

ESSEX MOTH GROUP

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2015

COMPILED BY DOUGAL URQUHART



BURREN GREEN, Frinton

PETER WRAIGHT



WATCHING MOTHS AT WIVENHOE

GLYN EVANS

ESSEX MOTH GROUP

ANNUAL MEETING AND EXHIBITION

The GREEN CENTRE, WAT TYLER COUNTRY PARK
SATURDAY 21st FEBRUARY

2015 PROGRAMME

- 10.30.....**RECEPTION / REFRESHMENTS**
DONATION £7 PAY ON ARRIVAL
- 10.45.....**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**
DOUGAL URQUHART, MOTH GROUP COORDINATOR
- 11.00.....**PAUL WARING** – THE RARER MOTHS OF ESSEX
- 12.00.....**GRAHAM BAILEY** – MOTHS OF SOUTH ESSEX
- 12.30.....**ROD COLE** - MOTHS OF THE LANGDON RIDGE
- 1.00.....**LUNCH** - CHANCE TO CHAT WITH FRIENDS
- 2.00.....**GREG SMITH** – MOTHING IN WIVENHOE
- 2.30.....**GRAHAM EKINS** - MOTHS OF BOREHAM
- 3.00.....**RICHARD GERUSSI** – MOTHS OF WITHAM
- 3.30.....**TIM GARDINER** – GLOW-WORMS
- 4.00.....**FINAL DISCUSSIONS**, QUESTIONS AND MEMBERS PHOTOS
- 4.30.....**LAST REFRESHMENTS** AND A CHANCE TO CHAT WITH FRIENDS
- 5.00.....**CLOSE OF PLAY** AND MOTH LAMPS SWITCHED OFF

**THANKYOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND
GOOD LUCK WITH THE NEW MOTHING SEASON!**

**MANY THANKS TO ANGLIAN LEPIDOPTERIST SUPPLIES FOR
DONATING THE MOTH/BUTTERFLY NET FOR THE RAFFLE**

Welcome to the annual meeting of the Essex Moth Group, now into its 19th year since first starting up in 1996. This is the second meeting to be held at the Green Centre at Wat Tyler Country Park after the switch of venue from Lawford in the north of the county. There seemed a lot of positive feedback to the holding of the last year's meeting at Wat Tyler, so we are back here again for 2015.

We thank Peter Harvey of the Essex Field Club for arranging that the Group are able to meet in the smart surroundings of the Green Centre, and also for arranging the buffet lunch with the caterers. Also a big thankyou to Peter and the Essex Field Club for enabling the newsletter to be printed off and copies available for members at the meeting.

The annual meeting and the newsletter are important to the Essex Moth Group. They both demonstrate the important moth recording work that members carry out across the county of both the common species and the scarcer species too. The annual meeting is the only day-time opportunity where members can meet up with fellow moth enthusiasts to share their experiences and sightings. The newsletter also allows other members to share their account of the previous mothing season, share their sightings as well as their moth images too.

As group co-ordinator, a big thankyou to all those members who have either put together a talk for the meeting, compiled an article for this newsletter, or just attended the meeting at Wat Tyler – in some cases some kind folk have helped with all three! Maybe under the duress of arm-twisting and succumbing to some gentle persuasion, the meeting has a full programme and the newsletter has turned into a bumper report. The support has been great and much appreciated throughout the year.

The moths of Essex will appreciate our time and attention!

I trust members will find this newsletter an interesting read. The articles have had very little editing and are read as they were sent in. As chief collator, I've tried to keep the articles compact whilst including the many images sent in, to help keep the length of the whole newsletter down to a minimum number of pages. I've tried to include as many images as possible and apologise if not every one has been shown. All images have been credited, usually to the right hand side of the page and sometimes with the initials only. I also apologise for any spelling or grammar errors especially with the scientific names. I also apologise for any perceived relaxing of the usual scientific report writing protocol!

If you want to share any other ideas about the Moth Group, you can contact me - Dougal Urquhart as the Moth Group coordinator on 01206 383868 or at – dougal.urquhart@essex.gov.uk;

There is an email Yahoo Group on Essex Moths where moth sightings and other topics are posted. To join this you can either email Brian Goodey at - essexmoths@dsl.pipex.com; Reg Fry at reg.a.fry@btinternet.com; or Tony Prichard at tony.prichard@btinternet.com; One of these moderators will then invite you onto the email forum.

Information about the Essex Moth Group can be found on the Essex Moth Group website at www.essexfieldclub.org.uk/portal/p/Essex+Moth+Group . Help is needed with keeping these pages updated.

At present the moth County Recorder for Essex is Peter Harvey and whilst Peter is more than happy to continue to deal with records, we need a moth specialist to come forward to manage identification requests and organise and promote recording in the county. Contact Peter at: grays@peterharvey.freeserve.co.uk;

BURREN GREEN – Barbara Lock

Draft of what I sent to Atropos which they edited and added to, before publication in the Summer 2014 edition.

"I have been mothing regularly in my garden at Frinton-on-Sea, Essex since 1993. I use an actinic Heath trap, and over the years have progressed from a 6W tube to the 15W tube which I am now using. On the evening of 25th July 2014 I put out the trap as usual. The following morning, on opening it I immediately saw a very pretty emerald green coloured moth which I did not recognise. My first thought was that it was one of the 'emerald' moths, but on checking the appropriate page in my usual moth book, I found that it was very different to any of the moths shown there. Later in the day I looked in another book, Chris Manley's photographic guide to British Moths and Butterflies where I found a photo of a **Burren Green** moth which looked identical to mine. The text stated that this moth was restricted to the Burren area of Ireland so I thought I must be mistaken. However it has now transpired that this moth is also known in Europe, and the consensus of opinion now appears to be that it is an immigrant from there."



BURREN GREEN

Barbara Lock

2014 ESSEX MOTH GROUP MEETING

The annual meeting was held at Wat Tyler CP on the 14th February, the first time at this venue in the south of the county. The two main reasons for the switch away from the Lawford hall were due to unavailability during February / March and also an increasing cost. Thanks to Peter Harvey and the Essex Field Club, the 2014 meeting proved very successful with a good attendance of fifty members. Presentations on the day included talks on moths from the Langdon Ridge, Wat Tyler CP, south Essex sites, St Osyth, Cudmore Grove CP and south-central France. (Pic Peter Harvey)



MOTH GROUP DISPLAY

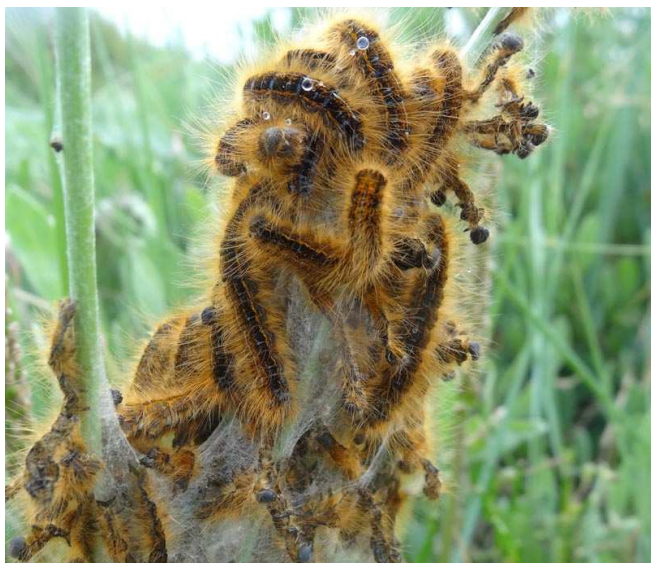
For the second year running, a stand was manned at the Essex Field Club's Annual Exhibition and Social at Wat Tyler CP on Sat 6th December 2014.

On display were two pull-up banners, a lit Gardiner moth trap and a tank of pupating emperor larvae.

The various projects and mothing sessions undertaken by various members were publicised as well as the Annual Meeting of the Moth Group.

(Pic D.U.)





REGIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR MOTHS

Butterfly Conservation's Regional Action Plan for the East of England is currently being reviewed. This action plan for moths identifies 45 high priority species and 85 medium priority species in the Anglian Plan and the Thames Plan. The main Key Landscape identified in the Plan for moths is the Essex seawall and the coastal grasslands, where the likes of **Ground Lackey** and **Fisher's Estuarine Moth** are found. Key Sites for moths recognised in the county are Epping Forest for species like **Buttoned Snout** and Grays Chalk Quarry for **Chalk Carpet**.

It is hoped the Regional Action Plan will be posted on the Essex Moth Group page on the Essex Field Club website in the near future.

Ground Lackey larvae at East Mersea 2nd June 2014 by D.U.

BIRD-DROPPING TORTRIX BOOK

Anglian Lepidopterist Supplies will be publishing a 2nd edition of the popular Bird Dropping Tortrix Moths book – the first edition has been out of print for the last sixteen months. The 2nd edition will include new names and numbering system, some updated photos and various new species comparison plates. This should hopefully be out by the autumn. Jon Clifton.

FLATFORD MILL MOTH COURSES

Just over the Essex border into Suffolk near East Bergholt, the Flatford Mill Field Study Centre run various courses including these forthcoming two moth ones in late summer, both led by Dave Grundy.

Moths of Wetland Habitats – Fri 14 – Mon 17 August 2015. Cost £383 residential.

The course will instruct moth ID and ecology through slide presentations, helping to ID moth families of both macros and micros, with hands on the ID of live moths. The course will target wetland habitat species as well as any from the nearby habitats too.

An Introduction to Leaf Mining Moths – Fri 11th – Sun 13th September. Cost £255 residential.

Improve your skills at field craft to detect moth species in a different way by looking for leaf mines on trees and other plants. The course is aimed at beginners as well as those with advanced knowledge.

MINOTAUR BEETLE REQUEST

Could moth trappers keep an eye out for the Minotaur beetle (*Typhaeus typhoeus*) in their traps and report any sightings. These striking beetles can occasionally turn up in moth traps and Maria Fremlin would be interested in records and preferably sexed too.

The male pictured right on the top is 16mm with 3 forward pointing horns with a shorter central one, while the female pictured lower right is 18mm with short spurs on the sides of a transversal ridge, one of which is visible in the photo taken by Maria.

Report sightings to mariafremlin@gmail.com;



North-East Essex is well served with many moth enthusiasts using lamps and traps to collect and record data on the distribution and frequency of moths in the area. Most of these people belong to the Essex Moth Group and whilst some members operate as individuals, others join up to form small groups to operate with multiple lamps and traps.

One small group that has been operating in the Colchester area for many years endeavours to provide a service to the local council and other organizations for the purpose of introducing the general public to the 'world of moths'. A program is set up early each year as in most cases some pre-planning is necessary. In addition to providing some educational benefit these events are usually held at sites where records from moth lamps are not normally taken so the sessions are very beneficial for the records obtained.

The following is a summary of the events that were carried out by the Colchester group in 2014. The weather for the year was generally favourable for 'moth lamping' with fairly long spells of dry weather and reasonable temperatures, although easterly winds frequently kept the temperature to the low 'teens'.

The first meeting was at Buntings Meadow (TL979256), a Colchester B.C. site, on 23 May. This meeting only produced 16 species, mainly Geometridae, with **Rivulet** being the most frequent visitor.

The next session planned for High Woods C.P. on 27 May had to be cancelled due to rain.

On 24 June a visit was made to Tiptree Heath (TL884148) and again the temperature was quite low, which resulted in a low count of 30 species, well below the norm. for this site. Highlights included **Poplar Lutestring**, **Orange Moth**, including var. *corylana*, and **White Satin**.

A late planned visit to the Chanterelle site at High Woods C.P. (TM009268) on 2nd July turned out to be one of the best evenings of the year with 48 species recorded with **Buff Arches** being the most frequent visitor with over 50 noted. **Swallow-tailed Moth** was also in large numbers, together with individuals of **Kent Black Arches**, **Festoon** and **White Satin**.

The session at Chalkney Woods (TL873279) on 4th July was another successful evening although it had to be shortened due to rain late in the evening. Over 50 species were recorded including **Lobster Moth**, **Beautiful Hook-tip**, **Red-necked Footman**, **Pretty Chalk Carpet** and **Small Yellow Wave**.



LOBSTER



PRETTY CHALK CARPET

RED-NECKED FOOTMAN
PICS DU

On 22 July the group took part in the annual 'multi-lamp' evening at Cudmore Grove C.P. (TM066124), organized by Dougal Urquhart, the manager of this site. This evening produced 60+ species, with some traps being run overnight with **Ground Lackey**, **Oak Eggar**, **Tree-lichen beauty**, **Rosy Footman** and **Black Arches** the main ones of interest.

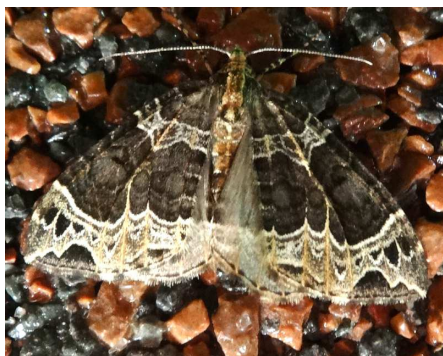
A visit to Cockaynes Wood at Alresford (TM055217) on 1st August comprised of 4 lamps recorded over 70 species. **Coronet** and **Small Rufous** were among the species recorded in reasonable numbers.

High Woods C.P. (TL999270) was again the venue, pictured right, on 14 Aug., but this time close to the visitors centre. With 2 lamps operating only 26 species were recorded which was well down on the usual count for this site. **Maiden's Blush** and **Cypress Pug** were among the more unusual species recorded. (Pic. D.U.)



On 28 Aug. a visit was made to the Colchester B.C. old nursery site at Spring Lane (TL973256). Species records for this session was 33 which again was low when compared with previous visits, but a few **Old Ladies** turned up later in the evening – the moth variety !

The last session of the year was when we were asked by Colchester Zoo to take part in their 'Bioblitz' festival and two lamps were in operation on 5th Sept. close to the Roman River (TL951218). The species count was low at 33, which may have been partly due to the time of year and also to bat and owl surveys which were taking part in the close vicinity and created some disturbance. Species of note were **Phoenix**, **Feathered Gothic** and **Webb's Wainscot**.



PHOENIX



MOTHING AT ZOO



WEBB'S WAINSCOT (D.U)

Summary - Whilst 2014 was in general a much improved year compared with 2013, most of the lamp sessions carried out above did not come up to the 'species count' levels expected from the sites which have been monitored in previous years. Weather had something to do with it as quite often a cool wind was in place on the night despite other things being alright. A full record list of the above lamp sessions is available on request.

WIVENHOE WATCHING WILDLIFE WATCHES MOTHS

GREG SMITH

Wivenhoe Watching Wildlife was formed by a small group of local naturalists in 2012. Their mission is to inspire and inform the local community about the amazingly rich and diverse wildlife that is to be found in and around this small, estuarial, former boat-building town on the north-east Essex coast out beyond Colchester.

One of the more striking successes of the group has been the level of interest in moths that it has managed to generate – through a combination of moth nights, presentations and a steady supply of amazing photographs on the Wivenhoe Forum website courtesy of Glyn Evans.

In 2014, we held two successful mothing evenings, both of which were blessed by warm, muggy weather, an abundance of moths and plenty of eager visitors. Our formula is to set three traps in a suitable public space, from around 9:30pm to midnight and regroup around 10:00 the next morning for the grand opening – supplemented by any additional specimens of interest caught in our garden traps overnight.

Our first evening in 2014 was on 17th May, part of a wildlife weekend in Wivenhoe focused on the new wildlife garden on the King George VI playing fields in the middle of town: a big old oak tree, an elm hedge, nectar-rich flower beds and a recently dug pond; with power courtesy of the nearby Montessori nursery. Sixty species was a good count for this time of year, including the ever-impressive big game (**Eyed, Poplar** and **Lime Hawk-moths**), some popular furry ones (**Pale Tussock**, **Marbled Brown** and **White Ermine**) and some local rarities (**Buttoned Snout**, **Brown Silver-lines** and *Coleophora fuscicornis*).

Looked on from a distance, the event had a magical quality: a little chiaroscuro tableau-vivant around each trap and the whole suffused by the light of a blood-orange moon. The real highlight of the evening was having three under-10s completely engrossed: writing lists, looking things up in Waring and even questioning some of our identifications!

17 May 2014 Checklist

Larger moths:

Common Swift, Oak Hook-tip, Pebble Hook-tip, Chinese Character, Brown Silver-Lines, Brimstone, Willow Beauty, Engrailed, Scalloped Hazel, Clouded Silver, Clouded Border, Light Emerald, Waved Umber, Yellow-barred Brindle, Green Carpet, Common Marbled Carpet, Broken-barred Carpet, Sandy Carpet, Spruce Carpet, Red-twinspot Carpet, Mottled Pug, Toadflax Pug, Foxglove Pug, Triple-spotted Pug, Pale Tussock, Marbled Brown, Iron Prominent, Buff tip, Cinnabar, Orange Footman, White Ermine, Eyed Hawk-moth, Poplar Hawk-moth, Lime hawk-moth, Least Black Arches, Turnip Moth, Heart and Dart, Shuttle-shaped Dart, Flame Shoulder, Powdered Quaker, Rustic Shoulder-knot, Light Brocade, Dusky Brocade, Brown Rustic, Shears, Treble-lines, Vine's rustic, Buttoned snout.

Micro moths:

Light Brown Apple Moth, Garden Pebble, Bee Moth, *Pseudargyrotoza conwagana*, *Coleophora fuscicornis*, *Dicrorampha acuminatana*, *Epiblema cynosbatella*, *Psyche casta*, **Green Oak Roller (caterpillar)**



CHINESE CHARACTER



LIME HAWK-MOTH



ORANGE FOOTMAN (Glyn Evans)

Our second evening on 4th July (National Moth Night) was similarly successful. This time we set up in the old cemetery with a generator to power the traps and a bat detector to add further excitement. We were finally rained off at 12:30, but not before an impressive showing of **Festoons** (we usually only record odd individuals each year in Wivenhoe gardens but here they were by far the commonest moth), some other note-worthies (such as **Vapourer** and **Bird's-wing**), the popular eye-catchers (**Elephant hawk-moth** and **Swallow-tailed Moth** – and Britain's largest caddis fly *Phryganea grandis*), and, in the morning, a huge emergence of **Horse Chestnut Leaf-miners** all around us as we undertook the ceremonial unveiling of the traps.

4 July 2014 Checklist

Larger Moths:

Festoon, Buff Arches, Common Emerald, Small Fan-footed Wave, Single-dotted Wave, Dwarf Cream Wave, Riband Wave, Least Carpet, Treble Brown-spot, Toadflax Pug, Swallow-tailed Moth, Brimstone, Scalloped Oak, Pale Oak Beauty, Clouded Silver, Yellow Shell, Vapourer, Buff tip, Buff Ermine, Common Footman, Elephant Hawk-moth, Heart and Dart, Heart and Club, Double Square-spot, Flame, Dot Moth, Large Yellow Underwing, Lesser Yellow Underwing, Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing, Clay, Dun-bar, Marbled Minor, Cloaked Minor, Bird's wing, Rustic, Uncertain, Mottled Rustic, Fan-foot, Snout

Micro Moths:

Horse Chestnut Leaf-miner, *Blastobasis decolorella*, *Agapeta hamana*, *Argyrotaenia ljungiana*, *Cydia splendens*, **Bee Moth, Garden Grass Veneer, *Scoparia basistrigalis*, *Udea prunalis*, *Orthopygia glaucinalis*, *Synaphe punctalis*, *Numonia advenella*, **White Plume Moth****



PEPPERED MOTH



DR CHRIS GIBSON



WHITE ERMINE (Glyn Evans)

Wivenhoe Watching Wildlife will be watching moths and other wildlife with the local populace again in 2015. To find out more, and to enjoy some of Glyn's wonderful photos, visit the Wivenhoe Forum at www.wivenhoeforum.co.uk.
Greg Smith, Chris Gibson, Glyn Evans and Richard Allen (aka Wivenhoe Watching Wildlife)

MOTHING IN BULMER - STARTING AGAIN

HUGH OWEN

In 2012 Veronica and I decided that we were of the age where it was time to 'downsize' and after 20 years at Langenhoe we moved home in July 2013 to Bulmer, near Sudbury which is still just inside the Essex boundary. There are several aspects to 'downsizing'.

Residence: a large bungalow exchanged for a more modest bungalow and a garden/meadow of 5 acres exchanged for a back garden of about 1/8 acre.

Biodiversity: Diversity of flora much reduced with the majority of large trees in the area being horse chestnuts. The fauna is also considerably reduced with now no open views over farm fields towards Langenhoe Marsh, Pyefleet and Mersea).

Butterflies and moths: Lepidoptera species much reduced and some statistics follow with Langenhoe first and 2013/14 Bulmer records in brackets: butterflies 28 (14), micro moths 249 (94) and macro moths 399 (165). We should have stayed a little longer to record one more micro and one more macro! Maximum annual totals: macro moths 266 (145) and micro moths 162 (71). There were several occasions where well over 100 species of moth were seen during a night whereas the maximum last year was 68. I have been an enthusiastic but not dedicated moth trapper with trappings per year of around 50 (25) and always bringing the trap inside by 12.30 am at the latest.

Despite my smaller catches I still get a buzz out of mothing and there have been a few surprises here with **Beautiful Hook-tip**, **Dewick's Plusia**, *Agapeta zoegana*, lots of horse chestnut leaf-miners and 4 other micros all being new to my garden lists. Other good records for me were **Dusky Thorn**, **Great Oak Beauty** and 3 **Small Elephant Hawkmoths** (only 1 recording of each at Langenhoe) and **Old Lady** and **Scarce Bordered Straw** (only 2 recordings at Langenhoe). I was also pleasantly surprised to record 6 species of **Hawkmoth** - only **Pine**, **Eyed** and **Convolvulus** to catch up with Langenhoe.



DEWICK'S PLUSIA



BEAUTIFUL HOOK-TIP



AGAPETA ZOEGANA (H.Owen)

It was a difficult decision to leave the wildlife haven at Langenhoe but for the sake of our physical well-being there will now be no more digging out of ditches, mowing a 3 acre meadow, cutting down bramble, trimming hedgerows, looking after 2 acres of garden and the numerous trips to the green waste recycling centre. In theory I should have more time and energy for moth trapping!

PS I am already missing the EMG visits to Langenhoe!

It amazes me that after more than 20 years of regular mothing in my garden at Frinton I am still getting some new species each year, 2014 being no exception. My total identified species for the year was 189 macro-moths and 59 micro-moths. I actually had far more micros than this but I was unable to identify them.

The new macro-moths for 2014 were **Blairs Mocha, Burren Green, Ear Moth, Peacock, Pink-barred Sallow and True Lover's Knot**. New micromoths were *Diaphania perspectalis*, *Palpita vitrealis* and *Argyrotaenia ljugiana*. Another moth I was delighted to see was **Convolvulus Hawkmoth**. I had this for the first time in 2013 when it visited me on one occasion, and it returned in 2014 paying two visits.

Of course my big event of the year was the **Burren Green** which seems to have caused quite a sensation in the mothing world - I wonder whether that will come back in 2015.

I would like to thank all those who helped me with identifications during the year and look forward to seeing everyone at the Moth Meeting.

The stronghold for the British population of the **Fisher's Estuarine moth** is the Walton Backwaters area of the northeast Essex coast where it is reliant on grassland areas that support Hog's Fennel, its sole larval food-plant. Here, it is naturally found on a number of islands and in areas where Hog's Fennel grows along the sea wall on the mainland.

However, this habitat is low-lying and threatened by flooding. As a consequence, a project has been in operation since 2005 that aims to secure the long-term future of the moth in Britain by creating a landscape-scale network of interconnected sites away from this threat. The project enables farmers and landowners to be supported in creating and maintaining habitat for the moth through agri-environment schemes.

To date over 25 plots have been planted with Hog's Fennel in the area of the northeast Essex coast at sites away from the threats of flooding. Between 1,000 and 4,000 Hog's Fennel plugs have been planted at each site and three arable reversion sites have been established using Hog's Fennel seed.

The sites have established well and the moth is now found at 22 of the plots. The majority of plots within 2-3km of the Walton Backwaters have been colonised by the moth naturally.

Colchester Zoo is running a captive breeding programme for the moth and stock from this programme has been used to establish the moth at some sites that are further away from the Walton Backwaters and therefore less likely to be colonised naturally.

Two new plots were planted in October 2014 and one of these at Brightlingsea Farm was carried out by members of the Essex Moth Group and the Cambridgeshire & Essex branch of Butterfly Conservation.

The site had been specially prepared, on the slopes overlooking Alresford Creek. The prepared area measured 70 by 20 metres and had been fenced, as rabbits are partial to the young Hog's Fennel plants. Perhaps the most difficult part of the operation was getting the plugs out of the plastic trays without damaging the delicate young shoots. The plugs were then set out at 1-metre spacings using string lines and then planted using spades. The weather was cloudy but pleasant enough and we saw what was probably a Red Admiral migrating south.

A frantic spurt in the last hour saw the whole plot filled with all 1400 plants, just as a fine drizzle set in. This was to turn to heavy rain in the evening - perfect for watering-in.

Thanks to Barbara Lock, Jeff Higgott, David Scott, and Mark Cooper (the farmer), Richard Bigg, Zoe Ringwood, Louise Bacon, Vince Lea and Rob Smith.

Zoe Ringwood of Natural England is the lead for this project and is still looking for new areas to establish Hog's Fennel in suitable locations near to the northeast Essex coast. If you are interested in becoming involved in the project, please contact her! e: Zoe.Ringwood@naturalengland.org.uk m: 07717 478159



PLANTING AT BRIGHTLINGSEA



HOGS FENNEL

(R.BIGGS)

LEPIDOPTERA IN N.ESSEX IN 2014

SVEN WAIR

I ran a 60 watt actinic Skinner-type moth-trap in my central-Colchester garden (VC19, TM0025) during 2014 (having used the same apparatus in 2013 as well). I also recorded moths and butterflies observed elsewhere in the county or by other methods. Here are a few basic statistics:

- Total no. of Lepidoptera species or aggregates recorded: 235
- Butterfly species: 20
- Moth species: 215
- Earliest records: *Agriopsis leucophaearia* **Spring Usher**, and *Theria primaria*, **Early Moth** on 18 January
- Latest records: *Epiphyas postvittana* **Light-Brown Apple-Moth**, *Mythimna albipuncta* **White-point**, and *Allophyes oxyacanthae* **Green-Brindled Crescent** on 31 October

The most common macro-moth species recorded were as follows:

- *Agrotis clavis* **Heart and Club** 54 specimens over 9 mothing nights (18 May–6 June) Peak count: 19
- *Agrotis exclamatoris* **Heart and Dart** 190 specimens over 14 nights (22 April–29 July) Peak count: 41
- *Agrotis puta puta* **Shuttle-Shaped Dart** 97 specimens over 14 nights (18 April–26 October) Peak count: 18
- *Noctua pronuba* **Larger Yellow Underwing** 224 specimens over 17 nights (5 May–19 October) Peak count 67

Also noteworthy was the micro-moth *Plodia interpunctella* **Indian Meal-Moth**, not for its numbers but for its phenology, it being recorded (indoors) continually between January and August (despite efforts to discourage it from living with us!).

A notable factor affecting my mothing in 2014 was the decision by the County Council to turn off the streetlights between midnight and 5 am. One would have imagined that this would make moonless nights extremely dark, thus increasing the numbers and the range of species trapped. However, the effect was not particularly evident; even without the streetlights, there was considerable light pollution, not only from nearby houses, but also from the much wider area. The weather, as always, played its part. Although I did not keep records of weather, my sense is that 2014 was colder and wetter than 2013. Whereas late 2013 had been an extended period of calm, dry and warm weather, the equivalent period of 2014 was changeable, wet and cold. I put out the trap on far fewer occasions in the second half of the year, and it trapped fewer species and specimens.

As a consequence, the number of species recorded was down considerably on 2013, when I had recorded 289 species of Lepidoptera in just one square kilometre in Colchester.

There is now increasing public pressure in Colchester for the streetlights to remain on throughout the night, arising in part from anxiety caused by a high-profile murder, but also from the self-interested night-time economy. Perhaps, if it comes to pass, changing back to the previous regime may not have a particularly negative effect on records. I wonder what other recorders in the county make of the issue.

The year was also a little disappointing in terms of the records of migrant species in the county. I saw no *Vanessa cardui*, **Painted Lady** at all, although I did see two *Colias croceas* **Clouded Yellow** near Southminster. Numbers of *Autographa gamma* **Silver-Y** were low, with just 5 being trapped on 5 different nights. I did see dozens of *Macroglossum* spp. **Hummingbird Hawkmoth**, but they were in Ethiopia!

Finally, just a couple of notable (from my point of view) records:

- My favourite moth of 2014 was probably *Atolmis rubricollis* **Red-Necked Footman**, a single specimen that I caught walking out of the trap on 23 June. It's a very smart moth, one which I haven't seen before. I understand that the resident population has a westerly bias in this country, so it is possible that it was a migrant. Perhaps others better informed can express an opinion on this.



A special moment was finding myself in the extensive unmowed parts of Highwoods Country Park, Colchester (TM0026) during a mass emergence of *Zygaena lonicerae* **Narrow-Bordered Five-Spot Burnet**, pictured left. It was quite a spectacle.

I netted a specimen of the crambid *Agriphila latistria* on the seawall near Hythe Lagoons in Colchester. This species seems to be under-recorded in the county. I imagine that it is one that is unlikely to come to most traps, so it is probably worth going to find it on seawalls and in similar habitats.

(Pic. S.Wair)

STANWAY GREEN MOTHS

ANDREW THOMPSON

Moths were trapped by Andrew Thompson in his garden in Stanway Green, on the southern edge of Colchester between 2001 and 2007 recording 280 species of macro and micro-species. Highlights included **Leopard, Yellow Horned, Lilac Beauty, Great Oak Beauty, Pine Hawk-moth, Small Elephant Hawk-moth, Tawny Shears, Merveille du Jour, Webb's Wainscot, Red Underwing and Peach Blossom**. Micros of note included *Epinotia subocellana*, *Calamotropha paludella*, *Agriphila latistria* and *Catoptria falsella*.

Small Elephant Hawk-moth above an **Elephant Hawk-moth** pictured right (Pic – APT)



MOTHING 2014 SEASON AT CUDMORE GROVE CP

DOUGAL URQUHART

Moth trapping took place on 76 nights at Cudmore Grove Country Park in East Mersea during 2014, almost the same number as in 2013. The general impression of the season was of a good season with plenty of suitable nights for moth activity. Conditions seemed favourable both in March and in October which helped to extend the moth-trapping season at both ends. What was missing were the migrant moths and also very few new macro-moths added to the park list, these being **Crescent Striped, Crescent, Small Clouded Brindle, Orange Footman, Lesser-spotted Pinion and Cypress Carpet**. Macros recorded during the year totalled 248 species.

The season kicked off in early March with a **Dotted Chestnut**, followed by a second one in early April. **Blossom Underwings** were noted on six nights during the first three weeks of April. A female **Emperor** graced the trap on 5th May and promptly laid a batch of eggs in the specimen pot. These were subsequently reared during the summer leading to fourteen pupating through the winter. A **Fox** on the 20th May was the first record for seven years and a single **Cream-spot Tiger** made a welcome reappearance after a three year absence.

The most productive night was on 8th July when Chris Williams set up four traps along with my three traps, dotted along the length of the park from the car park to East Mersea Point a kilometre to the east. By dawn the next day 2000 individuals of 100 macro moth species were logged after a warm night with a slight breeze. Of note were 4 **Crescent Striped**, 2 **Garden Tigers**, **Festoon**, **Ground Lackey**, **Peach Blossom**, **Crescent**, **Sand Dart**, **Archers Dart** and **Fen Wainscot**.



FESTOON



FOX MOTH



ROSY FOOTMAN (D.U.)

The annual EMG meeting took place on a breezy 22nd July with four traps operating. Over 60 species of about 700+ macro individuals were recorded with highlights being **Tree-lichen Beauty**, **Ground Lackey**, **Rosy Footman** and the scarce park record of a **Black Arches**.

Chris Williams returned on 1st August with four traps to join my two, resulting in 65+ macro species being recorded on a cool and clear night. Eight **Tree-lichen Beauties** were of interest along with several **Sandhill Rustics**, **Twin-spot Wainscot**, **Marbled Beauty**, **Bordered Beauty** and a **Vapourer**.

Nothing during the rest of August and September was fairly average while October had one or two species of note. A late **Beautiful Hook-tip** was noted on 1st along with a **Flounced Chestnut** while **Pine Carpet** was logged on three nights. The first site record of **Cypress Carpet** was trapped on 22nd while autumn migrants were a **Gem** on 18th, **Dark Sword-grass** on 22nd and several **Rusty-dot Pearls** throughout the month and into November.

MOTH TRAPPING WEST MERSEA

DOUGAL URQUHART

Running a moth trap in my Firs Chase garden in the middle of West Mersea during 2014 proved interesting and rewarding. The last time I did any mothing here was nine years earlier in 2005, following the purchase of my first moth trap – a Skinner trap which operated on nine nights that autumn. Without any neighbours' houses directly beside our back garden, I've been able to use a 125 MV bulb. No trapping took place in recent years here prior to 2014 as the only trap had been based at Cudmore Grove. A new Robinson trap was acquired and this was put out when conditions and time allowed, operating on 34 nights from start of April to the end of October. On some nights the Skinner trap was also operating at Cudmore Grove CP at East Mersea, providing a contrast between town and country locations. Generally there were fewer moths caught in West Mersea than East Mersea, as one might expect.

Nothing was rewarding during June and July peaking in the middle of July when the weather got very warm and muggy at night. One very productive night came to an abrupt end on the 18th July at 3.30am when a thunderstorm cracked overhead and the rain fell like stair-rods onto the trap, drowning a few moths on the white sheet.



MERVEILLE DU JOUR



WEST MERSEA GARDEN



Palpita vitrealis (D.U.)

Amongst the highlights was the first Island record of **Small Ranunculus** on 16/7, as was a **Black Arches** on 18/7. Saltmarsh species **Ground Lackey** on 18/7 and **Sandhill Rustic** on 26/7 strayed over 200m from the nearest shore to find our garden. Seven species of **Hawk-moth** came by night to the trap with the eighth species seen in the daytime being a **Hummingbird Hawk-moth**. The **Tree-lichen Beauty** appeared to like the garden during the second half of July, being noted on seven nights and peaking on the 26th with an impressive 22 individuals. There were the interesting records of **Coronet** on 1/6, **Dotted Fan-foot** on 7/6, **Dark Spectacle** on 17/7, **Oak Eggar** on 18/7, **Old Lady** on 31/8, **Pine Carpet** on 25/9 and 18/10 and a late **Swallow-tailed** on 1/10. The season finale was saved for the 18/10 on a warm night with a touch of rain when a few migrants dropped in. A **Gem**, **Dark Sword-grass**, 3 *Palpita vitrealis*, 3 **Rusty-dot Pearls**, **Silver-Y**, **White-point** and **Diamond-back** were amongst just seventeen species noted, although the highlight was the only **Merveille du Jour** seen on the Island in 2014.

Other interesting observations about numbers were the reasonable numbers of **Shuttle-shaped Darts** in the spring, **Least Carpets** peaking at ten on 17/7 and good numbers of **Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwings** in August which peaked at 40 on 13th more than double the number of all the other moths in the trap that night.

VISITS TO ESSEX COASTAL SITES 2014

CHRIS WILLIAMS (Staffordshire)

Wanting to see some of the Essex coastal speciality moths I made contact with Dougal Urquhart at Cudmore Grove Country Park and Matt Cole at Fingringhoe Wick Nature Reserve. I was pleased to hear from both of them that I would be welcome to do some trapping.

The first trip was in mid-June to Cudmore Grove on an almost perfect evening for trapping. Meeting up with Dougal and having had a walk around the park, I decided to set six traps, four on the eastern end of the park and the others on the vegetated shingle on the foreshore. Moths started to come freely to the traps, two **Cream-spot Tigers**, **Rosy Wave** & **Sand Dart** on the beach and **Maple Prominent**, **Dotted Fan-foot**, **Blotched Emerald** & seven **Hawk-moths** – **Lime, Elephant, Small Elephant, Pine, Eyed, Privet & Poplar**, in total I had 65 macro species.



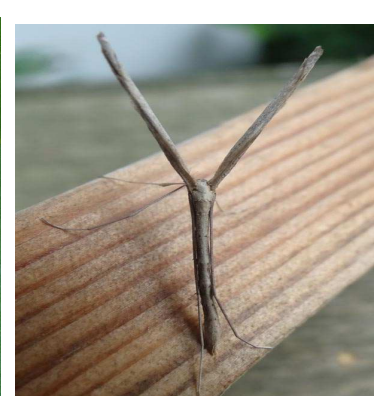
ARCHERS DART



CRESCENT-STRIPED



SAND DART



SALTMARSH PLUME (D.U.)

A second visit was made in early July, again in ideal weather conditions, five traps being set. One on the eastern end of the park, two on the vegetated shingle on the foreshore and two on the salt marsh on the point. Early arrivals were **Festoon**, **Lackey**, **Ground Lackey**, **Least Carpet**, **Rosy Wave**, **Feathered Ranunculus**, **Archers Dart**, **White-line Dart** & **Tansy Plume**. One of the traps on the point attracted five **Crescent Striped** & **Mugwort Plume**. The night ending with 66 macro species trapped.

A third visit was made at the end of July, again being blessed with a shirt-sleeve night, four traps being set at the western end of the park. The main features of the night being **Tree-lichen Beauty**, **Cream-bordered Green Pea**, **Starwort** & **Sandhill Rustic**. The night ending with 85 macro species taken.

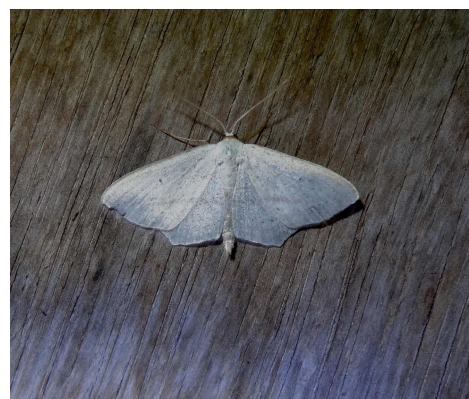
Dougal had made arrangements for me to trap on the salt marsh at Maydays Farm on the north side of Mersea Island. The first visit being made in mid-June, when five traps were set in rather windy conditions, behind bushes, on banksides & in ditches. Despite the wind moths soon started arriving, an assortment of **Wainscots** including **Shoulder-striped**, **Fen**, **Obscure** & **Matthews** plus **White-point**, **Nutmeg** & **Blotched Emerald**. The wind had obviously kept numbers down but a total of 46 species was quite satisfactory.



GROUND LACKEY



MAYDAYS SALTMARSH



ROSY WAVE

(D.U.)

Another visit was made in early July, the temperature being somewhat cooler than the previous few days. Four traps were set, two on the salt marsh (with the knowledge that the tide would be low) and the others on the track side of the sea wall. The strange looking **Saltmarsh Plume** was an early arrival, followed by **Ground Lackey**, **White-point**, **Fen Wainscot**, **Wormwood Pug**, **Rosy Wave**, **Garden Tigers & Festoon**. From the salt marsh came a buff version of the **Poplar Hawk**, the first I have seen for 8 years.

The first visit to Fingringhoe Wick was made in early July, when six traps were set. The first to arrive were two **Orange Moths**, followed by **Rosy Footman**, **Ground Lackey & Matthews Wainscot**. Later came **White-line Dart**, **Yarrow & Brown Plumes**, **Least Carpet**, **Kent Black Arches** and a good variety of summer moths. After a still, warm night a vast amount of various small insects arrived to help me check the traps, which I found more than a trifle distracting, despite the application of liberal amounts of Jungle Formula. I managed to record 118 species.

A subsequent visit was made in late July, in excellent weather conditions, five traps being set. The highlight of the night being the **White-spotted Pinions** that came to the trap set in the visitors carpark. I also had **White-line Dart**, **Sand Dart**, **Lackey**, **Ground Lackey**, **Small Rufous**, **Sandhill Rustic**, **Black Arches & Tree-lichen Beauty**. I recorded a total of 102 species.

I hope to visit the sites again this year in search of other coastal species.

MOTHING FINGRINGHOE – 8TH AUGUST 2014

DOUGAL URQUHART

A memorable evening was had at Fingringhoe nature reserve on 8th August in the search for **White-spotted Pinions**. Essex mothers were almost outnumbered by visiting Suffolk mothers who brought with them eight traps to join my two. The evening had started promising at 9.30pm with warm and overcast conditions along with a light breeze, seemingly ideal for mothing. Initially the main focus was on the perspex Gardner trap in the visitor centre car park which had the moths soon fluttering into and on it. During the evening the group did a couple of rounds checking each of the ten traps in turn that were spread out on the reserve along some of the paths, in the coach car park and down by the old quay.

It wasn't long before the first **White-spotted Pinion** was found in the visitor centre car park, the same locality where three were found in 2013. Shortly after a second one was found in the other trap here, then later a third along the narrow path leading south from the car park, a fourth in the coach car park and a fifth along the wooded path leading to Kitts pond. Each person who brought a trap along was rewarded with their own **White-spotted Pinion**. Very satisfying to see a handful of these scarce elm feeding moths at the one site.

White-spotted Pinion pictured left was photographed by Chris Williams at Fingringhoe on 31st July 2014



A total of 119 species were recorded, 71 macros and 48 micros.

Macros of note included **Peach Blossom**, **Cypress Pug**, **Small Seraphim**, **Vapourer**, **Dark Sword-grass**, **White-point**, **Antler**, **Coronet**, **Tree-lichen Beauty**, **White-spotted Pinion**, **Sandhill Rustic**, **Webb's Wainscot**, **Small Rufous** and **Silver Y**.

Micros of note were *Plutella xylostella*, *Agonopterix nervosa*, *Aroga velocella*, *Bactra lancealana*, *Eucosma tripoliana*, *Calamotropha paludella*, *Agriphila selasella*, *Catoptria falsella*, *Platytes alpinella*, *Cryptoblabes bistriga* and **Saltmarsh Plume**.

The evening's fun soon turned miserable at midnight when the heavens opened, each of us running back to our traps to quickly clear everything away. Everything got well and truly drenched and it was a shame the very productive evening ended so abruptly. For some it was a slow wet drive home, lots of big puddles to avoid and more drying out of traps in the garden the next day for the second weekend running!

A big thankyou to Matthew Deans, Neil Shearman and Stuart Read for bringing along all their traps from across the border and for identifying all the little micros so readily! Thanks to Matt Cole for allowing us late night access onto the reserve.

MOTHING ACTIVITY 2014

NEIL HARVEY

My mothing activities can be divided into three main areas: running a 60W actinic light trap in my garden in Rowhedge; keeping an eye on the outside lights at Abbots Hall Farm (where I work); and field recording while I'm out and about around the county. The latter includes searching for adults and caterpillars, but also leaf mines and larval cases. These provide great opportunities for expanding knowledge, as they are, in general, poorly recorded in the county, particularly so in recent years.

On the morning of 18th July I found *Metalampra italica* in my trap, a recent colonist in this country for which there do not appear to be any previous Essex records. If anybody else has caught this moth then please let me (and the County Recorder) know. Previously considered endemic to Italy, it was first recorded in 2003 in Devon, possibly as a result of accidental introduction, and it has turned up in several counties across the south of England and Wales since. The larvae feed in decaying wood beneath loose bark.



Metalampra italica



Coleophora aestuariella (N.H.)

The case-bearing micro *Coleophora aestuariella* has only been recorded once in Essex, by Steve Rolls at Point Clear in 2012, so I was pleased to find an occupied case on saltmarsh at The Naze at the end of September. I'm sure it will eventually be found all along the coast wherever there is a decent amount of its food plant, Annual Seablite.



CURRENT CLEARWING



Dasycera oliviella (N.H.)

In June I was fortunate to stumble across a **Currant Clearwing** basking in the sun on an Elder in a residential part of Maldon. This is a Nationally Scarce species included on the Essex Red Data List with only a few thinly scattered records across the county.

Records of other Nationally Scarce, Essex Red Data List species were: adult *Dasycera oliviella* at Abbots Hall Farm in July; adult *Metriotes lutarea* in East Mersea in June; the leaf mine of *Phyllocnistis xenia* at the Naze at the end of September; the mine of *Ectoedemia heringella* on Holm Oak in Maldon in December; and the mine of *Ectoedemia erythrogenerella* on Bramble at Wrabness Nature Reserve in November. In July I found an occupied case of *Coleophora amethystinella* (= *fuscicornis*) on Smooth Tare on Layer Breton Heath. The status of this species is provisionally RDB2, but it is reasonably easy to find in suitable habitat when you know what to look for, and so either this status may prove to be slightly exaggerated or Essex really is a national hotspot.

Some of the more unusual for Essex species from light trapping in Rowhedge included: *Ectoedemia intimella*, *Eulamprotes unicolorella*, *Hedya ochroleucana*, the beautiful *Oncocera semirubella*, **Golden-rod Pug** and **Great Prominent**.



Oncocera semirubella



Dichrorampha sequana (N.H.)

During the year I found leaf mines of the following species for which there are very few Essex records: *Phyllonorycter sorbi* on Rowan at East Hanningfield; *Stigmella svenssoni* on Pedunculate Oak at Layer Breton Heath; *Stigmella continuella* on Silver Birch at Stanway; and *Stigmella suberivora* on Holm Oak in Maldon. In addition I was able to record *Coleophora albicosta* from a case on Gorse at Layer Breton Heath. The scarcity of these species should really be taken with a pinch of salt, as I believe that very few people are recording leaf mines with any regularity and these are generally species that aren't recorded with light traps.

Micro-moth imagines recorded while out and about included the following: *Narycia duplicella* on a trunk in Well Wood, Hanningfield Reservoir in June; *Dichrorampha sequana* and *Ancylis badiana* by one of the balancing ponds on the A130 near Rettendon at the beginning of June; *Apodia bifractella* feeding on Fleabane flowers at Hanningfield Reservoir and Colchester Hythe Marshes in the first half of August; *Cedestis gysselella* swept at dusk in a pine plantation on East Mersea in June; *Phalonidia manniana* at Rushes Lock on the River Chelmer near Ulting in July; and *Phyllonorycter lautella* beaten from a Pedunculate Oak on Layer Breton Heath.



Ancylis badiana



Phalonidia manniana (N.H.)

Of the still reasonably common, but rapidly declining, species included in the UK BAP (now more properly called Species of Principal Importance in England) for research only, my garden trap gave me records of **Knot Grass**, **Beaded Chestnut**, **Ear Moth**, **Mouse Moth**, **Large Nutmeg**, **Centre-barred Sallow**, **Small Phoenix**, **Autumnal Rustic**, **Shoulder-striped Wainscot**, **Large Wainscot**, **Oak Hook-tip**, **Sallow**. **Beaded Chestnut**, **Sallow** and **Large Wainscot** were also recorded at Abbots Hall Farm.

In my (fairly limited) experience, none of these species is particularly scarce in our area, but a look at the distribution maps on the Essex Field Club website will show the scale of their decline, with almost as many old (brown) dots as recent (blue) ones. I'm sure that if I'd been recording for longer, I'd be noticing a decrease in abundance and frequency. At the end of June, a **Garden Tiger** at Abbots Hall Farm was my first recent record of this species, which is also a Species of Principal Importance in England and which genuinely seems to be scarce in my part of Essex.



Looking forward to 2015, it will be more of the same, with potentially my first full year of trapping in my relatively new garden at Rowhedge and continued searching for under-recorded leaf mining and case bearing species in odd corners of the county.

Oak Hook-tip, left.

All pictures Neil Harvey

MY MOTHING YEAR

STEVE ROLLS

Looking back through my records for 2014 they showed it to be a good year but by no means a vintage one. The year started well when I managed to trap some **Yellow Horned** and a couple of **Alder Moths** in Layer Wood, these 2 species have proved elusive to me since I started trapping 7 years ago, During the summer trapping in Layer Wood produced much the same as 2013 with no real surprises other than a *Synaphe punctalis* which is usually found at coastal locations, **Kent Black Arches**, **Scallop Shell**, **Red-necked Footman** and the Micro *Pseudopostega crepusculella* being the highlights.

Trapping in Point Clear proved productive during the summer, **Silver Barred** being the pick, **Sand Dart**, *Eidophasia messingiella*, *Platytes cerussella*, *Crociosema plebejana* and a **Delicate** were the highlights.

Moth trapping in Braintree was excellent last year, not great numbers but some new to me species, **Square-spotted Clay** and **Four-spotted Footman** were the pick of the Macros, Micro high-lights included *Antispila metallella* and my Moth of the year a *Pammene populana* which was found in a polytunnel.



Pammene populana



YELLOW-LEGGED CLEARWING



Pseudopostega crepuscula (S.R.)

My searches for *Coleophora* new to me continues and 2014 proved very productive, In April I had a successful search for *Coleophora juncicolella* in Pod's Wood, *Coleophora solitariella* turned up in Highfield Lane just outside Tiptree and *Coleophora siccifolia* at work in Braintree.



Coleophora juncicolella



Coleophora solitariella



Coleophora siccifolia



Coleophora kuehnella



Coleophora siccifolia

(All pics S.R.)

MACRO AND MICRO LISTS & NOTHING IN LAYER

PETER PYKE

Hi all, I have been asked by the very persuasive Dougal to write a paragraph or two for the newsletter. As you can see from the title there are 2 parts to this, the first concerns my "project" to compile lists of the Macro and Micro moths found in Essex. The lists will include common and Latin names, along with both the Bradley number and the newer Agassiz species number. I also hope to have information re flight times, status, distribution and habitat preferences. Due to the size of the lists they are not shown here but the Macro list is on the Essex Field Club site whereas the Micro list is still being worked on. I hope to have this finished in 2-3 months, (fingers crossed).

I have been running a trap in my garden since 2001 but for the last 2 years my moth recording has been limited to participating in the national Garden Moth Scheme. In this scheme you trap every Friday night and complete the online form with the temperature, species caught and the numbers of each species, the form only lists the most commonly trapped species but you are able to add additional species at the end of the form.

2013 = 126 recordable species with a total of 1244 moths. I did not record other species trapped on the form but they are in paper form waiting to be put onto Mapmate.

2014 = 146 recordable species with a total of 1815 moths; these were trapped over 36 weeks between 28/02 and 31/10. I also trapped a further 155 moths of 56 species, + the inevitable unidentifiable little brown jobs!!

As can be seen 2014 was a much better year in terms of number of species and total of moths trapped, the top 2 in terms of numbers for 2013 were **Setaceous Hebrew Character** = 226 and **Water Veneer** = 82, (2014 = 76 & 32 respectively).

2014 top 2 were *Chrysoteuchia culmella* = 212 and **Dark Arches** = 119, (2013 = 73 & 25 respectively).

Apart from the weather the only other changes between the 2 years is the fact that I have removed 10 x 40 foot Leylandii trees thus letting a lot more light into my back garden.

My garden list of all Lepidoptera is now 563, the majority of which I have relied heavily on Brian Goodey to ID, so many thanks to him and everyone else who has helped me during that time.

Well roll on 2015 and hopefully it will be full of good surprises for us all.

It was to be birding that brought me into contact with the world of moths

A holiday in Wales in the late 70's at Cnwch Coch 10 miles S E of Aberystwyth this holiday cottage produced my first Red Kite and nest just 200yds from the property within 15mins of arrival. An early start the Sunday morning I met my neighbour about to take his wife to Church in Aberystwyth when I spoke of the Kite he declined any comment but invited the 3 of us to join them Monday at 7pm. We escaped at 1-20am the following morning after 4 hrs of slides on birds and moths a totally new subject to me this was followed by a trip to Borth and on to the Dovey estuary showing me his trap locations in this area. This gentleman was some 15yrs our senior had been retired since he was early fifties from Trawscoed as an entomologist.

With the passage of time and joint birding holiday to Spain including one very memorable trip when the strong winds held up migration for several days to produce a passage of awe inspiring size with 3 huge spirals and many hundreds of thousands of birds on passage such that we had to seek shelter behind a building in the Pedro Valiente area to the east of Tarifa to avoid being hit in the face by the fast flying Falcons and , then post arrived one day with a 12volt 6watt tubed moth trap which I still use on a regular basis and the switch began from birds to moths.

Andrew Cook has been and still is a motivator albeit he is on Fetlar. Stephen Rolls has been a major source of assistance in recent years most notably with micros, plus a very pro-active contact in Wales, Peter Williams who I am in regular contact as we still continue our love affair with that country trapping on an annual basis. I have attached a few records plus one of my terrace type garden here at Sible Hedingham, mid point on the north Essex border with Suffolk.



I started recording species and numbers at the start of 2011, these are the findings from my twin 30watt tubes and a 12volt 6watt tube traps, whilst I have 125w systems it is unsuitable for my small garden, pictured left, and proximity of neighbours. Trap(s) were run 2011-2014 on 103-109-129-125 nights in every month of the year.

Species returns as follows 2011and 2012 saw a total of 447 ,by the end of 2013 it was 574,and for 2014 it is 627 I cannot claim 100% accuracy I regret to say on these figures, with more note to the earlier years, however with access to the considerable assistance I have been given from those previously mentioned my hit ratio of the last two years must be very good.



WAVED BLACK



DARK SPINACH



GOLDEN TWIN-SPOT

(Pics A.S.)

I have of course taken time to review these said records and deleted any I currently consider debatable, all I can say is I have never knowingly added a record that I knew was wrong

These records have been and are for my enjoyment long may it remain so, still supported annually by 3 weeks worth of records from Wales, now I can no-longer trap in Spain and Portugal.

Golden Twin-spot This was following the posting off of the moth to Brian Goodey - Lifer 2014

Dark Spinach - Lifer 2014, **Barred Sallow** - Lifer 2014, **Waved Black** - Lifer 2012

I have been moth trapping on and off in our garden for a number of years and during that time I have been grateful to both Brian Goodey and Chris Gibson for help with ID, especially with the micros. In 2014 I also had additional help from Nigel Richards (UK Moths) and Jon Clifton (ALS).

In comparison to catches in 2001 and 2002 I am now catching similar numbers of species but the total numbers have been reduced by about 30% even though I have doubled the numbers of moth traps I am using.

I have in recent years had a lot less free time to put out the moth traps, but when I do it can be quite rewarding, especially for a site so near to Chelmsford. In 2014 I trapped for 4 weeks from mid-March then again from mid-May to mid-June and all of August. Finally at the end of the year I trapped for 3 weeks from the 25th November. During 2014 I added 17 new macros and 48 micros to my Boreham garden patch list.



SMALL RANUNCULUS



GREY BIRCH



TOADFLAX BROCADE (G.E.)

Interesting new macros in May included **Grey Birch**, **Marbled Brown**, **Light Brocade** and **Small Clouded Brindle**. In June **Beautiful Hook-tip**, **Round-winged Muslin** and **Cream-bordered Green-Pea**. From the 30th July I trapped **Tree-Lichen Beauties** daily until the 9th August with a peak of 9 on the 1st August. This species is only a recent addition to the Boreham macro fauna. In August I added **The Ear** (*Amphipoea* agg), on the 1st, **Shaded Broad-bar** on the 2nd with **Toadflax Brocade** on the 9th and **Small Ranunculus** on the 15th August. Sadly I was away for most of the impressive migration season.

*Cydia amplana**Argyresthia curvella**Eucosma obumbratana* (G.E.)

Thanks to Nigel and Jon, I was able to add a number of interesting micros to my patch list. They included the adventive species *Gelechia senticelella*, *Tachystola acroxantha*, *Cydia amplana* and *Cochylis molliculana* as well as scarce Essex species such as *Coleophora alcyonipennella* (dissection), *Parornix Scoticella*, *Argyresthia curvella*, and *Eucosma obumbratana*.

I am looking forward to the start of the 2015 mothing season.

LIGHT TRAPPING AT CUCKOO MARSH AND ROUND MARSH (BLUE HOUSE FARM) - CINDY LAWES

From May 1 to August 1, 2014, as part of a university course field project I conducted light trapping using 15W Actinic Heath traps at Cuckoo Marsh and Round Marsh within the Blue House Farm EWT reserve. This was in addition to the regular trapping using a 125MV Robinson trap conducted by Graham Smith at the farmhouse. Cuckoo Marsh is a long and narrow grassy area along a counter wall with an east/west orientation, bordered by a low-lying marshy area leading to a year-round fleet with extensive reed bed containing *Phragmites australis*. Cuckoo Marsh was last grazed in 2010; grazing was abandoned to improve habitat for breeding wildfowl through natural succession of flora. Round Marsh is closer to the village of Fambridge and the farmhouse than Cuckoo Marsh, and is a long and narrow grassy field with a north/south orientation bordered by a reed filled ditch (*Phragmites australis*) and a counter wall, over which is found a seasonal fleet. Grazing occurs annually anytime from April through September dependent on stock availability.



SMALL WAINSCOT



SOUTHERN WAINSCOT



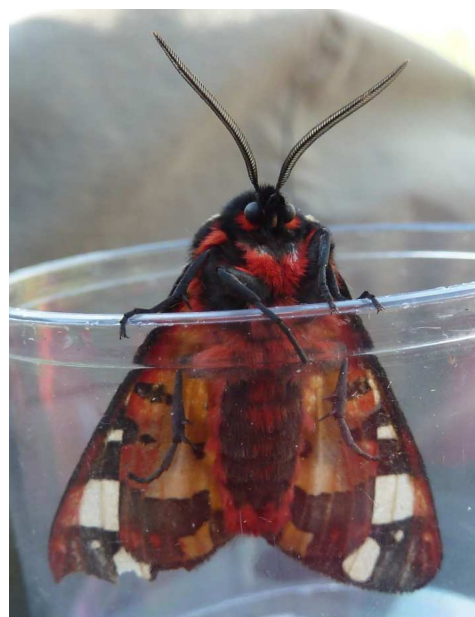
REED DAGGER

(C.L.)

Over 10 trap nights when both traps were set a total of 62 moth species belonging to 50 genera in 13 families (568 individuals) were recorded. The most frequently recorded family was Noctuidae, representing 34 out of 62 species. The two most abundant species from both sites were **Smoky Wainscot** *Mythimna impura* (12 occasions for 103 individuals) and **Dark Arches** *Apamea monoglypha* (12 occasions for 64 individuals). As could be predicted based on proximity to plants required for the life cycle requirements of specific species, a higher number of grassland specialists were recorded at Cuckoo Marsh than Round Marsh, where a higher number of herbaceous specialists were recorded. In addition to the species listed above, typical common grassland species which were trapped with some regularity during their expected seasons included **Southern Wainscot** *Mythimna straminea*, **Shoulder-striped Wainscot** *Mythimna comma*, **Reed Dagger** *Simyra albovenosa*, **Large Yellow Underwing** *Noctua pronuba*, The **Drinker** *Euthrix potatoria*, and **Garden Grass-veneer** *Chrysoteuchia culmella*. Of those moths with a greater than 75% decline in abundance within Britain, four were recorded: **Small Square-spot** *Diarsia rubi*, **Rosy Rustic** *Hydraecia micacea*, **Mouse Moth** *Amphipyra tragopoginis*, and **Rustic** *Hoplodrina blanda*.



ANTLER



CREAM SPOT TIGER

(All pics C.L.)

Some figures from all data collected at Blue House Farm

Of the 152 UKBAP species, 42 have been recorded from the entire reserve since 2008, all classed as 'research only' (widespread but rapidly declining moths), and none as 'scarce/threatened'. Of the 146 species on the Essex Red Data list, 23 have been recorded at Blue House Farm since 2008. For comparison, between 1 May and 1 August, the 125MV Robinson trap set at the farmyard for twelve trap nights (not on the same nights as my project), recorded 136 species and 1406 individuals, demonstrating the effect of having a large diversity of flora within range of a powerful light. If only we had a very, very long lead from the mains.....For the period 2008-2014, a total of 347 species have been trapped, which is 51% of the total recorded in Essex.

A full list of the primary data and the original report is available on request, but will be submitted to the EFC journal for publication.

On a personal note: I have Les Steward to thank for my new mothing interest. I have been birding since 1990 and continue to do so but also wanted to do something with nature closer to home. Over the years I had looked at a few of the moths Les trapped on the Scillies, and had even seen **Death's Head Hawk-moth** at Longstones Cafe. I knew about moth trapping but it wasn't until I spoke to Les in 2013 that he offered to loan us his light trap. I was intrigued. I could set a trap at night in our back garden in Maldon and not worry about it until the next morning, without having to arise (ahem) with the birds. New listing opportunities presented themselves! I will never forget checking the trap for the first time. It was July and the trap held gems such as **Elephant Hawk-moth**, **Privet Hawk-moth** and **Buff-tip**. I marvelled that a pink moth could be so perfectly camouflaged in the nearby flowering honeysuckle. The **Elephant Hawk-moth** stood on my hand as it warmed up its' thoracic muscles and then took off directly into my face. Magic. And the **Buff-tip**, looking just like a snapped off birch twig. Fantastic. Within a few weeks I had ordered a 60W Actinic Skinner trap and was trapping regularly. Turns out our area is well represented with Simon Wood and Russell Neave also trapping. A whole new world has been opened for me. I was so interested that I chose moths for my 2014 field project, and enjoyed every minute of it, with more plans for trapping in the future. Thanks Les.

MOTHING IN AN AGRICULTURAL DESERT

MOIRA TARRANT

When I first started mothing, it was driven by an interest in what insects were using my garden beyond the obvious day-time ones. It was only from attending Essex Moth Group meetings that I realised what impact the location of a trapping site can have on catches. And looking around Mashbury, it wasn't promising. Most land is intensively farmed with the main crops being Rape and Wheat, plus Potatoes on a wide rotation. Field boundaries are minimal and crops are managed for maximum yield. And yet catches are interesting enough to maintain my interest over the last twenty years, so what do we get here?

Moths, like everything else, have to make use of what is available and the principal resource obviously is my own garden. We have always gardened in a way which means that virtually everything can be used by someone in some way. We take what we need of fruit, nuts, vegetables, cut flowers etc and leave residue well alone. Other readily available habitats are hedges - miles of Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Field Maple, Bramble and Dog Rose with Ash, both flailed and mature and ancient pollarded Oaks at intervals. So species that can use this mix do so in reliable numbers, making the site excellent for GMS recording. We may not get a lot of (to us) exotic species but, boy, can we rely on **Quakers**, **Yellow Underwings**, **Wainscots**, **Footmen**, **Large Nutmegs** and **Square-spots**.

Also frequent in this area are old farmhouses mediaeval in origin, so moats in various stages of maintenance are frequent, giving sightings of reed and water species such as **Webb's** and **Large Wainscot**.



Chrysoteuchia culmella



Stathmopoda pedella



Twenty Plume

(M.T.)

When Chris Gibson was reporting each year on his garden trapping, he made the point that although he gardened for wildlife, he could produce no statistical evidence for the impact - positive or negative. As, by definition, there can be no control data, this must be true for all sites but we have seen direct response to what we have planted. **Nut-tree Tussocks** only arrived after we planted Cob and Filberts in the garden although Hazel is fairly frequent in local hedges. **Elephant Hawk-moth** and **Twenty-plume** arrived after I planted a pergola with Honeysuckle. The **Elephants** are now breeding in the garden on *Zauschneria californica*. The maintenance of rough grassland in the garden of a now ex-pub next door to us, coupled with Summer weather conditions directly impacts on the number of **Grass Veneers** that we catch. In contrast with an average year when we see 100 - 200 *Chrysoteuchia culmella* in their season, in 2010 when the owner didn't get round to mowing all summer and the weather was hot we counted 964 (approximately!) Trends take longer to reach this far inland. It was a couple of years after others nearer the coast were reporting **White-point** becoming regular that I caught any here. They have not yet outstripped the **Clay**, unlike **Dingy Footman** which now well overtake **Common Footman** that have dwindled alarmingly from their peak in 2010-2011. **L-album Wainscot** however, has yet to reach us.



NUT-TREE TUSSOCK



SMALL ANGLE SHADES



BLOTCHED EMERALD (M.T.)

My impression of 2014 during the year was that we were seeing a lot of species showing up after a long gap. Now the data is all entered, I can see that this was true for a number of lovely species including **Alder Moth**, **Blotched Emerald**, **Small Angle Shades**, **Sycamore** and **Webb's Wainscot**. Some drops in numbers are predictable. Spring species have performed badly here for several years as they have elsewhere. Less explicable were drops in normally good species including most of the **Hawk-moths**, **Blood-vein** (only 1) and **Mouse Moth** (none).

Even here, where vagrants rarely venture and so surprises are far fewer than for the coastal moth-ers, each year brings something to surprise and delight us. And the surprises are perhaps better for being less frequent. This year it was a *Stathmopoda pedella* - what an extraordinary moth!

For the first time in 2013 we trapped outside our garden at a nearby brand-new Community Orchard. I had two reasons for doing it - the first being that I am working hard to demonstrate the value of the one-acre site in terms of biodiversity, and the other is that it is handy in a 1 Km square for which there was no moth data.

The newness of the planting and the prevalence of common grassland plants such as Common Knapweed meant that we were unlikely to trap anything unusual. Also a factor was that as there is no power on site, I could not run my MV light so made a Heath-Robinson affair of the electrics from two Actinic traps running on batteries. The first year, we trapped in early October with children helping out for the first hour, which tested the nerves - but no moths were harmed.

This year we trapped at mid-summer so had no human visitors. What I hadn't predicted, never having to my shame been to an Essex Moth Group trapping, was the sheer beauty of sitting in the orchard as the light slowly faded. The clouds at last lost their glow from the setting sun and stars appeared - a few at first and then thousands and the only sound; a distant Tawny Owl.

CURRY FARM, BRADWELL REPORT 2014

STEPHEN DEWICK

Although 2014 was certainly, for migrants, another very good year, generally numbers of resident butterflies and moths, were not very good at all and the evidence suggests that this was mostly because of the exceptionally wet seasons we are currently having. The winter was again very, very wet and extraordinarily enough this culminated in February on the night of the 14th, when the flooding outside the house became so severe that several hours were spent carting hundreds of buckets of water from outside on the driveway and dumping them on to the lower ground over the other side beyond the fence. Whether we would have ultimately been flooded is anybody's guess but it was certainly the first time it has ever been as bad as that. One of our neighbours across the brook has access to continuous rainfall figures for Bradwell and Tillingham dating back 125 years. 2013/14 was amongst the six wettest, as was 2000/2001 and so when we say it never rained like it does nowadays, it appears to be true.

It was an interesting start to the year; on January 2nd there were no less than three **Red Admirals**, one **Small Tortoiseshell** and two **Peacocks**, followed by a further six butterfly dates during the month. Most interestingly on the 10th we saw our first ever January **Comma**, the butterfly being active near the moth trap for over an hour.

These mid-winter butterflies are quite a remarkable phenomenon, in the past we used to read of odd records in the magazines and these always seemed extraordinary, but in 1992 on 6th January it was a lovely warm day and both **Small Tortoiseshell** and **Peacock** were about. From 1998 on it has actually been exceptional to completely miss a month. Is this entirely due to climate change, only time will tell!

It was good to see a **Yellow Horned Moth** *A.flavicornis* in the trap on the 24th February our first since 1999. The remarkably mild spell at the end of March resulted in two **Holly Blues** being seen on the 29th, (our earliest since 1990) and two days later there were deposits of Saharan dust on the car but sadly no immigrants to note. On 1st April our first **Speckled Wood** appeared and an **Orange-Tip** was out on the 3rd, (our earliest ever). **Orange-Tip** more than any other species does seem to be getting earlier and earlier and the way things are going it may not be long before we get a March one as well.

There was a **Scarce Tissue moth** *H.cervinalis* in the trap on the 30th March which again I am assured is exceptionally early, but being a very rare species here anyway, what the normal date would be locally is hard to tell. April 9th was a strange night, there were **Early Tooth-striped** *T. carpinata*, the first since 1998 and **White-marked** *C.leucographa*, the first ever. Whether these were migrants or was it a coincidence that both appeared on the same night, it is impossible to tell.



OAK PROCESSIONARY



LUNAR YELLOW UNDERWING

(S.D.)

The immigrant butterflies **Red Admiral** and **Clouded Yellow** both had an excellent year but **Painted Lady** by recent standards was quite uncommon. There were two **Lunar Yellow Underwing** *N.orbona* in the trap on 6th June with another the following night. The only previous records here were both in 1982 so this is presumably an immigrant as well. Our earliest ever **Ringlet** was seen on 12th June and another very nice sighting was a **White Admiral** which was about between 17 -20 June, When last seen here in 2006 one stayed around for no less than 13 days, suggesting that this must be a potentially suitable breeding site. It is a shame it doesn't appear to become established.

Of further note were **Oak Processionary** *T. processionea* on 1st Aug and **Dusky Hook-tip** *D.curvatula* on 6th August. Twelve **Four-spotted Footman** *L quadra* were recorded and there were no less than eight *Evergestis limbata* between 12th July and 22nd September, a species with only one previous record, but the main excitement was yet to come,

Late September and early October were both interesting but on the night of 13th October an extraordinary sudden influx of immigrants really began. Highlights that night included 177 **Rusty-dot Pearl** *U.ferrugalis* a **Scarce Bordered Straw** *H. armigera* and our long awaited first record of the beautiful pyralid *Spoladea recurvalis*.



Spoladea recurvalis



WHITE-MARKED

(All pics S.D.)

Over the following weeks the general influx continued and there were six **Plumed Fan-foot** *P.plumigeralis*, one *Diasemiopsis ramburialis*, an incredible 31 *Palpita vitrealis* which almost surpassed last year's record and on 2nd November another *S.recurvalis*.

The season ended with a number of peculiar late records; **Kent Black Arches** *M.albula* on 17th and 28th October, **Pebble Hook-tip** *D.falcataria* on 31st October, **Merveille du Jour** *D.aprilina* on 25th November and **Blair's Shoulder-knot** *L.leautieri* on 17th December were amongst the best.



Stephen Dewick, left, inside his giant moth trap at Curry Farm examining the catch on 6th July 2014. Amongst the hundreds of moths, of note were **Bordered Beauty**, **Lilac Beauty**, **Rosy Footman**, **Dark Spectacle** and this **Orange Moth**, right.

(Pics – DU)



LEPIDOPTERA REPORT – FOULNESS 2014

CHRIS LEWIS

Trapping occurred on 9 nights between 12th April and 20th September. The traps were mostly sited on the Bennetts Butt road.

272 species were recorded, 18 of which were new for Foulness. This brings the total number of species of Lepidoptera for which I have a record of occurrence on Foulness to 561. 19th and 23rd July were particularly good nights with 133 and 136 species respectively recorded.

Perhaps the most spectacular occurrence was the sight of 40 **Oak Eggars** (pictured right), 30 **Drinkers** and 10 **Lappets** in the trap on 19th July.

Photo by C.Lewis



I have a photographic voucher for nearly all the species listed. These and others are gradually being presented on my moth website britishlepidoptera.weebly.com, which mammoth task I hope to complete by Spring 2016.

Scarce species recorded in 2014 are shown in bold in the cumulative list presented below:

Red Data Book species (Nationally Endangered, Vulnerable or Rare)

Eulamprotes immaculatella – 1 on 05/08/2012 – S England & N Scotland

Coleophora amethystinella – 1 on 08/05/11 – only known to occur in North Essex (and 1 record from Hampshire), this is the first Essex record South of the Blackwater.

Eucosma rubescana – 1 on 08/06/2008 – saltmarsh in Kent, Essex & Suffolk

***Deltote bankiana* (Silver Barred)** – 1 on 13/06/2009; 1 on 10/07/2010; 2 on 30/06/2013; **1 on 07/06/2014**

Nationally Scarce A (found in 30 or fewer 10km squares of the National Grid)

Elachista scirpi 1 on 14/07/2013 – saltmarsh in England and Wales

Ground Lackey – 1 on 10/07 and 31/07/2010; 1 on 19/08/2012 - Saltmarsh in SE England Barred Tooth-striped – 1 on 03/04/10 - prefers areas with chalky soils.

Nationally Scarce B (31-100 10km squares of the National Grid) or

Uncommon in Essex (UE):

Stigmella aceris 1 on 22/09/2013. UE and probably NS-B but status uncertain. This tiny moth with forewing length 2.2mm was first recorded in Britain in 1949, second record 1971, several subsequent records and now seems to be spreading but still scarce. It is on the Essex Field Club's Red Data List, which shows 14 previous Essex records.

***Monochroa palustrellus* (NS-B)** 3 on 14/07/2013, 1 on 21/07/2013; **2 on 12/07, 1 on 19/07/2014**

Coleophora limoniella (NS-B) 1 on 14/07/2013 – saltmarsh in SE England

***Coleophora deviella* (NS-B)** 1 on 23/07/11; **1 on 19/07, 1 on 26/07/2014** – saltmarsh in SE England

Coleophora adspersella (NS-B) 1 on 05/08/2012 – S.England

Thiodia citrana (NS-B) 2 on 28/06/2008, 1 on 01/07/2008, 2 on 04/07/2009, 4 on 14/07/2013, 2 on 21/07/2013

***Pammene gallicana* (NS-B)** **1 on 19/07/2014**

Hornet Moth (NS-B) 1 on 25/07/09, 1 on 11/06/2011 – SE England

Ancylois oblitella (NS-B), 1 on 31/07 and 07/08/10; 1 on 06/08/2011 - Saltmarsh

***Sitochroa palealis* (NS-B)** 1 on 23/07/06, 1 on 05/08/07, 1 on 12/08/07, 1 on 20/07/08, 2 on 19/08/2012; **3 on 19/07, 3 on 26/07/2014** – S England and East Anglia

Pediasia contaminella (NS-B) 1 on 30/07/11 – S England

***Platytes alpinella* (NS-B)** **2 on 19/07/2014** – coastal dunes and shingle beaches S&E.England



Lappet (UE) 1 on 5,19/07/08; 4 on 03/07/10, 6 on 10/07/10, 1 on 17/07/10, 2 on 31/07/10, 2 on 21/07/2013; **10 on 12/07, 10 on 19/07/2014**

Photo by C. Lewis

Rosy Wave (NS-B) – 1 on 13/06/09; 2 on 03/07/10; 2 on 03/09/2011; 2 on 30/06/2013, 1 on 14/07/2013; **1 on 30/08/2014**

Yarrow Pug (NS-B) **1 on 26/07/2014** – coastal from Dorset to Essex

Large Thorn (NS-B) 2 on 01/09/08, 1 on 13/09/2008, 1 on 02/09/2012 – SE England

Water Ermine (NS-B) 1 on 21/06/08 - coastal areas in SE England

Reed Dagger (NS-B) 2 on 26/07/08; 1 on 31/07 & 07/08/10 - reeds

Star-wort (NS-B) 1 on 30/06/07, 1 on 05/07/08, 2 on 26/07/08, 1 on 04/07/09; 1 on 22/05, 10/07 & 17/07/10; 1 on 30/07/2011, 2 on 05/08/2012; 10 on 14/07/2013, 6 on 21/07/2013; **1 on 12/07, 8 on 19/07, 4 on 26/07, 2 on 16/08/2014** – saltmarsh

***Cryphia algae* (Tree-lichen Beauty)** (Rare migrant, currently breeding in SE.England) 1 on 13/08/2011, 2 on 18/08/2012, **3 on 26/07/2014**

Webb's Wainscot (NS-B) 1 on 07/09/2008 – S&E coasts

Crescent Striped (NS-B) 1 on 05/07/08, 1 on 04/07/09; 1 on 10/07/10; 3 on 23/07, 1 on 30/07/2011; 1 on 21/07/2013; **1 on 12/07, 2 on 19/07, 2 on 26/07/2014** – saltmarsh

Dusky-lemon Sallow (UE) 1 on 06/10/07

Northern Drab (UE). 3 on 14/04/07, 1 on 21,28/04/07; 3 on 26/04/08; 1 on 10/04/10, 2 on 24/04/10, 13 on 01/05/10

Mathew's Wainscot (NS-B) 1 on 28/06/08 – saltmarsh; 1 on 03/07/10, 2 on 10/07/10

L-album Wainscot (NS-B) 1 on 15,22,29/09/07, 3 on 21/06/08, 2 on 05/07/08, 2 on 20/09/08, 1 on 13/06/09, 1 on 19/09/09; 1 on 03/07, 17/07, 31/07, 18/09, 02/10/10 and 3 on 09/10/10; 1 on 11/06, 03/09, 10/09, 2 on 17/09/2011, 12 on 16/09/2012; 1 on 22/09/2013

Kent Black Arches (NS-B) 1 on 07/07/07; 3 on 04/07/09; 2 on 26/06/10, 3 on 03/07/10, 2 on 10/07/10; 6 on 14/07/2013; 1 on 12/07, 1 on 20/09/2014 - S&SE coasts

More common species new to Foulness in 2014

Nemophora degeerella, *Bucculatrix maritime*, *Argyresthia semifusca*, *Limnaecia phragmitella*, *Bryotropha senectella*, *Coleophora deauratella*, *Perittia obscurepunctella*, *Stenoptilia zophodactylus* (Dowdy plume), *Pandemis corylana* (Chequered Fruit-tree Tortrix), *Bactra furfurana* (Mottled Marble), *Phycitodes binaevella*, *Chilo phragmitella*, *Agriphila latistria*, *Mesotype didymata* (Twin-spot Carpet), *Macaria alternata* (Sharp-angled Peacock), *Diacrisia sannio* (Clouded Buff), *Cosmia affinis* (Lesser-spotted Pinion), *Cerapteryx graminis* (Antler Moth),

During 2015 I plan to continue my effort to document the lepidopteran fauna of Foulness.

SOUTH ESSEX MOTHS

G BAILEY

HOCKLEY WOODS

30th April **Early tooth-striped** – 12+. A quite local sp. for Essex but here in good numbers for some years now , also *Acleris literana* and **Seraphim** 4; On 25th May *Spatalistis bifasciana* – a pretty **Tortrix** that is very local in Essex and believed to be first records for S. Essex – total of 3 noted. Photo ID confirmed by Ben and Brian Goodey. Also another 2 on NMN on 3rd July. On 3rd July (NMN) – with Ben Sale + Don Down, *O. fuscalis* 5+ (pyralid feeding on cow-wheat), *O. lithodactyla* (plume), **Olive Crescent** 4, **Lead-coloured pug** 5+, **Festoon** 4, **Phoenix**, **Slender Brindle**. On 19th July **Black Arches** 62+, **Olive Crescent** 2, **Beautiful Carpet**, **Satin Lutestring** (my first sighting here or anywhere in Essex), *Anacamptis blattariella* (gelechiid sp); On 25th Sept **Buff Footman** 2, **Lilac Beauty** - both second brood insects. **Buff Footman** 2nd generation noted at one or two other Essex sites, probably more. First time I've seen this phenomenon with this species



SATIN LUTESTRING **LEAD-COLOURED PUG** *Oidaematophorus lithodactyla* *Acleris literana* (G.B.)

CANVEY WICK

Only went there twice – on 16th and 17th Sept to help with official opening of site. On 16th Sept a recce with members of Buglife in case moth trapping session next evening proved very poor. Didn't get too much, but had 2nd generation **Beautiful Hook-tip** and **Autumnal Rustic** 4 as best of bunch. On 17th Sept the official opening of Canvey Wick with Steve Backshall et al. Had another **Beautiful Hook-tip** (not same insect as 16th), **Kent Black Arches** and a late **Star-wort**.

HYDE HALL RHS

On 27th Sept **Beautiful Hook-tip** 2 (2nd generation) and **L-album Wainscot**

THAMESIDE NATURE PARK

With Buglife, but cool and clear and very few moths – best *Sitochroa verticalis* (pyralid)

MARKS HILL WOOD – LANGDON HILLS

On 14th Oct with Rod Cole and Basildon Nat Hist Soc – **Beautiful Hook-tip** 1 (2nd gen), **Buff Footman** 2 (2nd gen), **Small Fan-footed Wave** (2nd gen)

NORTHLANDS WOOD – LANGDON HILLS

On 4th July (NMN) – **Beautiful Hook-tip** 4, **Small Emerald**, **Phoenix**, **Dark Umber** (last believed new record Langdon Hills).

RAYLEIGH GARDEN MOTHS – 2014 HIGHLIGHTS

On 30th March **Sloe Carpet** 6; Great silver diving beetle – previously only seen at Canvey Wick and Stanford Warren marshes. On 1st April *Acleris literana* 1, 17th May **Toadflax Brocade** – first of 5 noted in the garden, 19th May **Buttoned Snout** 2, 29th May *Bactra robustana* (micro) – photo ID by Mark Parsons, moth officer with Butterfly Conservation. A saltmarsh sp. which most probably had travelled from Canvey or Thameside, 31st May **Cypress Carpet**, first of several during the year, 21st June **Brown Scallop** – buckthorn feeder most probably breeding in Wheatley Wood close to my home. Get them in 1-2's most years. On 23rd June *Monophaga choragella* – a tineid micro sp. also noted on 18-7. Not a particularly rare moth, but v. large for a micro and possibly my 1st for the garden. Also had a total of 6 **Beautiful Hook-tip** for the night, most I've ever seen in one catch. On 24th June **Ruddy Carpet** 1 (plus another on 3-7), 26th June **Dark Spectacle** 1, 5th July **Phoenix** – don't see many of these in the garden. Strangely had one for each of the 3 NMN evenings, namely Hockley Woods, Northlands Wood and then my garden. All different moths, I hasten to add!

On 12th July *Anarsia lineatella* – believed possibly new to Essex when I sent the photo to Ben towards end of last year. ID confirmed by B. Goodey. Then I found a photo of mine probably the same sp. from July 2011, although still not certain if this is first county record. An adventive sp from the Continent where can be a pest of some fruit trees. Could be established near me. On 16th July **Bordered Sallow** 1, 17th July **Dark Umber** 2 (had a total of 5 of this species from the garden in 2014). Another buckthorn feeder so possibly breeding in Wheatley Wood, a Woodland Trust property. Also had **Silky Wainscot** and the pretty micro *Rhodophaea formosa*, on 18th July **Festoon** 4. **Rose plume** (*rhododactala*) 1, and also on 11th July – a very scarce plume that I had once before a few years ago. Probably breeds in Wheatley Wood where there is plenty of wild rose.

However, best macro moth for me for 2014 was a **Scallop Shell**, not in the best of condition but unmistakable – my first ever! Then on 19th July **Lesser Wax Moth** 1, 27th August total of 6 **White-point**. My best number for a single night, otherwise not out of the ordinary, 11th Sept **Cypress Pug**, my first for the garden, although well past its best; 16th Sept **Autumnal Rustic** – only my second ever garden record, **Lilac Beauty** – a lovely 2nd brood insect. (Also had one in Sept at Hockley Woods).

On 19th Sept **L-album Wainscot** 3, generally quite good numbers of this sp. around in late summer onwards. This is the most I had in a single night, also had **Beautiful Hook-tip**, 2nd brood insect. On 28th Sept **Mother of Pearl** – probable 2nd gen. moth as very fresh, 3rd October **Dusky-lemon Sallow**, 14th October **Straw Dot** – another possible 2nd brood moth, a rather nice slightly darker individual, 16th October **Beautiful Hook-tip** – my last of the year, believe it or not!



RUDDY CARPET



KENT BLACK ARCHES



Spatalistis bifasciana



Anarsia lineatella (G.B.)

I think that should be enough to be going on with! **Scallop Shell** had died by time I got photos of it the following day, but better than nothing. Very pleased to have **Satin Lutestring** from Hockley – only ever seen them in Surrey before with Don and John Dawson – hope it might be breeding at the site as there is plenty of birch.

I want to try and get out more to Canvey Wick but I dread to think what it looks like at present. I haven't been there in the early part of the year at all so should be able to add quite a few new species to the site, even **Common Quaker** and **Hebrew Character**! Maybe someone from Buglife or EWT might come out there with me, as certainly not somewhere I'd go by myself at night, although Ben once did.

CIVILISED DAYTIME MOTHING IN NORFOLK

Dougal Urquhart



Whilst holidaying in north Norfolk in March 2014, I joined ex-Essex moth-er/birder Greg Bond as he led a couple of very civilised mothing sessions during the daytime. Traps were checked at 9.30am in Glaven Valley left and Cley NR right. After the traps were emptied and species logged, members then retreated to the on-site cafes for a hot cuppa and a chat. Very relaxing!



EMPEROR BROOD

Dougal Urquhart



A female emperor was found in the trap at Cudmore Grove CP on 5th May 2014 and promptly laid about 25 eggs in a specimen container. The eggs were found hatched on 29th May, pictured above centre, so it was decided to try and rear them. My wife kindly adopted them for the next six weeks, making sure the bramble leaves were replenished every other day or so and the tank was cleaned out of the large amounts of frass.

The 22 larvae soon outgrew the first plastic tank and so a bigger one was bought from the pet store. During a two week absence for holiday, Andy Field kindly took over the mothering duties, and keeping up with their voracious appetite. Just prior to some of them pupating, a very muggy night saw some of them wriggling and squirming with discomfort in the oppressive humidity. After a couple of days they had settled down and pupated. Fourteen made it to the pupa stage and we await emperors and empresses in the spring!



Plumed Fan-foot
trapped by Nick Gash in
his garden at Prittlewell,
Southend on 23rd June
2014



I have been surveying moths at Belhus in south Essex since 2011. It is rich in micro moths both in variety and quantity. Because I am resident in Kent I use two systems of trapping, either with a generator, Robinson traps and sheet also the Dartford team of 5 when available or a Robinson 125 and 40w Heath traps which I leave at Belhus and is set up for me when requested, then I attend early morning and list the contents of the two traps. Although not the best system for results it helps me record most months of the year.

The survey to date shows 487 species of which micro moths are 199 and macro moths 288.

2014 saw 42 species added to the list including *Eucosma metzneriana*, **Dingy Shell**, **Small Elephant Hawk-moth**, **Kent Black Arches**, **Blossom Underwing**, **Merveille du Jour**.



BLOSSOM UNDERWING



Eucosma metzneriana



Telechrysis tripuncta



DINGY SHELL (G.B.)

Moths from the previous year include *Telechrysis tripuncta*, *Stathmopoda pedella*, *Cnaemidophorus rhododactyla*, **Round-winged Muslin**, **Dotted Chestnut**, **Alder Moth**, **Scarce Silver-lines**, **Blackneck**, **Waved Black**, **Button Snout**, **Dotted Fan-foot**, **Red-necked footman**, **L-album Wainscot**.

WANSTEAD MOTHS

TIM HARRIS

Tim Harris and Paul Ferris ran traps again in their gardens close to Wanstead Flats during 2014. Their results are well documented in the third annual report "Butterfly and Moth Report 2014", with a copy held by the Essex Field Club. Tim Harris ran an actinic trap in his garden in the Lakehouse estate recording 1600 individuals of 172 species while Paul Ferris ran an actinic and Heath trap in his Capel Road garden from early March to mid May recording 177 individuals of 65 species.

Though 2014 produced neither the moth species diversity nor the number of individuals of 2013, there were many highlights. The main ones were an **Emperor** laying eggs on 24th April and a **Crescent Dart** in Belgrave Road on 12th September – the second record for Essex.

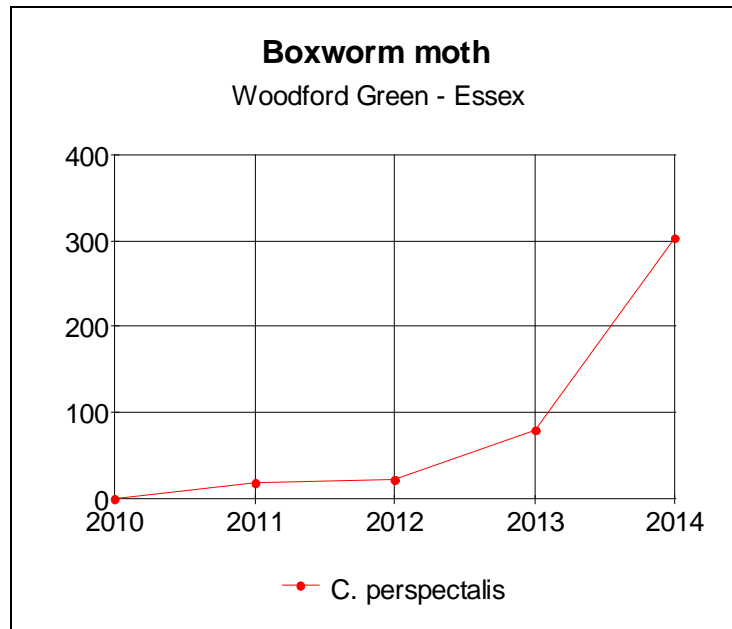


CRESCENT DART

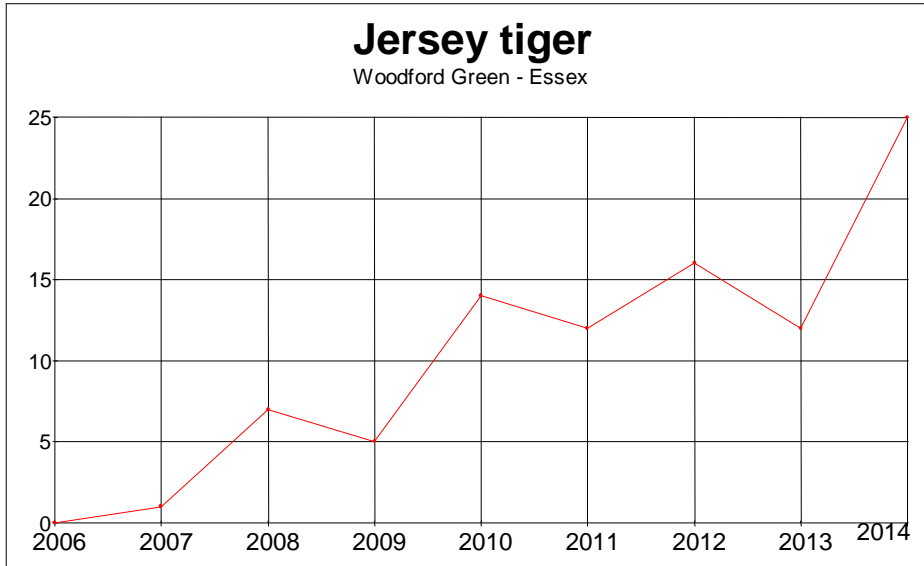
Tim Harris

Other notable records for the area included 12 **Least carpet**, **Cypress Carpet**, **Broom-Tip**, 44 **Jersey Tigers** between 17 July and 13th August, **Kent Black Arches**, **L-album wainscot**, **Merveille du Jour**, 34 **Tree-lichen Beauties**, **Old Lady**, **Beautiful Hook-tip** and **Mother Shipton**.

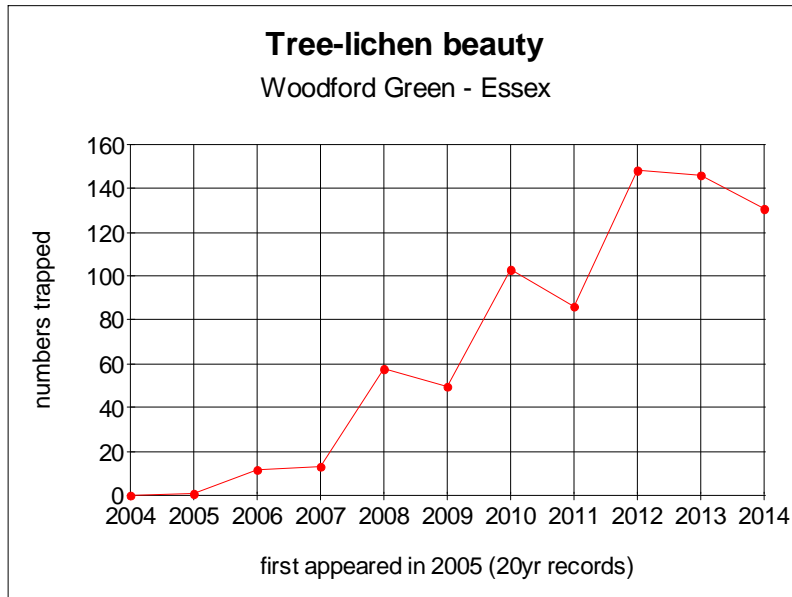
The main surprise of the year was even greater number of Boxworm moths taken at light in my garden totalled 304, of these 105 (27 June - 3 Aug) and second generation 199 (8 Sept - 1 Nov) . quite a dramatic increase since first appearing in 2011



Jersey tigers have steadily increased since first caught in 2007 with 25 in 2014



Tree-lichen beauties first recorded here in 2005 increased dramatically till 2012 but seem to have stabilised at around since then



Gypsy Moth - 3 males trapped in 2014 on 26/July, 28/July, 6/Aug
 the only other one I've recorded was last year on 20/Aug.
 These were reported to the Epping Forest Conservators as my garden is only 100 or so yards away from part of the forest.

Several new moths for my site but a **Pale Pinion** was probably the most notable although quite a few unusual **Tortrix** to dissect.

Brussels Lace - While pruning my lichen covered apple tree, early in the year, a geometrid caterpillar dangled on a thread in front of me. Probably 2nd instar at time but managed to get it almost fully grown on lichen when it unfortunately deceased. The only match I could find was for Brussels lace. Unfortunately cannot confirm it. I managed to delete all photos on one of my cameras while downloading and also had a computer I was then using crash. So may have lost any evidence. I had hoped to trap an adult to prove it but no such luck --- have any been recorded in Essex yet ?

MOTHING SESSIONS COLCHESTER AREA 2015**DAVID BARNARD**

DATE 2015	VENUE	Meet at O.S. Grid Ref	Suggested Meeting time	Site Contact
Wed 01 April	Colchester Zoo	TL953221	7.30pm	David Barnard
Fri 22 May	Coggeshall Pieces Halstead	TL825312	9.00pm	David Barnard
Wed 10 June	Spring Lane Nursery	TL973256	9.30pm	George Davidson
Wed 8 th July	Buntings Meadow	TL979255	9.30pm	George Davidson
Tues 14 th July	Tiptree Heath	TL884149	9.30pm	Joan Pinch
Sat 18 th July	EWT Abberton	TL963177	9.00pm	Dougal Urquhart
Tues 21 st July	Cudmore Grove CP	TM065145	9.00pm	Dougal Urquhart
Wed 29 th July	Coppins Farm, Alphamstone	tba	9.00pm	Dougal Urquhart
Fri 31 st July	High Woods - Chanterelle	TM009269	9.00pm	Sonya Lindsell
Fri 7 th Aug	Fingringhoe Wick NR	TM049193	8.30pm	Dougal Urquhart
Thurs 13 th Aug	High Woods CP	TL999271	8.30pm	Sonya Lindsell
Wed 19 th Aug	Salary Brook	TM031256	8.30pm	David Barnard
Sat 12 th Sept	Cudmore Grove CP – National Moth Night	TM065145	7.30pm	Dougal Urquhart

All subject to cancellation at short notice if adverse weather conditions prevail
 Telephone contact – David Barnard on 01206 825645

NATIONAL MOTH NIGHT falls on **Thur. 10 to Sat. 12 Sept. 2015** – the theme is **Migration**

FISHERS ESTUARINE MONITORING SESSIONS AUTUMN 2015 – BEAUMONT QUAY

Sat 19th September and Saturday 3rd October 2015. Meet at 8pm in Beaumont Quay car park TM189241
 Contact Zoe Ringwood for more details.