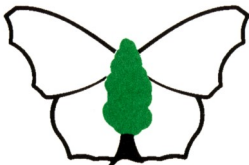


**HERTFORDSHIRE AND MIDDLESEX
BRANCH NEWSLETTER**

ISSUE 20

DECEMBER 1999



**BUTTERFLY
CONSERVATIONSM**

Another Year Gone...

by Gavin Vicary



At the AGM last month I thanked all the committee members for their hard work over the past twelve months. All of the committee members work very hard and do so in their spare time which they give up to help the society.

Two committee members have had to resign this year and this has left us slightly short-handed, so if there are any members out there who would be willing to help, then please do not be shy; I would love to hear from you. In particular we need someone to plan and

Hertfordshire and Middlesex

organise field trips and indoor meetings.

Our native butterflies will be trying to get through the winter in the various stages of their life cycle and will not be readily on view at this time. There is of course plenty of other wildlife still to see and we have been getting a good variety of birds in the garden along with numerous squirrels, attracted to the food we put out for them.

Whilst not a regular visitor we have had a greater spotted woodpecker on the nut feeder on several occasions and this is always a joy to see. Last year we had several sickens present for the first time which stayed for several weeks and we are hoping that they will return again this year. I have also been putting apples out in an attempt to attract redwings and fielders close to the house but so far without success. This is not helped by my two year old son however who is fascinated by the birds but insists on banging on the window to get their attention!

I am sure members will have been pleased to see the colour photographs in the last edition of the newsletter which in my opinion made it even better than it was before. These will be a permanent feature as the copying service from the national society is no longer available and the branch has decided to buy a colour printer instead.

I hope you all have a happy Christmas and enjoy the celebrations that take us in to the next millennium.



Editor's Notes, by Ian Small

Firstly, many thanks to those of you who took the trouble to write and say how pleased they were with the inclusion of colour pictures in the newsletter. It is very gratifying to know that my efforts were appreciated. By the time you have reached this page of this newsletter, it will already be apparent to you that we have moved on again. The Branch has purchased a high-volume colour printer, and the result is that we can include colour throughout the newsletter. This will make it possible to include much better illustrations that has hitherto been possible.

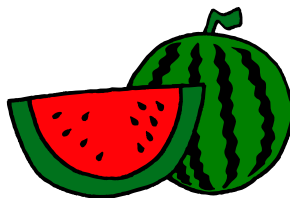
In addition, I have the ability to scan photographs for inclusion in the newsletter, as you will see from the examples in Brian Jessop's article on page 6.

It is my hope that these new technical abilities will both improve your enjoyment of the newsletter AND encourage you to provide contributions to the newsletter, perhaps including one of your own photographs to illustrate the article.

I would also very much like to receive your feedback as this 'experiment' develops. It would obviously be possible for me to make the appearance of the magazine much more bright and 'trendy' by having great splashes of colour everywhere, but I intend to take more of a 'softly-softly' approach to this, perhaps trying different things in different editions and waiting to hear your feedback.

However, all of the above is wasted if I don't receive any material to include !! It must be obvious to you that the number of regular contributors is very low - PLEASE WRITE TO ME - it doesn't matter how small the article. I am sure that you all have happy memories about butterflies - otherwise you would be unlikely to be one of our members - so why not share those happy times with everyone. I would much rather have the problem of too little space for the articles than the usual one of trying to fill the gaps !

Watermelon, Butterflies and Moths, by Malcolm Newland



The second week of September 1997 and 1999 produced well above average numbers of Comma and Red Admirals in my garden. There was one factor common to both years in that I had placed generous slices of over-ripe Watermelon in sunny, raised positions among the autumn flowers. The first year that I tried it seven Commas, an unprecedented number all at once and nine Red Admirals spent long periods imbibing the juice and largely neglecting the nectar in nearby blooms. This year six Commas, five Red Admirals and a Speckled Wood found the rotting fruit irresistible. Over the years I have experimented with ‘past use by date’ Pears, Bananas, Pineapple, Kiwi Fruit and Nectarines but there is no doubt in my mind that Watermelon reigns supreme.

Talking of moths, this year has been my best ever for garden records of Humming-bird Hawkmoths. Singletons were seen on three days in both July and September, nectaring on the following plants:- Red & White Valerian, Buddleia, Lochinch, Verbena bonariensis, Escallonia “Apple Blossom”, Lantana camara and Asclepias curassavica. Pre-1993 I hadn’t seen a single one but I have been lucky enough to have been visited by them every year since then. Further evidence of global warming perhaps?

Finally, a commercial. Back in the summer, Tim Freed kindly let me have a look through his Delta 8x42 close focus binoculars. By coincidence, we were outside a pub in Sussex and were able to observe a Humming-bird Hawkmoth working its way a long a tub planted with Petunias and Nasturtiums just a few feet away. The detail was breathtaking – I was hooked – and upon returning home threw caution to the winds and invested in a pair. They have brought a whole new dimension to my butterfly watching and I would recommend them to anyone.

Butterfly Books, Plants and Gifts, by Malcolm Hull

During the winter butterfly goods will be on sale at all branch indoor meetings. The stall is now stocking a wider range of specialist books and publications, which may be of interest to members. This includes free leaflets and some second hand books. Information on butterflies in some other parts of the country including other BC branch reports is also available. Do come and visit the stall if you attend the meetings.

If you have any butterfly or moth books you'd like to donate or sell, please bring them along to a meeting or give Malcolm Hull a ring on 01727 857893.

Sales in 1999

It's been a busy year for the butterfly stall, attending 12 events and making sales of £1,300 for branch funds. We also supported the National BC stall at Chelsea Flower Show, which raised far more.

The main theme for the year was Gardening for Butterflies and the butterfly friendly plants grown by Alan Downie and Malcolm Newland were the best sellers. Our most successful events were the gardening shows at Hatfield and Capel Manor. Special thanks for help on the stall must go to Malcolm N. and Alan, as well as John Stevens who helped at all the wettest and poorly attended events! Thanks also to Evelyn Crispe, Martin Hough, Gavin Vicary, John Hollingdale, Terry Rodbard, Brian Sawford, Tom & Anna Hull and everyone else who helped.

Sales in 2000

Next Spring and Summer we'll be focusing on those events where we can make most impact – large shows or ones with a specialist environmental or gardening theme. If you know of an event in your area which it might be suitable to attend ring Malcolm Hull on 01727 857893

Butterfly Aberrations, by Brian Jessop

On 5th August while on my transect in Tring Park, I came upon a Small Tortoiseshell which did not seem the same as usual. I could not figure out what was different at the time, so I took a photo (right). Later, comparing it to other photos, I realised that the white markings on the front wings, where normally there would only be one of each, there were in fact four white patches on each. Also, there was a white patch on each rear wing.



Another species I came across on the same walk was a Gatekeeper. This had no orange patches on the rear wings. Both were completely dark brown. I must have doubled the length of my transect chasing after it trying to get a photo. Every time I got near to it, off it flew again. I give it 10 out of 10 for stamina!

A couple of years ago I took a photo of a Meadow Brown with both rear wings completely white (below).

Editor's note: The larger the population of butterfly, the more likely you are to come across an aberration. I have previously seen many Meadow Browns with this aberration during my time at Porton Down, where the population of this species could probably have been measured in the tens of thousands.





Butterfly Transect Course, by Leslie Williams

A short course on butterfly transect recording for potential transect walkers will be held in the New Year. The course is primarily intended for walkers local to the Fyrent Country Park and Beane Hill transects in the Kingsbury/Wembley area, but would also be useful to those hoping to walk other transects. The course will be held over two half-days; one in the winter and one in early April. The course is free. For further details please contact the Brent Group of London Wildlife Trust at Roe Green Walled Garden, Roe Green Park, Kingsbury, London NW9 9HA.

Winter Field Trip

Sunday 15 January 2000 at 10.30 am

To look for Brown Hairstreak eggs in Bricket Wood. Meet outside the Old Fox Public House, which is at the south end of School Lane, Bricket Wood near Watford (OS ref TL 126003).

If the weather is bad that morning ring Malcolm Hull on 01727 857893 for details of an alternative date.

Copy Deadline for the March Newsletter will be
13 February 2000

NB it helps the editor if you can submit an electronic copy of your article (but don't worry if you can't). Files can be on disk or sent by e-mail to ian.small@lineone.net

Branch Committee Member Appears in National Press

Many of you will have seen John Murray, our Branch records collator, in the national news, appearing on TV and radio.

John, of the Open University, has been studying the peculiar motions of so-called long-period comets - By analysing the orbits of 13 of these comets, John has detected the tell-tale signs of a single massive object that deflected all of them into their current orbits.

Thus, he may have discovered a new and bizarre planet orbiting the Sun, 1,000 times further away than the most distant known planet. Currently, Pluto is the furthestmost planet that circles our Sun. But the new planet would be 30,000 times more distant from the Sun than the Earth, putting it a significant fraction of the distance to the nearest star. What is more, it seems that the new planet cannot be a true member of our Sun's family of planets. It may be a planet that was born elsewhere, and roamed throughout the galaxy only to be captured on the outskirts of our own planetary system.

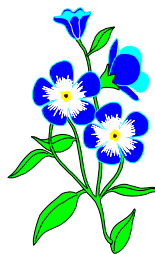
He suggests that the so-far unseen planet is several times bigger than the largest known planet in our Solar System, Jupiter. But, if it is discovered, will John get a chance to name it?

"Probably not," he says. "That will be up to an international committee. But it would be nice to make a few suggestions."

..but

It is with great regret that I inform you that John's wife, Ann has died during November. Many of you will know John through his central role in the preparation of our Annual Butterfly and Moth Report, and I am sure you would want to join me in extending our deepest sympathy to him.

Despite this, John has contributed the following article:



CONGRATULATIONS, by John Murray

As I write this, there are 35 remaining days in which to record butterflies for the New Millennium project, so presumably by the time you read it, our nationwide 5-year programme to record butterflies square by square over the entire British Isles will be completed.

In Hertfordshire and Middlesex, I think we can congratulate ourselves on a very thorough job well done. Several of you have made a great effort in this final year to fill in the remaining blank and under-recorded squares, particularly in London and Middlesex, and we now have adequate coverage of all tetrads allotted to our branch. It has been particularly helpful that most of you have been sending in your records at intervals throughout the year, which has spread the workload of number-crunching for Michael Healy, who as I speak is still painstakingly continuing to enter the thousands of records that you have sent in.

Although not all records have yet been entered on to the database, I am printing with this article a preliminary map of the number of species recorded in each tetrad over the entire five years of the project, showing those records already entered as of November 8th. Alongside it is an earlier map of numbers of butterfly species per tetrad assembled from two surveys done in the 1980s: that of Brian Sawford for Hertfordshire (mainly 1984-1986) and Colin Plant for Middlesex (1980-86).

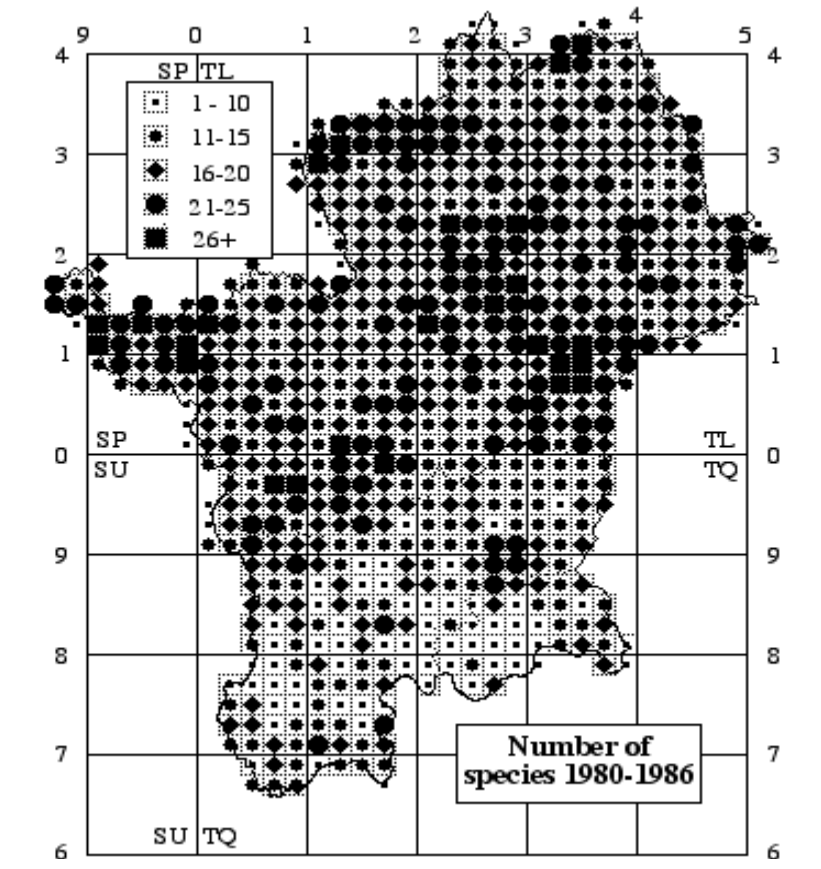
A comparison of these two maps gives us our first glimpse of the changes in butterfly diversity in our area over the past 15 years. Although it must be emphasised that the second map is preliminary, there are some interesting speculations that can already be made.

Firstly there are the overall similarities. Both maps show larger numbers of species (i.e. greater biodiversity) along the chalk hills that straddle parts of the northwestern borders of our area around Tring, west of Hitchin and at Therfield Heath. Both maps also show a band of higher biodiversity in the well-wooded parts of Hertfordshire between Hertford and Stevenage and also between Watford and Borehamwood, as well as at some prime sites in London and Middlesex such as Hampstead Heath.

Within these areas where biodiversity is comparatively high, it is also

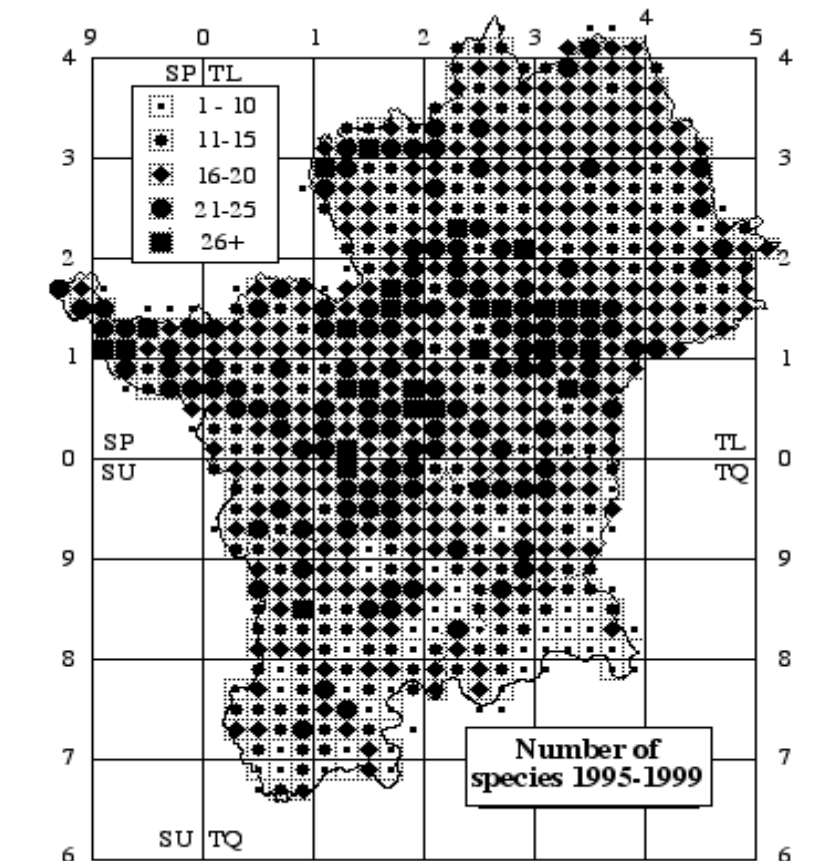
Hertfordshire and Middlesex

apparent that actual species numbers have changed. On the chalk, both numbers and range of species seem to have contracted, and the same is true of the Stevenage area. It is also noticeable that Northwest Hertfordshire has suffered a slight decrease in biodiversity. Decreases in Hertfordshire should, however, be treated with some caution, since Sawford did include all species casually recorded back to 1970, some of which are known to have died out by the 1980s, so in some areas we may effectively be looking at decreases over a longer period. The same caveat does not apply to areas where species numbers have increased, such as north of Hertford and between Watford and Borehamwood.



Most encouragingly, there do seem to be a number of new areas of higher biodiversity that have appeared in the past 15 years. Much of Middlesex and parts of Greater London seem to fall into this category, and this may be due to a more enlightened management policy at many of the parks and open spaces in this generally urban area. Grass has been allowed to grow uncut during the summer, which was not the case 20 years ago at many sites, and the increases in both numbers of species and size of populations has been marked.

Another new area of high biodiversity is apparent running northwards from Watford, through St Albans to the Harpenden area, and there are smaller such areas east of Enfield and along a corridor



Hertfordshire and Middlesex

between Watford and Tring. At this early stage I cannot see any obvious reason why these latter areas have been favoured. There is still a lot of work to be done on coverage of each tetrad, and it may simply be that these areas have been more persistently visited, so more butterfly species have in the end been seen.

What do we do now?

Now that the Millennium Atlas recording period is over, people have been asking what the Branch's recording priorities are now going to be. Many of you have felt very much "turned on" to butterflies and are keen to continue in the future. One of the important spin-offs of the mapping has been the healthy increase in the number of transects we now operate, from 19 in 1994 to nearly 60 in 1999. Transects are extremely important as the best way of monitoring real changes in butterfly numbers so please continue with your transect recording as before. As for those of you who have been keen recorders but have not yet started your own transect, now might be a good time to consider doing so. (*Couse available - see p7 - Ed.*). New transects would be particularly valuable on chalk sites, in north and east Hertfordshire generally, in London and west Middlesex, and also at specific interesting sites such as Waterford Heath, Broxbourne Woods and so on. If you cannot afford the time to walk a transect on your own, then why not consider getting together with someone else and sharing one? Write to me for details of other possible helpers in your area (address on back cover).

And finally, we would still like to have mapping records as before, though obviously there is not now the urgency and need that we had during the recording period. New tetrad records for particular species are especially important, particularly for species whose range is changing, such as Marbled White, Speckled Wood, White Admiral etc. Once again, thank you all for the very impressive numbers of records we have received over the last five years.

Butterfly Conservation Members' Weekend - Butterflies and Music. Friday 2nd June - Sunday 4th June 2000. Kingcombe Centre, Toller Porcorum, Dorset.

Cost: £90 per person in standard accommodation; £100 per person in en-suite accommodation. Single, twin and multiple rooms available - the cost for sharing a triple room (with persons of the same sex) is £85. A non-refundable deposit of £30 per person + s.a.e. is required at the time of booking and full payment by 31st March 2000. Note: Single and en-suite accommodation is limited and will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis. In the event of more bookings than rooms available at the Kingcombe Centre, we will try to arrange b&b accommodation in Toller Porcorum.

The fee includes full board, tea on Friday and Sunday and ticket to the concert on Saturday. There are facilities for making tea/coffee etc available at any time..

Butterflies: Dorset is well known for its abundance of butterflies and we would hope to see most of the spring species, including fritillaries. The programme will include walks around the peaceful meadows of Kingcombe (known as the place that time forgot, as it has never experienced modern farming methods. A visit to a nearby nature reserve will also be included.

Music: There will be a concert given by the Frascati String Quartet (members of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra) on Saturday evening. The programme will include quartets by Mozart and Haydn and/or Schubert and the premiere performance of Margaret Vickary's "Dorset Sketches", written in memory of our late President, Gordon Beningfield.

On Friday evening after dinner it is hoped to stage an impromptu concert performed by members attending the weekend. Any offers to perform, either solo or in a group will be very welcome.



BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION MEMBERS WEEKEND

BUTTERFLIES AND MUSIC

Booking Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Post Code: _____ Tel No: _____

I would like to book the following (please tick)

Single room en suite ___ Twin room en suite ___ (£100 per person)

Single room ___ Twin room ___ (£90 per person)

I would be willing to share a Triple room ___ (£85 per person)

I would be willing to share to Twin room ___ (£90 / £100 en suite)

I enclose a non-refundable deposit of £ ___ (£30 per person)

Please make cheques payable to Butterfly Conservation and send with large s.a.e. to Margaret Vickary, 3 The Deer Leap, Kenilworth, CV8 2HW (Tel. 01926 512343)

I would be happy to take part in an impromptu concert

I play (instrument) _____

I sing (part) _____

I could perform solo _____ In a group _____

Midsummer Madness at Millhoppers, by John Noakes

The following is a rather humorous article which John wrote for his own Parish newsletter. Although it covers ground included in our last newsletter, I am sure you will still appreciate it...Editor



Where in Long Marston would you find Pugs, Drinkers, Dark Arches or even a Setaceous Hebrew Character?- Not a clue; which is not surprising.

The place in fact as the title suggests, is Millhoppers and these are species of moths! These extraordinary names, amongst a host of others, have been given to these creatures by moth enthusiasts over the last hundred years or so. On a warm midsummer night a group of moth freaks gathered in Millhoppers, together with their curious moth attracting devices. Knowing nothing whatsoever about moths I was keen to up my knowledge base and join this strange gathering. Arriving a little late I stumbled across two shadowy characters standing beside a large white sheet spread out on the ground in the centre of which glowed a strange blue/white light. It looked as though some druid ceremony with an impending sacrifice was about to take place. I recognised one member as Alan Bernard; a chap not normally noted for strange behaviour, so I was partially reassured. But it was almost midsummer night so I still had a distinct feeling of unease.

As we stood at the periphery of the white sheet, small furry objects fluttered in and out of the circle of light, some occasionally crashing into strange egg box contraptions. These cunning devices seemed to have the effect of calming down what I now recognised as moths. From time to time there were shouts of "There's a Burnished Brass!" or "I think we've got another Drinker!" All this was rather disturbing talk for an uninitiate like myself. Things became somewhat clearer when moths, suitably quiesced, were

Hertfordshire and Middlesex

extracted from the egg boxes. It then became obvious they had discrete differences in wing pattern and indeed size and shape. They were in fact rather beautiful in a sombre sort of way.

These subtle yet complicated wing patterns, have led over the years to fanciful and amazing names;-Nutmeg, Flame Shoulder, Blood Vein and Pale Shouldered Brocade to mention but a few. To me the names seemed more fantastical than T.S. Eliot's cats. Those running this moth trap affair seemed pretty confident about their identification. For me, even with the latest moth guide, I could scarcely identify more than about half a dozen. They never kept still; constantly revving their wings. If indeed they did stay still, they folded their wings back and the guide just did not draw them like that. Clearly the bloke who produced the book had killed his moths, stretched them out and drew or painted them in rigor mortis. This clearly was not on tonight; this was no blood sport!

While this particular show was going on a shadowy figure, with a light in front of its head passed by close to the hedge, pushing a heavy object. It looked ghost like and the impression was enhanced as the headlight undulated as the figure progressed across the very uneven ground. Curious to know who this was, I followed at a safe distance. The figure eventually stopped and I discovered another midnight moth eccentric in the shape of John Hollingdale; Treasurer of the local branch of Butterfly Conservation. He had been pushing a wheelbarrow containing a heavy generator to power his moth trap. With no hands free, he had fixed up a sort of miner's headlamp to illuminate his way. Even more bizarre!

John then set up his rival moth-trapping stall, together with a bunch of sycophants and proceeded to plunder the midnight air. Soon there were shouts of Brimstone, Blood Vein, Double Square Spot and Double Striped Pug! These exciting cries resulted in the onlookers from the Bernard moth trap to desert to this new and seductive stall. Not to be outdone the Bernard team countered with; Straw Dot, Elephant Hawk and Clouded Brindle! This brought the deserters running back, together with some of the Hollingdale bunch. As the moths conveniently crashed into the moth traps eagerly wanting to be identified and the rivalry continued, a total tally of 36 moth species was identified. However more surreal

events were about to unfold.

Two more undulating lights came bobbing out of the darkness. It was now past midnight. It was too late to expect any further moth freaks. Who could this be? The answer was obvious before we could even see them.

“Hello, hello. What’s going on here?”

“Is that P.C. May? we retorted.”

“No he’s on holiday, it’s two of his colleagues.”



We invited them to join our strange circle. At first they seemed reluctant to accept our explanations. They clearly were convinced at the least some drug trafficking was taking place, or some badger baiting. Moth trapping was pushing credibility a little too far for them and I must say it was beginning to stretch my limits not a little. However I think they were convinced by our sobriety and they were certainly convinced by our eccentricity. So they stuck around for a while, perhaps expecting some mysteries from the occult. All that happened was that they were buzzed by a low flying bat and a couple of Pugs. We offered them the information that we had caught some Drinkers and Spectacle with a Tawny Marbled Minor, however these did not seem to be the sort of arrests that they were looking for that night. Uneasily they left us for the more sane word of policing. At least it was reassuring to know that there is an aware police presence in Long Marston.

By now it was becoming damper and colder and I felt it was time to leave this strange and select group. I came to conclusion that however long and hard I tried,I would never get to grips with the complexities of the moth identification. Moth trapping is not for me though I’m happy for others to pursue it. I hope though it doesn’t attract attention in labour party circles as Tony could well have it on his agenda after fox hunting.

P.S. On a more serious note moth trapping, if done on a regular basis and with some degree of training, is the only method of establishing the prevalence of species within a locality. There is still a lot to learn about them. At the end of the session, moths are

released unharmed.

The Moth Page by Rob Souter.

This article presents highlights from a review of the larger moths of the London Area for 1997 and 1998, written by Colin Plant for the London Natural History Society.

Several moth species regarded as being very locally distributed and uncommon in the London Area in the 1993 publication Larger Moths of the London Area LMLA have apparently undergone an expansion in both numbers and geographical range. These species include Red-green Carpet *Chloroclysta siterata*, Large Ranunculus *Polymixis flavicincta*, Waved Black *Parascotia fuliginaria* and Black Arches *Lymantria monacha*. In contrast, the Mottled Rustic *Caradrina morpheus* is reported on very few submitted lists and may perhaps be commencing a decline.

EXPANDING SPECIES

The distribution maps in LMLA included all records received for the period 1980 to 1991. Inevitably, there were many under-recorded areas but at the time there was confidence that the overall patterns of distribution presented were more or less a reflection of reality - new tetrad records were to be expected but these would likely consolidate the existing pattern of map dots rather than changing it. Subsequent field work by a number of people did indeed fail to alter these patterns to any significant degree in the next three or four years. Thus, whilst the surprise capture of a species in an area away from its main centre of distribution may always be expected, the sudden capture of a species from several localities across a wide area of apparent earlier absence is strongly indicative of a range expansion by the species concerned.

The Red-green Carpet *Chloroclysta siterata* was discussed in this context in the review of 1995 & 1996. Only nine records were listed in LMLA of which only two, both made in Surrey during 1990, were in the 1980 - 1991 'recent' period. However, since John Hollingdale's October 1996 record at Harrow, the first for Middlesex since 1898, this species has spread very rapidly and had quite literally occupied the entire of the London Area by the end of

1998. It is now evidently established as a resident here.

Interestingly, however, the Red-green Carpet is not the only moth that appears to be staging a take-over in parts of London from which it was previously absent. The spread of the Large Ranunculus *Polymixis flavicineta* into Middlesex from the south is evidenced by several recent records. There can be no doubt that this species is now expanding its range to fill the gaps on the map; it is now present in number throughout Middlesex and its apparent scarcity in Essex is surely a consequence of under-recording.

Joining the Large Ranunculus, the Feathered Ranunculus *Polymixis lichenea* is another moth which may be extending its range to establish itself as a London Area resident, though the names are pure coincidence and none are in any way related to Ranunculus plants. In this instance the expansion appears to be progressing westwards from the Kent coast where the moth is not uncommon. Examples were taken in other county areas during 1997, including a male in



The Red-green Carpet (*Chloroclysta siterata*)

Middlesex on 8 September and a male in my garden in Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire, slightly outside the LNHS Area, on 19

Hertfordshire and Middlesex

September. As yet there is no evidence of the moth breeding in our area but it may only be a matter of time before it is.

The Waved Black *Parascotia fuliginaria* was first discovered as a British species in London and its fungus-eating larvae were probably not uncommon in parts of London during the last few years of the nineteenth century but from 1906 to 1953 there are no London Area



Large Ranunculus (*Polymixis flavicincta*)



Black Arches (*Lymantria monacha*) (see page 21)

records. From then onwards there has been a steady trickle of records in all years except 1967, 1984 and 1986, but the moth has always been rare in that period and largely restricted to our part of Surrey. Since 1996,

however, there appears to have been a sudden and drastic increase in numbers and the moth is very clearly extending its range towards the north. There are now current records from 35 of the tetrads in the London Area - more than double the 15 included in LMLA.

To complete this brief discussion of spreading species during 1997 and 1998 the Black Arches *Lymantria monacha* must also be mentioned. The pattern of dots on the distribution map in LMLA showed a relatively widespread species, but it was always numerically uncommon and most certainly absent from a great many site lists that had been built from a considerable amount of effort. During 1997, and more so during 1998, this attractive moth started to appear at garden light traps - traps that had been operated for several years on practically every night of those years - where it had not been noted before. It is difficult to understand why a moth whose larvae feed on oak should suddenly become significantly more numerous.

DECLINING SPECIES

It is often easier to detect new species than it is to realise that 'regulars' are becoming less common. Often such traits go undetected by individual observers until it is too late to plot the decline. On the other hand, a Recorder who regularly receives 'total lists' from many sources is often better placed to spot these things. Thus, it is perhaps worth placing on record the fact that over a hundred 'complete' garden lists received for 1997 and 1998 in the London Area the Mottled Rustic *Caradrina morpheus* features on extremely few. Is this species in a decline?

MICROLEPIDOPTERA

Progress towards a complete listing of the microlepidoptera of Middlesex continues and a total of 761 species is now recorded. The project has at least one more year to run (year 2000) and so all records are invited. Whilst the Middlesex micro records are carefully checked and entered, however, records from county areas outside Middlesex are so few in quantity that they are better incorporated directly into the files held by the appropriate County Recorders. All such records have been so forwarded and these are not analysed in this Review.



WINTER INDOOR MEETINGS

Jan 15th, 2000. Butterflies of the Eastern Pyrennees

Feb 26th, 2000. Dragonflies of Hertfordshire

March 25th, 2000. Ardnamurchan - Freedom in a place. A look at the many aspects of a special area of Scotland

All talks to be held in the Welwyn Civic Centre,
Old Welwyn, at 2.30 pm.

Refreshments will be available.



Conservation Dates

Conservation work is one of the most important activities of the Society, as loss or neglect of suitable habitats is one of the major reasons for the decline in many of our butterflies as well as other wildlife.

Below are a series of dates across Herts. and Middlesex where you can help with essential management that aims to maintain the correct conditions on these sites for the wildlife that inhabits them. Several of the dates are run by the HMWT on their nature reserves.

Millhopper's Pasture SP 900149 - 4th Sunday of the month. Come along and help us with our own butterfly reserve. Contact John and Margaret Noakes (01296 660072) who will co-ordinate sustenance (lunch time) at Old Church Cottage..

Therfield Heath, TL 335400 First Sunday of each month from 10.00 a.m. - 1 p.m. Details from Vincent Thomson (01763) 341443.

Duchies Piece (Aldbury Nowers) SP 952131. Third Sunday of each month. Meet 10.00 a.m. in the lay-by, near Tring station. For details ring Alan Strawn (new reserve warden) on (01442) 232946

Hertford Heath TL 354111. For details ring Anthony Oliver on (01992) 583404.

Fryent Country Park - details from Leslie Williams at the Brent Ecology Unit on (0181) 206 0492

Patmore Heath TL 443257. Meet at 10.00 a.m. on the last Sunday of each month. Further details from Gavin Vicary (01279) 771933

Hertfordshire and Middlesex

Committee Members

Chairman: Gavin Vicary

Highside Cottage, Patmore Heath, Albury, Herts. SG11 2LS(01279) 771933

Secretary: Norma Dean

2 Seymour Crescent, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP2 5DS.....(01442) 252435

Treasurer: John Hollingdale

36 Southfield Park, North Harrow, Middx. HA2 6HE(0181) 863 2077

Newsletter Editor: Ian Small

59 Penn Way, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 2SH (01462) 677654
ian.small@lineone.net

Conservation Advisor: Brian Sawford

38 Northfields, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4QX.....(01462) 672287

Records Collator: John Murray

Field End, Marshalls Heath, Wheathampstead, Herts. AL4 8HS (01582) 833544
J.B.Murray@open.ac.uk

Membership Secretary: Margaret Noakes

Old Church Cottage, Chapel Lane, Long Marston, Herts HP23 4QT.....(01296) 660072

Publicity Officer: Terence Rodbard

24 Breadcroft Lane, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 4TE..... (01582) 761998
cddc@compuserve.com

Moth Recorder: Rob Souter

54 Willowmead, Hertford, Herts, SG14 2AT ***NEW ***(01992) 410783
R.Souter@psy.herts.ac.uk

Sales Officer: Malcolm Hull

11 Abbey View Road, St. Albans, Herts. AL3 4QL.....(01727) 857893
meh@stalbans.dircon.co.uk

Alan Downie

11 Fowley Mead Park, Longcroft Drive, Holdbrook,
Waltham Cross, Herts. EN8 7SX.....(01992) 650829

Millhoppers Reserve Manager: John Noakes

Old Church Cottage, Chapel Lane, Long Marston, Herts HP23 4QT.....(01296) 660072

Please direct your correspondence to the relevant committee member. The magazine is produced by the Hertfordshire and Middlesex branch of Butterfly Conservation (The British Butterfly Conservation Society Ltd.) a registered company in England No. 2206468, which is a registered charity (No. 254937) with limited liability status. Registered Office: Shakespeare House, Dedham, Colchester, Essex, CO7 6DE. The views expressed in the magazine are not necessarily those of the committee or the national society. Copyright 1999.