



Essex Field Club

Colchester Natural History Society

News from around the county...

Yellow-legged Clearwing *Synanthedon vespiformis*. Eves Corner, Danbury, 5 August, S.D. Wood.

Red-belted Clearwing *Synanthedon myopaeformis*. Alresford, 10 August, R. Cottrill. It is always nice to receive reports of clearwings. The above records are the third for each species since 1985.

Yponomeuta sedella. Elmstead Market, 27 September, B. Goodey. Garden plant nursery, larval webs on certain *sedum* plants. A few on *Sedum spectabile* but more commonly on lower growing, red foliage cultivars. This would appear to be the first post-1990 record and the first breeding occurrence for about 100 years.

Margaritia sticticalis. Maldon, 10 August, S.D. Wood. Also reported by Simon from Maldon: **Gem** *Orthonama obstipata*, 6 June; **Black Arches** *Lymantria monacha*, 9 August; 2085 **Archers** *Dart Agrotis vestigialis*, 11 August.

Palpita unionalis. Dovercourt, 2 July and 4 July, C. Gibson. Also recorded by Chris: **Sitochroa palealis** 14 July; **Choreutis pariana** 11 July and 16 July; **Euzophera cinerosella** 22 July; **White-point** *Mythimna albipuncta* 13 June.

Cnaemidophorus rhododactyla Friday Wood, Colchester 26 July, A. Prichard *et al.* Would appear to be only the third post-1990 record, the other two being from the Southend area in 1995 and 1996 (D.G. Down).

Silver-washed Fritillary *Argynnis paphia*. Jaywick, 30 July, J. Young. Also from Jon at Jaywick: **Dioryctria abietella** was seen in unusually good numbers (25 - 30) in August; **Agriphila tristella** - a specimen with light brown right-hand forewing and melanic left-hand forewing; **Numonia suavella** - three in August; **Obscure Wainscot** *Mythimna obsoleta* 29 June; a colony of **Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet** *Zygaena lonicerae*. Jon has been breeding Scarlet Tigers. He put the adult females outside in a cage one sunny afternoon in April and was surprised to see them attracting male ruby tigers.

Wall *Lasiommata megera*. Was reported from only five localities this year: Southminster, Coggeshall, Tollesbury, Colchester and West Bergholt. All were of 1 - 2 imagines.

Feathered Beauty *Peribatodes secundaria*. Kirby-le-Soken, 27 July, P. Bergdahl. Second county record. Paul noticed a strange 'beauty' species at rest on his garage wall and, suspecting its identity, rang Joe Firmin who suggested contacting Ian Rose. Ian duly photographed the specimen the next day. Reg Arthur and Barbara Lock saw it on the 29th and the moth was then passed to Brian Goodey on 1 August. The female specimen unfortunately refused to lay eggs during its spell of captivity. Paul also recorded **Sitochroa palealis** on 31 July.

Great Oak Beauty *Boarmia roboraria*. North Chingford, 16 June, B. Pateman. Bryon has also taken **Dark Umber** *Philereme transversata* and **Wormwood** *Cucullia absinthii*, both on 16 July, an incredibly early **Dark Arches** *Apamea monoglypha* during April, and two **Buttoned Snout** *Hypena rostralis* on 7 June.

Convolvulus Hawk-moth *Agrius convolvuli*. Clacton-on-Sea, 7 August, in a home for the elderly, B. Bachelor *per* I. Fox. Stanway, 22 August, N. Cuming in his garden. Mersea Island, 4 September, D. Nichols *per* J. Firmin. Bulmer, 11 September *per* B. Perkins.

Pine Hawk-moth *Agrius convolvuli*. Larva at Wrabness, 2 September, *per* I.C. Rose. This is the first *breeding record* in Essex. All reports of this species are welcome and will allow its continuing spread to be documented.

Dotted Footman *Pelosia muscerda*. Beaumont, 8 August, J.B. Fisher. Fourth post-1990 record. Also from Ben: **Euzophera cinerosella** 10 July, the specimen was verified at the B.M. (N.H.), and **Early tooth striped** *Trichopteryx carpinata* during April.

Dungeness Pigmy Footman *Eilema pygmaeola pallifrons*. Old Hall Marsh N.R., 18 July, J. Firmin, N. Cuming and D. Warner. Fifth Essex record for this species and the first for this subspecies. Also seen on the night was **Obscure Wainscot** *Mythimna obsoleta*.

Stout Dart *Spaelotis ravida*. Galleywood, 21 August, B. Churcher. Third post-1990 record.

Pale-lemon Sallow *Xanthia ocellaris*. Lamarsh, 3 October, I. Grahame. Third post-1990 record.

Marbled Green *Cryphia muralis* **New to Essex**. The Essex Lepidoptera Panel rejected a 1930's record because no specimen (usually a prerequisite when adding a species to the county list) could be traced (see *The Larger Moths and Butterflies of Essex*, p. 117). B. Lock at Frinton in 1994 and 1996 and R.W. Arthur at St Osyth in 1995 caught specimens thought likely to be *C. muralis* but after a discussion at an Essex Lepidoptera Panel meeting, the matter was left somewhat in abeyance. I visited P. Bergdahl to look at a suspected marbled green he had caught in his trap at Kirby-le-Soken on 10 August which had expired and was, following a critical examination of the specimen (retained as a voucher specimen), able to confirm it. Overnight Paul had taken a second specimen. There seems no reason not to include the 1994 - 1996 specimens and it seems likely that *C. muralis* is resident along the coastal fringe of northeast Essex. Other recorders are asked to keep a sharp look out for it next season and report any occurrences.

Old Lady *Mormo maura*. Had an unusually good year, according to reports received.

White-spotted Pinion *Cosmia diffinis*. Saffron Walden, 8 August, A.M. Emmet. First record for Essex of this elm feeder since at least 1985.

Rufous Minor *Oligia versicolor*. J. Aird caught a possible specimen from Colchester on 3 August and this was later confirmed by dissection. This is the second post-1990 Essex record, the other was from Saffron Walden in 1994. Seven other records have been rejected because of lack of supporting evidence. Current identification guides deem that identification of *Oligia* species by wing pattern alone is unreliable.

Four-spotted *Tyta luctuosa*. Further examples were taken at Daws Hall, Lamarsh in July by Major I Grahame and Whet Mead, Witham on 11 June by R. Gerussi bringing the total recorded in the year to four.

Invasion of Latticed Heath *Semiothisa clathrata* in 1997

I was alerted to this phenomenon by a phone call from a resident at Little Clacton on 25 August. Mrs M. Peck was amazed to see forty moths in her house, attracted by the kitchen light, and had contacted the Essex Wildlife Trust for help. They had passed the call on to me, first indication of what proved to be the best explosion of numbers since at least 1992. Recorders began to phone me with news, first- or second-hand, listed below:

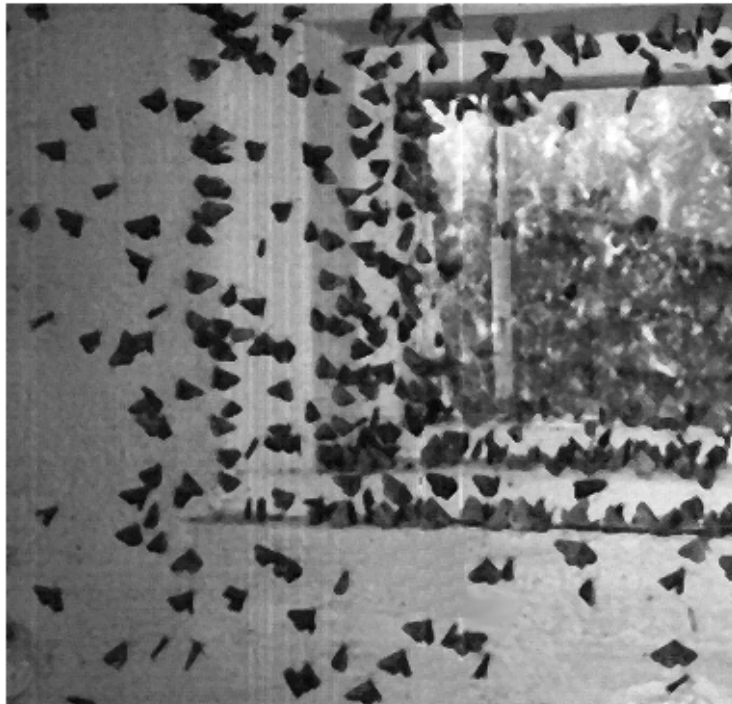
22 August: *A Beaumont trap was "alive with them", with 30 - 40 others at outside door lights; 20 at Old Hall Marsh N.R. paled against 1475 reported at St Osyth.*
23 August: *450 were reported from Great Holland Pits, 1600 from St Osyth, 130 at Beaumont, 400 from Stour Wood, 100 at Dovercourt, 104 at Harwich, 55 at Frinton in an actinic trap, 200 at Friday Wood, Colchester, and 200 at Wivenhoe.*
25 August: *700 at mercury vapour lamp at Colne Point N.R.*
2 September: *300 in a mercury vapour trap at Wrabness.*

At Jaywick, Jon Young began to record higher than normal numbers from 21 August, with 100 - 200 per night peaking on 25 August with 800 in his trap. Nearby, John Wilde's highest total was 2000 - 3000 on 25 August.

At Dovercourt, Chris Gibson noted each night's catch with customary efficiency:

21 August	5	25 August	28	30 August	112
22 August	387	26 August	26	31 August	275
23 August	1384	28 August	10	1 September	78
24 August	14	29 August	463		

J.B. Fisher, P. Smith, M. Tarrant, M. Tunmore, I.C. Rose, J. Young, J. Wilde and C. Gibson for supplying data.



Part of John Wilde's Latticed Heath-ridden Jaywick trap on the morning of 26 August

County Moth Night - 17 May 1997

One night in the year is chosen for the County Moth Night and recorders are invited to operate their lamps and send in the results, providing a 'snapshot' of species flying on a certain date. My thanks to the sixteen people who supplied data for this event in 1997 - full results have been included with their newsletter.

A mild night provided a total of 149 species. The highest individual tally was 54 from Saffron Walden, though traps at Mistley (45), St Osyth (42) and Dovercourt (39) also done well. Mercury-vapour traps yielded an average of 33 species whilst actinics managed 16.5 species. The five commonest moths were Shuttle-shaped Dart (a total of 201 specimens), Common Swift (80), Heart & Dart (73), Brimstone Moth (49) and Mottled Pug (33). Highlights included *Aproaerema anthyllidella*, Oak-tree and Ochreous Pugs, Water Carpet and Buttoned Snout. The spring was notable for early emergences and this night produced Common and Southern Wainscots and Dark Arches. Some people described it as the best night of the year so far; others said how poor it had been!

990 at Saffron Walden

The additions of *Monochroa hornigi* (5 June) and **Plain Wave** *Idaea straminata* (19 August) bring the total number of species recorded at Maitland Emmet's garden to 990. (The former appears to be rare in Essex, but Maitland suggests searching for signs of larvae in spring by collecting stems of **Pale Persicaria** *Polygonum lapathifolium*, which is a common weed in Essex.)

We have quite a gap till around the 500 species mark, where a few gardens are currently lodged. A couple of sites where recording has been fairly intense over the years, such as Fingringhoe Wick N.R., have had 700+ species recorded. It seems fairly easy to reach the 400+ mark (when surveying a site regularly) but thereafter things rapidly get harder!

Meetings

Abberton Reservoir, 16 August 1997

The 'September Slump' had arrived early and only 49 species were recorded. The most notable of these were the micros *Epiblema foenella*, *Catoptria falsella* and *Platytes alpinella*.

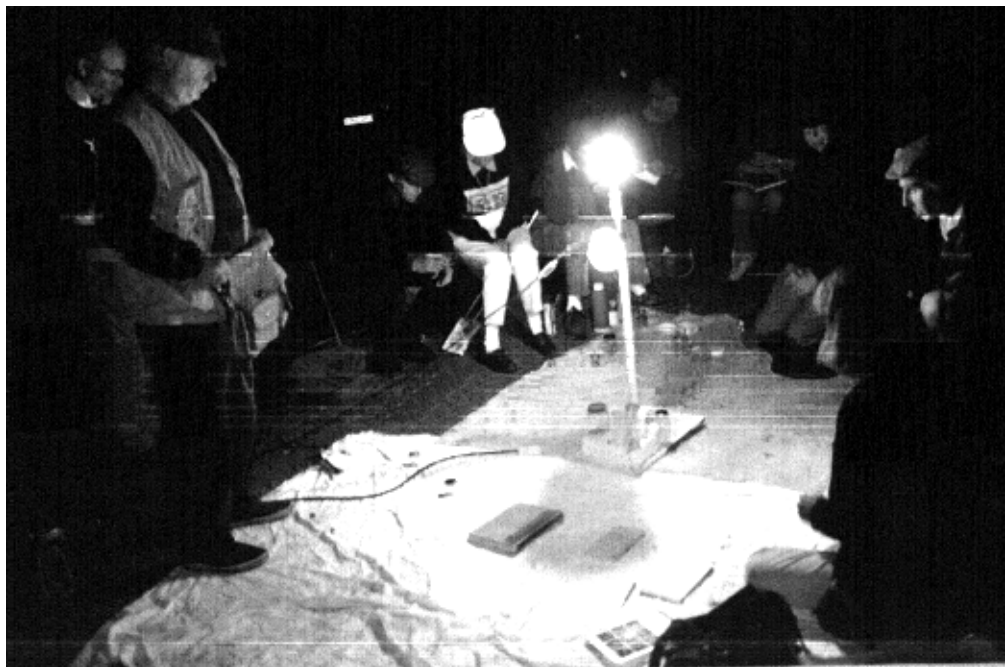
Friday Wood, Colchester, 23 August 1997

For once this location rather let us down. Of the 59 species seen, **Pale Eggar** *Trichiura crataegi*, **Mullein Wave** *Scopula marginepunctata* and **Treble-bar** *Aplocera plagiata* in good numbers were nice to see but rather

Latticed Heath *Semiothisa clathrata* (200) and amazingly stunted examples of **Snouts** *Hypena proboscidalis*. Swarms of small caddisfly/midges/bugs were a problem.

Danbury Common, 11 October 1997

A welcome opportunity to spend a day recording leaf-miners with A.M. Emmet was somewhat marred by persistent, chilling rain. Still, those hardy enough to keep up with Maitland, who appeared quite unaware of the weather, were shown 50 species mostly consisting of 'Neps', coleophorids and those of the *Phyllonorycter*. Learning the feeding characteristics of these tiny moths is at the opposite recording spectrum to emptying a light trap during the morning - but just as productive. A genus named after Maitland, *Emmetia*, was represented by *E. marginata* and *E. angusticollata* - the mines of which were found in abundance on rose.



Meeting at Friday Wood, 23 August. Note the lack of activity.

Moth Group Programme for 1998 If any of you want to arrange an evening at a site near to where you live and wish to advertise it here, please let me know. We are currently searching for venues next year.

Indoor meeting suggested

We hope to arrange an indoor meeting sometime during the winter. Details when known.

Renewal notice:

Many of you have supplied SAE's or a cheque* (usually £3.00 - £5.00) as a method of receiving the newsletter. The boxes display how many stamps or much money is left in your 'account'. No other reminders will be sent. SAEs are preferred. *made payable to B. Goodey

£

SAE's

Contacts:

J. P. Bowdrey, 12 Sparrows Corner, Harwich Road, Great Oakley, Essex. CO12 5AA. *Other Order records.*

A. M. Emmet, Labrey Cottage, 14 Victoria Gardens, Saffron Walden, Essex. CB11 3AF. *Microlep. records.*

J. Firmin, 55 Chapel Road, West Bergholt, Essex. CO6 3HZ (01206 241389).

B. Goodey, 298 Ipswich Road, Colchester, Essex. CO4 4ET. (01206 841224). *Macrolep. records.*

C. W. Plant, 14 West Road, Bishops Stortford, Herts. CM23 3QP. *National Neuroptera Recorder.*

I. C. Rose, Yaffles, School Lane, Mistley, Essex. CO11 1HN.

Next Newsletter - sometime March/April. Please continue to send me your records, notes of successful nights, comments, questions or anything of interest. Brian.