

ESSEX MOTH GROUP

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

2016

COMPILED BY DOUGAL URQUHART



NI MOTH

G.EKINS



MOTHING WRITTLE COLLEGE MAY 2015

D.U

ESSEX MOTH GROUP
ANNUAL MEETING AND EXHIBITION
THE GREEN CENTRE, WAT TYLER COUNTRY PARK,
SATURDAY 13TH FEBRUARY
2016 PROGRAMME

10.30.....**RECEPTION / REFRESHMENTS**

DONATION £7, PAY ON ARRIVAL

10.45.....**WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

DOUGAL URQUHART, MOTH GROUP COORDINATOR

11.00.....**SHARON HEARLE, BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION**

REGIONAL CONSERVATION STRATEGY FOR MOTHS

12.00.....**ROGER PAYNE – THE GYPSY MOTH**

12.30.....**TIM HARRIS – MOTHS OF WANSTEAD**

1.00.....**LUNCH – CHANCE TO CHAT WITH FRIENDS**

2.00.....**TIM GARDINER – MANAGEMENT OF SEAWALLS**

3.00.....**CHRIS LEWIS – MOTHS OF FOULNESS**

3.30.....**DOUGAL URQUHART – 10 YEARS OF MOTHING AT**

CUDMORE GROVE CP

4.00.....**DISCUSSION SESSION ON REGIONAL MOTH STRATEGY**

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!

Welcome to the annual meeting of the Essex Moth Group, now into its 20th year since first starting up in 1996. This is the third 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. We are using a different room in the Green Centre this year, the Savidge Suite, which should be better suited to our needs. We are indebted to the Essex Field Club for helping to subsidise the cost of hosting this annual meeting. It would be much more expensive for members if it the meeting was held anywhere else in the county.

We thank Peter Harvey of the Essex Field Club for arranging that the Group are able to meet here in the Green Centre, and also for arranging the buffet lunch with the caterers and all the other logistics. 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 everyone 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: gravspeterharvey@gmail.com;

2015 ESSEX MOTH GROUP MEETING



The annual meeting was again held at Wat Tyler CP on the 21st February, for the second year running.

The meeting again proved popular with around fifty members attending during the day – about the same number as the previous year.

We were pleased to welcome back to the EMG annual meeting, Paul Waring as our main speaker who recounted his many visits into the county searching for Essex moth rarities.



Paul with Zoe Ringwood and Tim Gardiner



Paul with Don Down

Paul said in an email shortly after the meeting – “It was a great pleasure for me to come to the Essex Moth Group meeting on Saturday, and to meet you all again, including some old friends and colleagues, and to catch up on local news. I also thought the venue was a very good one and that we were all well looked after by the staff. I also attach a number of photographs taken on the day, largely for my own interest, but in case they may be of some use or for the files of the Essex Moth Group”.

Greg Smith joins the smiling faces!



Dougal gets to photobomb Paul!



MOTH GROUP DISPLAY

The Moth Group had a stand again at the annual Essex Field Club's Annual Exhibition and Social at Wat Tyler CP on 5th December 2015. Around 180 people attended the event.

As with the display here last year, there were two pull-up banners as well as a lit Gardiner trap.

The various mothing activities and mothing sessions were publicised as well as the forthcoming Annual Meeting of the EMG



COASTAL & SALTMARSH MOTHS – CUDMORE GROVE COUNTRY PARK, MERSEA ISLAND

Tuesday 16th August - 10am to 4pm. Cost £30 per person. To book a place, contact Dave Grundy direct on dgcountryside@btinternet.com;

Dave Grundy has set up this short course which will be aimed at people with beginner or intermediate moth identification skills, who want to learn more about the speciality moths of this exceptional estuary, saltmarsh and coastal site. It is a one day course that will be held at East Mersea Village Hall, East Road, East Mersea, Essex (postcode CO5 8TQ), with a chance to examine the moths caught at the country park the previous night. Maximum of 15 participants – booking essential (**Saltmarsh Plume**, *Platytes alpinella*, **Starwort**, **Tree-lichen Beauty**, **Sandhill Rustic**, **Webb's Wainscot**, **Archer's Dart** and migrants might be among moths seen on this course if weather conditions are good). The course will consist of a slide talk on coastal moths in the morning followed by hands on identification of live moths in pots in the afternoon. The afternoon identification session aims to stretch participants' ability whatever their level of skill. A selection of field guides will be provided for reference, while Dave will be helping out with advice too as people work in small groups.



DAVE GRUNDY AT CUDMORE

D.U



DAVE AT CUDMORE

D.U

MICRO-MOTHS – FSC FLATFORD MILL, Friday 12th August to Monday 15th August 2016

Resident Sole occupancy £399, Resident Shared room £359

This course is aimed at anyone familiar with macro moth species who would now like expert help from Dave Grundy with micro moths. It is aimed at total beginners as well as people with more advanced knowledge – whatever your skill level we hope to stretch you. It will help you recognise the defining features and identify moths to family level. We will set light traps each night in a variety of habitats to give us a good range of live specimens to work with.

AUTUMN MOTHS – FSC FLATFORD MILL, Friday 9th Sept – Sunday 11th Sept 2016,

Resident Sole Occupancy £287, Resident Shared room £257

Dave Grundy will lead this new course which will study moths found in autumn around the excellent habitats near Flatford Mill near East Bergholt. It will take advantage of local weather conditions to study moths caught in moth traps, leaf- mines and / or migrant moths. The course is aimed at anyone who would like to learn more about identifying moths at this time of year. Their ecology and habitat needs will be discussed, particularly looking at what makes this time of year good for studying moths. It is aimed at total beginners wishing to study moths, as well as people with more advanced knowledge, but whatever your skill level it will be designed to stretch you.

SLOE CARPET - MORE MONITORING NEEDED



Dave Grundy observed that -
"After a poor spring in 2015 the picture for this nationally rare species in maybe its major stronghold sounds quite worrying. I think it would be good to try to encourage a major effort for the moth in spring 2016"

SLOE CARPET

Pic - DU

Summary of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Moths 2010 – Sloe Carpet

Ecology - The larvae feed on Blackthorn. The adult flies around Blackthorn bushes from dusk in April but rarely comes to light.

Past Distribution - Essex, Suffolk, Surrey, Hampshire, Sussex, Berkshire and possibly Wiltshire and Oxfordshire.

Current Distribution - Recently recorded from Essex, East Kent, Surrey, West Sussex and Hampshire.

Initial Conservation Priorities

- compilation of records to determine current status and past distribution
- autecological studies
- encourage survey of previously occupied sites
- provide advice to land managers to prevent destruction of habitat

BULB REMINDER FROM ANGLIAN LEPIDOPTERIST SUPPLIES

NOTE: As from Mid-April 2015 all Mercury Vapour (MV) bulbs will start to be phased out as part of the Restriction of Hazardous Substances Directive (RoHS) which effects the manufacturer of (not the re-sale of).

We are informed by the bulb manufacturers that they will have 'stock that will last some years', after this, ALS will have up to ten year's stock of 125w MV bulbs (ES screw-thread) on current sales figures of MV01 bulbs.

As this ban is designed to phase out less efficient lamps such as MV, it does not affect Actinic Light as used in some of our moth traps. See the ALS website for actinic range of moth traps.

MOTHING SESSIONS IN ESSEX 2016

DOUGAL URQUHART

There will be the usual variety of Moth Group evening mothing sessions held at various outdoor venues through the coming 2016 season. The programme is still being finalised and dates will be circulated via the email forum.

Regular visits will be made again to Tiptree Heath, Highwoods CP, Cudmore Grove CP and Fingringhoe NR. It is expected that more trapping sessions will be taking place at Friday Woods and other army land in the Colchester area.

Dates are also being arranged for a couple of mothing sessions in Epping Forest in conjunction with Jeremy Dagley.

The following report is a summary of moth lamp sessions carried out by a small group of moth enthusiasts who operate in the Colchester area. The group follows on from action carried out in earlier years by Ian Rose, the late Joe Firmin and others and concentrates on sites in and around Colchester.

The first meeting was at Coggeshall Pieces in Halstead (TL825312) on 22 May, following a request by the local Conservation Group to follow up on lamp sessions carried out some 7 / 8 years earlier. Only one lamp was operating in a somewhat enclosed site and this led to a rather low record of only 19 species. Most of the local people attending showed great interest and it was a pity that the 'count' was so low. Several of the Prominents showed up – **Iron, Pebble, Swallow** and **Pale** – which gave the opportunity to point out how varied the species in the same family can be.

On 10 June we visited a Colchester B.C. site at Spring Lane (TL973256) which runs alongside the River Colne. This is a small site which has been used in the past as a 'nursery' for growing black poplar, but in recent years is now unattended grassland which is cut twice a year. The evening was quite cold and only produced 19 species, but included 2 **Light Brocades** which made the visit worthwhile.

The annual visit to Tiptree Heath (TL884148) on 14 July proved a great improvement on earlier sessions. 3 lamps were in operation and a total of 77 species recorded. These included a **Garden Tiger** (rarely seen these days), **Festoon, Beautiful Hook-tip, Small Mottled Willow** and *Pempelia genistella* amongst the micro's.



FESTOON



CUDMORE GROVE



SMALL MOTTLED WILLOW

D.U

On 21 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 the usual 100+ species, with some traps being run overnight and the **Garden Tiger** being a regular visitor in the early hours of the morning.

A return visit to the Chanterelle site at High Woods C.P. (TM009268) on 31 July turned out to be another good evening with 75 species recorded. Species included **Kent Black Arches, Festoon, Tree-lichen Beauty** and **Round-winged Muslin**.

Another 'multi-lamp' evening took place at EWT – Fingringhoe Wick reserve (TM049194) on 07 August. A fuller account is described later in the newsletter, but the lamp operated by the small group from Colchester recorded 58 species including **Tree-lichen Beauty** and **Lunar-spotted Pinion**, but not the target species, the **White-spotted Pinion**, which has been recorded from this site.

On 19 August we visited the Colchester B.C. site at Salary Brook (TM031256) which is not easy to access with lamp equipment. However, 48 species were recorded, although nothing of unusual interest. This site is under danger of building development, so the efforts of the local wardens was felt worthwhile as it provides additional records for 'ammunition' against the developers plans.

A return visit to Cudmore Grove C.P. (TM066124) on 12 September was made with the aim of catching up on some of the migrant moths that had been recorded from various sites in Essex and Suffolk. This did not prove as fruitful as it should have been and records were quite low.

A full record list of the above lamp sessions is available on request.

2015 was only my second full year of mothing in my garden in Bulmer. I managed 9 more trapping sessions than the previous year but I am still only a part-timer with 32 during the year. I found mothing very slow to start in 2015 with June the first good month but it then continued at a reasonable level until October. My average catch was almost identical to 2014. My moth species totals were 187 macros and 99 micros and I had 98 species new to the site. Four new butterfly species for the site were **Small Copper, Holly Blue, Ringlet** and **Painted Lady**.

I am always pleased to get species that I did not get in 17 years of mothing in my garden at Langenhoe and in 2015 these included **Campion, Green Arches, Toadflax Brocade, *Batrachedra pinicolella*** and *Eudonia truncicolella*. Other good sightings that I had included **Beautiful Hook-tip, Dusky Thorn, Feathered Gothic, Lunar Yellow Underwing, Orange Footman, Orange Sallow, Poplar Kitten, Red-necked Footman** and **Yarrow Pug**.



GREEN ARCHES



DUSKY THORN

(H.OWEN)

I still find it a thrill to see **Hawkmoths** and I was particularly pleased to have completed the set of the seven common species of **Hawkmoths** in my garden. I was also luckier enough to have nine different sightings of **Hummingbird hawkmoth** during the year and they were generally seen on valerian. I must attempt to put my trap out more frequently in 2016!

FOUR-SPOTTED FOOTMAN, STOUR WOOD

GEOFF EMPSON



Paul Bergdahl and I were walking through Stour Wood on 5th August and at about 11.30 we sat down for a rest. It was warm and still and dappled sunshine. I saw a **White Admiral** harrying something and went to investigate. I found the moth in the undergrowth and decided to try netting it. I eventually succeeded and sat down to identify it. We had no clue and so I took some photos - difficult holding camera and moth - and let it go. I tentatively identified it as a **Four-spotted Footman** and sent off the photos to the group for confirmation from Brian Goodey and I then subsequently reported it to Peter Harvey

BRIGHTLINGSEA

Dave Scott reported two **Garden Tigers** on 24th July and a **White-spotted Pinion** at his trap on 18th August.

When I checked my moth trap on the morning of 2nd January 2015 and found there an **Angle Shades** moth I thought this must be a sign of a great mothing year ahead. My optimism remained when this was followed on 8th January by a **Winter Moth** and a **Dark Chestnut**, then 2 days later by a **Double-striped Pug**. Sadly this is where the great year ended. It was a month before another moth showed itself, and the first micro did not appear until March.

From then on it was rather a strange year with more or less the usual number of species, but few moths of even the most common ones, such as **Silver Y**, the **Wainscots**, **Minor** species, and the small **Waves** namely **Small Dusty**, **Single Spotted** and **Treble Brown Spot**. Some regulars missing from the annual list were **Light Arches**, **Muslin Moth**, **Red Underwing**, **Red-line Quaker**, **Small Angle Shades** and **Black Arches**.

Two scarce visitors appeared on the 2nd and 3rd August. Firstly a **Scarce Bordered Straw**, which I have had on only 2 occasions, in 1996 and 2006. This was followed the next day by a **Bordered Straw** which I last had in 2006. Another welcome visitor was the pretty little **Vestal** which is not a regular one.



CYPRESS CARPET



TOADFLAX BROCADE (B.L.)

The year wasn't all gloom. As usual there were some new species to add to my garden list namely **Black Arches**, **Cypress Carpet**, **Delicate**, **Pale Pinion**, **Pine Hawk-moth** and **Small Angle Shades**.

Unfortunately the year just seemed to fizzle out in the autumn, with very few moths about in spite of unusually high temperatures until the end of the year. I have to admit that I didn't trap as much as usual during 2015, this was mainly due to very heavy rain and/or severe gale force winds. No two years are alike so I'm keeping my fingers crossed that 2016 will be one of the better ones.

WIGBORO WICK FARM, ST OSYTH

CLIVE ATKINS

As in previous years a 125W MV Robinson was run throughout, with an additional 125W MV and 15W Actinic from the beginning of May until the end of October. A cold and windy start to spring meant that no immigrant species were recorded until June. The wind in particular played its part in there being no records of **Sloe Carpet** after a high of 61 in 2011.

Another species notable by its absence was **Dewick's Plusia** which had been recorded for the previous seven years both as adults to light and larva.

Monthly totals for the more regular immigrant species, all Humming-bird Hawk-moth records were diurnal. In addition **Silver Y** numbers seen nectaring on **Verbena** *Verbena bonariensis* and **Red Valerian** *Centranthus ruber* passed 40 on six evenings in September and are not included in the trap totals below. The only **Clouded Yellow** of the year appeared on the 22nd August.

Willow Emerald Damselfly continues to spread and is now found at four sites on the farm.



PORTER'S RUSTIC



OBSCURE WAINSCOT



NI MOTH



Pygmy Footman (r) (C.A.)

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	Total
Diamond-back Moth <i>P.xylostella</i>	0	0	0	0	0	18	6	5	1	0	1	1	32
European Corn-borer <i>O.nubilalis</i>	0	0	0	0	0	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	9
Rusty-dot Pearl <i>U.ferrugalis</i>	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	1	1	7
Rush Veneer <i>N.noctuella</i>	0	0	0	0	0	5	24	11	2	0	1	0	43
Vestal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	0	0	14
Humming-bird Hawk-moth	0	0	0	0	0	4	8	3	0	0	0	0	15
Dark Sword-grass	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	13	4	0	0	0	19
Pearly Underwing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	4
Tree-lichen Beauty	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	7	0	0	0	0	9
Small Mottled Willow	0	0	0	0	0	3	21	23	0	0	0	0	47
Scarce Bordered Straw	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bordered Straw	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	10	0	0	0	0	12
Silver Y	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	14	84	1	1	0	158

Other significant records:

Crociosema plebejana One on 7 July, two on 6 & two on 13 August.

Eastern Black Tabby *D. perieresalis* One on 16 August, new for site and county.

Vestal A total of 14 between 1 & 10 September.

Gem One on 21 August.

Dotted Footman One on 15 August, new for site.

Pygmy Footman one on 4 August, new for site.

Small Marbled One on 17 July, new for site.

Ni Moth Singles on 21 June, 3 & 7 August, new for site.

Tree-lichen Beauty A total of 11 between 17 July & 17 August.

Porter's Rustic One on 13 August, new for site.

Delicate One on 21 July.



Crociosema plebejana



D.perieresalis



MARBLED GREEN



CLOUDED BUFF (C.A.)

Wivenhoe Watching Wildlife is a group of local naturalists who organise events in and around Wivenhoe to enthuse the local community about the wealth of wonderful wildlife that can be experienced within a short walk of our town. In 2015, among the dawn chorus walks and fungal forays, we held two moth nights – both well-attended by local residents of all ages including some who know a bit about moths and others for whom moths and moth-trapping were a complete novelty.

Our first event was held in the old cemetery on Belle Vue Road on 13 June, where we set three traps among the mature scrub and old gravestones from around 9:30pm. We packed up at midnight and re-gathered again the following morning for the grand unveiling. Conditions were perfect but, in common with the slow spring experienced elsewhere, we only captured 35 species. The collection included **Lime Hawk-moth**, **Cream-spot Tiger**, **Sandy Carpet**, **Poplar Grey**, **Scorched Wing** and numerous **Beautiful Longhorns** (*Nemophora degeerella*). Oddly, the previous year we had enjoyed a veritable snow-storm of **Festoons**, but on this occasion we took none at all.



EMPEROR



OAK PROCESSIONARY



TOADFLAX BROCADE (G.EVANS)

We held our second event of the year on 11 September to coincide with National Moth Night. Again we set three traps, this time around the new Wildlife Garden on the edge of the King George V playing fields. It was a still, warm evening, seemingly perfect conditions for mothing and we had a good turnout of local wildlife watchers, but the eventual haul of just 34 species was a bit of a poor return. We did find most of the typical early autumn species (**Square-spot Rustic**, **Flounced Rustic**, **Setaceous Hebrew Character** and the full set of common **Yellow Underwings**) but among them we also had **Feathered Gothic**, **Oak Hook-tip**, **Centre-barred Sallow**, **White point** and (to the delight of our guests) an **Old Lady**. The highlight of the



GARDEN TIGER



HUMMING-BIRD H.MOTH



STARWORT (G.E.)

session though was a **Vestal** (taken in one of our garden traps overnight) which caused as much excitement to the organisers as it did to the guests.

If any Essex moth-ers would be interested in joining us at one of our regular events in 2016, do please get in touch and keep an eye on the Wivenhoe Forum (where all our events are advertised and reported on).

It was in early July 2015 that I started to think about a 12 month survey of Friday Wood, 3 miles SSE of Colchester. This woodland has a long history of human intervention/occupation, indeed finds back to the Neolithic period have been found. It is now owned land and used by the army for training exercises but has extensive public access. The woodland is predominately mixed deciduous ancient woodland with many cleared, grass swards. It also has a number of recently planted conifer and Sweet Chestnut stands. The woods form a part of the Roman River SSSI and this flows along its southern boundary. To the west and east lie Layer Road and Mersea Road respectively.

I contacted a few people who have been involved in moth trapping in north Essex to see if anyone knew the approximate dates of any other systematic surveys of this area. Since the sad death of Joe Firmin much local knowledge appears to have been lost and the closest I could get to any previous survey was about 25 years ago, many thanks to Brian Goodey, and any results or information of this now appears to be gone forever.

The next step was to gain access to the woods at night, bearing in mind that this is an active troop training area. Retired major Udai Gurung is the range commander for the eastern area and it was to him that I sought permission. Udai was very happy to grant permission in return for a report and input at conservation meetings. He has also asked for further surveys to be carried out at Fingringhoe ranges and Donyland Woods, which are on the to do list.

By the end of 2015 I, along with help from my wife Jill, Andrew Raybould and Dougal Urquhart managed 8 trapping sessions around 4 different sites within the woods, in a variety of weather conditions. Trapping will continue until August 2016 when a full 12 months will have been completed.



FRIDAY WOODS
8/8/15

CLOUDED MAGPIE -left

PINE HAWKMOTH – right
(D.U.)



MOTHING SEASON AT CUDMORE GROVE 2015

DOUGAL URQUHART

Another successful year of trapping took place at Cudmore Grove CP during the last year with traps put out on 63 nights. The year's total of 253 macro moth species is the highest yet since mothing started in 2005. The mothing year was rather mixed with a poor spring which then picked up through the summer tailing off through an average autumn and a poor end to the year. Moths came under more scrutiny thanks due to more multi-trap sessions by Chris Williams and then later Dave Grundy when up to 11 traps were laid out.

The first moth of note in the spring was a **Dotted Chestnut** in early March and the first Blossom Underwing in mid-month. The visit by Chris Williams on 15th April was successful in turning up 3 **Sloe Carpets** – the main target species for the night, as well as **Northern Drab** and six **Blossom Underwings**. A single **Sloe Carpet** was noted again on the 22nd along with **Northern Drab** and 2 **Blossom Underwings**. Little of note during nine sessions in May and June because of lots of clear and cold nights.

The season started to pick up in July with a **Sand Dart**, **Bordered Beauty** and a **Beautiful Hook-tip**. The most productive night was on 16th July spent with Chris Williams when nine traps brought in 2000 macro

individuals of nearly 100 species. Highlights included **Crescent Striped**, **Garden Tiger**, **Kent Black Arches** and two **Small Mottled Willow**. The next week another successful session was the annual visit by members of the EMG on 21st, when 110 macro species were recorded although numbers of individuals were down by half from the previous week. Species of noted were **Bordered White**, **Leopard**, **Ground Lackey**, **Garden Tiger**, **Archers Dart**, **Southern Wainscot**, **Mathews Wainscot**, **Starwort**, **Lesser-spotted Pinion**, **Olive** and **Crescent Striped**. In addition Steve Rolls added 30 species of micro moths to the list.



WHITE-SPOTTED PINION



REST HARROW



CRESCENT-STRIPED (D.U.)

The mid-August period was an exciting time when the first **White-spotted Pinion** for the site was trapped on 9th. A new location for this nationally rare species, there is elm close-by so it will be interesting to see if the species is found here next year too. A visit on the 13th by Dave Grundy coincided with a **Convulvulus Hawkmoth**, **Ni Moth**, **Coronet**, **Sandhill Rustic**, **Small Mottled Willow**, **Garden Tiger**, **Starwort**, **Archers Dart** as well as *Sitichroa palealis* and *Platytes alpinella*. A return visit by Dave two days later was rewarded with a **Rest Harrow** as well as 3 **Small Mottled Willow**, **Dark Swordgrass**, **Peach Blossom** and **Sandhill Rustic**.

Early September was good for **Large Thorns** with the first on 1st, two on the 4th and three on both 10th and 12th. The latter coincided with a multi-trap evening for National Moth Night when about 40 species were noted including **Dark Swordgrass**, **Delicate**, **Antler** and **Feathered Gothic**. Other moths in the month were **Pale Eggar** and **Hedge Rustic**, while October highlights were **Merveille du Jour**, **Feathered Brindle**, **Dusky-lemon Sallow**, **Streak** and **Gem**. The latter part of the season seemed disappointing considering the mild autumnal nights.



Twenty students from Writtle College helped plant 620 plugs of Hog's Fennel on 3rd November 2015 at Cudmore Grove Country Park. This will boost the existing plants, dug in seven years earlier, to around 1000 plants now on site. Many thanks to Zoe Ringwood who organised and supervised the day.

MOTH TRAPPING WEST MERSEA

DOUGAL URQUHART

Trapping took place again in my back garden in West Mersea on fifteen nights. The most rewarding night was on a muggy 10th July when 250 individuals of 60 species of macro were logged including the nice haul of four **Privets**, four **Elephants**, two **Pines** and two **Poplar Hawkmoths**, along with three **Red-necked Footman**. Other interesting moths during the season were a **Least Black Arches**, **Sand Dart**, **Saltmarsh Plume** and two **Red Underwings** resting on the side of the house.



SAND DART



RED UNDERWINGS



LEAST BLACK ARCHES (D.U.)

FOUR NIGHTS OF TRAPPING IN ESSEX BY AN “OUTSIDER”! DAVE GRUNDY

I’m an ‘outsider’ from the far north – well actually Birmingham and due to working nearby or just wanting to look at different moths, I decided to trap on 4 nights in Essex in 2015 and really enjoyed my visits. On each night I ran between 5 and 10 traps and mostly hit good trapping weather. Here’s a report of the more interesting moths I saw, but then these are from my perspective of course. What’s rare and unusual for me might be common as muck in any Essex back garden!

My first visit of the year was to search for **Sloe Carpets** – loads of sloes in Birmingham, but no carpets! But due to a trip up north trapping in Scotland, I wasn’t able to visit Essex till the end of the flight period for this species. So, I didn’t have much hope, but thought I might as well try any way on 3rd May. Only 14 species seen and common spring species including **Streamer** etc, but star moth of the night at Old Hall RSPB reserve was of course trapping one **Sloe Carpet**, it was very flighty when it first arrived but I managed to get photos of it eventually!



SLOE CARPET



NI MOTH



LARGE THORN



TREE-LICHEN BEAUTY (D.G.)

My next return was to the Essex County Council site of Cudmore Grove (with trapping help and advice from Dougal Urquhart) on the 13th and 15th August, which is ideally placed for recording saltmarsh and coastal species plus migrants. Highlights included **Saltmarsh Plume** (*Agdistis bennetii*), *Eucosma tripoliana*, *Sitochroa palealis*, *Platytes alpinella*, **Dark Spinach**, **Convolvulus Hawk**, **Rest Harrow**, **Ni Moth**, **Starwort**, **Tree-lichen Beauty**, **Small Mottled Willow**, over 40 **Sandhill Rustic**, **Webb’s Wainscot** and **Archer’s Dart**. I then returned to Cudmore on 10th September when highlights included *Ypsolopha alpella*, **Large Thorn**, **Archer’s Dart** and **Orange Sallow**.



CONVOLVULUS HM



FEATHERED BRINDLE



FISHERS ESTUARINE



F.E. CAUGHT IN WEB (DG)

My final visit to Essex was of course for a must see - **Fisher’s Estuarine Moth**, so I went along to the annual event and thanks to Zoe Ringwood for organising this, I was able to see 2 and a **Mother Shipton** larva. I then went to check out another site for the moth myself and managed to find another two plus a

dead one in a spider's web! I also trapped at Colne Point. Trapping highlights there were 13 **Feathered Brindles**.

So, for me, this was a great set of visits and I can't wait to return to your excellent county in 2016!

VISITS TO ESSEX COASTAL SITES 2015

CHRIS WILLIAMS

Following on from several visits to Essex during 2014 I wanted to return in 2015 to look for some of the county specialist moths. Some that come to mind were **Sloe Carpet**, the Essex species of the **Northern Drab**, **Triangle**, **Fishers Estuarine** and **Feathered Brindle**.

I cannot help but wonder why the **Sloe Carpet** is so scarce as its food plant, Blackthorn, is one of the most common bushes in our hedgerows. Perhaps there are some other factors that we do not understand or is it that because of its early flight season moth trappers prefer to stay at home in the warm?

The first trip to Essex in 2015 was in mid-April when a warm weather window was forecast. I trapped at Fingringhoe Wick NR on the 13th, this reserve offers a great variety of habitats, setting out 8 traps some close to good stands of Blackthorn. The temperature at 8pm was a warm 8°C but dropping, the sky was clear and no wind so didn't bode well. I made several rounds of the traps as the temperature dropped down to -2°C by 4am, some of the traps showing a 'delightful' coating of ice. However, good numbers came to the traps including 6 **Blossom Underwings**, one **Northern Drab** and, oh joy!, one rather worn **Sloe Carpet** – which came to a 15w Synergetic lamp. In all 230+ moths of 22 species were counted and, as often happens, the traps in the least likely looking spots turned up the best results.

On the 14th I trapped at RSPB Old Hall Marshes reserve. The air temperature at 8pm was a dizzy 14°C but it was very windy. I set 8 traps in or near to Blackthorn, which was in full flower. Finding sheltered spots was a bit difficult but I managed to get most into good areas. It was a promising night but the increasing wind kept the moth activity low with only about 170 moths of 19 species trapped. They were mainly **Hebrew Characters** but also 1 **Blossom Underwing** plus 11 **Sloe Carpet** which came to both 15w Synergetic lamp and an experimental 1w UV emitting LED lamp.



SLOE CARPET



NORTHERN DRAB



TRIANGLE

(C.W.)

The 15th was at Cudmore Gove CP, with Dougal Urquhart. The forecast was quite good with the temperature being 11°C at 8pm and no wind to worry about. I set 8 traps around the park, all as near as possible to flowering Blackthorn. I made several rounds of the traps during the night but numbers were rather on the low side. **Quaker** & **Hebrew Character** made up the bulk of the numbers but I did have 3 **Blossom Underwing**, 1 **Northern Drab** and 1 **Sloe Carpet**.

My second trip was in July to Beaumont Quay to look at some of the stands of Hogs Fennel to see if they showed signs of **Fishers Estuarine** larva. There was plenty of frass present so it boded well for a visit in September during the flight season. While I was there, after particular help from Dougal to gain permission, I trapped in Gravel Wood to see if I could locate the **Triangle**, our smallest Macro Moth. I set up 4 portable traps and a 9pm temperature of 18°C looked promising. I made a couple of visits to the traps during the night and had the excitement of finding just one male **Triangle** amongst over 400 moths of 66 species.



HOG'S FENNEL



FISHERS ESTUARINE -FRASS



FISHERS ESTUARINE (C.W.)

In September I was privileged to join Dr Zoe Ringwood on the transect survey at Beaumont Quay for the **Fishers Estuarine**. Numbers were low for some reason but both male & female moths were found.

The **Feathered Brindle** was not found in 2015 so an excuse to return in 2016 when I will also be hoping to catch **Large Thorn** and **Toadflax Brocade**.

I would like to thank the following people for allowing me access to some fabulous sites: Louise Beary at Fingringhoe Wick NR, Neil Lincoln at RSPB Old Hall Marshes, Dougal Urquhart at Cudmore Grove CP, Dr Zoe Ringwood, Natural England at Beaumont Quay.

ASSORTED MOTHING SESSIONS

DOUGAL URQUHART

Writtle College hosted a mothing session to the side of the main building on 20th May thanks to an invite from Alan Roscoe. The clear skies kept moth numbers down to just 15 species from the four traps being run by Graham Ekins, Alan and myself. Several moth group members and students made the most of a slow night with **Pale Tussock**, **Scorched Carpet**, **Spruce Carpet**, **Waved Umber** and **Orange Footman**. Thanks to Graham a non-descript pug was later identified as **Ochreous Pug**, a scarce moth of woods and gardens where pine occurs.



OCHREOUS PUG (G.EKINS)



COPPINS FARM



VAPOURER (D.U.)

Hugh Owen and I met at Coppins Farm at Alphamstone near Bures on 29th July, at the invitation of the farmer John MacGlashan. I've visited the farm on several daytime occasions in the past and it's a very rural location with small fields, big hedges and scattered woods and was worth visiting with a couple of moth traps. On a cool and partially cloudy night 44 species were logged up until midnight. It was no surprise to see a handful of **Barred Rivulets** when their red bartsia foodplant was all around the traps. Other moths of note included **Small Rivulet**, **Dark Swordgrass**, **Silver Y** and **White Satin Moth**.

Several members of the Essex Moth Group met at Fingringhoe Wick Nature Reserve on 7th August in the hope of seeing **White-spotted Pinion** moth but sadly without any luck. Traps were put out by Dave Barnard, Ian Turner, Richard Dennison and me with a final grand tally of 110 species logged. This comprised of 97 species of macro and 13 micros. Some figure crunching by Andrew Raybould showed that comparing the catch with the previous year, there was a 50% difference in the species of macro caught. In 2014 the total was 123 species made up of 75 macros and 48 species of micro. Highlights this year included **Ground Lackey**, **Oak Eggar**, **Large Emerald**, **Pine Hawkmoth**, **Rosy Footman**, **Kent Black**

Arches, Coronet, Tree Lichen Beauty, Sandhill Rustic, Small Mottled Willow, Webb's Wainscot and Waved Black. Thanks to Matt Cole for allowing us to trap on the reserve again.

A couple of trapping sessions were arranged for Weald Country Park next to the Cricket Ground car park, the first quite successful, the second one abandoned before it started when Ian Turner and I found ourselves with a group of gypsies in the car park for company! For the first session Ian and I were joined by Andrew Raybould again along with a couple of ECC rangers. Sixty species were logged from the five traps situated on the edge of the old wood pasture with **Gypsy Moth** being the most notable. Also seen were **Small Phoenix, Antler, Tree Lichen Beauty, Maple Pug** and a **Vapourer**.

MOTHING ACTIVITY 2015

NEIL HARVEY



My most intriguing record of the year was in November, an empty pupa on Common Polypody, a scarce Essex plant, growing in a field boundary bank on the outskirts of Elmstead Market. It appears to belong to one of the two UK species of *Psychoides*, *filicivora* or *verhuella*, neither of which has been recorded in Essex. They both feed on various ferns, although Hart's-tongue appears to be the favourite. The adults of both species fly around the food plant on sunny days, so a return trip is called for in 2016. Both have been recorded in Kent and *verhuella* is known from Suffolk, so either is possible. *Psychoides* pupa

For the second year running I found *Metalampra italica* in the 60w actinic skinner trap that I run in my garden in Rowhedge, this time on the 1st August. Given the generally low incidence of migrants in my trap, it appears as though it might be established locally.



Metalampra italica

Another enigmatic micro, trapped on 2nd September, was *Prays ruficeps*. Previously thought to be a form of *Prays fraxinella* DNA evidence has shown that it is a separate species, which flies somewhat later than in the year. In 2013 it was added to the British list. There don't seem to be any records in the EFC database, but I wonder if anyone has old records of this form that is now a species?



Nephopterix angustella



Pine Carpet

The other highlights of garden trapping included a number of Nationally Scarce micros with few Essex records: *Aristotelia brizella*, *Bactra robustana*, *Bucculatrix maritima*, *Coleophora conyzae*, *Eulamprotes unicolorella*, *Oegoconia caradjai*, and *Platytes alpinella*. Larger Nationally Scarce moths included: **Ground Lackey, Cream-bordered Green Pea, Festoon** and **Waved Black** on three dates. Less significant

nationally, but poorly recorded locally were **Pine Carpet**, **Great Prominent**, *Argyresthia semifusca*, *Eidophasia messingiella*, *Marasmarcha lunaedactyla*, *Eucosma tripoliana*, *Dichrorampha acuminatana*, *Cryptoblabes bistriga* and the ERDL *Nephoterix angustella* on two dates.



Platytes alpinella

Marasmarcha lunaedactyla



Of the Priority Species listed for research purposes, I was able to record **Beaded Chestnut**, **Dusky Brocade**, **Large Wainscot**, **Centre-barred Sallow**, **Pale Eggar** and the somewhat localised **Minor Shoulder-knot** in the garden, with **Deep-brown Dart**, **Brindled Beauty** and **Dusky-lemon Sallow** attracted to the outside light at Abbots Hall Farm. A **Hoary Footman** was attracted to the same lights at Abbots Hall Farm on 11th August, with *Narycia duplicella*, a not uncommon, but rarely seen Psychid a surprise find on 5th June.

Around the county I was able to record several species for which there are very few records on the database: *Diurnea lipsiella* at Long Wood, Tiptree on 27th October; *Stigmella suberivora* mining Holm Oak at Maldon Wick, *Stigmella malella* mining Apple in a small Colchester orchard, with *Yponomeuta malinellus* caterpillars in a larval web nearby; *Parornix devoniella* mining Hazel at Parkgate Wood near Wivenhoe; and *Stigmella splendidissimella* mining Agrimony at Birch Wood Tiptree. I also succeeded (not entirely on purpose) to rear *Cydia splendana* from chestnuts collected at Hockley Woods, Elmstead Market.



Yponomeuta malinellus

(ALL PICS NEIL HARVEY)



Diurnea lipsiella

2015 started well for me with 3 **Dotted Chestnut** coming to my Braintree map in early April and a **Northern Drab** to a security light in Tiptree, a **Bordered Straw** in June was my first migrant of the year from Point Clear.

July was an excellent month for me with *Argyresthia glaucinella*, *Grapholita funebrana*, *Yponomeuta rorella*, *Bucculatrix cidarella*, *Vitula biviella*, the first of many **Small Mottled Willows**, *Pempelia genistella* and at least 50 *Aristolelia ericinella* from Tiptree Heath, *Scotia adelphella* and an *Ectoedeamia decentella* were trapped in Point Clear.



Bucculatrix cidarella

OAK PROCESSIONARY

Monopsis imella (S.R.)

August also produced some real quality with 5 *Chrysoclista linneella* found on Lime trees in Braintree, an example of *Anarsia lineatella* came to light in Point Clear and an **Oak Processionary** to light in Braintree, *Ptocheuusa paupella*, *Aproaerema anthyllidella*, *Monopsis imella* and a *Nephopterix angustella* were other highlights from August.

During a dusking session in Layer wood in August I netted a moth I did not recognise, it turned out to be a *Musotima nitidalis*, subsequent searches showed this moth to be common in the Bracken areas within the Wood.



Chrysoclista linneella

Musotima nitidalis

Coleophora saturatella (SR)

September started well with a number a **Vestals** at Point Clear and a *Ypsolopha horridella* in Braintree, I noticed huge numbers of *Bucculatrix cidarella* leaf mines on Alder during September almost everywhere in Essex that I looked for them, this was a surprise as they are rather rare in Essex, they should be common here in 2016.

My [almost] obsessional search for *Coleophora* cases continued in 2015 and I managed to find 10 new to me species, *C. artemisicolella*, *C. follicularis*, *C. trochilella*, *C. conyzae*, *C. discordella*, *C. amethystinella*, *C. deauratella*, *C. mayella*, *C. taeniipennella* and my favourite *C. saturatella*.

I originally began mothing in the very early 1980s with encouragement from the late Geoff Pyman, whose Little Baddow garden backed onto my parent's, and the late Reg Arthur, during seasonal wardening adventures at Colne Point NR with Russ Neave. Whilst at Little Baddow I trapped regularly but when I married and moved to Great Baddow I managed to do very little mothing.

With a move to Maldon in 1996, not long after Russ Neave had done the same, I was able to trap more regularly as, despite being on the edge of a new housing estate, part of my garden was secluded enough for me to run my 250W MV light. In 2010, a short move north took me to Heybridge, still on a housing estate, but only a stone's throw from both the River Blackwater and estuary and the Chelmer & Blackwater Canal. Here I have managed to run my 250W MV plus an 80W Actinic trap albeit only on the odd night or two a week and mostly at weekends. I have also trapped a couple of times at Chigborough Lakes N.R. and several times in Hazeleigh Woods, a private ancient woodland referred to in the Doomsday Book.

Since 1996, I have recorded a very respectable 730 or so species of Lepidoptera within the area that the Maldon birders call The Patch – an area first agreed on by Russ and I in the mid-1990s and comprising the area within the circle described by a 3mile radius centred on Russ's old home on Mundon Road. Russ also trapped at Mundon Road occasionally and recorded a number of additional rare species, which are included in the write-up.

The most exciting discovery in The Patch was the five **Small Black Arches**, pictured left, that came to 125 MV light in Hazeleigh Woods in 2007, the first Essex record since the species was reported from Hadleigh, Great Wood in 1934. The species had been reported at Hazeleigh by Victorian recorders. Today, this nationally scarce species is only found in any numbers in Hampshire. The larvae feed on Pendunculate Oak. Others have been trapped subsequently.



In 1998, single male and female **Small Eggars** turned up together in my trap, the only time I have recorded this increasingly local species. As for local micro-species, *Eucosma pauperana* turned up on two nights in 2002, whilst *Eucosma metzneriana* arrived in June 2009 and *Olindia schumacherana* just a week later. *Oncocera semirubella* also occurred in 2009, during July.



Oncocera semirubella



Eucosma metzneriana



***Olindia schumacherana* (S.W)**

What has been most noticeable, as far as residents species are concerned, is the apparent reduction in numbers over the last 20 years, although species diversity seems to have remained more or less the same; this "thinning" out of the natural heritage seems to be a constant theme across the country as habitats are slowly degraded by the effects of intensive use and pesticides.

Some species have become exceptionally rare now, such as **Garden Tiger**, but others have now colonised and we now have **White-point**, **L-Album Wainscot**, **Tree-lichen Beauty** and **Toadflax Brocade** all breeding locally, larva pictured, although migrants, I suspect, boost numbers.



Maldon's proximity to the Blackwater estuary means that coastal and reed bed species are recorded regularly including a good variety of **Wainscots** including **Brown-veined**, **Twin-spotted**, **Silky**, **Southern**, **Mathew's** and **Obscure**.

Sandhill Rustic turns up almost annually whilst in 1997 one of my favourite moths, **Archer's Dart**, did the honour of turning up in my trap. Other coastal species recorded include the micros *Ptocheurra pupella*, *Coleophora limoniella*, *Cosmopterix lienigiella* and *Agdidis bennetii*, **Saltmarsh Plume**.



Coleophora limoniella



Cosmopterix lienigiella



RED-NECKED FOOTMAN (S.W.)

As for migrants numbers are, not surprisingly, variable but generally not large. However, over the years there has been a good selection of rarer species including **Silver Barred** [2001], two **Golden Twin-spot** and a **Great Brocade** [2006], **Dewick's Plusia**, two **Rannoch Looper** [2009], *Palpita vitrealis* [2010] and two **Red-necked Footman** [2015], whilst **Convulvulus Hawkmoth**, **Bordered** and **Scarce Bordered Straws**, **Vestal**, **Gem** and **Small Mottled Willow** are occasional. However, pride of place goes to the odd looking "bordered straw" Russ trapped on 8th June 2003 We concluded that it was an **Eastern Bordered Straw**, which was subsequently confirmed as just the fifth British record. Russ also trapped *Antigastra catalaunalis* on 21st September 2006 at the time of a major national influx and still just one of a hand-full of County records.



GOLDEN TWIN-SPOT



DEWICK'S PLUSIA (S.W.)

As for day-flying moths **Mother Shipton** has been recorded along the seawalls, as have **Six-spot** and **Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet** as well as *Sitochroa palealis* and *Commophila aeneana*.

The butterfly fauna is probably richer now than it was 20 years ago, but again overall numbers seem lower. In recent years **White Admiral** has arrived, whilst a **Silver-washed Fritillary** was found by Russ in July 2013 at Maldon Wick was egg-laying. He also found what appears to have be a continental race **Swallowtail** at Heybridge Pit in 2012. **White-letter Hairstreaks** are just about hanging on, whilst a **Green Hairstreak** in my garden in 2012, the first patch record, suggests there must be an undiscovered colony nearby.



Commophila aeneana



Narrow-Bordered 5-spot Burnet (S.W.)

With thanks to Russ Neave with his assistance putting this note together.

CURRY FARM (BRADWELL BROOK) RESERVE

STEPHEN DEWICK

2015 was yet another good year for immigrants, but resident species had mixed fortunes once again. The year started well with two **Red Admirals** on the 2nd January. The Christmas period had been cold but fortunately the frosts did not penetrate much as winds were mostly light. A **Peacock** appeared on the 9th February and **Small Tortoiseshell** and **Comma** were about on the 18th of the month. On the 25th a **Red Admiral** was photographed nectaring on snowdrops just before it was chased off by a Robin. That night a **Red Sword-grass** came to light. March brought little of interest although the 7th was a warm day with at least five **Brimstones** flying and an astonishingly early **Small or Green-veined White**.

The quiet theme continued through April although an early **Humming-bird Hawk-moth** was seen on the 20th.

The first **Painted Lady** appeared here on the 12th May, but it was not until the 29th that the first **Common Blue** was seen and even by then, only the odd **Small Heath** and **Small Copper** had been about.

From the 12th June the season changed dramatically. The first **Rush Veneers** and **Rusty-dot Pearls** were recorded. **Bordered Straws** and high numbers of **Small Mottled Willows** started to arrive over the following nights.



GYPSY MOTH



Ctenophora ornata (S.D.)

July was certainly an interesting month for immigrants, with the first ever Bradwell records of *Catoptria falsella* on the 1st and 4th. Of considerable interest, a male true crane fly, *Ctenophora ornata* was caught in the trap on the 15th. This spectacular and unmistakable RDB 1 species is classified as endangered. A **Beautiful Snout** arrived on the 16th, with **Gem**, **Delicate** and **Scarce Bordered Straw** by now also coming in. Intriguingly, the last twelve days of July saw a **White Admiral** occupying exactly the same territory as last year's one.



Catoptria verellus



RED SWORDGRASS

(S.D.)

The diversity of immigrants increased still further during August with two **Ni Moths**, two **Rest Harrows**; also our first ever **Gypsy Moths** on the 13th and 17th of the month.

Cydalima perspectalis appeared here for the first time on the 15th of September and the first *Palpita vitrealis* had now arrived

In complete contrast October was a strangely disappointing month although a final **Ni Moth** was in the trap on the 10th.

From the very start November saw renewed immigrant activity. Following northerly gales an exhausted Little Auk was in the lane on the 24th.

On the 7th December I photographed Dog Rose, Musk Mallow, Blackthorn and Honeysuckle in bloom. A **Hebrew Character** was in the trap on the 11th and a **Spring Usher** on the 16th. With the unseasonable warmth the migrant theme continued. A **Rusty-dot Pearl** was rescued from a road side puddle and finally an extraordinarily late **Small Mottled Willow** was in the trap on the 28th.

MOTHING REPORT

GRAHAM SMITH

Although I had long been interested in moths I did not begin trapping on a regular basis until the early 1990s. I knew that a mercury vapour lamp was the best light to attract them but was unsure of what wattage to use so my first purchase was a spectacularly large 400W bulb. We set it up on the beach at Bradwell and it lit up the entire Blackwater estuary. It attracted not only a huge number of moths but also the local Coastguards, who wondered what the hell was going on! Thereafter, we confined its use to the more sheltered confines of the garden of Linnet's Cottage. Quite often Steve Dewick was in attendance to help me identify the moths.

Trapping in my garden began at the same time. The 400W lamp proved to be a little unsettling for the neighbours so I reduced it to 125W and then 80W but even the latter flooded the local gardens with light. I then tried a 15W ultra violet light and increased this over the years to 30W and then 60W, the light I now use. My interest in moths at that time, and to some extent now, was aesthetic rather than scientific and although I sent records of new species for the garden to the then recorder, Brian Goodey, I never kept systematic records. An opportunity missed. That changed when I became more involved with the EFC and I now send all my records to Peter.

I trap nearly every night in the back garden during the season, roosting my catch in a converted aquarium during the day and releasing them in the front garden at dusk. By marking some of the common species with a dab of colour I found that this system resulted in only occasional recaptures on consecutive nights, thus keeping disturbance to a minimum. The number of 'macro' moths caught during that time stands at around 370. I live within a couple of hundred yards of open countryside and within a mile of the outer reaches of the Writtle Forest so I have had a good many wanderers from those forested habitats during the 25 years spent trapping, many of them on only one or two occasions. Sadly, the **Garden Tiger** is among their number, a species that was common during the days of my youth. The commoner species have waxed and waned over the years - **Varied Coronet** has not appeared for five years and even the **Lesser Yellow Underwing** is in the doldrums at present, whereas **Dusky Thorn** and **Heart & Club** numbers are booming – but you still look forward to the appearance of the 'regulars' in due season. In recent years these have included **Toadflax Brocade** and **Jersey Tiger**. I live too far inland to attract many migrants but the likes of **Dark Swordgrass**, **Pearly Underwing**, **Small Mottled Willow**, **Rusty Dot Pearl** and **Rush Veneer** have occurred on several occasions and rarer species have included the **Gem**, **Bordered Straw**, **Cloaked Pug**, and a very fine **Bedstraw Hawk** Moth in 2011.



BEDSTRAW HAWKMOTH



CLOAKED PUG



OAK PROCESSIONARY (G.S.)

It still surprises me that I manage to add species to this list each year. 2015 was a particularly good year. Trapping was terrible until mid-June due to below average temperatures but then took off for a couple of months. Eleven species visited the garden for the first time. In order of appearance they were **Dotted Chestnut**, **Pale Pinion**, **Scalloped Hazel**, **Lobster Moth**, **Cypress Carpet**, **European Corn Borer**, **Brown Scallop**, **Boxworm Moth**, **Oak Processionary**, **Fen Wainscot**, **Scarce Bordered Straw**. At first I thought the **Boxworm Moth** might be a **Moon Moth**, as that was the only similar species in my old copy of 'Goater' but Brian put me right on that! That will teach me to look up unfamiliar species when they appear on the Group's emails!

BOREHAM MOTHS IN 2015

GRAHAM EKINS

I decided in 2015 to try and trap as much as possible during the year in our Boreham, Essex, garden. This site has been trapped with varying levels of intensity since 1995. Pre 2002 I used just 2 traps and caught as many moths as I could deal with. By 2015 I had increased the traps to 5 with a mixture of different wavelength actinics and UVs. Only in July did I catch numbers and species diversity approaching pre 2002, for most of the time numbers, particularly of macros were significantly reduced. I trapped for a total of 193 nights with an average catch over the year of 2.3 new species per night with a peak in July of 6.9 species. The surprise was December with only 0.3 new species. With the amazingly mild weather in December I did expect much higher catches and some interesting arrivals but this did not happen.

The results were interesting in that I trapped 567 species during the year, this is 82% of the total ever caught on site and far above what I was expecting. Of the total catch in 2015, 334 were Macros and 233 Micros. A much higher proportion of Macro records involved just one moth per species even though I was trapping nightly for extended periods. It does suggest that population levels for some species in my area may be at quite a low density compared to 20+ years ago.

The peak macro month was June with 100 species but numbers were quite high in May and August. For Micros the peak was more concentrated with 103 species in July with only one-third of this total in June and August.

The table below summarises my 2015 catch. For 5 months (Jan, Feb, April, Sept & Dec) I did not trap a single new species for the site (NFS). The peak NFS was July with 63 species, the majority being Micros with much reduced numbers in June and August. As would be expected June to August were the peak months for NFS Macros and Micros. The number of new species for the site at 131 represents 23% of the total catch with 38 Macros and 93 Micros.

Moth summary, Boreham, Essex garden TL754098, VC19, 2015.													
New for site in 2015													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Sub-totals
Macro	0	0	1	0	3	11	15	7	0	1	0	0	38
Micro	0	0	1	0	5	22	48	12	0	3	2	0	93
													0
New species Total	0	0	2	0	8	33	63	19	0	4	2	0	131
Monthly New for Year (NFY)													
NFY Macro	5	7	13	21	53	100	63	30	11	29	1	1	334
NFY Micro	4	2	7	5	26	35	103	38	1	10	1	1	233
No. of Nights trapped	7	9	11	15	18	29	24	24	20	25	5	6	193
Total Moth species trapped in 2015	9	9	20	26	79	135	166	68	12	39	2	2	567
Moths NFY/catch/night	1.3	1.0	1.8	1.7	4.4	4.7	6.9	2.8	0.6	1.6	0.4	0.3	2.3



SCARCE BORDERED STRAW



SMALL MARBLED



NI MOTH

(G.EKINS)

2015 was a superb one for migrants here in Boreham with 125 *Nomophila noctuella*, 14 **Bordered Straws**, 8 **Dark Sword Grass**, 12 **European Corn Borer** (*Ostrinia nubilalis*), 14 **Rusty-dot Pearl** (*Udea ferrugalis*) 26 **Small Mottled Willows**, 2 **Delicates**, 2 **Pearly Underwings**, 3 **Vestals**, **Scarce Bordered Straw**, **Small Marbled**, a **Ni Moth** and a **Gypsy Moth**.

This year I actually trapped more *N. noctuella* than I did *Plutella xylostella*. I also trapped 2 **Peach Twig Borers** (*Anarsia lineatella*) in July during a significant moth arrival along the south and east coast. This summer I found the best migrant conditions were when winds were from the S or SW rather than E. I also found that the migrants in Boreham often arrived one or more nights after any falls on the south coast. In past years winds with an easterly aspect have brought in migrants, this was less obvious in 2015.



Anarsia lineatella



SALTMARSH PLUME



SANDHILL RUSTIC (G.E.)

Coastal Essex species arrived during 2 periods of light E/NE winds in July/August, these included 3 **Saltmarsh Plumes** and 2 **Sandhill Rustics**.

CONFESSIONS OF A NOVICE MOTHER

ANDREW RAYBOULD

I started mothing at home (between Great Leighs and Boreham, NE of Chelmsford) in 2013 and retirement during 2014 has allowed over 100 sessions at home and at 7 other Essex sites during the last two years.

At first there were hours spent leafing backwards and forwards through the Field Guide looking for moths that seemingly had so far been undescribed and I appeared to continually acquire kit. The discovery that egg boxes were de rigueur meant asking for egg boxes from work colleagues and finding that, once they started coming, you couldn't stop them appearing on your desk for months.

My first ever moth identified was an **Oak Eggar** in August 2013 - I've not had one since in the garden. We are situated in a rural location with many mature trees and nearby hedgerows and the garden list is now about 440 moths (310 macros) with new ones turning up quite regularly. At home on a Thursday night I compete with the lights from Chelmsford Racecourse (about 4 miles away) and I wonder if they are capable of attracting not only inter-galactic moths but also enticing away moths that are rightfully mine by making my MV lamp look rather sad in comparison. My family initially had to overcome the delight of finding sleepy moths in pots in the fridge amongst the milk and orange juice in the morning, whilst keeping company with potted up moths (and other small beasties at times) on the kitchen table as they had their breakfast.

People at work could comprehend, and had happily accepted, my birdwatching over the years, but someone trapping moths and identifying them was generally regarded by them as a large step towards becoming a complete Old Buffer. I remember one young lady was amazed to hear that there was in fact more than one type of moth. My Chinese team kept using Google translate and believing that they must have it wrong in Mandarin and it was in fact something else entirely that I was up to. My mother-in-law on the other hand likened it to my never ending battle against rabbits in the garden, wanting to know how I was going to eradicate all the local moths.



4 SPS OF SALLOW



DECEMBER



TWO EYED HAWKMOTHS (AR)

I have particularly enjoyed joining other like-minded Essex mothers at various sites and have learnt a lot from them. Aside from moths I discovered a number of other practical things. Even if warm, do not wear shorts as moths seek out the upper inner reaches and hornets may decide not be confined to the traps alone. At my first away game (Spring Lane Nursery) with David Barnard and the CNHS group, I was woefully short of equipment; no garden chair, no flask of coffee, no chocolate biscuits, to say nothing of no torch and no net. When there have been multi-trap sessions (memorably at Fingringhoe and Cudmore Grove) keeping hold of pens or pencils has been a particular problem of mine and some sites in Essex are now liberally sprinkled with them.

The sessions around Essex have been particularly nice when joined by the local support group, Wardens/Rangers and, in the case of the session at Writtle College, students, genuinely marvelling at every new moth that turns up (and of course they often bring along cake and biscuits).

I obtained a net and was surprised that there is in fact a technique (it is all in the wrist action). I read somewhere that as you swish about 'if you don't look stupid doing it then you are not doing it right' According to my family, I don't even need the net to achieve this.

Nothing has been more expensive than I imagined having accumulated more Moth books, a nice camera particularly for identification of micros and twice already I have had to call upon Jon Clifton at ALS to replace the bits of my Skinner Trap that I clumsily break (who would have thought that there were enough bits to break?). Whilst it is clearly wrong to covet another's generator, I have not gained permission to get one as yet. Watching Dougal trying to get his to start in the latter part of 2015 has been amusing, particularly his look of surprise when challenged about whether the oil had been checked lately. I'm not sure Dougal even knew generators needed oil.

In 2015 I went a few times to Friday Woods to help Pete Dyke and his survey project there. I had previously seen a visiting Suffolk mother keeping his MV lamp in an old cylindrical whisky container and I had taken to copying this to store my lamp. When setting up one evening at Friday Woods and getting the lamp out of the whisky box, Pete Dyke asked me 'Where did you get that?', 'Duty-Free' I replied, 'Oh' said Pete with a genuinely surprised look, 'I didn't know they sold MV lamps'.



MERVEILLE DU JOURS



Rhodophaea formosa



RED-NECKED FOOTMAN (AR)

At an early session there, Pete was accosted by several Military Police after the Guard House had failed to get the message that we were there and were patrolling to prevent other non-mothing nocturnal activities in the car park. Dougal and I casually moved over to the trap furthest from the MPs and left Pete to his fate.

The Suffolk mothers came along to a Fingringhoe session (and were rewarded with the target species of 5 **White Spotted Pinions**) and this was my first brush with my Mother Superiors. How micros can be identified with a short glance, or it would appear almost just from behaviour, is astounding and knowing them by their Bradley & Fletcher numbers rather than names, well, one day maybe.....

My moth-trapping is generally confined to leaving the kitchen window open on those warm summer nights, and as a 'butterflyer', most moths that I record are the dayflyers. Some do come to light, but some may be less familiar to regular 'trappers'. There are several 'banker' species that emerge as the season progresses, such as the **Burnet Companion**, **Mother Shipton**, **Shaded Broad-bar**, **Latticed Heath**, **Yellow Shell** and of course, the **Silver-Y**. This year, numbers of these grassland species seemed low, although the **Yellow Shell** was abundant. The **Burnet Companion** has a curious distribution nationally and is common in the western side of the county. I found one at the Bow Creek Ecology Park – a curious slither of land where the Bow River meanders into the Thames. With its iridescent black background with red spots, the **Six-spot Burnet** moth is the real 'looker' of the dayflyers, being notably numerous at Willow Park, Langdon. Less so, its cousin, the **Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet**. Other less-common species seen were the **Snout**, a **Blood-vein** sitting motionless in the short grass, **Brown Silver-line** disturbed from Bracken, and a **Clouded Border** flitting around a hedgerow.

In late May, I believe I saw two male **Fox** moths frantically flying around Knightsfield, Willow Park and this species certainly breeds on the southern slopes of the Langdon Ridge. Just as manic in July are the male **Oak Eggars** and I saw these throughout the county from Berden in the north-west to Fingringhoe and at Thorndon Park. The first moth of the year was perhaps the best, a very jumpy **Orange Underwing**, (just about) photographed at Ellis Wood, Writtle Forest.



ORANGE UNDERWING

A personal favourite expedition is an annual count of **Common Heath** moths at Sunshine Plain. This species has been recently added to the Essex Red Data Book as this area of heath in Epping Forest is the only known breeding location in the county. There are occasional records elsewhere in the county, where it probably feeds on vetches in a thin sward, but at Sunshine Plain, it feeds on common ling that is being regenerated by the reintroduction of grazing. The timed count recorded 33 males and 2 females on the south side, plus another 5 males on the north side, representing a very stable population over the past few years.



There are some familiar moth caterpillars seen in most years, the most conspicuous being the black and yellow striped **Cinnabar** on Ragwort. A **Scarce Footman** and 3 large blue caterpillars of The **Drinker** were seen at Mill Green Common at the end of May, an **Oak Eggar** at Little Haven heath, a **Knot Grass** at Mountnessing and a **Lackey** on the sea wall at Ramsey Marsh.

SCARCE FOOTMAN CATERPILLAR



I was also fortunate to spot a **Magpie** moth pupae in a spun web in a hedgerow at Ingrave.

As the nights draw in, but the evenings stay warm, I indulged in some crepuscular activity at Mill Green Common in September and was able to observe a mating pair of **Green Carpet** moths and several **Feathered Gothics** roosting in the long grass. This period saw a small influx of **Vestal** moths and I disturbed one in the long grass Totham Plains and another came to my kitchen window in Brentwood.

FEATHERED GOTHIC



We encourage day-moth recording to our butterfly sightings page, and there were at least 3 **Jersey Tigers** seen, all in the London suburbs. Notable was the **Streamer**, seen roosting at Mill Meadows, Billericay by Paul Hudson.

Micros seen this year were the common, but spectacular, *Alabonia geoffrella*, that flies at my local woods in Great Warley with the similar longhorn moth, *Nemophora degeerella*. Just as glitzy is *Eriocrania subpurpurella* that flies early in spring on the margins of oak woodland. I disturbed the 'rhubarb-and-custard' micro *Oncocera semirubella* from rough vegetation at Grangewaters, South Ockendon early one July evening. A couple of 'local' species were found at Mill Green Common in late May, *Triaxomera parasitella* and the slightly larger *Morophaga choragella* (pictured).



These are subtly speckled with dark and sandy browns and have a delicate buzzing flight, low to vegetation, and frustratingly rarely settle. The larvae feed on bracket fungi – a reward for leaving stumps and sawn logs on site during heathland restoration work.



A couple of favourites, *Sitochroa palealis*, the delicate powdery white moth most often encountered on the sea walls, but also this year in London at Bow Creek and last year at Becton District Park and the Thames Barrier Park where wild carrot has been planted. Also in London, another sea wall speciality, the small, delicate black *Epichnopterix plumella* was found on wasteland by the Royal Docks Road in Becton. I also observed this inland at Mill Green Common, unwittingly disturbing a pair trying to mate in the Purple Moor Grass. But at least I managed to photograph the female in its case made from dead grass stems.

I must confess to a couple of late experiments with a light trap, one of which at Tylers Wood meadow, Great Warley revealed another 'local' species - *Eudonia pallida*, in amongst the **Square-spot Rustics**.

Rob Smith, Butterfly recorder for Essex, Butterfly Conservation

(PICS R.SMITH)

I usually run a 40W actinic trap in my garden on most suitable nights through the season but low night time temperatures, a succession of empty traps and low numbers of the common spring moths typified the start to 2015. However, two **Orange Underwings** flying around the Backwarden reserve on 21st April were a sign that things were beginning to pick up – just before I spent 2 weeks abroad! My garden trap produced a **Chocolate Tip** and a **Muslin Moth** on 7th May – both less than annual here and a magnificent **Puss Moth** on 11th but numbers of moths remained low throughout the rest of the month. June saw a marked improvement when I ran two MV Robinson traps on Danbury Heath on 4th. The highlights from a total of 53 macro moths were 3 **Seraphims** and a **Poplar Kitten**, a species I had been trying to confirm for several years. A **Treble Brown Spot** appeared in my garden trap on 11th following a complete absence last year and a varied catch on 13th included a **Freyer’s Pug**, **Scorched Wing**, **Waved Umber**, **Lobster**, another **Puss Moth** a **Large Nutmeg** and a **Rustic Shoulder Knot**. Two **Bordered Straws** on 16th were the first of the summer migrants to grace my garden.

July started with a **Blotched Emerald** on 4th, another species that was absent last year following regular annual appearances since 2009. On 6th the first of a good series of **Beautiful Hook-tip** records was accompanied by a **Miller** and a **Leopard Moth**. On 8th a **Waved Black** and a **Varied Coronet** were found in the garden trap. I had three records of the latter species in 2014 but these were the first that I had seen since 2006!

On 8th July I ran a trap for a few hours at Canvey Wick where the stars of 51 species of macro moth were undoubtedly the 4 **Lappets** which zoomed in and bounced on the ground like Hawkmoths. A **Blackneck** and 2 **Dotted Fan-foots** were the best of the rest.

On 15th I tried my luck on a warm evening at Tiptree Heath where 93 species of macro moth were identified. **Festoon** and **Orange Moth** were welcome but expected, a **Small Mottled Willow** was not surprising given this year’s invasion but **Shaded Fan-foot** was a species that I had not anticipated. It is pleasing to see it spreading out of its Suffolk strongholds. On 17th a **Small Mottled Willow** finally made it in to my garden trap and on 20th a pristine **Toadflax Brocade**.



VARIED CORONET

SHADED FAN-FOOT

(I.T.)

By 23rd July the species count at Danbury Heath had risen to 72 including **Oak Eggar**, **Birch Mocha** and **Cream-bordered Green Pea** and a **Pine Hawkmoth**, the last two some distance from apparent breeding habitat.

During August I volunteered to help with some moth trapping sessions with the staff at the new Little Belhus Country Park. The most interesting records from an enjoyable evening on 3rd were 20+ **Tree Lichen Beauty** and a fine male **Gypsy Moth** – the first of this species that I have seen. Interestingly Dougal Urquhart and I trapped a second individual at South Weald on 12th.

On 8th another **Small Mottled Willow** was found in the garden trap along with a **Waved Black** and another **Toadflax Brocade**. Two **Jersey Tigers** were trapped on 20th, one of which was var *lutescens*, an

Oak Processionary was a first for me on 21st and a wandering **Webb's Wainscot** was a first for the garden on 22nd.

On 6th September I was pleased to find 12 **Toadflax Brocade** larvae feeding on my Purple Toadflax.

And so an interesting year concluded with the usual autumn species augmented by a spectacular **Red Underwing**, the odd **Merveille du Jour** and **December Moth** and the discovery of 2 **Herald Moths** hibernating in the loft while I extracted the Christmas decorations! A Happy New Mothing Year to you all!



TOADFLAX BROCADE LARVA



OAK PROCESSIONARY



GYPSY MOTH



POPLAR KITTEN

LEPIDOPTERA REPORT – FOULNESS 2015

CHRIS LEWIS

Trapping occurred on 9 nights between 18th April and 19th December. The traps were mostly sited on the Bennetts Butt road (TR042943).

286 species were recorded, 25 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 586.

5 Red Data Book species and 14 Nationally Scarce species were recorded this year.

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 during 2016.

Scarce species recorded in 2015 are shown in bold in the cumulative list presented below:



Figure 1: **REST HAROW**

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.

***Coleophora aestuariella* – 1 on 01/08/2015 – saltmarsh in SE.England (possibly only the 3rd record for Essex)**

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

***Eucosma metzneriana* – 1 on 27/06/2015 – recent colonist, possibly breeding in Kent (possibly 7th record for Essex)**

Rest Harrow – 1 on 09/08/2015 – breeds

very locally in Kent, occasional migrant (possibly 5th record for Essex)

Silver Barred – 1 on 13/06/2009; 1 on 10/07/2010; 2 on 30/06/2013; 1 on 07/06/2014; **1 on 04/07/2015**

Sandhill Rustic – 2 on 15/08/2015. I have suspected this species before and it should occur on Foulness, but its similarity to *L.testacea* (Flounced Rustic) has left me in doubt



Figure 2 – **SILVER BARRED**

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

***Brachmia inornatella* – 1 on 13/06/2015 – fens & marshes in SE.England**

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

Trichopteryx polycommata (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, **2 on 27/06/2015, 2 on 04/07/2015, 2 on 15/08/2015**

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, **2 on 27/06/2015**



Figure 3: *Thiodia citrana*

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

Sesia apiformis (Hornet Moth) (NS-B) 1 on 25/07/09, 1 on 11/06/2011 – SE England
62.053

Ancylosis 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, **1 on 01/08/2015** – S England

Pediasia aridella (NS-B) **1 on 27/06/2015** – saltings S&E 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, **8 on 04/07/2015**

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; **1 on 13/06/2015, 2 on 27/06/2015, 1 on 04/07/2015**

Ruddy Carpet (NS-B); 1 on 27/06/2015

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; **2 on 27/06/2015** – saltmarsh

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

Small Mottled Willow – **2 on 04/07/2015, 1 on 01/08/2015, 2 on 15/08/2015** – an uncommon migrant that had a bumper year in 2105

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; **4 on 27/06/2015, 10 on 04/07/2015** – 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; **2 on 27/06/2015**

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; **2 on 03/10/2015**

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; **1 on 27/06/2015, 6 on 04/07/2015** - S&SE coasts

More common species new to Foulness in 2015

Argyresthia spinosella

Coleophora trifolii

Coleophora hemerobiella

Acleris aspersana

Treble Brown-spot,

Winter Moth,

Orange Moth,

Common Wave,

Blotched Emerald,

Straw Dot,

Burnet Companion,

Marbled White Spot,

Brown-spot Pinion,

Chestnut.

Striped Wainscot,

Obscure Wainscot,

Short-cloaked Moth,

During 2016 I plan to continue my effort to document the lepidopteran fauna of Foulness.

MOTHING IN MARKS HILL, LANGDON RIDGE 2015

ROD COLE

21st APRIL

A fine dry evening, albeit rapidly cooling down, there being little by way of cloud cover. Crescent moon. Sadly, no nightingale singing in the distance, unlike our experience on 19th May 2009, when one was clearly audible from the Lee Chapel Lane direction. We have had no such accompaniment on these Marks Hill Wood moth evenings since then. We did have a tawny owl, however. There was no shortage of participants: Richard and Jude Dennison from Hornchurch, Marlene, Denise, Brian and Toni Dawson, John and Wendy Wiggins, Peter, Fred, Colin, RLC. Twelve souls in all – and we threatened to outnumber the moths, until the latter staged a counter-attack.

We had approaching 60 moths, of 16 species. There were no new records for the wood as far as moths were concerned, but considerable interest attached to a winged insect, perhaps one of the scorpion flies, the like of which none of us had ever seen before. Otherwise, the most remarkable species of the evening was probably the **Frosted Green**, with some very handsome individuals, and in numbers not hitherto experienced in the wood.

14th JULY

A calm, overcast, warm and close evening. Strong turn-out, of both moths and moth botherers. The latter comprised, in something approaching order of appearance, John and Wendy Wiggins, Peter Furze, Fred Burgess, Roger Payne, Richard Dennison from Hornchurch, Colin Humphrey, Rod Cole, Marlene Bradshaw, Don Down, John Ellis (from Laindon Common Conservators, visiting to see how we do things), Denise Rowling. What with Richard's and Don's lights, there were five lights in total, making for a good coverage of what was on the wing (and attracted to light: there are always those elusive species which avoid it).

New species were **Ghost Moth, Festoon, Leopard, *Argyresthia bonnetella*, *Paraswammerdamia nebulella*, *Metzneria metzneriella*, *Anarsia spartiella*, *Blastodacna helerella*, *Acleris bergmanniana*, *Ancylis achatana*, *Eudomia delunella*, **White-pinion Spotted, Pebble prominent, Dot Moth** and **Blackneck**.**

11th AUGUST

Undaunted by gentle rainfall which contrasted with prior drought, nine stalwarts ran, between them, six light-traps – save that one of those traps succumbed to circumstance: its old and distinguished bulb finally expired, obliged thereby to surrender its socket to a brash and bright new bulb, all glamour and brilliance, proudly illuminating Gladstone Road and sneering at the humble glow-worm that glimmered its optimism just a few yards further along the track. But pride comes before a fall! The mizzle of drizzle was easily dealt with – but there came one of those tremors of gusting excitement amid the treetops, presaging the shaking of accumulated droplets from the lofty foliage, to descend upon the heads of the diligent moth-botherers beneath. They, of course, were made of the stuff that spurns such passing nuisance, but the gleaming new bulb was of no such robustness – and when a sturdy gobbet of rainwater dropped directly upon its hot little surface, just as it was warming to its proud purpose of enticing all passing moths, it gasped its premature end amid a forest-shaking CRACK – and with a bang it gave up the ghost. Darkness descended – broken only by the indomitable little glow-worm. So we had just five light-traps. But hey! Those five traps did the trick!

The list testified, yet again, to the astonishing variety of wildlife to be beheld in Marks Hill Wood in particular, and upon Langdon in general. As indicated above, there were nine souls fortunate enough to behold this abundance of good things, and those readers unfortunate enough to have missed the business can only survey the following list of dedicated operators and wish that they had been at the scene of such action and fascination – just as King Henry V opined before the Battle of Agincourt in 1415, at least in Shakespeare's version of events (not that our moth bothering took place on 25th October – oh dear me no: you wouldn't get such a mixture of species at that time of year).

So it was that Richard and Jude Dennison, John Wiggins, Peter Furze, Fred Burgess, Colin Humphrey, Marlene Bradshaw, Don Down and the author assembled on the edge of the forest at the pre-arranged time, intent upon discovering which moths were on the wing at this point in August.

Species added to the list were *Hypatima rhomboidella*, *Psoricoptera gibbosella*, *Hedya ochroleucana*, *Lathronympha strigana*, **Pale Mottled Willow**, while 3 **Mochas** and 2 **Gypsy Moths** were of note.

The evening's mothing brought the total number of species recorded for the Langdon Ridge to 682.

After the August visit, the Marks Hill Wood species list, now stands at 410 (246 of which are so-called macros). This is now a very good list for a single location, testifying to the richness of the nature reserve.

MOTH HIGHLIGHTS FOR 2015 IN SOUTH ESSEX

GRAHAM BAILEY

Heron Gardens, Rayleigh – Macro moths

Sloe Carpet - singles on 14th and 24th April, **Toadflax Brocade** - 2nd and 11th June, 2nd and 11th August, **Dark Spectacle** - 11th June and 17th September, **Buttoned Snout** - 12th June, **Bordered Straw** - 17th June, **Small Mottled Willow** - 5th July, **Dotted Fan-foot** - 5th and 9th July, **Blackneck** - 9th and 18th July, **Beautiful Hook-tip** – total of 16 on night of 10th July. Also noted 2 freshly-emerged second brood insects on 4th October, **Dark Umber** - 10th and 31st July, **Star-wort** – 18th July, **Festoon** - 20th July, **Waved Black** – 20th July, **Maple Pug** – 11th August, **Gypsy Moth** – single male on 11th August, **Cypress Pug** – 21st August, **Vestal** - 10th and 15th September, **Large Thorn** - single male on 11th September, **Hedge Rustic** - 11th September, **Dusky-lemon Sallow** - 10th October, **Gem** - single male on 5th November



BLACKNECK

VESTAL

LARGE THORN

BEAUTIFUL HOOK-TIP (GB)

Heron Gardens, Rayleigh – Micro moths - *Semioscopis steinkellneriana* – 15th May, *Platyedra subcinerea* – 11th June (ID by Stephen Palmer, UK Gelechiid recorder), *Archips crataegana* – 21st June, *Acleris bergmanniana* – 25th June, *Schoenobius gigantella* – 5th July and 3rd August, *Eana incanana* – 18th July, *Anarsia lineatella* – at least 3 noted on the 18th July, and another on 25th July. Probably breeding on extensive sloe bushes close by at Wheatley Wood. *Rhodophaea formosa* – 2nd August, *Epiblema costipunctana* – 2nd and 13th August, *Eucosma conterminana* – 10th August, *Platytes alpinella* - 10th August, *Eucosma conterminana* - 10th August, *Agdistis bennetii* - 17th August, *Nephoterix angustella* – 17th September, *Acrolepiosis assectella* (Leek moth) - 19th August, *Ypsolopha horridella* - 22nd August, *Palpita vitrealis* – 27th October.



Archips crataegiana

Commophila aeneana

Eucosma conterminana

Cochylimorpha alternana (GB)

Canvey Wick SSSI - Some of the more interesting species noted on the evening of 14th August 2015, with Don Down *Platytes alpinella* - 25+, *Sitochroa palealis* – 1, *Oncocera semirubella* - 20+, **Small wainscot** and **Small Rufous** – singles of each. Our first records of these species here. **Garden tiger** – 3, *Ancylosis oblitella* – 1, Also noted by day a *Epichnopterix plumella* on 16th May.

Private Nature Reserve – Daws Heath, Hadleigh - (Four trapping sessions carried out with the permission of the land owner) 4th August – *Oidaematophorus lithodactyla* - 2; **Kent Black Arches** - 1; **Waved Black** - 1; **Barred Rivulet** -1; **Maple Pug** – 1; 20th August – *Epermenia falciformis*; 20th August - A possible singleton of the tortrix *Cochylimorpha alternana* – needs to be hopefully confirmed from the single half-decent photo I have of it. Could be a first record for Essex as only known to occur in Kent; 12th September – **Dotted Rustic** – 1; 10th October – **Rosy footman** - 1. Freshly emerged – a possible second brood insect.



O.lithodactyla

WAVED BLACK

MAPLE PUG

DOTTED RUSTIC (GB)



Luperina sp



A. brockeella



Pammene regiana



RED-NECKED FOOTMAN (NG)



I found this moth in our bathroom on the morning of 06.12.15. It was provisionally identified for me by Martin Honey as a *Metachrostis* species. I took the moth to Martin at the Natural History Museum for determination. I haven't heard back from him yet. I had visited Mozambique in November 2015 and had returned to the UK two weeks previously. It seems likely that I inadvertently brought it home with me from there.

CHIONODES FUMATELLA AT CANVEY WICK -

EXTRACT FROM ENTOMOLOGIST'S GAZETTE

An account is given by S. Beavan and R. Heckford of the larva of *Chionodes fumatella*, which has apparently not been found previously in the British Isles. In 2015 three larvae were found amongst minute traces of silk on the surface of the moss *Barbula convoluta* in Essex and several were discovered in sand-covered silken tubes attached to the base of the moss *Brachythecium albicans* Schimp. in Norfolk. Both localities are in England. Mainland European accounts are reviewed.

A copy of the paper is held by the Essex Field Club.



Chionodes fumatella - Adult emerged 20.8.15 from larva found among silk traces on surfaces of the moss *Barbula convoluta* at Canvey Wick, Essex.

Davy Down is a 32 acre country park in the Mardyke Valley at North Stafford near Grays owned jointly by Thurrock Council and Essex and Suffolk Water (who I work for) and thanks to the cooperation of the warden Steve Mitchell, I was given full access to the site to carry out a number of moth recording sessions throughout the year. Steve was keen to get an idea of the sites moth potential and I was keen to trap somewhere local with the chance to encounter some new species not likely to be found in my Hornchurch garden. The other bonus for me was the secure nature of the pumphouse compound which allowed me to run 2 traps overnight and return in the morning to inspect the catch safe in the knowledge they wouldn't be tampered with. The main feature of the park is the river valley, apparently once the route of the river Thames, and its associated bankside flora, there is some ancient woodland at the far end plus some blackthorn scrub and grasslands also a couple of reed-fringed ponds. Listed are some of the highlights from last year's tally of just over 200 macro species recorded.

I look forward to an equally interesting and enjoyable 2016.

Pretty Chalk Carpet (many), Cream-spot Tiger (a few), Festoon, Red-necked Footman, Double Dart, Obscure Wainscot, Shaded Pug, Haworth's Pug, Poplar Lutestring, Grass Rivulets, Kent Black Arches (a few), Small Elephant Hawkmoth (a few).



DOUBLE DART



KENT BLACK ARCHES



HAWORTH'S PUG (R.D.)



POPLAR LUTESTRING



CREAM-SPOT TIGER



PRETTY CHALK CARPET (R.D.)

SUMMARY OF TRAPPING IN A WANSTEAD GARDEN (BELGRAVE ROAD)**TIM HARRIS**

I ran one or (occasionally) two light traps in my garden adjacent to Wanstead Flats and Wanstead Park on 108 nights between 5 March and 19 December 2015, and once in Wanstead Park (on 26 June). One trap is a Skinner with a 30W tube, the other a Robinson with a 125W bulb. The latter doesn't come out very often because I don't want to annoy my neighbours, though they are happy with occasional outings!

The unusually mild conditions towards the end of the year meant that trapping could continue to the end of December, later than in any previous year. A total of 295 species of moths was recorded, several being new for the area. Very warm nights in late June and early July resulted in the biggest catches, including c150 moths of 57 species on 25 June.

Highlights during the year included four **Broom-tip** (8 April, 17 August, 2 on 20 August); two **Toadflax Brocade** (11 May, 22 May); **Buttoned Snout** (11 June); *Dioryctria abietella* (25 June); two **Kent Black Arches** (25 June, 9 July); four **Red-necked Footman** (26 June); nine *Catoptria falsella* (in the period 9 July to 26 August); **Webb's Wainscot** (29 July); **Crescent Dart** (presumably a continental migrant, 20 September); and **Ni Moth** (11 November). A pheromone lure attracted 12 **Six-belted Clearwings** on 4 July on adjacent Wanstead Flats.

Two species that have become common in this area of metropolitan Essex are **Jersey Tiger** (30 between 21 July and 20 August) and **Tree-lichen Beauty** (23 between 17 July and 20 August). Single male **Gypsy Moths** were attracted to light on five dates in the period 31 July to 26 August, as was a single **Oak Processionary** on 6 August.

MOTHS OF MAGDALEN LAVER, ESSEX VC19, 2015 HIGHLIGHTS**TIM GREEN**

I have been carrying out trapping in my garden at Magdalen Laver since 1996 and regularly since 2004. My main trap is a 125W Skinner, but when time permits I also use a 125W Robinson pattern trap and/or a twin 24W T5 HO Skinner pattern trap. I also record moths found by day and actively search for early stages both in the garden and local area. Recording effort varies depending on time away and has been reduced since Summer 2013, when I have been spending approximately one week per month in France, so it is difficult to make valid comparisons between years. To date I have recorded 792 species in the garden. The table below shows the annual species totals, numbers of records and total moths recorded. Additional species added to the garden list each year are also shown.

Year	Species	Records	Total Individuals	New Species
2004	442	5,460	22,067	155
2005	460	5,333	23,101	76
2006	458	6,287	32,010	47
2007	419	5,026	16,637	22
2008	417	5,218	21,915	15
2009	469	6,598	31,222	33
2010	493	6,136	27,849	43
2011	494	6,588	18,849	39
2012	400	4,035	10,004	11
2013	518	7,071	19,432	21
2014	420	3,698	13,943	2
2015	407	3,492	12,128	10

Many of the new species added to the list between 2009 and 2011 were as a result of dissections to determine species of micro moths included some 21 species of *Coleophora* and quite a few species of gelechid.



Caloptilia cuculipennella



Parectopa ononidis



Platytes alpinella



Musotima nitidalis

(TG)

New species for my Garden in 2015

10 new species for the garden were recorded in 2015, which goes to show that after 12 years of pretty intensive trapping, new species can still turn up which is welcome after the somewhat disappointing two new species added in 2014. Many of these new species are better represented in the east or north of the county, so western records are worthy of note.

Caloptilia cuculipennella. One adult trapped on 16th July. The specimen was retained for confirmation by dissection. Identification was later confirmed and so this is the first record of this scarce (Nationally Scarce A) ash-feeding species for the county.

Parectopa ononidis. One trapped on 12th August. There are only a handful of Essex sites, scattered widely across the county for this clover leafminer.

Argyresthia cupresella. Although seemingly more frequent in the east of the county, this recent colonist seems to be moving westwards. A single specimen turned up on 21st June in the garden 125W Skinner trap.

***Anarsia lineatella*, Peach Twig Borer**. One trapped in the garden on 17th July. This appears to be a recent colonist to the county (first recorded in 2014?) and I believe there have been a number of records across southern counties over the past few years. On the continent it is a pest of fruit trees.

Choristoneura hebenstreitella. A species I have encountered fairly regularly when trapping in Epping Forest, this is a first garden record for this large tortricid which came to the garden trap on 16th June.

Platytes alpinella. 9th August. An Essex RDB species, more frequent in the north and east of the county where it is resident. As it is reportedly associated with shingle beaches, this is likely to be a migrant or wanderer. In the same trap a **Vestal**, 3 **Rush Veneers**, **Silver Y** and a **Diamond-backed Moth** were recorded.

Musotima nitidalis. A single specimen of this attractive pyralid native to Australia was recorded in the garden trap on 21st October. First recorded in the UK in Dorset in 2009, the species is thought to have originally been imported with tree ferns. However, repeated captures at the same sites and the discovery of larvae and pupae at these sites on other fern species (including bracken) show that the species may have colonised the country. In nearby Harlow, Essex, Paul Trigg has recorded adults in Oct/Nov over the past 4 years. It will be interesting to see if the source of these records can be determined to be a local garden centre or if a local wild population exists on other native fern species.

Sitochroa palealis. One specimen was trapped on 21st July. Mostly encountered on the east coast of the county and along the Thames estuary, this may well be a primary migrant or wanderer from resident populations.

Synapse punctalis. Another species with an almost exclusively eastern distribution in the county, so a surprising visitor to the trap on 6th July. No other unusual species were recorded on this night.

***Perizoma bifaciata*, Barred Rivulet**. One on 21st July. Not a scarce species and one with a wide distribution in the county, but one that has eluded me until now.



Sitochroa palealis



Barred rivulet



Dystebenna stephensi



M. palustrella (TG)

Other notable species

Several other species of note made appearances in 2015. Some of the more significant records are detailed below.

Dystebenna stephensi. 5 specimens of this tiny (WS 9mm), Nationally Scarce A species were recorded in a Robinson trap on 18th July. First recorded in 2013 when I began trapping just outside the garden underneath a veteran boundary oak in the field behind the garden when 14 were recorded on 6 nights. This species is associated with mature oaks, where the larvae live under the bark. The adults are clearly somewhat sedentary having never managed to fly the 10m or so to my regular trap in the garden on the other side of the hedge!

Pediasia contaminella. One on 21st July. Recorded on 7 occasions between 2004 and 2015.

Monochroa palustrellus. One on 10th, 14th and 25th July and four on 18st July. This species is seen annually in the garden with 134 individuals in total and an impressive 64 in 2013.

Apodia bifractella. One adult found on a flower head of the larval foodplant, fleabane on 23rd August. This was searched for on a patch of foodplant 400m from the garden following a tip-off seen on a local moth group facebook group. None were found on 3 other stands of the foodplant in the local area

Duponchelia fovealis. One recorded on 28th May. This adventive species is associated with cultivated plants in glasshouses and this is almost certainly the source of this specimen which was found inside a chiller unit used to store products recently imported from Holland.

***Sesia apiformis*, Hornet Moth**. Despite daily checks of a row of hybrid poplar trees alongside a nearby road, only one Hornet Moth was seen in 2015. This specimen was newly emerged and drying it's wings at around 8.30am. 32 have been recorded since 2008.

Luquetia lobella. One recorded in the 12W Skinner trap on 18th June. The fifth garden record of this Blackthorn feeding species that is otherwise absent from the western half of the county.



HORNET MOTH



Luquetia lobella



Apodia bifractella



Argyresthia cupressella (TG)

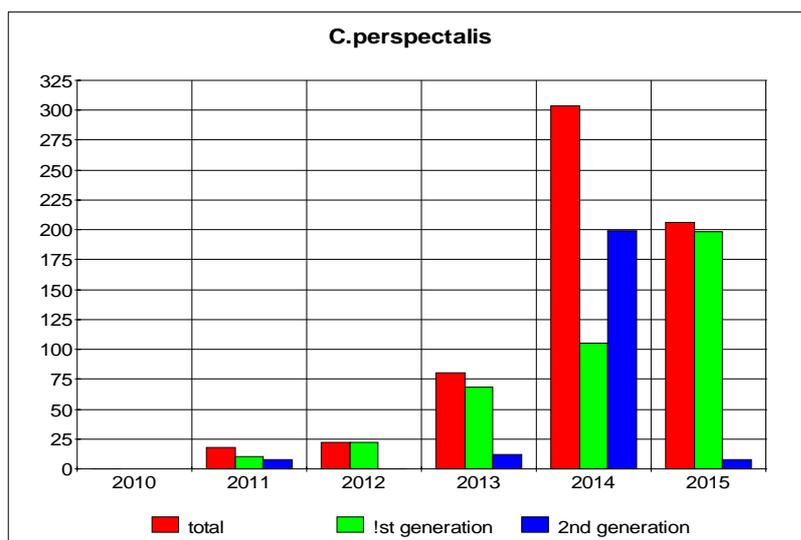
C. perspectalis

I reported last year on ever increasing numbers of the **BOXWORM MOTH** *C. perspectalis* being trapped here and was not surprised when 198 were between Jun 28 and Aug 3 and expected another bumper year but then only took 8 later in the year.

In their original habitat in China several generations a year occur with larvae usually hibernating shortly after hatching. My records here show a similar pattern with usually just 2 generations a year from approx last week of June to 2nd week in Aug and again mid Sept to mid Nov. The exception was 2012 with moths recorded only between 10/7/12 to 20/8/12 and no second brood.

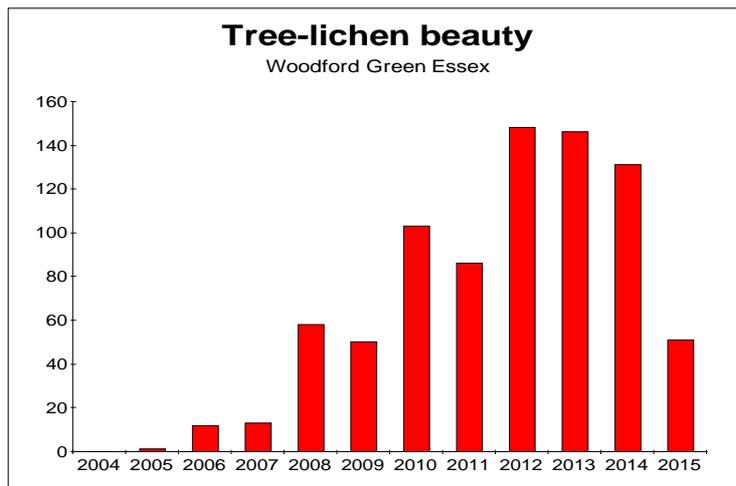
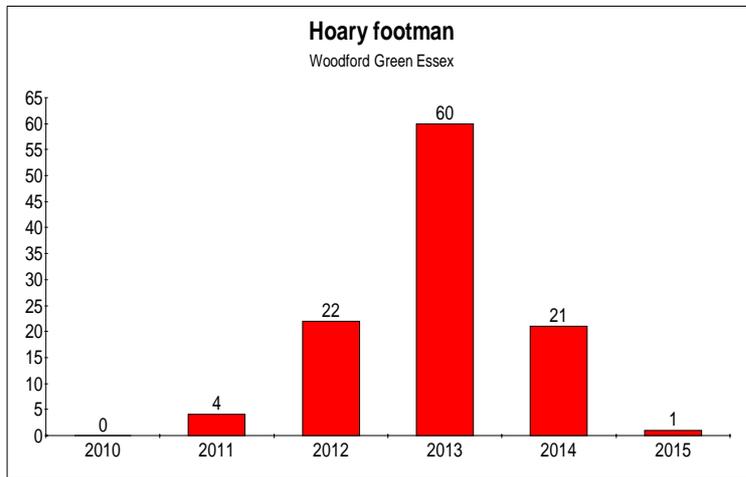
It is possible that this years 2nd gen was low as the Box bushes in my garden had been completely stripped of leaves when the larvae were almost fully grown leaving nothing left to eat and causing them to wander off in search of pastures new. Great for the birds. Many neighbours also had decimated box bushes although these are now recovering overwinter with new leaves ready for this year's feast.

Chart - Catches showing generations is illustrated with a bar chart, total number per year in red 1st gen green and 2nd gen in blue.



Lichen feeders

There has been quite a decrease in several of these moths, **SCARCE** and **COMMON FOOTMAN** numbers are approx 50% of 2014 as is that of **TREE-LICHEN BEAUTIES** from approx 140 to 51. **HOARY FOOTMAN** first appeared here in 2011 and peaked in 2013 but only a single specimen taken in 2015. Not sure whether this is a local trend due to over enthusiastic tree pruning or more general due to other factors such as weather.



Other moths

JERSEY TIGERS were again around in same numbers as usual and for the 3rd year in succession **GYPSY MOTHS** were trapped with one on 4 & second on 17 August.

PEACH TWIG BORER

Always exciting to catch unusual species and luckily 3 of the small *gelechids*, 35.019 *Anarsia lineatella*, **PEACH TWIG BORER** were trapped on 4, 5 and 20 Aug. My thanks to Brian Goodey for confirmation by dissection



Final note - My traps were plagued with spiders during the last year including False widows which left netted eggs in and around the trap and electric I even found hatchlings last week making fine webbing inside some egg boxes.