

Suffolk Moth Group Newsletter

Issue 33 - Summer 2004

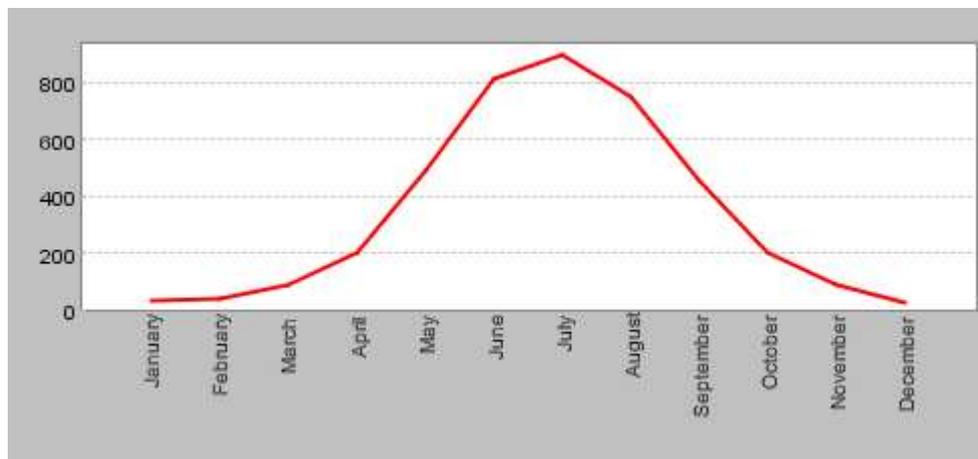
Edited by Tony Prichard

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Editorial

Initial concerns at the start of the season that moth numbers this year appeared a bit low and that this season would be rather poor in comparison to last year have proved largely unfounded. June and July have proved particularly productive in terms of recording some of the county's more localised species and migrants. Although we have now started the long slide towards the hornet season and winter there is still plenty of interest to see and record so keep the traps running. The graph below shows the number of species recorded as adults per month from the moth database - quite a few things to see right up to December.



Species recorded per month (adults only)

A couple of species that seem to have fared particularly well this year are Least Carpet and Kent Black Arches. Least Carpet is a species that I'd expect to record one or twice a year in the back garden but has so far appeared seven times this year with 2-3 individuals in the trap when present. This picture appears to fit in with other recorders' experiences with reports of increased numbers at known sites and records from new areas. Kent Black Arches tends to be found mainly in coastal habitats but this year has been recorded at sites further inland as well as in areas where it is known to occur.

A plume moth that is spreading nationally and that appears to have recently arrived in Suffolk is *Euleioptilus carphodactyla*. This moth has been recorded this year from Minsmere (Sean Clancy), Eye (Paul Kitchener), Market Weston Fen (SMG) and Ipswich Golf Course (Neil Sherman). Well worth looking out for as I suspect this species will become more widespread with time (see Paul Kitchener's picture in his Eye report).

Ethmia bipunctella has appeared at several sites this year. It has been recorded most years at Landguard in the past but this year it has appeared at several sites along the coast (Reydon, Alan Cornish; Aldeburgh, SMG; Bawdsey, M Deans; Landguard, N Odin & M Marsh; Dunwich Heath, M Cornish; Orfordness, J Askins) and also further inland (Eye, P Kitchener and Rendham, M Deans). I had a search for the larvae on Viper's Bugloss at Landguard and Shingle Street but failed to find any signs, apart from a single Painted Lady larva.

The *Cynaeda dentalis* colony seems to be doing reasonably well this year, at least in comparison with last year. The foodplant, Viper's Bugloss, has done well this year and I managed to count at least fifty *C. dentalis* cocoons when I checked the plants during June.

The English names given to some of the moths by the Victorians have a certain character and often capture the essence of a certain aspect of the moth's appearance. However, some of the names we now use replaced earlier names so I'll finish with a puzzler - any ideas what is the current name for moth that used to be called Goose Egg?

The next issue of the newsletter is scheduled for around the end of October.

***Coleophora fuscicornis* in Suffolk - Tony Prichard**

At the group's indoor meeting Brian Goodey gave an interesting in-depth talk on Essex's remaining endemic moth species, *Coleophora fuscicornis*, detailing habitat requirements, life history and field signs. As the moth is present in Essex at sites just to the south of the Stour it seemed quite reasonable that the moth could easily have made its way across the river and into Suffolk. The only problem would seem to be the relative lack of suitable habitat in Suffolk - rough grassy areas with the foodplant, Smooth Tare, normally close to the coast.

Brian looked at a couple of sites in Suffolk in early June, one north of Shotley that turned out not to be suitable and one in Felixstowe where there was plenty of the foodplant but no *C. fuscicornis* was found. I counted myself lucky when I managed to sweep one adult at Erwarton Bay on the 6th June 2004. The

identity was confirmed by Brian and the moth had the distinctive orange eye lashes. Further visits to the Felixstowe area and Shingle Street by myself both proved negative, although I may have been a bit on the late side when I visited Shingle Street. A search for cases at the Erwarton site on the 26th June unfortunately did not turn up any, their presence would have been useful to lessen the possibility that the adult I had caught was only a transient.

Many thanks to Brian for his help in locating this species and confirmation of identity. Brian did point out at the time that with this species now occurring in Suffolk Essex has now lost their last claim to an endemic species. Will they return the favour?

***Cameraria ohridella*, Horse Chestnut Leaf Miner, arrives in Suffolk - Tony Prichard**

In the Summer 2002 issue of the newsletter I did a short note on this species mentioning its rapid progress across Europe and it only being a matter of time before it arrived in this country. By the time I was writing the Moth Notes 2002 for the SNS Transactions the species had made it across the Channel and mines had been found in London. In the SNS Moth Notes I predicted it would only be a few years before this species appeared in Suffolk. I was possibly a bit cautious in my prediction as the species has taken under two years to reach the county.

Neil Sherman made the initial discovery at the Ipswich Golf Club car park on the 5th August. It appears that this species may be hitching rides on cars and trains and this might help explain its rapid spread. Neil mentioned that the car park at the IGC has plenty of visitors from the London area, so it would fit in with the hitch-hiking idea. A record by Neil and Graham Bull from Ramsey Wood on the 7th August possibly doesn't fit so well with this idea - the wood is set a few hundred yards away the main road. Lee Gregory found the first mines for West Suffolk at Great Livermere on the 9th August. Darren Underwood also recorded the species at Long Melford on the 12th August.

Matthew Deans has since found the mines at Bawdsey and I found some at Melton while on the way to the SMG Orfordness trip. Rob Parker has reported that some trees he's checked at Bury St Edmunds have all proved negative and I had no luck with some at Ixworth. So it would appear that it's not everywhere at the moment but it won't be long before it is. Well worth checking out the horse-chestnuts in your area, especially if they are near a major road or railway line. I'd be interested in hearing the results both positive and negative.



Cameraria ohridella © Lee Gregory



Cameraria ohridella © Darren Underwood

Dissection Workshop - Tony Prichard

In the last newsletter I mentioned that we were hoping to organise a dissection workshop this autumn. This has now been arranged and the workshop will take place at Ipswich Museum on Saturday 20th November 2004 from 1pm to 4.30pm. Jon Clifton is kindly offering his services to lead the event and give practical demonstrations on how to dissect moths. Moth dissection is needed to confirm the identity of a few of the macro-moths and a larger number of the micro-lepidoptera so it's a useful skill to be

familiar with.

Jon previously ran a dissection workshop for the group a few years ago but technology has moved on since then. We intend having a television screen hooked up to the microscope so that people can see what is going on without having to continually shuffle round in turn looking down the microscope. The plan is for Jon to run through two or three dissections of macros and then there should be the opportunity for people to have a go themselves. If you intend coming along then please book a place with myself as there may be a limit on numbers if this proves a very popular event. If anyone coming along has a dissecting microscope or other pieces of dissecting equipment and doesn't mind sharing then this would be very useful. Also if you have any moths that require confirmation by dissection then please bring them along (Grey/Dark Daggers, Ear Moth spp., worn Pugs, Marbled Minor spp.)

Clearwing Hunting 2004 - Lee Gregory

I purchased a set of Clearwing pheromones in 2001 from Andrew Collins as advertised in *Atropos*. As I had only seen Hornet Clearwing before that had been bred by Neil Sherman, I thought this would be a good way of seeing some other species. After initial disappointment with the pheromones in Suffolk I tried further afield including Dorset, Anglesey, Kent and other areas with better luck at known sites and also finding new sites for several species.

In 2003 gaining more confidence and experience in locating likely sites for clearwings I found Orange-tailed and Six-belted Clearwings in Cambridgeshire and this spurred me on to look again in Suffolk in 2004.

On 13th June with Paul Bryant and Matthew Deans, we managed to attract Red-tipped Clearwing to a combination of pheromones at Hengrave on the River Lark. We cannot take the credit for finding this species at this site as Adrian Parr recorded it here in 2003.

On the 22nd June with Paul Bryant we attracted 10+ Orange-tailed Clearwings to pheromones hung on Wayfaring Trees between Barton Mills and Red Lodge along the A11- a new species for Suffolk. I found the Wayfaring Trees here in the spring when driving past and noticed the flowers. Wayfaring Tree is quite scarce in East Anglia and these were probably planted as landscaping plants when the road was made into a dual carriageway quite a few years back.



Orange-tailed Clearwing © Lee Gregory



Red-tipped Clearwing © Lee Gregory

On the 27th June with Graham Bull, Tony Prichard and Neil Sherman we attracted four Six-belted Clearwings to pheromones hung on Birds-foot Trefoil at Little Blakenham Chalk Pit. There are old records from for this species from Suffolk but this is the only recent one.



Six-belted Clearwing © Neil Sherman

This season Anglian Lepidopterists Supplies have been trialing a new single pheromone for Red-tipped Clearwing that works much better than using the three pheromone combination which has a very weak attraction. It will be interesting to see next season with the new pheromone if Red-tipped becomes the most common species.

Field reports - Tony Prichard

Moth Night - Lower Hollesley Common - 1st May 2004

This is becoming a reasonably well-recorded heathland site at the southern end of the Sandlings. A good selection of spring species were recorded amongst the 28 species attracted to the lights, with Great Prominent; Lunar Marbled Brown, Purple Thorn, Oak-tree Pug, Grey Pug, Scalloped Hook-tip and Barred Hook-tip being of interest. New site records were made of *Incurvaria masculella*, *Caloptilia robustella*, Shoulder Striped, Water Carpet and Sharp-angled Peacock.

SMG Moth Night - Market Weston Fen - 7th May 2004

This meeting was cancelled due to the heavy rain on the night.

SMG Moth Night - Clare Country Park - 14th May 2004

This country park lies in one of the under-recorded squares of the county, hence the group's visit to the site. Four MV lights were operated mainly along the disused railway line and near to the river. Not a terribly busy night although weather conditions were reasonably favourable. Fifteen new species for the site were made including; Scorched Carpet, Water Carpet, Sallow Kitten, Waved Umber and Small Waved Umber. An Orange Footman also put in an appearance a second record for the site following its initial recording in 2002.

SMG Daytime meeting - Dunwich Forest - 16th May 2004

A poorly attended event, just two people, and one of those was from out of the county! This was a meeting intended to search for White-spotted Pinion larvae. The only positive aspect was that we had a nice walk in the sun around the forest. No signs were found of any White-spotted Pinion larvae although some other larvae were found including; Winter Moth, Feathered Thorn, Mottled Umber, Brown-tail and Dun-bar

SMG Moth Night - Belton - 21st May 2004

A cold night to be travelling to the far north east of the county but this was a visit to another under-recorded area of the county. The meeting was being hosted by Keith Knight who took us to an area of sallow carr and young broad-leaved woodland that looked quite promising. Six MV lights were placed alongside the largely inaccessible wood in attempt to lure some moths out into the cold. Results were rather disappointing with only 17 species recorded but these were all new to the site (not too surprising as no recording appears to have been done here previously). Nothing too unusual amongst those species recorded but worth mentioning are Grey Birch, Lychnis and Grey Pug. Thanks to Keith Knight for organising this event.

BC Moth Night - Ickworth - 22nd May 2004 - National Moth Night

An even colder night than the previous. The group has fared well in previous years for National Moth Night in terms of favourable weather conditions but not this time. We sought shelter and hopefully slighter higher temperatures amongst one of the broad-leaved woods in the park. Silver-ground Carpet and Green Carpet seemed to be the only species coming to the lights and in low numbers. Neil Sherman with beating tray in hand managed to rustle up some larval records; March Moth, Feathered Thorn, Spring Usher, Dotted Border, Mottled Umber, Early Moth and Sprawler. A good idea of the cold temperatures can possibly be had from the fact that Neil knocked an adult Rustic Shoulder-knot from a bush onto his beating tray right next to the sheet light. It was so cold that the moth could not even be bothered flying the few feet to the sheet.

Poor weather conditions aside this location would appear to have some interesting habitats that will be worth further investigation. The park has good examples of parkland habitat where sheep are grazed with scattered mature oaks of substantial size. At various parts along the border of the park are a number of deciduous woods with some of them being graded 'ancient'. It would appear that there is no history of moth recording on the site so some interesting things could be lurking here awaiting to be discovered.

SMG Moth Night - Tattingstone - 28th May 2004

This was a joint event with the local SWT branch. One of their members has part ownership of some fields next to Alton Water that they have converted to a nature reserve, with a small piece of woodland, hedgerows and a couple of meadows. Numbers of species were a bit disappointing with 57 species recorded on the night with most notable being Maiden's Blush, Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet, Rivulet, Brindled White-spot, White-pinion Spotted, White and Buff Ermines, Shoulder-striped Wainscot, Poplar Grey and an abundance of Shears.

Moth Night - Tangham Valley - 29th May 2004

After the rather low number of species appearing at light on the preceding night we nearly didn't go out this night. Fortunately we did as this site didn't let us down and we had a very productive session. Six MV lights were placed in the wet woodland and heathland habitats. 122 species in total. A single Rosy Marbled was probably the moth of the night, this species is not too well known from this area of the county (although previously recorded at an SMG event at Staverton Thicks). Other species of interest included; *Cedestis subfasciella*, *Agonopterix ocellana*, *Carpatolechia proximella*, *Metendothenia atropunctana*, *Ancylis upupana*, *Epinotia rubiginosana*, *Orthopygia glaucinalis*, Dwarf Pug, Flame Carpet, Small Yellow Wave, Scorched Carpet, Grey Birch, Lobster Moth, Orange Footman, Cream-spot Tiger, Alder Moth and Clouded-bordered Brindle.

SMG Daytime meeting - Priestley Wood - 30th May 2004

Following the success of previous years larval searches this year's event was rather disappointing. Recent management within the wood has meant that suitable branches within the wood for beating for larvae were in short supply - a meagre fourteen species were recorded. As there's not too many species of larvae to list here they all are - March Moth, Winter Moth, Brindled Pug, Scarce Umber, Early Moth, Common Quaker, Twin-spotted Quaker, Copper Underwing and Dun-bar.

Moth Night - Barnhamcross Common - 30th May 2004

A site in the Brecks regularly visited by the group, this time we were looking particularly for False Mocha, which the group had recorded here previously on 18th May 2001. Even after several previous recording visits by the group we still managed to record 11 new species for the site from the total of 83 species. Birch Mocha and Maiden's Blush were recorded but no False Mocha. Species of note included Marbled White Spot (this seems to be appearing over most of the county at the moment), Clouded-bordered Brindle, Miller, Bird's Wing, Pale-shouldered Brocade, Orange Footman, Great Prominent, Broken-barred Carpet, Dwarf Pug, Shaded Pug and Grey Carpet.

Moth Night - Snape Warren - 2nd June 2004

This was a visit to a mainly heathland site that the RSPB has recently started to manage. The site has good areas of heather with scattered gorse and birch scrub. Six MV lights were operated at the north end of the site. A good selection of heathland and scrub species appeared during the night; *Neofaculta ericetella*, *Metendothenia atropunctana*, *Pempelia palumbella*, Fox Moth, Narrow-winged Pug, Grass Wave, Small Elephant Hawk-moth, Cream-spot Tiger, True Lover's Knot, White Colon and Bird's Wing. In all 71 species.

SMG Moth Night - Aldeburgh-Thorpeness - 4th June 2004

One of the regular sites for trapping by the group on the coast. We set up in the usual site next to the derelict cottage with six MV lights running. Fortunately no wind was blowing in this rather exposed site. A gradual progression of new moths to the light through the night brought the total up to 120 species. Following on from the Striped Hawk-moth at a previous visit the appearance of a single *Ethmia bipunctella* maintained the site's reputation as good for migrants. After the event it turned out that at the same time Alan Cornish was catching another *Ethmia bipunctella* in his trap up at Reydon. Some of the more interesting species recorded were *Glyphipterix thrasonella*, *Epiphyas postvittana*, *Bactra fufurana*, *Epiblema scutulana*, *Schoenobius gigantella*, *Phlyctaenia perlucidalis*, *Pempelia genistella*, *Euzophera cinerosella*, Netted Pug, Shaded Pug, Small Seraphim, Sharp-angled Peacock, Cream-spot Tiger, Water Ermine, White Colon, Dog's Tooth, Flame Wainscot, Small Clouded Brindle, Large Nutmeg, Silky Wainscot, Bordered Sallow, Cream-bordered Green Pea and Pinion-streaked Snout.

Moth Night - Hintlesham Wood - 5th June 2004

The RSPB acquired this wood earlier in the year and on hearing from the warden that it contained a reasonable stand of Small-leaved Lime we thought it would be a good idea to check for Pauper Pug. After a long trek carrying the gear, the lime trees were in the part of the wood furthest away from the parking, we set up four lights under the trees and two along the edge of the wood. Activity around the light was a bit slow but good enough to attract in a few Pauper Pug and a single Mocha. Surprisingly the lights along the edge of the wood were not all that productive. Other species of note from the total of 53 species included Poplar Lutestring, Cream Wave, Scorched Wing, Brindled White-spot, White-pinion Spotted, Lobster Moth and Small Fan-foot. The evening ended with another long trek laden down with the kit back to the cars.

SMG Moth Night - Wordwell - 11th June 2004

Although the group has visited the King's Forest several times before this event was a visit to a new part of the forest. Originally planned to cover Chalk Lane I had visited the Wordwell site earlier in the year and decided to re-locate as the habitat looked more promising than Chalk Lane. Conditions were favourable especially considering we were in the Brecks. Common Carpets and Wood Carpets provided some material for discussion when a few not so well-marked individuals came to light. Also of interest was the relatively high numbers of *Ethmia dodocea* that appeared in the traps. This species I'd normally expect to see in ones or twos but here we had over forty. We didn't fare particularly well on the Breckland specialities but we did manage Grey Carpet and Lunar Yellow Underwing. Some other species of interest were *Metzneria metzneriella*, *Scrobipalpa costella*, *Mompha ochraceella*, *Epinotia rubiginosana*, *Thisanotia chrysonuchella*, *Sitochroa verticalis*, *Nascia ciliaris*, *Dioryctria sylvestrella*,

Cream Wave, Royal Mantle, Beautiful Carpet, Fern, Pretty Chalk Carpet, Haworth's Pug, Shaded Pug, Pimpinel Pug, Barred Red, Lobster Moth, Four-dotted Footman, Orange Footman, Cream-spot Tiger, Clouded Buff, Dark Sword-grass, White Colon, Broom Moth, Bird's Wing, Large Nutmeg and Clouded-bordered Brindle. 159 species in total.

BC and SNS Moth Morning - Alder Carr Farm - 12th June 2004

This was a moth morning held as a joint meeting for the Suffolk Branch of Butterfly Conservation and the Suffolk Naturalists' Society. I've been trying a few moth mornings this year as a different means of attracting more people to come and see what moths are all about. Joan Hardingham had kindly agreed to host the event at her farm where there is a small piece of wet woodland and meadow. Some new faces appeared at the meeting but in terms of numbers it was not overly successful. Those who did turn up seemed to find it an interesting event. Seventy species were recorded in all, with Pinion-streaked Snout, Cream-bordered Green Pea, Champion and Ingrailed Clay probably being the most interesting.

Moth Night - Icknield Way - 12th June 2004

A return to the Brecks having only been there the previous night. The very optimistic amongst the group were hoping for Bordered Gothic whilst the slightly less optimistic were after False Mocha. As far as recording these species both groups were disappointed. 9 MV lights and two actinic lights were run along the track, the latter lower-powered lights were particularly aimed at trying to pull in any False Mocha. I gather that the habitat along this part of the Icknield Way is continuing to degrade and over the years has lost most of its Breck character with most of the track verges now seeming to consist mainly of rather long rank grass. In all 105 species were recorded on the night, including some species were normally associate with the Brecks - *Sitochroa verticalis* and Grey Carpet. Other species of note included *Metzneria metzneriella*, *Aethes beatricella*, *Epinotia demarniana*, *Cydia fagiglanda*, Clay Triple-lines, Four-dotted Footman, Orange Footman, Cream-spot Tiger, Clouded Buff, White Colon, Broom Moth.

SMG Moth Night - Maidscross Hill - 18th June 2004

This was a public event at this recently designated LNR. The event attracted a number of the public including one woman who had come along to see if it would help her moth phobia. Weather conditions were not favourable and only 43 species were recording including Satin Wave, Broom-tip, Clouded Buff, Lunar Yellow Underwing and White Colon

SMG Moth Night - Westleton Heath - 25th June 2004

The first of this year's visits to this heathland site owned by English Nature. Lights were operated on the heathland and next to an adjoining area of woodland. As dusk fell it turned out we were not the only ones on the heath that evening, a group hoping to see some Nightjars had arrived and fortunately the trap lights out on the heath didn't seem to disturb the birds. Conditions seemed fare initially but temperatures dropped on the heath as the evening went on with conditions being quite misty on the heathland areas by the end of the evening. In all 79 species were recorded, the localised micro *Monopis monachella* was the species of most note, closely followed by Shaded Fan-foot. Clouded Buff, a species more frequently seen in the Brecks, also appeared. Other species worthy of mention were *Platytes cerussella*, *Pempelia palumbella*, Lackey, Grass Emerald, Blotched Emerald, Lobster Moth, Four-dotted Footman, Purple Clay, Bird's Wing and Dotted Fan-foot

SMG Moth Night - Havergate - 2nd July 2004

This was the third visit made by the group to the island, which has areas of saltmarsh and lagoons. A breeze was blowing on the night and as this is an exposed site it was not looking very promising. Just to cheer us up a heavy shower on the boat trip over made sure we were thoroughly soaked. As we set up the traps at various positions on the island the wind continued to blow but fortunately without any further showers. These conditions continued through the night and we did not expect to find much in the trap in the morning. We were not disappointed. In all 16 species were recorded and these included a selection

knocked up during the Friday evening. Ground Lackey larvae were still present in low numbers on the saltmarsh, although it looked as though most of these had gone over. This site certainly has potential to produce substantially more species than this and it has just been unfortunate that the last two visits to the island have been made when the weather was not very favourable.

Moth Night - Ickworth Park - 3rd July 2004

A further visit to the same site we had used for National Moth Night. Amazing what a bit of warmth and change in season can do. 85 species (42 new site records) were recorded from the 8 lights with a few early hornets putting in an appearance at the odd trap. The best of the night's selection included *Ypsolopha vittella*, *Brachmia blandella*, *Scoparia basistrigalis*, Clouded Brindle, Slender Brindle, Mere Wainscot and Marbled White Spot.

SMG Moth Night - Newmarket - 9th July 2004

This was our second visit to this site in one of the county's under-recorded areas for moths. Last year's visit had suffered from persistent rain and conditions were not much improved for this visit. It was rather hard work to build up a list of 33 species, not helped by the sheet attracting 40 plus wasps. A wandering hedgehog came visiting the sheet - had it lost its way or been attracted by the moths? Most interesting amongst the few moths recorded were *Cydia fagiglanda*, Small Dotted Buff and Pale Mottled Willow and we did manage to clock up fourteen new species for the area.

Moth Night - Tangham Valley - 10th July 2004

After the poor results the preceding night there was some debate over whether it was worth going out on this evening as conditions did not appear that much different. In the end it was a good call to go out to this area of heathland and wet woodland amongst the conifer plantations of Rendlesham as 145 species were recorded at the lights. There were quite a few species of possible interest with *Opostega salaciella*, *Monochroa cytisella*, *Carpatolechia proximella*, *Brachmia blandella*, *Archips oporana*, *Piniphila bifasciana*, *Phlyctaenia perlucidalis*, *Dioryctria sylvestrella*, *Capperia britanniodactyla* (in a trap right next to some Wood Sage), Common Lutestring, Grass Emerald, Lesser Cream Wave, July Highflyer, Small Seraphim, Sharp-angled Peacock, Kent Black Arches, Purple Clay, Square-spotted Clay, Dingy Shears, Small Rufous, Rosy Marbled (previously recorded in this area at Staverton Thicks) and Shaded Fan-foot.

SMG Moth Night - Belton - 16th July 2004

This was the year's second visit to this site in a particularly under-recorded area of the county with Keith Knight again hosting the event. The evening was pleasantly warm and promised a good night's mothing. Nine MV lights were scattered along this rather linear site trying to cover as much of the habitat as possible. As we did the first trap round it was clear that this was going to be a good night as the species list rapidly built up, with each trap adding a good number of new species to the list. A Water Ermine that appeared probably should not have been that unexpected as the distribution of this moth has it occurring along most of the coastal regions and inland a distance along the Waveney Valley. Of the 175 species recorded by the end of the evening the following were of most note; *Caloptilia stigmatella*, *Anarsia spartiella*, *Aethes beatricella*, *Eudemis profundana*, *Epinotia cruciana*, *Epiblema foenella*, *Pediasia contaminella*, *Schoenobius gigantella*, *Ostrinia nubilalis*, Small Scallop, Slender Pug, Archer's Dart, Miller, Olive, Double Lobed, Fen Wainscot, Cream-bordered Green Pea, Oak Nycteoline and Herald. This meeting certainly went some way to putting the moths in this under-recorded area on the map. Thanks again to Keith for hosting the event.

Reports from Recorders around the county

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

Grundisburgh - Summer 2004 - Martin Hough

Last Summer was one of discovery- learning what the moth population of my new home was. This year has been more prosaic, filling in the gaps and looking out for changes. The weather has been rather less kind too, which made for frequent disappointments.

The Orange Moth (*Angerona prunaria*) made a welcome reappearance in the trap on several nights in July and, and on 21st July I was very pleased to see the Garden Tiger (*Arctia caja*), which had been missing last year. This once numerous species has suffered a serious decline- it is thought because of disease in the larval stages- so it is good to see that it is still holding on. It had been an even greater pleasure on the 7th June to find a single specimen of the Cream Spot Tiger (*Arctia villica Britannica*)- a species that I have never recorded before. I've said it before, you East Anglian types don't know how lucky you are.

One species that I did once manage to find back in Middlesex, much to the surprise of the County Recorder, was the Kent Black Arches (*Meganola albula*). And now one has turned up in my trap up here- on 27th July. According to the County List it is a notable species, although it has already been seen in nine Suffolk locations. Another rather local species, new to me, is the Scarce Tissue (*Rheumaptera cervinalis*), single specimens of which turned up on the 10th and 16th of May. I gather that this species did well this year in other locations, too.

One particular problem with recording in West London was that any migrants had to find their way all across the Metropolis if they were going to reach my humble garden. Consequently most never made it, and so it was that until now I had never seen a Humming-bird Hawk-moth (*Macroglossum stellatarum*). I am pleased to report that I have now broken my duck. On an ill-timed visit to the RSPB Bird reserve at Minsmere on the 17th of July, two friends and I were sheltering in the tea room from the aftermath of a thunderstorm, gazing gloomily at the bird feeders' patrons, when a Kamikazi Humming Bird Hawk came hurtling along through the steady rain, running the gauntlet of twenty or so hungry beaks. I am glad to say that it eluded all its predators, and disappeared into the foliage.

Mendlesham Green - the first half-year - Steve Woolnough

The garden trap was first used this year on the night of 16-17th March, running a 15w Actinic through the night. Only 3 species were recorded. Unsurprisingly, of the 13 moths trapped, majority were Common Quaker. The most productive night in March was that of the 17th.. Of the 9 species, single Water Carpet and Pine Beauty occurred, with Common Quaker again top-scoring with 38 individuals. The trap was run on 5 nights in the month, with a total of just 13 species recorded.

April began with an *Ypsolopha mucronella*, a scarce Spindle-feeder with a distinctive 'head down' resting posture, being found on the morning of the 1st. The maximum number of species on any one night was again 9, on the 12th, which included 21 Hebrew Characters and the last March Moth of the spring. A single Frosted Green on the 24th was good to see. 19 species were recorded in the 12 nights the trap was run during the month.

May saw the trap run on 21 nights, still using the Actinic. On the night of the 1st, a further *Ypsolopha mucronella* was found. Other highlights were a Poplar Kitten on the 10th, together with a Dark Sword-grass and the first Peppered Moth of the year. Puss Moth occurred on the 6th and again on the 27th, on both occasions resting on the outside of the box. A Scarce Tissue was found on the 30th. The top night was the 29th when 25 species were found, including a Buttoned Snout. A total of 79 species were recorded in the month.

In June, the weather was considered good enough on three of the 15 nights on which the trap was run, to use a 125w MV. Not surprisingly, these were the nights which produced most records, with 48 species on the 7th, 68 on the 14th, and 77 on the 29th. On the first of these dates, a Salt-marsh Plume (*Agdistis bennetii*) occurred. Although a recognised wanderer, this is still quite a distance from the coast for this sp. to be recorded. Another wanderer from the same night was a White-point. On the 14th, no less than 8 Privet Hawk-moths had managed squeeze themselves into the trap but there was still room

for a Bordered Straw. Another good record for that night was Cream-bordered Green Pea, and the same species. occurred when the MV was next used on the 29th, when a Rush Veneer (*Nomophila noctuella*) was also found. The same night also saw two stunning male Orange Moths.

However, it was not necessary to use the MV to collect good records. Actinic nights produced a Flame Wainscot and a very clean Netted Pug on 3-4th, the first Silver Y of the year on the following night, a Yarrow Pug on the 12th, and a Small Tabby (*Aglossa caprealis*) on the 28th. The highlight of the month, also using the Actinic, was from a very average night in terms of weather. Of the 20 spp. found on the morning of 26th June, the second Dark Sword-grass of the year was pleasing but I was very surprised to find under the boxes at the bottom of the trap a comatose Striped Hawk-moth. I was even more surprised when in the process of 'potting' it, it revived sufficiently to lay a small green egg on the pot lid! After photographing the moth, I therefore decided to make a home for it in a garden propagator, with suitable nectaring flowers and larval food-plants. Almost immediately, another two eggs were laid but nothing thereafter, and on the evening of the third day of captivity, I decided to give it its freedom. After the necessary warming-up 'wing-whirring', it took off to do a rapid darting patrol of the garden hedge, before disappearing into the night like a little helicopter.

The eggs were subsequently given to Tony Prichard but unfortunately proved to be infertile and collapsed after a few days. However, finding a Striped Hawk so far inland was a great record, and helped bring the number of species recorded in June to a total of 149.

Ipswich Golf Club - April to May 2004 - Neil Sherman

April was, like March another indifferent month for moth recording at the golf club. A mixture of showers, cold nights and low numbers of moths only resulted in a species total of 35, which was lower than the count for March.

A few things of possible note for the site seen included Shoulder stripe (only one record on the 14th). Frosted Green first appeared on the 14th and peaked at 13 individuals on the next day. Lunar Marbled Brown appeared at singletons on 3 occasions, but numbers may pick up in May (they didn't - none were seen!). Brindled Beauty also appeared as singletons, but on 4 occasions. Moths that were more abundant included Brindled Pug (peak of 35 on the 14th!) and Great Prominent (which first appeared on the 22nd with 8+ most nights after that). A single Dotted Border was trapped on the 15th - not the latest record as it has been seen in the third week of April here in the past. Other odd records of note were Purple Thorn (2 records at the end of the month), Muslin (22nd) and Oak-tree Pug (on the 27th). Generally, the numbers of the commoner species (especially the *Orthosias*) were disappointing.

A few micros were seen with *Alucita hexadactyla* being noted on 2 occasions along with a single *Mompha sturnipennella* (on the 22nd). Hopefully moth numbers will increase next month!

Unfortunately, at the beginning of May conditions for mothing did not improve greatly, with more cool, cloudless nights. The traps only caught 25 species (mostly as singletons) on the night of the 2nd, with Purple Thorn (last of the first brood), V-Pug and Oak-tree Pug being of possible note.

I then went away on holiday to Poland for 9 days - on my return I found that things had improved dramatically! Sunny days followed by warm nights caused a mass emergence of moths resulting in 50+ species being trapped on 3 of the 4 nights when lights were ran in the second half of the month (best night the 31st with 71 species). The total for the month (with daytime sightings and a few larval records) was 128, 10 better than last year, but not as high as 2002 when I recorded 150 species. Within this total, the following records were of possible note: Figure of 80 (first for year on the 19th), Broom-tip (again a 2004 first on the 19th), Seraphim (3 on 2 dates), Least Black Arches (5 on 3 dates, maximum 3 on 19th), Puss Moth (on the 19th - new site record), Lime Hawk-moth (5), Rivulet (regular singletons), Maiden's Blush (common), Bird's Wing (first for year on the 31st) and Maple Prominent (31st).



Puss Moth © Neil Sherman

The moth that was of most interest during May was the Orange Footman, which appeared in incredible numbers. There were 33 on the 17th, but this was followed by a staggering total of 88 on the 19th! Numbers dwindled off at the end of the month, with 20 on the 31st. This species seems to be going from strength to strength in Suffolk at the present time.

Traditionally, micros start to pick up in May, but most of the interesting ones were all seen right at the end of the month (31st). They were *Triaxomera parasitella*, *Monopis weaverella*, *Plutella porrectella* (second record), *Epiphyas postvittana* (2 - second site record), *Cochylis nana* (2), *Ptycholoma lecheana* and *Myelois circumvoluta*.

The most interesting daytime observation this month was a White Colon (on the 27th - a new site record), found underneath the door of an outdoor storeroom! Another strange discovery was a Brick caterpillar inside one of the moth traps on the 20th - are larvae attracted to light as well? A more normal observation were 2 caterpillars of the Lesser-spotted Pinion, found by searching Elm for their 'tents' - 2 leaves spun together with silk that they hide in during the day.

Ipswich Golf Club - June 2004 - Neil Sherman

June 2004 was a month of highs and lows in moth recording - initially the first part of the month was about average, with some warm nights but also some cold ones, resulting in 60+ moth species appearing each time the traps were run. Then, there was a fantastic period of warm humid nights from the 7th through to the 16th, when the average total of species appearing was 100+. This culminated on the night of the 16th, when 140 species were caught in the traps; up till that date the best ever total for one night in June here. Some interesting species were seen that night (more later). Then followed a period of wind and much needed rain, when no trapping was undertaken. For the last few days of the month conditions improved again, with traps being run on 3 more occasions. On the 29th, the last trapping night for the month the June record was broken again. 159 species were caught (with a few more still to be confirmed.).

The final moth total for June was 355, the best June in the 10 years of recording at the golf club. Within this large total, there were many records of possible interest. Macros included the following (in taxonomic order). Gold Swift (3 on the 14th, 3 on the 15th which included a male, all other records being female, 1 on the 16th and 3 on the 28th). Fox Moth (all records of females, 2 on the 7th followed by 3 on the 8th). Festoon (now annual at this site with 3 on the 7th, 1 on the 8th, 14th, 16th, 29th). Peach Blossom (2 on the 14th were the first for the year followed by one on the 16th, 2 on 28th and 3 on the 29th). Blotched Emerald (on the 13th, 14th, 3 on the 15th and 16th - a welcome return after a poor year in 2002 and a complete absence in 2003). Clay Triple-lines (a male on the 15th was the first for the site). Tawny Wave (6th, 3 on the 7th and 1 on the 8th - the most number of first brood I have seen at this site). Least Carpet (first for year, 27th). Spinach (14th - typically one record a year), Small Waved Umber (second site record on the 8th). Shaded Pug (one on the 8th). Sloe Pug (14th and 16th), Sharp-angled Peacock (on the 8th, 16th and 28th - first records for the site). V-moth (27th, in actinic trap, first record since 1997). Lilac Beauty (28th), Grass Wave (a female on the 7th trapped up on the

heathland - 3rd record). Eyed Hawk-moth (8th and 2 on the 29th). Small Elephant Hawk-moth (7th and 2 on the 8th). Poplar Kitten (2 - on the 7th plus another on 16th a new species for the site does appear to be increasing in Suffolk at the moment with more records). Orange Footman (a total of 75 for the month, seen every trapping session). Dark Sword-grass (2 on the 13th). Grey Arches (on the 14th and 15th). Alder Moth (2 records). Cream-bordered Green Pea (2 seen on the 8th, another 28th). Silver Y (first in the trap on the 13th). Herald (7th). Pinion-streaked Snout (2 on the 14th followed by 8 on the 15th trapping in the wet woodland, 2 more 28th). Shaded Fan-foot (first for the year 16th, on a typical date).



V-moth © Neil Sherman

Of the micros, the following were of note at the site. *Ectoedemia decentella* (2 on the 16th were the first site records - larvae mine Sycamore keys). *Lampronia corticella*, the Raspberry Moth (another first with records on the 15th and 16th). *Nemapogon clematella* (2 on the 6th followed by another on the 16th, yet another new species). *Monopis obviella* (on the 6th with 2 more on the 16th). *Caloptilia populetorum* (now annual at this site after probable colonisation a few years ago - plenty of food in the form of young Silver Birch here!). *Aspilapteryx tringipennella* (second record on the 3rd). *Cedestis gysseleliella* (one on the 14th). *Cedestis subfasciella* (4 on the 7th, trapping up on the heath - foodplant is Pine). *Argyresthia glaucinella* (29th - second record). *Eidophasia messingiella* (second record on the 14th, 2 more 29th). *Elachista argentella* (regular, records most trap nights). *Monochroa palustrella* (29th - second record). *Teleiodes vulgella* (28th and 29th - first records). *Stathmopoda pedella* (second site record, 16th, a moth with a very characteristic resting posture with its legs sticking out!). *Pseudargyrotoza conwagana* (2 on the 7th followed by others on the 8th and 29th the first site records). *Tortrix viridana*, the Green Oak Tortrix reached its peak again this year in mid June, with at least 450 on the 16th (only a rough estimate as I didn't have time to count them all, or the large number of wings around the traps left by the bats that had eaten loads!). *Celypha cespitana* (regular - a moth with a smelly name!). *Endothenia quadrimaculana* (6th - first site record). *Lobesia reliquana* (another first on the 8th). *Epinotia rubiginosana* (3 on the 7th followed by 2 more on the 8th). *Enarmonia formosana*, the Cherry Bark Tortrix (15th again another first for IGC). *Cydia coniferana* (7th, trapping on the heath, foodplant conifers - first for the site). A nice attractive moth (see picture). *Anania verbascalis* (14th again caught in a heathland area. Loads of the food plant, Wood Sage here). *Nascia cillialis* (second site record after the first last year on the 8th). *Nomophila noctuella* (one on the 14th, first for the year). *Capperia britanniodactyla* (3 in the trap on the 29th). *Adaina microdactyla* (second record 29th).



Cydia coniferana © Neil Sherman



Eidophasia messingiella © Neil Sherman

On top of all these interesting records, the 16th stands out as being a particularly good night with some even more notable moths. Among the 140 species were, starting with the micros: *Spatalistis bifasciana* (only the 3rd recent record for Suffolk), *Loquetia lobella* (first site record of this unusual gelechid), *Pexicopia malvella* (the Hollyhock Seed Moth, another first, seen again on the 28th) and *Gypsonoma oppressana* (2 individuals - yet another first). On the macro front: Goat Moth (4th record for the site, second of an adult moth - I have found 2 larvae here), Lobster Moth (first for the year, and the first away from its usual woodland haunts in the centre of the site) and a Red-necked Footman (probably a migrant individual although there is some discussion whether there may be a resident population at low density in Suffolk).



Goat moth © Neil Sherman



Spatalistis bifasciana © Neil Sherman

The sightings during the day around the site have also produced some good records. *Incurvaria pectinea* mines were seen, on Birch (10th). The last *Adela rufimitrella* of the year was noted on the 1st, sitting on Ladies Smock, the foodplant. Also in the same wet meadow, a worn Small Yellow Underwing was flushed on the 4th (a new site record). Hopefully as the foodplant is present in that area it will colonise in future years. Another adult moth record of interest was a Lunar Yellow Underwing (8th), seen in a bunker, unfortunately with one forewing missing!

From the middle of the month, feeding signs of Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth larvae have been evident on Honeysuckle all over the site, so this species seems to be doing well at the present time. Also doing well were some larvae of the Mullein Moth, although the Mulleins they were eating didn't look well at all!

Bungay - June and July - Leigh Davis

Leigh has sent in the following records for June and July.

June

Nymphula stagnata, *Eurrhyncha hortulata*, *Phlyctaenia coronata*, *Udea olivalis*, Small Blood-vein, Riband Wave, Common Carpet, Yellow Shell, Barred Straw, Common Marbled Carpet, Barred Yellow, Sandy Carpet, Scorched Carpet, Swallow-tailed Moth, Mottled Beauty, Small Elephant Hawk-moth, Cinnabar, White Ermine, Heart and Dart, The Flame, Flame Shoulder, Large Yellow Underwing, Lesser Yellow Underwing, Ingrailed Clay, Double Square-spot, Poplar Grey, Small Angle Shades, Dark Arches, Middle-barred Minor and Silver Y

July

Leopard Moth, *Scoparia ambigualis*, *Eudonia mercurella*, *Pleuroptya ruralis*, *Endotricha flammealis*, Single-dotted Wave, Small Scallop, Red Twin-spot Carpet, Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet, Magpie Moth, Clouded Border, Scalloped Oak, Early Thorn, Privet Hawk-moth, Common Footman, Ruby Tiger, Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing, Least Yellow Underwing, Nutmeg, Campion, Clay, Smoky Wainscot, Spectacle and Common Rustic

Eye Moths - mid-April to early August 2004 - Paul Kitchener

April

In my last report I commented on the low numbers of *Orthosias* this spring, but they did eventually pick up and, although slightly down on last year's totals, they were generally more numerous than in 2002. Scarce Tissue on the 27th was a first site record and only the sixth I've seen in Eye, the last being in 2000. Two Powdered Quakers this month and another two in May was a welcome improvement on the singleton last year. The Knot Grass is becoming increasingly frequent in Eye and the first appeared on the 27th.

May

Catches were unspectacular to say the least this month, with that on the 14th probably being one of the best. Two micros that night were firsts for the garden, *Scrobipalpa atriplicella* and *Mompha epilobiella* and there was also the first Sallow Kitten and Chocolate-tip of the year.

The few other noteworthy moths this month were *Phycitodes maritima* (fourth site record following the three last year), Spruce Carpet (first of five this year, singletons only in the previous two years), May Highflyer (second consecutive good year), Small Waved Umber (with others in June and August), Orange Footman (second site record on the 10th, first was in 2002) and the first of only six Silver Ys this year, on the 26th.

June

Things could only get better and, although the impression was one of fewer moths than expected, it did get better, with several new garden records and plenty of other interest.

Of the micros, *Ectoedemia decentella* on the 14th, *Monochroa palustrella* (first of three on the 8th), *Bryotropha terrella* (also on the 8th), *Endothenia quadrimaculana* (10th) and *Lathronympha strigana* (first of two on the 1st) were first records for the garden.



Monochroa palustrella © Paul Kitchener

Other micros notable for these parts were *Nemophora degeerella* (second garden record on the 8th, the first only last year), *Argyresthia cupressella* (seven individuals and first noticed last year), *Plutella porrectella* (two records, again only first recorded last year), *Lozotaenia forsterana* (only one of the year on the 13th), *Ancylis achatana*, *Cataclysta lemnata* (only the third in four years) and *Phlyctaenia perlucidalis* (the first of nine this year).

Macros new to the garden were Blotched Emerald on the 16th (I've not recorded this in Eye before), Brown Silver-line on the 14th (surprisingly a first as I used to see it quite regularly in my previous garden only ½ mile away), Bordered White on the 9th (I last recorded this moth in Eye in 1998), Small Elephant Hawk-moth (two individuals, the last records were five in 2000), Ingrailed Clay on the 10th (another moth that seems inexplicably scarce here, my last record in Eye being in 1999) and Light Brocade on the 1st (a regular in my old garden).

The list for June also includes White-spotted Pug (the first of three so far this year), Maple Prominent (two this year after a blank in 2003), Middle-barred Minor (evidently having another good year), Small Dotted Buff (recorded for third consecutive year), Marbled White Spot (only the third site record), Cream-bordered Green Pea (another good year, maximum five on the 14th), Green Silver-lines (third site record) and Buttoned Snout (now recorded in four of the last five years, with all but one in May/June).

Moths that have appeared in much lower numbers than previously at this time of year have been Flame (exceptional numbers last year though), Small Square-spot (three this year compared to nearly one hundred by August last year) and Burnished Brass (only seventeen so far, whereas I had seen over one hundred by the same time last year).

July

As we all know the first half of July was wet, cold and often very windy. The garden night time temperatures reached a low of 5°C on the 5th and the maximum daytime temperature on the 9th was only 17°C with wind and rain. It was on this latter day that my first Hummingbird Hawk-moth of the year chose to appear, briefly feeding at some trailing geraniums by the living room window. It seemed all rather bizarre, but it cheered me up no end.

Not surprisingly trapping was at a minimum for a while and just about everything of interest happened later in the month.

New micros for the garden were *Acleris hastiana* (two and the first seen in Eye since 2000), *Celypha rosaceana* (two delightfully pink individuals on the same night, 16th), *Rhyacionia buoliana* on the 23rd (also not seen in Eye since 2000), *Homoeosoma sinuella* on the 22nd (also first Eye record) and the attractive, small, pale yellow plume, *Euleioptilus carphodactyla* on the 31st.



Euleioptilus carphodactyla © Paul Kitchener

Other notable Eye micros have included *Brachmia blandella*, which was first noticed only last year. Seventeen were recorded in an eight day period, but the only gorse that I know of within a mile is a couple of scrubby bushes beside the town centre car park.

Helcystogramma rufescens (six records), *Enarmonia formosana* on the 15th (second site record), *Calamotropha paludella* (three records), *Nomophila noctuella* on the 28th (the only one so far this year), *Orthopygia glaucinalis* (three records after a blank last year) and *Nephoterix angustella* on the 14th (now seen in four of the last six years) were other species of note.

Macros seen this month included the following “firsts” for the garden: Lesser Cream Wave on the 14th (also a first record for Eye), Least Carpet (the first of five records this year on the 14th and also not seen in Eye before), Small Seraphim on the 16th (again I’ve not seen in Eye before), Sharp-angled Peacock (the first of five records on the 22nd and the first time I’ve seen this in Eye), Clouded Brindle on the 10th (the first record since the five in 2000), Large Ear on the 28th (gen. det.) and Oak Nycteoline on the 22nd (this moth was seen almost every year in my old garden).

There was plenty of other interest to be had on the macro front and an Oak Eggar on the 29th was only the second site record and only the fourth I’ve seen in Eye in nine years. A Common Lutestring on the 14th was the third garden record. Brown Scallop on the 11th (second site record), Dark Umber on the 19th (third site record and first since 2001), Dingy Shell (fourth record), Orange Moth on the 15th (second site record), White Satin (another very good season, being seen nearly every night), Round-winged Muslin on the 20th (third record), Six-striped Rustic (first of the autumn, 29th), Gothic (fourth record and apparently rationed to one a year), Southern Wainscot on the 15th (second site record), Olive (two), Double Lobed (two), Rosy Rustic (first of the autumn, 16th) and Herald (seven records this year, a typical number) were amongst the best of the rest.

Comments about numbers must be made for the following: Buff Arches are almost non-existent, with only two being seen. I’ve only seen eight Green Pugs so far (V-Pugs being far more numerous). Numbers of Clouded Silver have also been very low with a total of twenty-two this year. Compare this to the almost two hundred for June/July last year. Brown-tail continues to be present, albeit in small numbers, being seen every year since 2002, and only once in the six years prior to that. Cabbage Moth has only been seen once so far this year and last year was the best year ever for this species. Similarly for Common Wainscot, with nine records only so far. On the positive side it has been an exceptional summer for the Uncertain.

August

Hot and humid weather at the start of this month has helped to fill the trap to almost overflowing. Hoverflies have almost outnumbered moths on occasions but three unexpected species have appeared and were first records for the garden.

Ethmia bipunctella was represented by two individuals on the 1st and 2nd (this very attractive little moth has dropped in on several places within the county recently and not only on the coast). Dark Spectacle, also on the 1st and 2nd, were second and third site records.

The next to appear was a Webb's Wainscot on the 6th and the very warm and humid night of the 8th, when the temperature dropped to no lower than 20°C, produced a Gypsy Moth, a moth I hadn't seen anywhere before. Several Canary-shouldered Thorns and Square-spot Rustics from the 1st have shown that autumn is only just around the corner.



Ethmia bipunctella © Paul Kitchener



Gypsy Moth © Paul Kitchener

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The Newsletter

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



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