane O'Brien for the quality of the pitch. Finally thanks to Kev Morris for arranging everything from organising the players, transport, sideline heckling, post match speeches and evening beverages back at Redlibbits. Thanks for the great company and another amazing day guys."