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Essex Moth Group



Issue 15

Winter 1999/2000

Geoffrey Arthur Pyman MBE.: an appreciation Joe Firmin

It was with shock and a deep sense of loss that his many Essex naturalists friends, especially those in Essex Moth Group, Essex Lepidoptera panel and the Essex and Cambs branch of Butterfly Conservation, learned of the death of Geoffrey Pyman on 20 November after a short illness. Geoff, who was 79, had suffered a bout of flu which turned to pneumonia from which he failed to recover.

The news was received in near disbelief by us, his colleagues on Essex Lepidoptera Panel and in EMG, as only days before his death Geoff had been host to the annual meeting of the Panel at his home in Little Baddow and at that time seemed to be in good form and looking forward to the Millennium and many more interesting Lepidoptera seasons in the next century.

Geoff was a leading figure in Essex Wildlife Trust since its inception 40 years ago (as Essex Naturalists' Trust) and held a number of senior posts. His encyclopaedic knowledge of all Essex wildlife and habitats made him the Number 1 field naturalist in our county and his contribution to conservation management of EWT reserves, and to the accurate and systematic recording of species, had no equal. His passing leaves a huge gap, impossible to bridge.

Geoff was not only accomplished in the fields of entomology and botany. He was founder of Essex Birdwatching Society and was President at the time of his death. He was secretary of the national British Birds Rarity Committee 1959 -1961 and co-author, with Robert Hudson, of *A guide to the birds of Essex* (1968). He edited the Essex bird Report from 1949 to 1970.

Geoff formed Essex Lepidoptera Panel with myself and other leading lepidopterists in 1971 and was co-author of *A guide to the butterflies and larger moths of Essex* (Firmin, Pyman et al, Essex Naturalists' Trust, 1975). He was also co-author of *The larger moths and butterflies of Essex* with Maitland Emmet, assisted by David Corke published by Essex Field Club in 1985. He was awarded an MBE in 1980 for his services to wildlife conservation and local government. He was principal Administration Officer for Essex County Council for many years. Geoff was County Recorder for macrolepidoptera for many years and secretary to the Lepidoptera Panel, succeeded by Brian Goodey who has so ably carried on the high standards and traditions set by Geoff over such a long period. Geoff will always be remembered for his unflinching courtesy, his immaculate attention to detail and critical assessment of records, and his unflinching and at times outspoken devotion to the cause of Essex wildlife and landscape conservation. No query went unanswered and it seems impossible to think that we won't ever see those GAP reply postcards with his neat and characteristically vigorous handwriting.

Geoff was never happier than taking friends round his favourite nature reserves on the Danbury Ridge which owe so much to his management skills and showing us every plant, insect and bird. Even the most obscure and tiny plants and insects were identified with consummate ease and delight. We must hope that Essex Wildlife Trust will at some future date dedicate one of its reserves to this great man. We extend our deepest sympathy to Geoff's wife Eileen and to his son Trevor and family.



*1998 Essex Lepidoptera
Panel meeting.
Geoff sits on the left*

Roundup of 1999 records

Widespread whinges of it being a poor season apart, records received showed 1999 to be one of our most successful years ever. It was also the mildest ever recorded, despite the Arctic nights of July. There were no less than five new additions to the county and numerous records of importance, as the following shows...

0103 *Stigmella nylandriella* Little Baddow, Pheasant House Wood (G.A. Pyman).

0144 *Nemophora fasciella* Jaywick, Midway, two - three on *Ballota nigra*, 27 June (J. Young).

0151 *Adela croesella* Coggeshall, Markshall Wood, hundreds around small-leaved lime on 28 May and 3 June (N. Cummings, I.C. Rose and C. Gibson). *There are few recent Essex records.*

0173 *Festoon* Maldon, Memory Close 23 July (S. Wood). *First record from this area for over 100 years. The closest known colony is at Tiptree.*

0174 *Triangle* Beaumont-cum-Moze 17 July (J.B. Fisher); Copperas Wood 20 July (two) and 23 July (three) P. Smith and M.E. Anthony; Stour Wood 16 July (two), 19 July (eight) and 24 July (twelve) P. Smith and M.E. Anthony et al.

0220 *Nemapogon clematella* Colchester, High Woods Country Park 23 June (B. Goodey).

0234 *Trichophaga tapetzella* Chelmsford, Cheviot Drive 19 May (G. Wilkinson).

0237 *Niditinea fuscella* Thundersley, Woodend Close 17 July (D Down).

0363 *Phyllonorycter platanoidella* Jaywick, mines on Norway maple, 14 July (J. Young).

0368 *Phyllocnistis unipunctella* Jaywick, Midway, mines discovered on white poplar on 3 August, a new foodplant in Britain for this species (J. Young and A.M. Emmet).

0369 *Phyllocnistis xenia* Colchester, Ipswich Road 17 July at mv (B. Goodey). **New to Essex**

0370 **Hornet Moth** Chadwell Heath, 17 July (S.L. South); Chelmsford, survey by G. Wilkinson revealing many sites; Harlow, November, resident (M.J. Pledger per C.W. Plant).

0389 **Choreutis pariana** Dovercourt, Oakley Road 1 July (C. Gibson).

0409a **Argyresthia trifasciata** Colchester, Ipswich Road 26 May (B. Goodey). **New to Essex**

0409b **A. cupressella** Colchester, Ipswich Road, a number of adults 26 May and cocoons on *Cupressocyparis leylandii* 10 June (B. Goodey). Dovercourt, Oakley Road 10 June (C. Gibson). Range extensions from the area of Suffolk and north Essex where it was first discovered in Britain in 1997.

0428 **Yponomeuta rorrella** Tollesbury, Old Hall Marsh RSPB reserve, larvae collected on hawthorn during summer and reared (D. Warner). A hitherto unknown foodplant in Britain.

0470 **Orthotaelia sparganella** Colchester, Ipswich Road 17 July (B. Goodey). Beaumont-cum-Moze, in August (J.B. Fisher). Both at mv.

0520 **Coleophora fuscicornis** Dovercourt, Oakley Road 2 July (C. Gibson). Second for garden.

0556 **Coleophora trochilella** Dovercourt, Oakley Road 17 July (C. Gibson).

0650 **Esperia oliviella** Colchester, 17 July (B. Goodey). **First VC19 record for 130 years.**

0667 **Semioscopis steinkellneriana** Thundersley, Starvelarks Wood 8 April (D.G. Down).

0724 **Metzneria lappella** Beaumont-cum-Moze 26 July (J.B. Fisher confirmed NHM).

0749 **Sitotroga cerealella** Saffron Walden 11 July (A.M. Emmet). **New to Essex.**

0764 **Pseudotelphusa scaella** Colchester, Friday Wood 29 May (B. Goodey). **New to VC19**; Theydon Bois 6 June (J.G. Green).

0776 **Teleiopsis diffinis** Dovercourt, Oakley Road 14 June (C. Gibson).

0808 **Platyhedra subcinerea** Jaywick, adults February 1999 and 3 May, larvae on *Malva sylvestris* on 4 July (J. Young and A.M. Emmet). **New to VC19.**

0957 **Cochylidia heydeniana** Dovercourt, Oakley Road 3 August (C. Gibson).

1061 **Acleris literana** Thundersley, Starvelarks Wood 8 April (D.G. Down).

1099 **Endothenia marginana** Dovercourt, Oakley Road 4 July (C. Gibson).

1104 **Endothenia quadrimaculana** Landermere, August (J.B. Fisher).

1171 **Gypsonoma minutana** Dovercourt, Oakley Road 9 June (C. Gibson).

1204 **Thiodonia citrana** Jaywick, Midway 17 July (J. Young).

1245 **Cydia janthinana** Dovercourt, Oakley Road 16 July (C. Gibson); Great Horksley, 17 July (B. Harley and A.M. Emmet).

1279 **Dichrorampha acuminatana** Jaywick, Midway 31 May (Jon Young).

1370 **Sitochroa palealis** Dovercourt Dunes, 4 July (C. Gibson and B. Goodey); Mistley, 17 July (I.C. Rose); Kirby-le-Soken, Langdon Hills C.P., 16 July (P. Harris); 17 July (P. Bergdahl); Walton on Naze, ten from 31 July to 1 August (P. Smith).

1371 **Sitochroa verticalis** Tilbury Power Station, 12 August (P. Harris).

1400 **Antigastra catalaunalis** Bradwell-on-Sea, Curry Farm September (A.J. Dewick). **New to Essex.**

1429 **Melissoptabtes zelleri** Dovercourt, Oakley Road 10 and 23 July (C. Gibson); Thundersley, 17 July (D.G. Down).

1433 **Cryptoblabes bistriga** Kirby-le-Soken, June (P. Bergdahl); Dovercourt, Oakley Road 1 and 5 July (C. Gibson).

1449 **Microthrix similata** Theydon Bois, two on 26 June (J.G. Green). Third Essex record.

1474 **Ephestia parasitella unicolorella** Dovercourt, Oakley Road 26 May (dissected) and another two in June (C. Gibson).

1479 **Plodia interpunctella** Mistley, 12 March (I.C. Rose). 5th county record since 1976.

1496 **Cnaemidophus rhododactyla** Colchester, Ipswich Road 7 July (B. Goodey).

1543 **Pale Clouded Yellow** North Weald Bassett, 8 June (per J. Young).

1555 **Green Hairstreak** Jaywick, 19 June (J Young). The first for Jaywick.

1584 **White Admiral** Colchester, Friday Wood, ten on 10 July including an ovipositing female (B. and M.A. Goodey). Brentwood, Thorndon Country Park 5 August (J. Patterson and M. Mitchell). Hopefully the start of another colony.

1594 **Large Tortoiseshell** Brightlingsea, Ford Farm 28 August (D. Scott). The eighth Essex record I am aware of since 1990.

1597 **Peacock** Colchester, Ipswich Road 10 December, flying in sunshine (M.A. Goodey).

1613 **Heath Fritillary** Hockley Wood. Substantial second (G. Bailey).

1615 **Wall Brown** Canvey Island, 35 on 19 May (G. Bailey). This should help allay the usual fears that crop up when this species has its periodic declines.

1620 **Marbled White** Colchester, Friday Wood 5 August (R. Cornhill per J. Firmin). A surprisingly northerly record, and species number 807 for this site.

1621 **Grayling** Grays Chalk Quarry N.R., two adults on 4 and 14 August (I. Cotgrove).

1629 **Ringlet** Coggeshall, Markshall Wood c.1000 on 4 July (N. Cumings).

1639 **Pine Tree Lappet** *Dendrolimus pini* Benfleet, 20 July, reared (D.G. Down). **New to Essex**, although certainly introduced.

1642 **Lappet** Langdon Hills, One Tree Hill Country Park 16 July (P. Harris).

1667 **Blotched Emerald** North Chingford, 280 in June alone (B. Pateman). Bryon has recorded 1016 specimens since 1991. Thundersley, ten on 15 June (D.G. Down).

1681 **Clay Triple-lines** Theydon Bois, Woodland Way 7 June (J.G. Green).

1688 **Tawny wave** Dovercourt, Oakley Road 31 July (P. Smith); Copperas Wood, 2 August (J. Firmin et al).

1716 **Vestal** Hamford Water, 28 August (J. Clifton); Takely, Bampers Green, 29 August (G. Sell); Theydon Bois, 3, 5 and 8 September (J.G. Green).

1722 **Flame Carpet** North Chingford, 12 May and two on 3 June - the 19th from here since 1992 (B. Pateman); Mistley, 20 May (I.C. Rose); Theydon Bois, seven between 7 June and 6 September (J.G. Green); Takeley, Bampers Green, 3 August (G. Sell).

1739 **Wood Carpet** Little Baddow, The Ridge 17 July (G.A. Pyman).

1760 **Red-green Carpet** West Bergholt, 5 April (J. and L. Firmin). North Chingford, 1 and 2 May (B. Pateman); South Woodham Ferrers 7 August (M.C. Perry); Coggeshall, Markshall Wood 7 October (J. Firmin et al); Mistley, School Lane 29 October (I.C. Rose). Chelmsford, 31 October (G. Wilkinson); Theydon Bois, seven between 26 September and 18 October, a total of 12 since 1997 (J.G. Green).

1792 **Dark UMBER** North Chingford, 12 July (B. Pateman).

1793 **Cloaked Carpet** Copperas Wood, July; Stour Wood, 16 and 24 July (P. Smith et al).

1833 **Bleached Pug** South Woodham Ferrers 6 August (M.C. Perry).

1890 **Sharp-angled Peacock** Jaywick, 7 July (J. Young).

1841 **Yarrow Pug** Jaywick, two on 7 July (J. Young).

1855 **Cypress Pug** Kirby-le-Soken, 27 August (P. Bergdahl).

1885 **Clouded Magpie** Wivenhoe, 17 July (M.P. Jackson and D. Dutton); Beaumont-cum-Moze, 24 July (J.B. Fisher).

1943 **Great Oak Beauty** North Chingford, 11 June and 1-2 July (B. Pateman).

1968 **Yellow Belle** Stanway, 30 May an unusual inland record (S. Grimwade).

1972 **Convolvulus Hawk-moth** Theydon Bois, 22 September (J.G. Green). Dovercourt, Oakley Road 22 September (P. Smith).

1973 **Death's-head Hawk-moth** Willingale, Birds Green 5 September, adult being eaten by a dog (R. Jones). Dovercourt, Ashley Road 6 September, a female (P. Smith).

1978 **Pine Hawk-moth** Theydon Bois, 29 May and 5 July, her fifth and sixth (J.G. Green). Landermere, 25 July (Dr Dansie per J.B. Fisher).

1984 **Humming-bird Hawk-moth** Corringham, 15 June (per M. Parsons); Jaywick, 15, 17 and 25 July (J. Young); Writtle, 20 June (M. Green); Bradwell-on-Sea, 5 September (G. Smith); Colchester, 5 September (B. Goodey); Dovercourt, 12 September (P. Smith); Ingatestone, 23 September (G. Smith).

1987 **Bedstraw Hawk-moth** Southend, larvae 2 October (per D.G. Down).

1992 **Small Elephant Hawk** Old Hall Marsh, 29 May (C. Tyas); Rayne, 10 June (A. Goodey). Jaywick, 25 June (J. Wilde).

2040 **Four-dotted Footman** North Chingford, 4 July (B Pateman). Species 351 for his site.

2043 **Orange Footman** Theydon Bois, 5 and two on 19 May (J.G. Green); Norwood, Fyfield 9 May (G. Smith). Dovercourt, Oakley Road 20 May (C. Gibson); Coggeshall, Markshall Estate 28 May (B. Goodey et al).

2044 **Dingy Footman** Copperas Wood, over 100 on 20 July (P. Smith). An incredible number.

2057 **Garden Tiger** Jaywick, c.120 larvae in early June (J. Young). Also occurred in adult stage at Manningtree, Ingatestone, Maldon, Wivenhoe, Southminster and Basildon.

2062 **Water Ermine** Tollesbury, Old Hall Marsh 15 June; (Chris Tyas).

2076 **Kent Black Arches** Kirby-le-Soken, 6 July. (P. Bergdahl); Abberton, 24 July (S. Wood).

2091 **Dark Sword-grass** Ingatestone, 24 April and 21 August (G. Smith); Beaumont-cum-Moze, 17 July (J.B. Fisher); North Chingford, 18 and 30 July (B. Pateman); Takeley, Bambers Green, 5 September (G. Sell); Thundersley, 22 September (D.G. Down); Theydon Bois, 26 September (J.G. Green); West Bergholt, 18 October (P. Smith per J. Firmin).

2113 **Stout Dart** Dovercourt, Oakley Road 26 October (P. Smith).

2118 **True Lover's Knot** Dovercourt, 9 July (C. Gibson); Theydon Bois, 12 July (J.G. Green); North Chingford 10 July (B. Pateman).

2119 **Pearly Underwing** Jaywick, 30 August and 2 September (J. Young); Brightlingsea, Ford Farm 10 October (D. Scott).

2183 **Blossoming Underwing** Occurred at Wivenhoe 31 March; St Osyth 1 April (two) and 2 April (four); Thundersley 2 April; Mashbury 3 April; Jaywick 4 April; Frinton-on-Sea 6 April; and Kirby-le-Soken 6 April and 7 April. Probably migrants.

2152 **White Colon** Dovercourt, Oakley Road 17 July (C. Gibson).

2165 **Small Ranunculus** East Tilbury, four larvae on Wall Lettuce *Mycelis muralis* on 9 July (D.G. Down). The first Essex record since it became extinct in the county in 1918.

2194 **White-point** Beaumont-cum-Moze, 1 June, 3 September and two on 5 September (J.B. Fisher); Dovercourt, Oakley Road 11 June (C. Gibson); Bradwell St Peters, 22 August (G. Smith); Jaywick, Midway 30 and 31 August (J. Young).

2196 **Striped Wainscot** Dovercourt, Oakley Road 2 and 22 June (C. Gibson).

2202 **L-album Wainscot** St Osyth, 7 September, specimen photographed by P. Smith (R.W. Arthur). Bradwell St Peters, 19 September (G. Smith). Dovercourt, 26 September (D.M. Anthony per P. Smith).

2227 **Sprawler** Langengoe, Tawnies Meadow 22 November (H. Owen).

2230 **Feathered Brindle** Bradwell St Peters, 19 September (G. Smith). Dovercourt, Oakley Road 29 September (P. Smith). Dovercourt, 30 September (D.M. Anthony per P. Smith).

2241 **Red Sword Grass** Skippers island, 7 October (R Marsh).

2275 **Dusky-lemon Sallow** Mashbury, 25 September (M. Tarrant); Copperas Wood, 1 October (P. Smith). Second from this site, the first was on 3 October 1997.

2300 **Old Lady** Common this year generally, with 21 at North Chingford being the highest at light total (B Pateman). Seems to quite like mv nowadays.

2354 **Sandhill Rustic** Jaywick, a peak in numbers between 4 and 8 August (J. Young). This is slightly earlier than most people would consider searching for adults but is constant at Jaywick and probably elsewhere. A meeting at Dovercourt Dunes on 28 August yielded a number of adults which were mostly worn.

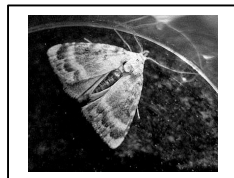
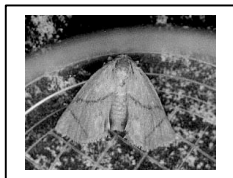
2357 **Large Ear** Mistley, 31 August 1997 (I.C Rose), but not dissected and identified by B.G until 1999. Second for Essex, raising the question of whether the species is resident here.

2362 **Butterbur** Dovercourt, 13 September (D.M. Anthony per P. Smith).

2365 **Fisher's Estuarine Moth** Dovercourt, Oakley Road 25 September and 1 October, though it may have been same specimen (P. Smith). These can be added to the one taken in September 1996 from the same site.

2370 **Twin-spot wainscot** Tollesbury, Old Hall Marsh 23 July (J. Firmin et al); Wrabness, Copperas Wood 2 August (P. Smith, J. Firmin et al).

2371 **Brown-veined Wainscot** Stour Wood, 16 July (P. Smith); Maldon, 17 July (S. Wood). Jaywick, Midway 24 July, (J. Young); Walton on Naze, 31 July (P. Smith).



Festoon, Kent Black Arches and Four-spotted Photos courtesy of Simon Wood

2373 **Webb's Wainscot** Theydon Bois 5 August (J.G. Green). Second from this site.

2391 **Silky Wainscot** *ab. bipunctata* South Woodham Ferrers 8 August (M.C. Perry).

2399 **Bordered Sallow** Old Hall Marsh, 3 July (C. Tyas); Dovercourt, 6 July (C. Gibson); Dunmow, 17 July (C.W. Plant); Dovercourt 21 July (P. Smith); Jaywick, two, (J. Young).

2400 **Scarce Bordered Straw** Langengoe, Tawnies Meadow 31 October (H. Owen).

2495 **Olive Crescent** Mistley, 30 June (I.C. Rose); Stour Wood 16 and 24 July (P. Smith et al).

2465 **Four-spotted** Abberton Reservoir N.R., 24 July (S.D. Wood).

2475 **Waved Black** Theydon Bois, two on 28 June and 17 July (T. and J.G. Green).

2480 **Button Snout** Chelmsford, three in May (G. Wilkinson); Theydon Bois, 28 May (J.G. Green); Kirby-le-Soken, 1 July (P. Bergdahl).

2491 **Shaded fan-foot** Stour Wood, 16 July (P. Smith and M.E. Anthony).

All set for meeting? Saturday 26 February 2000

Our annual indoor meeting this year is set to be our largest so far, with Mark Parsons and Paul Waring the guest speakers.

Paul has been vital to the cause of recognising and conserving Britain's rarest moths, and for several years had valiantly tried to form a viable breeding colony of the Essex emerald with the hope of releasing stock back into the wild in Essex. Paul produced many of the *Biodiversity Action Plans*, which are now used to identify and monitor species' habitat requirements, and has helped to keep the County Recorder network functioning smoothly. More recently Paul has gone freelance and is not uncommonly up to his neck in tropical climes, though he doubtless prefers the more exotic locations of our Essex coastline...

Mark Parsons, formerly of the *Natural History Museum*, has taken over many of Paul's tasks since becoming Butterfly Conservation's Moth Officer and has visited Essex recently on a number of occasions. Much of the thrust of moth conservation today is due to Mark's efforts. A top name in the field of microlepidoptera, we plan to keep him and feed him on unidentified gelechids and such like...

Directions on how to get to the Tendring Hundred Water Services

Head for Horsley Cross near Manningtree. If you are coming via the A12, follow directions to **Harwich** and the **A120**. Once you're on the A120 you'll come to a roundabout after about 4 miles, with a water tower in sight. Turn left at the roundabout (towards Manningtree) and the venue is immediately on the right. Can't miss it. Honest.

Other bits: Please ring or write to Joe if you intend to come (address at end of newsletter) so that Bob can ensure there's plenty of food. And you know how good the food is...

Small print alert: We'd also appreciate a couple of pounds to help out with expenses. Thank you.

Book news

Die Zunslerartigen (Pyraloidea) Mitteleuropas, Frantisek Slamka

Okay, the text is in German and I understand practically none of it, but the beauty of this little book is that language is less of a problem than you might think, given that it is a reference book. Of course, we have Goater, and that in my opinion is a far superior book, but the above volume costs just £17 (£19.25 including postage) and for this you get a set of reasonable plates backed by line drawings of the genitalia (and other characteristic features) which help to separate closely related species. The area the book covers is central Europe (which I think the *Mittel* bit in the title stands for) and so contains many pyralids not (or not yet...) found in Britain. Available from Pemberley Books, PO Box 334, Hayes, Middlesex UB40XX

Boost for gelechids

Lack of literature and difficulties in identification have left the families *Oecophoridae*, *Gelechiidae* and close allies among the most neglected of our Lepidoptera. But this is all about to change. Harley Books are close to publishing 'Vol. 4', and we may see it as early as Summer 2000. Work on the text, plates and drawings of this most eagerly awaited book are all nearing completion and advance orders for the two volumes are being taken (at a reduced cost) by the publishers. Date and exact cost to be announced. For an advance information sheet or to place an order, contact Basil Harley, Harley Book, Martins, Great Horkeley, Essex CO6 4AH.

If you can't wait until then, or want a second source of reference (a wise thing to have), consider volume 3 of Apollo Books' *Microlepidoptera of Europe, Gelechiidae 1*, by Peter Huemer and Ole Karsholt. Roughly covering species numbers 755 to 776 and 790 to 807, this lovely work uses photographs of specimens of each species, the finest genitalia plates I've seen, and English text. £58.25 from Pemberley Books, PO Box 334, Hayes, Middlesex UB40XX

On the Web and a plea for photos

Until I am able to launch our web site, which hopefully will be soon, Terry Jeffreys has kindly allowed the group space on the Cambs & Essex Butterfly Conservation branch's web site. To see it, go to: www.btinternet.com/~terry.jeffreys/

We need a regular supply of photos and current news to keep it updated - please!

500 up

Congratulations to Jean Green for reaching the 500 species mark in her garden at Theydon Bois, near Epping Forest. Highlight of the year was a pair of *Microthrix similella*, third Essex record. Jean started to send in records in 1990. Meanwhile...

600 up

...Paul Bergdahl notched up his 600th species in October at his Kirby-le-Soken garden with *Monopis obviella*. Paul's first record was in 1993, proving you're never too old to start recording (*ooh, sorry Paul!*) Meanwhile...

700 up

...Chris Gibson's garden total at Dovercourt reached 700 species with the capture of *Phyllonorycter schreberella* on 3 August. This in a period of time of eight years, from 1991 to early 1999. (*Just another 300 to go, Chris, to catch Maitland!*) (*Looking at my own garden list (started in 1983) I was slightly surprised to find it languishing back in the 480s! Believe it or not, this year I apparently caught flounced rustic for the first time! This would have been in August, the last time I turned the trap on... Just you remember this, the next time I get on to you*)

Fisher's Estuarine Moth numbers estimated

Surveys by Terri Tarpey and others indicate a population of 10,000 *G. borelii* larvae on Skipper's Island. 60,000 plants, of which 20% are infected (12,000 plants in all), would give rise to a population of c.500 adults, the Essex Lepidoptera Panel guestimates.

Marks Hall releases

Efforts to try and introduce woodland butterflies to this Coggeshall site have commenced with silver-washed fritillary and the release of a first batch of adults, eleven females and one male, on 29 July. The site has been carefully selected and the project has the backing of English Nature. A meeting is set for 15 July at 10.00am to see if any progeny is forthcoming.

Riband Wave survey.

Thanks to all who sent numbers - I've passed these on to Roy Leverton. Report in next issue.

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The Group, as of 15 December 1999, has 71 members.

Programme for 2000

These are events we are aware of but may not necessarily have arranged. Please treat as provisional and contact the leader before attending. My thanks to Joe for organising the Friday night surveys. If you know of any other events, please let me know and I'll include them.

26 February (Saturday) ***Annual Indoor Meeting and Exhibition*** at Tendring Hundred Water Services, Horsley Cross near Manningtree at 11.00am. Guest speakers Paul Waring and Mark Parsons, plus the usual fun and games...

April 1 (Saturday) Canvey Island Search for Morpho butterfly larvae. Meet any pub, any time.
April 14 (Friday) Old Hall Marsh RSPB N.R., near Tollesbury. Meet 7.00pm at car park. Leader Joe Firmin (01206 241389).
April 28 (Friday) Marks Hall, Coggeshall. 7.00pm at car park. Leader Joe Firmin
May 12 (Friday) Old Hall Marsh N.R.. 8.00pm at car park. Leader Joe Firmin
May 26 (Friday) Marks Hall, Coggeshall. 8.00pm at car park. Leader Joe Firmin
June 9 (Friday) Tiptree Heath N.R. 8.30 at car park 'A' opposite Manor House Farm. Leader Joe Firmin
June 23 (Friday) Old Hall Marsh N.R.. 8.30pm at car park. Leader Joe Firmin
June 24 (Saturday) Hanningfield Reservoir. Meet 9.00pm at causeway TL722971 B. Goodey.
July 14 (Friday) Marks Hall, Coggeshall. 8.30pm at car park. Leader Joe Firmin
July 15 (Saturday) Marks Hall, Coggeshall. Monitor recent butterfly releases. Meet 10.00am.
July 28 (Friday) Pods Wood, Tiptree. 8.30 Leader Joe Firmin
August 4 (Friday) Brooks Wood, Gosfield. 8.30pm at car park. Leader Joe Firmin
August 18 (Friday) Old Hall Marsh N.R.. 8.30pm at car park. Leader Joe Firmin
September 8 (Friday) Marks Hall, Coggeshall. 8.00pm at car park. Leader Joe Firmin
October 6 (Friday) Old Hall Marsh N.R.. 7.00pm at car park. Leader Joe Firmin

Questions Please.

For inclusion in the next newsletters, on any Lepidoptera or club-related topic. Can't guarantee an answer, but I may know a person who can...Let's have some debates, some good old-fashioned arguments!

Final thoughts:

Geoff Pyman - a personal tribute *Brian Goodey*

Geoff's Service of Thanksgiving was held on 30 November at Little Baddow Church. Over 200 people were there, gathered to say goodbye to one of our most prominent and respected naturalists. To say that we were all still stunned by events is no exaggeration.

I first met Geoff in the early 'eighties and took over his role as county macro recorder in 1985. As part of the job, Geoff gave me an immense bundle of letters containing thousands of records and comments to and from his colleagues in Essex. These files, now stored at the Resource Centre in Colchester, formed the backbone of the recording effort, which blossomed into *The Larger Moths and Butterflies of Essex*. They make fascinating reading. Although Lepidoptera was but one string to his bow, he championed their cause with great enthusiasm and professionalism, helping to form the stable foundation we have today.

In 1992 he noted a strange, small and insignificant moth in Thrift Wood, Bicknacre, which he had not seen before. Its unknown identity clearly vexed Geoff and he phoned me that evening for an opinion which, based on his description from memory, I could not give. The following year, practically in the same spot, the same thing happened, though this time Geoff managed a hasty sketch which he sent to me by first class post. I could only offer a few suggestions, none of which really matched the sketch particularly well. A search in 1994 revealed nothing, despite Geoff's best efforts, but in 1995 it happened again! This time Geoff was well prepared and spent time making an on-the-spot description backed by a careful drawing. Thinking I knew the moth, I sent a couple of old plates, nearly fifty years old, with which Geoff was able to confirm the identity: *Esperia oliviella*, a beautiful creature but one rarely seen, and a notable record for the county.

A small example, but one that demonstrates the dogged determination typical of Geoff's approach to recording and the need to know the name of everything that came his way. He will be greatly missed by us all.

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Herts & London Lepidoptera records & National Neuroptera Recorder. C. W. Plant, 14 West Road, Bishops Stortford, Herts. CM23 3QP.
Other Order records. J. P. Bowdrey, Fair View, Colchester Road Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex. CO16 0LB (01255 862507).
Coleoptera records N. Cuming, 33 Holly Road, Colchester CO3 5QL (01206 330019).
Web Site: www.BTInternet.com/~terry.jeffreys/

Next newsletter: Mid-April, or thereabouts.

STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS! STOP PRESS!

We had to wait just 90 minutes for the first 2000+ Essex moth* - a geometrid spotted by Dave Warner at 01.30 on 01.01.2000 outside his home at Earls Colne. Trouble is, without a net, he could not identify it[†]. Dave had to wait 18 more agonising hours until 19.30 before catching and identifying a winter moth in the same location. Trouble is, I'd already bagged the same species at Friday Wood at 17.45! However, in the spirit of human generosity, I have no hesitation in awarding Dave the prize - a year's free subscription to the newsletter (all he has to do is supply the SAEs!) and, of course, the all expenses paid holiday to the Seychelles[‡].

*Note the clever avoidance of the term 'Millennium', or that atrocious Y2K thing.

[†]Strange, isn't it, that Dave should be up at this hour, presumably with the sole intention of trying to record the first moth (what other reason would one be up at this hour?), but forget his net!

[‡]The holiday part is, alas, a blatant lie.