

Suffolk Moth Group Newsletter

Issue 35 - Winter 2004/2005

Edited by Tony Prichard

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Editorial

In the Winter issue last year I made a comment about wondering if numbers of moths would be down in 2004 due to the long dry summer of 2003. Comments received from various recorders around the county would tend to give a rather mixed picture - from a below average year through to a good year. My personal impression was that it was a good year with the added bonus of being a good migrant year. What sort of season lies in store for 2005? Not very much until this cold snap finishes.

The SMG events programme has now been finalised and as usual we plan to visit various parts of the county. Last year's visits to Belton certainly made a dent in the lack of recent records for that area and we're returning again this year for a couple of visits. There are a couple of events with overnight stays (Orfordness and Havergate). If you would like to go on these then please get in touch as places need to

be reserved due to limited accomodation.

I have just about finished entering the majority of moth records for 2004 but there are still some recorders who have not sent in records. Can I give a gentle reminder to send these in sooner rather than later as I would like to finish the data entry process while we're still in the quiet season. That said I will accept records at any time and there is no cut off date for sending in records for a year.

Two issues ago I posed a question - what is the modern name for the moth previously known as the Goose Egg. As I forgot to give the answer in the last issue and nobody mentioned the omission to me there was/is obviously a lack of interest in the answer! Despite the apathy here is the answer - Chinese Character. I find it hard to visualise the Chinese Character as anything like a goose egg, maybe that is why the name lost favour. Of more interest locally is the Grey Carpet, an earlier name for the Sloe Carpet *Aleucis distinctata*, and a possible source of confusion in old references with what we now call Grey Carpet *Lithostege griseata*.

The annual indoor meeting for 2005 has now been arranged for the 2nd April at Needham Market - details below.

Thanks to all the contributors of articles and photos for this issue.

Red-headed Chestnut *Conistra erythrocephala* (D. & S.) - a moth new to Suffolk - Matthew Deans

The Red-headed Chestnut *Conistra erythrocephala* (D. & S., 1775) is a widespread species breeding in almost every European country. Its larvae are believed to feed on fresh young Oak, Elm or Hornbeam leaves then descend to continue feeding on various ground-cover plants like Dandelion, plantains, bedstraws, etc. The moth occurs in two forms: the nominate form and the form *glabra*. Its confusion species are The Chestnut and perhaps the Dark Chestnut. However, the Red-headed Chestnut can be identified by its larger size and the presence of two or three small black dots in the lower half of the reniform stigma which are diagnostic.

First recorded in the U.K. in East Sussex in 1847, the moth appeared to be resident there until 1874 and then again between 1913 and 1932 in the woods around Lewes and Eastbourne. Away from this area (and excluding questionable records from the Canterbury, Kent area) approximately a dozen British records followed in the twentieth century, mostly from south-east England. Of interest to Suffolk recorders are the records from our adjacent counties of Norfolk (at Wells on 28.10.45) and, more recently, in Essex (Dovercourt, 09.11.03, C. Gibson). So with records to the north and south of Suffolk, perhaps it was inevitable that the species would one day turn up in the County.

Winds from the south during the last week of October 2004 had produced a good run of scarcer immigrants at Bawdsey. On Sunday 31 October alone single Gem, White-speck and Scarce Bordered Straw were all trapped. Having reported these captures to Steve Nash (Migrant Moth web-site coordinator), he alerted me to the fact that Tuesday night was looking promising for immigrants.

Monday 1 November produced another Scarce Bordered Straw. A south-easterly airflow was forecast for the Suffolk coast on Tuesday 2 November. These conditions brought a moth to the Robinson trap which I tentatively identified as a Red-headed Chestnut! I was quietly confident with the identification so I told a few people that I had a probable Red-headed Chestnut.



Red-headed Chestnut - 2nd November 2004 © Matthew Deans



Red-headed Chestnut -- 25th November 2004 © Matthew Deans

A few days before the Bawdsey capture, I had studied photographs on the 'Atropos' and 'Moths of Dungeness' web-sites of specimens of Red-headed Chestnut taken in Kent recently. The 'Atropos' specimen was a well-marked individual of the form *glabra* - which was brighter with more contrast than mine. James McGill kindly emailed me photographs of a nominate form individual taken in Somerset earlier this year. Once I saw these pictures, I was in no doubt that my specimen was definitely a Red-headed Chestnut of the nominate form.

The Bawdsey specimen was larger than a Chestnut, exhibited three small black dots within the reniform stigma and showed a darker wedge-shaped mark on the leading edge of the forewing near the tip.

Incredibly on the same night as the Bawdsey individual two Red-headed Chestnuts were trapped at Portland, Dorset and another at Dungeness, Kent. I emailed Steve Nash the news and he replied to say that he had also trapped one at Swanage, Dorset! So there it was, five trapped in the country on the same night. More records followed with a total of 13 recorded between 25 October and 16 November. This was the largest ever influx into the U.K. There were also three records in the late winter/early spring period, making a total of 16 in the U.K. during 2004.

I thought the story was now over..... That was, until 25 November when I inspected the Robinson trap at Bawdsey to discover another Red-headed Chestnut! Incredibly it was the only moth in the trap. This was also of the nominate form and was just over three weeks after the first County record. This specimen had more obvious black dots in the reniform stigma although the wing edges were slightly worn. A few Silver Ys had been trapped in the preceding days and the winds had been from the south or south-west. It will be interesting to see if any appear after hibernation in early-spring 2005.

References

South, R. 1980 reprint. The Moths of the British Isles, series one.

Skinner, B. Second edition 1998. Moths of the British Isles.

Waring, Townsend & Lewington, Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland.

Websites visited: Essex Moth Group, Suffolk Moth Group, Atropos, Migrant Moth.com, Moths of Dungeness, Portland Bird Observatory.

Footnote: Since this article was written more records have come to light, see Atropos 24 Winter 2004/2005, notably one at Bradwell, Essex during 2004.

Indoor Meetings, Winter 2004/2005 - Tony Prichard

Dissection Workshop - 20th November 2004

This well attended workshop was held at Ipswich Museum and we must thank Jon Clifton for coming along and taking us through the techniques of genitalia dissection (in moths!). The group held a similar workshop several years ago, again led by Jon, but since then technology has moved on a bit. With a dissecting microscope connected up to a digital camera and TV it was possible for those present to see just what Jon was doing under the microscope. Following demonstrations on different types of moth there was time to try a few dissections ourselves on moths that had been brought along - this managed to confirm a few tentative determinations made earlier in the year. Possibly not a technique that will appeal to all, a microscope is essential and costs a few pennies, but hopefully it gave at least an appreciation of what is involved. Thanks are due to Ipswich Museum for providing a meeting room for the event.



Jon Clifton demonstrating dissection techniques © David Lampard

Identification Workshop - 1st December 2004

This was a chance to work through some of those troublesome photos or specimens that have been lying around unidentified for too long. On the night attendance was a bit on the low side but with the material to hand we still managed to finish rather later than expected. Neil Sherman did a section on some of the pugs and already I've been asked if this could be repeated at the next workshop. This event will be run again later on this year. If you would like particular areas covered then shout now so as to give us the chance to photograph material if it has not already available.

Annual Indoor Meeting - Alder Carr Farm, Needham Market - 2nd April 2005, 11.00am to 4.30pm

The annual indoor meeting of the group has been arranged for 2nd April 2005 and will again take place at Alder Carr Farm, Needham Market. Doors will open at 10.30am with proceedings starting 11.00am. This will be an informal meeting with myself giving an overview of the recording season of 2004 and various other bits and pieces based on data from the county moth database. The format for the rest of the day will be largely down to members of the group. So please bring along any digital photos/slides/exhibits or anything that you think might be of interest to other members of the group. If nobody brings anything along it will be a very short meeting. If you do intend bringing anything along then please let me know so that I can hopefully come up with some sort of running order. Refreshments will be available but lunch will not be provided, although there is a coffee shop at the farm and pubs not

too far away or bring a packed lunch. Feedback from last year's meeting was generally very good, so if you didn't come along last year then why not make a date of it this year.

Alder Carr Farm (Grid reference: TM091553) is on the eastern outskirts of Needham Market and is sign-posted from the A14. There is ample car parking at the site.

A cautionary note on Langmaid's Yellow Underwing *Noctua janthina* and Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing *Noctua janthe* - Matthew Deans and Jon Clifton

Most readers will know that the European species *Noctua janthina* was first identified in the U.K. and named as Langmaid's Yellow Underwing by John Langmaid following a specimen trapped in Hampshire in 2001. This short note is aimed at outlining some of the identification pitfalls these two species can present, following the capture of specimens of both species in the U.K. by Matthew Deans in 2004.

Two early *janthe/janthina* caught at 125w M.V. light at Rendham, Suffolk on 15 July 2004 were upon capture believed to be Langmaid's, as one in particular exhibited a hindwing with broad black terminal fascia extending all the way along the costa, thus forming an orange spot (pic. 1). The underside of the forewing was not as extensively black as a typical Langmaid's and showed finger-like projections (pic. 2), which unfortunately pointed towards these being Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwings. This was not clearly seen until the moths were removed from the setting boards.

Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing *Noctua janthe* Rendham, Suffolk (15 July 2004) © Matthew Deans Langmaid's Yellow Underwing *Noctua janthina* Dungeness, Kent (7 Aug 2004) © Matthew Deans



Picture 1 - upperside



Picture 3 - upperside



Picture 2 - underside



Picture 4 - underside

Whilst trapping in the Long Pits at Dungeness, Kent on 7 August, Paul Bryant, Matthew Deans and Lee Gregory obtained two specimens showing a similarly patterned hindwing to the Rendham specimen, but more importantly had an extensive dusky black underside to the forewing. These features are depicted in photographs 3 and 4.

To further the complication of these two species most of their biology seems to differ very little indeed from habitat, larvae (some differences in early instars), food plant and even genitalia. Referral to an

original paper written by Michael Fibiger et al, sensu auctorum a complex of three species from *Notalepid.* 14 (1) from 1991, to *Noctuidae Europeae* Volume 2 page 83, and to *Noctuidae Europeae* Volume 3, pages 154, 155 does not give much more information for separation either.

It is thus clear that given a probable *Janthina* in the field close scrutiny must be advised, text should be consulted and if possible, access to specimens of both species should be sort before a clear identification can take place. Most importantly, retain the specimen!

Many thanks to Colin Plant and Norman Hall for helpful comments.

Moth Picture Quiz - Neil Sherman

Here is another picture quiz courtesy of Neil Sherman. Each picture shows part of an adult moth or caterpillar of a species that may be seen in Suffolk. This year Neil has included some of the larger micros. Answers will appear in the next issue of the newsletter.



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2



3



4



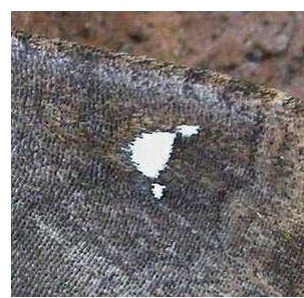
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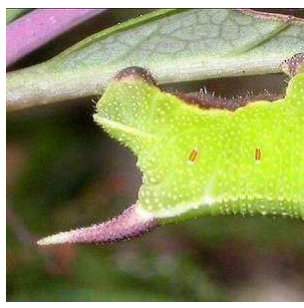
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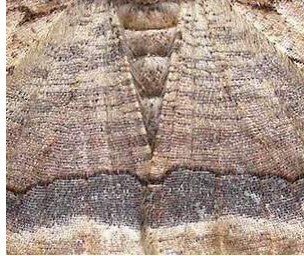
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L-album Wainscot *Mythimna l-album* (L.) at Bawdsey - the discovery of a potential new breeding colony - Matthew Deans

The L-album Wainscot is an unmistakable moth with the white letter 'L' on the forewing being diagnostic. First recorded in the U.K. in Devon in 1901, the moth was believed to be an immigrant, occurring on the south coast, until the 1930s. Then it was considered to be a resident breeder in Devon (although apparently no wild larvae were found).



L-album Wainscot, Bawdsey © Matthew Deans

Since the 1930s until the present day, the moth occurs from Cornwall eastwards to Kent including the Isles of Scilly and the Isle of Wight. Away from the south coast there have been records of immigrants from North Hampshire, Berkshire, London and Essex.

In Kent the L-album Wainscot was first recorded at Dungeness in 1934. This was the sole record until

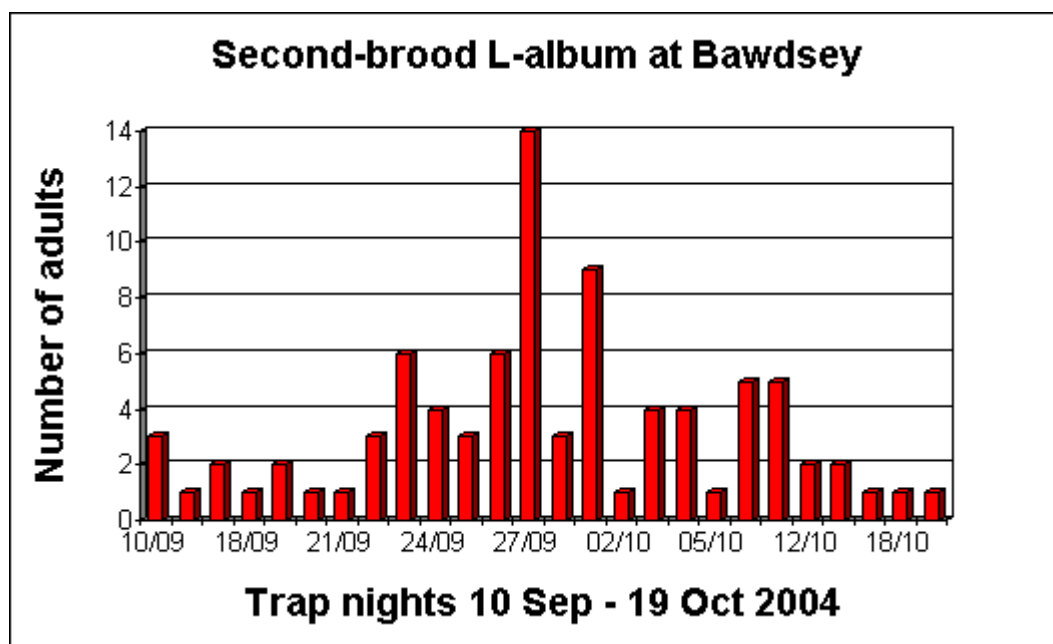
1989 when four were recorded in the area. Since the early 1990's the moth has been recorded annually, increasing in numbers and distribution and appears to have colonised areas a few miles inland of Dungeness itself. It occurs regularly in both broods although numbers of the moth are generally greater in the second brood - a phenomenon noted in Suffolk too. The species has spread north through Kent, with records coming from the Isle of Thanet, where in 2004 a good count of five was made on 28 September at Elvington. The moth has also started spreading to sites west along the Thames estuary.

In Essex there were seven records during 2003 from widespread sites covering the second-brood period September/October.

The first Suffolk records involved singletons at Landguard in 2000 and 2001 (N Odin & M Marsh). Records came from Orfordness and Landguard during 2002 (J Askins, N Odin & M Marsh). In 2003 the moth was recorded from new sites at Dunwich Heath (M Cornish) and Bawdsey (M Deans), in addition to the two previously mentioned sites. However in 2004 the status in Suffolk was to change rather dramatically.

On the first night I ran my M.V. Skinner trap at Bawdsey on 16 June 2004, I recorded a single L-album Wainscot. Two more were trapped on 1 July, with a further singleton on 8 July.

Then no more L-album Wainscots were trapped at Bawdsey until 10 September when three appeared in a Robinson trap. The species was then trapped virtually nightly (when the trap was run), with 59 recorded by the month's end. Another 28 individuals were logged throughout October, with the last of the year on 19th. So to summarise: four were trapped during the first-brood (16 June to 8 July) and 87 were trapped during the second-brood (10 September to 19 October), see graph below. The peak was late September as shown.



In addition to the moths trapped within the Bawdsey Manor Estate, Nick Mason caught thirteen individual L-album Wainscots on ten trap-nights between 13 September and 9 October in his garden at nearby Hollesley (and two other localities in the village). His trap run occasionally at Shingle Street had produced negative results.

I became rather keen on establishing exactly where the centre of the population was in Suffolk and what was going on. Clearly with this number of moths they were not all immigrants? I enlisted the help of Nick Mason and several members of the Suffolk Moth Group to get involved in some survey work.

Nick Mason, Tony Prichard and I trapped at East Lane, Bawdsey (a site c2 miles north of the Bawdsey Manor Estate) on 22 September and recorded a single L-album Wainscot at 125w M.V. light. Then Nick Mason and I trapped by the allotments at Shingle Street on 29 September and failed to record any

L-album. So it would appear that the main population stretches from Bawdsey Quay northwards to East Lane (and possibly no further north, as none recorded at Shingle Street). Then there was the population slightly inland of Shingle Street at Hollesley to explain!

Further up the coast Tony Prichard, Neil Sherman and I trapped at Aldeburgh halfway cottage with negative results, although this was thought of as a long shot!

Could it be that there is a breeding colony in the Bawdsey area and that the occasional records elsewhere on the Suffolk coast are wanderers?

My thanks in particular to Sean Clancy and Nick Mason for information provided used within this article.

References

South, R. 1980 reprint. The Moths of the British Isles, series one.

Skinner, B. Second edition 1998. Moths of the British Isles.

Waring, Townsend & Lewington, Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland.

Websites visited: Suffolk Moth Group, Essex Moth Group, Moths of Dungeness, Planet Thanet.

Update on the spread of *Cameraria ohridella* in East Anglia - Jon Clifton

The Horse-Chestnut Leaf Miner *Cameraria ohridella* was first found near Lake Ohrid in Macedonia (hence its unusual latin name) and soon spread through Europe rapidly, reaching Britain in July 2002 at Wimbledon, south London. Its predicted dispersal, as with other leaf mining adventive colonists such as *Phyllonorycter leucographella* (1989) and *Phyllonorycter platani* (1991) was documented as it spread through the south of England and the Home Counties later that year.

It first reached Suffolk, found by Neil Sherman, in August 2004 at the Ipswich Golf Course (VC25) with further records throughout the county now standing at over 15 sites covering both VC's with a bias to the south and east (*AWP - possibly due to recorder bias*).

In Norfolk mines were also discovered in August at Surlingham Church (VC27). It was then seen at a further five sites throughout the year in both VC's. Norwich and Thetford being two main areas.

The mines are fairly distinctive with one side of the leaf being 'blistered' although care is required not to confuse these with a very common leaf mould which also affects the leaf.



Mine to the right and mould infection to the left



Cameraria ohridella - adult moth

Photos © Rob Edmunds

More information can be found at the Leaf Mining web site at www.leafmines.co.uk

Introduction to Moths Course at Sandwich Bay, June 2005 - Tony Prichard

Tony Davis of Butterfly Conservation has brought to my attention a course that is being run by Butterfly Conservation and the Sandwich Bay Bird Observatory Trust. The course is primarily intended as a beginner's course but there should be plenty of interest for more experienced recorders as well. The course runs from the evening of Friday 25th June to mid-afternoon of Sunday 27th June, with moth lights being run on the Friday and Saturday nights. Daytime activities include a number of identification workshops, including identifying moths caught during the night-time sessions. There is a charge; £60 for residential places and £35 for non-residential places, with a limited number of the latter. Species of interest that caught my eye when I was looking at the lists for 2004 (when I'm told the conditions were not favourable) were; Six-belted Clearwing, Bright Wave, Rest Harrow, Pigmy Footman, Water Ermine, Kent Black Arches, Toadflax Brocade and Reddish Light Arches. If you would like further details then contact myself and I will pass on contact information.

Dissection News - Jon Clifton

Many thanks to all recorders handing me on examples of *Cnephasia* from 2004. I have now finished dissecting well over twenty of these from various sites in Suffolk. With interest is the discovery of *Cnephasia pasiuana* from the Ipswich, Martlesham and Minsmere areas, the first recent records from Suffolk. (interestingly Norfolk also produced one from the north coast also constituting the first recent record) Further records of *Cnephasia genitalana* have also come to light (pardon the pun) via genitalia examination.

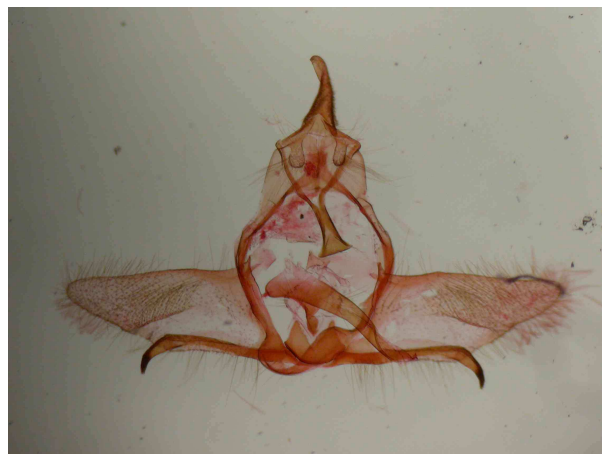
Of other interesting micros dissected from the 2004 season where *Acleris logiana*, thought of once as almost a Scottish speciality but has been turning up over various southern counties over the past few years. Suffolk now holds in excess of twenty records from six sites of this handsome looking moth, the majority from the Ipswich area giving the clear impression of a local breeding population (again Norfolk has produced its first two records in 2004 as well).

Unfortunately only one of the metallic green *Coleophora* of the trifolii group were handed onto me, from Paul Bryant. This turned out to be *Coleophora alcyonipennella* from Hopton.

Of significant interest was the discovery of a female *Scythris potentillella* from the Ipswich Golf Course found outdoors resting on the work shed wall in August. The first Suffolk record for over twenty years, old records being from Thorpeness (1972) and Lakenheath (1980/81), albeit the true identity being somewhat clouded with only males being examined and which tended to resemble both *potentillella* and *cicadella* in genital characteristics, this female surely meaning the nomenclature is correct.



Scythris potentillella © Jon Clifton



Cnephasia pasiuana © Jon Clifton

The capture of *Catocala conjuncta* at Minsmere RSPB was overshadowed by the much more handsome *Cosmiotes consortella* (pun intended of course!) captured in August and handed onto me with a batch of micro's for determination. Well done all there.

Thanks to Tony Prichard, Neil Sherman and Jeff Higgott for dates and comments.

Lunar Yellow Underwing Survey 2004-2005 Update - Tony Prichard

This year's survey has been progressing well with the majority of the surveying this year being carried out by Neil Sherman and myself with additional help from Graham Bull, Matthew Deans and Nick Mason. Mild weather in December and into early January meant that most of the visits to our regular survey sites had been completed ahead of schedule. As it would appear that counting the larvae in their earlier instars provides more accurate estimates of population numbers this was fortunate. We have managed to add a few new sites for the species with Westleton Common, Martlesham Common and Wenhaston Black Heath all providing positive results. On the downside some of the surveyed sites now seem to be suffering from encroachment of either bracken or sand sedge, and the effect of this will need to be monitored in future surveys. Experience has shown that if bracken or sand sedge occurs in more than just small amounts in an area that larval numbers are significantly reduced or even absent. It would also appear that heathland management in the Sandlings is going to see more widespread use of grazing and the impact of this on Lunar Yellow Underwing will need to be assessed in future surveys - findings in the Brecks would indicate that grazing has not proved beneficial in the main.

Of particular interest have been exceptionally high counts of Lunar Yellow Underwing larvae at Tunstall Common. Our first visit to this site on 13th December recorded 236 larvae in one survey area. All counts are adjusted to give a standard comparison value (number of larvae per surveyor per hour) and this count of 236 has an adjusted count of 236 (there were three of us counting for 20 minutes). This is an extremely high adjusted count - we would normally expect between 30-50 as an adjusted count for a reasonable area of habitat and our previous highest adjusted count was 88. Two further visits have been made to the site since then and adjusted counts of 182 and 226 were made, so numbers were holding up prior to the cold snap.

With the recent spell of cold weather larval counts have been temporarily suspended so I have resorted to analysing some of the data from this year's survey so far. 17 nights of surveying have been carried out from 5th December to 11th February. 12 main areas have been visited with 25 survey sites covered. We have made 159 records covering 17 species of moth, with a total of 2150 caterpillars

counted and of these 1573 were of Lunar Yellow Underwing larvae.

Species recorded as larvae are Lunar Yellow Underwing, Large Yellow Underwing, Lesser Yellow Underwing, Yellow Shell, Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing, Green Carpet, Yellow Belle, Cream-spot Tiger, Autumnal Rustic, True Lover's Knot, Square-spot Rustic, Lunar Underwing, Straw Underwing and Angle Shades.

It will be interesting to see what effect this cold weather has had on larval numbers. Limited experience in the past has shown a drop in numbers following very cold periods.

European Butterflies Web Site - Tony Prichard

With the increasing interest in digital photography and the internet there has been a rise in the number of moth picture web sites over the last few years. As with most web sites they can be widely varying in quality and coverage. European Butterflies by Chris Jonko at <http://www.lepidoptera.bai.pl/> in my view is one of the top sites at the moment - covering not just butterflies but all European lepidoptera. The design of the web site is very elegant and simple to use. Although the text is mainly in Polish there is increasing support for other languages and English species checklists are provided. All species appear to be covered with the level of information and photographs being more limited for the micro-lepidoptera.- not surprisingly. Distribution data seems to be lacking for the UK although the European distribution maps give a broad view of a moth's distribution. A site well worth a visit to have a browse around, a lot of information is presented graphically so the lack of English doesn't detract too much.

If you like the site how about supporting it by contributing a few (or more) photos of moths that may be missing or under-represented - Chris has previously been in contact with me about supporting the site so any contributions should be well received.

Field reports - Tony Prichard

SMG Moth Night - Aspal Close - 3rd September 2004

This was a second attempt to look for Oak Lutestring at this local nature reserve with good numbers of old oak pollards. The event had been opened to the public and was well attended. Fortunately for them a good number of moths were attracted to the light and they seemed to go away happy enough. Conditions were reasonably favourable and we did quite well with over 60 species recorded. A few interesting species turned up amongst the commoner late summer and autumnal usual suspects with Tawny Wave, *Platytes alpinella*, Feathered Gothic, Frosted Orange and Hedge Rustic.

SMG Moth Night - Walberswick - 10th September 2004

In contrast to the previous meeting we struggled to get over thirty species on this night, although we were not helped by the cool windy weather. Looking for Rush Wainscot, in particular, we were disappointed, although time-wise we were possibly getting a bit near the end of its flight season. Species of possible note included *Acleris cristana* (an unusual form), *Udea ferrugalis*, Dark Sword-grass, Frosted Orange and Large Wainscot.

Moth Night - Little Blakenham Pit - 11th September 2004

At a previous group moth night in 1996 we had had an abundance of Treble-bar to light and to a lesser extent Lesser Treble-bar. Maybe not too surprising as there is plenty of the foodplant in the chalk pit. Since then we have made the odd return visit to look again for Lesser Treble-bar without any success and our lack of luck continued on this night - no Lesser Treble-bar but a few Treble-bars. A visit from Lord Blakenham and his guests kept us busy as we showed them the various species that had turned up so far. While we were walking around the traps a pair of keen eyes spotted a Vestal and this raised

some excitement, not only amongst the guests. Other species recorded out of the total of 39 were Mullein Wave, Autumnal Rustic, White-point, Brindled Green, Brown-spot Pinion, Centre-barred Sallow and a larva of Mother Shipton.

SMG Daytime meeting - Priestley Wood - 12th September 2004

This daytime meeting was switched to Bonny Wood. At a meeting earlier in the season when we visited Priestley Wood we had discovered that there was not much in the way of shrubs and trees suitable for searching for larvae. As this visit was primarily targetted at looking for Mocha larvae it was thought that Bonny Wood would be just as suitable a venue. Whether this was a wise decision is not will not be known as we failed to find any Mocha larva. Leaf-miner records formed the bulk of the species list with the more notable including *Caloptilia semifascia* (forming cones on field maple) and *Ectoedemia septembrella* mines and *Eucalybites auroguttella* cones on St John's Wort. Macro-moth larvae found included Small Yellow Wave, Scalloped Hazel and Common White Wave.

SMG Moth Night - Clare Country Park - 17th September 2004

A quiet cool night with few moths flying. Two leaf-miners provided interest, with *Phyllonorycter platani* mines being common on the London Plane tree in the car park and *Cameraria ohridella* mines also being found in trees next to the car park. Interestingly, we have checked for *P. platani* here in the past with no luck so it would suggest it to be a recent arrival at the site.

Moth Night - Minsmere RSPB Reserve - 18th September 2004

Intended primarily as a meeting to search for Marshmallow Moth on the reserve, just in case it had arrived since our last search. Evidently not, as we failed to find any adults in the traps or by searching the foodplant with torchlight. Twenty-six species were attracted to the light with a fair representation of autumnal species, *Monopis monachella*, the pretty black and white tineid, being the only species of particular note.

SMG Moth Night - Barnhamcross Common - 24th September 2004

Although planned as a moth light session we spent most our time at this meeting searching the brambles and ivy blossom with torches. This latter method was more productive than the moth lights and also helped to keep us warm. A fair selection of autumnal species were found at the ivy and brambles including a migrant Pearly Underwing.

Moth Night - Aldeburgh - 28th September 2004

A visit to the usual Aldeburgh-Thorpeness beach site as part of the L-album Wainscot search organised by Matthew Deans. No L-album Wainscot but some other species of interest were *Monopis obviella*, White-point, Feathered Brindle, Deep-brown Dart and Large Wainscot, with 20 species recorded in total.

SMG Moth Night - Northfield Wood - 1st October 2004

An extremely quiet night and with no brambles or ivy blossom to search. So quiet that even the hornets didn't bother making an appearance. 11 species recorded with nothing particular of note.

SMG Leaf-miner Recording Day - Lineage and Bradfield Woods - 9th October 2004

The group's now annual leaf-miner recording event started off at Lineage Wood. The wood has a good selection of trees, shrubs and plants and so promised to produce a good species list. Strangely the results did not live up to our expectations with only 52 species recorded. Species of note included *Ectoedemia septembrella*, *Stigmella tiliae*, *Bucculatrix albedinella*, *Deltatornix torquilella*, *Phyllonorycter quinnata*, *Coleophora badiipennella*, *Coleophora violacea* and a Chocolate-tip larva in a few spun

leaves.

Following a pub lunch in Lavenham - very enjoyable - we moved on to Bradfield Woods. The results failed to improve on the morning session with only 47 species recorded. *Ectoedemia rubivora*, *Ectoedemia septembrella*, *Stigmella alnetella*, *Parornix finitimella*, *Phyllonorycter rajella* and *P. kleemannella* were amongst the more infrequently recorded species noted on the day, but even most of these are not particularly rare in the county.

Moth Night - Raydon Great Wood - 7th November 2004

An ad-hoc moth night searching yet again for Plumed Prominent at this ancient wood. Moths were thin on the ground and Plumed Prominent failed to appear. Only 10 species recorded including *Udea ferrugalis*, Spruce Carpet, Autumnal Moth and Sprawler

Moth Night - Hintlesham Wood - 16th November 2004

Another moth night in the series of Plumed Prominent searches. We have not searched this wood before for this species, although previous searches at the neighbouring Ramsey Wood had proved negative. Activity at the lights was slightly up on the visit to Raydon Great Wood. Included in the 13 species recorded were Northern Winter and Winter Moths, Scarce Umber, Sprawler, Green-brindled Crescent and November Moth.

Moth Night - Alder Carr Farm - 21st November 2004

The Plumed Prominent search continued at Alder Carr Farm, where there is some field maple in the copse and neighbouring hedgerows. It would appear that it is unlikely that the Plumed Prominent is there. Moth activity was at an extremely low level - only 5 species.

Moth Night - Priestley Wood - 7th December 2004

The final Plumed Prominent search of the year. After so many negative results we decided to return to a known site where the moth has previously recorded in high numbers. It looks as though we may have been too late in the moth's flight period by this stage as again we drew a duck on the target species. 7 species recorded - December Moth, Winter Moth, Northern Winter Moth, Pale Brindled Beauty, Mottled Umber, Satellite and Chestnut.

Reports from Recorders around the county

Records reported in this section have not been checked by the Suffolk Moth Panel. Many thanks go to the recorders who provide write-ups for this section.

Moths at Bawdsey - October to December 2004 - Matthew Deans

October

Some typical late-autumn moths appeared during the first half of the month including the first *Epirritas* (November Moths), Grey and Blair's Shoulder-knots, Merveille du Jour (9th) and both Red and Yellow-line Quakers.

However the clear highlight of the first week was the capture of a pristine *Convolvulus* Hawk-moth on 3rd followed by The Delicate on 5th. A Clouded Yellow butterfly was a fine sight by day on 6th.

Other interest was provided by the ongoing surveying and capture of L-album Wainscots (28 in Oct, last one on 19th) and Black Rustics (five in Oct). Scarcer resident species trapped included two Deep-brown Darts and a Large *Ranunculus* (8th). The Large Wainscot appeared in good numbers almost nightly with 125 recorded throughout the month.

Mild conditions resulted in late records of both Red Underwing and Willow Beauty on 12th with another Delicate.

The first Red-green Carpet for the site and first Feathered Thorn of the year were trapped on 13th. Single Scarce Bordered Straws were taken on 14th and 15th along with ten Pearly Underwings between 13th and 15th.

A very un-seasonal catch was a Shoulder-striped Wainscot on 15th which according to the literature should have finished in July!

With recent good catches of immigrants, four traps were run on 16th which resulted in 251 moths of 35 species being trapped - very impressive for mid-October. The highlights were a staggering 41 Dark Sword-grass, 9 Pearly Underwings and two more Scarce Bordered Straws! Also of note were the 72 Angle Shades trapped that night - most of these were clearly immigrants too.

The run of immigrants continued with two more Delicates trapped on 18th followed by singles on 20th, 22nd and 24th.

Further Red-green Carpets were trapped on 17th, 22nd and 24th and Dark Chestnut put in an appearance on four nights with Streak on two October nights. The first Mottled Umber - a well-marked specimen - was taken on 27th.

The much publicised Harlequin Ladybird was discovered on the site on 23rd - it will be interesting to monitor moth numbers to see if there is any effect from this potentially devastating pest.

Odd micros this month included an un-seasonal *Pleuroptya ruralis* (Mother of Pearl) on 22nd and a very streaky *Acleris cristana* on 28th.

A fitting end to a fantastic month in which 77 species were recorded were single Gem, White-speck and Scarce Bordered Straw which graced the trap on 31st.



White-speck © Matthew Deans



Convolvulus Hawk-moth © Matthew Deans

The traps were operated on 28 nights during the month producing immigrant totals of six *Plutella xylostella* (Diamond-back), 27 *Udea ferrugalis*, five *Nomophila noctuella* (Rush Veneer), one Gem, one Convolvulus Hawk-moth, 39 Turnip Moth (mostly immigrants), 120 Dark Sword-grass, 30 Pearly Underwings, eight White-points, seven Delicates, one White-speck, 258 Angle Shades (mostly immigrants), five Scarce Bordered Straws and 78 Silver Ys.

November

The month opened with single Dark Sword-grass, Scarce Bordered Straw and Silver Y all trapped on

1st. Resident species on that date included Streak and Large Wainscot.

A south-easterly airflow on 2nd brought a new moth to Bawdsey and for Suffolk - a Red-headed Chestnut - of the nominate form (see separate article). Also in the traps were single Gem, Pearly Underwing and ten *Udea ferrugalis*. A Mottled Rustic was a strangely un-seasonal sight, although in recent years they have started to appear in October. A late example of the pyralid moth *Orthopygia glaucinalis* was at the security lights.

On 7th a Dark Arches was an odd sight next to a December Moth! It was the first record at Bawdsey since August.

Another exciting immigrant on 8th was a Red Sword-grass in the Robinson trap. A pristine specimen - this was only the second recent Suffolk record since Morley's time (the other being at Landguard in 1996). Another new moth for the site on the same night was an *Acleris logiana* in the Skinner trap.

Late examples of Mallow appeared on 11th, Turnip on 17th; with Large Wainscot and Brick on 24th. The night of 24th also produced the first Scarce Umber and Winter Moth of the season.

Another Red-headed Chestnut of the nominate form on 25th was both the second site and County record. Incredibly it was the only moth in the Robinson trap that night!

The month ended quietly with colder nights. A single late Angle Shades and Silver Y on 30th were the most noteworthy.

A culmination of 21 nights trapping produced an excellent haul of immigrants. Totals were 48 *Udea ferrugalis* (Rusty-dot Pearl), one *Nomophila noctuella* (Rush Veneer), one Gem, five Dark Sword-grass, two Pearly Underwings, one Red Sword-grass, two Red-headed Chestnuts, 47 Angle Shades, one Scarce Bordered Straw and 30 Silver Ys.

December

The first week of the month saw a few late examples of Brick and Yellow-line Quaker in the traps. Some of the over-wintering species like Grey Shoulder-knot, Satellite and Chestnut also put in an appearance before they went into hibernation. The last Feathered Thorn of the year was noted on 4th at the security lights.

A mild south-westerly airflow on 4th brought two *Udea ferrugalis* and three Silver Ys to the traps. The only other migrant this month was a single *Plutella xylostella* on 8th.

Numbers of December Moths soon started to drop-off (16 recorded up until 16th) as the Winter Moth numbers increased (60 recorded all month). Totals of 17 of the highly variable Mottled Umber were noted during the month along with two Scarce Umbers.

Three Dark Chestnuts appeared mid-month with a single on 14th and two on 15th.

A cold spell during the run up to Christmas meant that hardly any trapping was done through to the end of the year.

Moths at Ipswich Golf Club - October to December 2004 - Neil Sherman

October 2004 was quite good for recording moths, with some mild nights during the second half of the month producing some interesting trapping results (more on this later). Moth traps were run on 7 nights, producing a species list of 51 moths (36 macros).

Macro records of possible note included the following. Firstly, and most noticeably at this site was the regular appearance of the Red-green Carpet. 20 were seen in total, these being the best ever figures - it is normally only seen once a year! Flounced chestnut was seen 3 times at light, with 2 more sightings feeding at brambles. The Deep-brown Dart appeared on the 4th, the last for the year. The Dark

Chestnut was first seen on the 4th, when 3 were found after dark on bramble. The first appeared in the trap on the 28th. The Blair's Shoulder-knot trapped on the 12th was the first record away from the clubhouse area - another appeared on the 19th (eaten by a Hornet unfortunately!). The only Green-brindled Crescent so far were trapped on the 19th (2). Other more usual moths seen were Streak (5 records), Mallow (3 records) and Merveille du jour (2 records). 2 Macros seen were not expected - Buff Footman (12th) and Pebble Hook-tip (19th). This follows the trend in recent years of moths appearing out of season.

Micro numbers were few, these were the ones of note at this site: *Udea ferrugalis* (2 records), *Acleris logiana* (regular) and *Diurnea lipsiella* (also regular).

2 trapping sessions were of note for the totals of species/numbers appearing. 31 species were trapped on the 19th, this being the highest for the site in October. The 28th produced a total of 18 species, but there were 227 moths! Amongst this total were 77 November (*Epirrita*) sp, 70 Yellow -line Quaker, 36 Chestnut and 14 Feathered Thorn. This was easily the highest ever total for an October night at the site.

The Ivy blossom/brambles surveying continued at the start of the month, until both finished for the year during the second week. As with last month, here is a table of the results.

	At light	On Ivy	On Brambles
Chestnut	99	14	119
Brick	5	1	16

Numbers of both these species noticeably increased at light after both the food sources dried up - maybe the moths were becoming more mobile in their searching for food so hence were caught by the traps.



Moths at bramble © Neil Sherman



Selection of moths in the trap © Neil Sherman

November continued on with the same mild theme, with a few short cold snaps the only interruptions to the pattern. This produced probably the best number of moths for November at this site since recording began in 1994 and also the best night (more on this later).

25 species were noted, with the following of possible note. Streak was seen 3 times with the last on the 16th. The Chestnut was noted regularly, with a highest count of 41 on the 7th. Northern Winter Moth was recorded twice, but surprisingly no Winter Moths. Scarce Umber first appeared on the 12th, and was seen regularly after that. Silver Y was noted twice, on the 16th and 23rd - this is not the latest record for the site though as I have one record for December (in 1994). The macro that has provided the most interest was the Red-green Carpet. There were records on the 1st (1), 7th (2) and 16th (3).

This follows on from the 20 seen in October. In total, I have recorded 36 individuals of this moth in 2004 - compare this with the number of records for all previous years back to 2001 (when I recorded the first one at the site) - a total of 5! This is equal to the highest number of the moth I saw in one night this year (on the 24th October).

Micros noted included *Diurnea lipsiella* (seen once), *Epiphyas postvittana* (1) and most unusually a *Scoparia ambigualis* (16th).

As already mentioned, the mild conditions resulted in the best ever trapping night for November at this site, on the 23rd. 10 species were seen, with a total of 82 moths, all in the ALS Robinson trap. This catch included 50 December Moths, 10 Scarce Umbers, 8 Mottled Umbers and 2 Northern Winter Moths to name but a few.



Scarce UMBER © Neil Sherman

Very little trapping was done in December, with a trap only going out once at the start of the month (8th). Moths seen included Northern Winter Moth (2), Winter Moth (11) and Scarce UMBER (3). Also noted this month were the borings of the Lunar Hornet Clearwing (2nd), found while coppicing Sallow bushes.

Mention was made in my last report of a possible record of a Porter's Rustic on the 19th August. As this moth was worn, it was kept as a specimen to be determined at a later date. It was taken along to the British Entomological Society meeting in London in November, and compared with other specimens that had also been recorded on the south coast at the same time. All present on that day (Tony Prichard, Graham Bull, Matthew Deans, Jon Clifton and myself) agreed that the moth was that species, this being the first record for Suffolk of this rare migrant.

The moth species list for 2004 currently stands at 685, with a few more species still awaiting confirmation. This compares well with 2003, when 681 species were noted, showing that, despite the periods of bad weather 2004 was a good year for moths at this site (2003 being in most people's opinions a very good year).

Eye Moths, Winter 2004/5 - Paul Kitchener

Generally, mild nights were the norm throughout October and November and there was usually something of interest in the trap during those months. The twenty species seen in November was the best total for that month I've had since I began trapping in Eye in 1996. The trap was out for a total of only eight nights in December and January with the latter month proving the better of the two for a change.

Late records for *Clepsis consimilana* (19th October), *Pseudargyrotoza conwagana* (20th October) and *Monopis obviella* (15th December) were of interest. Other micros of note were *Acleris hastiana* (8th November and the first winter record for the site), *Plutella xylostella* (singles, 20th October and 7th November, bringing the year total to fifteen - last year's total was ninety nine) and *Udea ferrugalis*

(singles, 29th October and 5th November, bringing the year total to seven, one more than last year).

It was an excellent autumn for the Mallow, the last one appearing on the 25th October. A very welcome sight beside the trap on the morning of the 1st November was a Red-green Carpet, a moth I last saw in Eye in 1999.



Red-green Carpet © Paul Kitchener

It was my best autumn ever for Feathered Thorn, up to three being seen most nights up to 8th November, but a December Moth on the 1st November proved to be the only one of the winter (one better than last year however!). Three records of the Turnip in October were perhaps typical, whilst Setaceous Hebrew Character continued to be seen throughout that month, the last one being caught on the 1st November, equalling my latest ever record. Five Sprawlers between 29th October and 3rd November were quite a surprise as there was only one previous site record (and I'd only seen two in Eye in eight years). Another moth that had its best year for some time, as far as my records for Eye can tell, is the Large Wainscot, with a total of seven between 1st October and 11th November.

Other bits and pieces for this period have included a Satellite (28th October), only the third of the year, but I've only seen one in the previous two years(!), the last Silver Y of the year (23rd October) and an Angle Shades (8th November). This last species has had a very poor year, the total being a paltry seventeen individuals.

Mottled Umber was seen in typical numbers, the first on the 8th November, but they were all over by the end of the year.

A species that has proved strangely scarce here in Eye is the Winter Moth, with no more than ten records in a winter since 1996. The total of ten individuals this winter was better than the blank last year however! It doesn't seem to be a moth that is greatly attracted to light traps, even actinic, but my totals also include those few seen at lighted windows.

A few Dark Chestnuts and Pale Brindled Beauties in January kept the interest going, but two Early Moths (the first on the 29th) were particularly welcome, as it not only suggested better things to come, but also they were the first for the site since 2003. The first January (just) *Orthosia* records that I've had for Eye were produced on the 31st, when single Common Quaker and Hebrew Character were in the trap. However, no more have been seen since and last year none were seen until March.



Early Moth © Paul Kitchener



Pale Brindled Beauty © Paul Kitchener

February, so far (and at the time of writing, on the 22nd, there is another heavy snow shower), has been very quiet. Four night's trapping, all in the first two weeks, produced just four species, new ones for the year being *Emmelina monodactyla* and Chestnut.

I'm sure though, that once this cold snap is over, things will really start to take off and I'll be out enjoying the Eye nightlife once again.

Mendlesham Green - Steve Woolnough

Since last reporting, the trap has only been run the once; on 31st October.

It was a mild night and produced the reasonable total of 13 moths of 9 different species, the highest total since 29th September. It included four new garden records, with three Feathered Thorn, singles of Sprawler and Satellite, and three Yellow-line Quaker. A single Silver Y was also present, together with a late Green-brindled Crescent. The three remaining species were Turnip Moth, Red-line Quaker and *Blastobasis decolorella*.

With that, garden mothing ended for the year on a total of 318 species from 96 trapping nights.

Moths at Rendham - October to December 2004 - Matthew Deans

October

The trap was first run on 4th with Red Underwing, two Merveille du Jour and a Yellow-line Quaker adding flavour to autumn mothing at Rendham. The Green-brindled Crescent was first seen on 5th when three came to light along with Spruce Carpet and a late Sallow.

Migrants were thin on the ground (compared with Bawdsey) although a Pearly Underwing and a White-point brightened things up on 6th after strong southerly winds. The same night produced two specimens of Frosted Orange.

Another southerly airflow on 12th brought warm and overcast conditions resulting in a good count of 21 species. This included late examples of Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing and Burnished Brass in addition to the more expected Mallow, Blair's Shoulder-knot, Brick and Red and Yellow-line Quakers.

An impressive 24 species were trapped on 13th including a Feathered Thorn and three Dark Chestnut - both new for the year. The first December Moth of the year appeared on 27th.

Throughout the month Merveille du Jour appeared regularly brightening up the catch - 15 were recorded this month. There has been an increase in Feathered Ranunculus trapped here in recent years - October was no exception with 11 recorded. Another good total was the 15 Brown-spot Pinions trapped throughout the month - a species we take for granted and quite scarce in some parts of the U.K.

November

Mild conditions prevailed throughout the first few days of the month but moth numbers were still very low. A single *Udea ferrugalis* was trapped on 1st along with a December Moth and the year's first Sprawler.

On 2nd the first Mottled Umber of the autumn was trapped along with a Pale Mottled Willow and another Sprawler.

Feathered Thorns appeared in reasonable numbers with five trapped on 3rd. This night also produced a single late Blood-vein - the first November record for Rendham.

Moth numbers were generally low in the garden compared with Bawdsey. Two *Udea ferrugalis* were an interesting catch on 8th (a scarce species at Rendham) and compares favourably with the good numbers trapped at my Bawdsey site this month.

Further specimens of Sprawler appeared on 4th, 9th, 11th and 16th - all singletons apart from two on the last date. They were most often discovered in the grass surrounding the trap.

The 10th saw the first Winter Moth appear on a brick wall by a security light and was a depressing reminder of things to come.

Two Scarce Umbers trapped on 23rd were the first for the year. This night was a good one for December Moths with 12 trapped.

December

The trap was run on 4th with two Mottled Umbers, Scarce Umber and two Winter Moths trapped. The outside lights attracted a late Brick and eight Winter Moths the same night. The following night the trap was again run but drew a complete blank!



Mottled Umber © Matthew Deans



Scarce Umber © Matthew Deans

From then on with cold nights, it was not surprising that the month was dominated by Winter Moths noted at outside lights or on windows.

Contact details

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Suffolk Moths web site (home of the SMG): <http://www.suffolkmothgroup.org.uk/>

SMG Email Discussion Group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/suffolkmothgroup>

Essex County Moth Recorder : Brian Goodey, 298 Ipswich Road, Colchester, Essex. CO4 0ET. E-mail: essexmoths@dsl.pipex.com

The Newsletter

This is the newsletter for the Suffolk Moth Group. It is available for download from the Suffolk Moths website and subscribers can receive email notification when new issues are produced. Paper copy are available at a £2 per annum subscription. It is usually intended for four issues to be produced a year although the precise time of production varies. I am always on the look out for articles that will be of interest to moth recorders in Suffolk, although field and site reports should be topical. Please contact me for publication deadlines as this varies with each issue and tends to be flexible.



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