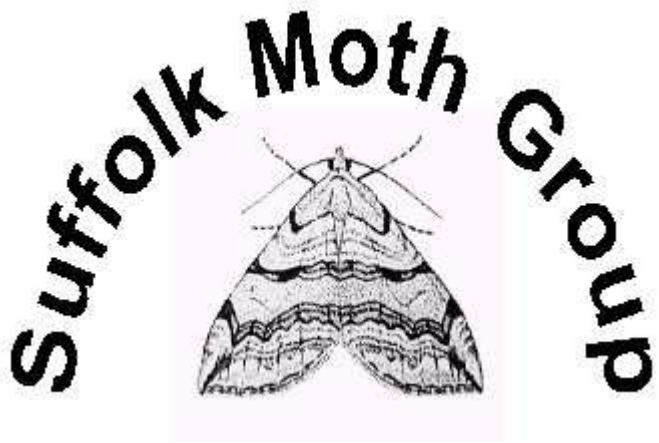

Suffolk Moth Group Newsletter

Issue 25 - March 2002

Edited by Tony Prichard

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Editorial

Another newsletter and the start of another season. After what seems to have been a busy winter sorting out the records, writing reports and organising the indoor meeting and 2002 field events it is good to get out into the field and see some of the new season's moths.

The Suffolk Moth Group's event list for 2002 is now available and accompany's this newsletter - click here to view. This year we are again holding meetings every Friday night during May to September at various sites around the county. There are a few daytime meetings as in previous years and hopefully members will find time to get along to one or two of these meetings which have a tendency to be not so well attended as the moth evenings. The programme starts with an evening larval hunt at Lower Hollesley Common on the 12th April.

The group held its first open indoor meeting in January which was well attended on the day. Based on feedback I have had so far it seemed to go well so we will almost certainly be organising a similar event for next winter. While it is still fresh in the minds of people who attended I am keen on getting some feedback from people who attended. How did people feel the day went? Is there anything that members would like to see at the next meeting? Was the museum a covenient venue? There is no parking near the museum but it helps support the museum by holding such events there (and it doesn't cost the group anything).

I have heard from Brian Goodey in Essex that one of the Essex Moth Group members was attacked and stabbed while out moth recording in the south of Essex last year. Fortunately we seem to have avoided any such trouble up to now (although we've had the odd minor disturbance) and hopefully it will stay that way. However, I would caution members to bear in mind their own safety when out recording in the field - especially when on their own.

For those of you who let me have contact details for the directory of Suffolk moth recorders then I will shortly be emailing this out.

The Moths of Essex book - pre-publication offer

The Moths of Essex book currently being written by Brian Goodey is due for publication by Lopinga Books later this year. Now is the time to register your interest in buying the book. If people register enough interest in purchasing the book then this will hopefully keep the price down and enable publication to go ahead.

The book will include all species of moths recorded from Essex with distribution maps for most species: 2km squares for macrolepidoptera, 5km squares for microlepidoptera. Flight-time graphs for 411 species where sufficient data is available. Monochrome photographs by Ian Rose and others of most resident macro-moths, taken in Essex of living moths in natural resting positions (those that were at the indoor meeting will have seen the quality of Ian Rose's slides). Status, habitats and foodplant information for every species from Essex data (not just a repeat of what is in the national books) . Special chapters include "Recent Population Trends" (Dr Chris Gibson) & "Fisher's Estuarine Moth - an Essex speciality" (Zoe Ringwood). Approx. 300 pages of text, maps, charts and monochrome photographs, plus 8 pages of colour plates. Hardbound with colour cover from a specially commissioned painting by Alan Harris.

A pre-publication offer of £16.50 (+ £3.25 p&p) for the book is available. Details and order form are available form the Lopinga Books web site at www.lopinga.co.uk.

Alternatively they may be contacted at Lopinga Books, Tye Green House, Wimbish, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 2XE. Email : lopinga@aol.com or telephone 01 799 599 643.

Volume 4 of Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland

The long-awaited Volume 4 of the Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland is now being distributed to those that have placed orders. I've just received my copy and based on my initial impressions these two volumes maintain if not exceed the high standard set by Volume 3 considering the families covered. This book covers mainly the oecophorids and gelechids in two volumes. These families have previously not been covered comprehensively in the literature since Meyrick - apart from odd articles here and there which have in cases become hard to obtain. Paper-back versions are due to be available later this year. A full review will appear in the next newsletter.

Harley Books (B.H. & A. Harley Ltd.) can be contacted at Martins, Great Horkesley, Colchester, Essex CO6 4AH. Telephone 01206 271216.

Suffolk Moth Group Indoor Meeting 2002 - Neil Sherman

The Suffolk Moth Group held its first ever indoor meeting in the lecture room at Ipswich Museum on Saturday 26th January 2002. There were 30 people present, with some coming from Norfolk and Essex as well as the Suffolk gang. Here is an account of what went on.

The meeting started with Tony Prichard, the county recorder, reviewing the previous year's activities and moths. The field meetings were discussed, of which the 'moth nights' were well attended. There were some memorable ones, with the highlights mentioned by the members being Redgrave Fen (where 190 species were recorded), Orfordness (a night of few moths but what an adventure!) and Walberswick (where it was uncomfortable near the light due to the large numbers of biting mosquitoes!). Daytime events however were poorly attended with just 2 members most of the time. It was stated that these could be just as important as moth nights, as some moths fly only during the day, and larval searches prove a species breeds on a site.
The surveys the moth group did were discussed – the White-mantled Wainscot being recorded from 3 sites during the year and the Ground Lackey larval hunt that produced some new records.

The eagerly awaited new events list was released, with the target projects for the new season including a survey of Chalk Lane (in the King's forest), before it is turned into a public road, more site surveys for White-mantled Wainscot and a search for White-spotted Pinion at Kenton Hills.

After a break for refreshments, it was the turn of members of the group to show their slides. Jon Clifton showed the group some of the moths he saw during the year in the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Staffordshire, including such delights as the Light Knotgrass and Sandhill Rustic. Then it was yours truly who showed a selection of slides of the nice moths seen by the group during the season including Wood Carpet, Ground Lackey (larvae and adults) and Oak Lutestring. I then went on to show a brief overview of Ipswich golf course and some of the moths I caught during the year including Red-necked Footman and Goat Moth.

After lunch, Ian Rose and Joe Firmin from the Essex moth group entertained us with slides and stories of their activities 'south of the border'. Ian Rose's slides are well known by those of us who have attended Essex moth group meetings in the past of being of the highest quality. It was of interest to see moths regarded as rare there can be quite common here (e.g. Maiden's Blush), and to see the life cycles of some of the species they have bred through. Of course, the Fisher's Estuarine moth made an appearance, as some of us expected!

This was followed by a short talk from Jon Clifton about his company, Anglian Lepidopterist's supplies. He showed us the various moth traps up for sale, along with other products such as microscopes, specimen tubes and bulbs.

Following another coffee break, the next session was free for people to view the various exhibits around the room, as well as a chance to view the collections of lepidoptera stored at the museum. There was a good display of various items around the room, including specimens taken during the 2001 season, a range of moth books, information fact sheets as well as the ALS stand.

This session also gave time for people to chat and catch up on all things moth wise, before we all went home at 4pm.

The reactions on the day were that everyone had a good time and found it of interest, so it looks like this event will be a permanent addition to the Suffolk moth group calendar!

Thanks go to Tony for organising the day, the museum for having us and all others who brought along exhibits or slides, and thanks to all who attended to make the day such a good one. See you next year!

Langmaid's Yellow Underwing - a new moth for the country - Tony Prichard

The latest issue of the Entomologists Record and Journal of Variation has an article by John Langmaid [1] which formally records the presence of a new macro-moth in the county - *Noctua janthina*. Prior to 1991 the Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing was known under the name of *N. janthina*. However, this species was split into three in 1991 and the type that occurred in this country was given the name *N. janthe. N. janthina* is reasonably well distributed in Europe whereas the third species *N. tertia* occurs only in the south-east areas.

As this species currrently has no English name Colin Plant has suggested that it be called Langmaid's Yellow Underwing.

Although similar to the Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing recorders will be pleased to hear that the two species can be distinguished on external features alone.

The differences in appearance are summarised below (for full details I'd suggest you read the article)

- the upperside of the forewing tends to be darker in janthina than in janthe.
- the underside of the forewing shows a black area extending just over the subterminal line. In janthina the edge of this black area is smoothly curved and in janthe the edge appears like saw-teeth.
- on the upperside hindwing the black border in *N. janthina* is broader than *N. janthe* and extends along the costa to merge with the blackish basal area. This feature gives the hindwing of *N. janthina* more the look of an orange spot in a black wing rather than an orange wing with a black border. Apparently this can be spotted as the moth flies around a moth light.

Examination of collected specimens has not revealed any *N. janthina* lurking among the *N. janthe* so my suspicion is that John's moth may very well have been a migrant (he lives near the south coast). However, we should keep our eyes out for this species as there's always the possibility it may turn up in the county.

References

[1] Langmaid, J R, 2002, *Noctua janthina* ([Denis & Schiffermuller, 1775]) (Lep. : Noctuidae): A Yellow Underwing moth new the British List. *Entomologist's Record and Journal of Variation* **114** : 19-22

Visual differences between Dark Dagger, *Acronicta tridens* and Grey Dagger, *Acronicta psi* - by Mike Hall

In 1907 Richard South wrote, *Moths of Brit. Isles*, Ser. 1, p. 195, of the Dark Dagger, *Acronycta tridens*: "I an unable to indicate any character that will serve to distinguish this moth from the Grey Dagger". Tutt, *Brit. Noct. and their Var*., in 1891, vol i., p. 17 goes into more than a page of detailed points of differentiation but also remarks, "It is well known, however, that the markings of both are so similar that very few Lepidopterists can separate them with any degree of satisfaction". Barrett in 1896, *Lep. Brit. Isles*, vol iii., p. 245, enumerates a number of slight distinctions. He makes such comments as: "In *A. psi* the thorax and abdomen seem to be more robust and the shoulders a little more square; forewing slightly broader and more triangular; the ground colour of a colder grey – devoid of either pinkish or yellowish tone; the second line of the forewings at its origin on the costa, runs at first more parallel with that margin, and so as it bends makes a broader and more squared curve above the middle of the wing; costal spots usually less distinct ....." etc. etc. Skinner also says that *A. psi* is a more robust species and adds that in the male the overall colour and the veins of the hindwing are usually darker.

All these (and other similar comparative comments) are very useful when comparing set specimens in a series but nowhere near as helpful with live moths in mercury vapour light. In 1906 Dr. Chapman read a paper at the City of London Entomological Society in which he said from personal experience and breeding both species he was able to separate them with practical certainty but also expressed his "absolute inability to lay down any characters by which someone unfamiliar with these two species" could do so. However, a number of the points he made can be used to make accurate identifications of **some** individuals of both species and I summarise them below.

Colour of the hindwing: a male specimen with quite white hindwings is almost certainly *tridens*, with very slight dark scaling is probably *tridens*, with moderately dark scaling is probably *psi* and with very dark scaling is certainly *psi*. In summary males with dark hindwings are always *psi* while males with white hindwings are sure to be *tridens*.

Colouration: *psi* is pure black and white; *tridens* has red, green, brown and yellow. The pale form of *psi*, with white predominating, is probably unmistakable; so in *tridens* when richly suffused with pink, brown or olive. *Tridens* very commonly has the interior of the orbicular stigma coloured, or definitely of a different tint from the rest of the wing; *psi* almost always has it of the same colour as the rest of the wing.

Marking: the separation of the marginal dots from the anal dagger in *psi*; and their junction, especially the upper one, with it in *tridens* is more constant than any other in the markings, still it has exceptions.

By using all three characters described above it is possible to identify, pretty certainly, those specimens of these two species that show the extremes as outlined above, particularly if they are males which I find are more regular visitors to light.

[Editor's Note: Being able to identify at least some of the Grey/Dark Daggers externally will certainly be useful but until the above features are confirmed further the Suffolk Moth Panel will still be requiring that records of adults of these species are confirmed by genitalia. I will be very interested to hear from recorders who use these features to determine Dark/Grey Dagger species and additionally confirm the identity by the usual means]

A plume moth to look out for - *Merrifieldia baliodactylus*

Andy Musgrove trapped a plume moth at Narborough Railway Line, near Swaffham, during a Norfolk Moth Group meeting on 20th July 2001. Andy tentatively identified it as *Merrifieldia (=Alucita) baliodactylus* but after being informed by Ken Saul, the Norfolk recorder, that this would be new to the county the specimen was sent to Colin Hart (the national plume recorder) who confirmed the record as new to Norfolk. Andy mentions that he caught a plume moth at the reserve the previous year which he

identified as *M. balidoactylus* but did not keep the specimen at the time. He also mentioned that the moth feeds on marjoram, which grows in abundance along the chalky soil of the abandoned railway line.

Apparently the moth has not been recorded from Suffolk previously. I have no records for the species in the database and Morley states that we were unlikely to pick up this species in the county.

This could be a species worth looking for in the future.

Book Review - Die Tortriciden Mitteleuropas - by Tony Prichard

Die Tortriciden (Lepidoptera, Tortricidae) Mitteleuropas by Józef Razowski

Published by Slamka, 2001. ISBN - 80-967540-7-6
319 pages with 24 colour plates and 150 pages of black and white drawings. Text in German.
Price between £45 - £50.

The tortrix moths are one of the families of the micro-lepidoptera which attract more general interest as they are reasonably large as far as micro-lepidoptera go and can be quite attractive in appearance. The problem for people wishing to study this group is that the standard reference for this family, the two volumes of British Tortricoid Moths by Bradley, Tremewan and Smith, is now out of print and can be expensive or hard to obtain second-hand.

Die Tortriciden Mitteleuropas is the third and latest book in a series about middle European lepidoptera which have all been produced with German text. As I don't speak German I cannot really comment on the textual content of this book too much.

The first section of the book is a checklist of the species covered along with synonyms. This will be of use as some of the terminology in the book is different to that used in the latest Bradley checklists and with which most UK lepidopterists will be familiar with. Thanks are due to Ian Dawson who has produced a spreadsheet of the terminology differences between the Bradley and Razowski. Ian can be contacted via email at ian.dawson@lineone.net for a copy of the spreadsheet. After working through the checklist it appears that the book provides very good coverage for the UK fauna with 94% of the 384 species from Bradley's checklist included. Of the missing species most are casuals in the UK but there are some common tortrix moths missing from the book including; *Ditula angustiorana*, *Epiphyas postvittana* and *Lozotaeniodes formosanus*.

The species accounts are rather brief and take up only 72 of the 319 pages in total. Even though the text is in German there appear to be three pieces of information that non-German speakers will be able to easily use; lifecycle information for each stage is given as numerals, scientific names are used for foodplants and the wingspan is specified in millimetres

The main reason I bought this book was for the 150 pages of genitalia drawings (of tortrix moths) which form the major part of the book. These are clear and well drawn, covering both male and female genitalia. The British Tortricoid Moth volumes includes very few genitalia drawings, so this book may make a useful addition if you're interested in this subject.

The section of the book containing the plates will probably be the main interest for most people. All twenty four plates are of photographed set specimens. The pictures of the moths are reasonably clear

and of good quality and will enable most species to be identified from the plates. One annoying feature of the plates is that they have shrunk or expanded the pictures of the moths so that the individual moths all appear to be roughly the same size, so that they line up neatly in columns and rows on the plate. Hence it was quite important that they specified the wingspan size in the species accounts.

The main drawback of this book is the lack of textual information, at least to the non-German reader, covering areas such as habitat, distribution, confusion species and key identification features. This forces the recorder to rely solely on visual matching with the plates. As a consequence I would use this book with caution as a primary identification guide to this family of moths, especially where there are several similar species from which to choose.

Some web links

Here are some web links that I have wandered across in the last few months which may be of interest to web-enabled people.

Jeff Higgott has recently launched a web site consisting of pictures of over 650 species of moth and butterfly which can be found at http://go.to/uklepidoptera.

The Lepidopterogical Society of Finland has its own web site http://www.perhostutkijainseura.fi/, the only problem being that most of the text is in Finnish (not surprisingly) although there are English summaries in places. There is a particular section on the Finnish Gelechiidae at http://www.perhostutkijainseura.fi/sps_gelechiidae.html with a range of good quality large size photos of pinned specimens.

The Biological Records Centre at Monks Wood (quoting from the web site) is the national custodian for data on the distribution of wildlife in the British isles. The site covers the NBN Gateway (a pilot in giving internet access to species data eg distribution maps), details of the national recording schemes, atlases and recording cards - amongst other things. The site can be found at http://www.brc.ac.uk

A Dutch site at http://www.xs4all.nl/~wnellis/ covers the leaf-mining species of insects (not just moths). I suspect, unless you can speak Dutch, that this site's appeal will lie in the pictures of leaf-mines. Coverage is not complete but most of the common species are covered. The photographs of the mines are backlit so you can easily see the pattern of frass.

Defensive postures of Yellow-tail and Brown-tail - Jeff Higgott

Yellow-tail (*Euproctis similis*) and Brown-tail (*Euproctis chrysorrhoea*) are two species commonly encountered in Suffolk. Both are extensively white. At rest the closed wings hide the coloured tips to the abdomen but if they are disturbed both ‘play dead’ and reveal their abdomens, the tips of which are covered with irritating hairs. I have noticed from the individuals in my garden last year that the two species do this in different ways. Whereas Yellow-tail curls its abdomen up to project beyond the training edges of the wings, Brown-tail curls its abdomen down to project beyond the costa.

Brown-tail

Yellow-tail

I have found no mention of this behavioural difference in an admittedly limited search of the literature.

Jeff Higgott jeff@higgott.info

[Editors note: The records in the database show that the Brown-tail, as far as Suffolk goes, is almost exclusively found in the coastal eastern vice-county, with just one or two records just creeping into West Suffolk. Yellow-tail is widespread across both vice-counties]

Survey for Lunar Yellow Underwing larvae

Several of the group have been carrying out night-time larval surveys for the Lunar Yellow Underwing larva since the start of February which will continue till the end of the month.

This survey was prompted by conversations with Nick Gibbons of English Nature and Gerry Haggett. I understand that recently English Nature have instituted a habitat management regime of grazing by sheep in the Brecks. This has raised concerns that the sheep may be destroying the habitat required by the Lunar Yellow Underwing larva - which feeds on fine heathland grasses. Gerry Haggett and others have been surveying areas of the Brecks to ascertain whether in fact the larvae have been adversely affected in that area. To complement this survey a few of us have been surveying the Sandling heaths where the species has also been recorded.

Although several visits have been made we have managed to find no larvae of Lunar Yellow Underwing on the Sandling heaths to date, although surveying will continue to the end of the month. I gather from Gerry Haggett that they are having better results in surveying the Brecks.

However, the time has not been wasted as we've been running light traps at the same time and have picked up some records for these areas which are not normally visited at this time of year. In addition, other species of larvae have been recorded which provide useful larval records for the sites.

Species of larva recorded included; Square-spot Rustic (abundant everywhere), Lunar Underwing, Large Yellow Underwing, True Lover's Knot, Yellow Shell and Angle Shades.

Moth Recording in the Far East - Jeff Higgott

July 2000 found me carrying out a period of consultancy in West Malaysia. When the work finished I headed to Fraser’s Hill for a well-earned break in the submontane rainforest for a couple of days. We booked into The Gap Resthouse and by complete chance our stay coincided with the arrival of Barry and Sandra Stewart – Barry being the Glamorgan moth recorder.

Agathia codina

Apsarasa radians

Chalcosoma atlas

Unlike me, Barry had come prepared. A simple funnel moth trap and white sheet were set up in the rest house garden. Obvious enthusiasm was kept in check by the generator being turned off before midnight each evening.

Moth trapping at 1000m in Malaysia is an experience encouragingly free of biting insects. The main hazards for us were the Atlas Beetles *Chalcosoma atlas* attracted to the light. Whilst these don't bite or sting they are HUGE and tend to fly straight for the head! The main hazard for the moths was the Brown Wood Owl which sat in a tree nearby and would regularly swoop down and take the larger moths in mid air. The quiet (apart from the generators) of moth trapping in the wilds of the UK contrasts with the racket of Malaysian cicadas, which sit on the trap and squeal away to the world.

Cyana malayensis

Pachynoa purpuralis

Theretra nessus

Barry was tooled up with the available field guides and handbooks and camera but many of the moths trapped have had to remain completely unidentified. Many of these are quite possibly new to science – the potential for breaking new ground in Asia would be huge for a dedicated recorder with several lifetimes to spare.

For a complete novice on Far Eastern moths the experience was amazing - the variety and colours too much to take in. Many moths could be easily pigeonholed though. There were about 10 species of hawk-moths up to Death's-head size. There were geometers – emeralds boldly patterned and the size of Red Admirals. There were cossids the size of a large hawk-moth. There were others from families not represented in the UK with amazing patterns and combinations of lime and black or red, white and blue.

Our man in Malaysia *Attacus atlas*

What was the most impressive moth seen? Without doubt the Atlas Moth *Attacus atlas*. This species has one of if not the largest wingspan of any moth, approaching 30cm. We saw a few of them and they really are amazing with their “snake’s head” wingtips and transparent windows in the wings. It is amazing to believe that their tiny bodies can power such enormous wings – in flight they look remarkably like a child’s wind-up toy.

The combination of wildlife (moths, bird-wing butterflies, birds, monkeys, gibbons…), scenery and temperature (encouragingly cool after the heat and humidity of Kuala Lumpur) makes Fraser’s Hill a must for any visitor to Malaysia.

Reports from recorders around the county

Records reported here have not yet been verified by the Suffolk Moth Panel.

Moths at Ipswich Golf Club - October to December 2001 - by Neil Sherman

With unseasonably mild weather all month, mothing this October was much better than in previous years. Instead of only being able to run the trap on 2 or 3 occasions due to frosts or rain, I was able to trap 9 times! This resulted in 62 species being recorded (39 macros).

Along with the unseasonable weather, some unexpected moths also appeared, well outside what I would call their normal flight times. Species seen were: White Ermine (on 3rd), Straw Dot (11th), *Carcina quercana* (22nd) and *Orthopygia glaucinalis* (on the 9th and 11th). Either the warm weather tricked them it was time to emerge, or they were possible migrants, although not many ‘usual’ migrants appeared during this time with only singletons of Silver Y, *Plutella xylostella* and Turnip being recorded.

The warm conditions increased the number of resident moths normally seen at this time of year as well. For example, the Streak, a common species here is normally recorded in numbers of 10 – 20 for the year. This year there have been 89!

Best night was the 11th/12th, when 31 species were trapped (25 were macros) along with a Red Admiral butterfly! Species of possible interest were: *Acleris rhombana* (good to see on 2 occasions not common here), *Caloptilia betulicola* (2 on the 22nd), Mallow (1 or 2 a night), Spruce Carpet (common), Pale November Moth (1 picked out from the more common Novembers on the 24th), Merveille du Jour (2 recorded), Flounced Chestnut (3 seen), Rosy Rustic (a late individual on the 14th), Large Wainscot (2 seen) and an Oak Nycteoline (on the 11th a nice pinkish form). A Red-green Carpet was trapped on the 22nd, a new site record.

A hairy caterpillar was handed to me on the 29th to identify, found feeding on geraniums at the clubhouse. It turned out to be an Oak Eggar – this is the second record of a larva this year, the first

being found in the same area, this time feeding on ornamental heather! Also seen on its daytime flight at the end of the month (29th) was the first *Diurnea phryganella* of the year.

The hunt for leaf-mines continued this month, with 22 species being recorded on various trees and shrubs around the site, including *Parornix scoticella* (on Rowan) which is not on the current checklist.

By November the weather broke, and virtually no light trapping was done all month. The Robinson was only put out once (on the 18th), and it caught 2 moths: Northern Winter Moth and a Streak.

At this time of year the security lights around the clubhouse produce more moths – species such as Mottled Umber, Scarce Umber, December Moth and Northern Winter Moth all put in appearance towards the end of the month here. Other daytime moth sightings of possible interest, mostly seen while coppicing gorse were: Streak, *Acleris cristana* and *Ypsolopha ustella*. The tunnels of Lunar Hornet Clearwing moth were also seen while coppicing sallows (on the 1st) – the caterpillars always seem to be at the exact point where the tree is cut though, so there is not much left of them when they are revealed!

The main thrust of recording during the month has been leaf mines – it certainly has been a bumper season with the leaves staying on the trees for longer than normal. This has made it easier to find species that normally feed once they have fallen. 40 species were recorded, including 6 new site records – the most interesting being *Heliozela resplendella* that mines the midrib of alder leaves, eventually cutting out a case, leaving a distinctive hole behind.

No moth trapping was done at all during December, and very few moths were seen at all! Only the ubiquitous Winter Moth and Mottled Umber appeared at the clubhouse security lights. Of possible interest was the daytime discovery of a specimen of *Acleris logiana*, a new site record. Last moth of the year was an *Alucita hexadactyla*, flying round in the tea sheds.

Moths at Ipswich Golf Club - January to February 2002 - by Neil Sherman

The year begun as usual with Winter Moth (8th) and Mottled Umber (16th), both seen on the clubhouse wall underneath the security lighting. It wasn't till the end of the month, on the night of the 28th/29th, that I was tempted to put a trap out. It was exceptionally mild for the time of year, and this was reflected in the number of moths caught – 53 moths of 8 species! Of possible interest were the good numbers of Pale Brindled Beauty (30) and Spring Usher (9), along with Dotted Border and Early Moth.

Unfortunately the mild conditions did not continue into February – nights were either cold, windy, wet or a combination of all these! Despite this, trapping was attempted on the 11th and the 26th, with the former date producing just over a double figure of moths, with the usual March Moth, Pale Brindled Beauty and *Tortricodes alternella* appearing. The first Small Brindled Beauty of the year was also present, followed by 2 more on the 26th (the only moths caught that night!).

Small Brindled Beauty - showing some of its variations in colour

Of more interest were my daytime discoveries. *Acleris logiana* was found on 2 dates (1st and 25th) after first being recorded last year. As usual, *Agonopterix umbellana* was found while coppicing Gorse, its foodplant. Whilst walking past the clubhouse rose-bed on the 8th, I noticed a large cocoon on one of the plants. This turned out to be an Emperor cocoon, almost certainly from one of the larvae that I found feeding there last year. Its pretty big so is probably a female, so hopefully if it emerges I will try assembling some males.

The moth that caused a stir due to its appearance was the Pine Beauty noted under the clubhouse security lights on the 8th. This is earlier than any of the currrent records in the county moth database for Suffolk. This moth has also appeared here in early June!

Field reports

Not too much in the way of field reports so I've included most species recorded on the night.

MV - Raydon Great Wood - 20th January 2002

Four species recorded, which were Chestnut, Pale Brindled Beauty, Mottled Umber and Winter Moth

MV - Blaxhall Heath - 2nd February 2002

Our first evening looking for Lunar Yellow Underwing larvae. Rather windy on the night but we did record Chestnut, *Tortricodes alternella*, Spring Usher and Pale Brindled Beauty at light.

Spring Usher

MV - Lower Hollesley Common - 10th February 2002

Good numbers of *Agonopterix umbellana* flying around the gorse on the heath. Hebrew Character, Pale Brindled Beauty and *Tortricodes alternella* also turned up to light. Larva found included; Angle Shades, True Lover's Knot, a Wainscot spp, Square-spot Rustic and Large Yellow Underwing.

MV - Dunwich Heath - 3rd March 2002

A rather mild night with a slight breeze. Moths included; Hebrew Character, Double-striped Pug, Yellow Horned, Dotted Border, March Moth, *Agonopterix umbellana* and *Caloptilia elongella*. Larva found included Square-spot Rustic, Straw Underwing, Lunar Underwing and Grayling butterfly. On a rather lonesome stunted holm oak we also found *Phyllonorycter messaniella* blotch mines.

MV - Rendlesham Forest - 8th March 2002

The habitat in the Tangham Valley area near the forest office appeared unsuitable for Lunar Yellow Underwing larvae being rather rank and mown by a multitude of rabbits. Moths recorded at light included; Pine Beauty, Hebrew Character, Double-striped Pug, Early Grey, Yellow Horned (40+), March Moth, Common Quaker, Chestnut and *Ypsolopha ustella*.

Yellow Horned

Contact details

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The Newsletter

This is the newsletter for the Suffolk Moth Group. It is distributed free to those with email and at a £2 per

annum subscription for paper copies. Four issues are produced per year, in March, June, August and November. I am always on the look for articles which will be of interest to moth recorders in Suffolk, although field and site reports should be topical. Articles should arrive by the end of the month preceding the month in which a newsletter is produced, eg. the deadline for articles for the March newsletter is the end of February.

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