

NEWSLETTER 44

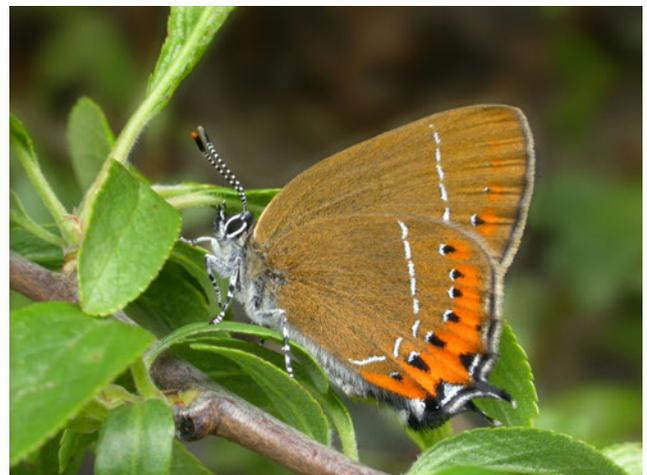
January 2011

Black Hairstreak at Luffenham Golf Course

Lenny Holton has continued the survey of the Black Hairstreak butterfly *Strymonidia pruni* at Luffenham Golf Course, Rutland (SK9502) by kind permission of the golf course committee and members (see previous editions of this Newsletter).

He started on 10 June 2010, which was a poor day, weather-wise. It was cloudy and cool, leaving Lenny with no sightings of the butterfly after three hours of recording. His next visit was 13 June and although it was warmer, it was cloudy with a north wind blowing. Once again, nothing was seen of the butterfly. The next visit was 15 June, when conditions were better. One possible sighting was noted alongside the third green - subsequent events make this record more positive. The weather had been warmer with good amounts of sunshine but by 18 June, the weather had worsened to very cloudy with a strong breeze, so he was not surprised to see nothing of the butterfly. The next trip to the course was 22 June, when the temperature was very high with lots of sunshine - good conditions for the butterfly to be on the wing. He saw at least four specimens of the butterfly in a Blackthorn thicket between the 16th and 17th tees. These sightings are significant, as no positive sightings of this butterfly had been made in the two years previous.

The next visit was 25 June, with similarly good conditions. He saw at least six specimens in the same location, but no more than two at a time. On 27 June, the weather was very hot and humid with a strong breeze. No records of the butterfly were made. This was surprising, considering the result from 25 June, but it may be relevant that he arrived at the course two hours earlier. The last visit to the site was 1 July, with hot and breezy weather, when nothing was seen.



The Black Hairstreak is a local and elusive butterfly that is confined to Blackthorn thickets between Peterborough and Oxford. It is similar to the commoner White-letter Hairstreak, but may be distinguished by the row of black spots along the outer orange margin. Photo: Keith Tailby

This season's work confirms that the Black Hairstreak, one of the rarest of our local butterflies, has once again survived at this site over the previous bad summers. We hope it will continue to do so.

On the days that Lenny saw no Black Hairstreaks, he was still engaged in collecting butterfly records: 14 species in all, including Marbled White *Melanargia galathea*. He also noted 24 species of bird including Red Kite *Milvus milvus* and Common Buzzard *Buteo buteo*.

Harry Ball

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The editor will be happy to receive articles, short notes and photos (in focus please!) about insects or other arthropods in Leicestershire and Rutland, also news of members' activities further afield.

Next Copy Deadline: 5 Sept 2011

Wigston Garden Insects

It looks like 2010 was another good year for moths here in our Wigston garden (SP597998). It started in April with an old favourite The Satellite *Eupsilia transversa* and on the same night a Pale Pinion *Lithophane hepatica* which was a new species to our garden. The highlight of the year was a single Privet Hawkmoth *Sphinx ligustri* that appeared on 27 July, another new species for us. Rounding off the year was the arrival of a new species, the Large Wainscot *Rhizedra lutosa*. It also seems there was an increase in Vine's Rustic *Hoplodrina ambigua* and a decrease in numbers of Light-Brown Apple Moth *Epiphyas postvittana*.

As I'm now taking more of an interest in micro moths, it was nice to be able identify *Agriphila geniculea* instead of casting it away, as we would have done in previous years along with the other annoying veneer type jobbies. There are so many varied and colourful species of micro, that it's like getting to know the excitement of moths all over again! I'm hooked! Though like macros, there are obviously still the species that are so similar they need identification by dissection. So of course, the smaller they are the harder it is. And with some, even this method is not a certainty. There's also a new depth of frustration to be discovered when you take on micros! But the rewards are worth it - especially the sight of our first and so far only Brown China-Mark Moth *Elophila nymphaeata* back in 2008.

We grow runner bean plants every year and these seem to have attracted a lot of insects over the last few years. In 2009 they were infested with Green Shieldbugs *Palomena prasina*, which laid their eggs on the leaves and were observed to go through all the instars until fully adult. In 2010 however, it was the aphids' turn!



Green Shieldbug *Palomena prasina*.
Photo: Steve Woodward

More specifically, blackfly! But due to this pest invasion, we had an army of ladybirds to counter the attack. For most of the year, about twenty plus adult 7-Spot Ladybirds *Coccinella 7-punctata* were seen feasting on the plentiful bounty. But while they remained with the plants, I saw no sign of their eggs or larvae. Then, late August and early September there appeared a lot of Harlequin Ladybird *Harmonia axyridis* larvae but no sign of any

adults. The larvae pupated and about 18 days later the juvenile Harlequins hatched out. We had noticed a lot of parasitic wasps around the bean plants and that some of the newly emerged Harlequins had been harbouring the wasps' young. They looked exactly the same as Maggie Frankum's photo of the ladybird affected by the parasite (*Newsletter 43*). Possibly the same species of wasp. Our normal native ladybirds didn't seem to be affected by this parasite at the time, indeed, it seems only the Harlequin was fighting for survival in the battle of the beans!

Adam Poole

The Mystery of the Leicestershire Water Flea records

Water Fleas are crustaceans in the order Cladocera. *Daphnia pulex* is common enough in ponds in the county (although there are no records for VC55 on the NBN) but what about the other Cladocera species?

While searching for old records for Grace Dieu, I read the Crustaceans chapter in the Victoria County History of Leics. (1907), which includes a dissertation on Cladocera with a list of Leicestershire species but, unfortunately, it does not link the species with the sites where they were recorded. Tantalisingly, one of the sites is the pond at Grace Dieu Priory ruins, so I have been digging about for more information – to no avail, so far.

Mr Garnar recorded 24 species from “the immediate neighbourhood of Leicester” in the years before 1903 and at Whitsuntide in 1906 Mr D J Scourfield recorded 16 species, seven of them additional to those of Mr Garnar. So we probably had about 30 species in total – there being some debate about species and varieties. One of Mr Garnar's sites was Saddington Reservoir.



Daphnia sp., showing the branched antennae used for swimming.
Photo: Steve Woodward

D J Scourfield was one of the authors, with J P Harding, of the key to *The British Species of Freshwater Cladocera*, first published in 1941, so he knew what he was talking about! The sites that he visited were “Groby Pool, ponds near Beacon Hill and Bardon Hill; Old Fish Pond, Grace Dieu Priory and various little roadside and farmyard ponds etc.”

Whether the lists were actually published anywhere, I do not know. We seem to have no trace of them in the Leics. Museum records. I have made various enquiries of the Freshwater Biological Association (who published Scourfield's key) and the Essex Field Club, of which he was president, so we may learn something eventually. If anyone has any thoughts on the subject I would be glad to hear from them.

The county list in VCH is as follows:

Diaphanosoma brandtianum/brachyurum, no species of *Moina*, *Daphnia magna*, *D. pulex*, *D. hamata/minehaha*, *D. obtusa* (*D. propinqua*), *D. longispina*, *D. hyalina* (the small *galeata* form), *Scapholeberis mucronata*, *S. cornuta*, *Simosa vetula* (*Simocephalus vetulus*), *Ceriodaphnia quadrangula/pulchella*, *C. megalops*, *C. affinis*, *Bosmina longirostris/cornuta*, *Macrothrix laticornis*, *Ilyocryptus sordidus*, *Lathonura rectirostris* (the last three all found at Saddington Res.), *Eurycercus lamellatus*, *Camptocercus rectirostris*, *Acroperus harpae*, *Alona tenuicaudis*, *A. rostrata*, *A. affinis*, *A. guttata*, *A. rectangula*, *Leydigia quadrangularis*, *Alonella nanus*, *Peracantha truncata*, *Lynceus uncinatus* (*Pleuroxus uncinatus*), *L. denticulatus* (this one, recorded by Garnar, is doubted by Scourfield!), *Chydorus globosus*, *C. sphaericus*.

I have not attempted to bring these names up to date, yet. I do hope there is a *Daphnia hiawatha* too!

Helen Ikin

Cranefly Workshop

Seven members attended the Cranefly Workshop at the Collection Resources Centre, Barrow, on 8 January 2011. This was presented by LES member John Kramer, who co-ordinates the national Cranefly Recording Scheme. We covered the four Dipteran families Tipulidae, Cyndrotomidae, Limoniidae and Pediciidae, together containing more than 300 species. John showed us how to distinguish the families, then took us through the keys to sub-families and genera. In a few cases the wing markings and other “field” characters are diagnostic but, as with many insects, detailed microscope work, especially wing venation, is needed to sort them out.

We are grateful to John for laying this on, also to Anona Finch, assisted by Graham, for hosting the workshop at Barrow.

Ed.

Looking for help?

The following are willing to act as an initial point of contact for providing advice and information to members.

Arachnids (Spiders, harvestmen, pseudoscorpions):- Jon Daws, 177 Featherstone Drive, Leicester LE2 9RF.
jonathan.daws@yahoo.com

Biological Recording:- Sue Timms, Holly Hayes, 216 Birstall Road, Birstall, Leicester LE4 4DG. 0116 267 0018. Sue.timms@leics.gov.uk

Chilopoda:- Helen Ikin, 237 Forest Road, Woodhouse, Woodhouse Eaves, Leics LE12 8TZ. 01509 890102. helen@canids.freemove.co.uk

Coleoptera:- Derek Lott, see page 2.

Diplopoda:- Jon Daws, see Arachnids.

Diptera (Acalypterates, Syrphids & Brachycera):- Darwyn Sumner, 122 Link Road, Anstey, Leicester LE7 7BX. 0116 212 5075.
Darwyn.sumner@ntlworld.com

Diptera (Nematocera - Mosquitoes, Blackflies & Craneflies):- John Kramer, 31 Ash Tree Road, Oadby, Leicester LE2 5TE. 0116 271 6499.
john.kramer@btinternet.com

Hymenoptera (Aculeates):- Maggie Frankum, see page 2.

Hymenoptera (Non-aculeates):- Gareth Price, Holly Hayes, 216 Birstall Road, Birstall, Leicester LE4 4DG. 0116 267 0008.
Gareth.price@leics.gov.uk

Hemiptera:- Dave Budworth, see page 2.

Isopoda (Woodlice): - Jon Daws, see Arachnids.

Lepidoptera:- Adrian Russell, 15 St Swithin's Road, Leicester LE5 2GE. 0116 241 5101.
Adrian@wainscot.demon.co.uk

Mecoptera, Neuroptera, Plecoptera :- Steve Woodward, see page 2.

Odonata, Orthoptera:- Helen Ikin, see Chilopoda.

Phthiraptera, Siphonaptera:- Frank Clark, 4 Main Street, Houghton on the Hill, Leicester LE7 9GD. 0116 243 2725. ClrFlea@aol.com

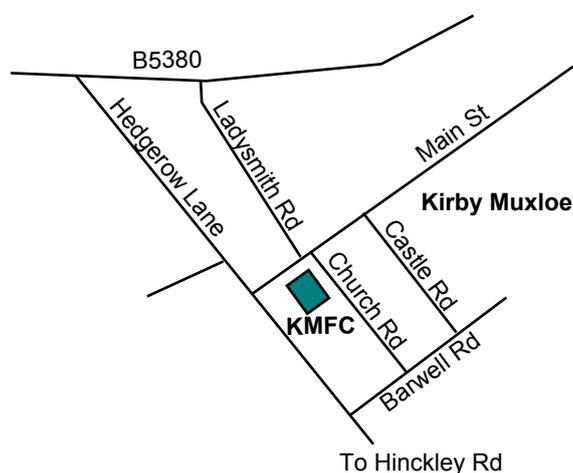
Plant Galls:- Maggie Frankum, see page 2.

Thysanoptera:- Ivan Pedley, 28 Woodbank Road, Groby, Leicester LE6 0BQ. 0116 287 6886.
ivan.pedley@gmail.com

Trichoptera (adults):- Ray Morris, see page 2.

Indoor Meetings Programme

Please note that our **new venue** is Kirby Muxloe Free Church, Main Street, Kirby Muxloe LE9 2AN SK517042. The session starts at 7:30, but most members arrive half an hour earlier for a natter and a cuppa. Visitors are welcome.



Thursday 20 January 2011 Members are invited to show any recent books, identification keys or equipment that may be of interest to other members. One of the Brunel range of stereo microscopes (with SLR camera adapter) will be demonstrated.

Thursday 17 February 2011 Steve Woodward has been photographing a wide range of invertebrates in the Charnwood area. This will be a selection of the best photos, the scarcer species and the less popular orders.

Thursday 17 March 2011 *Aspects of entomology at Priory Water.* Frank Clark and Tony Cook give an insight into the variety of species they regularly see at this special nature reserve.