

Suffolk Moth Group Newsletter

Issue 36 - Spring 2005

Edited by Tony Prichard

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Editorial

This season seems to have got off to rather a slow start with cold or windy nights or both being the norm. After a rather mild winter when we managed to complete most of the Lunar Yellow Underwing surveying by the end of January opportunities for recording at light seem to have been rather limited. See the Field Reports section for details of those nights when we did manage to get out and about at night. A consolation is the prediction of a hot summer being in the offing but at the moment I am still waiting.

The numbers of moth recorders in the county sending in records to myself continues to grow and so does the readership of the newsletter. At the moment the newsletter is based on material from a few regular contributors but I would like to encourage other recorders to contribute articles. They do not have to be terribly scientific or long and the 'Report from Recorders' section is a convenient section where all recorders could contribute. Even if you're a beginner it is interesting to hear what you find to be interesting or is turning up in your local patch. If you just want to send in a species list of what you

have recorded then I can incorporate that easily enough into the report section. If there are any suggestions for improvements to the newsletter or topics that you would like to see covered then again let me know.

During our Lunar Yellow Underwing larval survey in the winter Neil Sherman and myself visited Purdis Heath one evening. As we entered the wooded section nearest to the road we were surrounded by Winter Moths fluttering between the trees and most trees seemed to have several adults perched on them. I didn't really think much more about this until the springtime when walking through the same area of woodland I was met with Winter Moth larvae dangling on silken threads from what seemed every tree, plenty of spun leaves on the oak and birch trees containing further larvae and a rain of frass from the canopy above. A few weeks later at the end of May and on another visit I was met with the noisy squawks of what must have been over two hundred starlings up in the trees, where the Winter Moth larvae had stripped the leaves, and down on the ground searching among the dried leaves. It would appear that this local explosion of larvae was a very attractive food source and news has spread to the local starling population. I have seen a similar scene before when Mottled Umber larvae stripped the sycamore trees in a small area of woodland but had not seen the story unfold in such a way from adult through to larvae to being eaten by birds.

Many thanks to this issues' contributors and good luck for the season ahead.

Answers to the Moth Picture Quiz - Neil Sherman



1 - Kent Black Arches



2 - Pink-barred Sallow



3 - Water Carpet



4 - Birch Mocha



5 - *Conobathra repandana*



6 - Grey Dagger larva



7 - Poplar Kitten



8 - Satellite



9 - Blair's Shoulder-knot



10 - *Alucita hexadactyla*



11 - Flounced Chestnut



12 - Mullein larva



13 - Yellow Horned



14 - Six-belted Clearwing



15 - White Satin



16 - Grass Wave



17 - Mocha



18 - Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth larva



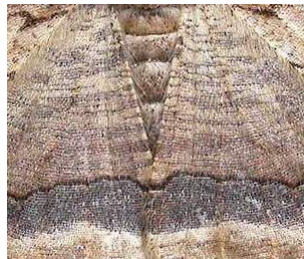
19 - Clouded Magpie



20 - *Perinephela hortulata*



21 - Beautiful Yellow Underwing



22 - Waved Umber



23 - Royal Mantle



24 - *Orthopygia glaucinalis*

Annual Indoor Meeting Winter 2005 - Tony Prichard

This year's indoor meeting was held rather later than usual on 2nd April at Alder Carr Farm, Needham Market. The meeting was well attended as in previous years, even without the attraction of a main speaker. We were joined by some fellow moth recorders from Essex and Jon Clifton from Anglian Lepidopterist Supplies. As usual the meeting followed the format of myself starting off the proceedings with a report on the recording of moths in the county based on the previous year's recording. A few of the slides shown are reproduced below in the next section. After lunch and a perusal of the exhibits the afternoon session was devoted to a members' slideshow, with the laptop and digital projector kindly on loan from the Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation. Talks were given by Jon Clifton, Matthew Deans and Neil Sherman - many thanks to them for keeping us entertained in the afternoon with some very good pictures - some of local species and some not so local.

If anyone has any suggestions for activities or topics or any general improvements to the indoor meetings then could you please drop me a line.

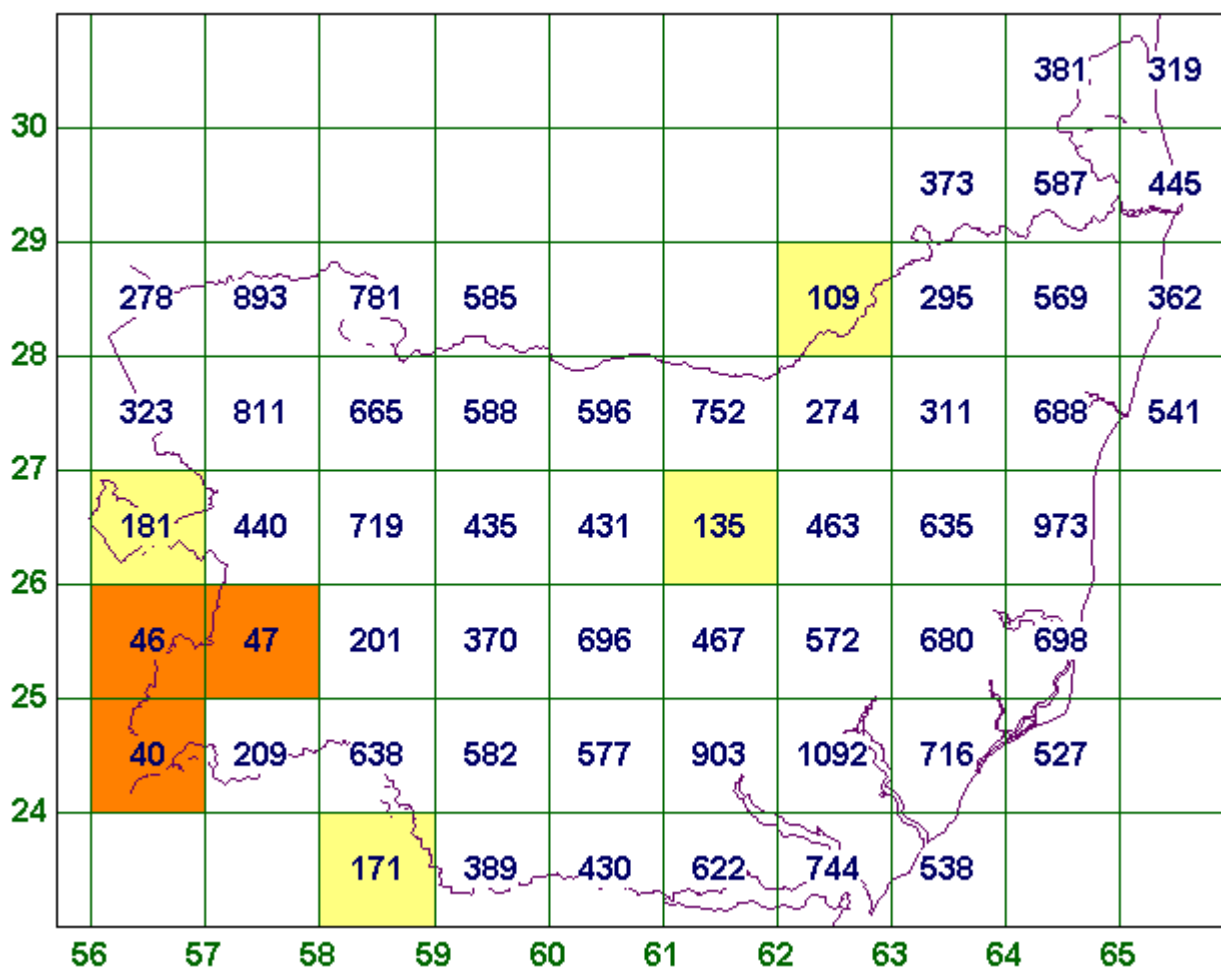
As per last year it is intended to hold an identification workshop one autumn evening this year after the season's main activities have calmed down a bit. Further details will be announced in a newsletter nearer the time.

Recording Summary from 2004 - Tony Prichard

Here are a few of the slides that I put together for the indoor meeting in early April based on the records

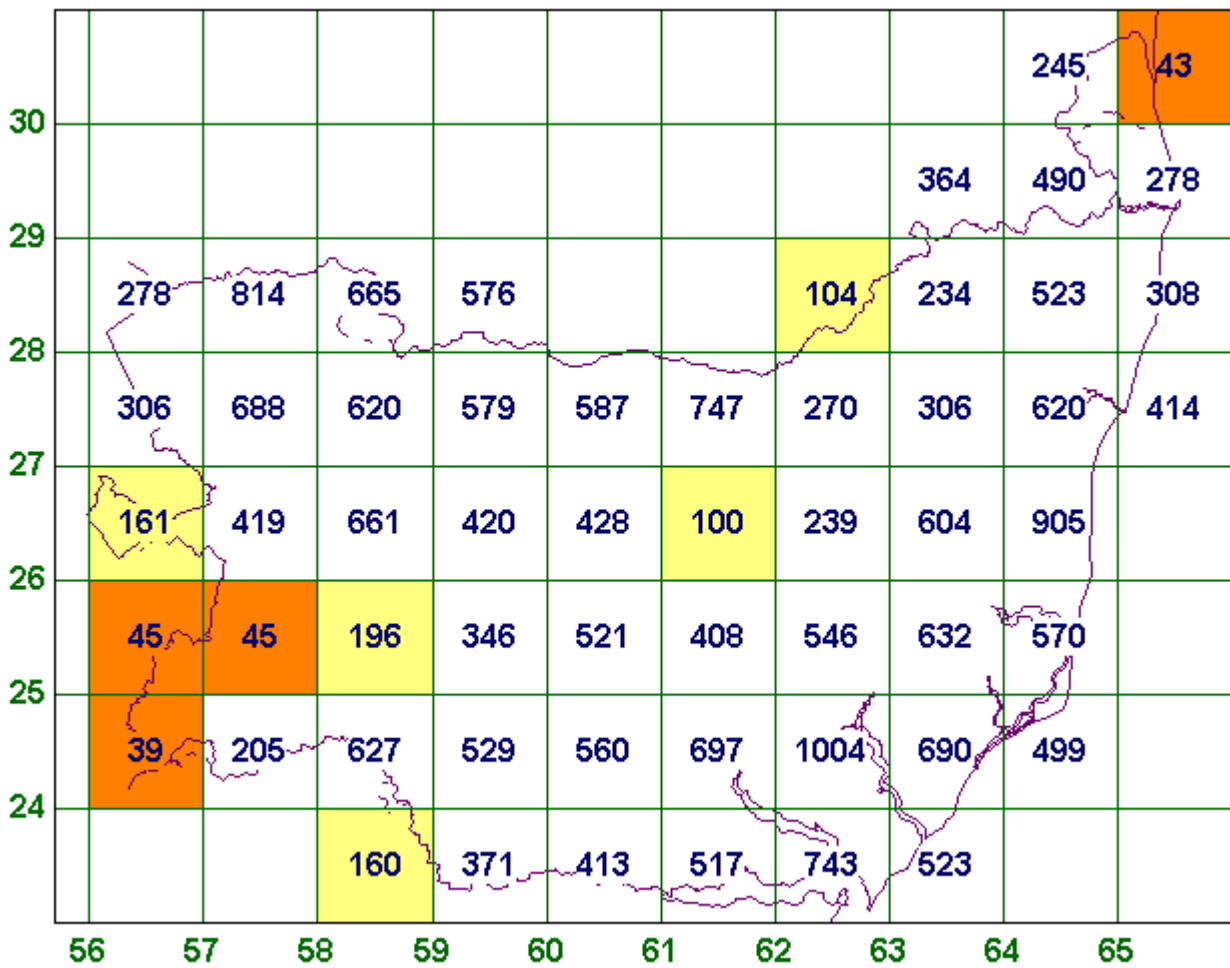
in the moth database. As is usual not all records for 2004 had been received by the time of the indoor meeting and most of these graphs are regularly changing to small degrees. Even so they give a broad indication of the state of moth recording throughout the county. The data now includes almost all records from Morley's Final Catalogue.

The first map shows the counts of all moth species per ten kilometre square for all time. It would appear that even in Morley's time the south-west part of the county was under-recorded.



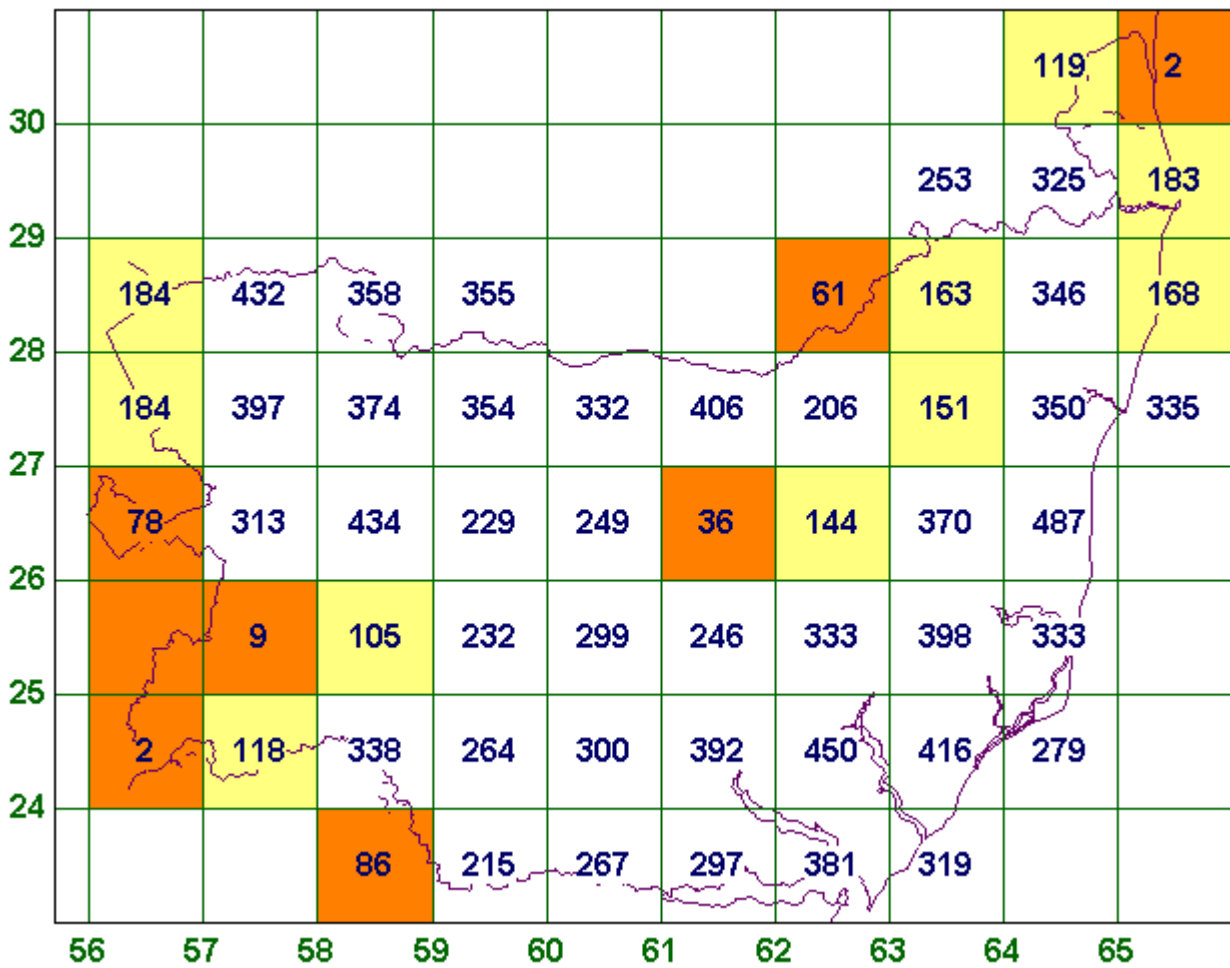
Counts of all species per ten km square at end of 2004

This second map shows the counts of all moth species per ten kilometre square based on records from 1990 onwards. Some of the squares are not too far off their all time counts but quite a few are adrift by around a hundred species, notably the north-east of the county where several recorders mentioned in the Final Catalogue were based.



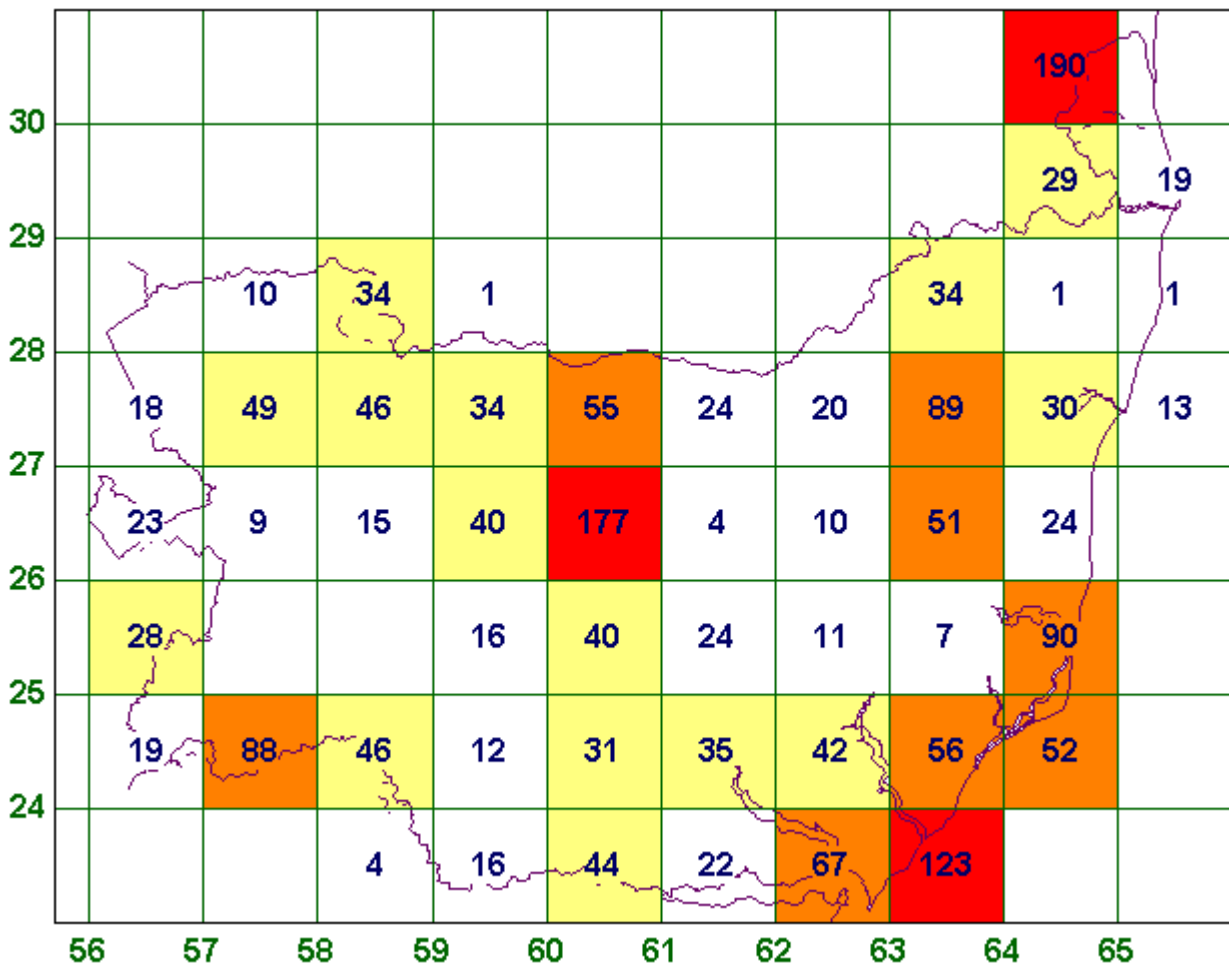
Counts of all species per ten km square at end of 2004 - post 1990 records only

This next map shows the same type of data as the preceding one but this time it is restricted to just macro-species. This roughly aligns with most other order recording coverage maps in the county with south-west and north-east corners being under-recorded, along with an area of 'High Suffolk' between the two.



Counts of macro-moth species per ten km square at end of 2004 - post 1990 records only

I put this following map together to show that even recording in previously well-recorded squares can provide useful new distribution data. The three hot-spots (with over a hundred new species) are down to Steve Woolnough's recent trapping efforts at Mendlesham, Matthew Deans' recording at Bawdsey and the group's visit to Belton in the north-east of the county.



Counts of new species per ten km square in 2004

***Ectoedemia heringella* (Mariani, 1939) - yet another new leaf miner for the county - Tony Prichard**

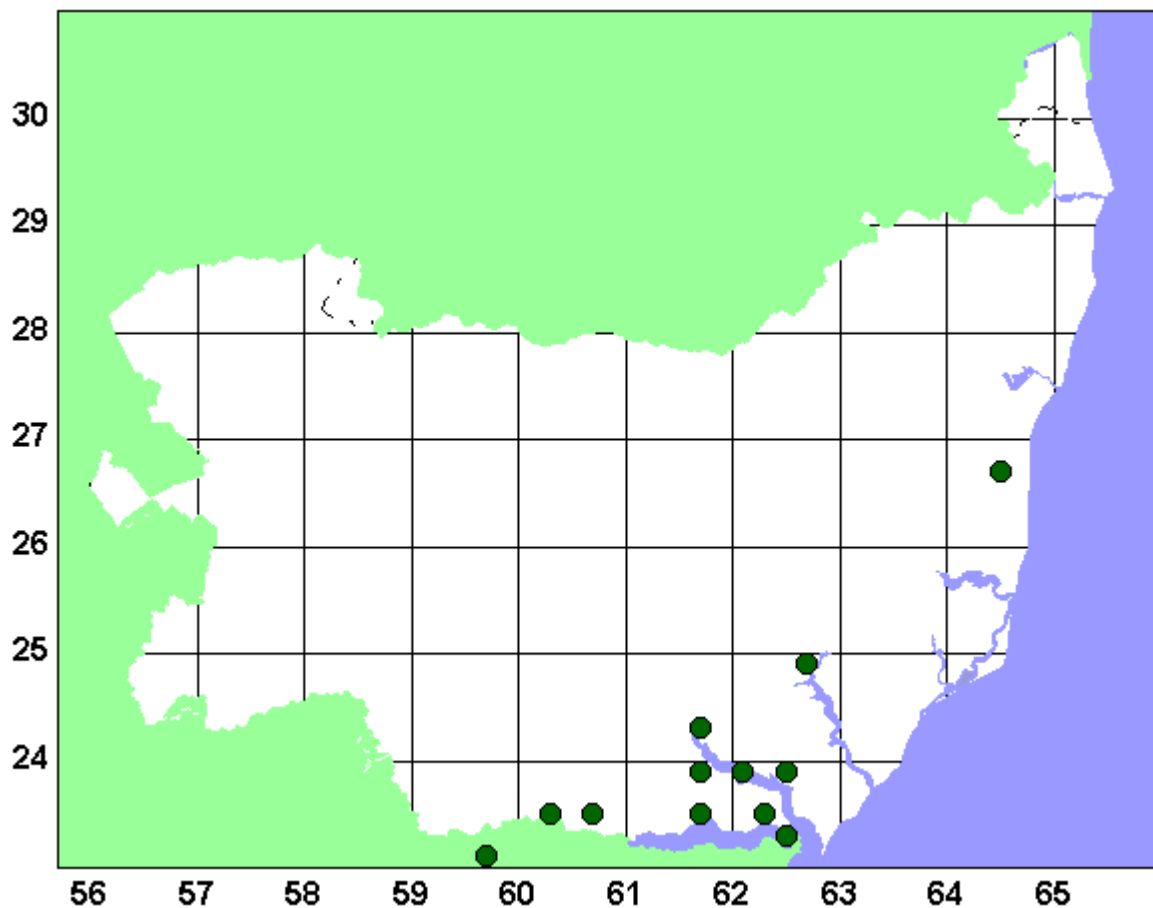
This was rather a fortuitous find of this leaf-mining species that had previously been restricted to the Greater London area in the UK. A recent newsletter from the leaf mining website (www.leafmines.co.uk) run by Rob Edmunds had covered the mines of this species on Holm Oak. At the time I had not really thought much about it, I had searched for this species in 2002, following its discovery in the London area, but had failed to uncover any of the mines at the time. If this species was on the move I would have expected it to turn up in other areas before arriving in Suffolk. While trying to locate a recording site in the Great Wenham area, near Ipswich, I got a bit lost. I parked up in the village and was walking back to the main road when I noticed a Holm Oak in the churchyard, the appearance of the leaves immediately brought to mind the pictures of *Ectoedemia heringella* mines that I had seen in the leaf-mining newsletter. A few leaves were bagged up, the mines photographed and posted the leaf-mining email group and their identification confirmed by Martin Honey and Erik van Nieukerken (thanks to them for their help).



© Tony Prichard - high density of mines on leaves © Tony Prichard - *Ectoedemia heringella* tenanted mines

Having a few days to spare I went around checking the other Holm Oaks in the area and found the species to be reasonably well established in the south-east corner of the county, including North Essex. What was quite noticeable in most of the trees affected was the high density of mines on a tree, some trees had so many mines in them that they appeared quite brown from a distance. There has been some discussion with the spread of the other leaf-miner *Cameraria ohridella* being assisted by the adults hitching rides on vehicles and trains and it may just be coincidence with *E. heringella* but quite a few of the sites where mines were found were not that far from the A12.

The map below shows the distribution of mines that were found from late March to mid-April this year. I have not heard of any other records of this mine outside London but I would have thought that these records are a sign that the species is spreading within the country.



Current records for *Ectoedemia heringella* in Suffolk (and 1 from Essex)

Some confusion species - Tony Prichard

While putting together the flight time period data for the online guide I noticed that for a couple of sets of confusion species it looked as though some recorders may be mixing up the species. What follows is hopefully some pointers to help distinguish the species.

The first set of confusion species is the Foxglove Pug and the Toadflax Pug, both are species that are reasonably widespread in the county although by no means abundant, turning up in ones or twos here and there. The reference books vary in the flight periods given for these species. The Foxglove Pug may appear from end of April to end of August, it seems to peak in May and June and then have a possible second brood in August. The Toadflax Pug appears on the wing from late May to early September and it would appear that peak emergence is between late June and August in two possible protracted and overlapping broods. So although I would normally be expecting Foxglove Pug in May, June into July followed by Toadflax Pug from late June onwards this is by no means a certain rule.

The reference books also vary in the distinguishing features between the two species but the table below summarises the more frequently mentioned features. Some books seem to rely heavily on the angulation of the outer line of the dark central band in the Foxglove Pug. My experience is that this feature does vary in its extent, in some individuals the line can be quite angulated but in others the angulation is minimal, as shown in the picture of the adult moth below.

Foxglove Pug	Toadflax Pug
Generally larger - with forewing length of 10-12mm	Generally smaller - with forewing length of 9-10mm
Outer line of the dark central band in sharply angled	Outer line of dark central band is not sharply angled
More washed out colour - the dark central band has pale speckling (irroration)	Appears neater with more solid colours - dark central band lacks irroration
Dark basal patch is more complete	Dark basal patch not complete, restricted to costa
The band on the second abdominal segment (tergum) is lighter	The band on the second abdominal segment (tergum) is darker



© Neil Sherman - Foxglove Pug



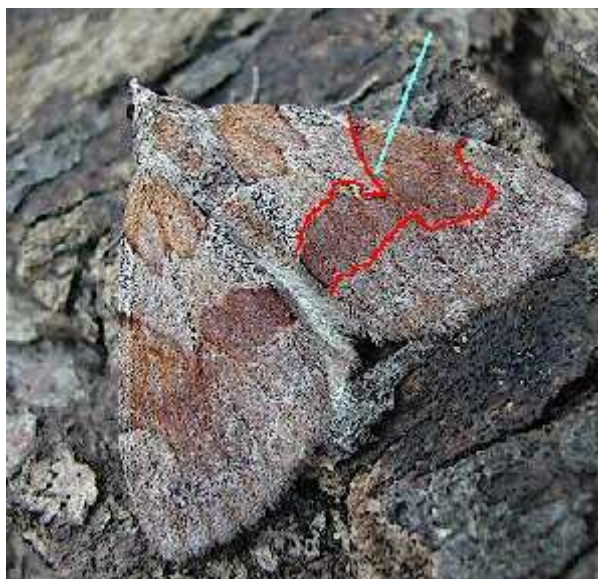
© Neil Sherman - Toadflax Pug

The other set of species where it appears there may have been some confusion is Grey Pine Carpet, Pine Carpet and Spruce Carpet. Both the Grey Pine Carpet and Spruce Carpet are double-brooded being on the wing May to July and September to November, while the Pine Carpet is single-brooded and on the wing from July to November. Spruce and Grey Pine Carpets are more widely distributed within the county while the Pine Carpet appears to be more restricted to the Sandlings and Brecks where there are large conifer plantations.

The distinguishing feature of Pine Carpet is the sharply angled leading edge of the central cross band, with the appearance of the band being pinched, as shown in the photograph below, whereas both the Grey Pine Carpet and Spruce Carpet lack this sharp angulation. In general the Grey Pine and Pine Carpets are of a more rusty brown colour while Spruce Carpet has much greyer look to it. Distinguishing Grey Pine Carpet and Spruce Carpet can be difficult with some individuals but pointers towards Spruce Carpet include the better defined wing markings, white lines edging the central cross band and a more fluted edge to the central cross band.



© Neil Sherman - Grey Pine Carpet



© Neil Sherman - Pine Carpet



© Lee Gregory - Spruce Carpet

References

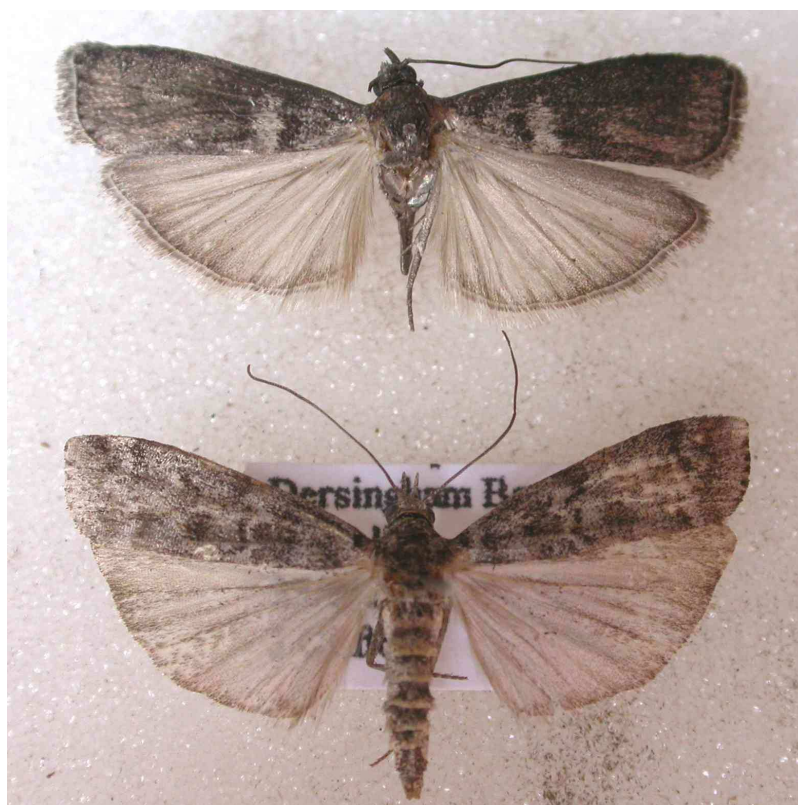
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***Dioryctria simplicella* (Heinemann, 1863) at Rendlesham Forest - 20th August 2004 - Jon Clifton**

An odd example of the pyralid moth *Dioryctria simplicella* first reached me via a photograph taken by Neil Sherman on 20th August 2004. At first glance I thought it was not unlike a *Scotia* but some abnormalities persisted. Its extreme colour ruled out most of the others within this group.

After circulating the photo to a few friends nobody was any the wiser and even possibilities of new to Britain crept in.

I eventually received the set specimen from Tony Prichard in April 2005 which was duly dissected and turned out to be a male *D. simplicella*. The puzzle was resolved.



© Jon Clifton - *Dioryctria simplicella* - mystery moth at top

Field reports - Tony Prichard

Moth Night at Wordwell - 18th March 2005

This was one of our first nights out looking for Barred Tooth-stripe in the Brecks. With plenty of privet bushes spaced between the conifer blocks it seemed a suitable candidate for running some lights. This turned out to be rather a long night, after turning up at dusk to set up we waited around until about midnight, following comments that the species would appear to be a late flier. After a larval search in the early evening there was not a great deal of activity to keep us occupied with only a few species coming to light - Yellow Horned, Oak Beauty, Grey Shoulder-knot. Moth of the night was Mottled Grey with good numbers at the lights and also noticed in torchlight as we wandered around. Alas no Barred Tooth-stripe.

Moth Night at Hintlesham Wood - 25th March 2005

A visit to continue the recording of this ancient woodland site started the previous year. A reasonable selection of species (16 in total) for the time of year with Yellow Horned, Shoulder Stripe, Engrailed, Red Chestnut and Twin-spotted Quaker. Actual numbers of individuals appeared to be rather on the low side.

Moth Night at Wordwell - 1st April 2005

A second visit to look again for Barred Tooth-stripe and just as successful as the previous visit. The upside is that we did not waste as much time achieving our negative result having decided to turn up much later and set up in the dark. By this time Mottled Grey numbers were well down although a reasonable selection of spring-time species was seen, with *Semioscopis steinkellneriana* being the most noteworthy.

Moth Night at Maidscross Hill - 12th April 2005

After being checked out by the local police patrolling near the airbase we set up four lights around one of the larger clumps of privet on this classic Breckland moth site. Still no Barred Tooth-stripe but a few other species of interest came to light - Powdered Quaker, Broom-tip, Red Chestnut and the usual spring-time *Orthosias*.

Moth Night at Tangham Forest - 16th April 2005

One of our favoured local haunts that normally does quite well. My recollection was that there was quite a bit of blackthorn at this site but it must have disappeared or moved, as we wanted to try and target Sloe Carpet. Not surprisingly given the small amount of blackthorn present - no Sloe Carpet was recorded. Species of note were Yellow Horned, Water Carpet, Engrailed, Red Chestnut, Satellite, Early Grey and some more spring-time *Orthosias*.

Moth Night at Newbourne Springs - 22nd April 2005

The last time we visited this site in April it was a night of refrigerator temperatures - I don't think it was too far off becoming that cold on this night either. Continuing with the search for Sloe Carpet this site was picked as up on the hill in the reserve there is a good block of blackthorn, where we have had Sloe Pug in the past. Activity was rather slow during the evening with only eleven species recorded including Early Tooth-striped, Frosted Green, Purple Thorn, Muslin Moth and Brindled Pug.

Moth Night at Pattles Fen - 25th April 2005

Russell Leavett, retired RSPB warden, alerted us to this site that is now a small Woodland Trust reserve on the outskirts of Brantham. As Sloe Carpet had been recorded in the vicinity in the past it seemed worthwhile giving the site a visit. There is not much blackthorn on the site itself, although there is plenty

in the hedgerows in the surrounding area. Given its size it is rather an unusual site with acid grassland, fenny areas and sallow carr. No Sloe Carpet came to light but several new species to the ten kilometre square were picked up on the night so the visit was justified. Species of possible interest were Scarce Tissue, Frosted Green, Lunar Marbled Brown, Powdered Quaker, Coxcomb Prominent and Brown Silver-line.

Moth Night at Ickworth Park - 29th April 2005

This National Trust site has some very good pieces of woodland mixed in between parkland habitat and would appear to have been relatively under-recorded in the past. Five MV lights were operated in one of the more accessible pieces of woodland. This was a night of pugs - with most of the moths appearing at the sheet being Brindled or Oak-tree Pug. Other species of note were Frosted Green, Water Carpet, Small Waved Umber, Purple Thorn and Nut-tree Tussock.

Moth Night at Groton Wood - 1st May 2005

Continuing our search for Sloe Carpet this woodland site was picked as the species had been previously recorded here in 1995. For a change weather conditions were quite favourable and reflected in the number of species recorded. Orange Footman now appears to be turning up almost anywhere in the county and was a new site species on the night. More of the later spring-time species were now appearing with Pebble Hook-tip, Chinese Character, Scorched Carpet, White-pinion Spotted, Prominents (Pale, Pebble, Swallow and Coxcomb), Lunar Marbled Brown and Least Black Arches being recorded.

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 Ipswich Golf Club - January to April 2005 - Neil Sherman

First moths for the new season were both Winter Moth and Mottled Umber, both seen on the 4th (attracted to the lighted windows of the work sheds). Other sightings up till the end of the month included regular observations of Spring Usher (at lighted windows or at rest on the walls of outbuildings) and the borings of Lunar Hornet Moth larvae in coppiced Sallow stumps.

On the 31st, conditions were deemed good enough to attempt some light trapping. Both an 11w actinic and a Robinson trap were put out, and produced the following results (11w/Robinson totals): *Tortricodes alternella* (4/25), March Moth (16/0), Spring Usher (0/23), Pale Brindled Beauty (5/4), Chestnut (2/5), Dotted Border (1/0) and Early Moth (1/0). As both traps were in similar habitat, it is interesting to see that the March Moth was present only in the actinic while the Spring Usher was only in the Robinson trap.



© Neil Sherman - Early Moth



© Neil Sherman - Spring Usher

Very little trapping was done in February, due to the cold snowy conditions. Traps (Robinson + actinic) were run on the 3rd and 9th, producing 6 species. These were (with the total number in brackets): *Tortricodes alternella* (42), Spring Usher (35), Pale Brindled Beauty (27), March Moth (11), Dotted Border (1) and Chestnut (15). Hopefully things will improve in March!

Conditions for trapping did not improve in early March, with more cold weather. The first attempt at trapping was the 15th, with lights being put out on another 3 occasions during the rest of the month. Compare this with last year, when light traps were operated on 8 nights - this shows how poor the early season has been this year. Best night was the 22nd, with 15 species present.

Most of the moths seen were the usual suspects for this site, including Oak Beauty (first 15th, followed by 4 on the 20th and a peak of 10 on the 22nd, including a melanic specimen). Small Brindled Beauty was also first seen on the 15th (17), but only one other was seen after that on the 22nd. Yellow Horned peaked at 10, on the 22nd, as did Small Quaker (58 trapped). Other macros of possible note seen were Red Chestnut (1), Grey Shoulder-knot (1), Twin-spotted Quaker (6) and Engrailed (2).

There were 2 micros of interest. *Eriocrania semipurpurella*, trapped on the 31st, confirmed by genitalia dissection by Jon Clifton, was the second site record - a superb moth. The other, *Agonopterix ocellana*, was flushed while coppicing willows on the 8th.



© Neil Sherman - *Eriocrania semipurpurella*



© Neil Sherman - Early Tooth-striped

There was only one sighting this year of the day-flying Orange Underwing, on the 17th.

In April, weather conditions were better with traps operated on 5 nights during the month, with the warm weather and the progressing year meaning that numbers of moths increased. The best night was towards the end of April, on the 28th, when 28 species were seen.

Macros of possible note for the site included the following. Small Quaker peaked for the year on the 3rd, when 80 were trapped. Common Quaker peaked a little later, with 46 seen on the 12th. The Frosted Green was seen every trapping night, with a peak of 9 on the 12th. The last Oak Beauty of the year was caught on the 3rd. Early Grey has been noticeable by its low turnout, with only 2 records of singletons on the 10th and 12th. Brindled Beauty has only appeared once so far (10th), but more may appear next month. Pine Beauty has also only been seen once (12th), another poor showing for this site. Yet another 2 species having a poor year are Early Thorn and Purple Thorn. Each have appeared only once (both 28th), hopefully the second brood will be stronger. The Water Carpet (2 on 12th), White Ermine (25th), Lunar Marbled Brown (25th), Scalloped Hook-tip (3 on 25th), Oak-tree Pug (25th) and Orange Footman (28th) all appeared for the first time in 2005 on the dates given. Early Tooth-striped appeared twice (25th, 28th), both times as singletons. The prominents made their traditional appearance at the end of the month, with Swallow, Lesser Swallow (peak 13 on 28th), Great (2 25th + 1 on 28th) and Pebble all being seen.

Micro numbers increased dramatically during the month, with, as always at this site, *Eriocrania subpurpurella* being the most common. 100 were seen on the 12th, but this was beaten on the 28th by a count of 142 (and yes I did count them all!). *Caloptilia populetorum* was seen on the 12th and 28th, an increasing species at the site. The most interesting species appeared on the last trapping night (28th), with *Plutella xylostella*, *Eriocrania sparrmannella* and a probable *Eriocrania unimaculella* (this is subject to confirmation) all appearing.

Moths at Bawdsey - January to April 2005 - Matthew Deans

January

The month started rather predictably with a Winter Moth attracted to security lights on 3rd being the first moth recorded this year. Peak counts of this species were six, Jan. 4th and five, Jan. 28th, with a monthly total of 28 (20 recorded in Jan. 2004).

Four highly variable Mottled Umbers were observed at the security lights between 5th and 28th. A single Early Moth on 16th was to be expected, but surprisingly, was the sole record of the winter (apart from a dead specimen found in a spider's web). Double figures of this species had been recorded in both of the previous two years.

The two Dotted Borders on 24th and 28th were the earliest ever noted at Bawdsey. A Spring Usher on 30th was most welcome as it constituted a new site record. The only micro recorded this month was a

single *Emmelina monodactyla* on 4th.

February

As I was away on holiday in The Gambia for during the first fortnight of the month, very little recording was undertaken this month. Nick Mason kindly checked the security lights on three occasions but no moths were present!

The only moths recorded during the second half of the month were single Dotted Borders on 15th and 17th. From then onwards the Estate was covered in snow!

March

A Pale Brindled Beauty at security lights on 7th was the first moth recorded this month. Two March Moths and a Dotted Border appeared on 9th with further records of both species over the following week.

The 'find of the month' must go to the Joiner at Bawdsey who brought in to my office a Humming-bird Hawk-moth on 10th. He was repairing a first-floor window in The Manor and the moth flew into the back of his neck. It was quickly secured in a glass which was covered with masking tape!

Mild conditions prevailed for the second half of the month. Trapping was undertaken for the first time ever at this time of year at Bawdsey. It was not surprising to add some common species to the site list, which had not been recorded at security lights. These included *Tortricodes alternella* and Oak Beauty on 17th, Pine Beauty on 21st, Herald on 22nd, Small Quaker on 29th and Lead-coloured Drab on 31st.

Security lights continued to be the main source for March Moths and Dotted Borders and provided the sole record of Shoulder Stripe on 18th.

April

The month opened with another Lead-coloured Drab trapped on 1st and a Mottled Grey at the security lights on 2nd - another good new site record and presumably a wanderer from the nearby Sandlings population.

Careful checking through the orthosias revealed eight Powdered Quakers this month and 15 individuals of Northern Drab (first moth on the 4th, third consecutive year the species recorded at Bawdsey). Powdered Quaker was new for the site as was an Early Grey - both first trapped on 4th.



© Matthew Deans - Mottled Grey



© Matthew Deans - Northern Drab

The Scarce Tissue was recorded on 24th and 29th at security lights and two Streamer were discovered by the same method on 27th.

The wings of a Puss Moth were found outside the trap on 28th - constituting another new site record although a great shame it had succumbed to the local birds!

A total of 35 Red Chestnut were recorded during the month - the species is much more abundant here than at Rendham. Another high total was the 25 Twin-spotted Quakers - this species appears to have had a good year.

The last week of the moth brought not only late records of Dotted Border (29th) and Grey Shoulder-knot (28th) but the first *Scoparia ambigualis*, Common Carpet, Brimstone Moth, Swallow Prominent, Muslin Moth, Shuttle-shaped Dart and Cabbage Moth of the season - a sign of summer and things to come.

Grundisburgh Spring 2005 - Martin Hough

It has been a bleak Spring here, moth wise. For much of the year the weather has been too cold, windy or rainy to warrant putting the trap out. On the occasions when I have able to do so, the haul has been disappointing to say the least.

However, the usual crop of Quaker moths put in their appearance. The Powdered Quaker, *Orthosia gracilis*, still continues to elude me, despite being billed as not infrequent on Tony's Larger Moths of Suffolk pages. The Pine Beauty *Panolis flammea* was a welcome arrival, having been absent last year.

I was also pleased to see the Streamer, *Anticlea derivata* come to my trap. I normally find this species on fences and in woodlands, but it has not seemed very susceptible to light. The Red Chestnut, *Cerastis rubicosa* is another species that I usually associate with woodlands, but seems to be fairly well represented in my garden here.

There have been two hawk moths so far- the Lime Hawk, *Mimas tiliae* appeared on the 29th April- about three weeks earlier than I would normally have expected - and a fresh Pine Hawk, *Hyloicus pinastri* appeared four days ago, on the 20th of May.

Hopefully this is an indication that at last the season is on the move. It's about time.

Bungay Spring 2005 - Leigh Davis

Leigh has sent in the following list of species for the spring period 2005, recorded at actinic light at his home in Bungay. Common Swift, Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet, Silver-ground Carpet, Garden Carpet, Green Carpet, Common Pug, Brimstone Moth, Early Thorn, Scalloped Hazel, Pale Tussock, Buff Ermine, White Ermine, Garden Dart, Shuttle-shaped Dart, Flame Shoulder, Shears, Common Quaker, Clouded Drab and Treble Lines.

Mendlesham Green Records - Steve Woolnough

The poor weather we have had during the first part of this year has had its impact on garden mothing. A quick check of records shows that I have run a light for just 16 nights up to the time of writing (25th May), as against 32 nights to the same date last year. The first night was 15th March with the most productive being 1st May, with just 26 moths of 13 spp. Even the commoner moths were hard to come by, with Hebrew Character being the highest in terms of numbers with just 16 on 29th April, as against figures regularly in the 20's last year. In May 2004, 79 spp were recorded. So far, this month has produced just 28.

Despite somewhat depressing numbers, there have been a few records of interest. A very smart Satellite occurred on 1st April, apparently having gone through the winter virtually unscathed. The

following night saw a garden first with a Shoulder-stripe, and one of my favourites, a Herald.

An unusual record of 30th April was *Nephopterix angustella*, a spindle-feeding but still quite distinctive micro. Whilst I have recorded this localised moth in the garden before, the earliest date has been 6th June. Literature puts the flight-time as being August-September, so this does appear very early. (Thanks to Neil Sherman for confirming this record).

With the first Common Swifts, Small Square-spot and Flame Shoulder last night, the signs are that the weather is finally improving and garden mothing will now become more productive.

Moths at Rendham - January to April 2005 - Matthew Deans

January

It was a slow start to the month for moth recording at Rendham. Strong winds accompanied any mild spells thus hampering trapping efforts.

A few blank trap nights were compensated by two specimens of Pale Brindled Beauty at the garage lights on 9th and a single Early Moth on 13th. Just a single Winter Moth was recorded this month on 10th.

The first worthwhile trapping was undertaken on the mild night of 30th with three Pale Brindled Beauties, single Spring Usher, two Early Moths and single Chestnut, Hebrew Character and Early Grey at M.V. - these last two species represent the earliest ever garden records.

February

I was away on holiday in The Gambia for the milder first fortnight of the month.

With cold snowy conditions predominating during the second half of February, it was not surprising that moths were in short supply! In fact the trap was run once on 17th with the total catch being two Pale Brindled Beauties and a March Moth.

March

During the first week of March, with Arctic conditions persisting, no moths were trapped despite several attempts.

A single March Moth and an Oak Beauty (earliest garden record) were trapped on 9th. The following night five March Moths were trapped and a Dotted Border appeared at the garage lights.

Not before time, the first Common Quaker of the year was light trapped on 14th, accompanied by just a single March Moth.

A Shoulder Stripe trapped on 15th was the first of eight this month. An *Acleris cristana* on 17th and a *Tortricodes alternella* on 19th were noteworthy for Rendham. The earliest ever Angle Shades was trapped on 20th.

Average numbers of *Orthosias* were recorded with counts of 126 Small Quaker, 141 Common Quaker and 81 Hebrew Characters throughout the month. The Twin-spotted Quaker total was 24 and four Lead-coloured Drab were identified - all in the last week of the month.

April

The first week of the month saw the first Early Thorn and Pine Beauty of the year. Mild conditions provided a good haul of 138 moths on 3rd, which were mainly *Orthosias* but did include two Engrailed and four Red Chestnut.

The middle of the month was quite cool and catches were much reduced. The first Muslin Moth appeared on 16th, which was about the most exciting catch.

One of the highlights was the record numbers of Streamer caught this year (nine between 22nd and 30th). Three Scarce Tissue also appeared during this period (first on 25th).

The first Swallow Prominent, an early Bright-line Brown-eye and a Herald were taken on 25th. A pristine Chocolate-tip was caught on 27th along with the first of five Powdered Quakers trapped this month.

It was exciting with new species for the year appearing virtually daily. The 28th produced Purple Thorn and Lesser Swallow Prominent and the 29th Oak-tree Pug, Brindled Beauty (new for garden), Waved Umber, Great and Pebble Prominents.



© Matthew Deans - Great Prominent



© Matthew Deans - Brindled Beauty

The final night of the month (30th) provided yet more new species for the year including a few micros: *Ypsolopha ustella*, *Esperia sulphurella*, *Phtheochroa rugosana*, Chinese Character, Lunar Marbled Brown (rare at Rendham), Ruby Tiger and Cinnabar.

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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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