



Suffolk Moth Group Newsletter

Issue 2 - June 1996

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Editorial

Welcome to the second Suffolk Moth Group Newsletter. At last the weather has improved and there are some moths to look at. I am hoping to bring out, with your help, a newsletter every month throughout the summer, until the moths go for their winter break at least. So you should expect to see this newsletter at the beginning of July, the next one in August etc. If you have paid me for this years newsletters (only £2.50 to cover printing and postage) then thank you, if you have not then could you do so A.S.A.P.

Several people have asked how I want records to be sent to me, well I don't mind really but here are a few guidelines to help.

1. Species name - English will do - and relative abundance if possible.
2. Site name - grid reference if possible.
3. Dates.
4. Recorders name.

The aim of this newsletter is to inform so any information, no matter in what form, will be appreciated. Also if you would like to comment on any aspect of mothing then please put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboard, and I will include it in the next letter. For example do any of you use sugar to attract moths? If so are you successful? What advice would you give to help a novice sugarer? What about your trap, maybe you have an unusual construction or a very easy to assemble and use design that you could tell us about. (How about it Roger ?) I know that some people are interested in breeding larvae and some information about that would be interesting to read about. Also some people may go sallowing or dusking and get records that way and write about their experiences. Anything really that interests you will probably interest others

Format of data

At the moment I am not recording every moth that is being sent to me but giving you a selected view of what people are finding. The main reason for this is the amount of typing that this would involve is too much for me at the moment. However I am in the process of acquiring a simple (if that is possible with computers?) little program that will type out all the information on a specimen, once the Bradley and Fletcher number has been typed in, saving a lot of time. Once this is up and running I will be able to include all the current records for that month, so watch this space for developments.

Ipswich Museum Moth Specimens

Ipswich museum has an extensive collection of moths collected within Suffolk. We are organising a visit to the museum to view the moths in early August, probably on a Saturday. If you would be interested in going then let me know. It would then be possible, after prior arrangement with the museum, to visit the collection again if you had a particular group or interest you wished to study further. This certainly looks like an opportunity too good to miss as from all accounts there are some excellent cases to look at.

Suffolk Moth Group moth nights

Purdis Heath Golf Club. Friday 25 May

After a day of rain and winds we were not expecting a lot of moths, but hope springs eternal, so an MV light and three traps were set up along side the old decoy lake. The Ipswich Golf Club has a very good reputation for wildlife conservation due to the efforts of its grounds man Steve Noye and his assistant Neil Sherman, so there is a lot of varied and well managed habitats in the grounds. Steve regularly runs a Heath trap in his garden, on the edge of the club, and has recently purchased a Robinson trap and a generator to investigate the rest of the course. Temperatures of 13°C and less could have produced more but the final count was only just over twenty. Notable species were Pebble Hook-tip, Oak Hook-tip, Bordered White, Clouded Border and Least Black Arches, this last species a new one for several people present. Of four micro's *Esperia sulphurella* was very interesting, it's a species whose larvae feed on the Ascomycete fungi *Daldinia concentrica*, the familiar 'Cramp balls' or 'King Alfred's Cakes'. Two of the other micros were members of the *Incurvariidae* family, *Incurvaria mascuella* and *Adela reaumurella*, typical of this group they have very long antennae, in the case of the latter up to 1cm long, huge in proportion to the insect.

Hollesley Common. Friday 31 May

After a struggle to find a parking space, on the verges alongside the heath land and mixed woodland of Barthorpe's Folly, we set up two MV lights and two UV lights. The temperature started at about 15°C but soon cooled to a chilly 9°C due to the gusting wind . A small group of fallow deer were disturbed as we looked for a place to put the lights, and both nightingale and night jar were heard calling. The dominant trees in the area are oak and birch and this was reflected in the species found. An early visitor was the Lime Hawk along with several Great Prominents also found were Maidens Blush, Birch Mocha, Pale Tussock, Common White Wave, Oak Hook Tip, Marbled Brown and the micro *Ancylis mitterbacheriana*, all birch and oak feeders. Several pine feeders were also recorded, Pine Beauty, Grey Pine Carpet and Tawny-barred Angle The star of the night was the diminutive Orange Footman, this straw coloured lichen feeder was a new record for all of those present, Morley states it to be " rare in the few sylvan places it occurs" but does not list one of these as Hollesley

Leiston Common. Friday 7 June

We all met at the 'Nursery' east of Leiston and the first spectacle was a large fire at the industrial estate which filled the sky with a layer of thick smoke. Luckily for us this did not drift in our direction. The weather had been very warm all day and thunderstorms were forecast for the evening, we were aware of lots of lightning all around us throughout the session but the torrential rain held off until about 15 minutes after we left! The temperature was in the high teens all night and the humidity got up to 70%, ideal conditions for moths. There were two MV lights out, one above a sheet and one in a trap, and two

UV traps to cover both inside and outside of a small wood. As predicted it was an excellent night for moths and the final list topped the hundred mark, including five hawk moths, here is a small selection of the more notable species. Lime Hawk, Eyed Hawk, Elephant Hawk, Poplar Hawk, Privet Hawk, Cream spot Tiger, Cream-bordered Green Pea, Miller, Alder, Fox, Seraphim and Gold Spot. Also found were two local species, the Flame Wainscot, only found as a resident in East Anglia, and the White Colon, usually found in the Breckland area. Among the micros there lots of the brightly coloured Tortrix *Eulia ministrana*, and the *Nascia cilialis*, once considered rare, (Goater reports it as only found locally in Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire and Hampshire) but now found to be quite common in this county.

Blaxhall Common. Friday 14 June

The evening started off cold, was cold in the middle, and ended very cold. These are not ideal conditions for mothing. We drove into the heath to find a warm spot, but failed. We didn't see a moth until about 10.30, and then a brave Brown Silver lines flew in. Only a few moths were daft enough to venture forth and the final count was about twenty. We did have a Privet Hawk a Grass Wave and a Bird's Wing to compensate for staying there until midnight. The highlight of the evening was the unexpected arrival of a small group of thermally challenged *Crucisa bunnieata*, a rare pabulum for most, but they were quickly devoured, along with the coffee.

Tiger Hill. Friday 21 June

Another cold night brought a low count of moths at this private reserve near Arger Fen. We set the light up next to a small cottage on the side of a slope leading down to a small stream. The area around the cottage consisted of trees and mixed scrub with rabbit grazed heath at the top of the hill. A varied bunch of moths came in slowly, in one's and two's, throughout the evening which was terminated early at around midnight. One consolation was that several of the specimens were very fresh and well marked, including Buff Ermine. *Udea olivalis*, Figure of Eighty, Ingrailed Clay, Pale Shouldered brocade, Green Silver lines and a Beautiful Golden Y.

Darsham Marshes. Friday 28 June

A warm evening (17°C), with rain threatening, should have been very good for moths in a site which yielded over 100 species last year but things never quite materialised as expected. About 60 species did turn up however, so this was a great improvement on recent weeks. Highlights were Small Angle Shades, Straw Dot, Peppered, Cream-bordered Green Pea, Buff Ermine, Green Silver-lines, Small Emerald, Common Swift, Burnished Brass, Clouded Silver, Elephant Hawk, Figure of Eighty, Broad-barred White, July High Flyer, Marbled Brown and Shears. We did see two exceptional species with both a male and female Ghost Moth. the female being particularly beautifully coloured, and a Water Ermine, which is very rare and may not have been recorded in Suffolk since 1989 when it was last seen in Aldeburgh.

Records from recorders around the county

Location: Felixstowe. Recorder: Jon Nicholls. 1-30 June

It seems to have been a very quiet year so far, as many nights have been clear and cold resulting in few moths, however 48 species by the end of June is 14 better than last year so first impressions can be misleading. Common species are the Garden Carpet, Turnip and Heart and Dart, Some of the more interesting moths have been the lichen feeder Least Black Arches, the wonderfully marked *Pyrausta aurata*, Yellow barred Brindle, Spectacle, the first grass veneer was *Crambus pascuella*, and a uncommon migrant the Bordered Straw

Location: Barrow. Recorder: Adrian Parr. 29 February - June

Adrian reports a quiet year, with only 24 species by the end of May. The season started with Pale

Brindled Beauty and March moth and he noticed good numbers of Orthosias (Quakers. Drabs and the ubiquitous Hebrew character). Chestnut, Grey Shoulder-knot, Clouded Border, Waved Umber and Poplar Hawk moth were also seen The improved weather in June has brought in Diamond backed moths and Rush Veneer two common migrants Foxglove Pug, Pale Oak Beauty and the Breckland specialist the Grey Carpet.

Location: Rendham. Recorder: Annette Lea. 6 April - 17 June

Annette uses an 80W MV lamp on a home-made Robinson trap run in her garden that overlooks the flood meadows of the River Alde. She reports the usual early year selection of Carpets. Early Grey, Hebrew Character and various Orthosias. To date she has an impressive list of over fifty species including four species of hawk moth, three Prominents, Buff tip, Herald and Peppered.

Location: Woodbridge. Recorder: Roger Kendrick. 22 March - 17 June

Roger uses an 11W fluorescent (green) lamp with a Skinner trap. In March Roger saw a number of March, Dotted Border. Common Quaker and Hebrew Character. In April several Orthosias appeared along with Oak Beauty, Pine Beauty and the local Oak Nycteoline. In May Scorched Carpet and Least Black Arches were two early uncommon moths along with the more usual Scalloped Hazel, Rustic Shoulder knot, Oak Hook Tip, several Pugs, Pale Oak Beauty, Nutmeg, Shears, Yellow barred Brindle (which has been seen in good numbers this year), Sallow Kitten, Peppered, Buff tip, Light Brocade and Birds Wing

In June many of these moths continued along with Red-barred Tortrix, Turnip, Tawny Shears, Varied Coronet, Sycamore, Silver y, Common Swift, Small Magpie, Elephant Hawk-moth, Cream-spot Tiger and Alder. Along with several other moths, including the micros, this makes a total of over 100 species so far this year.

Location: Monks Eleigh. Recorder: Arthur Watchman. 5 May - 27 June

Most of Arthur's moths are attracted to a 160W Mercury/Tungsten blended bulb. This bulb requires no choke and is put into a light holder outside the front door. A few moths are also attracted to the bulkhead lights at the rear of the house which only contain 60W bulbs.

Very few moths were noted in early May - Early Grey, Hebrew Character, Clouded Drab, Red Chestnut and Powdered Quaker On the 17 a small group appeared including Small Waved Umber, Water Carpet, Purple Thorn, Pale Prominent, Streamer, Brindled Pug, Red Twin-spot Carpet and Common Quaker May also saw White Ermine, Oak Hook-tip, Yellow-barred Brindle, Small Phoenix, Green Silver-lines and Eyed Hawk

In June the number of species has continued to increase as expected with Brimstone, Pale Oak Beauty, Common Swift, Rustic Shoulder-knot and. new to Arthur, Bordered Straw (This migrant has also been seen by JN and SN). Also Light Emerald, Beautiful Golden Y, Scorched Wing, Common Wainscot. The first grass moth on the 16 was *Crambus lathoniellus* followed by *Chrysoteuchia culmella* and *Crambus perlella* The month ended with Small Yellow Wave, Elephant Hawk, Flame, Double Square-spot, Dark Arches, Figure of Eighty and Buff Arches

Arthur has also visited Wattisham where he saw a lot of very long named micros, Barnham with the B.E.N.H.S where. he saw the day flying (or easily disturbed) Yellow Shell, Bordered White, Cinnabar, Green Silver-lines, Cream-spot Tigers, Clay Triple-lines, Maidens Blush and several species of Tortrix and Pyralid.

Arthur also had a Ghost moth emerge in his garden on 23 June. It wandered over the lawn looking like a caterpillar with short, white wings! It was looking for somewhere to hang to expand it's wings, it tried to climb small grass stems but looked very vulnerable, with birds around, so it was put on an Iris stem where it soon settled and within twenty minutes it had fully expanded it's wings.

Location: Minsmere. Recorder: Charlotte Anderson

Charlotte is responsible for moth-trapping at Minsmere nature reserve where they operate an MV trap next to the volunteer's chalet. The area includes a variety of habitats including mature deciduous woodland, acid grassland, scrub and reedbed. She has had the following 'notables' ; Alder, Broad-bordered Bee Hawk, Cream-spot Tiger, Dog's Tooth, Flame Wainscot, Great Oak Beauty, Great Prominent, Matthew's Wainscot, Pale Tussock, Peacock, Plain Wave, White Colon and Yellow Belle.

The Broad-Bordered Bee Hawk-moths have been recorded several times feeding on rhododendron and both the Wainscots have been seen in good numbers. There are also large numbers of Cinnabars, Heart and Darts, Quakers, Early Greys and Hebrew Characters. Also seen have been Poplar, Eyed and Elephant Hawk-moths.

Location: Ipswich. Recorders: Steve Noye and Neil Sherman.

Steve and Neil run an actinic Heath trap in Steve's garden at Ipswich Golf Club. This year they have acquired an impressive list of some 125 species of macro moth. A selection of these includes Alder, Barred Red, Bird's Wing, Brindled White-spot, Buff Tip, Chocolate Tip, Dark Sword-grass, Early, Foxglove Pug, Green Silver-lines, Knot Grass, Lime hawk, Lychnis, Maiden's Blush, March, Miller, Mullein, Nutmeg, Ocherous Pug, Peacock Pine Hawk, Privet Hawk, Scorched Wing, Seraphim, Small Phoenix, Spinach, Spring Usher, Sycamore, Water Carpet, Winter and Yellow Shell. They also had a Bordered Straw and a long list of unidentified micros.

Many thanks to all those people who have sent me their records, I certainly enjoyed reading them and hope to be able to visit some of the sites this summer to find out how they were produced. Please put your pens to paper and let me include your observations for next month's newsletter: I hope to be able to include all records next month to give a more complete picture of what we are getting.

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All eyes to the cloth! Suffolk Moth Group at Hollesley Common.