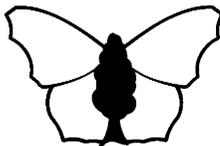


HERTFORDSHIRE AND MIDDLESEX BRANCH NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 12

DECEMBER 1997



**BUTTERFLY
CONSERVATION**

Going Forward
by Gavin Vicary



The changes that I mentioned in the last newsletter were ratified at the A.G.M. with three new committee members; John Stevens, Alan Downie and Malcolm Hull being elected. In addition Ian Small was confirmed as the Newsletter Editor and I have replaced Malcolm Newland as Chairman.

We are still a relatively young branch, but in the short time since we were formed we have reached a strong position under Malcolm's leadership. Living in a densely populated area has

Hertfordshire and Middlesex

meant that we now have a large committee, well supported by our members and that we are in a good position to fulfil the aims of the society.

Membership has increased by nearly ten percent in the past year and if the current trend continues our numbers should soon reach the 300 mark. The sales side is now actively raising funds for the branch and the Butterfly reports produced for 1996 and 1997 mean that we have an up to date knowledge of the status of our butterflies and an increased understanding concerning the occurrence of the moths. In addition the high profile shows that we attend give good publicity to our cause, as do the indoor meetings and field trips.



Rob Still
© Butterfly Conservation

One area where I feel we could become more active is on the conservation side. We have held some conservation events of our own such as those at Standalone Farm and also publicise some of those held by the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust. Further practical conservation work, however, is imperative if we are to prevent further declines and local extinctions in our branch area. Comparison of this years report with Brian Sawford's book of ten years ago shows alarming losses,

although we do at least know where the rarer species remain and hence where our conservation effort should be directed.

A Butterfly Conservation Reserve in Hertfordshire or Middlesex is something that the committee has discussed in the past. It would be a drain on resources and it is therefore important that we do not rush in to this, but find the right site. If a suitable location could be found for us to manage, however, it would provide a good focal point for the branch and there is no reason why this should not become a reality in due course.

Details of some indoor meetings appear in this newsletter and field trips for 1998 will be published shortly. I do hope our members

will continue to support these enjoyable events.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all.



New Newsletter Editor - Ian Small

As you will have seen from Gavin's introductory article, I have taken over from him as editor of the Branch newsletter. This will be a new experience for me, and so please bear with me if there are a few teething difficulties to begin with.

Remember that this is your newsletter, and the intention is to include material which you find interesting and useful. In order to do that, I need your input - tell me what you want to see and I will try to supply it. I would like to publish letters and articles from members in every issue - so please put pen to paper (or the electronic equivalent) and let me have your contributions. These can be accepted on paper, on disk in most common wordprocessing formats, or by e-mail to ian.small@lineone.net.

I also want to make the newsletter look good, so I need to know if we have any ARTISTS in the Branch - do you make line-drawings of butterflies / plants etc ? - If so, I would like to be able to include your drawings as illustrations in the newsletter. Many other Branches do this, but rather than obtaining some of their artwork, I thought I would try our own members first. In the meantime, I will add drawings and graphics as I think appropriate - please let me know if you like them / want more / want less etc.

Copy deadline for March issue is 14 February 1998

Field Trip Reports

Field Meeting at Bayfordbury, July 26th 1997 led by Rob Souter.

For this combined moth and butterfly event 15 adults and 4 children attended. A Robinson light trap had been run over night and caught 26 species of macro-moth. This is a disappointing number for this time of year despite good conditions. The best species were a couple of Poplar Hawkmoths and more interestingly a male Black Arches, an attractive and relatively large black and white moth with a red and black abdomen. This species, whose larvae feed on oak, appears to be expanding back into its former range and has been recorded at a number of sites in Herts this year.

Despite overcast skies and occasional drizzle on this typical summer 1997 day, we toured the woodland and grassland habitats of the estate. Most butterflies were resting up but this did allow a few to see a Purple Hairstreak at close range. A few female Ringlets were seen but their flight period was almost over having peaked about 2 weeks earlier than last year. Also of interest was a Roesel's Bush-Cricket which was caught and identified and we were told that this species has been spreading through Herts over the last ten years or so.

Those attending extended their thanks for being introduced to this site which normally is off limits as there are no public rights of way through the estate.

Field Meeting at Rowley Green Nature Reserve, August 2nd 1997, led by Rob Souter and Colin Joiner.

13 adults attended this years moth trapping evening. Having arrived a little early we had the opportunity to look around this Herts and Middx Wildlife Trust Reserve situated at the edge of

Greater London. Colin took us on a short walk along an acid grassland ride and through secondary oak and birch woodland. The area was formerly open grassland heath with some heather, small patches of which remain. The other interesting features are depressions in the woodland created by gravel extraction, one of which is a small sphagnum bog with some rare aquatic plants present. A new pond has also been dug and this provides a breeding site for a range of dragonfly species.

We ran both a Robinson and a Skinner light trap from a generator (the last two items being the branches recent acquisitions) and over the next three hours assembled a list of 31 macro moth and 7 micro moth species identified, with a number of other micros beyond the scope of the knowledge of those attending. Black Arches was also recorded here suggesting its range extension is widespread. Also of interest were 3 Antler Moths, and a Maiden's Blush, with great admiration for a second brood Swallow Prominent and a Drinker.

Again everyone attending had an enjoyable evening which was only



Black Arches *Lymantria monacha*

Field Meeting at Porton Down, 17 August, by Ian Small

The expectations were high for this trip after the complete wash-out experienced by the Branch at this prestigious site in 1996. Particularly as the days leading up to the visit had been characterised by clear blue skies and hot sunshine. My family and I decided to make a weekend of it, and travelled down the day before, intending to spend a couple of nights in Salisbury.

I was awoken on the Sunday morning by a rather unusual sound - rainfall ! The Branch jinx at Porton had done it again. The early rain ceased, to be replaced by an overcast, oppressive morning, as about 30 Branch members converged on the site, most having travelled down that day. Our trip was to be led by Dick Ryan, who has worked on the ranges at Porton for over 20 years, and is an authority on its wealth of natural history from personal observation, rather than from reading books. We were first shown to the Conservation Group museum where there were displays of much of the natural history and archeology of the site.

For those who have never had the opportunity to visit, or who have not heard previously about Porton, it is one of the remaining gems in the UK's natural heritage. It comprises 7000 acres of chalk downland, significant parts of which have either never been ploughed or have not been for many hundreds of years. The landscape is described as the best bronze-age industrial landscape in the UK - the site has several miles of linear ditches (bronze age boundaries), numerous barrows (burial sites) and a fine example of flint mines, almost identical to those better known examples at Grimes Graves.

However, it is for its natural history that Porton is best known, as it represents one of the country's best butterfly sites. Over the years I worked there (1982 - 1990) I personally observed over 40 species of butterfly on the site ! Having said that, it is not the number of species which is so important, but the sheer numbers of butterflies which can be seen. As transect recording was not possible on the site, I used to do some timed counts of individual species. In the first week of July it was possible to have counts of Dark-green Fritillaries of 700/hour passing within ten feet of me, whilst the

number for Marbled Whites was in the region of 1500/hour. Over my time there, I also observed the size of the colony of Silver Spotted Skippers increase from a tiny remnant population in less than one acre, to a massive sprawling population covering at least 1000 acres !.

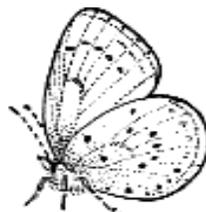
Our convoy then proceeded up onto the ranges, more in hope than in expectation and we began what we hoped would be the first of two extensive walks of the day. As the season had been an early one, I think only a single Marbled White was observed, together with a small number of very worn Dark-green Fritillaries. A number of Silver-Spotted Skippers were observed and photographed, despite the overcast conditions, together with Chalkhill Blues. Sadly, no Adonis Blues were observed. Good numbers of Autumn Gentian kept the botanists happy. In areas of longer grass, particularly where ragwort was present, numbers of Small Copper and Common Blue were seen. The highlight for many was the sighting of Grayling on one patch of broken ground. The Grayling is now very rare on chalk, being mostly observed on sandy, coastal sites, and there has even been a suggestion that separate sub-species may inhabit these different habitats.

The latter part of the morning walk was accompanied by the persistent, ever-closer, sound of thunder, and it was fortunate that everyone was able to return to their vehicles before the heavens opened. We ate our lunch sheltering from the thunderstorm, and about half the group gave up after an hour or so. The rest of us hung on, had another walk in the rain, and then we too gave up and went home.

Just to rub salt into our wounds, the next day dawned bright and clear, and temperatures reached 90 degrees !

Do Holly Blues Hide from Parasitic Wasps in the City of London ? by David Chandler

I live in Dunstable and help Butterfly Conservation by acting as transect recorder for the superb chalk downland site of Sharpenhoe Clappers in Bedfordshire, a site where I met some of the Herts. and Middx. Branch earlier this year.



Sharpenhoe Clappers has, in recent years, had regular confirmed records of the rare Dark Green Fritillary, the declining Wall and the scarce Dingy Skipper. It is also a prime site for the Chalkhill Blue which in peak season is very numerous and the Marbled White. In 1997 I recorded over 7000 butterflies and 29 different species during the 26 week recording season at Sharpenhoe, so it is well worth a trip over the border to the site.

During the week I work in Finsbury Circus in the City of London where it is quite hard to see any butterflies, a complete contrast to the Bedfordshire chalklands. However, even in this apparently hostile environment a few butterflies turn up from time to time which I notice when I go for a summer lunchtime constitutional walk around the City. I have seen Large and Small Whites in Finsbury Square and in Bunhill Fields, spotted Peacocks, Small Tortoiseshells and Red Admirals on the Buddlieas along London Wall and most interesting of all Holly Blues in and around The Barbican and near to St Paul's Cathedral Churchyard. I first thought it strange seeing a "blue" in the City, but over the years have noticed them regularly in and around the small courtyards and quiet corners near Cheapside. Some years they would be found in the City but not at Sharpenhoe.

This leads me to make a possibly controversial observation. Could it be that in the City the Holly Blue's parasitic wasp does not occur in large enough numbers to impact upon the Holly Blues? For it is most strange that when the Holly Blues are in nadir at Sharpenhoe I can still expect to find one or two around St Paul's. It follows, if this is so, that when conditions are right in the four-year parasitic cycle, do the Holly Blues then re-populate the nearby Home

Counties from their City hideaway? This theory seems to fit because in the butterfly's second generation preceding a Holly Blue year I will see Holly Blues in numbers at my mother's garden in King's Langley, Herts. but scarcely any in Bedfordshire.

A disclaimer. I do not profess to be a learned expert in butterfly ecology other than through personal observations made since my childhood days in Hertfordshire in the 1960's. So, if anyone strongly disagrees with my observations and my wild assumptions, I believe we should simply debate the issue in the magazine until a consensus is reached.

A tale of Two Transects by Gavin Vicary

In 1996 I moved house, which meant that I had to give up my transect at Balls Wood. Fortunately another more local member, Andrew Wood, was able to take this over. The house we moved to is very close to the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust nature reserve at Patmore Heath and so naturally I started a new transect on the reserve.

In the first year 24 species were seen and it was pleasing to find that butterflies such as Brimstone, Small Copper, Small Heath, Ringlet and Brown Argus were all quite common. This year I carried on with the transect but also thought that it would give an interesting comparison to conduct a second transect close to where I work in London. Nearby is an area of the Lee Valley Regional Park called Tottenham Marsh and so I started another transect, of similar length to the one at Patmore Heath, that I could walk during my lunch hour. The two sites are quite different and therefore a direct comparison between them would not be fair. Rather, a more general indication is given of what might be found on a nature reserve in a rural location to the north of our branch area as opposed to one in a heavily built area of London within the North circular Road.

Hertfordshire and Middlesex

Patmore Heath is an ancient acid grassland heath, traditionally grazed for hundreds of years, with a number of ponds that have unfortunately been dry for the majority of the time since I moved there. This century, grazing has gradually declined and large areas of scrub and oak woodland have developed. The wildlife trust were able to reintroduce some sheep grazing for a while, but sadly this has now been allowed to lapse, although local volunteers regularly meet to remove small areas of scrub for the benefit of the wildlife that requires heathland conditions.

Tottenham Marsh is a small green remnant that remains in a heavily built up area. It is surrounded by busy roads, housing, industrial estates and Tottenham Football Ground is visible in the distance. Managed by the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, who leave large grassy areas uncut, it is adjacent to the River Lee and its relief channels and is hence a favourite spot with fishermen as well as cyclists and local people who are often seen walking their dogs.

Before I started the walk at Tottenham Marsh I thought that it might be possible for all the species found at Patmore Heath, with the possible exception of Purple Hairstreak to occur at Tottenham. I suspected, however that the likes of Brimstone, Small Copper, Small Heath, Ringlet and Brown Argus might not all be found. In actual fact only Brown Argus, which became much more common in our branch area during 1996, was seen. In addition a big surprise was the absence of the Gatekeeper. This butterfly does have a somewhat patchy distribution in London, but as it is common further north in the Lee Valley Park I thought that it would be at Tottenham due to the natural links that occur along the river margins.

A total of 22 butterflies were seen this year at Patmore Heath compared to 17 at Tottenham Marsh. The Patmore Heath total is two down on last year as it was a poorer year for migrants; I have not seen a single Painted Lady or Clouded Yellow anywhere this year.

The actual number of butterflies seen during the transect season was highest for Patmore Heath but this was due to this transect having less missed weeks. The wet weather in June made it particularly

difficult to get a full set of data for the Tottenham transect. Interestingly the average number of butterflies seen per week at the two sites was virtually identical; 55.9 at Patmore Heath as opposed to 55.8 at Tottenham Marsh.

The numbers of Speckled Wood, Large Skipper, Large White, Holly Blue, Comma, Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock and Red Admiral did not differ greatly from site to site. Green-veined White was far more abundant at Tottenham Marsh, presumably preferring the damper conditions. Small and Essex Skippers were also far more common than at Patmore Heath, where the ratio of Essex Skippers was particularly low. Meadow Brown and Common Blue on the other hand were far more common at Patmore Heath.



There are no mature Oaks at Tottenham Marsh and it was therefore thought that Purple Hairstreak might be absent. In fact a single specimen was seen, I assume as a result of areas being planted with small native saplings by the lee Valley Regional Park Authority. Holly Blue was only seen once at each location and it would appear that this has gone back in to cyclic decline, caused by parasitic wasps, as I saw it far more frequently during 1996. Small Copper was again very frequent at Patmore Heath, which is one of the most important sites in the branch region for this attractive small butterfly.

Full details of the two transects will be given in the 1997 butterfly report when it is published. It was interesting to find that the number of butterflies seen at two extremes of our branch area did not differ dramatically. As expected, however, the number of species did and those occurring at Patmore Heath and not Tottenham Marsh may well be the ones most at risk as further development takes place in Hertfordshire and Middlesex.

Hertfordshire and Middlesex

Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust Launch “BUTTERFLY SURVIVAL”

Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust have recently launched an appeal to raise funds for butterfly conservation activities in this area. They describe “Butterfly Survival” as an important program of butterfly survey work, habitat restoration and species reintroduction. The work is focussed on two Trust reserves:

Aldbury Nowers (Duchie’s Piece) has been the only location for Duke of Burgundy in Herts for many years, but its presence there is in jeopardy. Funding is needed to support survey work on the butterfly and the growth of its foodplants (cowslip and primrose). Female Dukes are very particular about where they lay their eggs, and foodplants need to be in partial shade or will not be used.



Ball’s Wood, is in need of urgent management work to support species like the White Admiral, Purple Hairstreak and Ringlet. Funding is sought for activities of coppice restoration and ride management, together with the start of a feasibility study into potential species reintroductions. Reintroductions require extensive research, planning and monitoring in order to have any chance of success (the vast majority fail for one reason or another), and so a preliminary feasibility study is appropriate.

We will be discussing with the Trust how we can be of assistance in these activities, and to offer them the expertise which Butterfly Conservation can bring to these matters.

If you wish to make a donation, or to ask for further information, then please contact the Trust, at Grebe House, St. Michael’s St., St. Albans, AL3 4SN. (Tel. 01727 858901)

New Butterfly Species Found in Garden Geraniums

As reported in a recent press release from Butterfly Conservation, and which resulted in TV coverage in the 'Newsround' programme, a common Southern African butterfly, the tiny Geranium Bronze, was discovered breeding in a Sussex garden at the end of September !

One of our Society members made the discovery when he spotted half a dozen of the butterflies in his garden. Since then, he has observed them breeding, with large numbers of eggs laid on cultivated Geranium plants (the caterpillar's foodplant in South Africa). It is believed that the Geranium plants and the butterfly were imported from Holland.

This is the first record of the Geranium Bronze breeding in the UK, and it was only in 1989 that it was first recorded in Europe, when it established itself in the Balearic Islands. This global spread of the butterfly is the direct result of its transportation in cultivated Geranium plants from Southern Africa for the horticulture trade. Thus the presence of the butterfly north of the equator is entirely man-made, due to the popularity of Geraniums and Pelargoniums as garden and window-box flowers.

In the Balearic Islands, the butterfly has reached pest proportions, because there it has no natural predators. It is too early to tell whether the Geranium Bronze will become firmly established here. In Southern Africa, the butterfly is continuously brooded, and the likelihood of it surviving our winters is remote. Geranium plants cannot tolerate British winters, and need to be kept away from frost.

So look out if you have obtained Geraniums this year, or are planning to get some next year - you might have an unexpected bonus. Be aware, however, that under the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act, it is an offence to deliberately release 'alien' species into the UK.

Hertfordshire and Middlesex

AGM Report, by Norma Dean

This year's AGM took place on 15 October at the Cross St. Centre, St. Albans, and was attended by 21 members. The meeting was led by Chairman-elect, Gavin Vicary, who indicated that he had taken over following the resignation of Malcolm Newland, due to his wife's illness. Gavin voiced everyone's thoughts as he thanked both Malcolm and Lindsay for all their work over the years.

John Hollingdale reported on the annual Branch accounts, which are currently in a very healthy state. John Murray was congratulated on raising £1850 towards the publication of last year's butterfly report. It was agreed that future publications could only maintain the amount of colour and graphics if similar financial support was forthcoming.

Terry Rodbard and others were thanked for manning the Branch's stand at events at Hatfield House, Capel Manor, St. Albans and Long Marston.

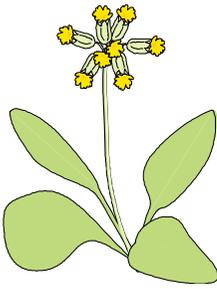
Margaret Noakes reported that the number of Branch members had increased over the year, and now stood at 286, 75 of whom were senior citizens.

Branch officers were then elected, with all those offering to stand being duly re-elected. New committee members elected were John Stevens, who is taking on the role of Branch Organiser, Alan Downie and Malcolm Hull. Gavin Vicary was elected as Chairman and Ian Small as newsletter editor.

During Any Other Business, discussions were held on butterfly records, the Chelsea Flower Show, Field Trips, the newsletter and use of the Branch moth trap.

Following a break for refreshments, the evening concluded with a show of member's slides.

Good News ! - Chelsea Flower Show, 1998

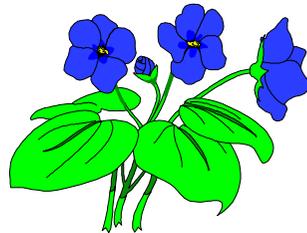


As many of you will know, the Society has had a stand at Chelsea Flower Show for a number of years now. Indeed, some of you will have helped to man the stand ! This stand was organised by the London Branch prior to the split, and since then by the Surrey and South West London Branch. However, next year, that responsibility, and honour, is down to us. So early next year we will be putting together detailed plans for the stand and asking for volunteers to help man it - contact John Stevens if you are interested.

The Society has named 1998 as 'Gardens for Butterflies' year, and the highlight of the year will be at Chelsea, where we hope to have a Butterfly Garden to mark the event. At the time of writing, all the signs are that this will be going ahead, but we are awaiting the final written confirmation.

If all goes well, therefore, the Garden will attract many hundreds of visitors to our stand who might not normally find us. So don't expect that it will be a relaxing day out !

Our challenge for next year, within the Branch as well as nationally, is to convert the undoubted wide interest the public has in seeing butterflies in their gardens, into a substantially increased membership of this Society. Although that will be a year-long exercise, the week at Chelsea will provide us with national coverage in the press and on television. We are unlikely ever to have such an opportunity again to reach such a mass audience in such a short space of time, so let's all grab it with both hands and transform this Society into one of mass appeal.



Moth recording in 1997 by Rob Souter

Having recently persuaded the rest of the committee of our need for a generator and light trap to assist with moth recording, I managed to get out into the field this season to see what moths can be found away from the usual back garden assortment.

The main site I visited was Symonshyde Great Wood near St. Albans. This was a large ancient oak woodland which has since been largely planted with conifers. However, a remnant of oak woodland remains and is managed by the Countryside Management Service. I later discovered that the site just lies within the boundary covered in 'The Larger Moths of the London Area' (Colin Plant, 1993), being the north-west most square. There were some 200 records for the site already but I do not yet know the origin of these.

Although I only made 5 visits (2 in April and 3 in July) I was catching species not previously recorded here and they just happened to be seemingly rare species. These were Maple Prominent, Black Arches, Pine Hawk-moth and Poplar Lutestring all recorded as Category 3 by Colin Plant. These species are all expanding their range. The Buff Footman, a category 4 species, was also taken.

Paul Waring recently reported in British Wildlife that the Maple Prominent, which was formerly considered nationally scarce, is now being recorded from many more squares, although the boundaries of its distribution in the south-east are essentially unchanged. It is believed that although the larval foodplant is field maple, the species is now exploiting sycamore and even exotic maples.

Colin Plant wrote in the 1997 report by John Murray that whilst Pine Hawk-moth was expanding, two records of Black Arches in Broxbourne were only the second and third for the south of the county. I did find Pine Hawk-moth and Black Arches at two other sites (Bayfordbury and Rowley Green) this year, demonstrating that their expansion is widespread across the south of Hertfordshire at least.

The Poplar Lutestring has larvae which feed on aspen and other

Populus species in the south. I believe this species is also expanding its range but have no further details.

Unlike butterflies, certain species of moth appear to respond to environmental change very rapidly and populations will expand and contract their range in only a few years. Some of the species reported here would appear to be responding to increased availability of larval foodplants or adapting to related species. There is obviously still much to be learnt about the ecology of moths.

The Buff Footman, however, is probably the only genuinely rare species caught, and as a lichen feeder is probably confined to ancient woodland sites. It favours coarse lichens growing on Yews, although other trees are used, and is a very local species with a stronghold in the New Forest (Emmett & Heath, 1983).

Unfortunately I was unable to return to Symonshyde this year but it would seem to be worthwhile in the future to record in other months and hopefully turn up some more treats.

In contrast, I also thought I'd see what might turn up in my own garden in urban Stevenage, with its surrounding bright street and security lights, small gardens and large areas of tarmac. I was surprised at what was being attracted to the Robinson trap run from the house for a couple of hours on some 10 evenings from April to July. With some 50 species recorded I wish to use my experience to encourage those of you who wish to record moths but don't think your location is suitable to surprise yourself as to what is flying around your neighbourhood after dark.

Moth Recording Network

For the benefit of those of you who weren't able to make this year's AGM, I suggested that I was considering setting up a network of people in the branch who were interested in regular moth recording at sites around the branch area.

Since we now have a generator and two light traps I am interested in trapping as often as possible at a number of sites. Although I plan to have 4 moth trapping events for all members to attend, which will be advertised in the newsletter, it would also be

Hertfordshire and Middlesex

desirable to be able to arrange evenings at short notice, when the weather prospects might be better predicted. If we can visit some key sites around the branch area then different people will be able to attend as convenient. Therefore, if you wish to be included in the network then contact me, preferably in writing, including a phone number, and I will call you when I'm next going out.

You may even suggest areas in which you wish to record but have been prevented from doing so because of lack of equipment.

And finally, don't stop now. Just because those sensitive, sun loving, warmth seeking butterflies have adopted their respective overwintering strategies for the next few months, it doesn't mean there's nothing to see. Some moths are just starting their flight period and will be around for the winter. The November Moth, December Moth, Winter Moth, Feathered Thorn, Scarce Umber, Mottled Umber, The Chestnut and Dark Chestnut are just some species on the wing during November or December. And immediately into the new year start looking for the March Moth, Pale Brindled Beauty, Spring Usher, Early Moth and Grey Shoulder-knot.

All moth records can be sent to me whenever you like but before the end of January if you want to be included in the annual report.

Happy mothing.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Monday, 9 March 1998. A talk on Moths, by David Brown, at The Canon's Room, Harrow Arts Centre, Hatch End, at 8 pm. Joint meeting with the Harrow Natural History Society. Admission 50p

Tuesday, 28 April 1998. "The Butterfly Year" by Gavin Vicary. A joint talk with the RSPB, to be held at the United Reformed Church Hall, Mill Lane, Broxbourne at 8 pm. Admission £1.20

Conservation Dates



Conservation work is one of the most important activities of the Society, as loss or neglect of suitable habitats is one of the major reasons for the decline in many of our butterflies as well as other wildlife.

Below are a series of dates across Herts. and Middlesex where you can help with essential management that aims to maintain the correct conditions on these sites for the wildlife that inhabits them. Several of the dates are run by the HMWT on their nature reserves.

Therfield Heath, TL 335400 First Sunday of each month from 10.00 a.m. - 1 p.m. Details from Vincent Thomson (01763) 341443.

Duchies Piece (Aldbury Nowers) SP 952131. Third Sunday of each month. Meet 10.00 a.m. in the lay-by, near Tring station.

Hertford Heath TL 354111. For details ring Anthony Oliver on (01992) 583404.

Fryent Country Park - details from Leslie Williams at the Brent Ecology Unit on (0181) 206 0492

Patmore Heath TL 443257. Meet at 10.00 a.m. on the last Sunday of each month. Further details from Gavin Vicary (01279) 771933

Hertfordshire and Middlesex

Committee Members

Chairman: Gavin Vicary

Hillside Cottage, Patmore Heath, Albury, Herts. SG11 2LS.....(01279) 771933

Branch Organiser: John Stevens

3 Scarborough Road, London N9 8AT (0181) 804 6918

Secretary: Norma Dean

2 Seymour Crescent, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP2 5DS(01442) 252435

Field Trip Officer and Treasurer: John Hollingdale

36 Southfield Park, North Harrow, Middx. HA2 6HE.....(0181) 863 2077

Newsletter Editor: Ian Small

59 Penn Way, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 2SH..... (01462) 677654

Conservation Advisor: Brian Sawford

38 Northfields, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 4QX.....(01462) 672287

Records Collator: John Murray

Field End, Marshalls Heath, Wheathampstead, Herts. AL4 8HS..... (01582) 833544

Membership Secretary: Margaret Noakes

Old Church Cottage, Chapel Lane, Long Marston, Herts HP23 4QT (01296) 660072

Sales Officer: Terence Rodbard

23 Breadcroft Lane, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 4TE (01582) 761998

Publicity Officer: Phil MacMurdie

143 Albany Park Ave., Enfield, Middx. EN3 5NY..... (0181) 804 9427

Moth Recorder: Rob Souter

29 Woodstock, Knebworth, Herts. SG3 6EA..... (01438) 816091

Education Officer: Gerry Rirsch

10 Gibbons Close, St. Albans, Herts. AL4 9EP(01727) 864387

Malcolm Hull

11 Abbey View Road, St. Albans, Herts. AL3 4QL (01727) 857893

Alan Downie

11 Fowley Mead Park, Longcroft Drive, Holdbrook,
Waltham Cross, Herts. EN8 7SX..... (01992) 660829

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