



Huntingdonshire Moth & Butterfly Group

Newsletter No 2

July 1996

Sightings, rumours of sightings, sales, wants and exchanges should be sent to:—
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Migrants arrive early

Most members will by now have noticed that the country has been invaded by Painted Ladies. Thousands have migrated northwards from early June, and now appear very common. Some of these insects are very small, scarcely larger than a Small Tortoiseshell, but in fairly good condition. They are all over the country, with around thirty being seen in Shetland in early June. The migration includes much of Europe, with many thousands seen in the Netherlands, Spain, France and Belgium.

In Huntingdonshire, they can be seen in parks and gardens, and should breeding conditions prove favourable, the next generation will be visiting our Buddleia bushes during the rest of the summer.

Also arriving in June were Red Admirals, with several seen in one day at Little Paxton Pits Nature Reserve, near St. Neots.

As for the moths, while none of the migrant hawks have been reported (yet), the Silver Y has reached this country earlier than usual, and in some numbers. The source of these migrants may be Spain, where a wet winter and spring has caused unusually lush vegetation, ideal conditions for breeding. Millions of these moths have apparently swarmed into Madrid, and presumably thereafter, moved northwards.

The Rush Veneer, (*Nomophila noctuella*) another regular summer migrant, has also begun arriving earlier than ever before, with a number coming to light traps at various sites around Huntingdonshire.

Finally, a Clouded Yellow was seen in St. Neots on June 17th, heading northwards at speed. Sadly, the wind changed the next day from southerly to north easterly; this has probably curtailed any migration of these butterflies, for the time being at least.

Thanks to Stephen May, David Evans, Barry Dickerson, & Neil Crossman who supplied information for this newsletter.

Ardennes Expedition

Blue skies, warm sunshine, light breezes, temperatures in the eighties... All these were largely absent in Belgium last weekend. But despite indifferent weather, those who went managed a fair amount of butterfly watching.

During Saturday the butterfly species included the Black Veined White, Pearly Heath, and Purple Edged Copper.

On the Friday night a moth light was run, recording about 50 species, including the Black V moth, last recorded in Britain in the 1960's.

A full account and species list will appear in the next Annual Report, to be published in April 1997. The Hu.M.B.G. meeting on December 11th will be given over to slides, anecdotes and so on from the members who went on this trip.

Holly Blue

The Holly Blue, after several years of scarcity, seems to be much more in evidence in 1996. There have been numerous sightings around the county during April and May, which would suggest that it will soon approach the levels it reached in the late eighties and early nineties, after which the population crashed dramatically.

Trip to Thursley Common

Owing to difficulties of fixing a convenient date, the trip to see the Purple Emperor at Bookham Common, Surrey will not take place. Instead, there will be a visit to Thursley Common, also in Surrey, on Sunday 28th July, where we hope to see the Silver Studded Blue, the Silver Washed Fritillary, and the Grayling. This site is also reputed to be the best in the country for dragonflies. It is possible to see up to 19 species there in one day. We aim to leave around 8.30 a.m. arriving at the site around eleven. Should you be interested in this trip, please ring Barry on 01480 475689, or David on 01487 814176 so that the travel details can be sorted out.

It is hoped to make the Purple Emperor a priority in 1997, should members still be interested in seeing this butterfly.

● The next newsletter is due for publication around the middle of September. Information should be sent to the address at the top of the page.