

Cheshire Moth Recording Group Newsletter

Issue 2

January 2001

Welcome!

Welcome to the second issue of the Cheshire Moth recording group newsletter. By the time you read this the first of the new sessions moths will be with us. Look out for Spring Usher and Pale Brindled Beauty during the next few weeks. Moths such as the Satellite, the Chestnut, the Herald and Early Moth should also be on the wing. – Spring is on the way, and the Quakers will soon be with us.

Field Trips

The 2001 field meeting program is coming together. Details of trips are attached below. All trips are open for anyone to attend. Please feel free to come along to as many or as few as you like. Various people will be present with traps and generators, so please don't be put off if you can't bring equipment. We usually have more traps than we need! The field meetings are an ideal opportunity to meet other local mothers and learn from each other's experience. *Note:* early season trips are weather dependant. Contact the organiser a day or so in advance to check that the trip is going ahead.

Advance notice of an autumn trip –I will be leading a trip for Sandhill Rustic on The Wirral in late August/early September. Details next time.

- **Saturday 31st March** Little Budworth Country Park daylight session to look for Orange Underwing. We'll also do some larval work. This will be followed by an evening light trapping session for things like Lunar Marbled Brown, Yellow Horned, and Oak Beauty. Meet in the main car park (by the toilet block) at 2:00pm for the daylight session, 6:00pm for the evening session. Organiser: Adrian Wander
- **Saturday 7th April** Marbury Country Park/Anderton Nature Park Organiser Paul Hill
- **Sunday 8th April** Leasowe, The Wirral: Daylight session to survey the Belted Beauty (BAP specie). Meet in the main car park, on the right just past the lighthouse at 10:00am. We will take a look at the insect at its known haunt. There will be an opportunity to search other local areas for the insect in the afternoon. Organiser: Adrian Wander
- **Friday 4th May** Moore Nature Reserve Nr Warrington. Organizer: Jeff Clarke
- **Saturday 12th May** Marbury Country Park/Anderton Nature Park Organiser Paul Hill
- **Saturday 9th June** Marbury Country Park/Anderton Nature Park Organiser Paul Hill
- **Saturday 23rd June** Caldly Hill (mixed woodland-heathland) Wirral. Nr West Kirby. Organiser: Jeff Clarke
- **Saturday 7th July** Moore Nature Reserve. Organiser: Jeff Clarke Marbury Country Park/Anderton Nature Park Organiser Paul Hill
- **Saturday 4th August** Caldly Hill. Wirral (evening only). Organiser: Jeff Clarke Marbury Country Park/Anderton Nature Park Organiser Paul Hill
- **Weekend of 4th/5th August** Paul Waring will be visiting the region. An event is planned in Lancs for the 4th August and hopefully an event will be organised in Cheshire for the 5th August. Details next time.
- **Saturday 18th August**

British Entomological and Natural History Society (BENHS) meeting at South Stack, Anglesey. Meet 8:00pm in the top car park.

OK, I know it's not in our region, but the trip is reasonably local and is designed to look for Hoary Footman-following my capture of one at the site last year. Please excuse the plug! This trip will be led by Dr Paul Waring.

- **Saturday 1st September**
Moore Nature Reserve. Organiser: Jeff Clarke
Marbury Country Park/Anderton Nature Park Organiser Paul Hill

The sessions at Caldly Hills and Moore Nature Reserves organised by Jeff Clarke and the sessions at Marbury Country Park/Anderton Nature Park organised by Paul Hill are parts of on going survey work at the sites. Regarding Marbury Country Park/Anderton Nature Park Paul writes

'The variety of habitats at these two sites - open water, reedbeds, deciduous woodland, open parkland, birch woodland and calcareous grassland - should produce a good variety of Cheshire's moths. To date around 250 spp of Macro and 200 spp of micro have been recorded, and each year I've been adding new species by trapping different habitats at different times of the year. Any one is welcome to come along and join in on the evenings - just get in touch with me the day before and I can confirm where to meet and when.'

Non-Moth Records - Pass them On!

During a visit to Cornwall last October I found a nice Knot-grass larvae. Never having bred the specie I collected the caterpillar, which fed up and within a week had pupated. Unfortunately, the hoped for moth failed to emerge, and instead I obtained a couple of flies. Knowing that Bill Hardwick is interested in diptera, I passed them on to him. (I didn't want to release a potentially alien specie into my back garden!) He very kindly identified them for me and writes:

'The fly is *Exorista larvarum* (L.), a fairly common and usually gregarious species. Its known hosts are

mostly in the *Lasiocampidae*, *Lymantriidae* and a few *Arctiidae*; the only British *noctuid* host record published is for *Acronicta rumicis*, as in the case of your specimens.

Having said it's fairly common, I do not however have many previous specimens, so these are welcome additions to the collection. The *Tachinidae* form quite a large family, all of which are parasites of the larvae of other insects; in the vast majority of cases the hosts are lepidopterous, but a few bugs and beetles are also attacked. One of the reasons they are rather hard to get your head around is the huge number of different genera mostly containing but few species each in the British fauna, coupled with copious revisions of the boundaries of genera and supra-generic taxa. With only half a dozen or so notable exceptions (at least here in the NW), most are relatively infrequently swept as adults in the field, and are more readily inadvertently taken by lepidopterists as parasites of wild-caught caterpillars. (The yield from Malaise traps is somewhat higher, but I don't run one of those). So reared specimens, particular as in this case where the host species is known, are always of interest, even from local sources.'

So, if any of you breed butterflies/moths and rear parasites, don't throw them away in disgust - they are of interest to someone! If you don't know who is interested in a particular group, and you have specimens, drop me a line and I'll try and put you in contact with the relevant person.

Records, Records Records....

We're now well into 2001, so hopefully you have already passed your 2000 micro records on to Steve Hind and your 2000 macro records on to Steve McWilliam. If not, please do so at once. In addition, if any of you stray over the border to the South, we have a request from Peter Boardman for submission of records from Shropshire from 1990-present day. His new address is included under contacts at the end of the newsletter.

Contacts and Web Sites

- Steve McWilliam's web site on Cheshire Moths can be found at:

<http://www.consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk/entomol/chmoths>

- The Lancashire and Cheshire Entomology Society (LCES) can be found at:
<http://www.consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk/entomol/lces>
- The Underwings (The junior section of the LCES) can be found at:
<http://www.consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk/entomol/underwng>
- **rECOrd** – The Local Records Centre for Cheshire, Halton, Runcorn, Warrington and the Wirral can be found at:
<http://www.record-lrc.co.uk>
- Records of macro moths should be sent to Steve McWilliam at:
stevemc@consult-eco.ndirect.co.uk
- Records of micros should be sent to Steve Hind at:
steve@hind1.fsnet.co.uk
- Records from Shropshire should be sent to Peter Boardman, 7 High Street, Weston Rhyn, Shropshire, SY10 7RP or e-mail at peperouda@btinternet.com
- Submission of all biological records can be made to **rECOrd** at:
manager@record-lrc.co.uk
- Butterfly Conservation can be found at:
<http://www.butterfly-conservation.org>
- Cheshire Region Biodiversity Plans for butterflies can be found at:
<http://www.papilio.co.uk>
- Paul Hill can be contacted via email paul@papilio.co.uk or via snail mail at Paul M Hill Natural History Services, 1 Clive Cottage, London Road, Allostock, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9LT
- Jeff Clarke can be contacted about field trips at BirderJeff@aol.com
- The Lancashire Moth Group now has a web page at <http://www.lancashire-moths.org>
- I can be contacted regarding field trips, items for the next newsletter etc. at:
a.wander@dl.ac.uk or by snail-mail at 54A Hartford Road, Davenham, Northwich, Cheshire, CW9 8JF