

Kent Moths Newsletter

May 2006

Introduction

The season may be very active from May but how can we forget Oak Beauty? There are many moths that are out early in the year but how many did we all find? With it being a cold and very uninteresting generally, over-wintering adults may come out at any time so please be vigilant.

BF 1200 *Eucosma hohenwartiana*

This species listing has been split into three different ones. From this year, we will have to record the moths as 1200 1200a 1200b, an aggregate record [1220agg is fine] unless the recorder can confirm which species was seen. This may seem unsatisfactory but, for the purposes of an accurate database, it is fair. In the Ray Society's book, or the Pisces CD, the various species are shown as *E. hohenwartiana*, having several forms. Both 1200 and 1200b have been recorded in Kent but it is unlikely that 1200a is extant.

BF 773 *Psedutelphusa paripunctella*

This beautiful micro moth has reappeared in a mysterious way after not being seen in West Kent since 1954, 1994 in VC15. It was seen in large numbers in an oak wood on 26 May and later on 18 June, being seen as dusk fell as well as being one of the first moths to arrive at the three traps in use on both days. It was not seen at that site on 15 May or the next visit there on 20 July. A creamy kaki with flecks and six spots it is unmistakable; both the male and the smaller female were seen.

Surrey report that it had not been seen for a hundred years and then, in 2005, it was seen over a similar period as above by several people in very different parts of the county. How come? Where has this moth been all this time? Was there a tremendous expansion in population or a movement from East Kent?

The larva feeds on deciduous oak, spinning two leaves together in a flat plane and also feeds bog myrtle. Will it be seen again in 2006; is this the beginning of a spell when it becomes increasingly common?

BF 469 *Eidophasia messingiella*

This moth is probably under-recorded as it is a day-flying species and is easily overlooked as diptera.

The books show a clearly identifiable species but only show the male. UK Moths website shows a good example of both. The stance of the moth at rest is typical and aids identification but, more importantly, the broken creamy bar denotes a female.

Yponomeuta Species

This group of moths is very difficult to identify accurately due to similarities. There is suggestion that they are ecotypes, specialising on different foodplants. For the purposes of identification, larval reports are the most accurate. Following discussion with experts, it is considered that an experienced micro-moth recorder can separate most of the species but caution needs to be taken.

424	<i>Y. evonymella</i>	Bird-cherry Ermine	OK to ID as an adult
425*	<i>Y. padella</i>	Orchard Ermine	
426*	<i>Y. malinellus</i>	Apple Ermine	

* These are inseparable without dissection. Please report as 425 agg. or *padella* complex.

427	<i>Y. cagnagella</i>	Spindle Ermine	OK to ID as an adult
428	<i>Y. rorrella</i>	Willow Ermine	OK to ID as an adult by experienced recorder
429	<i>Y. irrorella</i>		Expert ID only due to rarity
430	<i>Y. plumbella</i>	Apple Ermine	OK to ID as an adult

Psyche casta

This species was another that seemed to have a very good year in 2005, why was this? When we understand the causes of the cycles many micro moths go through, we will be much better at looking after them in the wider countryside.

Pheromones

If you would like to see the clearwings this year don't forget to obtain the pheromones soon, as the supplies seem to run out or otherwise stop selling in May.



Currant Clearwing
(Ian Ferguson)



Orange-tailed Clearwing
(Ian Ferguson)

May be found on allotments Downland species

BF 1080 *Olethreutes arcurella*

This is the most splendid moth with a choice of markings to match any butterfly in the world, it is seldom seen but flies during the day so please have a look when you are out looking around woods (see UK Moths). It also flies at night so do try woods with young trees and edges and lots of leaves on the floor. The caterpillars feed on ground debris.

BF 899 and 900

Pancalia species.

The orange marked variety is often seen on downland but the blue marked variety has not been seen for a very, very long time so please check just to make sure what you have, particularly if you are in an un-surveyed area.

Dwalf Gorse

There are some species that feed on dwarf gorse we would like to find and, *Scythris grandipennis* in particular. The caterpillars are interesting as they form communal webs. They are very active and will scurry backwards into the web if disturbed.

BF 730 *Apodia bifractella*

This small brown moth has an orange head and has not been recorded very often, with the exception when 11 were found in a field. The best way to spot this one and enhance our knowledge of its true population is to look for its food plants, common cudweed and ploughman's spikenard, in June and July. Then try to spot the adult resting on the flower head, simple!

BF 1950 Brindled White-spot

An observation from Ian, when we were preparing a talk to BRANCH, an organisation which is looking at climate change in North West Europe and how planners can help species adjust to the changing landscape and conditions, has prompted this note.

It seems that, from the database, this species is not very often reported. Below are the summaries from the annual moth reports.

06/06 to 27/06 1998 in 05 10km sqs
27/05 to 05/07 1999 in 06 10km sqs
03/06 to 30/06 2000 in 07 10km sqs
11/06 to 29/06 2001 in 05 10km sqs
20/05 to 16/07 2002 in 07 10km sqs
30/05 to 27/06 2003 in 10 10km sqs
29/05 to 05/05 2004 in 04 10km sqs

Is this restricted by soil or food plant? Unlikely, as in the Field Guide to the Moths of Great Britain and Ireland it is stated that it feeds on "Pendunculate Oak, Hazel, Hawthorn, Midland Hawthorn, Downy and Silver Birch and probably Sessile Oak. Also reported from unspecified Lime"

This book also states that it flies from late May-June, here in Kent we seem to be seeing it for longer than most other regions.

On my own system, I have records for this species in eleven 10km sqs and they are from all over Kent not the Downs or just the Weald.

What percentage of Kent recorders actually see this species? Do you use 125MV or actinic or just know the sorts of places it really likes? Can you let us know your thoughts?

Please support your local events!

Keep an eye on the Newsletters as these events are being put on especially for *you* and we hope that you enjoy the moths that come to visit. The locations are chosen to cover most of the county and in many different habitats. We look forward to seeing you. If you know of a suitable site for a survey or event, please let us know and we will endeavour to respond.

Survey for a Friend

Have you thought of doing a survey at a friend's garden to see what truly grows the other side of the fence? From the records, it is clear some of you do, well done. You could start by inviting them round to see the moths in your garden as an introduction.