



Newsletter No 26

Huntingdonshire Moth & Butterfly Group



September 2004

Please pass any items of interest for the Spring newsletter to the current editor: Nick Greatorex-Davies, 28 Old Pound Close, Hemingford Grey, Huntingdon PE28 9DY, Tel: 01480 301 685, email: ngd@ceh.ac.uk.

This is a two-page newsletter: so don't forget to look at the second page!

----- Migrants in 2004 -----

Several migrant species have been seen in Hunts this year but in general in nothing like the numbers seen in 2003. The main species seen were **Hummingbird Hawk-moths**, **Clouded Yellows**, and **Painted Ladies**. **Red Admirals** seem to have been unusually scarce

Hummingbird Hawk-moths were seen earlier in the season in St Neots, Hilton, Ramsey Heights, Brampton, Pidley and Easton, and more recently in Salome Wood (9/9 Barry Dickerson), St Neots (11/9 – Andrew Booth). Again sightings in an Upwood (not Bury as inaccurately recorded in last September's newsletter!) garden hold the record where they were seen on 11 dates between 27/7 and 22/8, with two seen on two occasions (Pam Moorhouse).

There have been several reports of **Clouded Yellow** – at Earith, Barley Croft (2/8 – 2, 3/8 1+ - Bob Frost, Kimbolton and at Elton - in the north of the county (21/7 – Brian Stone). Also an unconfirmed report at Little Paxton Pits.

Two large early influxes of **Painted Ladies** in the south and south-west of Britain in February raised expectations for another good Painted Lady year, but this has not been the case, certainly in the east, and there have been relatively few reports. They have fared better west of Britain.

For more details on migrant Lepidoptera to the UK see: <http://www.migrantmoth.com>

2004/2005 Winter meetings have been arranged as follows:

Wednesday 6th October: **Nick Greatorex-Davies:** 'The moths of Monks Wood'

Wednesday 1st December: **Chris Gerrard:** 'The Great fen Project'.

Wednesday 9th February: **Martin Davies:** 'Butterflies across Europe'.

Wednesday 8th April: **Members evening and quiz night**, this time quiz to be set by the 2003 quiz winner! Bring slides, specimens and other items of interest.

[Don't forget subs are due on Oct 1st (£5 single, £6 joint) - please post if not attending the October meeting]

Meetings are held at the **Hinchingbrooke Countryside Centre in Hinchingbrooke Country Park** and start at 8.00pm

Woodwalton Fen trapping: Final 2004 trapping session: **17th Oct.**
Start 5.00p.m.

Contact Barry Dickerson beforehand to check that it is still on (or postponed) or if you are likely to be late. Bring a good torch, warm clothes, a sleeping bag (if sleeping in the bungalow) and something to eat and drink for a night cap and for an early breakfast.

August trapping had to be cancelled due to bad weather, however the September 10th trapping session went ahead as planned and approximately 48 species were recorded (compared with 52 on 19th September 2003).

Web development skills? We would like to develop a **HMBG website**. If you are someone with the skills and the time, would you be willing to help build and launch a website for the group? If so please contact Nick G-D or Barry Dickerson.

Please begin thinking about any contribution (long or short) you might make to the **Annual Report**. It does not have to be a great literary masterpiece - just likely to be of interest to at least some members! Send these to Barry Dickerson by the end of January at the latest please. ... **Go on - have a go!**

* *Other
forthcoming
events:*

AES annual exhibition

Sat 2nd October: as usual at Kempton Park Racecourse, Staines Road, Sunbury, 11.00 a.m. start. [The racecourse is near the M25 just adjacent to the start of the M3].

BENHS annual exhibition

Sat 13th November: at Imperial College, London. 10.00 a.m. start.

National Moth Night

Sat 7th July 2005, corporate venue to be arranged in due course.

The next newsletter is planned for April 2005. Please send any items for inclusion to Nick G-D.

BAP species news

White-spotted Pinion (*Cosmia diffinis*): The first of the season was recorded by David Griffiths in Earith on 27/7. Ten between 1st and 19th August Barry Dickerson recorded them in his light traps at a number of sites around the county including one new site for the species at Midloe Grange Farm. However Barry was by no means able to cover all the known Huntingdonshire sites due to the poor weather. However, if the number that came to a single trap at Raveley Wood on 14th August (30 – a record for Barry in a single trap) is anything to go by then the species did well this year. At Monks Wood seven were trapped in the Rothamsted trap between 6th and 25th August. Numbers there appear to have been increasing in recent years and this is the highest number recorded in one year (previous highest 6 in 1997). Twice as many were recorded in the 15 year period from 1989 to 2003 (24) as in the previous 15 year period (1974 -when trapping started - to 1988) The trap is sited well away from the main breeding areas in the wood so it seems that Monks Wood probably holds a strong population of this species.

Square-spotted Clay (*Xestia rhomboidea*): This year the species was trapped at How Lane (Abbotsley) on the 1st and 19th August and at a new site known as 'Duloe Brook' near the southern border of Huntingdonshire.

Interested in *Leqafminers*?? – then join **Barry Dickerson** (our local leafminer expert) at **Holland Wood (TL234786) on 17th October**. This will take place as part of the **Hunts Fauna & Flora Society** fungus foray day with Sheila Wells. Contact Barry for further details (01480 475 689).

Old Ladies at large!

Judging by reports on the Lepidoptera egroups 2004 has been a good year for the **Old Lady** moth (*Mormo maura*). Many reports were of moths attracted to wine ropes, but also a number of reports of **Old Ladies** in moth traps – including some in mercury vapour traps, to which they are generally less attracted than to actinic traps.

However here in Hunts. there have been only a few reports. Those seen include one on a front door in St Neots on 1/7 (Andrew Booth), two to mercury vapour light on Holts Island on 3/9 (Barry Dickerson) and one dead, battered and largely descaled outside the front-door of a house in St Ives – presumably mauled by one or more of the feline residents!

--- A new Lepidoptera egroup for Cambridgeshire ---

A new **egroup** has been started called: **Cammoths**. It has been set up by Louise for those interested in observing and recording Lepidoptera in Cambridgeshire who wish to share their findings and find solutions to their ID problems. It is a particularly useful forum if you are a moth trapper and have a digital camera as you can upload your pictures of any moths you want identifying! Several HuMBuG members already 'subscribe'.

To find out how to join **Cammoths** go to the following url: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cammoths/>
If you have a computer it costs nothing except your link to the internet.

Thankyou Peter!

Peter Rowlings has been the groups Field Meeting Co-ordinator for the past 15 years (almost since the group began). Peter has decided that it is now time for him to relinquish this duty and to hand over to someone else. During the past 15 years Peter has organised on average, two field meetings a year, and members of the group have travelled to many parts of Britain to see a good variety of rare butterfly species. In recent years he has also organised annual trips to Europe (Belgium, France and Spain).

On behalf of the group I would like to say a big 'thankyou' to Peter for all his efforts, from which many have benefited over the years.

Field Meetings Co-ordinator wanted!

Following on from the above, the post of Field Meetings Co-ordinator for the group is now vacant. If anyone might be interested in taking this on please contact Barry or Nick - though you may want to talk to Peter first about what is involved!

Some butterfly news

Despite the relatively poor summer, and at times, it seemed, endless wind and rain, butterflies do not appear to have fared badly in terms of numbers seen on the wing. **Small Tortoiseshell** seems to be continuing to recover after several poor very years. The **Holly Blue** has also had a good year and these could be seen almost anywhere in the county. **Brown Argus** has also done well and has been found at three new sites in Hunts in the area between Spaldwick and Great Staughton, west of Huntingdon. The Woodwalton Farm butterfly transect produced its highest count for this species since they apparently colonised the Monks Wood area in 1995 with a maximum count of 47 on 11/8. **Marbled Whites** were again much in evidence in the grassland areas around Monks Wood and at Woodwalton Marsh (And probably in the railway cuttings south to Huntingdon). A new site for the **Grizzled Skipper** was discovered by Val Perrin in May north of the Connington railway ballast site (north of Woodwalton) on rough ground on the west side of the railway line. Several were seen.

Many thanks to all who have contributed information for this newsletter. A special thankyou to Barry who not only provided much information but read through the text and made some corrections.