

## Suffolk Moth Group Newsletter

**Issue 46 - Spring 2009**

Edited by Tony Prichard

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### Editorial

At this time of year all eyes are to the season ahead and after two generally poor years I expect most will be thinking it's time for an improvement. Although most opinions I have heard were that 2008 was a poor year there were a few who surprisingly found it a good year in terms of species numbers recorded. You will also see later on in the newsletter that others were lucky/diligent enough to find some new species for the country, so it was rather a mixed picture.

I am in the process of upgrading the web site and will be busy on this for quite a while, it is no small task. There is not much to show for the effort so far but hopefully it will bring the web site up to date and into the world of Web 2.0 - easier to use and with additional features. Other activities

that have been keeping me busy over the winter have included this newsletter, the events programme and processing the records for 2008. The former two are now complete and I can concentrate on the records - hopefully completed in time for the indoor meeting. The macro-moth records up to the start of 2008 have been sent off to the National Moth Recording Scheme, I expect these will be available on-line shortly - keep an eye on [www.mothscount.org](http://www.mothscount.org) for further details.

The Light Orange Underwing seems to have had a good year for a change based on observations from a few visits to Wolves Wood before the weather turned. It appears to have been on the wing a little earlier this year - first noted on the wing in mid-March. The majority of the sightings have been in the east of the wood where there is still plenty of aspen. The west of the wood where the moth's main haunt used to be was coppiced a couple of years ago and large numbers of mature aspen tree removed. Very few moths have since been seen in this part of the wood. Since the loss of this main area there have been a couple of poor springs and it was not certain whether the low numbers recorded for those two years were due to the loss of habitat or the poor weather. Fortunately it appears that the moth survives and is being seen in numbers we would normally expect.

As usual I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the newsletter. I would encourage other recorders to consider writing something for the newsletter - short or long - the newsletter benefits from having a mix of contributors and material. I'd also welcome any record updates during the year for inclusion in the 'Reports from Recorders' section, if you do not feel up to contributing a short piece in your own words.

Good luck with the season ahead.

## **Suffolk Moth Group Indoor Meeting 2009 - Tony Prichard**

This year's indoor meeting will be held on Saturday 25th April 2009 at the usual venue - Bucklesham Village Hall. Doors will open at 1.30pm and the meeting will start at 2.00pm. We have gone for a shorter meeting this year as I don't think we'll be inundated with presentations. The event will finish by about 5.00pm, although there's no requirement to stay to the end.

I would encourage all coming to help out with exhibits and presentations, otherwise it will be rather a short meeting. Please could you let me know if you are going to be doing a presentation so I have a feel for time requirements. This applies especially if you require a slide projector as I will not bring one unless I know someone has some slides to show.

For those who maybe feeling a bit hungry beforehand some of the group will be meeting up in the nearby Shannon Inn at around 12.00pm. The pub is about 100 yards from the village hall. As the pub has recently changed management I can't comment on how good the food is.

There will be plenty of time during the afternoon for refreshments and chat, which I think is the best part of the meeting.

## ***Ectoedemia atrifrontella* - A New Moth to Suffolk - Neil Sherman**

The night of 28th August 2008 produced a good catch of moths in the trap in my garden on the edge of Ipswich Golf Course, not too surprising as it had been cloudy, warm and humid overnight. The trap was full of common species typical of the time of year, namely Large Yellow Underwings and Square-spot Rustics. Among the other 70+ species was a first site record – a female specimen of *Ancylosis oblitella* (a known migrant/wandering species). As usual on warm nights, there were quite a few small micros that were retained for later examination. One of these was a very small non-descript moth, mainly a sandy brown colour with some dark scales (See picture). A thorough search of all my literature as well as checking all of the moth sites on the internet failed to produce an identification. Therefore I retained the moth for Jon Clifton to examine during the winter months.



*Ectoedemia atrifrontella* © N Sherman

In January 2009, Jon dissected the moth, and it turned out to be a female specimen of *Ectoedemia atrifrontella*, the first record for Suffolk. This moth is one of the leaf-miners, but unlike other *Ectoedemias* it mines the bark of small green oak twigs, producing a raised sinuous gallery. There have been a few searches for this species over recent years with the surge in interest in recording the leaf-mining Lepidoptera in Suffolk, but there has been no success to date. This record hopefully will prompt more searches to see if it is actually breeding in the county, but with the moth being noted on a warm night with another wandering species it may have come in from elsewhere. So check the oak trees near you.

### ***Coleophora galbulipennella* - Another New Moth for Suffolk Recorded in 2008 - Neil Sherman**

The night of the 31st July 2008 produced a good catch of moths at my usual trapping site at the golf club. Warm, humid and cloudy conditions resulted in a species total of 169 from the two Robinson traps used. Both traps were placed in an area of mixed habitat, with areas of heathland, oak/birch woodland and reed-bed close by. Upon examining and recording the catch, any moths not readily identifiable were retained for later determination. Amongst this batch was an unidentified Coleophorid and as this group are best determined by examination of the genitalia the moth was kept and passed on to Jon Clifton to identify during the winter months. Once dissected, Jon identified the moth as a male specimen of *Coleophora galbulipennella*.

This species is restricted in Britain to the shingle beaches between Dungeness and Hythe in Kent, where it breeds and has been found nowhere else. The food-plant is Nottingham Catchfly (*Silene nutans*), but on the continent it can be found on Spanish Catchfly (*Silene otites*).

At the moment, the origins of this moth are uncertain. Both of the known food-plants are not found on the site, or anywhere in the local vicinity. The nearest populations of Spanish Catchfly are found in the Breck district of Suffolk, some 30 miles away, whilst the nearest Nottingham Catchfly is found in Kent. The moth is not known to occur on Spanish Catchfly in the UK at the moment. The only plants closely related to the two known ones present on the site are White Campion (*Silene latifolia*) and Red Campion (*Silene dioica*), but these are not known as food-plants at present.

It is possible that the moth could have wandered up from Kent as in recent years a few non-resident unusual specimens of moth have occurred at this site. Both Little Thorn (*Cepphis advenaria*) (in 2006 – first Suffolk record) and Dark Tussock (*Dicallomera fascelina*) (in 2005 – first Suffolk record since 1964) have been seen, with the nearest known populations of both species being Kent. Searches will take place in 2009 both at the site and in the Breck area to see if any unknown populations can be found.

Thanks go to Jon Clifton for his determination of the specimen. See Jon Clifton's article for a



photograph of the genitalia.

(AWP - I did a limited search for the larva of this species on Spanish Catchfly in the Brecks two or three years ago without finding any sign of it.)

## Answers for Moth Identification Quiz - Neil Sherman



*Anthophila fabriciana*



Barred Hook-tip



*Cochylis atricapitana*



Dark Spectacle



Dot Moth



Drinker Moth



Endrosis sarcitrella



Hornet Moth



L-album Wainscot



Least Carpet



Orange Sallow



*Phlyctaenia coronata*



*Phycita roborella*



Scarce Silver-lines



*Schoenobius gigantella*



Short-cloaked Moth<sup>16</sup>



Shuttle-shaped Dart



Square-spot Rustic



Tawny Speckled Pug



Treble Brown Spot

## Dissection News 2008 - Jon Clifton

I have just completed the regular pots of moths sent to me for determination from some of the Suffolk recorders and what good news there seems to be from the 2008/7 season!

Icing on the cake goes to a diminutive tortrix caught and set by Matthew Deans at his regular recording area of Bawdsey Manor in July 2007 and has turned out to be *Cymolomia hartigiana* new to Britain. Details of this discovery to follow in a future newsletter.

Other major notable records are *Trifurcula squamatella* from Rushmere St. Andrew and Martlesham Heath taken by Jeff Higgott and Steve Goddard respectively during August 2008. This is the first time this has been recorded anywhere in Britain since the late 1800's, an article is in preparation for the Entomologist's Record.

Neil Sherman continues to throw up interesting records and therefore is no surprise he recorded two new Suffolk moths in the form of *Coleophora galbulipennella* and *Ectoedemia atrifrontella* at the Ipswich Golf Course during July and August 2008, the former species is the first time it has been seen away from its Kent stronghold. Neil also recorded the second record of *Gelechia muscosella* in July after I determined one taken by Tony Prichard at Belton in 2004. Other interesting records at the golf course from Neil's 2008 batch were *Scrobipalpa instabilella* and *Agonopterix conterminella*.



*Coleophora galbulipennella* © J Clifton



*Ectoedemia atrifrontella* © J Clifton

Not outshone by records from Ipswich, Matthew Deans recorded several specimens of *Monopis crocicapitella* and a singleton *Scrobipalpa ocellatella* from August/September 2008. An example of the Alfafa Moth, *Cydia medicaginis* from Bawdsey in July 2007 was the second record for Suffolk after one at Thorpeness in 2004.

Along the coast I was able to determine *Coleophora vestianella* taken by Paul Kitchener at Iken Cliff in June 2008. It was also notable to see he recorded *Aristotelia brizella* from his garden trap well inland at Eye in July.

It was interesting to note the amount of *Coleophora versurella* determined from the pots labelled 'Coleophora sp.', ....seemingly recorded throughout Suffolk in 2008 and something I have noted from samples determined from further a field in Norfolk and as far north as Staffordshire. This species certainly had a good 2008!

Two specimens of *Scoparia basistrigalis* were confirmed from Redgrave Fen and Thelnetham Fen



taken in July 2008 and just goes to show this species is occurring in Suffolk. There have been some doubts raised about identifications of *S. basistrigalis* based on external features so I would like to ask for any possible specimens of *S. basistrigalis* to be sent to me for examination.

Jon Clifton - Hindolveston, Norfolk

## **Garden Moths Count 2009 - Tony Prichard**

Something that may appeal to the less experienced/beginner moth recorders in Suffolk (and elsewhere) is the Garden Moths Count project. This is a nationwide survey of mainly common and easily identifiable moths and not to be confused with the Garden Moth Scheme. This year will see Garden Moths Count in its third outing, it had rather a quiet start in 2007 but participation improved last year.

The survey concentrates on twenty easy to identify species that can be found in gardens using either lights or sugaring. Photographs for all the moths (and one larva) can be found on the web site and can be printed off in an easy to use identification guide format. Records are sent in via the web site and feedback to participants has been via distribution maps available on the web site. The results for 2008 can still be viewed.

Further details on the Garden Moths Count project can be found at the Moths Count web site ([www.mothscount.org](http://www.mothscount.org)).

## **Request for Beetle Specimens - David Nash**

Could this be a picture of you? If so, we'd like your help.



Scenes like the above are becoming increasingly common throughout the county with moth traps currently operating in most areas. In recent years there has been increasing recognition that, apart from moths, these traps attract other insect orders including a considerable number of interesting beetles some of which are rarely found using conventional collecting methods. Last year's Suffolk Natural History featured a fine picture by Neil Sherman of the spectacular – looking *Odontaeus mobilicornis* which visited his trap at Ipswich Golf Course – only the third Suffolk record in well-over 150 years; in 2001, *Thalycra fervida* graced Alan Cornish's trap in Reydon – only the second Suffolk capture of this rare species which had not been seen here since 1917 (see Suffolk Natural History 38 (2002) : 112).

A couple of years ago, Neil Sherman collected samples for me of the beetles occurring at his MV trap using the simple and not especially onerous method described below. It was developed in order to particularly avoid the tedious and time-consuming process of carefully placing individual beetles into separately labelled and dated tubes – although I'm happy to receive specimens

however they are stored.

A small, wide-mouthed, lidded container (e.g. sandwich spread jar) is half-filled with vinegar and labelled with the month when it is going to be used. Throughout that month a selection of the beetles occurring at the trap is dropped into the container - especially the smaller and more obscure looking ones. At the end of the month, the contents of the container are filtered through a kitchen towel to remove the vinegar, a scrap of paper with the month, grid and locality written IN PENCIL is placed with the beetles and the towel gently and carefully folded to enclose its contents. The towel(s) can be placed in a plastic bag to retain moisture and then either dropped in for me at Ipswich Museum or else sent to me at my home address. When posting it is important to protect the beetles from getting squashed.

N.B. It is advisable not to leave beetles in vinegar for more than two months as they will begin to disintegrate. This can be avoided if an approximately 7- 8% solution of acetic acid is used instead of ordinary vinegar (ca 3% acetic).

My sincere thanks to Tony Prichard for his atmospheric picture.

If you can help or would like more advice , why not mail me as I would be delighted to hear from you ?

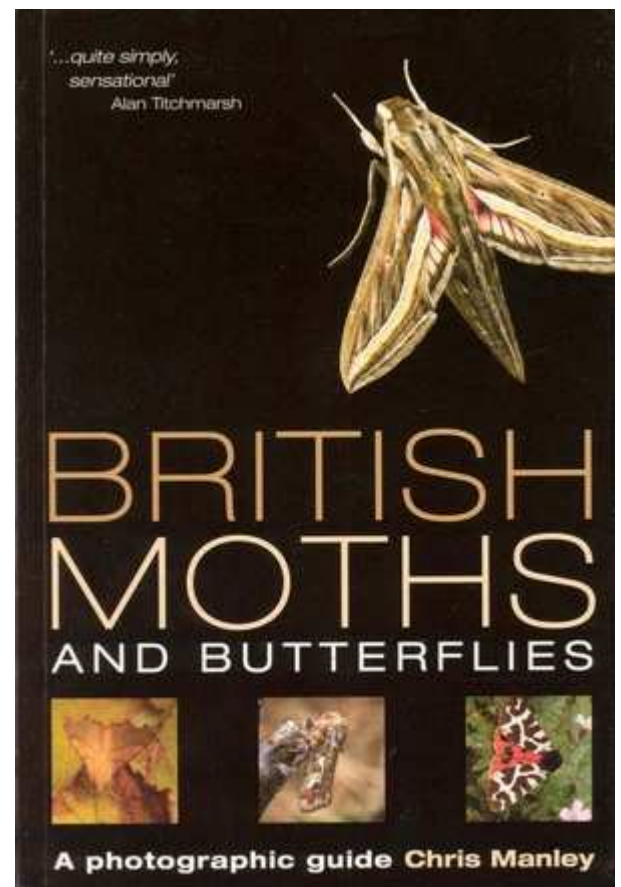
David R. Nash, Coleoptera Recorder, 3 Church Lane, Brantham CO11 1PU. Email: coleoptera@sns.org.uk

## **Book Review: British Moths and Butterflies - a Photographic Guide by Chris Manley - Neil Sherman**

Publishers A&C Black. £24.99 Soft-back.

This new book on Lepidoptera fills a vacant niche in the market. Skinner has photographic plates of set moths, while the Waring guide shows colour plates of moths in their resting positions. This book has colour photographs of moths (and Butterflies) in their resting postures, providing more help in identifying an unknown species.

Around 850 species of macro moth are covered, along with pictures of 500 micros, 74 butterflies and the bonus of 314 species of caterpillars, eggs and pupae. All pictures have been reproduced well, and the author has done well to pool the vast resource of digital photographs held by numerous people in the UK and Europe to complete the coverage of the macros (a list of contributors can be found at the start of the book). Each species also has a short section of text with the photo, covering size, flight period, Status in the UK, habitats and food-plants. The person who took the photograph is identified at the end of the text with their initials. The photographs and text of course take up most of the pages of the book, but there are also sections on how to see moths and butterflies, photography and classification. At the back of the book is a handy moth food-plant list – the name of a plant is listed along with all the species of moth that feed on it, helpful in identifying that caterpillar found on the tree in the garden!



Unfortunately there are a small number of errors with some of the labelling and identification of a few moths which is a bit of a shame. The price too for a soft-back book may deter some buyers, but on the whole this book is very nice to look at, being full of excellent photographs and would be a useful addition to the moth enthusiast's bookshelf.

## Psychid Moths - an Under-recorded Group - Tony Prichard

The Psychidae (bagworms) are an odd but interesting group of moths - the females of most species are wingless and some species occur only as females reproducing by parthenogenesis. As a group the larvae feed on a range of foodstuffs including lichens, grasses, detritus including dead insects and/or other plant material. The larvae spin cases and decorate them with various materials. Most larvae can be identified from the type of case they create.



*Psyche casta* © A Prichard



*Taleporia tubulosa* © A Prichard

Most moth recorders are familiar with the cases *Psyche casta* that they find stuck to fence posts, walls or tree trunks. There are a few other common species for which we have more than a smattering of records - *Narycia duplicella*, *Luffia ferchaultella* (or more correctly *L. lappidella* f. *ferchaultella*) and *Taleporia tubulosa*. The known distribution of these species is almost certainly determined by recording effort to date and the species will turn out to be widespread in the county.

Recently I have received some records of the less well-known species, hinting that we could be recording these species more frequently if only more time was spent looking for them - *Diplodoma laichartingella* at Elveden (G Finch, 17th May 2007) and as adults - *Bacotia claustralla* again at Elveden (H Beaumont, 5th July 2007) and *Epichnopterix plumella* at Minsmere (D Gibbs, 18th May 2004). Other species of the family historically recorded from Suffolk include *Dahlica inconspicua*, *Bankesia douglasii*, *Epichnopterix retiella* and *Pachythelia villosella*.





*Luffia ferchaultella* © A Prichard



*Narycia duplicella* © A Prichard

Looking for the cases often involves spending lots of time staring at tree-trunks, fences and walls and spring-time is a good time to be searching as the larvae move up the trunks with the arrival of the warmer spring-time weather. As the moths are rare visitors to moth traps looking for the cases is the way most records of this family are made. A good place to start searching is on tree-trunks in urban streets or parks.

Around the country some recorders have been looking a bit deeper at this family - some of Ian Smith's work can be found on the UKMoths web site and an interesting article about some surveying work done in Nottinghamshire can be found at [www.eakringbirds.com](http://www.eakringbirds.com). For further information on this family you could try *The Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland Volume 2* or a newer Swedish book by Bengtsson and Palmqvist - *Lepidoptera: Micropterigidae - Psychidae: Fjärilar: Käkmalar - säckspinnare*. Both books have keys and information on identifying the cases.

## Field reports - Tony Prichard

### Friday 1st August - Moth Night at North Warren RSPB Reserve

As Tim Freed and myself had visited Hen Reed-beds the week before (see previous newsletter) and found a few White-mantled Wainscot the group decided to relocate this night's meeting to RSPB's North Warren reserve a little further south down the coast. We were based in the north-eastern part of the reserve and ran lights along the northern end of the disused railway line and in the woodland bordering of the northern edge of the reed-bed.

This night proved to be one of the most successful for the year in terms of species numbers with over 160 species. As with our previous visit we recorded White-mantled Wainscot from traps located along the railway line - there is dry reed either side of the path at this point. The Wainscot Index (an indicator in a fen of how good is the night's mothing) was not that high with only Southern, Small, Brown-veined, White-mantled, Webb's, Fen and Silky Wainscot - no Common or Smoky. Not a good indication on this night as we managed to record some interesting species at light and also on wine ropes including *Gelechia sororculella*, *Aethes francillana*, *Cydia amplana*, Oblique Carpet, Dotted Clay, Purple Clay, Old Lady, Reed Dagger, Kent Black Arches, Dark Spectacle and Small Rufous.

### Saturday 2nd August - Grey Carpet larval search

This meeting was cancelled

### Friday 8th August - Moth Night at North Cove

This meeting was cancelled due to poor weather

### Friday 15th August - Moth Night at Dunwich Forest

I was away on holiday over this period so I cannot write too much about the event but the weather must have been reasonable for a change. The following species of interest were recorded on the night - *Athrips mouffetella*, *Metendothenia atropunctana*, *Dioryctria sylvestrella*, Clouded Magpie, Sharp-angled Peacock, Kent Black Arches, Dark Sword-grass, Square-spotted Clay and White-point.

### Friday 22nd August - Moth Night at Hinderclay Fen

This meeting was cancelled due to the poor weather

### Friday 29th August - Moth Night at Shingle Street

Recent visits to this site have not been made under the most ideal conditions, but that could be said of most sites over the last couple of years. Results were rather disappointing at only 48 species recorded on the night. There were a few highlights - *Epiphyas postvittana*, Rosy Wave, Satin Wave, White-point, Frosted Orange and Crescent. Particularly memorable were the large Privet Hawk-moth caterpillars found on a couple of stunted privet bushes next to the concrete track - possibly the only privet for miles around.

### Friday 5th September - Moth Night at Lavenham Railway Walk

This meeting was cancelled due to the poor weather

### Friday 12th September - Moth Night at Dunwich Forest

This meeting was cancelled due to the poor weather

## **Saturday 11th October - Leaf-miner day at Brandon Country Park and Mildenhall Woods**

The morning started off with the group wandering round the grounds of Brandon Country Park - near to the car park there was a predominance of beech and *Stigmella hemargyrella* mines appeared quite common and a larva of Green Silver-lines was also spotted low down on a sapling. The feeding signs of *Strophedra weirana*, with two leaves spun together and windowed, were also a common find. As we moved away from the old gardens we found a patch of birch saplings where we recorded *Heliozela hammoniella*, an unusual find for Suffolk and an usual mine as the larva mines up the petiole of the leaf into the leaf and then excising a case from the mine in the leaf. Very shortly after a case of *Coleophora milvipennis* was also found on birch. In all 42 species were recorded at the site.

In the afternoon after the obligatory pub lunch we visited Mildenhall Woods. Wandering around the wooded area near the car park turned up 31 species with the more interesting being - *Leucospilapteryx omissella* bladder mines on Mugwort, more signs of *Strophedra weirana* and *Ancylis mitterbacheriana* and on buckthorn we found *Stigmella catharticella* and *Bucculatrix frangutella*.

Nearby along the riverside we also had *Bucculatrix cidarella*, *Phyllonorycter rajella* and *P. kleemannella* on alder and also *Cameraria ohridella*. Although there were plenty of poplar trees along the river side the leaves on the ground had mostly been dried to a crisp and there was no sign of *Ectoedemia hannoverella*.



## Reports from Recorders around the county

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

### Mendlesham Green, September to year end 2008 - Steve Woolnough

Poor weather and a holiday meant that the trap was run on only six nights before the end of the year. However, there was still a new garden record with *Mompha sturnipennella* recorded on 27th September. The last Silver Y of the year appeared on 9th October and after a complete absence of Common Plume during the year, three were in the trap on 11th October. On 17th October, four Merveille du Jour occurred, the highest total recorded in the garden. The trap was last run on 14th November, when a Yellow-line Quaker and two Feathered Thorn were captured. The last moth of the year was an *Agonopterix arenella* seen on 8th December.

Five mines new to the garden were recorded during October (thanks to Neil Sherman for the identifications). These were *Stigmella anomalella* (Rose Leaf Miner), *Stigmella crataegella*, *Parornix anglicella*, *Phyllonorycter oxyacanthae* and *Phyllonorycter corylifoliella*. Including mine records, the species total for the year was 319, the highest total since 2005.

After six years of garden trapping, the species total now stands at 535.

### Eye Moths, late August to February 2009 - Paul Kitchener

#### August

A run of several warm nights during the last week of August produced a flurry of good garden records. On the 26th there were first site records for *Aproaerema anthyllidella* and Saltern Ear (the identification of both confirmed by Jon Clifton) and to follow on the 27th were two more firsts, *Dichrorampha simpliciana* (also checked by Jon) and *Pyrausta despicata*. The 28th was not to be outdone, with yet two more garden firsts (and yet more work for Jon) in the shape of *Ectoedemia lousella* and *Cosmiotes consortella*. Also on the 28th there was *Acrolepiopsis assectella* (the fourth site record and second of the year) and the second site record of Narrow-winged Pug (and only the third I've seen in Eye over the past thirteen years). Other bits and pieces at the tail end of August were *Bucculatrix thoracella*, *Ypsolopha sequella* (two on the 31st was a seventh record but the first since 2006), *Blastodacna atra* (the second of the month), Large Thorn (sixth site record, but only the second since 2003), Old Lady (fourth record and the third to come to MV) and a single Red Underwing.



*Blastodacna atra* © P Kitchener



Large Thorn © P Kitchener

## September

Of the micros in September *Stigmella obliquella* was a first for the site whilst a *Caloptilia syringella* on the 8th was the third in a couple of weeks (there have been five records this year but only three previously). *Phyllonorycter leucographella* may also be increasing locally as one this month was the sixth of the year and the last year one was seen was 2003. Another *Ypsolopha sequella* was good but only two *Plutella xylostella* were trapped making a very poor total for the year (thirty-eight, the worst since 2005). *Coleophora alcyonipennella* (confirmed by Jon again) was a third site record, the previous two were both in 2006 and an *Epinotia tenerana* on the 23rd was a second site record and a second for the year. *Epiphyas postvittana* (fifteen this month) was not recorded here until 2006 when six were seen, there were ten in 2007 and thirty-seven in 2008, a steady increase pretty much expected once the first ones arrived.

Whatever the weather and however poor the year there is always hope that there will be the odd migrant or two turning up. This autumn it has indeed been just the two, with a Vestal (third site record) on the 9th and a Dewick's Plusia (first site record) on the 23rd. Incidentally, twelve Silver Y were trapped in September, nearly half the year total.



*Caloptilia syringella* © P Kitchener



Dewick's Plusia © P Kitchener

A Clouded Border on the 8th was my latest ever (the first September record was only last year), a Swallow Prominent on the 6th was the first September record since 1999 and a Buff Ermine on the 7th was a surprise as I had never recorded it later than July. Species occurring this month that seem to have had a relatively good year include Dusky Thorn (the highest numbers since 2003), Willow Beauty (the most ever at this site), Frosted Orange (sixteen this month alone whereas there was only one seen all of last year) and Burnished Brass (the most ever at this site). Dark Spectacle would appear to be safely established around here now, (the numbers for the years 2001 - 2008

being 0/1/0/4/10/10/10/20) and Orange Sallow had it's best year following a complete blank last year. Common Wainscot however had an extraordinarily bad year; from a peak count of six hundred and ten in 2006 it has crashed to just nineteen seen this year, the first time it has been outnumbered by Smoky Wainscot (which appeared in average numbers), a species that I have always assumed would be affected in much the same way by the vagaries of the weather.

## October

I was away on holiday until the 10th and managed only twelve nights trapping during the remainder of the month, so there is very little to report. The night of the 13th produced the best catch with twenty species that included *Acleris rhombana* (only the seventh site record but second of the year) and my first October record for Small Square-spot (there were two more to come on the 15th). Two other species also appeared on their latest ever dates: Light Emerald (12th) and Burnished Brass (19th). A White-point on the 19th was the last one of the year and took the year's total to thirty-six, the lowest number since 2004. One noteworthy feature of the month appeared to be the high numbers of Setaceous Hebrew Character relative to the year total (62/698). The year 2006 was a bumper one for this species but relatively few were seen in October (though well over one thousand were seen in September), the equivalent figures being 28/4098.

## November

There were some very mild nights this month, ten of the eleven nights trapped having a minimum temperature above 8° C. As a consequence, perhaps, a record total of twenty seven species was seen, easily beating the previous record of twenty recorded in 2004. Of these, nine were micros which included *Caloptilia rufipennella* and *Caloptilia stigmatella*, both being seen in November for the first time.



December Moth © P Kitchener

Both Large and Lesser Yellow Underwing were trapped on the 3rd, the first November record for the former and there were also the latest ever records for Common Marbled Carpet (5th) and Pale Mottled Willow (15th). More typical of the time of year were two December Moth (this moth remains strangely rare around here, only thirteen individuals have been seen in eight years), fourteen Feathered Thorn (more than twice the very poor number seen last year), three Sprawler and three Brick (of the seven this year, after none at all last year).

## December

Six nights trapping produced just three species, *Emmelina monodactyla*, Winter Moth and Chestnut before proceedings were brought abruptly to a halt by the cold weather. It would be mid-February before it would be worth a try again and the last time I went for a whole month without at least trying one night was January 2002.



## February

Trapping resumed on the 15th and with night time temperatures holding up well for the time of year continued to the month's end. Fourteen species were recorded, easily my best February count (the previous best being nine for last year and 2003).



*Acleris cristana* © P Kitchener



Pale Brindled Beauty © P Kitchener

An *Acleris cristana* on the 16th was a first site record and the first I'd seen in Eye since 2000. A Pale Brindled Beauty on the same night was the first of the year, a total of thirteen being seen this month (ten on the night of the 17th) whereas there was only one last year. Another surprise on the 17th was two Spring Usher, a real rarity around here. There has only been one previous record, in 2003. There was to be a third record, just a couple of days later. A Dotted Border on the 18th was my earliest and a Grey Shoulder-knot on the 20th was only the second February site record. The mild conditions encouraged a *Caloptilia rufipennella* out of hibernation on the 26th and the next night an Oak Beauty was not only the first I'd seen in February but also only the second site record, the first as recently as last year. And finally, the *Orthosias* just scraped into February with a single Common Quaker on the 28th.

## Woolpit 2008: A quick tale of dark clouds and silver linings - Paul Bryant

It's been quite a while since I came up with some musings about my garden trap so, with apologies in advance for the sterility of this note, I thought I'd try and put just a few words together.

Several months ago, I was asked how many species had I recorded at Woolpit? I never thought that there would be a great deal of difference between my old garden and the one here so, allowing for a few variables and the fact that I left Thurston on 321, I guessed that my Woolpit list was somewhere in the region of 350 - 375. Imagine my surprise when I found out that it was actually just a couple short of 450. What was even more amazing was the fact that 21 of those turned up in 2008 – and from only fifty nights trapping!



*Diurnea flagella* © P Bryant



Oak Beauty © P Bryant

By far the most productive month was July, which accounted for the half of the new arrivals, but things started back in March when I finally picked up the enthusiasm to do some trapping and recorded *Diurnea flagella*, *Agonopterix heracliata* and *Acleris cristana*. A much anticipated first turned up on the 3rd April in the shape of a single Oak Beauty and the end of the month brought another macro - a Brindled Beauty. May's editions were single Streamer, Red-green Carpet, Puss Moth and Least Black Arches.

As I have already mentioned, July was the most productive month for new species. It was also the most productive period in the garden full stop in terms of nights trapped and species recorded. A European Corn-borer on the 14th got the ball rolling. I then added Dark Umber (18th), *Phalonidia manniana*, *Pammene fasciana* and Slender Pug (all on the 22nd), *Pyrausta despicata* and Oak Nycteoline (23rd), *Calamotropha paludella* (25th) and last but not least, *Phyllonorycter geniculella* and *Scoparia subfusca* (on the 30th). The final addition to the garden list turned up at the beginning of August, a single *Limnaecia phragmitella*.



Red-green Carpet © P Bryant



*Limnaecia phragmitella* © P Bryant

But that's only 20 new species I here you cry. One other July addition, which I thought was a garden first, has subsequently been pre-dated by an early gen-det record - *Paraswammerdamia lutarea*.

Many of these moths are fairly common or widespread species. Whether it was good old luck, or just plain and simple paying a bit more care and attention to what was in the trap I cannot say (although I suspect the latter) but, if I've learnt one lesson, then its tube it up. My thanks as always to my long suffering wife who tries to share my enthusiasm over 'boring brown moths' and to everyone who kindly helped identify and confirm these additions along the way.

Happy trapping.



## Moths at Ipswich Golf Course - July to November 2008 - Neil Sherman

### July

July 2008 bucked the trend for the preceding months – it was a very good recording period, all due to the weather. Almost continuous warm muggy conditions prevailed, with some violent thunderstorms towards the end of the month. Traps were operated on 19 nights, resulting in a species total of 422 (228 micros, 194 macros). This was much better than 2007, when that wet month only produced 370 species. The best night was the 14th, when 2 traps caught 174 species. The worst night was the 20th, when unusually for the month the night was cold resulting in only 25 species being noted in the garden trap.

A lot of survey work took place in the wetland areas of the site from the middle of the month onwards, to try and determine the status of White-mantled Wainscot after last year's records. This included 2 site visits by members of the Suffolk Moth Group with their additional traps to try and cover more ground, once at the end of July plus another at the beginning of August. Unfortunately, despite all this effort, no White-mantled Wainscots were seen, but the numbers of this moth and some of the other wainscots have appeared in my experience to be low this year, so more surveying will take place next year. One of the benefits of the SMG visits was that sitting out with the equipment meant that I could put out my wine ropes – these were successful in attracting Old Lady moths both nights, a scarcely recorded species here, and quite an impressive sight in the torch beam!

No new macros were noted during the month, but there were some notable sightings all the same. There were second site records for the following species: Lesser Cream Wave (2 on the 23rd) and Gold spot (31st). Reed Dagger (31st) and Mullein Wave (30th) were third site records. Also of possible interest were Leopard (4 seen on the 14th was a good count), Festoon (15 noted), Small Emerald (10th, scarce here), Spinach (1st, only sighting in 2008), Small Waved Umber (29th, fourth site record), Slender Pug (maximum count was 10 on the 23rd, the highest ever recorded), Clouded Magpie (2 on 23rd during SMG visit, first since 2006), Privet Hawk-moth (one only on 13th), Kent Black Arches (13 noted, maximum 4 on the 30th), Saltern Ear (30th), Webb's Wainscot (31st first for year), Small Rufous (24th), Shaded Fan-foot (5 only noted) and a Dotted Fan-foot (14th). Note the number of interesting wetland species there, showing where most of the recording took place! Some species appeared to be at a low ebb at the site, 2 examples being the Common Wainscot (1 only on the 14th) and the Pine Hawk-moth (6 noted, last year there were 64!). One moth however that appears to be super-abundant in 2008 is the Black Arches, with the highest ever figures recorded. The best count was the 60 seen on the 31st!



Clouded Magpie © N Sherman



*Coleophora deauratella* © N Sherman

Micro numbers really took off in the traps during the month, with many being tubed up for later



examination. Not surprisingly some new species were discovered. *Phyllocnistis saligna* (30th), *Coleophora deauratella* (15th), *Coleophora hemerobiella* (5 records) and *Plodia interpunctella* (the Indian Meal Moth – 15th) were all identified. Other interesting species included *Morophaga choragella* (3 records), *Argyresthia glaucinella* (17th first since 2006), *Ypsolopha nemorella* (14th, first since 2003), *Agonopterix ocellana* (31st), *Thiotricha subocellea* (3 records, first since 2006), *Dystebenna stephensi* (29th, second site record), *Epiblema foenella* (22nd, scarce here), *Grapholita funebrana* (1st, second record after the first last month), *Agriphila selasella* (31st), *Evergestis pallidata* (the 4 seen on the 23rd were the first since 2004), *Ostrinia nubilalis* (4 noted), *Vitula biviella* (28 recorded, down on last year's figures), *Capperia britanniodactyla* (6 seen at light, a good count) and *Adaina microdactyla* (2 records, scarce here). There was a small invasion of ermine moths during the month, with quite a few *Yponomeuta rorrella* seen, with a maximum of 20 noted on the 26th. Also found was an *Yponomeuta cagnagella* (27th), a second site record. A smaller number of *Acrolepiopsis assectella* were noted, mostly in the garden trap with a maximum of 3 on the 15th. These can probably be attributed to the onions and leeks growing in our allotment!

Daytime observations included 2 sightings of Yellow-legged Clearwing drawn to their specific pheromone lure. Lures were tried many times for other species both here and at many other sites across Suffolk with little success – it seems 2008 was a poor clearwing year (in my experience anyway). On the 23rd, a few Chevron were seen flying around on one of the heathland areas of the site, these being the only ones noted as most of the recording with traps took place away from these places.

## August

August continued the trend of good moth recording, with mild conditions dominating the month. Coupled with almost constant cloud cover, even at night, this produced some excellent results. Some of the cloudy nights were also wet, especially early on, but this did not make too much difference to the numbers. The last week was especially good, with most nights being warm and humid – lots of moths were trapped then, including some new species (more on this later). The micro moths certainly seemed to be present in good quantities again, just like in July, with many needing later examination to determine what they were.

Traps were operated on 17 nights, with some trapping sessions taking place at other habitats around the site. 329 species were noted (149 macros, 180 micros), this being the best August total since 2004 when 355 species were seen.

Another visit by members of the Suffolk Moth Group with their traps took place on the 2nd, covering the reed-bed again (see the July report for information on this). This night also produced the highest count for the month, with 130 species recorded.

Macro records of possible interest for the site included the following. Satin Wave (6th), Sharp-angled Peacock (5 recorded), Bordered Beauty (3 seen), Pine Hawk-moth (the last and only one for the month was noted on the 6th, only the seventh seen in 2008), Black Arches (noted every night still with a maximum of 25 seen on the 6th), Kent Black Arches (last one on the 11th), Dark Sword-grass (2, both in the last week), Large Yellow Underwing (abundant, with numbers every night during the last week exceeding 100), Square-spotted Clay (17th and 24th, both in the garden trap), Six-striped Rustic (4 seen), Square-spot Rustic (another species abundant in the last week), Heath Rustic (26th), Hedge Rustic (recorded most nights from mid month with a maximum of 15 seen on the 26th), Feathered Gothic (6 so far in the last few days of the month), Common Wainscot (8 only, a poor count), Coronet (2nd, second site record), Marbled Green (also 2nd, second site record), Old Lady (2 on wine ropes 2nd), Twin-spotted Wainscot (2 on 6th), Brown-veined Wainscot (2 on the 2nd with another on the 6th), Webb's Wainscot (6 recorded) and Dark Spectacle (19th and 21st, in garden trap).



Coronet © N Sherman



Marbled Green © N Sherman

On the micro front, five new species were recorded. First was an *Oncocera semirubella* on the 5th, rescued from a soaking wet trap after a lot of heavy rain overnight. This was followed the next night (6th) by *Agonopterix conterminella*, a species I'd not seen anywhere before. The warm humid conditions during the last week produced the other three: *Conobathra tumidana* (25th), *Cochylimorpha straminea* (26th) and an *Ancylosis oblitella* (28th, a female). There were many more interesting species recorded, here are a selection of the other highlights. *Caloptilia populetorum* (3 recorded), *Phylloncnistis saligna* (4th, second record after the first last month), *Yponomeuta rorrella* (5 more noted all in the first week), *Orthotelia sparganella* (6th, second site record), *Acrolepiopsis assectella* (4 more, probably coming from my allotment again!), *Coleophora hemerobiella* (6th, first records only last month), *Recurvaria nanella* (7th, second site record), *Blastobasis adustella* (commonest moth in the trap all month, with a high count of 300+ on the 5th), *Spilonota laricana* (25th, second record), *Cydia amplana* (6th, the third site record of this migrant), *Agriphila selasella* (2 records), *Synaphe punctalis* (a count of over 300 on the 2nd, most in one trap placed on an area of regenerating heather), *Vitula biviella* (2 on the 7th were the last recorded) and *Euleioptilus carphodactyla* (2nd, second site record).

Daytime observations included the discovery of a mine of *Heliozela hammoniella* on the 4th (a new site record) – this is a species that mines the stalk of a birch leaf before moving into the leaf blade to cut out an oval case. A Red Underwing was discovered at rest on the work-shed wall on the 20th, and was shown to the other staff who were suitably impressed by this spectacular species. Finally several caterpillars of the Elephant Hawk-moth were found feeding on Willow-herb in an area of open fen.

## September

September 2008 started very wet, not good weather for trapping moths. This was followed by a short spell of warmer nights with some good trapping. This period came to an end when cool, clear nights prevailed until the very end of the month when conditions improved again. Traps were operated on 14 nights, resulting in a total of 134 species (77 macros, 57 micros). This was lower than 2007, when 148 species were recorded. The best night total was on the 11th, when 41 moth species were trapped.

Towards the end of the month, searching of patches of ivy blossom after dark commenced, producing some good moth records for the site (more on this later). Best moth of the month was the Dusky-lemon Sallow trapped on the 29th in the garden, a new species for the site. Other macros of note included the following. Least Carpet (11th, latest ever), Red-green Carpet (numerous both in the traps and on ivy, maximum 10 on the 29th), Streak (11th – first for year), Feathered Thorn (24th and 28th, first records for the year), Mottled Umber (8th, earliest record ever, followed by another on the 16th), Lesser Swallow Prominent (11th, a late individual), Lunar Yellow Underwing (one only on the 10th), Heath Rustic (5 records), Feathered Gothic (14 noted,

with the 6 last month this is a welcome recovery in numbers), L-Album Wainscot (13th and 29th – both seen in the garden trap), Black Rustic (2 records), Merveille du Jour (29th, first one for the year), Brindled Green (regular, with a maximum of 17 on the 29th), Dark Chestnut (28th on ivy), Brick (7 seen, all on Ivy – none at all in the traps), Flounced Chestnut (28th), Brown-spot Pinion (23rd on ivy, first record since 2000), Red Underwing (10th). Some of the sallows seemed to be around in good numbers this year, especially the Orange. 32 were recorded, with a maximum of 6 seen on ivy on the 29th. Others seen were Barred (9), Pink-barred (3) and Sallow (12). No Centre-barred were seen at all, but this is a rare species at this site.



Dusky-lemon Sallow © N Sherman

Micros reduced in numbers, mainly dominated by commoner species. A few things of note were recorded, and included *Ypsolopha sylvella* (2 records), *Depressaria heraclei* (8th, second site record), *Acleris sparsana* (28th, first record for the autumn), *Eudonia pallida* (11th) and *Eudonia angustea* (5 records, a good number). There were also 2 records of *Pandemis cerasana* and *Archips podana*, possible second brood individuals.

## October

October started cold, but mild conditions soon returned for a short while, with some good counts of moths seen. It then turned cold again with some frosts, mixed in with some windy and wet weather reducing the trapping opportunities. Lights were operated on 9 nights, and checking the ivy patch in the garden continued on from last month, this producing a combined list of 62 species (13 micros and 49 macros). This was better than the total for 2007, when 56 species were noted, but there were more colder nights then. The best night was the 9th, when 28 species were recorded in the garden trap.

Moths of possible interest seen included the following. The Mallow was first seen on the Clubhouse wall by the security lights on the 10th, with the first in the trap on the 19th. The first November Moth agg. seen was on the 10th, followed by a scattering of others. Four more Streak were noted after the first last month. The warm conditions produced the odd wanderer – a Dark-sword Grass was seen on the 6th, followed by an L-Album Wainscot on the 10th (the third record for 2008). The Square-spot Rustic noted on Ivy on the 23rd is the latest record for the site, beating last year's late record on the 15th by some margin. Grey Shoulder-knot was noted on Ivy as well as at light, being seen on four dates. The Blair's Shoulder-knot was seen regularly with a maximum of 5 on the 7th. The Green-brindled Crescent was also noted on ivy and at light, with a maximum of 3 on the 19th, 2 of which were the dark form. The Merveille du Jour was seen on 8 dates, a good count. The Brindled Green continued to be present in good numbers following on from last month, with a maximum of 20 on the 6th at light. Only one Large Ranunculus was noted on the 6th. The Satellite was first seen on the 7th, and was seen at light and at ivy regularly after that. The Chestnut too was noted around the same time, with a maximum of 50 seen on ivy on the 7th, good to see back in numbers after a poor season last year. Mixed in with the Chestnut were a few Dark Chestnut, all seen on ivy. The Brick was another moth that was recorded more commonly on ivy, with up to 10



noted – there was only one at light on the 13th. The first Red and Yellow-line Quakers were noted on the 4th, and were seen regularly after that at light and ivy. In fact the Yellow-line was one of the commonest species noted on ivy, with a maximum of 60 seen on the 25th. Highest count in the trap was only 17. More Flounced Chestnut were seen, with a maximum count of 3 on the 7th. Only one Large Wainscot was seen on the 12th, continuing the downward trend of the other Wainscot species here. It was nice to see the sallows continuing to appear in good numbers following on from last month. There were 12 sightings of Orange, 35 of Barred, 6 of Pink-barred and 8 of the Sallow. Moth of the month had to be the Red-green carpet. Never have I seen so many – 102 were noted during the month, both on ivy and at light. It was seen every trap night, with a maximum of 17 on the 14th – it was the second commonest moth in the trap that night, only beaten by the 18 Pine Carpets!



Yellow-line Quaker © N Sherman



Green-brindled Crescent © N Sherman

Few micros were recorded, with the *Caloptilia stigmatella* (8th, on ivy) and *Ypsolopha sequella* (2 on the 6th at light) the only ones of some interest.

## November

Traps were operated on five nights, producing a species list of 23. This was better than 2007, when only 15 species were noted. Best night was the 2nd, when 2 traps caught 14 species. Most of the usual suspects for the time of year such as December Moth and Feathered Thorn were caught. Of possible note were sightings of a few more Red-green Carpet (four – with the total for 2008 at the month's end at 147!) and Streak (eight noted). A search of some tree-trunks on the course by torchlight on the mild night of the 26th revealed a big hatch of Winter Moths – over 150 were seen, with some still drying wings. At least 60 mating pairs were also found, the males attached to the wingless females. A wingless female Scarce Umber was also discovered, the first time one has been seen on the site.



There were only the odd sightings of Winter Moth and Scarce Umber during December, mainly at lighted windows. No traps were operated due to the poor weather.

The species count for 2008 was 683 (340 macros, 343 micros), higher than 2007 with its 640 species. This shows that the year wasn't as bad as first thought for species, although numbers of individuals of moths were lower in the traps. 28 new species were recorded (3 macros, 25 micros). The site Lepidoptera species total at the end of the year stands at 1096 (1065 moths).

## Contact details

Please send any Suffolk moth records, moth articles or other queries to myself (preferably via email) at :

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[www.suffolkmothgroup.org.uk](http://www.suffolkmothgroup.org.uk)

SMG Email Discussion Group: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/suffolkmothgroup>

## The Newsletter

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





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