

Suffolk Moth Group Newsletter

Issue 44 - Winter 2007-8

Edited by Tony Prichard

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Editorial

The start of another year and hopefully a better one than the last one but only time will tell. Something to be positive about is the unlikelihood that this year could be much worse than 2007. The impression I got during the autumn was that larvae were a bit thin on the ground (or leaves). Will this affect the numbers of moths flying this year? As the poor weather came along after the early spring time species would have fed up we may have to wait for the later emerging species to see if numbers are well down on normal.

It is that time of year to think about sending in your moth records if you have not already done so. Thank you to all those who have sent their records in already. I will be starting to process them shortly now that this newsletter and the events programme have been completed. The data on the web site has slipped a bit and needs updating so this will be an additional activity to be done before the season gets well underway.

Essex and Hertfordshire Moth Groups are holding indoor meetings again this year, which members are welcome to attend. The date for the Essex Moth Group meeting is 23rd February 2008 at the usual venue (Venture Centre 2000, Lawford), contact Joe Firmin for details. The date for the Herts Moth Group meeting is 29th March 2008 at the Havers Community Centre, Bishops Stortford. Further details can be found on their web site at www.hertsmothgroup.org.uk.

As usual I would like to thank all the contributors for this issue. The newsletter would be a lot thinner and not as varied without their contributions. It would be nice to see some different contributors too this year. The more varied the input the better the newsletter is in my belief and we do seem to lack short notes and observations from recorders within the county.

Annual Indoor Meeting - Bucklesham Village Hall - Saturday 5th April 2008 - Tony Prichard

The group's annual indoor meeting has been arranged for Saturday 5th April with the doors opening at 10.15am and the meeting starting at 11.00am. The meeting will follow the usual informal format and agenda. All those who are interested in moths are welcome to attend and admission is free. The day will consist of informal talks and presentations from myself and other members of the moth group. This normally means a good mix of different presentations, from the slightly more formal recording feedback by myself to the more colourful presentations containing lots of moth pictures from others. Exhibits and other items of interest are also welcome. If anyone intends bringing slides along could they let me know otherwise I will just bring a digital projector. This can also be a good opportunity to have names put to those unidentified moth photographs.

You will need to make your own arrangements for lunch (e.g packed lunch) although refreshments will be provided. There is a pub nearby that used to serve food but I'm not sure if this is still open. The meeting normally ends up finishing by about 3-4pm.

Jon Clifton of Anglian Lepidopterist Supplies will be coming along and bringing a limited amount of stock (pots and bulbs). If anyone would like to purchase anything specific could they please email him in advance so that he can bring it along. Details for ALS can be found at the end of the newsletter.

Bucklesham Village Hall is not far from the Nacton A12/A14 roundabout to the east of Ipswich. From the A12/A14 roundabout take the minor exit after the A12 exit but before the A14 Felixstowe exit. This exit is signposted to Bucklesham and leads via a single track road to Bucklesham Village. At the end of this road you will reach the village, at the T junction turn right into Bucklesham Road. Take the next right turn into Levington Lane and the village hall is a short distance down the lane on the right.

The OS Grid Reference for the hall is TM242417. If you need any more detailed instructions in how to get there then do get in contact with myself.

Your Records and the National Moth Recording Scheme - Tony Prichard

The NMRS has been progressing quietly behind the scenes as effort and publicity has been concentrated on the Moths Count aspects in 2007. One of the key milestones for the NMRS scheme, in my opinion, has now been reached and that is the production of the data policy for the scheme. This defines how the NMRS will use your records and it is important that recorders are aware of and accept how their records will be used under the scheme. Whether a recorder wants to participate in the scheme is their own decision and I will not submit records I hold as county moth recorder to the NMRS if a recorder has expressed a wish not to participate. I understand that it is also possible to change your mind at a later date and decide to withdraw your participation and as a result your records.

That said I would I encourage all recorders to participate in this scheme. The scheme will hopefully bring benefits to the moth recording community with a better understanding of the status of species and their distribution on a national basis. The scheme should be making tetrad distribution maps available via the web site, so recorders should be able to get an appreciation of some their contribution to the scheme. At the end of the initial four year project a draft atlas of the larger moths is expected. The less people who contribute the less complete the picture will be and this means that the value of the data in the NMRS will be limited.

One slight problem with the scheme from my viewpoint is how it will handle individual confidential records, only records of a few rare and vulnerable species will be treated as confidential. For me this is not sufficient for some of the records that I hold on the moth database. There are species in Suffolk that I have placed in a confidential category even though they are not classified as such under the NMRS scheme. In addition, some land-owners have only given permission for recording on their land based on certain confidentiality conditions. The effect of this is that not all records in the Suffolk moth database will be forwarded on to the NMRS scheme. But overall this will be a small proportion of the records held by myself and the vast majority I expect to forward on.

To participate in the scheme should require no additional work on the part of individual recorders. It is expected that the NMRS will interact with county moth recorders. So recorders within the county should continue to send their records to myself and I will then forward them on to the scheme once they have been through the validation process. When the transfer of Suffolk moth records will take place has not been fixed but I do not expect much to be happening in the immediate future.

If you would like to discuss this topic further then there will be time at the SMG Indoor Meeting to raise any questions or alternatively just contact me directly through the usual channels. I will be operating an opt-out approach to deciding who wants to participate as this will make my work much easier. **If you do not wish to participate then please let me know that is your wish.**

Below I have included the latest version of the data policy that I have available. A current copy should also be available from the NMRS page on the Moth Counts web site. It is worth working your way through it to ensure that you are happy with the conditions - it is reasonably straightforward.

National Moth Recording Scheme Data Policy

Version date 27.11.07

This policy concerns the collection, use and sharing of records by the National Moth Recording Scheme (NMRS) administered by Butterfly Conservation as part of the Moths Count project. We believe that everyone involved in the transmission of a record, from the field observation to the end user, should be aware of, understand and agree with the following terms and conditions that govern the collation and dissemination of NMRS data. This data policy may be subject to revision at any time in the future after due consultation. Please review the latest version of this policy regularly.

First principles

- The NMRS project partners aim to maximise the use of records and data to promote understanding, recording and conservation of moths and their habitats. NMRS records will be made available in a controlled and managed way to fulfil this aim.
- The NMRS needs permission to use records received from recorders.
- All recorders supplying records to NMRS, typically via a County Moth Recorder or local environmental records centre, will be considered to have granted permission for NMRS to use the records as outlined in this policy.
- Nevertheless, recorders will retain ownership of their records and are free to use them as they wish. Butterfly Conservation will own the NMRS database and use it in accordance with this policy.
- It is impractical to obtain permission individually from every recorder (especially for historical records) or to have different criteria governing access to records from individual recorders.
- Butterfly Conservation and NMRS will promote this data policy widely so that recorders can

make an informed choice about submitting records.

Some specifics

- Use of NMRS data. Records will be used to provide feedback to moth recorders and to stimulate further recording, as well as to inform conservation decision-making, the planning system, research, education, policy development, increasing public awareness and other uses in line with the stated aims of the NMRS (Moths Count) project and Butterfly Conservation's charitable objectives. Data users are likely to include nature conservation charities, statutory/government agencies, local authorities, ecological consultants and academic researchers, both in the UK and internationally.
- Sharing NMRS data. Summary distribution information (at 2km x 2km grid square resolution) will be made openly and freely available to the public through maps on the internet, including the Moths Count web site and National Biodiversity Network Gateway. This is to provide feedback and information to moth recorders and to support not-for-profit decision-making, education, research and other public-benefit purposes. Typically, detailed data will be exchanged directly with County Moth Recorders, local environmental records centres and NMRS project partners. Detailed data (i.e. records at full spatial resolution) may be available for use by third parties, following application using a standard form. Requests for data from single sites or small geographical areas (e.g. typical requests from ecological consultants) will normally be passed onto the manager of the appropriate local data set, e.g. County Moth Recorder or local environmental records centre.
- Restrictions. Butterfly Conservation and project partners reserve the right to refuse requests for NMRS data. Access to data may be restricted if making data available increases the risk of damage to moth populations and habitats or undermines in any way the collation of volunteered records through the NMRS. Records of an agreed list of species (shown in Appendix 1) are considered to be sensitive and will not be made openly available at 2km square resolution. Confidentiality of records other than these listed species cannot be assured. It is impractical for the NMRS to accept other restrictions on records imposed by recorders; any data held to be confidential by its originator should not be supplied to NMRS.
- Charges. Summary distribution information will be available without charge, but Butterfly Conservation may make a reasonable charge for the administration of requests for more detailed data. Records will never be sold. Institutional users should expect to help sustain moth recording by contributing financially to the ongoing costs of data collection, collation and management in return for data access.
- Personal details. Personal data (e.g. the recorder's name and address) will be managed in accordance the Data Protection Act 1998 and/or subsequent legal provisions. Recorder names will not be available to the general public, but may be provided to third parties as part of data requests. Contact details will not be passed on without the permission of the person concerned. Data users will be encouraged to acknowledge recorders.

Version date 27.11.07

Appendix 1

Sensitive moth species

Records of the following species are currently considered sensitive, although the list will be regularly reviewed by Butterfly Conservation in consultation with project partners and moth recorders:

- Barberry Carpet *Pareulype berberata*
- Black-veined Moth *Siona lineata*
- Fiery Clearwing *Pyropteron chrysidiformis*
- Fisher's Estuarine Moth *Gortyna borelii lunata*
- New Forest Burnet *Zygaena viciae ytenensis*
- Reddish Buff *Acosmetia caliginosa*
- Sussex Emerald *Thalera fimbrialis*
- Dark Bordered Beauty *Epione vespertaria* (Scotland only)
- Speckled Footman *Coscinia cribaria bivittata*

New Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan Species - Tony Prichard

It is a while since the mid-1990s when the first list of moth BAP species was produced. The moth group and Suffolk BC have been involved in carrying out surveys of some of the BAP species in Suffolk over those years. It has been apparent for a while that the existing list was looking a bit out of date in comparison with our updated knowledge. So it was good news to hear that the list was to be updated and even better to hear that some micro-lepidoptera would be included on the BAP list - the initial list only had one micro listed.

The initial publication of the revised UK BAP moth species seems to have caused some confusion amongst some recorders. Included in the species added to the list were a large number of species that most moth recorders would say were relatively common - Cinnabar, White Ermine, Dot Moth, Blood-vein, Small Square-spot and Mottled Rustic, as a few examples. Had the people at Butterfly Conservation finally cracked up (as long suspected)? Possibly not as a large number of these more common moths added to the BAP list have been put in under a category 'research only' - something not made clear on the list's initial publication. These 'research only' species were identified as having undergone a significant decline in 'The State of Britain's Larger Moths' [Fox *et al*, 2006]. It is hoped that research bodies will carry out investigations into why these widespread species are suffering significant declines.

Ignoring these 'research only' species there are 39 moth species that have been added to the BAP species list. 18 of these have been recorded in Suffolk in the past, although records for four of these species I would attribute to migrant individuals.

In the sections below I have outlined some suggestions for field work for the Suffolk resident species. I am open to further suggestions as to what we should be looking for and how we should be carrying it out. This article is more an opener for discussion about what we should be doing with these species.

Species remaining as BAP species

The following species have been retained on the BAP list - *Coleophora tricolor* (Basil Thyme Case-bearer), Bright Wave, Barberry Carpet, Barred Tooth-stripe, Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth, Lunar Yellow Underwing, Bordered Gothic, Pale Shining Brown and White-spotted Pinion,

Species losing their BAP status

Three species occurring in Suffolk that have been downgraded and removed from the UK BAP list are Square-spotted Clay, Toadflax Brocade and Buttoned Snout. The status of Toadflax Brocade appears precarious in Suffolk from the limited records that we have so I expect monitoring of this species to continue.

Resident or presumed previously resident species new to the BAP list

Lampronia capitella : At times in the past a pest species on currants and gooseberries and at present a localised and apparently declining species. I have only one record for this species in the database from Westerfield during 1934-35. Its status as a current Suffolk resident would appear to need confirmation, but may have merely been overlooked. The larvae feeds on the berries and causes premature ripening in July, then in March and April it mines the stems of its foodplant causing the shoot to wither and die. It is possible to detect the species with these signs (although the Currant Clearwing also causes withering of stems) so larval surveys may be possible.

Nemophora fasciella : A pretty dayflying longhorn moth where the larva feeds on Black Horehound. Nationally the species seems to be predominate in the south-east of the country but is very localised in its distribution. In Suffolk the species has been known since the late 1800s but with few records. It would appear to be quite local in the south of the county. I have searched for this

species in the past with little success and the moth is certainly not as widespread and common as its foodplant. The adult flies in July and early August. Old books refer to searching for the larvae in their fiddle-shaped larval cases but I have not had much success with this. Daytime searching for the adult during the flight period would seem the best way to survey for this species.

Goat Moth : A southern species that appears to have undergone a significant decline in latter years. Morley's comments that the larva was 'only too frequent everywhere' are no longer true. A species that is now recorded at light only intermittently across the county. The larva feeds for three to four years on the living wood of various trees. Host trees may be used repeatedly and it has been suggested that the reason the adult moth appears occasionally at sugar is because it mistakes it for the sweet smell of oozing sap from larval damaged trees. Occasional larval records are received when the full-grown conspicuous larva leaves its host tree to find a pupation site. At the moment I am not sure of a good way to survey for this species.

The Forester : Nationally a widespread but local species. It appears that its decline is at least partially due to loss of habitat from agricultural activities. This appears to have been a long term problem as Morley made a similar comment in the 1930s. In Suffolk it appears to have occurred two principal areas - one in the north-east and the other in the Brecks in the north-west of the county. Other odd historical records have occurred in more southerly parts of the country. It now appears that the north-east population has been lost and the only place in Suffolk where you will see the Forester is in the Brecks. The moth is found in grassland habitats where the larva feeds on Common Sorrel and Sheep's Sorrel and the adult is on the wing in late June and July. As this is a readily identifiable moth (Suffolk lacks the other two Forester species) and day-flying it may be suitable for surveying by butterfly recorders and other naturalists. It might be worth considering surveying suitable habitats in north-east Suffolk in case any relic populations remain.

Coleophora hydrolapathella : A very localised species from the Norfolk Broads and marshes near the sea in Suffolk, with a recent record from Co. Durham. The case-bearing larva feeds on Water Dock. The adult does appear at light while it is on the wing during July and early August but requires more critical determination. As with some of the other *Coleophora* surveying for this species will probably be more easily achieved by searching for the larval cases. These can be found on the seeds of the foodplant time between August and early October. The larval case overwinters on the stem of the foodplant and it may be possible to find it there. I am not familiar with searching for the larval stages of this species so we will have to ascertain which is the best way to find this moth.

Agonopterix atomella : A species of rough grassland where its foodplant of Dyer's Greenweed occurs. Loss of its habitat has resulted in a decline of this species nationally. In Suffolk I have only three historic records of the species, from Brandon, Fritton and Ipswich. It flies in July and August but apparently the adult is rarely seen. It would therefore seem that the best way to search for this species will be to look for the larva, between late May and June, in spun shoots or leaves spun into a tube along the stem. The first step will be to try to find this species in the county again.

Syncopacma albipalpella : This appears to be a very rare species in Britain with very few recent records - (Hertfordshire, 1999, RWJ Uffen; Silchester, 1973, Goater). The Suffolk record (Pakefield, PJ Burton, 13 June 1950) is in need of confirmation and is not accepted by most. The moth inhabits damp heathland where the foodplant Petty Whin occurs. This I understand is a rare plant in Suffolk that has declined much over the years. I would put this as a low priority species in Suffolk until it is confirmed as being resident in the county as the likelihood of it occurring here seems small.

Scythris siccella : Another very rare species with only three known localities in the country. In Suffolk it was found on Breck sands at Brandon *ante* 1859 and there have been no further records since then. However, as this group of moths tends to be under-recorded it could well occur undetected somewhere in the Brecks. Against that is the fact that the Brecks have undergone significant changes since the mid-19th century with widespread destruction of habitat. As with the preceding species the first priority must be to determine if this species is still resident in the county. The larva feeds in May on a variety of plants, including Wild Thyme, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Plantain, Mouse-ear, etc., by mining the leaves from a silken tube covered in sand that it spins along the stem and into the sand. The adult flies during the day in July and rests on flowers so the best

chance of locating this species may be by searching or sweeping flower-heads in suitable areas in Breckland.

Grapholita pallifrontana : Nationally a very localised species in southern England. Associated with chalk and limestone habitats where its foodplant Wild Liquorice occurs. There is a single record by Morley at the end of the 19th century from Bentley Woods. The foodplant appears to be a localised species in the county in areas where the soil is chalky or boulder clay. The status of this species in the county needs confirmation. The adults may be found during the day flying around the foodplant in June and July. It appears that searching for the larvae may be possible as its presence in the seed-pod of its foodplant may cause discolouration of the pod. The first step will be to locate areas where there is a good quantity of the foodplant.

False Mocha : A nationally scarce species that was previously locally distributed but has undergone significant decline over recent years. Its status in the county would appear to mirror its national decline. A formerly local species in the county that appears now only to be found from within the Brecks. The larva feeds on oak and apparently is hard to distinguish from Maiden's Blush larvae. The species is double-brooded, flying mid-May to early July and late July to late August. Habitat requirements seem to suggest young oaks but in long established sites. The best way to search for this species appears to be with light traps. There has been some discussion whether MV or actinic light is best for attracting the species.

Grey Carpet : A species resident only in the Suffolk and Norfolk Brecks. The larva feeds on Flixweed during late June to August, an arable weed more widespread than the moth. The adult is single-brooded flying from late May to July. It can be disturbed during the day, flies freely at dusk and readily comes to light. The comments in the Field Guide to Moths (Waring, Townsend and Lewington) about this species distribution are in my view quite misleading. My experience is that at most sites we visit in the Brecks during the flight period of this species will result in at least one or two of this species appearing at light, at certain sites in good numbers. This species I think after some further years surveying (going through the motions) will fall into the same category as Square-spotted Clay, a previous BAP species. This moth has a fixed distribution - the Brecks - and appears to be doing well within its limited distribution. There appears to be no sign of decline but it would be nice to have some firm data to back up this view.

Sloe Carpet : A scarce species occurring in southern England - Essex and Suffolk being reported as strongholds for the species. In Suffolk it appears to be intermittently recorded at light at various sites predominantly in the south of the county. The moth flies early in the year, (March), April and May, so possibly may be under-recorded. The larva feeds on Blackthorn from mid-May to July, with areas where there are large stands of the foodplant likely to be good sites to search for the species. I suspect that this species may be weakly attracted to light so other means than light-trapping may be more reliable in looking for this moth. However, my experience of searching for this species is limited so some investigation is required.

Fenn's Wainscot : Nationally a rare insect found in the Norfolk Broads and the coastal reed-beds of Suffolk, where it occurs from Minsmere as far north as Kessingland. There are historical records from further north in Suffolk but recent limited searches in this area have yet to uncover any remaining populations. The larva feeds on Common Reed and seems to occur in reed-beds that may be wetter than those preferred by White-mantled Wainscot. The adult is single-brooded and flies mid-July to mid-August. Surveying using light seems a good way to look for this species and may be combined with searches for White-mantled Wainscot. Some work on the early stages will be worthwhile, to look into defining more precisely the habitat requirements for this species.

White-mantled Wainscot : One of our few endemic species. The moth group has carried out surveys for this species at several sites along the coast over recent years so now I think we have a reasonable understanding of the distribution of this species. It seems well established at low numbers in most of the drier fens we have looked at between Thorpeness and Benacre Broad. This picture has been muddied a bit recently by records of this species from Shingle Street and Ipswich Golf Course, indicating a possible southerly expansion. Threats to this species include conversion of its preferred dry reed-bed habitat to the wetter habitats preferred by the Bittern and

there is an increasing threat of habitat loss due to the encroachment of the sea into coastal freshwater reed-beds. It has been found at the Hen Reed-beds Reserve further inland so there it should be safe from the latter threat for some time. There may be well be other drier reed-beds in south Suffolk where it remains undiscovered.

Migrant species new to the BAP list

New BAP species that have been recorded in Suffolk but which I would attribute to migrant individuals are *Anania funebris*, Rest Harrow, Concolorous and Shoulder-striped Clover. In addition, the inclusion of the Shoulder-striped Clover on the county list is a matter for debate in my opinion.

Possible Suffolk species new to the BAP list

I thought I would draw particular attention to the inclusion of Scarce Pug as a new BAP species. This moth has not been recorded in Suffolk previously. It is found along both the Norfolk and Essex coasts but not the Suffolk coast. The habitat would appear to exist for this species and it is a bit of a mystery, at least to me, why this species has not been found somewhere along the Suffolk coast. Some limited larval surveying has been carried out by a few members of the moth group in the last ten years but this has failed to uncover any Suffolk populations. As this species has now been upgraded the intention will be to carry out further searches for the larvae.

Non-Suffolk species new to the BAP list

The following eighteen species are those that have not been recorded in Suffolk. It is unlikely we will be spending much effort on surveying and conservation work for these species, unless they do appear in the county in the future as has happened with some of the previous BAP species. The non-Suffolk species are *Stigmella zelleriella*, *Nematopogon magna*, *Eudarcia richardsoni*, *Nemapogon picarella*, *Phyllonorycter scabiosella*, *Phyllonorycter sagitella*, *Coleophora wockeella*, *Coleophora vibicella*, *Agonopterix capreolella*, *Aplota palpella*, *Syncopacma suecicella*, *Celypha woodiana*, *Epermenia insecurella*, *Pyrausta sanguinalis*, *Agrotera nemoralis*, *Sciota hostilis*, Sussex Emerald, Scarce Vapourer, Small Dark Yellow Underwing and Sandhill Rustic (Cornish subspecies).

Dissection News 2007 - Jon Clifton

I have been sent various micro moths for dissection from several recorders in Suffolk from the 2007 season, these I have been working on during the winter period.

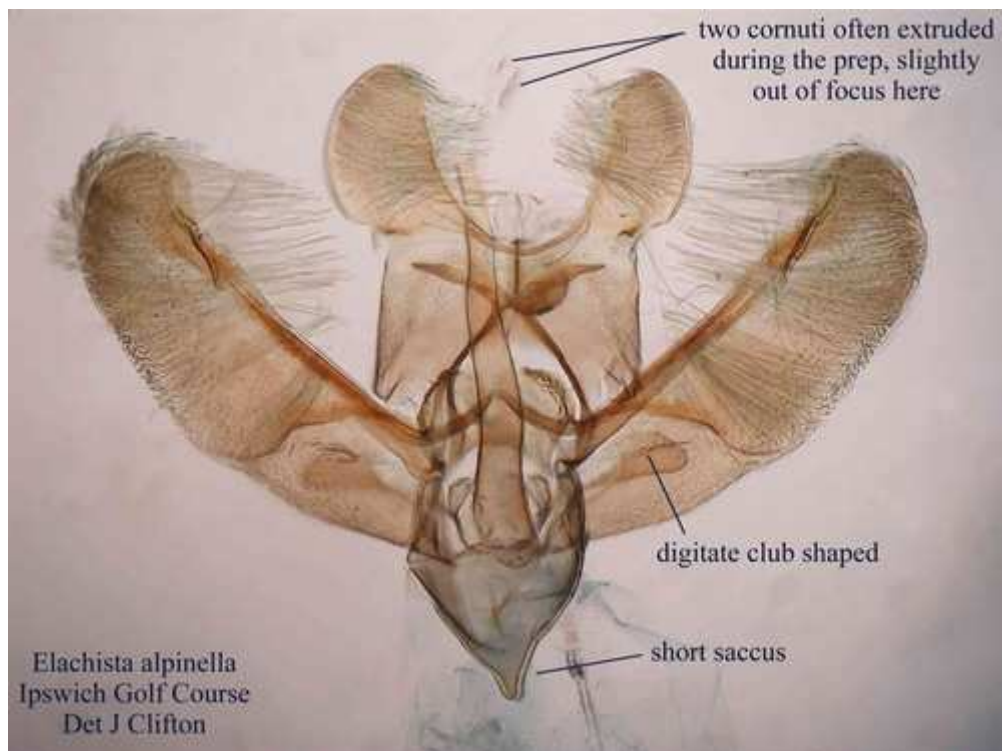
Some notable moths have been determined, one of which Neil Sherman will detail in a later newsletter.

Notable species at county level have been *Coleophora therinella* from Paul Kitchener in Eye, only one previous record from Minsmere in 2005. Paul also recorded *Coleophora caespititiella* and *Grapholita funebrana*, although these are no doubt under recorded species and not rare.



Scrobipalpa atriplicella male genitalia © Jon Clifton

Amongst a batch from Clive Moore at Dunwich Heath NT were four species of *Coleophora* (*taeniipennella*, *versurella*, *clypeiferella* and *salinella*) all with under half a dozen previous Suffolk records. Also determined was a single *Scrobipalpa atriplicella* with two previous records both in 2005 from Eye and Icklingham.



Elachista alpinella male genitalia © Jon Clifton

The highlights seem once again to be from Neil Sherman at the Ipswich Golf Course. *Elachista*

alpinella seems to be a new record for VC25, and *Elachista humilis* which has only a single record from Aldeburgh, this before 1937. *Pammene obscurana* is again turning up after Neil found one here in 2005 along with one from Clive at Dunwich Heath in the same year. *Acompsia cinerella* was another good find, only four previous Suffolk records mainly from the west of the county. Finally, two Tortricid's that are probably being overlooked, *Epinotia tetraquetrana* and *Spilonotia laricana*. Beware of the latter one and dark examples of *Spilonota ocellana*!

Jon Clifton
Hindolveston, Norfolk

In search of a Clearwing - Paul Bryant

Encouraged by the fact that the weather forecast promised a warm, dry day I persuaded Lee to go to the Norfolk Broads with me at the start of June in search of what would be a new clearwing species for the both of us. Leaving Thetford, the overcast skies didn't bode well but we decided to press on regardless.

Having read that our intended target could be seen early in the day we arrived on site around about 9:30am, where we bumped into a couple of friends from the Midlands who had spent the night looking for various local specialities. Alas, they hadn't been overly successful but we did manage to see a few bits and bobs, the best of which was a Flame Wainscot. Once they realised that we hadn't just come along to check up on them but, instead, were after a moth tick of our own they seemed quite happy to tag along!

Overhead, a few patches of blue sky was enough of a prompt for our search to begin. As most of you know, looking for any clearwings is a bit of a hit and miss affair. Choose a suitable spot, hang out the pheromone and wait. Five minutes later, we had our target species - a superb White-barred Clearwing (*Synanthedon spheciformis*).



White-barred Clearwing, Norfolk Broads, June 2007 © Paul Bryant

A dozen or so yards further up the track Lee was having even more success. In what seemed like no time at all we had an estimated six to eight males hovering around the lure. And there they stayed for what must have been about fifteen minutes. All looked amazingly fresh and we surmised that they had only recently emerged. In fact, so keen were they on finding a mate that they were even attracted to anything that had come into contact with the pheromone...as can be seen from one of the pictures below.



Attracted to the lure © Paul Bryant



Who needs a lure when a picture will do! © Paul Bryant

So all in all, it was a successful trip. Given the nature of the larval foodplant (alder and birch) and, having seen the sort of habitat in which they can occur there seems every likelihood this species might one day be found in Suffolk. Alas, a couple of lunchtime searching at Lackford Lakes over the next week drew a blank although I did manage to see several Red-tipped Clearwings. Perhaps a search along the Suffolk side of the Waveney Valley and areas around Lowestoft next year may be more rewarding.

Thanks to Lee his company on the day, for the loan of a fleece and for the use of what I think might be one of his photos.

Wanted - More Garden Moth Recorders in East England! - David Grundy



Do we really know what is happening to populations of common moths in our gardens? Yes we know that species like Large Yellow Underwing are common, but does that mean that we see 10 per night or 100 or 1000? Are those numbers going up or down? How can we measure these population changes of common moths over time? How can you make a difference to all this and contribute to help create valuable scientific statistics to measure these changes?

We need to be able to quantify these changes to our common moths if we are to be able to help them. So, the answer is that we need to join the Garden Moth Scheme (GMS) to try and record this vital information.

The purpose of the Garden Moth Scheme is to try and find out what's happening to our common garden moths. This is particularly relevant following the publication of the Butterfly Conservation report "The State of Britain's Larger Moths" in which it appears that a lot of apparently common moths are declining in Britain as a whole. Are these national declines of some of our common moths reflected in your area? The main aim of the GMS is to coordinate records to get standardized data from your results, which can be used for future study. The more people that take part - the more useful the data. We are not attempting to find out who's found the rarest moths, or who's got the best garden - all sites are useful, however many species you record.

The main aims of the scheme are to encourage more people to get involved in studying moths and therefore wildlife on their doorstep and to create a valuable dataset of garden moth records. This dataset can then be used to study the effects of climate change, change in habitats, to act as a biodiversity indicator and to plot against garden features such as distance from nearest wood, green-space etc or presence of pond, log-pile etc in garden.

The Garden Moth Scheme has been running now for five years in the West Midlands Region with 50 gardens taking part across six counties. Intentionally there was no fan-fare to announce the start of the scheme, as we wanted to keep it quiet while we worked out a recording system that was effective. We now have a GMS that works and want to expand it to a national scheme.

In 2007 this process of expansion started and has already been a great success. We now have GMS in Wales with 20 gardens (GMS Cymru), South East England with 20 gardens and the Essex area of East England with 10 gardens. As well as this we have additional recorders across the country from the Isle of Wight to Scotland (with two Norfolk and one Suffolk recorder). In 2007 we will have at least 110 GMS recorders and we are hoping for another big expansion in 2008. So do you want to join in for 2008? If so, let us know - you will be very welcome, we are particularly keen on recorders from Suffolk joining in.

What do you need to do to take part? You just need to count the numbers of common moths you see in your moth trap, for one night every week from March to November (and you are probably doing that already). The list of moths consists of about 200 species, common in your area and those that are difficult to identify are intentionally left out. This means that the GMS is open to recorders of all abilities - you don't have to be an expert, just get yourself a moth trap and field guide and you will be welcome! This is a rapidly expanding garden moth-recording scheme that measures the fortunes of our common moths. And to make it even more attractive to recorders the GMS now has its own popular chat-site for recorders (a public website is under construction), regular newsletter, annual report and meeting.

So what have been the results of the five years of West Midlands GMS? We have found that some moths including Dot Moth and Garden Carpet are in decline while others such as Common Footman and Blair's Shoulder-knot are increasing. Preliminary results for late summer 2007 are already quantifying just how bad this wet summer has been for moths, the top 20 commonest species declined by an average of 46% from 2006 figures, only Light Brown Apple Moth increased. But are these just short-term changes and is this reflected across the whole country? To answer these questions we need more moth recorders throughout the UK. If you count moths in your back garden and want to make a real difference to the future of moths and our environment then get in touch with me to sign up for the 2008 recording season.

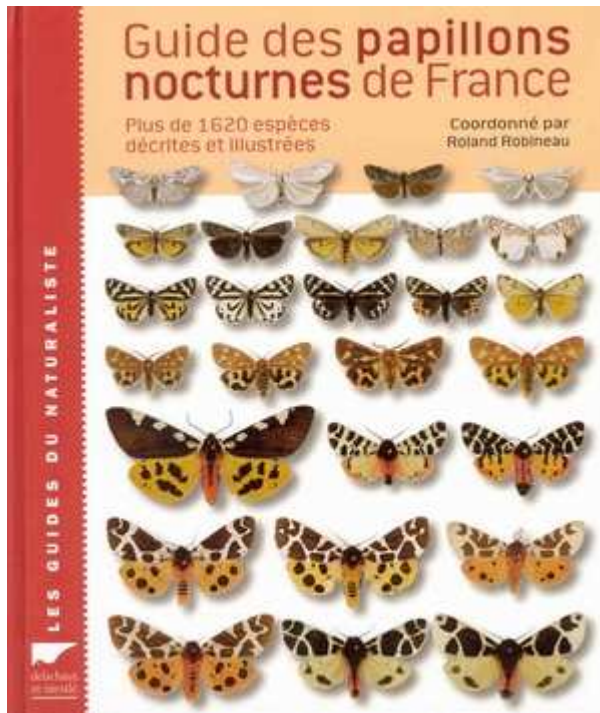
Please remember that the GMS is not intended to replace your county recorder - it is to work alongside your county recorder - so please still send all your moth records to your county moth recorder. The new Moths Count (NMRS) programme is administered by Butterfly Conservation to support County Moth Recorders, form a National Moth Data Base and run a wide variety of moth related training and public events. The GMS also aims to run alongside Moths Count and Butterfly Conservation.

So, get in touch straight away if you want to join the GMS in Suffolk - your records will be really valuable for 2008.

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Book Review of Guide des Papillons Nocturnes de France by Roland Robineau - Jon Clifton

ISBN 978-2-603-01429-5. Hardback 35 Euros.



When faced with the question 'what books does one take for a European mothing holiday' the answer usually boils down to space, either by plane or car, space is of paramount importance especially if you already have moth traps and pots in suitcases instead of clothes. One cannot be expected to take *Noctuidae Europaeae* or other such heavy books such as some of the European literature on the Geometridae.

Up until 2007 my choice was always small and simple, thus my travelling library for Central Europe at least would consist of *Les Papillons dans leur milieu* by Patrice Leraut for a general overview (sadly now out of print), for the Noctuids I would have Janusz Nowacki's *The Noctuids of Central Europe* and Jaroslav Fajcik's *Motyle Strednej Europy*. A good small simple guide for the Drepanidae through the Geometridae to the Arctiidae would undoubtedly be Jaroslav Fajcik's *Motyle Strednej a Severnej Europy*. The only micro literature I carry is usually *Die Zunslerartigen Mitteleuropas*

covering the Pyraloidea by Frantisek Slamka, and the first small edition of *Die Tortriciden Mitteleuropas* by Jozef Razowski. Any other micros I catch and am unfamiliar with would quite simply be set and examined back home. The new publication by Patrice Leraut *Moths of Europe Volume 1*, reviewed by Neil Sherman in the last SMG newsletter, could be an extra addition but personally I would stick with Fajcik if in near or central Europe.

On a trip to France and Italy in autumn 2007 I was given a copy of *Guide des Papillons Nocturnes de France*, another masterpiece in the famous Delachaux et Niestlé series (rather like our Collins guides), co-authored by several amateur entomologists and coordinated by Roland Robineau. It covers 1620 species of moths occurring in France with a massive 55 full life size colour plates, the *Idaea* and *Eupithecia* (waves and pugs) are depicted in a useful 1.5x natural size. Reproduction of the plates is of a high standard although with so many species stuffed into this 'Skinner Guide' sized book it does not allow for too much variation of each species to be shown. The figure for instance depicting Mullein Wave I find not a great likeness but on the other hand the plate showing the *Caradrina* was fairly helpful.

No English common names are used, only the scientific, all text is brief and in French but is perfectly usable giving the scientific names to foodplants and the Roman numerical for flight times, so don't let this put you off (I hear rumours there will eventually be an English version).

One final piece of invaluable information is an index of species giving both the checklist numbering system assigned by Leraut and Karsholt.

Although I say never review a book until you have used it for twelve months, I found this book so good travelling in France and in Italy I found myself using this and none of the other books I had with me other than checking for some of the variations and different forms that may occur. This is an absolute must for anyone into moths, home or abroad and obtainable at such good value!

Jon Clifton
Hindolveston, Norfolk

National Moth Night 2008

National Moth Night (and Day) this year is on Saturday 7th June and moth recorders are encouraged to run their lights on the night, either in their garden or further afield. Target species this year include *Anania funebris*, Bordered Gothic and Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth. Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth is known only from one site in the county and it may be worthwhile looking for this species during the day at sites where its foodplant Devil's-bit Scabious occurs, armed with some lilac blossoms to attract the adults. *A. funebris* is also a day-flying species but its status in Suffolk is rather uncertain and based on an old record from the middle of the 19th century. It is almost certainly extinct in the county now, if it was ever resident here. Bordered Gothic is looking as though it is extinct but somebody may get lucky and it was well known in Suffolk in the past. As well as target species this year there is a target habitat - orchards. So if you don't fancy the slim chances of picking up one of the target species you could try the target habitat - there are plenty of orchards old and modern within the county. The East of England Apples & Orchards Project are keen to get involved in NMN08. They have about 550 members spread across the region, with a variety of orchards - traditional and modern. If you would like to go along and run some lights at an orchard I can forward on details of Martin Skipper who is the contact for the project.

I will be running a moth night at West Stow Country Park as a public and joint event for Suffolk BC and SNS. Meet at the visitor centre car park at 9.30pm. The country park can be found on a minor road off A1101 between Lackford and Icklingham. Map Ref: TL801704. Bring a torch and warm clothing. Unfortunately children under 12 are not allowed due to health and safety restrictions.

Field reports - Tony Prichard

Friday 3rd August - Moth Night at Lackford Lakes

One of the more successful moth nights that the moth group held this year. I always get the impression that the most of the habitat at this site is not that well established and not varied enough to provide much of interest. Each visit so far has proven me wrong with larger than expected species counts. Of the 130 plus species recorded on this night there were some of particular note, the rare tortrix *Apotomis semifasciana* whose larvae feed on *Salix*, the RDB species Marbled Clover and also the Tawny Wave. Other species of note were Bordered Beauty, White Satin, Green Silver-lines, Square-spotted Clay, Nut-tree Tussock, Twin-spotted Wainscot, *Stathmopoda pedella*, Canary-shouldered Thorn, *Phtheochroa inopiana*, Dark Umber, Mere Wainscot and Small Wainscot.



Small Wainscot © Tony Prichard



Tawny Wave © Tony Prichard

Friday 10th August - Moth Night at Herringfleet Hills

A cold night meant that we headed down into the woodland areas of the site, avoiding the open grassland areas at the top of the site which already felt rather cool while we stood around discussing what to do. We had only one generator (I had forgotten mine) so we were limited in how we could position the lights. It was a slow night with the measly 41 species in mid-August giving a good indication of how poor the season was. The species list included Copper Underwing, *Dioryctria sylvestrella*, Black Arches, Large Emerald and *Lozotaeniodes formosanus*.

Saturday 11th August - Moth Night at Aldeburgh/Thorpeness Beach - National Moth Night

Following the cancellation of the arranged moth night at this site a few weeks earlier we decided to head for this coastal site for NMN. There was always the chance of picking up some interesting migrants but the total of sixty three species was a poor result given past experiences. A visit by some police broke the ennui of sitting around a quiet sheet light and we ended up returning home rather early for the time of year. Species of interest for the night included *Epiphyas postvittana*, Gold Spot, Sharp-angled Peacock, Dog's Tooth, Oak Eggar, Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet, Magpie and White Satin. There was always the chance that we might pick up a late White-mantled Wainscot but we were probably getting a bit past the end of their flight period so it was not too much of a disappointment when none appeared.

Saturday 17th August - Moth Night at Westleton Common



Westleton Common © Tony Prichard

This evening was a pleasant improvement on previous visits. The main area of heathland turned rather cold again but we managed to find an area above the heath to run the sheet light and had some good results for the time of year and considering the poor season. Eighty one species were recorded in all, along with some species representative of the habitat. The list included *Monopis weaverella*, *Batia lambdella*, *Pediasia contaminella*, *Platytes alpinella*, *Eudonia truncicolella*, Magpie, Peacock, Sharp-angled Peacock, Pine Hawk-moth, White-line Dart, Square-spotted Clay, Dog's Tooth, White-point, Dark Spectacle and Spectacle.

Friday 25th August - Moth Night at Hinderclay Fen

This site has proved to be quite interesting with some unusual species turning up in the past. The drive down the farm track to the site can be interesting too and the recent wet weather meant that most cars left the site liberally coated with mud. The mix of habitats (fen, heathland, scrub and carr) no doubt helps and on this night we totalled 66 species. There was nothing of outstanding rarity recorded but all records add to our sum of knowledge. Species of note were *Cryptobables bistriga*, Sharp-angled Carpet, White-line Dart, Six-striped Rustic, Hedge Rustic, White-point, Twin-spotted Wainscot, Pale Mottled Willow and Pinion-streaked Snout.

Friday 31st August - Moth Night at Wortham Ling

This heathland site proved to be a bit quiet on our previous visit and given the poor season we were not that optimistic on this night. Some of the more interesting species included *Mirificarma mulinella*, *Agapeta zoegana*, *Galleria mellonella*, Treble-bar, Dusky Thorn, White-line Dart, Antler Moth, Hedge Rustic, Feathered Gothic and White-point.

Friday 7th September - Moth Night at Little Blakenham Pit

As the weather was not that favourable and this site is a notorious frost-pocket we set the main sheet light up on the track above the pit. The lights down on the pit floor attracted a few species but it was rather a slow night. The site is no longer managed as a reserve by the SWT so the site is suffering from some scrubbing over, mainly along the slopes at the edge of the pit. In all 33 species were recorded, including Orange Swift, Spruce Carpet, Pretty Chalk Carpet, Treble-bar, White-point and Centre-barred Sallow.

Friday 14th September - Moth Night at Shingle Street

A quiet night to finish the year's moth night programme as only twenty-six species appeared at the lights. This vegetated shingle site is rather exposed and can get rather cold, which it did on this evening. Surprisingly, no Feathered Brindle were seen although in the past this species has appeared in large numbers at light there. Species of possible interest included *Acleris rhombana*, *Chilo phragmitella*, *Oxyptilus distans*, Hedge Rustic, White-point, Rosy Rustic, Frosted Orange and Dark Spectacle.

Saturday 13th October - Leaf-miner Recording Day at Wortham Ling and Redgrave Fen

It was a pleasant autumn day for the annual leaf-miner meeting. We started at Wortham Ling with heathland, young woodland and alder carr habitats. The first species of note found was *Enteucha acetosae*, with some of the red-stained mines being found on Sheep's Sorrel. We have only a few sites for this species but this is almost certainly due in part to under-recording. Moving to the alder carr we found several tenanted mines on alder which were confirmed as *Stigmella alnetella*. Searching of the hop plants eventually led to us finding some large white mines of *Cosmopterix zieglerella*, a new species for some. Other species of note among the fifty recorded were *Ectoedemia septembrella*, *Heliozela resplendella*, *Bucculatrix frangutella*, *Bucculatrix bechsteinella*, *Eucalybites auroguttella*, *Parornix betulae*, *Leucospilapteryx omissella*, *Phyllonorycter rajella*, *Phyllonorycter froelichiella*, *Metzneria metzneriella*, *Metzneria lapella*, *Grapholita janthinana*. Macro-moths recorded included a Currant Pug larva on hop, a Vapour adult and a Pale Tussock larva.

After a very nice pub lunch in Redgrave where a few partook of a humorously named but tasty sausage dish we moved on to Redgrave Fen. The site seemed more limited than Wortham Ling in terms of foodplants available but we actually recorded more species with a total of fifty three. The more notable were *Ectoedemia minimella*, *Ectoedemia quinquella*, *Stigmella continuella*, *Stigmella tiliae*, *Stigmella viscerella*, *Stigmella alnetella*, *Heliozela sericiella*, *Leucospilapteryx omissella*, *Phyllonorycter schreberella*, *Phyllonorycter froelichiella*, *Phyllonorycter kleemannella*, *Phyllonorycter platanoidella*, *Diurnea fagella* larva, *Cosmopterix zieglerella* and a Brick.



Heliozela sericiella © Tony Prichard

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 and records for this section.

Eye Moths, July to November 2007 - Paul Kitchener

July

I guess comparisons with last July are inevitable, but really whatever the weather was going to throw at us this month it couldn't possibly produce anything to compare with the exciting mothing that we all enjoyed last year. With mean temperatures below average and rainfall well above average virtually every species appeared in lower numbers. Only on two nights did the night-time temperature remain at or above 15°C and the night of the 30th was probably the coldest I've known for July, here in Eye, when the minimum was 6°C!

A poor total of two hundred and eight species was seen. Last July produced three hundred and fifty-four with the average over the previous five years being two hundred and sixty-six. The night of the 7th was probably a record-breaker when only twenty-eight species came to the MV!

Having trapped this site for only six years it would be an exceptionally bad July if no new site records were recorded. As it was there were five, all micros: *Rhopobota naevana* (four in one week, with a fifth record to come in August), *Eucosma hohenwartiana*, *Donacaula forficella*, *Coleophora serratella* and *Coleophora therinella*. The last two, thankfully, determined by Jon Clifton, otherwise I would have been none the wiser.



Donacaula forficella © Paul Kitchener

Continuing on the positive theme for as long as possible, a few other micros of local interest were seen and these included *Ectoedemia decentella* (the seventh record), *Ypsolopha scabrella* (only the third site record and the first since 2003), *Epermenia chaerophyllella* (the third and fourth of the year), *Elachista maculicerusella* (two; the first record was in April of this year), *Mompha epilobiella* (seventh record and now seen in every month from April to September, except June), *Limnaecia phragmitella* (the fifth and sixth records; first seen here only last year), *Phtheochroa inopiana* (four this month and seen for the first time last year but already there are thirteen records), *Apotomis lineana* (the sixth record, all the others were last year), *Enarmonia formosana* (three this month and now seen for five consecutive years), *Nomophila noctuella* (seven individuals with five on the 19th) and *Homoeosoma sinuella* (the third record, the second only last month).

It's difficult to find anything positive to say about the macros this month but I'll try: a single Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet was the first I've recognised here since 2004, four Sharp-angled Peacock was better than last July (it has been the best year for this species with eleven records), a Maple Prominent was the fifth of the year (it has also been the best year for this species as it has

been for Coxcomb Prominent), two Brown-tail were the first since 2004, a White-point was my first July record (albeit only just, on the 1st), a Slender Brindle was the second record, two Double Lobed was about average and a Small Dotted Buff was the eighth record.



Maple Prominent © Paul Kitchener

Mention must be made of some particular species in order to illustrate the differences with last July and the affects the very wet May and June must have had on moth numbers this month. Although May 2006 was also exceptionally wet, June 2006 was very warm and dry unlike this year.

For the following species the first figure given is the number of individuals recorded this July and the second is for July 2006. Of course, last summer was exceptional and in a few cases this year's figure was not much lower than that for 2005.

Clepsis consimilana (30/149), *Ditula angustiorana* (9/216), *Celypha lacunana* (13/111), *Pammene aurita* (7/131), *Pammene regiana* (2/194), *Agriphila straminella* (1/317), *Phlyctaenia perlucidalis* (1/20), *Pleuroptya ruralis* (62/625), Riband Wave (117/424), Clouded Border (28/269), Common Footman (104/514), Heart and Dart (32/150), Flame (13/127), Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing (3/49), Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing (10/201), Cabbage (1/43), Dark Arches (16/188), Mottled Rustic (46/209) and Straw Dot (2/61).



Pammene aurita © Paul Kitchener

For only the second year in five no *Sciota adelphella* were seen. Last summer eight individuals were trapped and there have been nine records in total. Perhaps the poor weather has brought an end to a small temporary resident population.

August

Still waiting for summer. Another very disappointing, cool month that nationally was the coldest August since 1993. Generally though night-time temperatures held up pretty well and with a period of east to north-east winds later in the month some interesting migrants were recorded.

This month the species total not only well exceeded that of August 2006, but also proved to be the best for August over the seven years at this site. The one hundred and ninety-nine species included eight new site records, four of which were macros.

A mild, drizzly night with a light north-easterly wind on the 23rd produced one of the most exciting catches of the month. This included five *Plutella xylostella*, *Acrolepiopsis assectella* (Leek moth, a first site record), two *Nomophila noctuella*, three *Dioryctria abietella* (only the fourth site record), Yellow-barred Brindle, Black Arches (third site record), over one hundred Large Yellow Underwing, a Dotted Clay (the first site record and the first I've seen in Eye in eleven years), ten White-point, two Silver Y, a moribund Scarce Silver Y (the first I've ever recorded, but unfortunately not very photogenic) and two Dark Spectacle.



Acrolepiopsis assectella © Paul Kitchener



Great Brocade © Paul Kitchener

A second *Acrolepiopsis assectella* was seen on the 27th and other apparent migrants this month were *Udea ferrugalis* (four), one other *Nomophila noctuella*, a single Humming-bird Hawk-moth (the only one of the year - a five second view from the living room window), a total of forty-nine White-point (half last August's total, but most probably local) and best of all, a Great Brocade on the 30th. Having missed out on last year's influx I thought I'd have a long wait for my next chance so I was both very pleased and surprised to see one so soon.

The other moths seen for the first time here were *Cameraria ohridella* (Horse-chestnut Leaf-miner), perhaps a new arrival around here, but more likely to have been overlooked in recent years (a total of twenty-five between the 1st and 30th, with a maximum of nine on the 12th), *Bactra furfurana* (a second one in September), *Grapholita funebrana* (this was actually a second record, the identification of it and one caught in June was recently confirmed by Jon Clifton), *Dichrorampha acuminatana* and Juniper Pug.



Bactra furfurana © Paul Kitchener

There was plenty of other interest provided by *Ectoedemia decentella* (eighth record), *Morophaga choragella* (second site record), *Ypsolopha scabrella* (the second of the year, having not been seen for the previous three years), *Depressaria heraclei* (only the third record in six years and the second

in August; at my previous trap site only half a mile away it was seen twenty-four times in four years, all the records during January to April), *Limnaecia phragmitella* (the third of the year), *Cacoecimorpha pronubana* (only the fourth trap record and first since 2003), *Bactra lancealana* (two), *Rhopobota naevana* (the fifth of the year), *Enarmonia formosana* (the fifth and sixth of the year), *Aglossa pinguinalis* (only the third site record), *Euzophera pinguis* (the only one of the year and only the fifth in three years - it used to be much more frequent), *Ephestia parasitella* (the first August site record), *Phycitodes maritima* (ninth record and the only one of the year), *Amblyptilia acanthadactyla* (the tenth and eleventh records but was first seen as recently as 2004), one Oak Hook-tip (the only one of the year), Least Carpet (the only one of the year but it has now been seen in four consecutive years), Flame Carpet (the second and third of the year, the first site record was in April), Dark Spinach (the third site record), Treble-bar (only the fifth record), Sharp-angled Peacock (seven), True Lover's Knot (fourth site record), Butterbur (the second site record, the first was in 2001), Dark Spectacle (five) and Red Underwing.



Butterbur © Paul Kitchener

A few species were more numerous this August than last, namely Single-dotted Wave, Riband Wave, Common Carpet, Green Carpet, Light Emerald and Burnished Brass and the final year tally for the last four mentioned was the best in six years. As in July however, most species were in much lower numbers, these being a few examples, (figures are August '07/August '06): *Agriphila tristella* (32/116), *Pleuroptya ruralis* (130/570), Flame Shoulder (402/1187), Six-striped Rustic (20/132), Cabbage (47/284), Common Wainscot (26/233) and Vine's Rustic (81/338). The final year tallies suggest differing fortunes though, with only Common Wainscot having the worst year out of seven and Vine's Rustic appearing in well above average numbers. Cabbage Moth numbers have been very erratic, from a maximum of three hundred and eighty in 2003 to a minimum of just seven a year later.

September

There's not a great deal to comment on this month. The trap was out on only thirteen nights and I was away on holiday from the 21st. The period was quite dry, certainly compared with the previous four months and temperatures were about average, nothing like the glorious warm weather of last September.

There was one first site record, a Clay Triple-lines on the 7th and this was also the first time I had recorded it in Eye. Other noteworthy species were *Prays fraxinella* (the eighth of the year), *Pseudargyrotoza conwagana* (the first September site record, but not the latest - in 2004 one was recorded on the 20th October), the second *Bactra furfurana* of the year, the third *Eudonia pallida* of the year (but only the sixth site record; the first five have all been in June), a single *Pyrausta aurata* (the first and only one of the year!), two Bordered Beauty (the only ones of the year), Large Thorn

(the fifth site record and first since 2003), six White-point, a Cream-bordered Green Pea (only the fifth record of the year and the first time in September. The average number of records over the previous five years is twenty-two), two Dark Spectacle (eighth and ninth of the year) and two Red Underwing.

Two Crambids were seen on their latest ever dates, *Chrysoteuchia culmella* (two this month with the latest on the 10th) and *Crambus pascuella* on the 1st. The latter species was a good month later than the previous latest. There were also first September site records for Wormwood Pug and Clouded Border (which has had the worst year at this site since 2002, the yearly totals for the six years being 50/203/162/167/308/60). A Pink-barred Sallow on the 3rd was my earliest record by ten days.



Pink-barred Sallow © Paul Kitchener

Both Canary-shouldered and Dusky Thorn were seen in their lowest ever numbers with only three of each. Last year I rather hopefully reported that Dusky Thorn may be recovering from a steep decline in numbers since 1999, but I may have been premature in my comments. Maybe there was a large emergence whilst I was on holiday, who knows?

October

Another relatively dry month but with cool nights and several ground frosts, only on three nights after the 5th did the temperature remain in double figures. Last October had seventeen nights with a minimum in double figures.

There were no new site records this month but the species total of fifty- six was the third best for the last six years and several species were seen later than they had before. These were *Tinea trinotella* (12th , a first record for October), *Anthophila fabriciana* (two, 16th, a first October record), *Pleuroptya ruralis* (two, the latest, 14th), Single-dotted Wave (5th, a first record for October), Willow Beauty (12th, a first record for October), Flame (two, the latest, 14th), Cabbage (6th, a first record for October) and Burnished Brass (15th). There were five records of Straw Dot, the fifth year in the last seven that it's been seen in October.

A single *Epiphyas postvittana* was the ninth record of the year. This moth was not seen here until last year, so it's probably safe to assume there will be even more next year.

Of the October regulars Red-line Quaker, Brown-spot Pinion, Beaded Chestnut and Barred Sallow all appeared in below average numbers (for the five years '02 to '06), whilst Sallow was the only species that was more numerous. Three species that are usually recorded this month were not seen at all. These were Feathered Thorn (the first year in ten it hasn't shown), Blair's Shoulder-knot (the only other blank year was 2002) and Brick (also the first time in ten years it's not been seen).

Other bits and pieces of note were two White-point, the first Sprawler of the year (on the 25th), only two records of Merveille du Jour (there were fifteen last October), four Brindled Green (the best yearly total since 2001!), only seven records of Large Wainscot (forty-two last October) and the

tenth Dark Spectacle of the year.



Sprawler © Paul Kitchener

November

Nine species were seen in the first week before a series of quite heavy ground frosts arrived. These included the first November site records for *Acleris variegana*, Shuttle-shaped Dart and Sallow. The only Feathered Thorn of the year finally put in an appearance and four Sprawler was a good showing.

So, that's probably it for 2007, thank goodness it's over many might say, but I doubt whether it's been a disastrous year, only time will tell. The wet weather may have caused a few local, temporary extinctions but I guess we'll just have to expect weather extremes to become more frequent these days. At least in this part of the country we were luckier than some who had a lot more than the odd empty moth trap to worry about.

Moths at Ipswich Golf Course - August to December 2007 - Neil Sherman

August

Summer just did not seem to arrive in August. There were a few warm days, but most of the time it seemed to be cool and wet, especially in the middle of the month. The end of August was dominated by northerly winds, dropping the numbers of moths in the traps. There were a few migrant northerly moths around like Great Brocade and Scarce Silver Y (same as last year) but none made it to my light traps. Only on the night of the 5th did I find the traps full of moths. In fact it was the best night of the year for the site, with 166 species being recorded in 3 traps. Lights were operated on 13 other nights, producing a total of 280 species (155 micros, 125 macros). On comparison with last August, this total is in fact much better - I only recorded 213 species in 2006, but then it was a much wetter month. One insect that did seem to be around in large numbers was the wasp - there were always quite a few to contend with in the traps each morning!

One new macro for the site was recorded - a Tree-lichen Beauty, found in one of the traps on that warm night of the 5th. Other sightings of possible note included the following. Oak Eggar (female) only found once on the 5th, unfortunately killed by the hornets present in the trap. Grass Emerald was noted twice (5th and 13th). The Large Emerald has been notable by its low numbers; only one more was seen on the 7th, the total for 2007 being 5. Birch Mocha was also in low numbers, with one record on the 18th. Tawny Wave however did well, with the one on the 5th being the fifth record for the year. Another good record for here was the Mullein Wave seen on the 7th - this is only the second record. Also seen on the 7th was a Dark Spinach. Least Carpet was seen virtually every night, with a total of 21 noted during the month. The Small Phoenix did not do well - after just the one sighting in July only 2 more made it to the traps. The Small Waved Umber noted on the 7th was only the third site record, the first since 2004. Second brood Sharp-angled Peacock were noted only

on one date (24th), with five seen. The second White Satin for 2007 was seen on the 12th, this is the 5th record for the site. The last Kent Black Arches for the year was noted on the 5th. Other species that have been in low numbers have included the Lunar yellow Underwing (one 29th), Six-striped Rustic (one on 27th) and Mouse Moth (one on 21st). 9 Hedge rustic have been recorded so far, more should be seen in September. A Saltern Ear trapped on the warm night of the 5th was the first since 2005. A single Shaded Fan-foot also trapped on the same night was the last sighting of the year for that species. A moth that does seem to be increasing is the Dark Spectacle. The one seen on the 19th was the 4th for 2007.



Mullein Wave © Neil Sherman



Tree-lichen Beauty © Neil Sherman

Micros of possible note included the following. Again on the warm night of the 5th, a new species was recorded - *Lobesia littoralis*. Other notables included *Morophaga choragella* (5th), *Caloptilia syringella* (27th), *Aspilapterix tringipennella* (on the 2nd, following on from the 2 seen in July), *Cameraria ohridella* (14 adults noted plus loads of mines), *Yponomeuta rorrella* (2nd, following on from last year's sightings), *Epermenia chaerophyllella* (second site record on the 21st), *Stenolechia gemmella* (27th), *Bryotropha domestica* (2 records), *Gelechia senticetella* (2nd, third site record), *Adoxophyes orana* (5th, second site record), *Platytes alpinella* (5th), *Eudonia angustea* (26th, first for the year) and *Achroia grisella* (the Lesser Wax Moth, seen on the 5th and 12th, first records since 2004). A complete surprise was the sighting of a *Cydia amplana* in the garden trap on the 12th, the second site record. A few more *Vitula biviella* were recorded following on from the 64 seen last month. Four were noted on the 4th, followed by two on the 5th - these were the last ones for the year.



Cydia amplana © Neil Sherman



Lobesia littoralis © Neil Sherman

There were two notable daytime observations - a *Recurvaria nanella* was found at the house on the 4th, followed by the discovery of mines of *Caloptilia falconipennella* on alder on the 31st (these were bred through with an adult hatching in September to confirm the identification). These were both new moths for the site.

September

The start of September was quite warm and dry, with some warm nights in the first week producing on average over 50 species of moths in the traps. Clear skies and lower night temperatures from the second week dropped numbers however, with an average of only 30 species in the traps. It became even worse during the last week, with wind and rain causing a crash in moths - only 14 species were noted on the night of the 27th.

The best count came during the first part of the month, when 72 species were recorded on the night of the 6th. Lights were operated on 11 nights. This produced a total of 148 species (75 micros, 73 macros), a better count than 2006 when only 137 species were recorded. This may sound surprising as September 2006 was very mild, but I was away for 2 weeks on holiday during that time so less trapping was undertaken.

Generally the trend of low moth numbers in the traps in 2007 continued, with some species normally noted in September not even appearing at all including moths like Deep-brown Dart and the Sallow.

Large numbers of wasps continued to hamper checking the trap contents, with the additional hazard of a few hornets as well!



Orange Sallow © Neil Sherman

There were no new macro moth species noted. Of possible interest were the following. Birch Mocha (6th, only the second record for 2007), Flame Carpet (8th), Lunar Yellow Underwing (8 records following on from the first last month), Heath Rustic (7 records), Hedge Rustic (22 records to add to the 9 seen last month), L-album Wainscot (16th, 5th site record, all recorded in the garden trap so far), Brindled Green (7 only so far), Orange Sallow (4), Poplar Grey (2nd, a second brood individual), Frosted orange (19th) and Red underwing (8th). Feathered Gothic continues to be poorly represented in the traps, with only a total of 7 seen - only 4 were noted in 2006, the last time double figures were noted was in 2005 (19). Two other species not seen in their usual high numbers were Lunar Underwing (6 so far - 88 were noted in 2006) and Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing (only 8 so far, 97 noted in 2006).



Heath Rustic © Neil Sherman



L-album Wainscot © Neil Sherman

Some of the common micros showed a similar trend. Most obvious was *Agriphila tristella* - there have been 56 so far in 2007, last year there were 123.

Micros of possible noted included *Ectoedemia decentella* (1st), *Roeslerstammia erxebella* (8th in garden trap), *Ypsolopha sylvella* (4 records), *Aristotelia ericinella* (6th, only the third record for 2007, this species is normally abundant near Heather here), *Acleris rhombana* (6th), *Bactra furfurana* (5th, second site record), *Crambus hamella* (2 noted on the 6th were the only records) and *Apomyelois bistriatella* (2nd).



Crambus hamella © Neil Sherman



Poplar Hawk-moth larva © Neil Sherman

There was very little evidence of unusual strong second broods of some species unlike previous years. The only moths noted doing this were *Pandemis cerasana* (3 records) and *Archips podana* (2 records).

There were only 2 daytime observations of note. A Pink-barred Sallow was disturbed while cutting sedge on the 17th, this being the only record so far for 2007. The next day, a caterpillar of a Poplar Hawk-moth was found, fully grown, feeding on willow.

October

October continued the mild autumn season, with some warm sunny days and mild nights in the first part of the month. Mid-month brought frosts however, this seemingly finishing off the moths at the site as after this, mild nights at the end of the month only produced single figure species totals. Trapping was attempted on ten nights, mostly in the garden due to re-development work at the work-sheds. The best night was the 2nd, when 27 species were seen. Final total for the month was 56 (18 micros, 38 macros), worse than 2006 when 70 species were noted.

Macros records of possible interest included the following. Red-green Carpet (4 records), November Moth agg. (8 only, 118 in 2006), Streak (9 only, 22 last year), Feathered Thorn (3 - 26

last year), Mottled Umber (again 1 only, 13 last year), Square-spot Rustic (latest ever on the 15th October - this species has been seen this year from July!), L-album Wainscot (1st, third record for 2007), Deep-brown Dart (6 noted after none at all last month), Black Rustic (1st, 2nd (2) and 12th), Blair's Shoulder-knot (22 seen, a good count here), Merveille du Jour (1 on the 2nd is the only record so far), Chestnut (1 only - 341 noted last year!), Yellow-line Quaker (4 - 67 last year), Lunar Underwing (highest count for the year on one date was 30 on the 2nd), Barred Sallow (5 - 25 last year), Pink-barred Sallow (4), Sallow (the only one seen on the 2nd) and Large Wainscot (only one on the 15th).



Black Rustic © Neil Sherman

Micros seen included *Monopis obviella* (12th), *Cedestis subfasciella* (11th, latest ever), *Archips podana* (2nd again latest ever), *Cydia splendana* (2nd, not surprisingly another latest ever record!) and *Eudonia angustea* (11th).

All the late records are undoubtedly due to the poor summer weather slowing development/emergence. It will be interesting to see what effect, if any, this year has had on numbers for 2008.

There was only one daytime observation of note, and that was the sighting of 2 caterpillars of the Festoon on the 25th, found underneath oak trees preparing to pupate.

November

A trap was operated on the night of the 1st, producing 19 moths of 9 species, with 2 Streak, Red-green Carpet and a Spruce Carpet being of possible note for the site. I basically lost interest in trapping after then, thinking was it worth putting the light out to catch such poor numbers!

However, at the end of the month there was a brief spell of warm nights. Checking the clubhouse wall by the security lights on the 28th (often more profitable than running a trap during the winter) produced 10 Mottled Umber, 10 Scarce Umber, 2 Winter Moth and a Feathered Thorn. That night I had another go with the trap, and was surprised to find a few moths in the morning. Most common was the December Moth, one of my favourite late season species with 10 present. There were also a few Winter and Northern Winter Moths, Red-green Carpet and a Scarce Umber to name a few of the 8 species present.

The total for the month was 15 species, better than last November when only 7 were seen so it wasn't all bad in the end!

December

Trapping was attempted on the night of the 4th, when mild conditions tempted me to try the trap. Bit of a waste of time - only caught 4 moths, with nothing of note. The usual winter species were seen around the clubhouse security lights, the only moth of note for the month being the Pale-brindled Beauty at the clubhouse on the 4th, this being the earliest before the year's end that I have seen

the species.

The summary for the year at the site is as follows. 699 species were recorded, more than 2006 when 696 were noted. This may come as a surprise, but I did survey the leaf-miners in 2007. There were 59 of these, so to compare the years I have removed them from the result. Therefore the total for 2007 was 640 species (318 macros, 322 micros), much lower than 2006, all due to the poor weather in the summer months. 24 new moths were noted (4 macros, 20 micros), the total number of Lepidoptera recorded at the site now standing at 1064 (1034 moths).

Mendlesham Green Records 2007 - Steve Woolnough

The trap ran on three nights in March. Numbers were low, without any double-digit species counts but there were two new garden records, with *Agonopterix alstromeriana* on 10th and Grey Shoulder-knot on 24th.

April was a very warm month, allowing the trap to be run on eight nights, giving the highest April count recorded, with 36 species. Only once before had a double-digit species count occurred during the month, but this was achieved on three nights this year, peaking at 15 on 22nd. Again, there were two new species; *Esperia sulphurella* on 13th and Treble Bar on 25th.

In May the trap was run on only four nights, as the wet weather began to take hold, but a respectable total of 76 species was recorded, although most of these occurred on just the one night of 24th, when 63 were identified. This beat by some margin the previous best May count of 46 on 27th 2005. Four new garden records also appeared on that night; *Agonopterix assimilella*, Clay Triple-lines, Brown Silver-line and Purple Clay. The remaining new garden moth was Dark Brocade on 22nd. The first migrants of the year appeared on the same night, with three Diamond-backs. There was also a very early Large Emerald on this date. A Puss Moth on 5th was found, typically, not in the trap but some three metres away on the shed door.

A total of 147 species were recorded from seven nights in June, with a record monthly count of 86 on 29th. Four new garden records occurred on that night; *Epermenia chaerophyllella*, *Coleophora adpersella*, *Acleris bergmanniana* and Holly Tortrix. Other new garden records were *Mompha subbistrigella* and Clouded Brindle on 7th, Brown Oak Tortrix, *Dioryctria abietella*, Juniper Webber and Light Brocade on 9th, and *Donacaula forficella*, Delicate and Dark Spectacle on 22nd. Also notable were two Orange Moth on 23rd and the high numbers of Buff Ermine throughout the month, which peaked with 26 on 9th.

July was almost a complete wash-out; what is usually the busiest month of the year saw the trap run on only four nights. For a month that usually sees counts of over 100 spp., the maximum recorded was only 81 on 18th July, with the second highest being only 64 on 28th. A new macro for the garden was recorded on 13th July with a single Fen Wainscot. New micros appearing on the same night were singles of *Swammerdamia caesiella*, *Bryotropha terrella* and *Epagoge grotiana*. An unusual warm and dry night on the 18th produced several new micros, namely *Stigmella hybnerella*, *Tischeria ekebladella*, Brown-dotted Clothes Moth and Brown Oak Tortrix. On 21st, a first *Helcystogramma rufescens* was recorded and the last new moth of the month was seen on 28th, with *Elachista maculicerusella*, giving a monthly total of 133 spp., by far the lowest July number recorded, being 37 down on the previous low score of 170 from 2004.

There was little improvement in August, with the trap run on only 6 nights. A total of 150 spp. were recorded, with a maximum count of 84 seen on 1st when a first Sallow Kitten, *Yponomeuta plumbella* and *Scrobipalpa costella* were recorded. The following night saw another three new species, with *Epiblema trimaculana*, Oak Eggar and Dark Umber. Another notable record occurred on 23rd, a night when the trap was not run, when my wife drew my attention to a large hawk-moth buzzing around the security light. This turned out to be a Bedstraw Hawk-moth, again a new garden record. It was held for two days before being released, during which time two eggs were laid, but they collapsed shortly afterwards.

Numbers and species were also well down in September. The trap was run on five nights with only 59 spp. recorded. The only new record was on 13th, when two *Aethes rubigana* appeared. However, whilst the trap was only used on three nights in October, a total of 47 spp. was recorded, which is the highest for this month in the 5 years I have trapped. Whilst no new species were noted, Merveille du Jour was seen for the first time since 2003 and a high count of 8 Barred Sallow was recorded on 12th October. A Mallow was notable on 3rd. The trap was run for the last time on 2nd November, when 8 spp. were recorded, including a Merveille du Jour, two Feathered Thorn and a very fresh Buff Arches.

The total spp for the year was 314 from 41 trapping nights; not the worst on record (which was 305 in 2006), but still well down on average, and total numbers were very low. Here's hoping for a better 2008.

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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 three to 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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