

# LEICESTERSHIRE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

5

October 1990

## HELP STILL NEEDED!

Following our request for information on records/collections etc of lepidoptera in Leicestershire and Rutland (see LES Newsletter No. 4) little new information has been sent in.

Notable amongst the little amount of data received were records of fritillary butterflies in Rutland in 1912 (see inside this Newsletter for more details) When did you last see a Duke of Burgundy in our county?

### *Important!*

The location of such records and the storage of the information on computer will allow easier access to the information for researchers in the future. For instance, in the last issue of the LES Newsletter we reviewed the bibliographical work of Chalmers-Hunt. In this useful little book the number of lists found for Leicestershire and Rutland is pathetic. Apart from being virtually the worst county for woodlands we also seem to be pretty badly off for lepidopteran publications.

To date around an extra fifty list/reports on our moths and butterflies have been unearthed - from the reports

of local natural history societies, the conservation trust and from national publications such as the Entomologists' Record.

### *How much still missing?*

I wonder what part of the lepidopteran record iceberg we are looking at! I suspect that there is lot more out there waiting to be found!

One way of making sure that records are available for future use is to use our Occasional Publications Series which is now sent to the British Lending Library and to the British Museum (Natural History). These organisations are the main starting points for anyone carrying out investigations into our lepidopteran fauna. It is our job to make sure that the local information is totally accessible!

Write a paper on your garden records or a favourite haunt (even if it is outside the county) - it's all useful!

# GALLS IN THE GARDEN

The most spectacular gall in the garden actually overhangs from next door! Stark black in winter and leafing up to a bushy green in summer, the "witches' broom" makes a showy display on the silver birch tree. These tight masses of twigs, caused by the fungus *Taphrina turgida*, must be host to a fair number of insect species. They also trap wind blown seed and are regularly used as feeding places in early spring by cole, great and blue tits, siskin and starlings. Wood pigeon and collared dove find them a convenient cushion to roost against.

## Aphid galls

Pineapple galls, each looking like a tiny cone, weighed down the 30ft Norway spruce last year. *Adelges abietis* (a woolly aphid) is the culprit here. Being confined to spruce species alone, this Adelgid had built up to a huge population until in 1990 the tree was felled due to storm damage.

## The productive oak!

The self-seeded oaks in the bottom hedge, though only about 15 years old, yield a varied and interesting crop of galls. Early catkins are beaded with currant galls, the sexual stage of *Neuroterus quercusbaccarum*. The agamic stage of this, the "spangle gall", blots out the underside of the leaf in autumn then falls as confetti later in the year. These vie for space with the aptly named "silk buttons" caused by the agamic stage of *Neroterus numismalis*. The sexual stage

of this causes blister galls on both sides of the leaf; well in evidence as I write in July.

## Apples, marbles and peas!

A few, pale and spongy, "oak" apples were seen early in the year. These are now brown and many-holed with escape routes of *Biorhiza pallida*.

Smooth "marble galls", caused by the wasp *Andricus kollari*, are persistent on the oaks as are the rough and scaly "cola" galls which house the agamic stage of *Andricus lignicola*.

Pea-type galls were found on the underside of leaves though the causer was not identified. Leaf lobes folded to the underside showed the midge, *Macrodiplosis dryobia*, to be present. This is one of the few galls on the British oak which is NOT caused by a cynipid wasp!

## Mites and flies

Further round in the hedge, the layered beech has many leaves with tightly rolled margins. The causer here is the mite *Eriophyes stenapsis*. A different Eriophyid causes unilateral curvatures in the weeping willow leaf to such an extent that usually every spring the first flush of leaves fall and a further, more healthy growth, follows.

*Phytomyza ilicis*, the leaf-mining agromyzid fly, though generally very common, is noticeably absent from the holly in the hedge.

(contd p3)

## **Garden galls contd.**

Two real devastators, which have added their number to the garden, are "big bud" on the blackcurrants (caused by the mite *Eriophyes ribis*).

I believe that there is no known cure for this other than the rather radical measure of cut and burn.

Also, *Puccinia malvacearum*, the hollyhock-ravaging rust has rendered 8ft tall, beautifully-bloomed plants to a pathetic heap of shrivelled leaves.

### *Midges and mites*

In the wild garden, *Barbarea vulgaris* was galled by the midge *Dasyneura sisymbrii* which caused swelling of the inflorescences, the yellow flowers bunched into white swellings. *Centaurea* seed heads also enlarged and hardened when housing several larvae of the gall fly, *Urophora* spp.

*Galium aparine*, when it escapes weeding, is readily infested with *Eriophyes galii* which causes sufficient leaf curling and colour change to be noticeable from quite a distance.

### *Something different!*

Two unexplained growths have occurred in the garden. The most unusual in 1989 was on corn cockle. A protuberance appeared on the stem, just beneath the flower, causing the stem and flower to bend at right angles and continue to grow horizontally. Though some of the affected corn cockle plants were kept sealed, nothing has emerged over the year but this absence does not rule out the possibility of a fungal or bacterial gall causer. This year, plants from 1989 seed

grown further down the garden, are minimally galled. Could this possibly be a new gall, I wonder? It seems, at present, to be unknown to the experts.

The second interesting growth was the viviparousness of marigolds, *Calendula vulgaris*. Each seed head gave rise to a ring of new 6cm stems each bearing a small, though normal, flower. I am not dead-heading these in case the "ring" flowers also exhibit the phenomenon.

Why not look for galls and growths in your garden?

Jane McPhail

### [Bibliography:

Bevan, D (1987) *Forestry Insects*. Forestry Commission Handbook No 1.

Connold, ET (1901) *British Vegetable Galls*. Hutchinson, London.

Darlington, A (1975) *The Pocket Encyclopaedia of Plant Galls*. Blandford Press, Poole.

Griffiths, R, Jones, L & Leach, CK (1990) *An Introduction to the Study of Plant Galls in Leicestershire*. Leicester Polytechnic.

Strawson, GF (1905) *Insects and Fungi Injurious to Plants*. Spottiswoode, London

Stubbs, FB (1986) *Provisional Keys to British Plant Galls*. British Plant Gall Society].

**Newsletter No 6**  
**Copy by:**  
**20th December 1990**

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

Research into past lepidopteran records has highlighted the sorry state of our County's butterfly fauna. The ninth annual report of the Rutland Archaeological and Natural History Society (1911) reports the presence of the chequered skipper and Duke of Burgundy fritillary butterflies at Barrowden, even then considered to be locally rare. Also present were green and purple hairstreaks, dingy and grizzled skippers.

Dark green fritillaries and cinnabars were found at Ketton while white-letter hairstreak was at Beaumont Chase. Several gardens in Uppingham gardens played host to hummingbird hawk moths.

If you have come across anything of entomological interest in the older literature which may be of interest to the members of the LES please let us know. If possible send a copy of the article to Ray Morris for addition to our files.

1525  
1582  
1555  
1557  
1582  
1534  
1607  
2069  
1558  
1984

## INFORMATION WANTED...

### Norfolk

The Norfolk Moth Survey has been running for a couple of years being based at the Castle Museum, Norwich. During the summer of 1990 the Group has organised trapping sessions at a number of familiar sites e.g. Roydon Common. As in our own county, the Study Group is keen to obtain any records of lepidoptera - if you have any please send details to Ken Saul, Norfolk Moth Survey, c/o Natural History Dept., Castle Museum, Norwich NR1 3JU - he will appreciate your help!

### Warwickshire

This time it's one of our newer members who lives just over the border in north Warwickshire that asks for help. Brian Mitchell is aiming to publish a booklet on the butterflies of North Warwickshire. He is keen to receive any records that LES members may have for the district which is the area roughly bounded by Nuneaton, Kingsbury, Tamworth and Twycross. Write to Brian at 127 Watling Street, Grendon, Nr. Atherstone, Warks CV9 2PH

## TORTRIX BOOKS HALF PRICE!

We have heard that the Ray Society books on the British Tortricidae are being offered at half price by the British Museum (Natural History). These are currently the only useful books on this group of lepidoptera. Contact the bookshop at the British Museum (Natural History), London for your copies!

1368

## LATISTRIA - more local records

Following on from my report of a supposed first record for this easily identified pyralid in the county, Nona Finch has drawn my attention to two earlier records published in the Loughborough Naturalists Club journal *Heritage* (No. 107, 1st July - 30th September 1987.

On the night of 15.viii.87, Graham and Nona Finch recorded the species at Breendon Cloud Wood. A week later, Peter Gamble attracted a specimen to light at the LRTNC reserve at Dimminsdale.

The Barwell moth of 4.ix.89 reported in the LES Newsletter No. 4 (February 1990) now seems to have been the third county record. To compound matters, a fourth moth was taken in 1990 at the Barwell light on 18.viii.90! There must be other records of this distinctive moth in the county - but unless records are submitted to the recording scheme how can anyone judge when a species is new to the county or not?

Ray Morris

### REVIEW

*An Introduction to the Study of Plant Galls in Leicestershire*  
- R Griffiths, L Jones & CK Leach, Leicester Polytechnic 1990.

As with many other areas of natural history, the publication of booklets describing the distribution of galls in our counties has proliferated in recent years. Such publications serve three purposes:

- (1) to draw the attention of naturalists to the group under study;
- (2) to encourage a greater input of records; and
- (3) to highlight the woeful state of knowledge about so much about us!

This publication is no exception but has the added attraction that it is the only "comprehensive" record of galls in Leicestershire and Rutland produced so far.

The authors have chosen to describe the distributions

of some of the commoner galls and the records do reflect the paucity of recorders in the county. For instance, the holly leaf gall caused by *Phytomyza ilicis* is probably more common than the marked 41 tetrads. A more extreme example is the paltry 19 tetrads where the hawthorn leaf roll gall, caused by *Eriophyes goniothorax typicus*, has been recorded. The large amount of hawthorn in the county would seem to indicate the likelihood that this gall is much more widely spread than present records suggest!

All in all this booklet should encourage the amateur naturalist to get out there and fill a few squares!

Ray Morris

## Recent publications of interest

### Cecidology volume 4

- 1/90 CK Leach. Eriophyidae through the looking glass [an introductory article on the study of gall-causing mites] pp 17-27.

### British Journal of Entomology & Natural History volume 2

- 2/90 AH Dobson. Lepidoptera foodplant recording for conservation. pp 131-138.

### British Journal of Entomology & Natural History volume 3

- 3/90 PA Sokoloff & ES Bradford. The British species of *Metzneria*, *Paltodora*, *Isophrictis*, *Apodia*, *Eulamprotes* and *Argolamprotes* (Lepidoptera, Gelechiidae). pp 23-28.
- 4/90 IFG McLean. What future for our entomological heritage? pp 35-54.

### Bulletin of the Amateur Entomologists' Society volume 48

- 5/90 J Harvey. Literature sources for the amateur entomologist. pp 151-153.

### Bulletin of the Amateur Entomologists' Society volume 49

- 6/90 CA Clarke, FMM Clarke, HC Dawkins & S Kahton. The role of moonlight on the size of catch of *Biston betularia* in West Kirby, Wirral 1959-1988. pp 19-29.
- 7/90 MEN Majerus. Variation in British Coccinellidae - a response. pp 151-155.

### Some 1990 goodies!

1545  
Burbage, near Hinckley on 11.viii.90 - clouded yellow butterfly - any others in the county?

Ketton Quarry - glowworms on 9.vi.90 at an LES trap.

637  
Fosse Meadows, Sharnford - at MVL 28.vii.90 a single female oak eggar, apparently only a few recorded in the county in the last ten years.

The LES thanks the Leicestershire Museums Service for their support and help in producing the Society's publications

# LETTER FROM WALES

LES member, John Gladman, whilst on holiday in Wales, offers his comments on observations reported in the LES Newsletter No. 4.

1707 *Idaea seriata* (Small dusty wave)

Found at kitchen window (Market Bosworth) on 29.vi.76 with two being taken for reference. It has reappeared several years since, but only one or two at a time.

*Leptidea sinapsis* (Wood white)

I was surprised to read that this species is associated particularly with coniferous woodland. I first encountered it in Salcey Forest, Northants on 11.v.61 and again in the same county at Yardley Chase on 27.v.64 both in association with deciduous forest and parkland.

It was a hedgerow butterfly on the east bank of the river Wye opposite Goodrich Castle on 30.v.71 and in a disused quarry on the top of the Great Doward overlooking the west bank on the following day - no nearby conifers at either site.

I found them, again as hedgerow butterflies, in side roads around Lough Corrib, County Galway (Eire) not far from Moycullen on 8.vi and on some other days soon after. Only those seen in the vicinity of St Anton in the Austrian Tyrol on 30.v.73 and 1.vi.73 were near conifers. There they flew on the outside edge and in the hay fields just below conifer plantations at 4,300 - 4,600 feet above sea level on south-facing slopes. In such localities their leguminous food plants were in no risk of being

shaded out by the closely packed conifers.

I have since returned to the Great Doward site to find that the quarry has been surrounded by a high boarded fence and was being used as a rubbish dump. That was several years ago - I expect by now that the locale has been destroyed!

*By the seaside!*

I visited Cwm Tydu this afternoon (just below Newquay on the Dyfed coast) to find that the small pearl-bordered fritillary is still around in numbers with the common blue - all very fresh specimens. With the wood white still in mind I stalked a feeble-flying, rather battered, little-marked white with the hope that it might just be *sinapsis*. When at last it settled (I had no net) I could see it was only a very worn male *napi*!

John Gladman

## Good gally!

The unusual (or overlooked?) gall of the leaflets of clover, caused by *Dasyneura trifolii*, was found at a field meeting of the LRTNC South West Group at Burbage Common, near Hinckley, on 9.viii.90 by Jane McPhail. The gall is a result of the upward folding of the leaflets to form a pod-like structure similar to that caused by *Wachtliella rosarum* on dog rose.

# WINTER PROGRAMME 1990-1

All meetings will be held at Leicester Museum, New Walk, Leicester at 7.30 p.m. (unless otherwise stated). Members are encouraged to bring along exhibits etc to all meetings.

\*Workshops at Leicester Museum start at 10.30 a.m.

- October 12th      *Africa, wasps and figs* - an illustrated talk by Dr Stephen Compton of Grahamstown University, South Africa. This talk will be preceded by the Society's AGM.
- November 9th      *Members' evening and conversazione*  
Exhibits and slides by LES members. Please bring along something to make this evening a success.
- \*December 8th      *Microlepidoptera identification workshop.*  
A number of microlepidopterists will be on hand to help out with identification problems.
- December 14th      *Introduction to hoverflies* - Dr Roger Morris  
A general introduction to this newly popular group. There will also be a workshop on Saturday March 9th 1991.
- January 11th      *Dead wood, sand and bramble stems - the conservation of ants, wasps and bees* - Stephen Falk, Coventry Museum (and LES member) author of the soon to be published guide on the conservation of aculeate hymenoptera for the NCC.
- February 8th      *The moths of Charnwood Forest* - Peter Gamble  
This is one of the richest areas of the county for insects.
- March 8th      *Insects of a Leicester garden* - Dr Jenny Owen of Leicester Polytechnic. The ecology of a garden has been studied for 15 years with a new book soon to be published on the findings.
- \*March 9th      *Hoverfly workshop* - Alan Stubbs and Stephen Falk, authors of the standard British work on this group, will help with identification and introduce the subject to beginners.
- April 12th      *The insects of Dungeness* - Mark Parsons, NCC.  
Mark was involved in a 2 year survey of the insects of the huge shingle deposits at Dungeness, one of the most important sites in Britain for scarce insects of all groups,