

MOTHS OF DORSET

NEWSLETTER NO 4

22 FEBRUARY 1997

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the fourth Moths of Dorset Newsletter. Yet again, welcome to a host more joining the network this year, including a pleasing number of ornithologists seeking to broaden their horizons and branching into moths.

We have received lists of 1996 records from most people, despite the year only having ended recently. Thank you to all of you who have sent in records, however brief or comprehensive; they are all wanted and gratefully received.

1997 is likely to be the penultimate year before we start to collate records and think seriously about a format for a publication, and we are still on target for a Moths of Dorset book for some time in 1999.

STATUS OF MACROMOTH SPECIES IN DORSET

In Newsletter #3 we put forward a provisional conservation status for each of the 692 macromoth species observed in the county. There are a few changes and additions to make to the Appendices in Newsletter #3 in the light of this year's recording or from information we now have. Changes are as follows:

Add 1877 Waved Carpet to Appendix A1 and delete from Appendix A2

Add 1996 Alder Kitten to Appendix A1 and delete from Appendix A2

Add 2022 Oak Processionary to Appendix A2 as Vagrant/Accidental (National status) and Migrant (Dorset migrant status)

Add 2046 Pigmy Footman to Appendix A2 as RDB3 (National status) and Migrant (Dorset migrant status)

Add 2140 White-marked to Appendix A1 as Notable b (National status)

Add 2376 Blair's Wainscot to Appendix A1 as pRDBK (National status) and DR (Dorset rare status)

Add 2396 Rosy Marbled to Appendix A1 and delete from Appendix A2.

Explanations for these changes appear in the text below, save for the Pigmy Footman which was simply omitted in error from the immigrant list last year.

Appendix B1 to this Newsletter provides an update to Appendix B1 in Newsletter #3, and includes 'Good News 1996' macromoth records.

STATUS OF MICROMOTH SPECIES IN DORSET

Phil has now produced a similar list to the macros for the critical indigenous micromoths ie. those species we believe to be breeding (or used to breed) in the county which are of conservation concern (see Appendix A). Almost none of these have been given a formal Red Data Book status, so the RDB statuses must be considered as provisional. The status of all micromoth species was reviewed by the then Nature Conservancy Council in 1984, but in the last few years the Joint Nature Conservation Committee have commissioned further reviews of some families and this information is included here. Phil has made a few personal alterations where a species either ought or ought not to be considered nationally scarce, based on knowledge gained countrywide since the first review in 1984.

In case you have forgotten may we remind you of the categories of rarity:

- **RDB1, RDB2, RDB3** - the top three national rarity categories, in descending order of rarity, as well as **RDBK** - considered rare, but insufficiently known, and **RDBI** - considered rare, but not enough information to assign a class.
- **Notable a** and **Notable b** - found in fewer than thirty 10 kilometre squares nationally, and, in between thirty and one hundred 10 kilometre squares nationally, respectively.
- **Notable** - estimated to occur in between 16 and 100 10km squares.

An attempt has also been made to propose a **Dorset Rare (DR)** status (common or local nationally but observed in three or fewer sites in the county), within Appendix B2, the 'Good News Micros'. The DR status, also used for the macromoth species in Newsletter #3, highlights those species considered common or local on a national scale, but for which there are three or fewer sites in Dorset. The importance of species categorised in this way is likely to be overlooked if only the national status is considered. At this early juncture the DR status is very provisional.

No attempt has been made in this Newsletter to provide a separate list of immigrant micromoths, though immigrant status in Dorset is shown adjacent to the national status where we consider this appropriate in Dorset (eg. pyrales).

The sixth column in the Appendix A provides the reader with very brief details of the locations for each species, and most recent dates recorded, where known. A general habitat requirement has been added where this is helpful.

We hope this list will prove as useful as the equivalent macrolist in helping newcomers to micros to gain confidence in recording through knowing which are the possible scarcities in Dorset.

Identifying micros

Many of you now keep a fair range of micros you see for identification. Phil has cleared the backlog of most specimens caught in 1996 (except species requiring genitalia examination), and is eagerly awaiting 1997s. John Langmaid remains willing to help out, as do Peter and Martin Cade.

DATA CAPTURE

Most of you will either have sent your records to Peter, Phil or DERC. All of these post boxes are happy to receive them and we exchange records to make sure each knows what has been received. Please note that DERC has moved to: The Barracks, Bridport Road, Dorchester, DT1 1RN (Tel: 01 305 261139)

The Dorset Environmental Records' Centre (DERC)

Data capture of Macromoths

DERC has now entered all 1980-1995 records of critical indigenous macro species onto its Recorder database. A report on these species was compiled last spring by Richard Surry with Peter's help. This report ensured that your Dorset records are included in the forthcoming national review of rare and scarce macrolepidoptera by Paul Waring (for JNCC). Alison Stewart, DERC computer officer, was then able to transfer all these records electronically into Recorder. The technique she has developed should enable most computerised records to be entered directly in future. David Jeffers is now using Recorder in conjunction with DERC and we intend that he should enter historical or other non-computerised data.

Apart from the Recorder based critical indigenous macromoth species, Peter continues to add all 'regular full count' trap records into Excel. Excel's functionality and power provides an ideal tool for generating moth population statistics from trap counts. Average emergence and finish dates, brood ratios, and species ranking are now available for all sites where regular trap counts have been undertaken for five years or more.

Data capture of Micros

Phil has abandoned the Recorder database in favour of using Excel spreadsheets and has begun entering lists onto Excel for direct transfer to Recorder in due course. Some of the Parkinson Curtis manuscript data has been abstracted, John Langmaid's records are done as are parts of Phil's own diaries. Peter's micro records are already on Excel. David Pearman and Phil have extracted records from the extensive Cyril Diver archive held at the Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Furzebrook.

1996 RECAP

Indigenous Highlights

The year saw many exciting and important discoveries in the county. Below are some of them.

Two male Blair's Wainscots were trapped by Steve Hales and Derek Hallett on private land in early October. A third, a female, came to Phil's ultra-violet lamp two nights later at the same locality. It seems extremely likely the species is breeding in Dorset at this site since the area is full of its foodplant, Lesser Pond Sedge. The species was previously found at Freshwater on the Isle Of Wight until 1950 when its habitat was drained and then burnt, and the moth became an extinct resident. Astonishingly, at the Dorset locality, Phil discovered a new micro to Britain, *Cosmopterix scribaiella*. Whilst searching by tilley lamp for the Blair's Wainscot, he noticed some leaf-mines in common reed he didn't recognise. With the kind assistance of John Langmaid and the Dutch lepidopterist, Sjaak Koster, we are confident of the identity of the mines, though we shalln't know for sure until the adults emerge in 1997. Superlatives would not do justice to the importance of these finds and, of course, the importance of the locality.

White Spot larvae were found for the first time in Dorset, feeding on Nottingham Catchfly seed capsules on coastal chalk cliffs by Phil. The colony may have been the source for the singletons trapped by Julian Clarke at Durlston in 1992 and by Steve Barrett at Bere Regis in 1995. The chalk cliff colony in Dorset mirrors that in Devon whilst all others in Britain (Hants., Sussex and Kent) occur where the plant grows on shingle.

Two other micros found in 1996 are worthy of mention. The first, *Coleophora ochrea*, was found by David and Anita Pearman at Punfield Cove, Swanage. The species was last noted 'near Swanage' in 1976. A subsequent visit to the site revealed the case-bearing larvae to be spectacularly abundant on the leaves of the foodplant, common rock-rose. There are perhaps 10 colonies of the moth in Britain today. The second species is *Scythris empetrella*, found by Phil and John Langmaid at Studland, where the larvae feed of heathers from within a tube made of silk and sand grains. It appears this is the first record of the species this century. Phil and John were following up a 19th century record from Studland by ER Banks.

In Newsletter #3, we highlighted the plight of the Speckled Footman. After many nights of persistence, and countless litres of petrol in the generator, efforts paid off when a single moth was trapped by Peter on July 26. This was on a heathland site which is a stronghold of the Silver-studded Blue butterfly. We are hopeful that our efforts in communicating our concern over the status of this species within conservation groups will be rewarded. The Speckled Footman is already in the UK Biodiversity Plan, highlighting its plight nationally, but a bid for joint funding from English Nature at Peterborough, and Dorset County Council, may be considered favourably. The money would be used to research into the ecology of the moth at its known location, and to work more thoroughly the sites where it used to occur. As mentioned in the last Newsletter, the fate of the species is evidently still very much in the balance, despite the good news of the find.

Chris Manley took advantage of Durlston Country Park's kind offer of the use of their big generator in 1996. Chris is fortunate in having access to the Trigon estate, and the many different habitat's that comprise it. By the end of the year Chris had amassed a very impressive list of macro and micro moth species for Trigon. On one warm night in June he trapped five Tormentil feeding Rosy Marbled moths on a bracken clad dry heathland site. The species has been trapped on two occasions before in Dorset. The first occasion a second brood immigrant at Scar Bank at the end of August in 1933 (the UK species are on the wing only until early July). The second specimen was trapped in VC 11 at St Ives by Julian Clarke in 1989, and may have originated from a colony nearby. The species is primarily a south-east England species, and until the 1980's was to be found no further west than Southampton. The Trigon record is certainly a substantial westward extension of its known range and it is possible the species is spreading. This is certainly one to look out for in situations where good numbers of Tormentil grow.

One enigmatic species that was searched for in 1995 without luck was the Reed Leopard. This species was last seen in Dorset in 1938 (DERC has several more recent records, incl. by D W H ffennell who was a reliable recorder). Three imagines came to Peter's light in July. The nearest county where the species occurs is in Cambridgeshire, so the rediscovery of the Reed Leopard in Dorset is very pleasing. The site in Dorset is also the only one in Britain on acid soils; all the East Anglian populations are known from alkaline soils.

Maureen Spencer, Steven Hales and Derek Hallett have worked hard over the past few years at Hooke Park, and their efforts in 1996 have really paid off. In the spring, the first verified record for Dorset of the White-marked was trapped by them at the Hooke site. During July, four Waved Carpet moths were trapped at the same site by them, and more were trapped subsequently five kilometres away near Powerstock by Ray Cook and John Chainey. This species has been recorded only once before in Dorset at Scar Bank by AGB Russell in the middle of July 1947 (a very hot summer), and it is assumed that this was an immigrant.

A 'Migrant' status was assigned to the Alder Kitten in the last Newsletter. This may have to be added to the critical indigenous list in view of Phil trapping a singleton at Melbury Park where ancient Alders grow. Phil also turned up a Double-line at the same site - this species has only been trapped once before in 1979 by Rob Dyke about one kilometre away at Evershot, as well as the Lunar Thorn - only the second recent site record for Dorset. This superb locality was also highlighted in Newsletter #3 when Phil turned up the Dotted Carpet there.

Rees Cox is evidently making the most of his retirement from English Nature. Rees was able to trap frequently at home, and duly recorded a number of interesting species. One of the more spectacular was a Flame Brocade on 23 October. There has been some debate relating to the high frequency of recent records - eight trapped in the Swanage area in five out of the past seven years. It may just be possible that this species is breeding in this part of Dorset (it used to breed in Sussex last century). Another exotic species which may also have got an antenna hold in Dorset is the Great Dart. This species has been trapped by Martin Cade on Portland in 1994, 1995 and again in 1996.

Migrant Highlights

To those who cursed the cold late 1996 spring, it would have seemed highly unlikely that the coming summer would yield any significant immigrations. Amazingly, 1996 easily rivalled 1995 for migrant year of the decade. The principle immigrations occurred in June and August, and yielded some phenomenal butterfly and moth records.

The early June influx is best summed up by reproducing Martin Cade's Portland migrant records at the material time. On 19 June, Martin recorded a staggering 96 Small Mottled Willow moths (Phil recorded 21 on the same night in the middle of Weymouth).

JUNE	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th	7 th	8 th	9 th	10 th	11 th	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th
Silver Y	5	2	17	369	225	140	91	55	42	71	41	27	18
Dark Sword-grass		1	2	3	9	9	17	8	4	8	5	2	4
<i>Udea ferrugalis</i>		1	3	11	4	4	12	6	15	11	18	4	10
Pearly Underwing			1	17	26	28	29	18	11	10	14	5	6
<i>Nomophila noctuella</i>			3	113	213	108	202	84	91	85	74	34	49
<i>Plutella xylostella</i>			6	83	297	56	67	25	51	5	9	10	4
Small Mottled Willow				3	2	1	-	-	2	-	1	-	1
Bordered Straw				1	23	9	10	1	2	9	6	3	2
Gem				1	3	1	-	-	-	1	1	-	1
Ni					2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Delicate					1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-
Scarce Bordered Straw					3	-	2	-	-	1	-	-	-
Humming-bird Hawk								1	-	2	1	-	-
Striped Hawk										1	-	-	-
Cosmopolitan											1	-	-
Convolvulus Hawk											1	-	-
White-speck													1

During the first three weeks of August, the UK experienced a phenomenal immigration of many unusual and often rare macro and micro moth species.

We know of one new migrant macro moth species for Dorset, caught at Worth Matravers by Martin Townsend on August 18/19 - this was the Oak Processionary, a denizen of central and southern Europe. On the same night, Roy Eden trapped his second Pale Shoulder in just over two years (see Newsletter #2). Four nights earlier, David Brown trapped a Passenger at Portland - this is only the second time the species has been seen in Dorset, the first trapped by Peter Davey at St Alban's Head in September 1983. The micro moth, *Cydia amplana*, was recorded throughout August with about 20 individuals being caught across the county (and several in Devon) - prior to this year only a couple of specimens had ever been seen in the UK. A single Dumeril's Rustic was caught at Portland in mid September by Martin Cade, and this constitutes the second Dorset record for this species - the first was trapped at Scar Bank by AGB Russell more than 50 years ago.

The following are some of the more interesting records from Dorset during August.

DATE	NUMBER	SPECIES	LOCALITY	RECORDER
05-Aug	1	Bloxworth Snout	Portland	Martin Cade
	5	<i>Cydia amplana</i>	Portland	Martin Cade
	1	Great Dart	Portland	Martin Cade
	3	Mere Wainscot	Portland	Martin Cade
	20	Small Mottled Willow	Portland	Martin Cade
07-Aug	4	<i>Cydia amplana</i>	Portland	Martin Cade
	1	<i>Yponomeuta rorella</i>	Higher Hyde	Phil Sterling
	1	<i>Yponomeuta evonymella</i>	Higher Hyde	Phil Sterling
	1	Ni	Higher Hyde	Phil Sterling
	1	Clouded Magpie	Higher Hyde	Phil Sterling
	1	Long-tailed Blue (butterfly!)	Batcombe Down	Andy Elliot
08-Aug	1	<i>Cydia amplana</i>	Wareham	Peter Davey
	1	<i>Agdistis bennetii</i>	Gaunt's Common	Peter Davey
	1	<i>Oegoconia caradjai</i>	Gaunt's Common	Peter Davey
12-Aug	1	Devonshire Wainscot	Portland	Martin Cade
	~3400	Silver Y	Portland	Martin Cade
13-Aug	46	Small Mottled Willow	Portland	Martin Cade
14-Aug	1	Passenger	Portland	David Brown
17-Aug	1	Barred Rivuet	Gaunt's Common	Peter Davey
	1	<i>Evergestis extimalis</i>	Portland	Martin Cade
18-Aug	1	Ash Pug	Portland	Martin Cade
	3	<i>Cydia amplana</i>	Portland	Martin Cade
	2	<i>Cydia amplana</i>	Worth Matravers	Martin Townsend
	1	Devonshire Wainscot	Portland	Martin Cade
	1	<i>Margaritia sticticalis</i>	Gaunt's Common	Peter Davey
	1	<i>Adaina microdactyla</i>	Gaunt's Common	Peter Davey
	1	<i>Psoricoptera gibbosella</i>	Gaunt's Common	Peter Davey
	1	<i>Cochylis molliculana</i>	Gaunt's Common	Peter Davey
	1	Oak Processionary	Worth Matravers	Martin Townsend
	1	Pale Shoulder	West Bexington	Roy Eden
	~2000	Siver Y	Gaunt's Common	Peter Davey
19-Aug	1	<i>Gymnancyla canella</i>	Christchurch	Mike Jeffs
	1	<i>Evergestis extimalis</i>	Worth Matravers	Martin Townsend
	1	<i>Pierci alismana</i>	Portland	Martin Cade
	1	Great Brocade	Swanage	Rees Cox
	1	<i>Margaritia sticticalis</i>	Worth Matravers	Martin Townsend
	2	<i>Cydia amplana</i>	Portland	Martin Cade
20-Aug	1	<i>Cydia amplana</i>	Abbotsbury	Stephen Hales, Derek Hallett
	1	<i>Palpita unionalis</i>	Portland	Martin Cade
	1	<i>Pyrausta ostrinalis</i>	Roy Eden	West Bexington
	1	<i>Platytes alpinella</i>	Portland	Martin Cade

This year must also have been one of the best one's for the Striped Hawk-moth. They were seen in June and again in August, possibly having bred here or on the near continent. Roy Eden saw five at West Bexington over the season, and then capped this with a Silver-striped Hawk-moth on 16 October. What it is to live in sight of the sea!

A new publication called *Atropos* has recently been issued with the aim of focusing on recent butterfly, moth and dragonfly immigrations in the UK. Peter has done some backtracking work for the more interesting immigrations to the UK in 1996, and these are reproduced in *Atropos* #2 together with potential places of origin. *Atropos* #1 and *Atropos* #2 also contain colour photographs of migrant macro species not featured in Skinner's 'Moths of the British Isles' book. *Atropos* #2 has recently been published; if anyone is interested in obtaining copies, please contact Mark Tunmore whose address is given at the end of this newsletter.

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION

1996 Events

Once again, in collaboration with Butterfly Conservation Dorset Branch, we ran a number of public moth trap events spread across the county. These were at:

Stubhampton. The moth trapping preceded a walk around Ashmore forest to look at the work undertaken to increase the Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterfly colony there. Unfortunately, May 1996 will go down as one of the coldest May's on record, and the night in question (24/25) was cold. However, Stubhampton is a first class site and never disappoints, and a sprinkling of prominent and other showy spring species were in the traps for people to enjoy. The walk itself produced some surprises - a Drab Looper was seen by Bill Shreeves, several *Pancalia leuwenhoekella* micromoths were observed near to its Hairy Violet foodplant, the plume *Adaina microdactyla* was flushed up and a Scarlet Tiger caterpillar was seen walking across the path nearby (the last two species are Hemp Agrimony feeders).

Melbury Down. Melbury is yet another gem in the Dorset crown, a flowery chalk downland site tended and cared for by the National Trust. Two traps were put out on 19 July, a very warm night with a south-east wind. 107 moth species were recorded, with 400 Large Yellow Underwings, nearly 200 Dark Arches, 8 Small Elephant Hawks and 6 Privet Hawks. Notable species included the Chalk Carpet, the Shaded Pug, the Toadflax Pug, the Galium Carpet and the Blackneck. The Varied Coronet turned up, the second record for Dorset, the first being trapped by Roy Eden in 1992. Two further specimens were trapped by Bill Shreeves at Shaftesbury and Steve Barrett at Bere Regis, and would seem to indicate a continental origin. During the walk, many Five-spot Burnets (sub-species *palustrella*) were seen together with a few Foresters and several Chimney Sweepers. A Humming-bird Hawk was spotted at rest on a chalk embankment by Bill Shreeves as well.

Holton Lee. On 15 June Phil was invited to show moths caught during the previous night to Princess Anne and disabled children, as part of the celebrations to mark the opening of The Barn at Holton Lee near Wareham. The owner, Sir Christopher Lees, is particularly keen to find out what is on the land which contains woodland, heathland, saltmarsh and reedbed. Of most interest that night was a single specimen of Flame Wainscot, though the children and Princess Royal were more interested showy species such as Cream-spot Tiger, Pine Hawk-moth and Elephant Hawk-moth.

Eype's Mouth. Phil and others hoped to see Morris's Wainscot at Eype's Mouth on 4 July, although none appeared. Perhaps the cold spring had delayed their emergence well into July? Only 38 species turned up on a cool evening, with the micro *Epiblema cnicicolana* being the most interesting.

Portland. Martin Cade entertained a dozen people at the Portland Bird Observatory on the morning of 13 July. We were between the main immigrations of June and August, but we saw a few resident species not normally found inland such as Crescent Dart, Four-spotted, the beautiful micromoth *Cynaeda dentalis*, and *Pelochrista caecimaculana*.

Melbury Park. On the morning of 14 July at Melbury Park, after a very hot night, expectations were high. Unfortunately the trap was full of Dark Arches (a common sight in most traps in 1996), and they had obviously prevented other species from entering the trap by their sheer volume. Amongst the dust we could identify just 67 species. Of interest were two micros only, *Bryotropha basaltinella* and *Eudonia delunella*.

Lulworth. A cool evening prevented a good species list at Stair Hole, Lulworth on 25 July. The only migrant was *Ancylois oblitella*, but people were pleased to see both 'elephant hawk-moths', as well as Peach Blossom and Bordered Sallow.

West Bexington. Roy and Sue Eden hosted a select bunch on the night and morning of the 28/29 September. Again we missed the immigrants, although both 'bordered straws' had been seen regularly until then, and were both probably breeding in their garden at West Bexington. It is always good to see Notable species in numbers though, such as the 41 Feathered Brindles.

Many thanks to those who hosted events.

RECORDING IN 1997

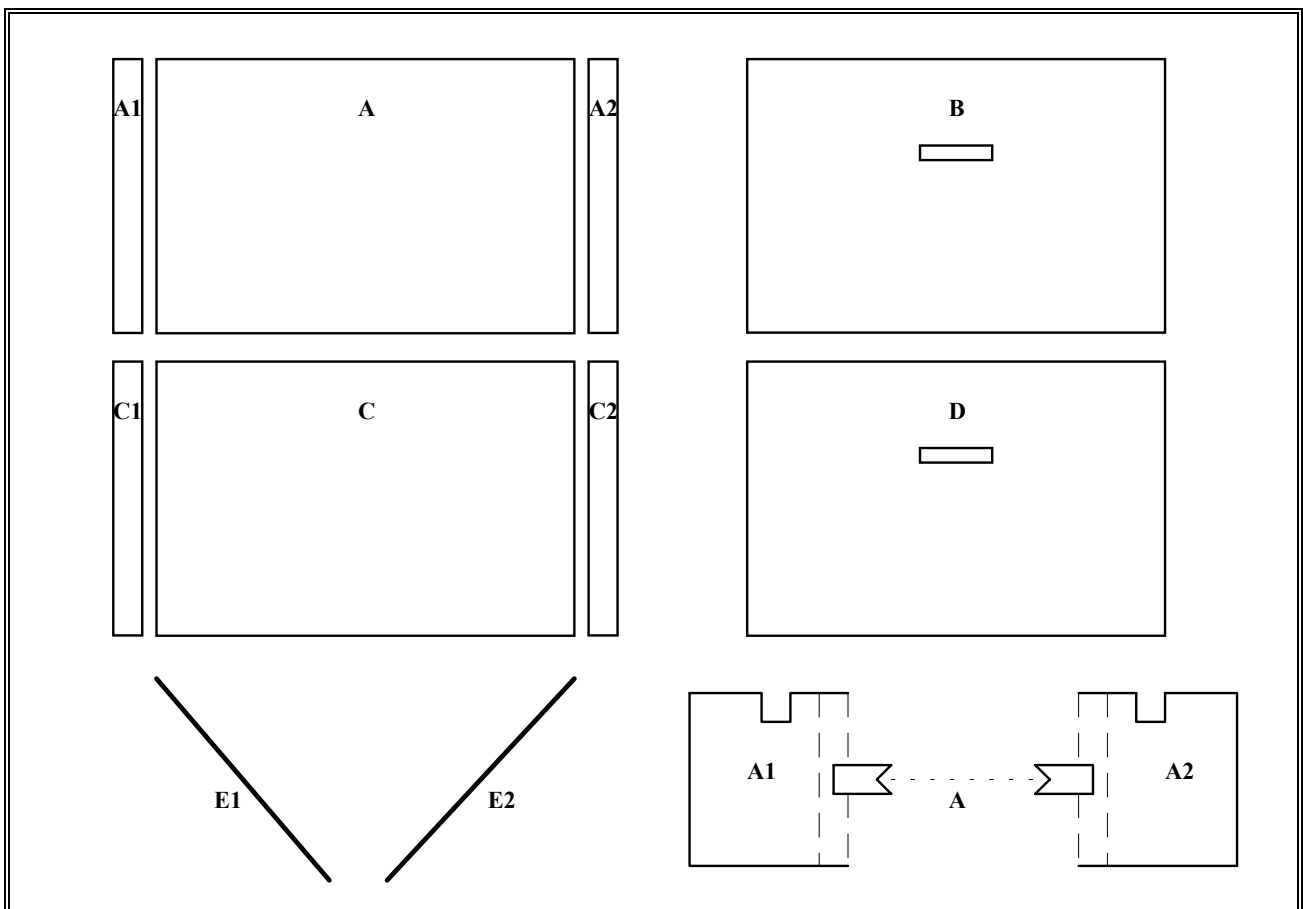
Equipment

As mentioned earlier, certain recorders benefitted from borrowing equipment in 1996. If you are interested, please contact us.

In response to several requests for some guidance on making a moth trap, Peter has included a very basic plan below of the collapsible trap he has made and uses. One of the main requirements of this trap was that it must be lightweight, collapsible and portable.

The trap basically consists of four painted plywood panels (A, B, C, D), two perspex sheets (E) and a cable/electrics tray (not figured). A, B, C, D and E are 450mm long, 300mm wide and about 4mm thick. The batons A1, A2, C1 and C2 are 300mm long and 20mm by 20mm in cross section. A 4mm deep and 4mm wide vertical groove needs to be cut into the full 300mm length of two adjacent baton faces, and a wedge cut (at one end only) to accommodate the perspex sheet face as it rests against the baton. The bottom right hand corner of the figure below is a cross section view of the baton, with grooves cut and wedge extracted - the wedge border is depicted as a dashed line in the figure, and slopes downwards as you move from the base to the top of the figure. A1 and A2 should then be glued to A (as depicted), and C1 and C2 glued to C in exactly the same way. B and D will then need to be cut so that they can house the cable tray supporting the electrics. A cut is preferable - fixtures will impact collapsibility and portability. The cut should be placed off (vertical) centre so that the bulb is elevated in the trap. A, B, C and D are then ready to be undercoated, overcoated and glossed. A suitable cable tray, roughly 490mm in length (to fit into the holes in B and D) needs to be equipped with the electrics to support the UV or MV light bulb. An extra large bulldog clip should then be snapped on to the cable tray with clips pointing to the ground so that one side of the clip holds the base of E1 and the other holds the base of E2. The trap, once constructed, should be held firm by an elasticated collar that completely encircles the mid-point of A, B, C and D. In dry weather, a white sheet beneath the trap will highlight the smaller species caught. Egg boxes need to be leaned against A and C inside the trap; if it does rain, the boxes should remain dry.

If anyone has any questions about the foregoing or related topics please contact Peter.



Organised events

As last year, a number of mothing events have been planned for this year. Peter Davey, Phil Sterling and Ian Cross, amongst others, will be leading the meetings. Full details of these will be available in the Dorset Countryside Yearbook 1997, to be published shortly by the County Council at a cost of about £2.00; this publication will be available from the Business Support Unit (telephone 01 305 224258), bookshops and tourist information centres. There are also two British Entomological & Natural History Society field meetings at Eype and Abbotsbury on July 5th at 11am (contact Michael Salmon on 01 725 513165); and, Lodmoor RSPB Reserve on 19th July at 11am & 8.30pm (contact Mick Parker).

Recording Red Data Book moths

A pilot project to record some of Dorset's Red Data Book plants and animals was undertaken by DERC, kindly grant-aided by English Nature. The project only began in June so we were not able to alert you to this in the Newsletter #3. The pilot list for moths included Shoulder-striped Clover, Southern Chestnut and Morris's Wainscot, as well as others. The idea was to revisit old haunts and to work suitable habitat more systematically to get a better picture of the status of these national rarities. The information on these key species will then be fed into management decisions to ensure that their requirements are considered (all too often we read that invertebrates are given only cursory attention in management plans). Recorders were offered travel expenses if required. DERC are hopeful that the trial will be continued, so if you would like to take part in 1997, please contact Carolyn Steele at DERC (01 305 261139).

A research project is currently being planned by Peter to investigate the habitat requirements of the Speckled Footman at the site where it was trapped in 1996. The project looks as if it may be split into two phases; the first and major phase focusing on detecting the larvae during the spring, and, contingent on a successful outcome, a second phase involving light trapping between mid July and mid August. We are looking to fund expenses incurred by individuals willing to contribute to this project under a grant aided scheme such as the one mentioned above.

Recording in under-worked sites

Continuing on the theme of being paid for recording, the Kingston Lacy wing of the National Trust have advised us that they have an expenses scheme in place, and will consider claims from recorders in areas for which the National Trust are particularly keen to have species lists compiled. This would mean that potential recorders contacting David Smith (address in this Newsletter) initially to agree the nature and location of the recording on the Kingston Lacy Estate. Peter will be providing David with some input to the conservation sections of the 1997 Badbury Rings management plan - moth research there in 1996 identified some nationally notable species on the site, and future sympathetic management of host flora should encourage these species further. A similar expenses scheme is offered by the National Trust to the Devon moth recorder network.

As mentioned in Newsletter #3, we are keen to get records from anywhere in Dorset, but especially in the north and west of the county. There is some wonderful Devon-like habitat in the Blackdowns north of Lyme Regis, and the Marshwood and Blackmoor Vales are particularly poorly recorded. Some of you in the network who have ventured forth into this region of Dorset over the past few years have made some exciting discoveries - see Appendices B1 and B2. H J Moore's moth collection dating from the 1950s and 1960s in Dorchester Museum, is principally derived from the trapping he undertook at Iwerne Minster whilst he was a master at Clayesmore school - tantalising species that he trapped at Iwerne, some of which have not been recorded in Dorset subsequently, include the following:

Brighton Wainscot	Blomer's Rivulet	Blossom Underwing	White-spotted Pinion
Dark Brocade	Barred Tooth-striped	Plumed Prominent	Dark Marbled Carpet
Scarce Forester	Barberry Carpet	Marbled Coronet	Pale Shining Brown
Oblique-striped	Tissue	Royal Mantle	Dusky-lemon Sallow
Square-spotted Clay	Lesser-spotted Pinion	Large Nutmeg	Autumn-green Carpet

There are several other species within his collection but caught at Kington Magna close to the north Dorset border. These have not been recorded in Dorset before or since either - the Grey Chi is one, the Northern Spinach is another.

Finally many thanks to those who have helped the project continue to be successful in 1996, especially to landowners and managers for allowing access for recording, and to English Nature and Dorset County Council for their financial support and encouragement. We wish you every success for the coming season, and thank you again for your contribution last year.

PETER DAVEY

PHIL STERLING