

Essex Moth Group



Newsletter 30 May 2004

essexmoths.org.uk

After last year's balmy weather it's reassuring to see this spring back to normal - cold, wet and entomologically-challenged. It's not all doom and gloom, though, and earlier there was an interesting spell of migration which yielded small mottled willow and humming-bird hawk-moths. Some of the latter may have successfully over-wintered. Several people have reported trapping nut-tree tussock for the first time, and water carpet and scarce tissue appear to be doing well.

Now is a good time to start searching flowery places for micros, things like *Micropterix calthella* flirting in buttercups, the long-horn *Adela fibulella* flitting around germander speedwell, and *Coleophora fuscicornis* wherever smooth tare grows. It would be nice to record this south Essex this year. The mercury vapour season is well under way and here's a photo of square spot, courtesy of Tim Green. It would be nice to see this in north Essex this year!



Here are a few other highlights:

January

1984 Humming-bird Hawk-moth Beaumont-cum-Moze, 30 January (Ben Fisher)

February

1398 Rush Veneer St Osyth, 4 February (Reg Arthur).

2385 Small Mottled Willow St Osyth, 4 February (Reg Arthur).

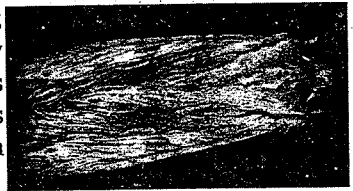
March

363 *Phyllonorycter platanoidella* Colchester Castle Park, breeding, 15 March (Jerry Bowdrey, Nigel Cumming). Fifth recent site.

1227 *Pammene gigantiana* Epping Forest, Oak Hill Farm, 10 March (Tim Green); Magdalen Laver, 31 March (Tim Green). Third and fourth post-1990 records.
 1984 **Humming-bird Hawk-moth** Writtle College, 19 March (Martin Heywood); Dovercourt, 20 March (Peter Smith); Layer Breton, 22 March (Adrian Knowles); Great Totham, 29 March (Paul Parmenter).
 2131 **Square-spotted Clay** Free Wood, Elmdon, larva, 15 March (Robin Field, Paul Waring et al); Langley Upper Green, two larvae 17 March (Ted Ponting). Confirmed as an Essex resident. Congratulations to everyone able to make the Elmdon meeting.

April and May

435 *Zelleria hepariella* Theydon Bois, 16 April (Tim & Jean Green). Fourth county site
 1198 *Eucosma pauperana* Epping Forest, 1 May (Tim Green). Third post-1990 site.
 2010 **Scarce Prominent** Epping Forest, three from 22 to 27 April (Tim Green); Theydon Bois, April (Jean Green).
 2236 **Pale Pinion** Great Dunmow, 9 April (Dave Perry); Chrishall, 29 April (Phil Jenner); Epping Forest, 6 May (Tim Green, Dave Perry). Third - fifth county records and the first since pre-1903. *New to vc19*. It seems highly likely this species is spreading into Essex from the west.



New nepticulid for Britain

In 2002 Jon Clifton and Tony Prichard discovered a leaf-mine on hybrid black poplar at Howlett Hills, Suffolk. After consulting with John Langmaid, they realised that the one possibility, *Ectoedemia turbidella*, was unlikely as it is only known from grey poplar, so they decided to rear the larvae to see what would emerge. Adults appeared earlier this year and subsequent dissection revealed the species - *E. hannoverella*, new to Britain. Other sites have been found, including one in Norfolk, and it seems highly likely the species will be found in Essex if searched for.

National Moth Night 2004

A reminder that this will take place on 22 May 2004, during both the day and night. I won't be collating records this year so you will need to send your records by post to Dept. NMN, Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5QP; by e-mail to: results@nationalmothnight.info; or if you are a MapMate user by visiting www.mapmate.co.uk/. You can find further information at www.nationalmothnight.info/information.

Of the target species, we really only stand a chance of seeing the geometer false mocha, and only then if someone is working the scrubby woodlands around Colchester where it is reasonably frequent.

Request for *Cnephasia* and metallic green *Coleophora*

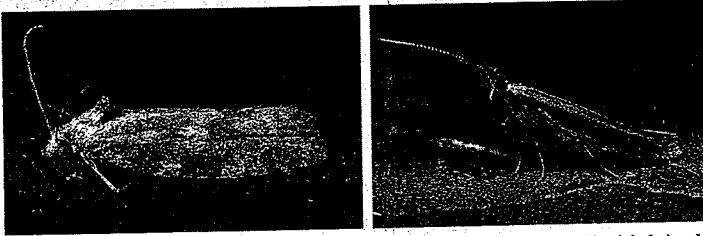
Amongst the *Coleophora* there are six metallic-green species known as the *trifolii* group.

In this group two are large species, *trifolii* and *fuscicornis*, and there are four smaller moths, *mayrella* (which has distinctive black and white ringed antennae), *deauratella*, *alcyonipennella* and *frischella* – the latter with only a handful of records due to confusion with the genitalia figures in *Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* volume 3.

I would like to make a request for any recorders catching the latter three species to either hand them to Brian Goodey or send them to me (address below) for critical examination to determine which species they are. This will help us gain a better understanding of their distribution and abundance. They may occasionally visit mercury-vapour lamps but are more often encountered whilst sweeping a net through grass on sunny days from May onwards.

I would also like to request any *Cnephasias*, rather nondescript tortricoid moths, to be sent to me as part of an ongoing study, particularly those caught between May and early June and from mid-July onwards.

Jon Clifton, Kestrel Cottage, Station Road, Hindolveston, Norfolk. NR20 5DE. email jon.clifton@btinternet.com



Cnephasia conspersana (left) photo Jeff Higgott and *Coleophora mayrella* (right) photo: Charles Baker. More of Jeff's work can be found at www.ukleps.co.uk

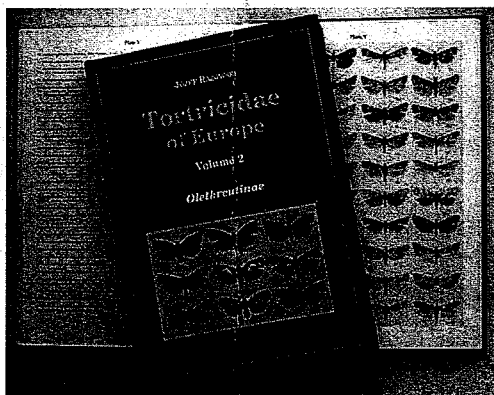
Ed: - an article discussing *frishella* and *alcyonipennella* has just appeared in the *Entomologist's Gazette*, volume 55 and on the basis of this, all Essex records for these two species are withdrawn with the exceptions of: Grays, 2 June 1981 (D.J.L. Agassiz); Saffron Walden, 16 August 1987 (A.M. Emmet); Wendens Ambo, 14 to 28 July 1992 (A.M. Emmet). In all these the genitalia have been recently checked.

Tortrix books on CD and Tortricidae of Europe

The two Ray Society books *British tortricoid moths* were published in 1973 and 1979 and have long been out of print, but the lack of more recent British literature has seen the price of second-hand copies, even if you're lucky enough to find them, spiralling upwards to over £350 for the pair. I recall paying £20 and £40 for my set at the BM (NH) and now wish I'd bought more! Not that they are particularly easy to use: the pictures of adults were hand-painted and are sometimes oddly shaped, and the text full of barely understandable phrases and descriptions. Despite this, they helped to bring this huge family within the grasp of many of us and it's true to say that the books are revered by their owners. Of particular value is the in-depth descriptions of the early stages and grey scale drawings of larval feedings. And, once you learn the terminology, they are still very

useable today, if not indispensable.

A company called Pisces Conservation have now digitised both books and produced them on a CD for £55. If you have access to a computer this represents a great buy. The only alternatives at the moment is *Die Tortriciden Mitteleuropas* (= The tortrix moths of Central Europe) by J. Razowski which, despite errors and a German text, is highly regarded by most people. There is now an expanded version *Tortricidae of Europe*, recently published in two volumes at around £120 the pair. This is an excellent work and happily the mis-captions of the earlier book have been largely corrected, and the text is now in English, though with the occasional amusing translation. People owning *Die Tortriciden Mitteleuropas* may not feel the need to buy this pair unless they are very keen on the family. It has a nicer feel than the previous book, and such is the quality of production and the ease of use that in thirty years time they may be worth several hundreds of pounds (or possible euros!). I must admit to reaching for the Ray Society books first, though, when trying to identify a moth.



Indoor Meetings

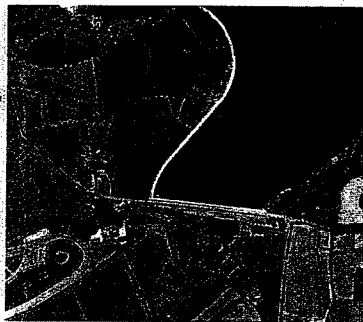
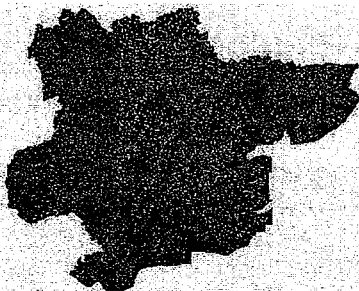
The season of annual indoor meetings has come and gone and each year they seem to grow in popularity. The Essex group's bash took place on 28 February and was attended by over 70 people. Once again we offer our thanks to Bob, Sue, Gordon, Joe and Ian for organising things so well. Sadly our guest speaker had to pull out at the last moment but Basil was able to step in and give an outline of the pug book's history. Other speakers included Zoe Ringwood, Chris Gibson and Paul Waring. *The moths of Essex* was launched and we'd like to thank everyone for supporting it. In all, fifty copies of the CD were distributed but so far there has been little feedback.

I was able to attend the Herts and Suffolk group meetings and these were just as enjoyable. Both had the use of a digital projectors, and despite the high cost of these machines I feel we really must get one for our next meeting. This year saw a drop in numbers of conventional slides being shown at the Essex show and with more people switching to digital cameras some way of projecting images would be very useful.

High in the Sky - Essex

Other counties available. £18 without P&P

It's unusual to review a computer-based mapping programme in this newsletter but this CD-ROM by Getmapping has obvious attractions for the naturalist. A great many aerial photographs (part of a nationwide survey) have been seamlessly stitched together to form the programme. Imagine seeing Essex from space (some would say the best place to see it from!) and being able to zero in on anywhere that takes your fancy. You can see habitats far easier with this than you can with OS maps. For example, an olive crescent turned up in a person's garden trap a few years ago miles away from a known colony. By using this programme I could follow a railway line which fortuitously linked the two sites and saw patches of oak woodland strung along the track acting like stepping stones.



Essex from many miles away and part of Hanningfield Reservoir

The resolution of the maps generated is good enough to just be able to see individual large trees, lorries, or houses. By resting your mouse pointer over a target, co-ordinates are given at the bottom of the screen, which makes this ideal for those who can't easily read maps. The programme is good for finding pockets of habitats not shown on OS maps, and sobering because you see quite clearly how much land is given over to farming. More detailed photographs are available from the manufacturer at an additional cost.

Available from www.lopinga.co.uk. For other counties, go to www.highinthe.sky.com

Field Meetings

May 15th Hatfield Forest (BEHS meeting) Leaders: Stuart Warrington, Paul Waring
Morning session meet at 10.30am at the Shell House Cafe, at Hatfield Forest.

Lunch 1-2pm by the Cafe (hot & cold food, drinks etc can be bought).

Afternoon session meet at 2pm by the Shell House Cafe.

Evening session (moth trapping), meet at 7.30pm by the Shell House Cafe.

If the kiosk by the road into the Forest is manned, tell the staff person that you are part of the BENHS meeting to get free entry. Follow the road to the final car-park by the Shell

House, Lake, Cafe, Toilets.

It is proposed that the morning session looks at the woodlands, rides and pollards to the south-west of the Lake. In the afternoon, the wetlands, acid grassland and coppice to the north will be visited. Many sites can be surveyed for moths. Power is available at the Shell House, generators required elsewhere. If dry, cars could be taken closer to the woodlands.

The following have been arranged by Joe and Ian. Please call Joe on 01206 241389 for any alterations/cancellations. Please note you attend these meetings at your own risk

May 19 (Wednesday) Fordham Heath, pond area. Park along Cooks Mill Lane (TL946266) 8.30pm.

May 21 (Friday) Layer Wood, Tiptree. Meet at entrance gate at 8.30pm.

June 16 (Wednesday) Chappel Millennium Green. Meet on village green (TL895284) at 8.30pm.

July 14 (Wednesday) Earls Colne Millennium Green. Park in Colne Stove car park, opposite site (TL848291) 8.30pm.

Contacts:

Records, Newsletter editor: Brian Goodey, 298 Ipswich Road, Colchester, Essex. CO4 0ET. (01206 841224), E-mail: brian@essexmoths.org.uk

EMG enquiries *Chairman:* General Moth Group enquiries: Joe Firmin, 55 Chapel Road, West Bergholt, Essex. CO6 3HZ (01206 241389); *Photos:* Ian Rose Yaffles, School Lane, Mistley, Essex. CO11 1HN

Essex Moth Group web Site: www.essexmoths.org.uk

Suffolk Moth Group: Tony Prichard, 3 Powling Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP3 9JR.

E-mail: tony.prichard@btinternet.com

Middlesex /Herts Moth Group: Colin Plant, 14 West Road, Bishops Stortford, Herts, CM23 3QP. E-mail: colinwplant@ntlworld.com

Butterfly records: Val Perrin, 13 Pettitts Lane, Dry Drayton, Cambs. CB3 8BT

Beetle records: Nigel Cuming, 33 Holly Road, Colchester CO3 5QL (01206 330019).

Other Order records: Jerry Bowdrey, Fair View, Colchester Road, Thorpe-le-Soken, Essex. CO16 0LB (01255 862507).

Harley Books: www.harleybooks.com

Lopinga Books: www.lopinga.co.uk

Anglian Lepidopterist Supplies (ALS) PO box 232, Northwich Delivery Office, CW8 3FG (01263 862068 www.angleps.btinternet.co.uk)

The following is a list of the
 names of the members of the
 Essex Moth Group, who have
 been elected to the office of
 President for the year 1967.

The names of the members of the
 Essex Moth Group, who have
 been elected to the office of
 Secretary for the year 1967.

The names of the members of the
 Essex Moth Group, who have
 been elected to the office of
 Treasurer for the year 1967.

The names of the members of the
 Essex Moth Group, who have
 been elected to the office of
 Chairman for the year 1967.

The names of the members of the
 Essex Moth Group, who have
 been elected to the office of
 Vice-Chairman for the year 1967.

The names of the members of the
 Essex Moth Group, who have
 been elected to the office of
 Honorary Secretary for the year 1967.

The names of the members of the
 Essex Moth Group, who have
 been elected to the office of
 Honorary Treasurer for the year 1967.

If this box is ticked you have
no more SAEs/ funds for the
newsletter. For speed and convenience SAEs
are very much appreciated