

HANTS MONTHLY



Purple Thorn, Basingstoke, 24 April 2010 (MJW)

NUMBER 10 - May 2010

Wallblings...

Welcome to the 10th Hantsmoths newsletter. I fear that sticking to a monthly schedule this year is going to prove difficult: life (work, cycling, family, **moths**...) gets in the way too much, but I will aim to get an edition out on a roughly six-weekly schedule. As I write, summer has finally arrived with temperatures in the twenties, but it has been an exceptionally cold spring - my trap a week ago reflected this with singles of Hebrew Character and Common Quaker, two species expected to be long over by now. May was also the month chosen by the National Moth Night organisers for this year's event, and the night - 15th - although cold, produced some reasonable numbers for most, everyone except yours truly it seemed! A full round-up will be covered in the next newsletter.

Hopefully the 2009 annual report will have landed by now on the doorsteps of those of you who are members of Butterfly Conservation. This is a mammoth task for the writing team to produce and for me, it is more with relief than anything else when it completes the production run, comes back from the printers and everything looks reasonable

(although of course there are always one or two glitches that hindsight would have fixed). If nothing else I hope it serves as an incentive for sending in moth records, as without the data we would have nothing to write about! Everyone, at whatever level of experience, has something to add and we welcome every single record.

Thanks as ever to Nick Montegriffo for taking the time to write up the monthly summary, Dave Owen for his weather words and a retrospective on hawk-moths in 2009, following up on his interim review halfway through last year, and Tim and Lyn for a roundup of the early year butterflies.

I hope what is left of May and the coming summer months are kind to us all, and we can enjoy a good summer in all ways.

Until the next time,

Mike



Dave's April 2010 Weather Review

Although dominated by high pressure, April had an unsettled start & end. The month opened with some cool and unsettled conditions but soon settled into a prolonged dry spell. No rain fell here in Alton between the 4th and 24th of the month. A cold front brought welcome rain for some of us on the 25th but others had to wait until the 29th; generally rainfall was roughly half of what we may have expected.

Sunshine was plentiful and, despite 2007 being better in this regard, there have only been five sunnier Apriks on average over the last 100 years.

The combination of clear days and nights meant that we saw a wide spread in temperature on some days. Indeed, I recorded five air frosts in 8 days during mid-month. It got much warmer at the month end as winds finally swung to the south with 20.6°C recorded here in Alton on both the 27th & 28th ensuring that it ended up a rather warm month at nearly 1°C above average

With thanks to Philip Eden at:-

<http://climate-uk.com/>

Dave Owen

APRIL 2010 SUMMARY

Please note that in accordance with the usual convention where referring to overnight light-trapping the evening date not the morning date is used.

Macromoths

Most recorders reported very low catches virtually throughout the month. A Sloe Carpet *Aleucis distinctata* was trapped by AGP at Linwood in the New Forest on the 24th, and is only the fourth recorded in Hampshire this century.



A Red Sword-grass *Xylena vetusta* (left) was found by GCE at Chilbolton on the 19th, posting on Hantsmoths "Ground frost first thing this morning, so I didn't expect much from my battery-powered Heath trap at West Down, Chilbolton. In fact there were just 16 moths, but big surprise and pride of place was a Red Sword-grass sitting on top of the trap."

Other notable April records include Barred Tooth-striped *Trichopteryx polycommata* at Sandy Point on 19th, well away from any known colonies (AJ).

Amongst the many species of macromoth reported for the first time in 2010 during April were: Blossom Underwing *Orthosia miniosa*, at Ashurst on the 3rd (KTai); Early Tooth-striped

Trichopteryx carpinata, at Grayshott on the 5th (RTu); Powdered Quaker *Orthosia gracilis* and Pine Beauty *Panolis flammea*, at St Cross on the 9th (THW); Streamer *Anticlea derivata*, at St Cross on the 10th (THW); Lunar Marbled Brown *Drymonia ruficornis*, at Cadnam on the 12th, with Lesser Swallow Prominent *Pheosia gnoma* there on the 18th (MP); Pale Pinion *Lithophane hepatica* and Frosted Green *Polyploca ridens*, at Grayshott on the 17th (RTu); Great Prominent *Peridea anceps* and Muslin Moth *Diaphora mendica*, at Chilbolton on the 19th (GCE); Red Chestnut *Cerastis rubricosa*, at Damerham on the 19th (PT); Nut-tree Tussock *Colocasia coryli*, at Fordingbridge on the 19th (NJH); Brimstone Moth *Opisthograptis luteolata*, Small Phoenix *Ecliptopera silaceata* (right), Small Waved



Umber *Horisme vitalbata* and Knot Grass *Acronicta rumicis*, at Sherborne St John on the 24th (NM); Pale Tussock *Calliteara pudibunda* and Pebble Prominent *Notodonta ziczac*, at Cadnam on the 24th (MP); Purple Thorn *Selenia tetralunaria*, at Fleet on the 24th (GCS); V Pug *Chloroclystis v-ata*, Oak-tree Pug *Eupithecia dodoneata* and Dog's Tooth *Lacanobia suasa*, at Lymington on the 24th (PRD); Emperor Moth *Saturnia pavonia*, at Linwood on the 24th (AGP); Scarce Prominent *Odontosia carmelita*, Pale Prominent *Pterostoma palpina* and Iron Prominent *Notodonta dromedarius*, at Grayshott on the 25th (RTu); Flame Shoulder *Ochropleura plecta* and Red Twin-spot Carpet *Xanthorhoe spadicearia*, at Alton on the 27th (DBO); Balsam Carpet *Xanthorhoe biriviata*, at Andover on the 28th (TJN, left); Common Heath *Ematurga atomaria*, in small numbers on Broxhead Common on the 29th (NM); and another



Blossom Underwing (28th) along with Tawny Pinion *Lithophane semibrunnea* (30th) were the highlights of restricted trapping at Brockenhurst (RBW).

At the Deadwater Valley LNR, Blossom Underwing was new for the reserve on the 13th (right), on which date eight of the nine British *Orthosia* species were recorded. At Wickham, a brace of Scarce Prominent *Odontosia carmelita* on the 30th was a new species for JRDS's garden. The good run of Dotted Chestnut *Conistra rubiginea* continued, with individuals reported from several sites. The spring sunshine proved good for Orange Underwing *Archiearis parthenias* and Light Orange Underwing *Archiearis notha*; shown below are examples of both taken by GJD in Pamber Forest during the month.



Light Orange Underwing



Orange Underwing

GCE took a highly unusual white-cream Muslin moth (shown right). It is similar in coloration to the white females of this species which are not often encountered, but the feathered antennae indicate this to be a male.

As an example of the restricted moth numbers (both individuals and species) around this spring to date, DW reports that to end April she had recorded only 39 species this year (58 last year), with the highlights being Blossom Underwing on 9/10th, Marbled pug on the 24th, Scarce prominent and Small Chocolate-tip on the 28th.

FAREHAM MOTH GROUP (APRIL RECORDS)

MLO reports that the group managed three outings this month but moths were generally scarce.

9th April

Visited Botley Woods (Kevin Coker, Richard Dickson, Maurice Opie and Keith Wheeler) with three lamps and caught c. 150 moths of 30 species. Highlights included three Blossom Underwing, four Pine Beauty, five Red Chestnut and 40+ *Diurnea fagella*.

16th April

Visited West Walk with four lamps and caught c. 100 moths of 21 species with highlights being two Water Carpet and nine Frosted Green.



30th April

The group visited Austins Copse near Upham with fopur lamps and caught c. 60 moths of 30 species including Lime Hawkmoth, Waved Umber, six Great Prominent, 15 *Plutella xylostella*, V-Pug, Oak-tree Pug and Least Black Arches.

At home in Funtley there were large numbers of *Orthosias* early in the month including several Powdered Quaker, and Blossom Underwing on 15th. Other highlights were Shoulder Stripe 6th, Red Chestnut 10th, the first Flame Shoulder on 18th, Bright-line Brown-eye and Dark Sword-grass 19th, with the first Knot-grass and Sallow Kitten on 28th, Pebble Hook-tip on 29th and Maiden's Blush and Peppered Moth on 30th.

However, the pièce de resistance was on 24th with the first *Epiphyas postvittana* of the year!!!!

Micromoths



An example of *Ancyliis subarcuana*, the first in the county since 1980 (identified by JRL, left) was found by RBW at Brockenhurst on 30th.

Other interesting April records were: *Grapholita jungiella*, 50+ at Magdalen Hill Down during the afternoon of the 20th (MP); *Agonopterix purpurea*, at Sherborne St John on the



24th (NM, right); *Agonopterix yeatiana*, 10 at Cholderton on the 24th (HE).

Amongst the many species of micromoth reported for the first time in 2010 during April were:



Agonopterix yeatiana, at Ashurst on the 2nd (KTai); *Agonopterix alstromeriana*, at Ashurst on the 2nd (HE); *Alucita hexadactyla*, at St Cross on the 9th (THW); *Esperia sulphurella*, in Gosport on the 22nd (DRA); *Caloptilia stigmatella*, at Cadnam on the 24th (MP); *Semioscopis steinkellneriana* and *Incurvaria pectinea*, at Burton (Dorset) on the 24th (JSw); and *Adela reaumurilla*, in small numbers on Broxhead Common on the 29th (NM). The Lesser Wax Moth shown left was found indoors at NM's Sherborne St John house aptly

enough resting on an old copy of the Entomologist's Gazette! It probably emerged from an old honeycomb found in Morgaston Wood over the winter.

DPH says that he's hardly trapped during the month in Stubbington, and the only thing of note was a *Ocnerostoma friesei* on the night of 28th April (gen.det. RJD) and a new species for his garden.

JRL found an incurvariid case 6ft up an oak trunk at Gutner Point, Hayling Island, on 15 April. *Incurvaria masculella* emerged a couple of days ago. Shown right is the case with protruding exuviae.



On the last day of April on a visit to Magdalen Hill Down, DSh came across the rare downland cochylid *Falseuncaria ruficiliana* (shown left), the larva

of which feeds on Cowslip.

Migrants

The only migrant activity reported was of one Rush Veneer *Nomophila noctuella* at Chilbolton on 24th (GCE), one Dark Sword Grass *Agrotis ipsilon* at Lymington on 28th (PRD), in addition to MLO's Funtley example mentioned above, two Silver Y *Autographa gamma* and seven Diamond-backed Moth *Plutella xylostella* in south-east Portsmouth on 29th (IRT), and two in Alton on 29th (DBO).

NJM



A LACK OF HAWKS? (Update)

You may recall an article I wrote in the June 2009 newsletter on this subject. With the new season underway I thought it appropriate to update the statistics to show the final figures for 2009.

As a reminder, I have been in Alton since 2006 (my first full year) and have adopted the same trapping methodology throughout.

Below is a table of cumulative numbers caught per year for the night-flying Hawk-moths

Species/Year>>>	2006	2007	2008	2009
ELEPHANT <i>Deilephila elpenor</i>	35	19	16	45
SMALL ELEPHANT <i>D.porcellus</i>	16	12	1	1
EYED <i>Smerinthus ecellata</i>	1	1	4	1
LIME <i>Mimas tillae</i>	3	4	3	0
PINE <i>Hyloicus pinastri</i>	3	4	0	0
POPLAR <i>Laothoe populi</i>	15	12	12	8
PRIVET <i>Sphinx ligustri</i>	11	21	6	5

Aside from Elephant Hawk-moths, which had an excellent summer, it really was pretty poor. When I wrote the original article I had not seen a Poplar but thankfully a few turned up later in the summer. Assuming others had similar experiences, I would suspect that the paucity of these moths may be caused by relatively poor weather at times in the last three summers, although 2007 looks quite good. However, that may be because there was a warm (and often dry) spring ahead of the washout in mid-summer, by which time I had recorded many of those moths. As with all wildlife, it will be fascinating to see what this summer brings after such a long and relatively cold winter. I will update my findings again in the June 2010 newsletter.

DBO



National Moth Night 15th May

It is hoped to do a short summary of this event in the next newsletter so please would everybody send in their records preferably by Mapmate sync file or excel list to Tim, Mike or Ian as soon as possible.

Tim Norriss

Butterflies



The over-wintering species continued to be seen in small numbers until the 6th when the first emergence of Speckled Wood, Green Hairstreak, Green-veined White and Orange-tip appeared. This was followed by a Large White on the 8th and Holly Blue on 9th plus the first Duke of Burgundy at Noar Hill on the same day (photo left taken later in month © BS).

The only sighting of Large Tortoiseshell in the period was at Parkhurst Forest on 10th (SRe). Small Tortoiseshell are doing very well so far this spring which is good to see after their last few very lean years. An

unusual ab. of this butterfly was seen at Bransbury by LF/TJN (right) on 11th. The normally yellow costal marks on the forewing were white and there was an unusual amount of white on the hindwing.

PDF saw the first two Grizzled Skipper at Magdalen Hill Down on 15th, and on 17th the first Common Blue and Small Copper were noted. Dingy Skipper appeared at several sites on 22nd.

Two Clouded Yellow seen on the coastal undercliff at Wheelers bay, Ventnor were a surprise (MHa) and it isn't known whether they were locally emerged or were migrants but the fact that a Painted Lady, which must surely have been a migrant, was seen at Danebury on the same day is perhaps a clue.



The first Pearl-bordered Fritillaries were seen in the New Forest on 27th (KWe) followed by Glanville Fritillary and Small Heath at Wheelers Bay, Ventnor on 1st May (IP).

At Magdalen Hill Down on 10th May PDF found 32 Green Hairstreak (photo left © AT) along the hedge at the top of the reserve in the shelter of the northerly wind. This is the second ever largest count of this species in Hampshire. He also saw 12 Brown Argus there the same day.

IP saw both Wall Brown and Adonis Blue at Bonchurch on 14th and a Painted Lady at Wootton Coppice the next day.

TJN

Contributors:

DRA	Debbie Allan	IP	Ian Pratt
GJD	Graham Dennis	MP	Maurice Pugh
RJD	Richard Dickson	SRe	Stuart Read
PRD	Pete Durnell	DSh	David Shute
HE	Henry Edmunds	JSw	Jean Southworth
GCE	Glynne Evans	BS	Bob Snellgrove
PDF	Patrick Fleet	GCS	Graham Stephenson
LF	Lynn Fomison	KTai	Keith Tailby
MHa	Mark Hallett	IRT	Ian Thirlwell
DPH	Dan Houghton	AT	Alan Thornbury
NJH	Nick Hull	PT	Paul Toynton
AJ	Andy Johnson	RTu	Robin Turner
JRL	John Langmaid	MJW	Mike Wall
NM	Nick Montegriffo	THW	Tim Walker
TJN	Tim Norriss	DW	Dianne Westerhoff
MLO	Maurice Opie	KWe	Karen White
DBO	Dave Owen	RBW	Russell Wynn
AGP	Andy Page		

And with thanks to everyone who posts on the Hantsmoths Yahooogroup and uses the Hantsmoths and BC branch websites!

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Contributions and ideas for articles are always welcome. I would also like to be made aware of any errors and omissions for correction.

For more information on moth recording in Hampshire, please contact either Tim Norriss (tim@kitsmail.com) or myself, or see www.hantsmoths.org.uk/recording.htm

Mike

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