

LARVAE ALERT!

At Shapwick Heath, maturing **Peacock** larvae were seen on 17th September and by 25th September these seemed to have dispersed to pupate. Normally this singled-brooded species is not found in the larval stage after early July. Similarly, there were more than twenty batches of **Small Tortoiseshell** larvae nearby on 17th September and even on 25th September some of these were only about 15mm long. This is unusually late for both species but other Branch Committee members had witnessed this phenomenon. The key issue is, with frost expected imminently, will the larvae perish and will the pupae fare any better? The survival strategy for both species is to over-winter as an adult, but can they survive the winter in the pupal state?

Please keep a watch for any late **Small Tortoiseshell** or **Peacock** larvae or pupae in your area and especially any evidence of whether they emerge late as adults or survive the winter as pupae. The more eyes focussed on this the better! Please report any observations on the website.

John Burrell
30th September 2009