



# HERTS MOTH GROUP

Newsletter 15

Winter 2008/2009

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## WELCOME

It has been around a year since our last newsletter. However, this is not because nothing has been worth reporting. Rather, I have been catching up with an approximate ten-year backlog of other stuff that I had been putting off in favour of the Hertfordshire moth book. The book finally appeared in July 2008 – I can't imagine that there is anyone out there who isn't already aware of that fact. It includes data up to the end of 2006; now I am starting to get the backlog of 2007 and 2008 moth data entered. This does mean that if you are sitting on 2008 data (some of you are) now is the time to liberate it so I can get it entered before the field season starts (if we get one this year!). One very large dataset (colossal in fact) has been entered post-publication. The nightly counts of macro moths from the various Rothamsted Light Traps that have operated in Hertfordshire over the past fifty years have now been made available – some 365,305 validated records! Although a complete species list from each site was included in the data used to create the distribution maps for the book, I deliberately avoided entering the entire data set in case it messed up the adult flight charts. Amateur moth-catchers will have a goodly proportion of 'retraps' in their moth trap each morning, but the RIS traps, which gather statistical data for application to farm crop protection, take an absolute sample because all moths entering them are retained. These two quite different numerical data sets were judged potentially incompatible. Now that we have produced the flight charts from data including re-traps, I can now compare with the newly added data and see if there are actually any significant differences.

## ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS TO AND DELETIONS FROM THE MOTH BOOK

Of course, as soon as the book appeared a number of interesting records "crawled out of the woodwork". I find it difficult to imagine how anyone could have missed the fact that I wanted Hertfordshire moth records over the last ten years yet at least two people claim such ignorance. No matter. Of course, we have also made discoveries that post-date the book (i.e., for 2007 onwards). An update is therefore necessary. This will be published formally in the *Hertfordshire Naturalist* but in the meantime here are some of the highlights.

### ADDITIONS TO THE HERTFORDSHIRE FAUNA

**344: *Phyllonorycter strigulatella***. Mark Sterling collected mines during 2007 in the car park of the Vue Cinema Complex in Watford and adults emerged July 2008; **561: *Coleophora therinella***. Roughdown Common, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2004 (Colin Plant). Identified by genitalia dissection, January 2009 (Brain Goodey); **909: *Sorhagenia lophyrella***. Roughdown Common, 25<sup>th</sup> June 2004, C. W. Plant. Identified by Brian Goodey by genitalia dissection, January 2009; **971: *Pandemis cinnamomeana*** One male taken by myself in Ravensdell Wood (in administrative Bedfordshire) on 1 May 2003 was recognised by me during January 2009 whilst clearing a backlog of genitalia dissections of specimens in my freezer. Our only other record, from a Watford garden in 1956, is regarded as an identification error, so the Ravensdell Wood example is the first for Hertfordshire; **2111a: *Noctua janthina* Langmaid's Yellow Underwing**. Marshall's Heath, at actinic light 16 August 2008 (John Murray) – on the same night that CWP caught a single example at Blean Woods, Canterbury (East Kent) perhaps suggesting immigration; **2408: Small Marbled (*Eublemma parva*)**: Bishops Stortford, 29<sup>th</sup> July 2008 (Julian Reeves).

### CORRECTIONS TO THE BOOK

**219 *Nemapogon ruricolella*** Incorrect map. That used is the map for species 129 (which is correct in its own position); **521 *Coleophora conyzae*** Incorrect map. That used is the map for 525 (which is correct in its own position); **796 *Aroga velocella*** Raymond Uffen found adults, not larvae, at Croxley Common Moor on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2000; **1637 Oak Egg** Missing map; **2281 Alder Moth** Missing map; **Biographies, page 517** Geoffrey Sell left the area for Dorset in 2004, not 1971. The latter year was when he left Hertfordshire (Bishops Stortford) to move to Essex (Takeley). He remained active in the Bishops Stortford area in both counties until the end of 2003.

### DELETIONS

**2433: Slender Burnished Brass**. Though Hitchin is the locality given in *Atropos* 12: 69, the moth was actually caught at Silverbirch Ave, Stotfold, near Hitchin (D. L. Hudson). This places the moth in Bedfordshire, not Hertfordshire; there are no other "Hertfordshire" records. The error in the locality was, apparently, communicated to the Editor of *Atropos* but, annoyingly, no correction has yet been published. The record is the same as that published in *Bedfordshire Naturalist* 55(1): 67.

## IMPORTANT UPDATES

**354: *Phyllonorycter emberizaepennella***. Marshall's Heath, leaf mine on snowberry (*Symphoricarpos*) 25 October 2003 (det. Mark Sterling) and adults at actinic light 17 July and 31 July 2003 (John Murray, det. Mark Sterling). First Hertfordshire records since before 1901; **473: *Acrolepiopsis assectella***. Bishops Stortford, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2003 (C. W. Plant). Scale-less specimen identified by genitalia examination (Brian Goodey) during 2008. Second Herts record; **642a: *Metalampra italica***. St Albans, 25<sup>th</sup> July 2008 (Mark Sterling); **736: *Monochroa lucidella***. Bishops Stortford, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2006 (James Fish & Julian Reeves), gen. det. Brian Goodey, 2008. **Second Herts record**; **834: *Caryocolum tricolorella***. Marshall's Heath, 31 July 2001, 2 August 2005, 13 August 2007 and 11 August 2008 (John Murray). First Herts records since 1977; **843: *Approaerema anthyllidella***. Marshall's Heath, 8 May 1997, 19 July 1999, 2 August 1999 (det. K. Sattler), 12 August 2000, 15 August 2001, 3 June 2004, 29 July 2004, 27 August 2004 and 31 July 2006 (John Murray). Previous Herts records all prior to 1960 apart from one in 1997; **856: *Anarsia spartiella***. Croxley Common Moor, several at sheet on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2008 (Herts Moth Group field trip). Formerly regarded as extinct in Hertfordshire; **956: *Cochylidia implicitana***. Marshall's Heath, a male on 25 August 1997 (John Murray Gen. det. 2008, CWP). Second modern record and sixth all-time county record; **1445 *Pempelia formosa***. Hertford, 13<sup>th</sup> July 2007 (Andrew Wood, gen. det. Brian Goodey). Third recent county record; **1731: *Scotopteryx bipunctaria* Chalk Carpet**. Bishops Stortford, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 1954 (Geoffrey Sell) extends the geographical range and flight period of the former population; **1736: *Catarhoe cuculata* Royal Mantle**. Bishops Stortford, 21<sup>st</sup> July 1954 (Geoffrey Sell). This record, supported by a voucher specimen plugs the gap between the first (27<sup>th</sup> July 1876) and now third (2<sup>nd</sup> July 2006) Bishops Stortford records; **1814: *Eupithecia plumbeolata* Lead-coloured Pug**. On male, Bishops Stortford, 18<sup>th</sup> July 2003 (C. W. Plant). Gen. det. 2008 by Brian Goodey amongst other worn specimens. Second Herts locality and first record since 1979; **2051: *Lithosia quadra* Four-spotted Footman**. Hertford, a male, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2008 (Andrew Wood), is the fourth county record; **2081: *Euxoa tritici* White-line Dart**. One at Bishops Stortford on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 1956 by Geoffrey Sell extends the former geographical distribution; **2118: *Lycophotia porphyrea* True Lover's Knot**. Records from Bishops Stortford, 1954 and 1955, Geoffrey Sell extend the former geographical range of this species; **2130: *Xestia baja* Dotted Clay**. Additional historical records are: Birchanger, 1913 (Mellows) and Barrells Down, 1946 (Craufurd) – these two both in P. B. M. Allan's 1950 list for the Bishops Stortford District. The 1983 update to that earlier list notes the moth as "regularly recorded in Bishops Stortford up to 1959", but gives no supporting data. However, Geoffrey Sell has in his collection specimens from the town dated 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1954, 17<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> July 1955, 28<sup>th</sup> July 1956 and 11<sup>th</sup> August 1956. One was also taken at Patmore Heath on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1970 (Geoffrey Sell); **2137: *Eurois occulta* Great Brocade**. Additional records: Green Tye, near Bishops Stortford, 7<sup>th</sup> August 1983 and 11<sup>th</sup> August 1984 (David Wilson); Little Hadham 9<sup>th</sup> August 1985 (Geoff Senior); **2148: *Polia bombycina* Pale Shining Brown**. Patmore Heath, 20<sup>th</sup> June 1970, recorded by Geoffrey Sell, who comments that it was common in Bishops Stortford list in the 1950s. There is no doubt that this statement is correct, but there are no available dated records to provide the proof. This should serve, if nothing else, as an example of why it is important to record captures of even the most common species; **2153: *Heliophobus reticulata* Bordered Gothic**. Geoffrey Sell tells me this species was fairly common in the town [Bishops Stortford] in the 1950s, last seen in 1959 apart from the 1994 record listed. Unfortunately, there are no dated records or specimens to support this undoubtedly true statement; **2159: *Lacanobia suasa* Dog's Tooth**. Bishops Stortford, 30<sup>th</sup> May 1954 (Geoffrey Sell); **2261: *Conistra erythrocephala* Red-headed Chestnut**. Bishops Stortford, 9<sup>th</sup> October 1956 (Geoffrey Sell). First Hertfordshire record since 1865; **2290: *Simyra albovenosa* Reed Dagger**. 2 at Rye Meads 25<sup>th</sup> July 2008 and another there 26<sup>th</sup> July 2008 (Joan Childs); **2165: *Hecatera dysodea* Small Ranunculus**. Bishops Stortford, 29<sup>th</sup> July 2008 (Tom Lewis). Although a spreading species, this record, in a new part of the county, was made on the same night as 2408 and a small number of other immigrants, perhaps suggesting immigration by this species; **2315: *Dicycla oo* Heart Moth**. Additional records from Bishops Stortford on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1954, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> August 1954 and 22<sup>nd</sup> July 1955 (Geoffrey Sell).

## 2009 INDOOR MEETING

A separate notice about our annual meeting is included with this newsletter. The date is 18<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

## DO YOU HAVE AN E-MAIL

This newsletter is being e-mailed to those who have an e-mail address and paper copy posted (only) to those who apparently do not. Please report any anomalies to me (Colin Plant) as soon as possible.

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