

LEICESTERSHIRE ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY

8

April 1992

WHAT IS GOING ON?

Green issues are a major part of our lives these days. Politicians are keen to be seen as caring for our environment, developers undertake landscaping schemes and environmental assessments and the European Commission makes Directives on environmental impact.

But what is really going on? The facts are simple - our countryside is being ravished regardless of what is being said publicly to support the countryside.

The M40 just missed several important sites including Hells Coppice and Bernwood Forest - but only after prolonged enquiries and protests. Now it's the turn of St Catherine's Hill on Twyford Down to come under the bulldozer for the extension of the M3, arguably the best butterfly site in the country with over forty species recorded, about two thirds of the British list! The site is destined to disappear, at least in part, under tarmac. The exhaust pollution resulting from this monstrosity will, no doubt, have an adverse effect on the invertebrate fauna. So much for politicians caring for the environment!

Nearer home it cannot have missed anyone's attention that Buddon Hill is now a mere pimple. Croft Hill is another site which may well go the same way. So much for the caring mineral extractors!

towns" around Leicester may not destroy sensitive areas but it is still less of our countryside at the end of the day - and this at a time when there is a slump in the housing market and many hundreds of homes already available! Where's the sense in building new homes when so many remain unsold?

What is going on? The truth is that those who are in a position to exert pressure so that they can meet their financial aspirations (or is it more a case of them satisfying their greed?) do not have any genuine regard for our environment.

Politicians, developers, mineral extractors, the lot - they do not care. But do you? The general election has just gone - make sure that your MP is arguing the case for the protection of our countryside and not letting the unscrupulous few destroy it!

Plans to build massive "new

Ray Morris

Notables of the 90s

Moths of red data book status found in Leicestershire

Three new macro-moths have been recorded in the county in the 1990s so far along with a few nationally notable species. These are listed below in B&F order. Many thanks to the faithful recorders - particularly to Harry Ball for collating the masses of paperwork. I notice with regret that a fair proportion of the rarer species have been recorded from Swithland Sidings. Until recently this was an area very worthy of a day- or night-time visit. Now there are reports of its being laid waste by JCBs spurred on by developers. So what chance now for the lunar hornet and reddish light arches moths?

Sesia bembiciformis
Lunar hornet
B&F 371
Nationally notable a

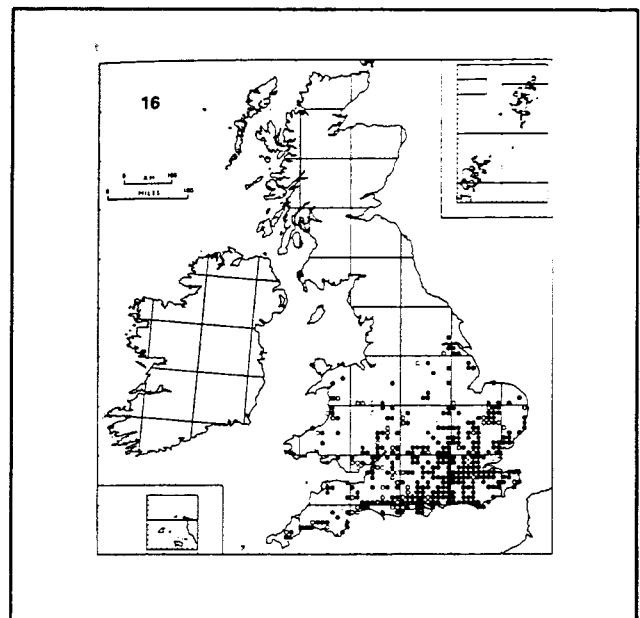
Swithland Sidings (SK565131) on 12.vii.90 by Peter Gamble and Jack Ward. A new species for Leicestershire although MBGBI vol 2 comments that the species is generally distributed through Britain with most records in central and southern England.

Drepana cultraria
Barred hook tip
B&F 1647
Nationally notable a

Recorded twice in 1991. Holywell Wood (SK50-18-) on 26.vii.91 by Harry Ball and Audrey Lomas. Ketton Quarry (SK97-04-) on 9.viii.91 by Harry Ball and Steve Telling. Only two other records known for the county (Beacon Hill, Ulverscroft NR) both in the 1980s. MBGBI vol 7(2) says that the moth is mainly associated with beechwoods on gravel and chalk in England.

Thera juniperata
Juniper carpet
B&F 1771
Nationally notable b

Swithland Sidings on 12.x.90 by Peter Gamble and Jack Ward. Although not often recorded in the "wild", over forty records have now been received from garden sites during the 1980s. It is possible that this species will lose its Nb status



Drepana cultraria

cont p3

Notables of the 90s contd

Colostygia olivata
Beech green carpet
B&F 1774
Nationally notable b

Holywell Wood on 26.vii.91
by Harry Ball and Audrey
Lomas and again at Ketton
Quarry on 9.viii.91 by
Harry Ball and Steve Telling.
New to the county. Skinner
describes the species as
being local mainly on chalk/
limestone in England but it
is more frequent in northern
parts of Britain.

Eupithecia trisignaria
Triple-spotted pug
B&F 1826
Nationally notable a

This widespread but local
species has been recorded
frequently in the county
over the last two decades
with seven records in the
1970s and ten in the 1980s.
Most records have been from
the north west of the county
but the species was taken at
Narborough Bog (SK54-97-)
by Harry Ball, Steve Telling
and Audrey Lomas on 24.v.91.

Eupithecia virgaureata
Golden-rod pug
B&F 1851
Nationally notable b

Widespread but local in
Britain with Leicestershire
having eight previous
records from the 1980s.
S Poole took the moth at
Wigston during 1990 (exact
date not given).

Eupithecia dodoneata
Oak-tree pug
B&F 1853
Nationally notable b

Again taken at Wigston by

S Poole (18.viii.90). The
species has been recorded in
the county three times in the
1970s and ten times in the
1980s. The moth is widespread
but local according to Skinner.

Boarmia roboraria
Great oak beauty
B&F 1943
Nationally notable b

The species is local but not
uncommon in southern woods
with Leicestershire being
near its northern boundary.
Recorded at Great Easton by
Ron and Jean Harvey during
June and July in 1988 and is
a new county record.

Perconia strigillaria
Grass wave
B&F 1970
Nationally notable b

Ketton Quarry on 28.vi.91
by Adrian Russell. New county
record. Regarded by Skinner
as widespread and common in
some southern counties but
sporadic elsewhere.

Rhyacia simulans
Dotted rustic
B&F 2105
Nationally notable b

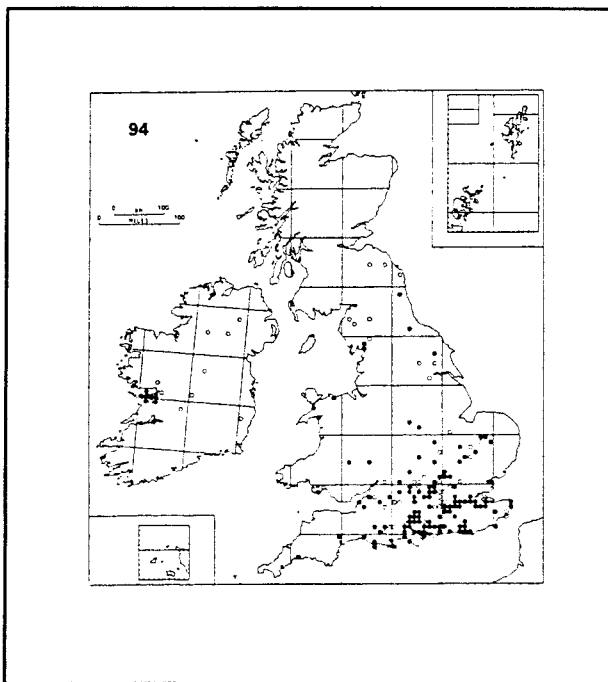
Peter Gamble and Jack Ward
recorded this species at
Swithland Sidings on 14.ix.90.
While there were only four
records in the 1970s, there
were 67 in the 1980s! The
distribution map in MBGBI
vol 9 shows a scattered
range but since its public-
ation the range of the moth
has expanded rapidly. It
is possible that its red data
book status will be reviewed.

cont p4

Notables of the 90s contd

Lacanobia contigua
Beautiful brocade
B&F 2156
Nationally notable b

Ketton Quarry during the period 1986-1991 by Adrian Russell (no details given). Four other records are known (two in each of the 1970s and the 1980s). MBGBI vol9 describes the species as being locally common in acid situations in southern England and the Midlands with a discontinuous distribution.



Apamea sublustris

Apamea sublustris
Reddish light arches
B&F 2323
Nationally notable b

Both county records of this moth have come from Peter Gamble and Jack Ward. The first was in the period 1976-80 at Swithland Reservoir and the latest at Swithland Sidings on 29.vi.91. MBGBI vol 10 describes the species as distinctly south eastern particularly on chalk.

Photedes fluxa
Mere wainscot
B&F 2349
Nationally notable a

This rare wainscot is locally common in eastern England and has been recorded just over the border at Bedford Purlieus, Northamptonshire. Leicestershire had one record for the 1970s and five in the 1980s. Recorded twice at Ketton Quarry in recent years by Adrian Russell in the period 1986-91 and by Harry Ball and Steve Telling on 9.viii.91

Jane McPhail

Hibernating 2-spots

An interesting field observation near Repton, Derbyshire (just over the Leicestershire boundary) on 3.xi.91 was a hibernating cluster of seventy six *Adalia bipunctata* (two spot ladybird) beneath the bark of an old elder. Included in this group were five melanistic patterns.

Dave Budworth

Glow-worms in Rutland 1991

Background

During 1990 British Gas announced plans to pipe gas to Rutland and East Northamptonshire villages. The planned route would have passed through one roadside verge where glow-worms (*Lampyrus noctiluca* L) had colonised. Public pressure resulted in a change of route and as a result a study was carried out during 1991 to assess the distribution of glow-worms in Rutland. The full survey report is available from the Rutland Natural History Society but, by their kind permission via LES member Jean Harvey, we are able to reproduce parts of the report here. This important study was undertaken by members of the RNHS under the guidance of Graham and Linda Worrall.

Two areas of study were undertaken: (a) a study of emergence from pupation on a Barrowden roadside verge and (b) a more general survey of the district.

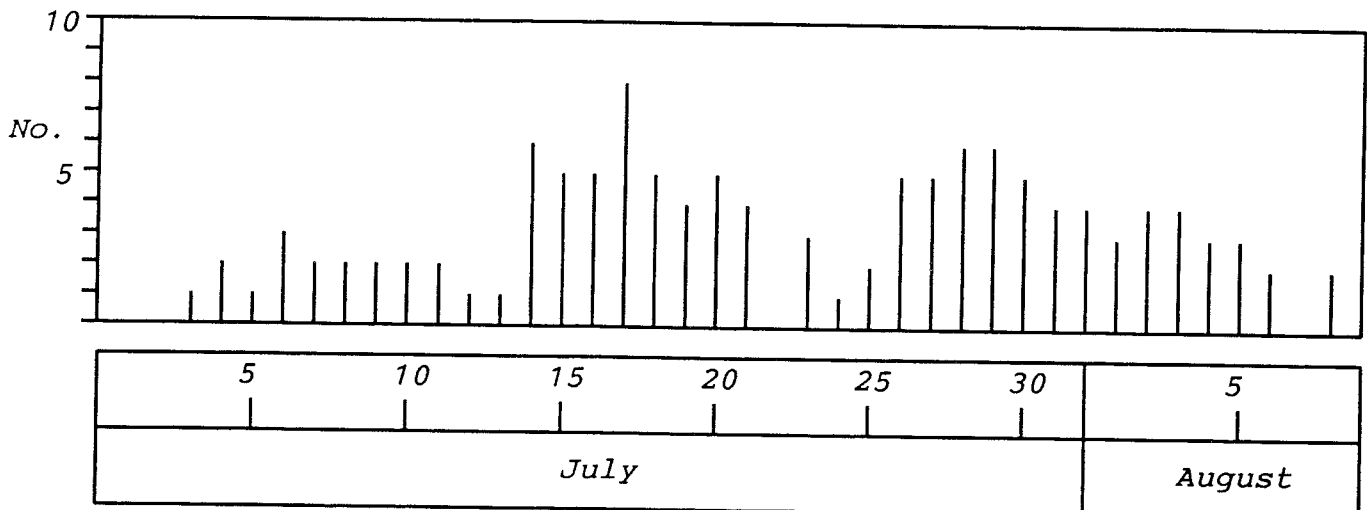
Barrowden verge study

The first glowing female was noted on 3.vii.91, the emergence from pupation being apparently triggered by the increase in air temperature and/or the smaller increase in soil temperature at 50mm depth. The Worralls also hypothesise that the larvae need to reach a critical body

weight before pupation can commence and successful emergence of the adult achieved. The maximum number of females was observed on 17.vii.91. The gap in observations on 22.vii.91 coincided with the one swathe cut made to the verges on this day (see figure).

cont p6

Records of glow-worms on a Barrowden roadside verge 1991.



Glow-worms contd

Rutland distribution survey

As part of a national survey of glow-worms, supported by the BBC Wildlife magazine, a group of RNHS members recorded the beetle at many sites in Rutland and east Northamptonshire. The choice of sites was influenced by whether (a) a site was known to have had glow-worms in recent years, (b) a site was known to have had glow-worms about ten years ago and (c) a site which, due to lack of disturbance in recent years, may hold glow-worms.

Each site was visited after nightfall, usually on one occasion only. This limited level of surveillance may well mean that sites recorded as negative may well have had glow-worms at other times. A total of forty two sites were visited over a 33 day period in July and August 1991. Glowing females

were found at 20 locations. Preliminary findings suggest that the colonies exist upon acid as well as calcareous sites. The RNHS survey amounted to about 10% of the sites surveyed in the national investigation.

The maximum number of females noted on any one visit in Rutland on any one visit was 50 at a roadside verge at Essendine. In contrast, a visit to Barnack Hills and Holes, just over the border in Northamptonshire, gave more than 450! A single larva was noted in building rubble at Charnwood Lodge, some distance from Rutland!

[Editor's note: such surveys are the essential basis for constructive conservation measures - it is to be hoped that a more intensive survey will be carried out in forthcoming years by the RNHS - perhaps the members of the LES could volunteer their services?]

Rutland sites with glow-worms 1991

Barrowden (road verges) 8 females, 1 male
Ketton Pit Lane (regraded stone quarry) 7 females
South Luffenham level crossing (hedge bottom on public footpath) 2 females
Essendine (road verge) 50 female

[Previously also recorded from:

Cuckoo farm (verge) about 40 years ago
Wakerley Road, Barrowden (verge) 1989
Live Hill, Barrowden (verge) about 20 years ago]

Stop press!

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News has just arrived of two good county records! Mottled grey moth was taken at mvl at Burleigh Wood, Loughborough on 17.iv.92 and a second county record of *Epinotia immundana* (Tortricidae) was taken at a garden mvl in Kirby Muxloe by Jane McPhail on 20.ix.92. 1136

Pug records needed!

Gaston Prior and Adrian Riley (the latter of Rothamstead light trap fame) are compiling a new book on the British pug moths for publication during 1993 by Harley Books.

They are currently updating records so that distribution maps can be as accurate as possible. They require all records up to the end of 1991 and if there are any old records they would also appreciate these. Please send your pug records to either Ray Morris or Jane McPhail who will then collate them and pass them on to the authors.

If possible please make a note of the frequency of each species and the type of habitat where your records came from. Records by May 20th please!

Clouded yellows

in Rutland

While 1991 was not a clouded yellow year compared with 1983, it is pleasing to note that the butterfly was seen in the east of the region by members of the Rutland NHS.

The first was recorded in a garden on the Teigh/Market Overton boundary by Graham Worrall on 20.viii.91. Ten days later J Levisohn spotted another in a Langham garden (30.viii.91). On the same date two were seen on lucerne in a set-aside field off Burley Road, Oakham by J Mallett and a further two (?same two) were at the same location a day later this time identified by Jim Eaton. The last sighting at this site was on 4.ix.91 again by Jim Eaton.

Jean Harvey

Liverpool meetings

As part of the LES attempts to gain contact with other entomological groups in the country, we have obtained a copy of the programme of the Lancashire & Cheshire Ent Soc which holds monthly meetings at Liverpool Museum. While it is a fair way to travel the programme may be of interest to those who are willing to make the effort! Details from Stephen Judd at the museum on 051-207-0001.

4th April - British solitary wasps (Michael Archer)

2nd May - Cheshire dragonflies (Richard Gabb & David Kitching)

17th October - An introduction to the biology, distribution and identification of the larger Brachycera (Martin Drake)

21st November - Longhorns and other Incurvarioid moths (Keith Bland)

Meetings run from 14.00 to 17.00

Hummingbird hawks 1991

F154

...at Shearsby

The first one seen at Shearsby was on July 14th, the last on September 20th with many sightings between. They often turn up quite late in the evening and on July 31st I was lucky enough to see one settling down for the night in a *Cupressus* bush. I now regard the species as the most commonly seen hawk moth at Shearsby, the reasons being that it is a day flier and its attraction to red valerian (*Centranthus ruber*). A few of these plants in your garden and any hummingbird hawks in your area will almost certainly visit them. If the first flowers are removed as they fade, it will flower right into October attracting a wide range of moths and butterflies. Having deep tap roots, it is a good dry weather plant which explains why 1976, a notoriously dry year, was the best ever for hummingbird hawks in my garden.

Harold Godsmark

...in Rutland

A single hummingbird hawk moth was seen at valerian in a garden at Whissendine on July 17th, 21st and 29th as well as 1st August by Rutland NHS member Mrs WJ Stevenson. Later in August (10th) G Moulden saw one feeding at pink phlox in an Oakham garden while Tim Appleton reported one over geraniums in his garden at Fishponds Cottage, Rutland Water on 4.x.91 with another on 30.10.91.

Jean Harvey

...at Loughborough

Heritage number 123, the Newsletter of the Loughborough Naturalists Club lists two records of the hummingbird hawk both from Peter Gamble. The first was from a Quorn garden on 26.vii.91 with the second being seen in a Leicester garden (no further details).

Monica Gillham

Any more to come?

Convolvulus in Rutland

1927

Jean Harvey, recorder for the Rutland Natural History Society has given the LES information of a sighting of the largest of the British hawkmoths in Rutland.

A single convolvulus hawk (*Agrius convolvuli*) was seen at Park Farm, Ridlington by RNHS member M Smith on 10.x.91.

The moth was definitely identified by Roy Butchart.

Jean Harvey

[This rare migrant is only occasionally reported in the county. The last known record was in August 1988 at Thurmaston with a total of six records in the 1980s]

Butterflies in 1991

Brian Mitchell, one of our out-of-county members (but only just!) reports on butterflies seen on the Leicestershire/Warwickshire borders during 1991.

The Leicester border at Pinwall is not very far from my home at Grendon and I regularly travel along the B5000 into Atherstone. Here are some of the more interesting sightings.

1586 *Brimstone*

May 6th: one near Sheepy Magna and another along the B5000 near Pinwall (not regularly seen along roadways around here).

1587 *Purple hairstreak*

According to the Market Bosworth magazine "Aspect" a purple hairstreak was in Bosworth Park on 23rd July and I had one around oak along the road from Ratcliffe Culey/Pinwall to Sheepy (SP320999) on 31st August. I also thought I had one at another site in the north west but this is unconfirmed. Certainly, I had one taking nectar at snowberry at Grendon church among holly blues on 30th August where I have not recorded the species before despite the preponderance oak and ash. The site is only 3/4 mile from the Leicestershire boundary.

1591 *Painted lady*

31st August at Norton Lane, Orton-on-the-Hill at 7p.m.

1590 *Red admiral*

30th August near Pinwall.

1592 *Brown argus*

The most exciting report must be of the brown argus spotted

by Andrew Hickinbotham at Shenton (reported in "Aspect").

Holly blue 1588

Seen at SP320999 with purple hairstreak on August 4th and also at SP320987 on ground outside Mythe Cottage, but the date escapes me for the moment. Also at Ulverscroft on 4th August, a male.

Ulverscroft

Also at Ulverscroft on August 4th were comma (f. *hutchinsoni*), meadow browns, gatekeepers, small skippers and a some odonata including *Aeshna grandis*, *A cyanea*, *Sympetrum striolatus* and *Ischnura elegans*. 1525, 1626, 1625

Brian Mitchell

Jersey tiger at Ketton 2097

Harry Ball picked off an obviously tiger moth larva from foliage at Ketton Quarry during the summer of 1990. After a week of feeding up at home the larva pupated.

The moth that emerged in June 1991, although not fully formed, turned out to be the first Leicestershire record of the Jersey tiger.

Will the moth be in evidence again at this site?

SUMMER PROGRAMME

Before turning up please check with the leader that the event is still on!

Meet at 09.45 in the Museum Car Park or 10.30 at the site but for Thorne Moors (21st June) please note that the meet time is 08.00 at the car park and that the outing is by coach.

A venue for lunch and discussion of the morning's results will be decided during the morning.

- Saturday 16th May PRIOR'S COPPICE
meet at the wood entrance at
map reference SK 832048. Lead by
Derek Lott (0533 - 473031)
- Saturday 6th June LEA MEADOWS
Meet minor road north of Lea Wood
map reference SK 505117. Lead
by John Mousley (0533 - 473262)
- Sunday 21st June THORNE MOORS, YORKSHIRE
Meet Museum car park 0800 for coach.
Places must be booked via Jan
Dawson for this joint trip with the
Natural History Section of the
Lit & Phil Society. Lead by Brian
Eversham of the Biological Records
Centre, Monk's Wood.
- Saturday 25th July BIG PITS, CLIPSHAM
Harvestman and woodlice recording
lead by Jon Dawes (0533 - 473031).
Meet at lay-by on A1 south of
Stretton (SK 951139).
- Saturday 22nd August CHARNWOOD LODGE
Flea foray lead by Frank Clarke.
Meet at the Lodge SK 469156.

Additionally, moth traps are being run on a regular basis at many sites, e.g. Lockington Marshes, Burleigh Wood, Martinshaw Wood - contact individual lepidopterists for details or, initially, Ray Morris (0455 - 842145) for contact names and phone numbers.

Stop Press!

A second county record for the grey shoulder knot moth has been reported by Adrian Russell from Pickworth Great Wood - last record was from Wigston in 1983! 223X