



# KILDARE BRANCH

FROM PA KEOGH



Xmas walk at Lullymore

## CHRISTMAS WALK 2014

This year's walk arranged by Jim Connolly brought us to the heart of Kildare into the Bog of Allen, Lodge Bog to be exact. Just a few kilometres from Allenwood, it is a fully functioning raised bog ecosystem protected because of its immense biodiversity which was once widespread

throughout the midlands. Michael Jacob an environmentalist, wildlife enthusiast, and local historian led us onto a 10,000 year old landscape where every step revealed a fascinating collection of plant life, each supporting one and other in this harsh environment.

In the short walk we saw the common snipe, some hare forms, old moth cocoons, heathers, four types of lichens, many sedges and sphagnum moss which was used during WW1 to dress wounds. Michael explained the difference between raised and blanket bogs, and cut

bogs that were the livelihood of many families. We saw bog butter dug from the bog and still so well preserved, a wing glean used to cut turf and finally stories of bog bodies and murders led us off the bog and on to the second part of our outing.

Just up the road is Lullymore West bog which has a very rare butterfly living there, the Marsh Fritillary (*Euphydryas aurinia*). This species is protected and this area is one of the few places it is found.

With 21 out of the 31 butterflies occurring in Ireland found here and over 150 species of moth, the site is exceptional in Ireland. Over 300 species of bird, plant, insect and animal are found here, which is incredible and to top it off just as we entered the

site we spotted a buzzard perched on a pole keeping an eye on us.

Wet feet led us back to Glennon's in Allenwood for some very welcome refreshments.

A huge thanks to Michael for a most enjoyable outing.

Apologies to those who hadn't the proper footwear as we didn't realise we were going out onto the bog.

**Photos: Pa Keogh**



Common buzzard

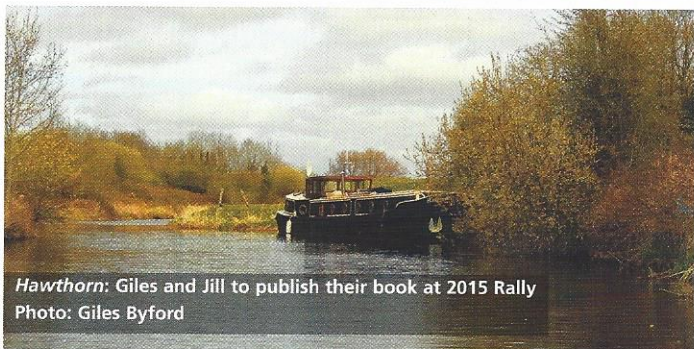


Marsh fritillary



# SHANNON HARBOUR

FROM DAMIEN BUCKLEY



Hawthorn: Giles and Jill to publish their book at 2015 Rally  
Photo: Giles Byford

## QUIET WINTER

It's been a quiet winter down at Shannon Harbour but we are getting ready to start out on a new boating season. Over the winter the dry docks have been busy again and this year seems to have a little more stir on so hopefully the recent recovery in the economy will lead to more

boating activity. For our part we have been busy putting the last year's records to rest with our AGM which returned the same committee and prompted the start of work towards this year's Rally.

## RALLY 2015

JD and crew promise to entertain us all with the mystery event on

Saturday night after the barbecue. Before that, for our afternoon event, we are delighted to announce that Giles and Jill from Hawthorn will launch their book which follows their journey from their native waterways through part of their time on our system and through our community.

Giles has been working hard on this creating his picture in words while Jill has created her record in illustration. Jill will be displaying some of her artwork in the meeting rooms and copies of the book will be on sale. Having seen previous work and knowing the perfectionists this couple are, it promises to be a true treat.

For a more light-hearted event, just so we can be in the calmed mood Donna Pride is organising some fun and games for Saturday morning (a change of clothes will be required). So the weekend 19 to 21 June is shaping up to be another great rally.

We just hope Fr. Pierre (jalapeno) Pepper can back up all his bluster in the Paddy's Day Punch up and be recovered in time for our Sunday morning Ecumenical Service. The sisters of no mercy have promised to give us a few hymns if Fr. Pierre can't make it.

Looking forward to seeing you on the waterways this year and hopefully many of you at the rally.