



**The year 1996...**

...Will be remembered as one of the finest painted lady years ever, though *cardui* was well matched in numbers by the micros *Nomophila noctuella*, water veneer and *Plutella xylostella*, diamond-back moth. In general it proved to be an interesting year, as the selection of records below indicate. These are in addition to those listed in the July newsletter.

At the moment you're probably fixing your nets, cleaning your traps, oiling your ferrules and dreaming wistfully ahead to the delights of the 1997 season. Let's hope it's a good one.

\* Original art work supplied by David Warner

***Nematopogon metaxella* Hb.**

Poor's Piece NR, 21 June. G A Pyman. Third record from the Danbury area.

***Luffia lapidella* Goeze**

Saffron Walden, 12 July at mercury vapour (mv). A M Emmet. **New to Essex.**

***Ypsolopha sequella* Cl.**

Jaywick, 16 July. J Young.

Mistley, 18 August. I. Rose.

***Coleophora fuscicornis* Zell.**

Northeast Essex, June. A M Emmet. First record since mid-1970's. Probably now extinct at Fingringhoe Wick NR where dense vegetation has swamped the foodplant.

***Pempelia genistella* Dup.**

Hamford Water area, 14 June, larvae on *Ulex* almost defoliating plant. A M Emmet. **New to Essex.**

***Gelechia senticetella* Stdgr.**

Saffron Walden, 25 July at mv. A M Emmet. **New to North Essex.**

***Cnephasia genitalana* P. & M.**

Saffron Walden, a few late July to early August at mv. A M Emmet. **New to North Essex.**

***Aethes piercei* Obraz.**

Ingatstone, 20 June. G Smith. Last recorded in Essex from the Brentwood area in c.1902.

***Eucosma aemulana* Schläg.**

Ingatstone, 7 August. G Smith. Last recorded by H C Huggins (undated); last dated record in 1937.

***Sitochroa palealis* D&S.**

Mersea Island, 8 August. J Firmin. Between Cudmore Grove and oyster packing building.

***Assara terebrella* Zinck.**

Ardleigh, 26 June at mv. A Guiver per I Rose.

Saffron Walden, 8 August at mv. A M Emmet. Second from this locality, the first being in July 1995. This species appears to be extending its range in Essex

***Gymnancyla canella* D&S**

Jaywick, 23 July at mv. J Young.

***Cnaemidophorus rhododactyla* D&S **Rosy Plume****

Thundersley, 5 July. D G Down. Larvae.

***Colias croceus* Geoffr. Clouded Yellow**

South Woodham Ferrers, August. J. Hurley. Five at The Washlands at TQ805964 ,

***Ladoga camilla* L. White Admiral**

A twenty-fold increase was reported from the Stour Wood area. Numbers at Friday Wood, Colchester were similar to last year, but nationally the species appears to be increasing.

***Nymphalis antiopa* L. Camberwell Beauty**

Thorpe le Soken, 7 September R Wood and 14 September J Aird.

Mistley, 15 September. I Rose.

***Melanargia galathea* L. Marbled White**

South Woodham Ferrers, 4 August. J Hurley. The Washlands at TQ805964

On Canvey Island numbers are reported to have increased.

***Hyloicus pinastri* L. Pine Hawk-moth**

Little Oakley, 27 July G Slater per P Smith and 30 July M Henchman per C Gibson.

Daws Hall, 20 July at mv. I Grahame.

***Macroglossum stellatarum* L. Humming-bird Hawk-moth**

Bicknacre, 9 June. J Dobson.

Butts Green, Chelmsford, 2 August. Mr Thompson.

Ongar, 21 August. P Merrett, Rothamsted trap.

Jaywick, every day between 18 August and 22 August. J Young.

***Hyles gallii* Rott. Bedstraw Hawk-moth**

Jaywick, 18 July. J Wilde.

Wivenhoe, 20 July. M Jackson.

***Hyles lineata* Fabr. Striped Hawk-moth**

North Chingford, 7 June. B Pateman.

***Odontotia carmelita* Esp. Scarce prominent**

Thundersley, 27 April. D G Down. Sixth Essex record.

***Coscinia cribraria* L. Speckled Footman**

Ongar, 6 August. P Merrett, Rothamsted trap. **New to Essex.**

***Eurois occulta* L. Great Brocade**

Jaywick, 19 June J Young and 15 August J Wilde.

***Mythimna albipuncta* D. & S. White-point**

Copperas Wood, 12 October. P Smith.

***Mythimna vitellina* Hb. Delicate**

Mistley, 23 October. I Rose.

***Gortyna borylii* Pierr. Fisher's Estuarine Moth**

Dovercourt, 8 September. P Smith. An apparently early and wayward specimen.

***Spodoptera exigua* Hb. Small mottled willow**

Thundersley, 13 August. D G Down.

***Earias clorana* L. Cream-bordered Green Pea**

Jaywick, 27 July. J Wilde.

***Syngrapha interrogationis* L. Scarce Silver Y**

Jaywick, 18 August at mv. J Young. Seventh Essex record.

**MBGBI Volume 3 - Yponomeutidae to Elachistidae.** Edited by A M Emmet. Harley Books, Colchester, 1996. 454pp., 19 plates. £75.

This eagerly awaited book should provide field workers with a much-needed tool for studying several awkward families of micros and especially the Coleophoridae. Other families covered are Yponomeutidae

(which include some large species easily noticed by those who usually only record macros), Glyphipterigidae, Roeslerstammiidae, Epermeniidae, Schreckensteiniidae and Elachistidae - most of which have been dealt with by other guides or journals. The Coleophoridae, however, have been strangely neglected despite being a rewarding group to study, since the larvae of most species have distinctive feeding habits and construct cases which can be searched for during the daytime.

In addition to the superb colour plates of the adults by Richard Lewington and duotone plates of larval cases, this book thoughtfully also provides illustrations of the genitalia for the Coleophoridae and Elachistidae, which greatly enhances the book's worth.

Dealing as it does with 245 species, £75 represents a real bargain and this is a 'must' buy. It is quite simply one of the most important British Lepidoptera books to have been published - miss it at your peril. BG

### **County Moth Night 13 July**

Many thanks to the 25 recorders who sent in details of their catches - you will find a printout of the raw data with this newsletter. If anyone else would like a copy send me an SAE.

This exercise provided a 'snapshot' of Essex moths flying on a particular night last summer.

4610 moths recorded from the 25 sites

281 species were recorded

Commonest moths were:

*Agrotis exclamationis*, heart and dart (476 specimens), which made up 10.3% of the catch

*Apamea monoglypha*, dark arches (386), 8.4% of the catch

*Chrysoteuchia culmella* (337), 7.3% of the catch

Sizes ranged from the tiny *Ectoedemia subbimaculella* to the huge *Sphinx ligustri*, privet hawk-moth, of which 18 were recorded from 10 sites.

Other notable catches included:

Micros - *Coleophora frischella*, *Athrips mouffetella*, *Cochylidia heydeniana*, *Capua vulgana*, *Cydia fagiglandana*, *Dioryctria mutata* and *Ancylosis oblitella*.

Macros - *C. puntaria* maiden's blush, *E. inturbata* maple pug, *E. millefoliata* yarrow pug, *A. sylvata* clouded magpie, *S. fagi* lobster moth, *S. urticae* water ermine, *A. prasina* green arches, *E. clorana* cream-bordered green pea, *L. pastinum* blackneck and *P. fuliginaria* waved black.

Saffron Walden recorded 131 species, the best haul of the night.

### **The 1996 meetings concluded**

#### Daws Hall, 20 July

Update to last newsletter, a further trap yielded new specimens for the night, such as *Hyloicus pinastri*, pine hawk-moth, and the final total was 139 species.

#### Bradwell-on-Sea, 3 August

Thirteen people turned up on this hot afternoon. The now-famous Thistle Bed was the focus of attention with an estimated 10 000 - 20 000 *Cynthia cardui*, painted lady, which rose in orange and pink clouds. One small maple tree resembled a scene from California with monarchs overwintering. Just prior to the full emergence, one observer reported a distinct rustling sound thought to have been made by thousands of pupae. We are unlikely to see an event on this scale this again in our lives. Overnight the trap caught *Ennomos quercinaria*, august thorn, *Idaea vulpinaria*, least carpet and *Apamea ophiogramma*, double lobed.

#### Abberton Reservoir N.R., 17 August

A pleasant evening yielded sixty-five species which included seven new 10km square records such as *Ypsolopha horridella* and *Acleris forsskaleana*. Most interest, however, was afforded to a rather disgusting *Nicrophorus vespillo*, the common sexton or burying beetle.

#### High Woods C.P., 5 October

A bitterly cold night revealed just four moths. Definitely one to forget.

#### Marks Hall Estate, Coggeshall, 12 October

Twenty-four species were noted, of which no less than sixteen were new or updated 10km square records and included *Acleris rhombana*, *Thera britannica*, spruce carpet, and two stunning *Dichonia aprilina*, merveille du jour.

### **Moth Group Programme for 1997 (provisional)**

The mid-Essex site of Marks Hall Estate, Coggeshall is going to be our main survey venue this year. It is very under recorded but has tremendous potential and should yield a surprise or two. If any of you want to arrange an evening at a site near to where you live and wish to advertise it here, please let me know before the end of March 1997. BG.

**19 April 1997**                      **Marks Hall Estate, Coggeshall**

Meet visitors centre TL839252 at 7.00pm. Leader: Joe Firmin.

**17 May 1997**                      **County Moth Night**

Last year's county moth night was a great success. In case of poor weather choose an alternative night as close to the 17th as possible.

**24 May 1997**                      **Marks Hall Estate, Coggeshall**

Meet visitors centre TL839252 at 8.30pm. Leader: Joe Firmin.

**7 June 1997**                      **Donyland Woods SSSI**

Meet lay-by on Mersea Road near Manwood Bridge at TM011206 at 8.30pm. Leader: Brian Goodey.

**14 June 1997**                      **Danbury Common**

Meet Danbury Common car park TL783044 at 8.30pm. Search for *Elaphria venustula*, rosy marbled, last seen in 1991. Leader: Geoff Pyman.

**21 June 1997**                      **Marks Hall Estate, Coggeshall**

Meet visitors centre TL839252 at 8.30pm. Leader: Joe Firmin

**2 August 1997**                      **Marks Hall Estate, Coggeshall**

Meet visitors centre TL839252 at 11.00am for day session and/or 8.30pm for dusk/MV. Joint British Ent. Soc. meeting. Leaders: Joe Firmin and Jerry Bowdrey.

**9 August 1997**                      **Friday Wood SSSI**

Meet at Bounstead Road car park TL985209. Leader: B. Goodey.

**11 October 1997**                      **Danbury Common**

Meet Danbury Common car park TL783044 at 11.30am. A chance to see how Maitland Emmet records micros from evidence of larval feeding.

**EMG member helps new larvae guide**

Whilst on holiday in Portugal in September 1996, David Warner found a female *Acontia lucida*, pale shoulder, a rare immigrant to the Britain Isles. The moth, on return to the U.K., laid ova and David reared some of the resulting larvae to the pupa stage. As Bernard Skinner needed examples to illustrate for his forthcoming book on the larvae of the British macrolepidoptera, Joe Firmin sent two of David's (feeding on mallow) and a photograph obtained will appear in the new book which is expected in May or June 1997. JF.

**Contacts**

A M Emmet, Labrey Cottage, 14 Victoria Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex. CB11 3AF. *Microlepidoptera records*.

B Goodey, 298 Ipswich Road, Colchester, Essex. CO4 4ET. (01206 841224). *Macrolepidoptera records*.

**Newsletter (in addition to above)**

J Firmin, 55 Chapel Road, West Bergholt, Essex. CO6 3HZ (01206 241389).

I Rose, Yaffles, School Lane, Mistley, Essex. CO11 1HN.

J P Bowdrey, 12 Sparrows Corner, Harwich Road, Great Oakley, Essex. CO12 5AA. *Other Order records*.

C W Plant, 14 West Road, Bishops Stortford, Herts. CM23 3QP. *National Neuroptera Recorder*.

**Renewal notice:**

Many of you have supplied SAE's or a cheque (usually £3.00 - £5.00) as a method of receiving the newsletter. The box displays how many stamps or much money is left in your 'account'. No other reminders will be sent.

Next Newsletter - sometime in March or early April. Send me your records, notes of successful nights, comments and anything else of interest. BG