Suffolk Moth Group Newsletter

Issue 39 - Winter 2005-6

Edited by Tony Prichard

In this issue

Editorial

The season seems to be taking awfully long to get started at the moment. It seems only in the last week or so that spring has really got going. It's not far from the end of April and I have only been out in the field with the moth lights three times this year. Daytime field work has also been slow in getting going with plants and trees being rather slow to come into leaf. However, now that temperatures have improved slightly I am expecting a rush of moths as they try to make up for lost time.

For those with web access and an interest in field work I have been spending quite a bit of time working on a 'field tips' section on the web site. This gives helpful hints on things to look out for while in the field and can be filtered to show only field tips for the current time of year. It can accessed from the main page of the web site.

Butterfly Conservation recently announced that it had received four year funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to run a National Moth Recording Scheme. Some match funding still needs to be found but they appear confident of achieving this. However, do not get too excited yet as it appears that it will not be until later in the year before anything really gets under way. However, one can hope that

eventually this scheme will greatly improve our understanding of moth distribution and status on a national scale.

The field programme is now available and members are encouraged to come along to any meetings that they can make during the year. Proceedings are quite informal and an especially warm welcome is given to those bearing cakes.

The draft tortrix species accounts are currently being reviewed and updated on the web site for the Moths of Suffolk guide. These will soon be made generally available. Work has begun to some extent on all the other remaining micro-lepidoptera families not already covered. With the tortrix accounts completed the remaining families to be covered are not so large and should appear on a more regular basis. The maps and other data for the existing accounts will also be updated in the not too distant future with the 2005 records. Thanks to those who have helped review the accounts and provide photographs. There are still plenty of opportunities for people to fill in the gaps with photographs.

Indoor Meeting 18th March 2006 - Tony Prichard

This was a new venue for the moth group's indoor meeting and seemed a marked improvement over previous venues, with good parking, plenty of room and facilities and a nearby pub selling good food and beer. Attendance was good with over twenty people coming along, including colleagues from the Essex Moth Group. The day started off with my usual overview of recording in the county for the previous year, with some comments on new and notable species recorded in the county. Updates were given on the distribution and spread of some recent arrivals and species that appear to be currently expanding their ranges. A few examples of under-recorded species were given that would certainly be shown to be more widespread if recorders carried out more field work.

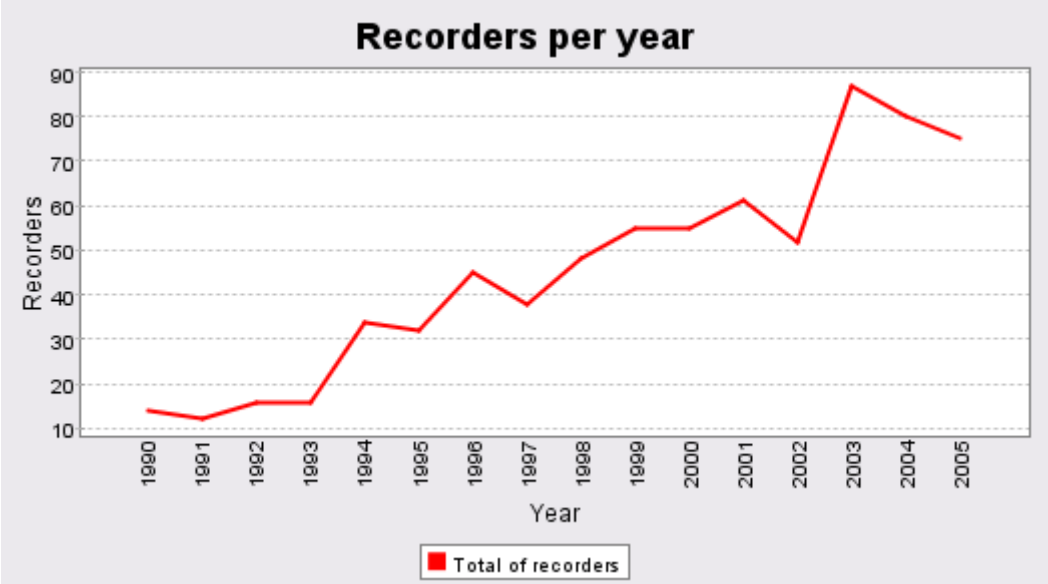

SMG Indoor meeting 2006 - © Tony Prichard

Neil Sherman gave a couple of talks, including some exotic moths from France, and Mike Swindells gave a talk on some interesting analysis of the results of comparing the running of actinic and MV trap in his garden. The afternoon was rounded off with an identification session of un-identified moths. Also on display were some moth exhibits provided by Lee Gregory, Joe Firmin, Neil Sherman and Matthew Deans.

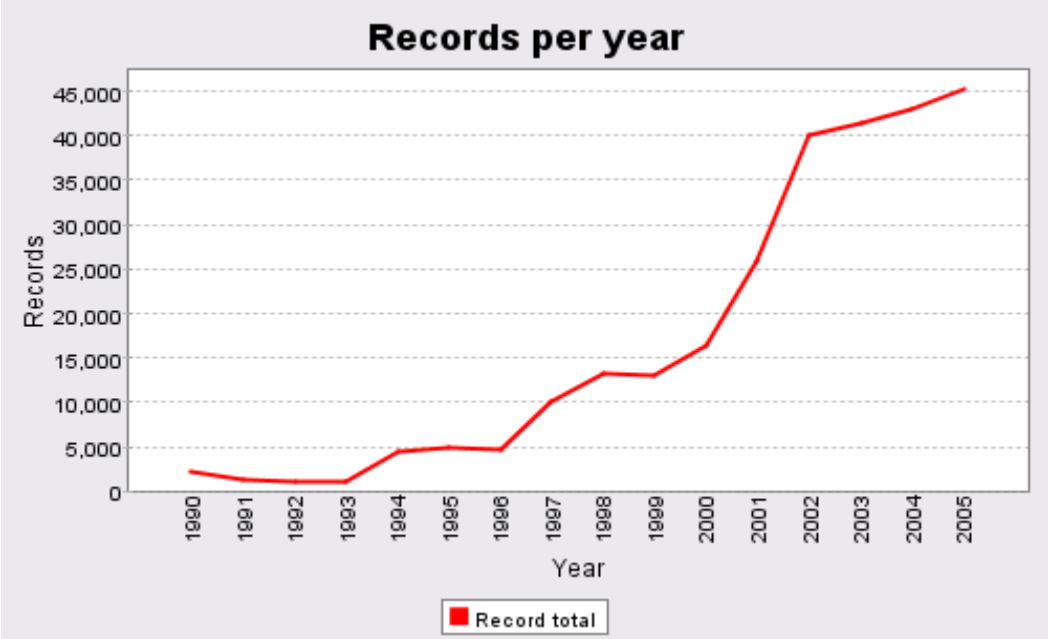
General feedback I have heard so far was that the meeting went well, the venue was good and that the identification session at the end was a useful reminder of what was to come in the season ahead. This identification section is likely to become a standard feature of the day so it would be useful if people could do some preparation over the year, taking photos of any unusual moths and un-identified moths.

I would like to thank those people who brought along exhibits and did some presentations during the day. It is these contributions that make the day interesting. I would also be interested to hear from people who came along how they thought the day went and if things could be improved.

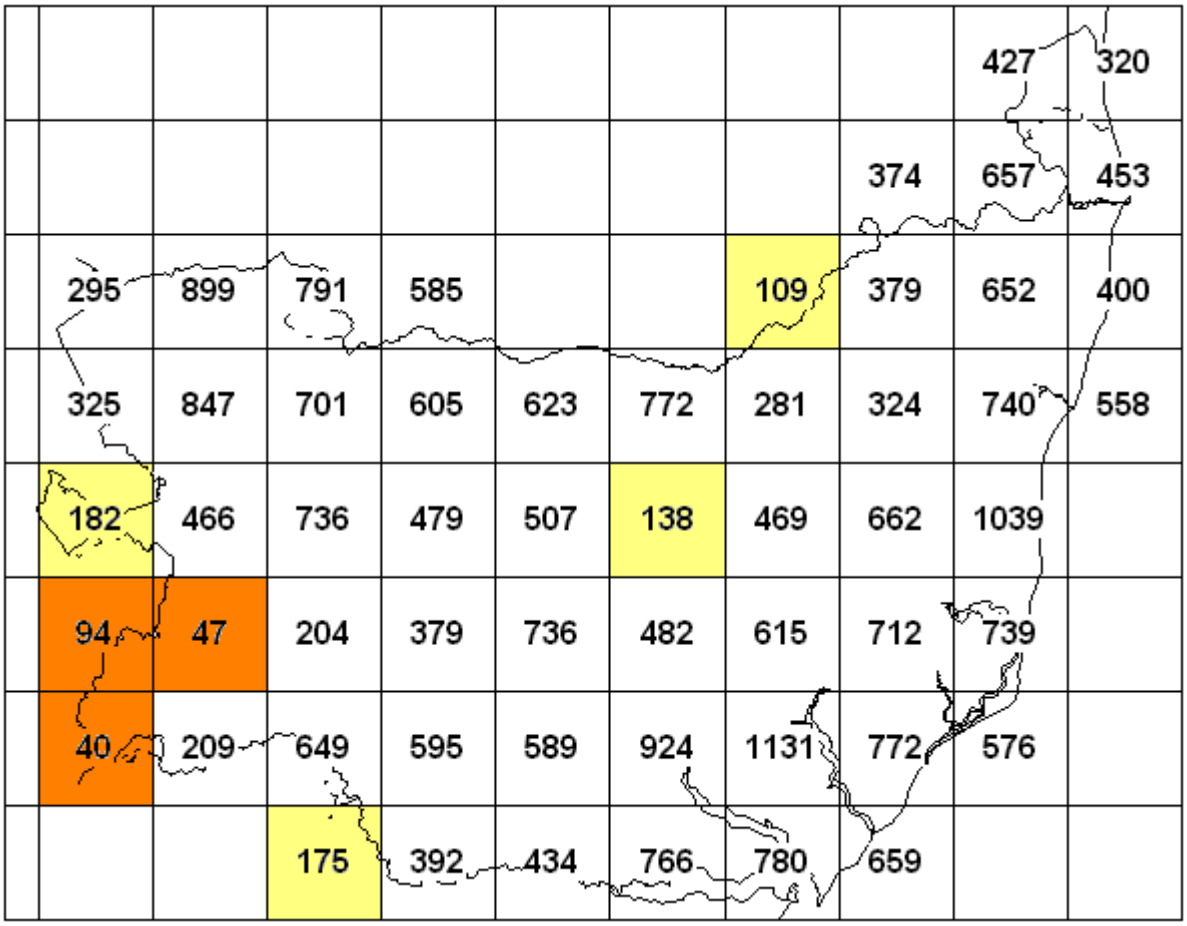
The following graphs and maps are a selection from the overview I gave during the morning session.



The number of recorders submitting records per year continues to grow, with occasional blips when we have a good Humming-bird Hawk-moth year, such as 2003.

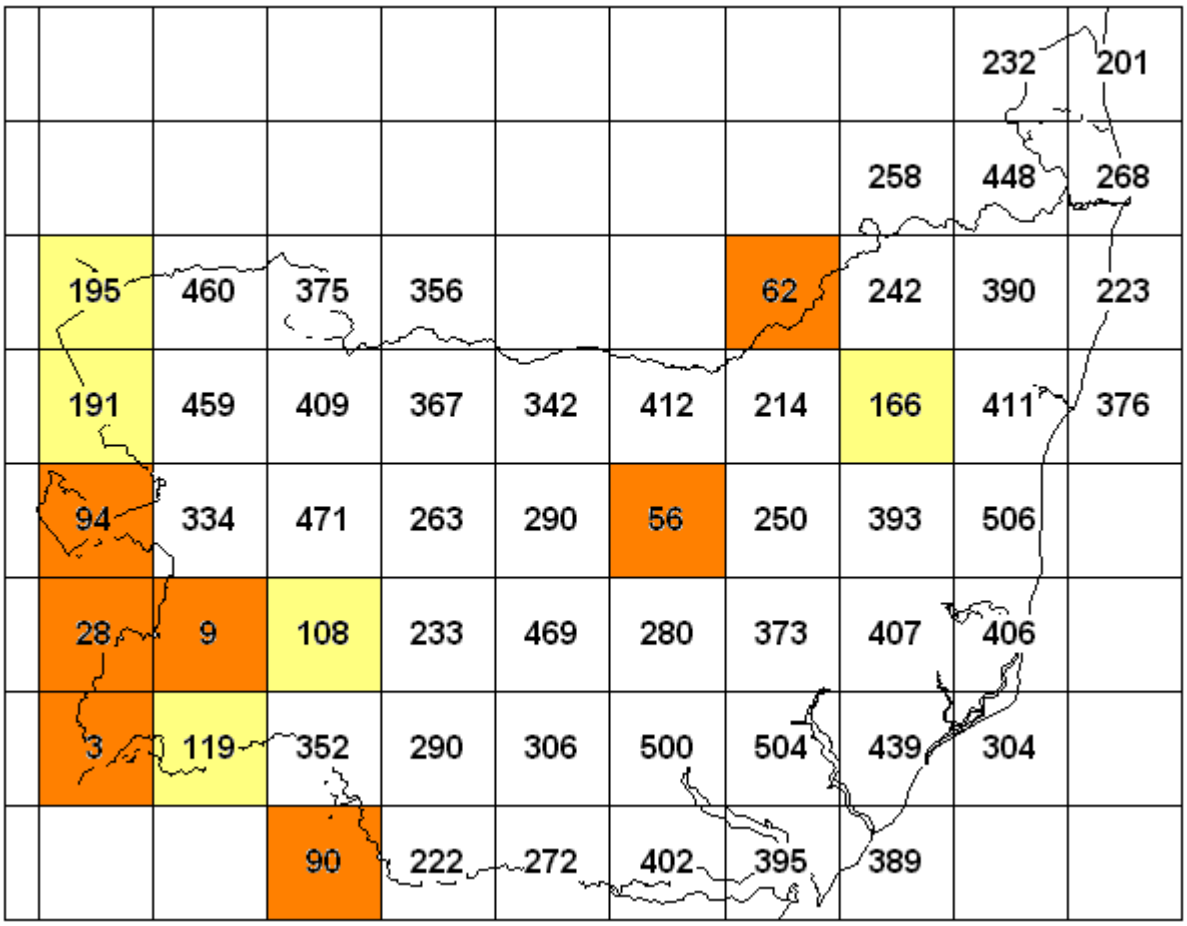


Similarly the number of records received each year continues to increase. For 2005 over 45,000 records have been received, varying in detail from annual lists to day by day records, and there are still some records to come in so hopefully we should exceed the 50,000 mark. Of this number there are a few recorders who produce very large datasets and the loss of their recording effort will have a noticeable impact on these figures. I was hoping to pass the quarter million record mark in the database with 2005 but it looks as though we will end up just below the 300,000 mark.



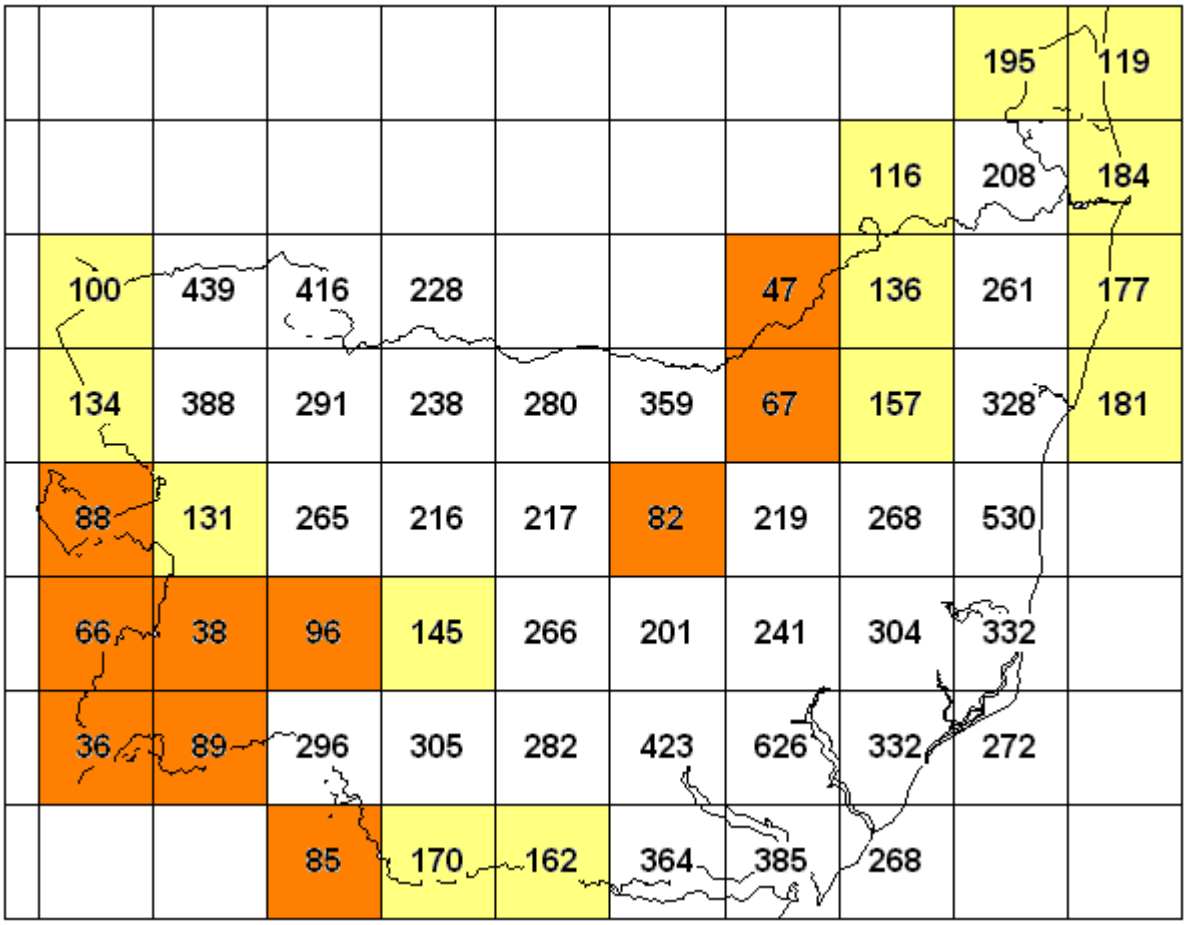
Species count per ten km at 2005

The map above shows the number of species recorded per ten km at the end of 2005 with some records still to be verified. The moth database now holds details of records from Morley's Final Catalogue and this has helped boost the species count per square. The downside is that Morley's data is 70 years or more old.



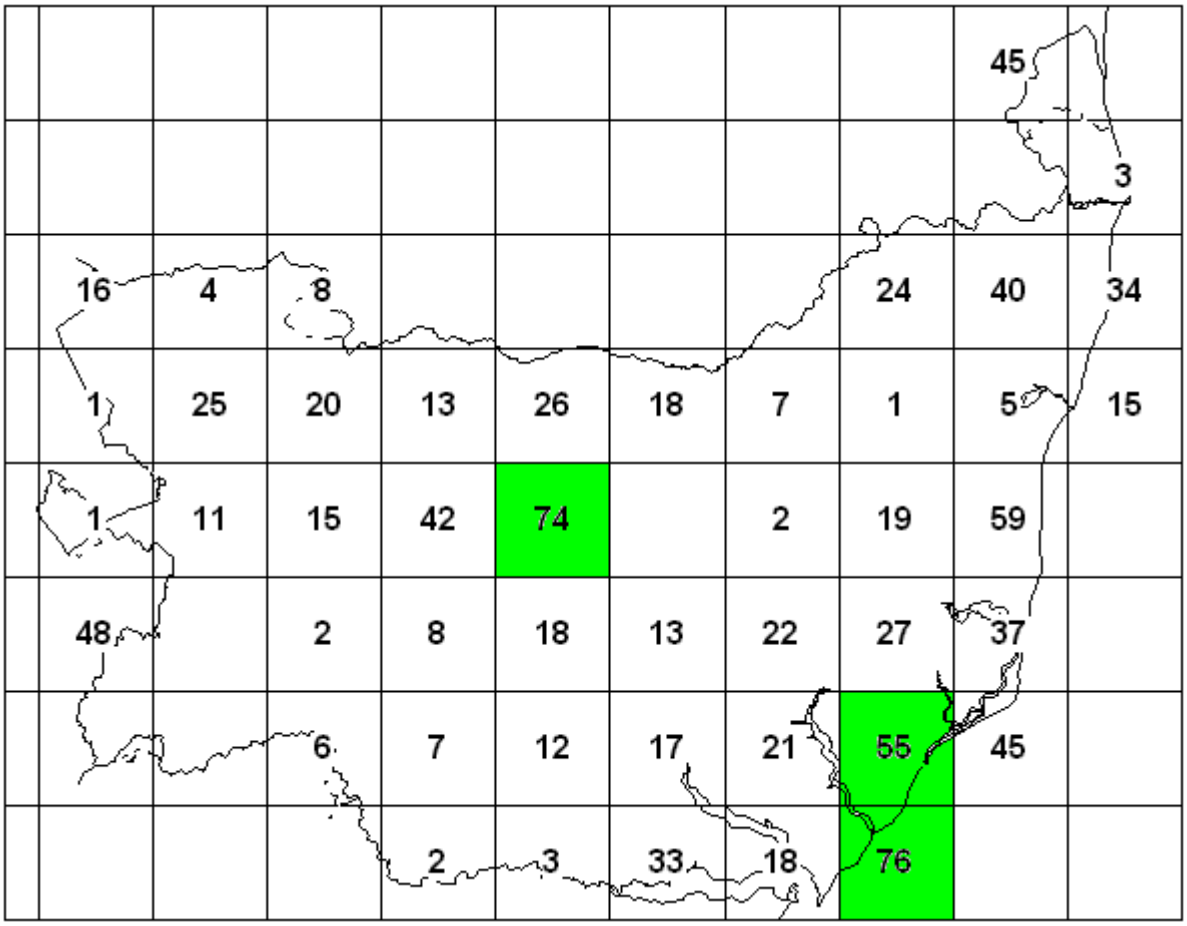
Macro-lepidotpera species count per ten km at 2005

The above map shows a similar species count per ten km square but including on macro-lepidoptera species.



Micro-lepidoptera species count per ten km at 2005

And again for the micro-lepidoptera.



Counts of new species per ten km in 2005

This map shows new species per ten km square for records in 2005, showing the benefit of recording even in well-recorded squares. The green squares show areas where more than 50 new species were added to the ten km species lists, with recording in those areas done by Nick Mason at Hollesley, Matthew Deans at Bawdsey and Steve Woolnough at Mendlesham Green.

A Thousand Species of Lepidoptera at Ipswich Golf Course - Neil Sherman

After 11 years of recording lepidoptera at the golf course, the record of a mine of *Stigmella viscerella* found on elm in October 2005 took me to the momentous target of 1000 species for the site!

During those 11 years, I have many memories of interesting sightings. I'll start with what I think are my most notable captures and discoveries. I've had a few species that were new to the county, most of these being found very recently. A Porter's Rustic (that managed to escape from its pot on the first attempt to box it) in 2004 was not the most colourful thing to look at (especially as it was tatty as well) but was interesting as it was a challenge to determine. Also in 2004 I discovered the first mines of *Cameraria ohridella* on Horse Chestnut trees in the golf club car park. I believe they got there by accidental transportation in members cars as there are some that travel up from the London area where they were first discovered in Britain. A real surprise greeted me in June 2005, an Olive Crescent sitting proudly on top of an egg tray upon opening one of the traps. This is a species that the moth group had been searching for in the woods south of Ipswich for a number of years with no luck. Not something I was expecting at the site at all, but that is part of the interest of moth trapping, you never know what you might catch. Other notable macros include species such as the Goat Moth – I've seen it as caterpillars and adult moths at a few locations around the site. I get regular sightings of both Tawny Wave and Shaded Fan-foot, species that I think are both possibly resident in the local area. Another probable resident is the Grass Wave, although I've only caught it 3 times so it may be wandering in from the neighbouring Purdis Heath. The Broad-bordered Bee Hawk-moth however is certainly resident – I find the caterpillars on Honeysuckle every year, but I've only seen the adult twice here. One of my favourite moth memories was the discovery of a Bedstraw Hawk-moth in a trap one morning – I think I let out a shout of joy when I saw it, luckily there was no-one around that early in the morning to hear it. Other complete surprises in the traps were the sightings of Dark Tussock (2005), Red-necked Footman (2001

+ 2004), Dotted Footman (2004 + 2005) and Sandhill Rustic (2001), all probably wanderers from somewhere else in Britain or maybe Europe. Following discovery of adult Lunar Yellow Underwing moths in the trap, good numbers of caterpillars were found out on the acid grassland areas of the course. Management of the site is now trying to increase this habitat so hopefully this BAP moth has a safe future here. Other BAP species seen occasionally are the Square-spotted Clay and the Buttoned Snout. Only the Buttoned Snout has been found breeding at the site so far – very few are seen at light but it is a regular sighting in the autumn on both blackberries and ivy blossom.

Lunar Yellow Underwing habitat at the golf course - © Neil Sherman

The status of some moths has changed over the years at the club, here are a few examples. The Cream Wave was regular in 1994, but has not been seen since. The Least carpet was first noted in 1998, it is now regular in good numbers most years. The Red-green Carpet has followed the same pattern – first noted in 2001, it is now annual. The most impressive increasing species has to be the Orange Footman – first noted in 1998 (2 records), it has increased to 80+ records a year. One moth that was noted a few times in the past that I thought had disappeared was the V-moth. It returned in 2004 and again in 2005 (both singletons) so hopefully it is still hanging on at the site.

What of the micros? There have certainly been a few of these of note mainly in recent years as my knowledge has improved. Helping to confirm that *Ectoedemia hannoverella* was a new species for the UK in 2002 was probably the most important discovery – the golf club was only the second site where it was found and provided some of the specimens of the moth that were dissected to confirm its identification. Another important record was the *Scythris potentilella* found in 2004. Confirmed by Jon Clifton, this was the first UK record since 1981. Of the many other species recorded here are a few others I've picked out: *Cydia amplana* (2005 – 3rd for Suffolk), *Pammene obscurana* (2005 – New to Suffolk – thanks to Jon Clifton for determining the record) and *Dioryctria schuetzeella* (second record for Suffolk in 2000, seen again in 2004).

Ectoedemia hannoverella - © Neil Sherman

Robinson moth trap - © Neil Sherman

Other trapping nights have been memorable for the numbers of moths seen. My highest night's species count at the moment is the 185 recorded on the 3/7/05. There have been many nights in recent years

when the species count has been over 150, possibly due to the better retention of moths in the Robinson traps and probably also due to better literature being available, so more species are being identified.

Other nights have been notable for the numbers of a single species present. Ones that come to mind include the 88 Orange Footman on the 19/5/04, the 120 Cinnabar moths on the 26/5/03 (this coincided with an increase in this moth across Suffolk), the 70 Yellow-line Quakers on the 28/10/04 and finally the 212 November moths (species not determined) on the 30/10/05.
Not only moths have been caught in the traps, other interesting and unusual wildlife has turned up. I've seen a Great Tit, a Wood Mouse, butterflies (including Purple Hairstreak on a number of occasions) and Dragonflies (e.g. Southern Hawkers). There have been some pretty impressive beetles too, with a female Stag beetle and several Sawyer beetles that have given me a fright when turning over the egg trays in the morning. In the summer I always get the occasional wasps and hornets, but one summer I came in to check the traps in the morning to find several thousand wasps all over one trap. I just had to gingerly lift the perspex off the top and let them disperse on their own. There were no moths left in the trap, they had eaten them all. I later found out that there was a nest entrance only a few metres away from the trap so I had probably caught most of the nest contents. The same situation has also happened with ants, with the trap being put out on top of the nest and they duly cleared the trap out for me.


Sawyer Beetle - © Neil Sherman


Cinnabar moths in Skinner trap - © Neil Sherman

My last and possibly funniest memory of trapping at the site must be when the moth group came over one night. We set up the sheet light on the edge of a wooded fairway, not far from a sprinkler. Tony Prichard did ask me whether it would come on during the night, to which I replied with confidence that it would not, being sure the sprinklers were off that night. Late in the night unfortunately I was proved wrong as they had been turned on without my knowledge. Don't worry, I said, the sprinkler wouldn't reach where we had set the sheet up, they only water the fairways. I was wrong again however as it spun round in a full circle, right over us - the sight of Tony holding his coat over the bulb to protect it from the deluge was very memorable!

Now I've reached the target of 1000 moths, you may think its time to ease back on recording at the site. I won't be however – I still need 29 species of moth for the site to make the list purely moths (I've had 29 species of butterflies at the club), so there's still work to do. It will still be interesting to watch the changes too, and you never know what will be waiting for you in the next trap – a Death's-head Hawk-moth would be very nice thank you!

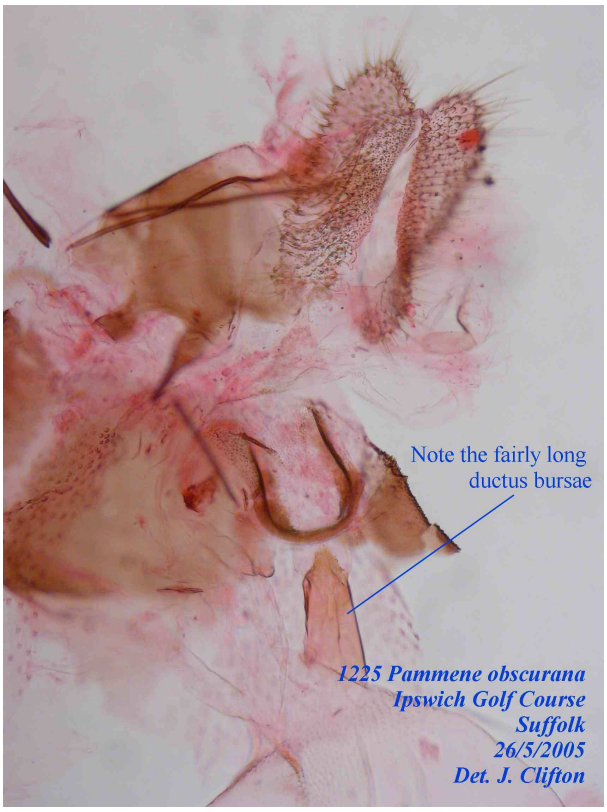
Dissection News - Jon Clifton

More *Cnephasia*'s have been handed onto me from the 2005 season, mainly from the Ipswich, Martlesham areas producing a male *Cnephasia pasiuana* from the latter site constituting its second record from here and several *Cnephasia genitalana* from Ipswich Golf Course, now seemingly well established at this site. Over the 2006 season *Cnephasia*'s will be collected for me from some of the

SMG field meetings by Neil Sherman and Tony Prichard to give a wider picture to this groups distribution in the county and to hopefully see the spread of *C. pasiuana* and *C. genitalana* that seems in full swing in Norfolk and in other east coast counties.

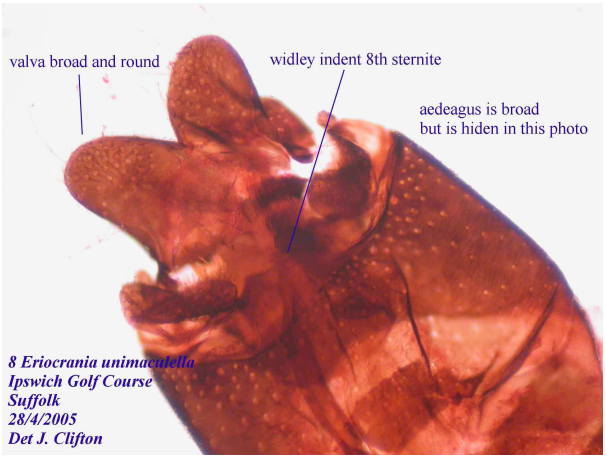
Many '*trifolii*' *Coleophora*'s have also been examined from Ipswich, Martlesham, Woolpit and Bawdsey to see the possibility of *C. frischella* occurring (not known from the eastern side of Britain) but alas only *C. alcyonipennella* have been discovered, this species seeming by far the commonest of this group by far (a few *C. mayrella* and *C. deauratella* where also determined)

Two records of *Pammene obscurana* where determined, both females, one from Ipswich Golf Course from the 26th May the other was one amongst a batch from Dunwich Heath labelled as "summer 2005", the former individual constituted the first record for Suffolk.

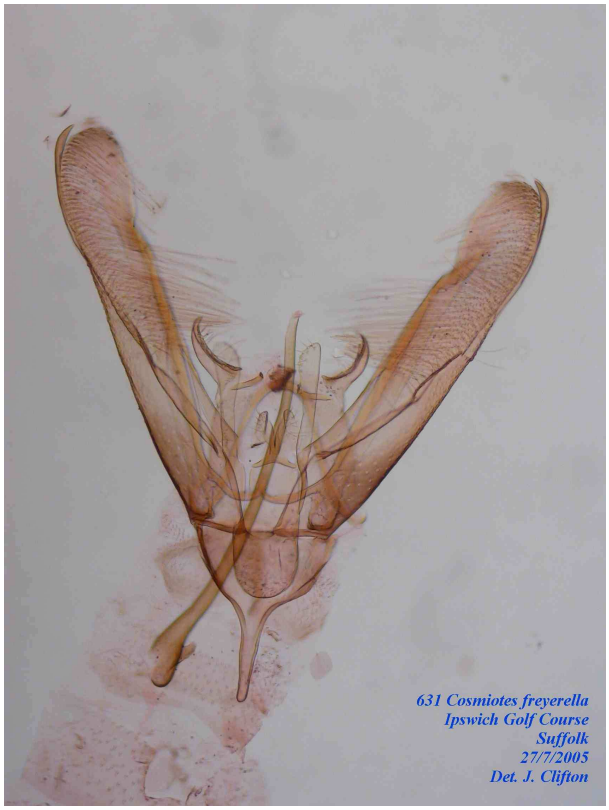


Pammene obscurana - © Jon Clifton

Of interest from Ipswich Golf Course where *Eriocrania unimaculella* from the 28th April which was the first in Suffolk "for many years", *Nematopogon metaxella* from the 22nd June being the 4th county record and *Cosmiotes freyerella* from the 27th July which is only the 2nd county record. With recent dissections now complete, seven new species where added to the ever growing species list from the golf course bringing it closer to that 1000 mark which Neil will detail in a separate article in this issue of the SMG newsletter.

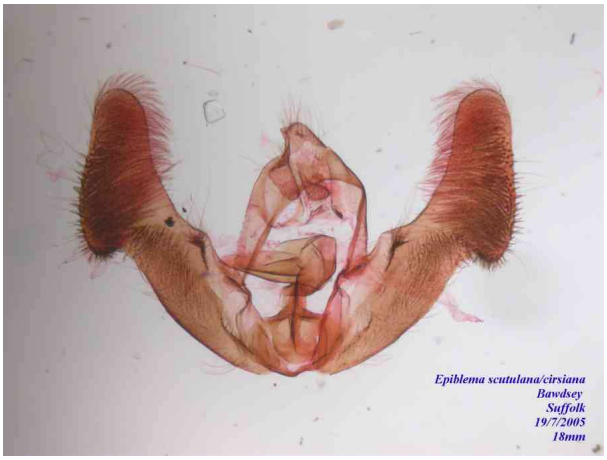


Eriocrania unimaculella - © Jon Clifton



Cosmiotes freyerella - © Jon Clifton

From Bawdsey a Haworth's Pug was confirmed, caught on the 1st July but separation of a male *Epiblema cirsiana* (as was a male from the above golf course) was more problematic and is something I have been working on for some time now with myself, Ian Smith, Dr Jozef Razowski and others. The female of these two don't usually cause much trouble but overlap in the shape of the male's valva results in a fair percentage not being determined. Work is still on going with specimens being bred and further work by Jozef Razowski.



Epiblema scutulana/cirsiana - © Jon Clifton

Of several requests for the 2006 season I would like to ask for any possible specimens of *Scoparia basistrigalis* to be sent to me for examination. This can be quite a confusion species and one I thought I had reordered until examination of the genitalia revealed it to be a large dark *Eudonia* truncicolella. This has also happened with other individuals once examined so do beware.

I would also like to request any of the '*albidella*' *Coleophora*'s (the white ones) and salix feeding *Phyllonorycter*'s.

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Web Sites

At the Essex Moth Group indoor meeting one of the presentations was given by Reg Fry covering the 'Early Stages' website (www.ukleps.org) that he looks after. This web site covers the non-adult stages of moths with a good selection of pictures of species, particularly macro-lepidoptera covered already. For some species there is a range of pictures from the egg through the various larval instars to the pupa, while for others there may be only a single photo of a late instar larva. For those with a penchant for field work this site should be extremely useful and with the it being an ongoing project will only get better with time. I am sure that Reg would like to receive any photographs of non-adult stages not already covered by the site.

I stumbled across the Magic (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside) web site while searching the web one day at www.magic.gov.uk. It introduces itself as ' The first web-based interactive map to bring together geographic information on key environmental schemes and designations in one place'. On the site you can browse maps around the country to a high level of detail supporting scales down to 1:101, although with the level of detail in the maps you probably wouldn't want to go past something around 1:2500. Maps can be overlaid with a limited number of habitat types (lowland grazing marsh, grassland, ancient woodland) or areas with statutary designations (e.g. nature reserves, environmentally sensitive areas, SSSIs, registered common land).

If you are looking for somewhere to go for a walk and do a bit of field work off the beaten track then the 'Country Walks and Rides' page at the DEFRA Rural Affairs web site may be of interest. Selecting a county from the starting page cwr.defra.gov.uk will produce a list of walks along with a dot map showing their rough location within the county. Most of the walks, for Suffolk at least, appear to be on farmland and for each walk a detailed route map in PDF format can be viewed or printed. In contrast to the recording effort in the county most of the walks are spread in a band from the south-west corner to the north-east corner, with the Brecks and Sandlings areas being poorly covered. That said there should be quite a few walks not too far away for most people in the county.

Stenoptilia annadactyla (Sutter 1987) resident in the Brecks area of Norfolk & Suffolk

Stenoptilia annadactyla has been found to be resident in the Brecks area of East Anglia by Colin Hart in 2005. The moths resemble *S. bipunctidactyla* (Scopoli 1763) closely, but the latter generally shows two small tufts of black scales in the termen of the second forewing lobe (in fresh examples). Whereas *S. annadactyla* generally has three rather broad tufts very close together and therefore can appear to show a continuous black line, especially if viewed against a pale background. The general appearance of *S. annadactyla* is more coarse and rough looking when compared to *S. bipunctidactyla*. The larvae are easier to tell apart than the adults. *S. annadactyla* is generally grey-green with no dorsal line, but sometimes a faint red dorsal line is present. The larva of *S. bipunctidactyla* is bright green with a prominent red dorsal line. *S. annadactyla* generally feeds on Small Scabious (*Scabiosa columbaria*), which is confined to the west of East Anglia, look for a wilted and greyish leaf in the crown of the plant in early May and there will generally be a larva mining the stem below. *S. bipunctidactyla* generally feeds on Field Scabious (*Knautia arvensis*) by mining the stem 5-30 cm above the ground, it is also slightly earlier in May. Second brood larvae of both species may be gathered by collecting flowers of the respective plants in July, examine the flowers for brown frass every day or two.

Worn examples can appear virtually identical and I would recommend any recorders with a possible specimen of either have them checked out first. They can be sent to me at the address below for genitalia examination.

Many thanks to Colin Hart for comments and input made from an earlier draft.

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Gibraltar Revisited

Its always nice to have a family member live somewhere hot and sunny and even better so if there is a chance to record a different fauna. My brother in-law has lived in La Linea just across the border to Gibraltar in southern Spain for 20 years and is somewhere we used to go on a regular basis although we had not visited Gibraltar for 16 years so was nice when we had a 40th birthday invite in early March 2006.

Staying in Gibraltar but eating and drinking in La Linea gave the best of both worlds. I checked with an old friend, Charlie Perez of the Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society and organised daily access to the bird ringing centres Robinson Moth Trap and also checked with our airline company Monarch Airlines that taking a sealed 12amp hour battery to run our 15w Heath Trap was no problem, we where then set for the week.

Gibraltar - © Jon Clifton

Gibraltar, Upper Rock - © Jon Clifton

Staying from the 3rd until the 10th March gave ample time to check out the upper rock, now a national nature reserve. Where else can you see moths, butterflies, birds, flowers and reptiles in such profusion along the southern Spanish coast nowadays when it is a mass of concrete apartments and tacky ex-pat English pubs?

Moth numbers where slightly down on previous years I was told by Charlie but we still recorded 25 species over the week with a UK flavour being of *Tortricodes alternella*, Silver Y, Turnip, Early Grey some of which where quite odd examples, Double-striped Pug, Small Blood-vein, Shuttle-shaped Dart, White-speck, Dark Sword-grass, Pale Mottled Willow and some wonderful examples of Pearly Underwing. On a more Spanish theme common species such as *Calophasia platyptera* known as Antirrhinum Brocade, *Cerastis faceta*, *Blepharita spinosa*, *Spudea ruticilla*, *Chemerina caliginearia*, *Idaea minuscularia*, *Campea honoraria*, the plume *Peurphorus olbiadactylus*, and the tortricids *Acroclita subsequana* and *Cacoecimorpha pronubana*.

Campea honoria, Gibraltar - © Jon Clifton

Spudea ruticilla, Gibraltar - © Jon Clifton

In the beautifully peaceful Botanical Gardens a Rothamstad Trap has just started to be operated. I went

through the catch on our last day with Charlie Perez and Keith Bensusan and decided to retain a rather odd example of a *Clepsis* initially resembling *consimilana*. Back at home it was dissected but I could not name it. It circulated a few high rank lepidopterists before it was named by Jozef Razowski as *Clepsis coriacana*, new to Europe and known from the Canary Islands and Morocco!

Botanical Gardens, Gibraltar - © Jon Clifton

Pine Processionary larvae, Gibraltar - © Jon Clifton

Gibraltar would be an ideal base for any student wanting to see the fauna and flora of this area, with British speaking locals, cheap beer, wine, fuel and the wonderful charm of the Victorian, Moroccan, Genoese and Moorish architecture and if Charlie Perez is asked nicely I'm sure access to the moth trap could be arranged at the bird ringing station meaning not only moths in the hand but birds too (now there is a story I won't go into in a moth newsletter!)

For further details Charlie Perez can be contacted on cperez@gonhs.org and further details of the Gibraltar Ornithological & Natural History Society can be obtained by going to their excellent web site at http://www.gonhs.org/ a well worthwhile membership costing only £15.00 per year and which produces high quality newsletters and an annual report on the natural history of the area.

Away from Gibraltar and inland of the concrete we visited Penny & John Hale who having been living just outside Casares, one of those magical white hillside towns, for over five years and have a good knowledge of the local flora and fauna and who run a moth trap. They also provide accommodation in a small casita, for details of an idyllic holiday go to the http://www.angleps.btinternet.co.uk/spain.htm

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Field reports - Tony Prichard

Moth nights have been particularly few so far this year due to the cold nights with only a couple of visits to previously unvisited woods.

1st April 2006 - Moth Night at Captain's Wood

This recently acquired Suffolk Wildlife Trust reserve was the first moth night of the year - surprising that we had not managed to get out in the field till April. A sunny day promised a good night for the moths, however a local heavy shower soaked the area just prior to dusk and probably dampened things down. With ancient oak pollards and birch trees next to an area of grassland we set up four lights. Ten species were recorded with Small Quaker, Yellow Horned, Clouded Drab, Oak Beauty, *Diurnea fagella*, Common Quaker, *Tortricodes alternella*, Chestnut, Red Chestnut and Hebrew Character. A *Caloptilia* resembling *C. betulicola* or *C. elongella* was also caught. Given the predominance of birch in the wood and lack of alder it would seem to point to *C. betulicola* as would the wing features. However, the distinctive white area around the hind leg trochanters is absent so this one will have to wait for confirmation by dissection.

7th April 2006 - Moth Night at Theberton Wood

This wood to the east of Saxmundham has a mixture of broad-leaved and coniferous trees. Current management is in the process of widening the rides meaning that at the moment it looks a bit like a bomb-site. The site appears to suffer from being in a bit of a cold pocket as there was a bit of a chill in the air on what was a relatively mild night elsewhere. Four lights were operated in the areas of broad-leaved woodland. Species recorded included Engrailed, Small Quaker, Chestnut, Twin-spotted Quaker, *Diurnea fagella*, Satellite, Common Quaker, Clouded Drab, Dotted Border, *Tortricodes alternella* and Oak Beauty.

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.

Mendlesham Green Records from 1st August 2005 - Steve Woolnough

With the weather finally deciding to improve after a cold and wet first part of the year, and an encouraging July, I was hopeful that the trend would continue.

It did not take long before two new garden species occurred, with Black Arches and *Grapholita janthinana* on 4th August. The third highest species total of the year took place on 10th August, where amongst the 96 recorded were no fewer than nine new records. These were *Catoptria falsella*, *Ditula angustiorana* (Red-barred Tortrix) , *Agapeta zoegana*, *Anarsia spartiella*, *Sophronia semicostella*, *Plutella xylostella* (Diamond-backed Moth), *Euzophera pinguis*, Shaded Broad-bar and Salten Ear. Other new garden records during the month were *Trachycera suavella* (15/8), *Agonopterix arenella* and *Archips podana* (Large Fruit-tree Tortrix) (20/8) and *Clepsis spectrana* (Cyclamen Tortrix) (29/8). There were also 10 Dusky Thorn on 20th, the largest number I have ever recorded on one night of a species which has apparently been declining in numbers over recent years. On the same date there was a late Buff-tip and, during the day, the only Humming-bird Hawk-moth of the year was observed, feeding on Buddleia. A good total of 162 species was recorded during the month.

September also started well, with 70 species being identified on 1st, which included seven new to the garden (*Cochylis atricapitana*, *Argyrotaenia ljungiana*, *Epiphyas postvittana* (Light Brown Apple Moth), *Acleris rhombana* (Rhomboid Tortrix), Maiden's Blush, Treble-bar and Old Lady). Of the commoner trap-fare, there were also 30 Brimstone Moth crammed in.

In terms of pure volume of moths, however, 5th September held the record for the year. Within the 52 species identified, which is itself a good total for the month, there were an estimated 200 Setaceous Hebrew Character, 200 Double Square-spot and 300 Common Wainscot plus 25 White-point.

Careful and ongoing checking of the Copper Underwings finally bore fruit and revealed a Svensson's on 3rd September and a second (or the same?) on the 5th. Another new garden record was Dusky-lemon Sallow on 14th (which also occurred on 7th October). On 24th September, with the weather a little uncertain, I ran an actinic rather than the usual MV, and although just 17 species were recorded, no less than five were new to the garden. These were Pink-barred Sallow, Grey Pine Carpet (also appeared on 29th), Autumnal Rustic, Brindled Green and Large Wainscot. Large Wainscot was also picked up into early October, with a maximum of three on 11th of that month. A total of 97 species was recorded during September.

Two new moths were recorded during October, *Acleris sparsana* on 3rd and Red-green Carpet on 5th. This latter date also saw a second Pink-barred Sallow, and good totals of 31 Beaded Chestnut and 14 Angle Shades amongst the 28 species recorded on that date. A further Dusky-lemon Sallow was found on 7th. The trap was finally run on 30th October when the catch comprised just 12 moths of six species, but did include a final new garden record with a positively identified Pale November Moth together with four Yellow-line Quaker and two Feathered Thorn, bringing the total for the month to 41.

The trap was run for 63 nights during 2005 and 410 species were recorded. The second half of the year was much better than the first few months but migrants were generally scarce. Only the odd Silver Y was found, with just a maximum of three on two nights at the end of July for a species that can usually be seen in some numbers nectaring during the summer evenings in the garden. After three years of trapping, the garden total now stands at 417.

Moths at Ipswich Golf Course from December 2005 to March 2006 - Neil Sherman

December

No trapping was undertaken at the site during December, due to the cold weather. A few moths were seen on the clubhouse wall under the security lights on the 6th – there were 4 Scarce Umbers, 6 Mottled Umbers and a Northern Winter Moth. I discovered a single Brick moth on the trunk of an Ash tree during the day on the 8th, this being my latest record for the site and only the 5th record for 2005, a very poor show for this species. On the night of the 21st, while surveying the site for Lunar Yellow Underwing larvae with Tony Prichard, well over 100 Winter Moths were seen perched on oak tree trunks. Males, females and mating pairs were all seen – this sighting is very similar to the one Tony and myself had on the neighbouring Purdis Heath in 2004.

January

The new year started with a Winter Moth seen on the window of the house on the 1st. The cold weather continued up until the nights of the 18th and 19th, when conditions were exceptionally mild for the time of year with 11 ℃ during the day with +5 ℃ overni ght. A Robinson trap was operated on both nights (in different locations), and produced the following results. On the 18th: 22 Mottled Umber, 60 Spring Usher (equalling the previous highest total seen in 2004), 8 Winter Moth, 8 Pale Brindled Beauty and a Chestnut.
On the 19th: Mottled Umber, 62 Spring Usher (a new record total), 3 Winter Moth, 2 Pale Brindled Beauty, Chestnut and a *Tortricodes alternella* (earliest ever record). The trap then went back into storage for the rest of the month as the cold weather returned.

February

Yet again, cold weather dominated most of the month. A trap was only put out on 2 occasions. On the 6th there were 22 Pale Brindled Beauty, 25 Spring Usher, 5 *Tortricodes alternella* and a Chestnut. On the 13th, when the temperature was over 5 degrees overnight, the trap was full of moths. There were 67 Spring Usher (a new site record total, beating the 62 seen last month), 37 Pale Brindled Beauty, 15 *Tortricodes alternella*, 10 March Moths, 6 Dotted Borders, 2 Chestnut and singletons of Mottled Umber (unusual so late in the winter season), Early Moth and the first Small Brindled Beauty of the year. On the 16th, searching by torchlight after dark on oak tree trunks around the site produced a female, 2 mating pairs and lots of male Dotted Borders.

Spring Usher - © Neil Sherman

March

March was yet again another very cold month, with springtime not really arriving until the very end. Traps were only run on 4 nights, with 3 of them being during the last week. On the 8th, with cloudy skies and temperatures of +5 ℃ produced good quantities of March Moth (64), *Tortricodes alternella* (49), Chestnut (40) and Small Brindled Beauty (25). Also present were Dotted Border and Satellite. Next time the traps went out was the 24th. There were similar species present, but notably the March Moth numbers had crashed – there was only 1. Commonest species was the Small Brindled Beauty, with 32 trapped – this is the highest total seen at this site in one night. There were also the first of the common *Orthosia*s and a few Yellow Horned. On the windy, wet and mild night of the 29th (when one of the traps blew apart), there were fewer of the commoner species present previously on the 24th but there were

the first Oak Beauties for the season (4).

Best night was the 31st, when mild temperatures finally produced a good number of moths. Commonest moth was the Small Quaker, with 110 caught (the second highest total ever, previous best 140 in 1998). There were also 18 Oak Beauties (highest ever total in one night), 30 Yellow Horned (again highest in one night), 8 Engrailed, Small Brindled Beauty (latest ever record), Dotted Border, Early Grey (first for year) Clouded drab (first for year) plus the other commoner *Orthosia*s.

I have noticed that during the first 3 months of 2006, it seems that there have been quite a few occasions when I have trapped the highest ever totals for the site for some species. I suppose that the number of nights when moths could fly this winter/early spring has been so limited that they have had to take advantage when it has been warm enough. A lot of the species involved over-winter as fully formed moths in their pupae, waiting for the right conditions to hatch out.

There were very few daytime observations of note, not surprising really given the weather. The first Orange Underwing for the year was seen on the 31st, flying round birch. I also discovered a virtually fully grown caterpillar of Lunar Yellow underwing under a sign that had fallen over on an area of acid grassland (27th). Hopefully conditions for trapping will improve during April.

Moths at Bawdsey - December 2005 to March 2006 - Matthew Deans

December

Eight December Moths were trapped on 5th along with singles of Chestnut and Angle Shades. The mild night of 14th produced 14 December Moths, a late Feathered Thorn and a Mottled Umber.

The only other species recorded this month was the Winter Moth with seven found at the security light.

January

The Robinson trap was run on two nights (17th and 18th) with completely negative results!

Only one security light was operational and was checked almost daily. Winter Moths totalled 26 moths during the month with peaks of six and nine on the 2nd and 17th respectively. The only other moth recorded was the Mottled Umber with two on 3rd and one on the 17th.

February

The first moths seen for two weeks at the security light due to freezing conditions were three Winter Moths and an Early Moth on 5th. Two further specimens of Early Moth were recorded here on 6th and 12th.

The Robinson trap was operated on 6th and a single Spring Usher was caught - only the second site record. The following nights trapping produced a blank!

March

Three Pale Brindled Beauties and a Chestnut were trapped in the Robinson on 8th.

The security light produced a single Pale Brindled Beauty on 12th and a *Tortricodes alternella* on 19th. A March Moth was the sole moth at the light on 30th.

The final trap night in March was on 30th with singles of Clouded Drab and Common Quaker trapped.

Contact details

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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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