

HANTS MONTHLY

NUMBER 17 - March to April 2011



Male Adela reaumurella (CLB)

Wallblings...

This spring has been one of the most remarkable on record, with an unremitting spell of high pressure throughout bringing forward the emergence of many species leading to record breaking early records for many species.

It's been a busy period for the annual butterfly and moth report editorial team: the number of records grows year on year, which is fantastic, but with it comes more data to sort out and analyse, and there's more to write about! The 2010 report is now in the process of being printed so it shouldn't be long before members of Butterfly Conservation will be seeing it through their letterboxes.

Material for the 2011 report is building up, with March and April seeing a frenzy of mothing activity and some excellent records, including a new for Britain. As ever, writing the monthly reports would not be possible without the dozens of contributors who take the time to submit their catches to the Hantsmoths yahogroup, or to Tim and myself directly. I hope that you will find the summaries of interest.

Please diarise 22-24 July for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Moth Weekend and try and get out into the wilds of our two counties to explore new sites. This year there's added incentive with prizes on offer.

Until the next time, enjoy the moths...

Mike



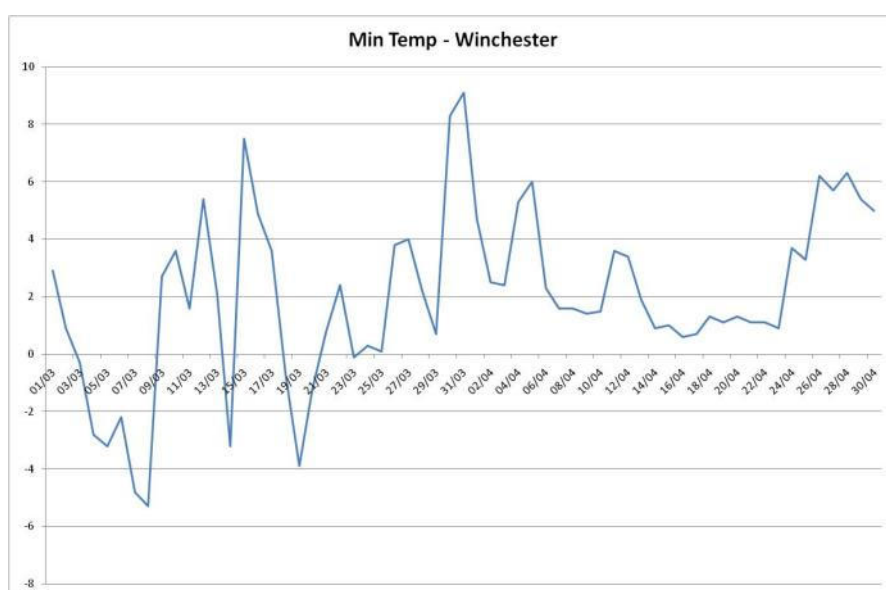
DAVE'S WEATHER SUMMARY – MARCH to APRIL 2011

MARCH 2011 WEATHER SUMMARY

March was a month dominated by high pressure. The positioning of that pressure initially allowed cold winds from the north and east but from mid-month temperatures rose as warmer air was able to flood in from the south. There were no significantly wet days during the month and rainfall was around half of what we may expect with some places even drier than that. Sunshine was well up, close to 40% above normal, and this, combined with temperatures a good degree above average, made for a pleasant month. The temperature anomaly masks the fact that maximum temperatures were well above normal whereas nights were about average, with several frosts.

APRIL 2011 WEATHER SUMMARY

A quite remarkable month, again totally dominated by high pressure. April 2011 smashed the record for warmest April (set in 2007) by half a degree, which is a huge amount in historical terms. Both maximum and minimum temperatures were very warm and the overall mean 4°C above normal. These amazing statistics were backed up by 50% more sunshine than normal and almost rainless conditions. Apart from some very light rain early in the month, and brief localised thundery downpours at the end, it was totally dry.



For more information, please see <http://www.climate-uk.com/index.html>

Winchester minimum temperature graph © <http://www.winchesterweather.org.uk>

Dave Owen



British and Irish moths: an illustrated guide to selected difficult species – Erratum!

Many recorders by now will have acquired a copy of this useful guide to many of the difficult to separate macro species (and if you haven't, please see http://www.mothscount.org/text/104/guide_to_difficult_species.html). However, it does contain an error, as below:

Erratum: Figure 48 (female Satin Beauty *Deileptenia ribeata*) on p.41 of the Guide is incorrect and, as a consequence, the key on p.40 is also incorrect. A corrected version of pp.40-41 is available at http://www.mothscount.org/uploads/Erratum_pages_for_Difficult_Species_Guide.pdf (note that this is a large 4mb file).



HAMPSHIRE AND ISLE OF WIGHT MOTH WEEKEND FRIDAY 22nd JULY TO SUNDAY 24th JULY

Last year we ran the first Hampshire and Isle of Wight Moth Weekend, the local counterpart to National Moth Night focussed on finding out more about the great diversity of moth fauna in two of the finest mothing counties in the country, through encouraging recording in new sites and under-recorded parts of our area. The results of the 2010 event will soon be published as a paper in the 2010 Annual Report.

For 2011 we want to keep the same aim, to encourage anyone who wants to take part to take the opportunity to get out during the day to a new site, or to run a moth trap or two out in the wilds, but is being held a little later this year, from the Friday evening of the 22nd July through to Sunday. This year the event is enhanced by prizes generously sponsored by Anglian Lepidopterist Supplies and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch of Butterfly Conservation to provide additional motivation to get out and about.

Prizes will be offered in two categories:

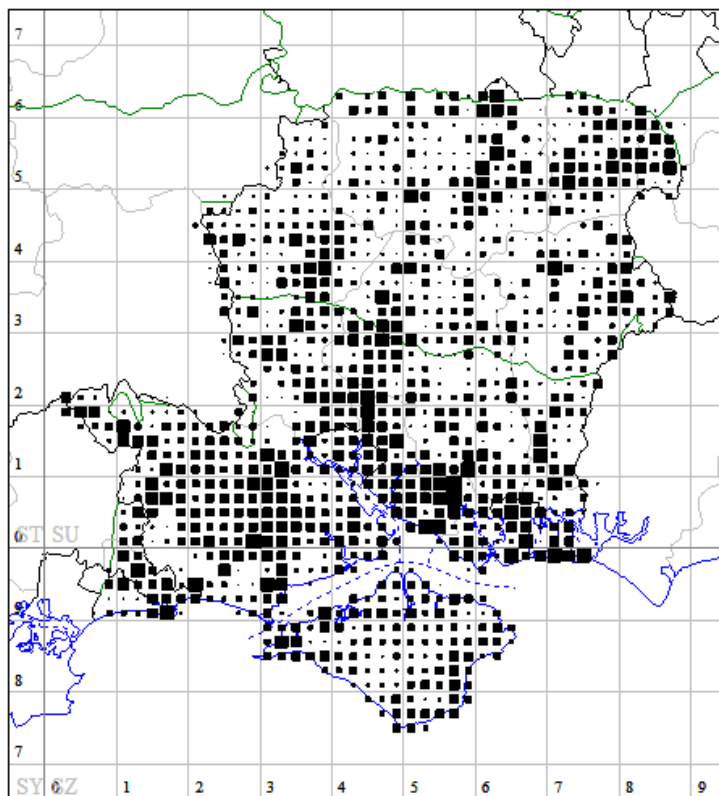
Most Significant Record: Presented to the finder of a species that, in the opinion of the judges, is the most significant in the context of our existing knowledge of the two counties' moth fauna. The most obvious example would be a new species for our area (or indeed, the British Isles!) but it could be a new vice-county record, or a re-find after many years of absence. Prize: a copy of the recently published '*Identification Guide to the Bird-dropping Tortrix*' by Jon Clifton and Jim Wheeler, an excellent guide to these sometimes confusing moths (Paul Boswell has supplied a review later on in this newsletter). Thanks to Jon Clifton at ALS for donating this prize.

Most Significant Contributor: Awarded to the individual recorder who submits the most new 10km square records over the weekend (22-24 July), from any site or combination of sites. Aggregate species will be excluded from the calculation and all records must be accepted by the appropriate county recorder. A new 10km square record is defined as a record for a species in a given 10km square that has no previous records in the same square prior to 2011 on the H&IOW database. Prize: a £20 Anglian Lepidopterist Supplies voucher, donated by the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch of Butterfly Conservation and supported by ALS.

All contributions will be acknowledged, both here in the Hantsmonthly newsletter and in a paper that will appear in the 2011 Annual report.

I hope that as many recorders as possible will be able to take part over the weekend and try and seek pastures new to go looking for moths, either by sight, net, pheromone lure or light, and by foot, bike or car!

MTW



Hampshire and Isle of Wight: the smaller the black square, the lower the number of records we've received



ELEGIA FALLAX – New to Mainland Britain

On 24th April, DPH reported on the Hantsmoths yahoo group that he'd caught an individual of *Elegia similella*, which was extremely early - even for a season where many emergence dates are well advanced, being some four weeks earlier than any previous report. Dan forwarded a couple of photos to myself and Tim, and the two-tone grey appearance struck me as odd. This, along with the early date, suggested that it might possibly be its European congener *E. fallax*, which



has occurred once on Guernsey, and which I have encountered when trapping in France. Showing the value of keeping hold of specimens until a determination is arrived at, Dan was able to forward it to RJD who, in liaison with JRL, was able to confirm that it was indeed *fallax* and therefore becomes the first record for mainland Britain (assuming there were no other records elsewhere at the same time, although this must be a possibility), and certainly the first for our area. Given there were a number of migrant moths reported in the days immediately preceding this find, with south to south-westerly winds, it was almost certainly an immigrant from the continent.

MJW



MARCH - APRIL 2011 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.

MARCH March was very slow to get going, with many recorders still in winter hibernation. The 11th saw a mass emergence of moth-ers emerging blinking in the light of spring from their winter caves: MP in Cadnam reported 87 moths of eight species: 34 **Small Quaker**, 44 **Common Quaker**, **Hebrew Character**, **Clouded Drab**, **Twin-spotted Quaker**, **Oak Beauty**, **Yellow Horned** and at the bottom of the trap a **Pine Beauty**. But GCE had already been out and about for a few weeks, the early bird getting a multiplicity of worms: on the same night, an MV ran in Wherwell held 1395 moths of 16 species by morning: **Small Quaker** (964), **Common Quaker** (349), **Twin-spotted Quaker** (23), **Chestnut** (16), plus a handful of **Small Brindled Beauty**, **Dotted Border**, **Oak Beauty**, **Hebrew Character**, **Grey Shoulder-knot**, **Satellite**, *Tortricodes alternella*, and singles of **Spring Usher**, **Yellow Horned**, **Clouded Drab**, and **March Moth**. Actinic traps elsewhere had small numbers of similar mix, plus a single **Brindled Pug**. TJN in Anna Valley had nine species including **Double-striped Pug**, **Twin-spotted Quaker** and an early **Pale Mottled Willow**.

The next day, RBW's Brockenhurst garden hosted 16 species, with **Dotted Chestnut**, **Shoulder Stripe** and **Grey Shoulder-knot**, supported by **Yellow Horned**, **Small Brindled Beauty** and **Twin-spotted Quaker**. THW ventured out into Winchester drizzle (a very rare precipitation event for the next couple of months as it turned out) to find 33 moths of seven species, including first mentions of *Agonopterix heracliana* and *Caloptilia semifascia*. At Leckford on 14th, GCE had 840 moths of 15 species, including a significant eight **White-marked**, along with a **Dotted Chestnut**, **Pale Pinion** and 517 **Common Quaker**. On the same night in Alton, DBO reported that he had had one of his best ever March nights with 141 moths of 11 species, **Oak Beauty**, **Double-striped Pug**, **Grey Shoulder-knot** and **Twin-spotted Quaker** all being new for the year. NJM had a lower return when trapping in Sherborne St John, but was the first reporter of **Early Tooth-striped** and *Ypsolopha mucronella* - another was not far away in Basingstoke, along with **Satellite** (MJW).

On 15th, MP (Cadnam) saw 122 moths of 18 species, including *Depressaria daucella* and *Agonopterix yeatiana*, the latter of note as it is a moth that appears to be increasing in range and numbers across the county. Of the macros, **Small Quaker** and **Common Quaker** led the way with 62 and 50 individuals respectively, along with two **Pine Beauty**, three **Oak Beauty**, just two **Hebrew Character** and **Clouded**

Drab. RTu's Grayshott garden trap attracted 275 moths of 14 species, although unsurprisingly *Orthosia* made up the great majority. Other than the 224 Small and Common Quaker, of note were *Semioscopis avallanella*, three Yellow Horned, five Oak Beauty, two Dotted Chestnut and 11 Twin-spotted Quaker. A similar story for LF in Ropley, where 352 moths of 10 species consisted predominantly of 223 Common Quaker with the first reported **Early Thorn**. By contrast, DPH reported just three moths on the same night, but of most significance was his note about *Bankesia conspurcatella* flying around a colleague's garden in Warsash.

On 16th, an event that will probably go down in Hampshire mothing folklore occurred in Mottisfont, where GCE had the fortune (or should that be misfortune?) to decide to trap under a flowering willow. As pictured in last time's newsletter, come the morning the Skinner was overflowing with *Orthosia*, with 2680 Small Quaker and 2600 Common Quaker - surprisingly similar totals! There was barely room for anything else, but diligent searching through the 'quaker mass' turned up Hebrew Character (144), Twin-spotted Quaker (66), Clouded Drab (54) [possibly erroneously including some Lead-coloured], **Lead-coloured Drab** (10+), Early Grey (9), Chestnut (6), **Blossom Underwing** (4), Grey Shoulder-knot (3), Satellite (3), two *Diurnea fagella*, Early Tooth-striped, Dotted Chestnut, Yellow Horned and Brindled Pug!

On the same day, the first of many *Aphomia sociella* (Bee Moth) started to emerge from a wasp nest brought indoors over winter from MJW's Basingstoke garden - over the next month, at least twelve males and eight females were found, the former emerging significantly earlier. Twin-spotted Quaker appears to be doing well, and was new for NJH's Fordingbridge trap, alongside Early Grey which is surprisingly infrequent there. An abundant Alton March continued for DBO with a sum total of 150 *Orthosia*, the only exception being a Grey Shoulder-knot.

After a couple of frosty nights saw a bit of a lull in reporting, the 21st saw renewed activity, with GCE venturing out into the wilderness onto farmland north of Whitchurch: his 460 moths of 17 species included five not previously recorded in the SU45 10km square - Pine Beauty, *Tortricodes alternella* (this last seemingly relatively scarce after a couple of good years), *Depressaria heraclai* and even *Emmelina monodactyla*! New for the year in Cadnam (MP) were *Diurnea fagella*, Grey Shoulder-knot and Small Brindled Beauty, and a notable 27 Clouded Drab along with 312 Common and Small Quaker. Even though JRDS had not yet ventured out into the garden with an MV, his porch light pulled in an impressive 11 **Engrailed** and his first **Streamer** for a few years on the 22nd.

The warm spell had brought both **Light Orange** and **Orange Underwing** out to flit around the tree tops, with reports from Pamber Forest (GJD), Harewood Forest (GCE) and Woolmer (Steve Mansfield) over the past few days; coincidentally, a note in the most recent edition of Ent.Rec. (Hill et al, 2011¹) explodes the myth that the former are associated solely with Aspen - in fact, it appears that either species can be seen in birch woodland where no Aspen is present and it is therefore not safe to differentiate between the two on habitat alone: it is necessary to get good views of the moths on the ground or in a net and look at the underwing pattern and pectination of the male antennae. ARC sent in photos of Light Orange Underwing taken at Lee Ground Coppice, Botley Wood - the one **shown right** was taken there on 8th April - but were first reported (independently) by ARC and Richard Carpenter on 27th March and confirmed by KW with two males there on 7th April.



The 24th saw GCE trying for **Barred Tooth-striped** in Leckford, successfully luring six pristine specimens to actinic. Another White-marked and Dotted Chestnut were found back in Chilbolton at his garden trap. RJD found about five male *Adela cuprella* flying over a flowering willow at Wickham Common - the earliest date by a day. He reported that they were "mostly they were over the very top of the tree, and flew vigorously to cope with the breeze - not the weak dancing flight typical of longhorns."

¹ Hill, L., Jenner, P., and Plant, C.W. 2011. A confusion of Orange Underwings *Archicaris parthenias* (L.) and *A. notha* (Hb.) (Lep.: Geometridae). Entomologist's Rec. J. Var. 123 (2) pp93-95.

TJN had a further Pale Pinion in Over Wallop on 25th. Carefully avoiding sallow blossom this time, GCE trapped again near Mottisfont, reducing the numbers in the trap to a still incredible 1200+ moths of 21 species, and returning Blossom Underwing, **Balsam Carpet**, five **Red Chestnut**, nine **Brindled Beauty** and a **Nut-tree Tussock**. NJH weighed in with the year's first **Powdered Quaker** amongst more usual fare in Fordingbridge, and on 26th an **Oak-tree Pug** was a very early sighting there. On the same night, another Nut-tree Tussock turned up in Alton, along with yet another Dotted Chestnut - the latter now being a widespread species after years of obscurity, - and MJW had a new garden record in Basingstoke in the form of *Agonopterix subpropinquella*, f. *rhodochrella*, distinguished by its black head and thorax (left). A very early **Common Pug** was new in for SKe in Sway on 27th.



The night of the 28th was quite cold, with ground frost in the Test valley, leading to a drop off in numbers, although GCE had a Powdered Quaker in Leckford. This was only a temporary lull, as one trap in Wherwell the next night held 1,300 moths of 18 species, notably for another White-marked and **Frosted Green**, while in Cove, up in the north-east of the county, came reports of another early Nut-tree Tussock, Dotted Chestnut (right) and Brindled Pug (RGE).



APRIL

And so into the new month, with rainfall still literally thin on the ground and continuing very warm. Recorders continued to report good numbers of *Orthosia* into the first week of the month. TJN started the month in a garden at the edge of Harewood Forest and attracted around 500 moths of 16 species, with the first report of **Lunar Marbled Brown**, Powdered Quaker, good numbers of Oak Beauty and Engrailed, and the first large count of Brindled Pug (23), more of which later. There was yet another Dotted Chestnut for DBO, this time at Newton Valence. *Acleris cristana* and *Zelleria hepariella* were newcomers, reported by THW at St Cross, Winchester. On the 2nd, a **Great Prominent** appeared in West Walk (JRDS), and Early Thorn were emerging across the county. A Lead-coloured Drab and **Red-green Carpet** were notable for TP in Ashurst.

There was some migrant activity at the start of the month: a **Rush Veneer** *Nomophila noctuella* in Sway on 2nd (SKe), and on the 3rd DBO reported a **Diamond-back Moth** *Plutella xylostella* in Alton, with the same night seeing a **Dark Sword-grass** at Browndown Fen, Gosport (John Norton); another Rush Veneer was reported from Brockenhurst on 5th (RBW), and a **Hummingbird Hawk-moth** nectared in MLO's Funtley garden on 7th. The **Red Sword-grass** (left) was an excellent find for DC at Freshwater on the same night, and one of the Dark variety was at Cadnam (MP), followed by a **Bordered Straw** on 8th (photo right). Another Dark Sword-grass was in Brockenhurst on 9th (RBW). The highlight was probably a **Striped Hawk-moth** in Northney, Hayling (JWP) on 7th.



Further Dotted Chestnut were reported from Brockenhurst (5th, RBW) and Cheriton (6th, RGLT). An early **Common Heath** was on the wing at Broughton Down on 6th (GCE). Relatively cool nights and a general decline in *Orthosia* numbers saw reduced catches around this time especially in suburban areas, but in Cadnam, MP had Great and



Swallow Prominent on 6th, and SKe reported Pebble Prominent from Sway. In Cove, RGE caught only 8 moths of 5 species, but one of these was *Agonopterix ocellana*, new for his garden (left). RFC and JBl had a good evening in Exbury Gardens running the trap for just 2 hours with 93 moths of 20 species including 24 Frosted Green, Water Carpet, Brown Silver-lines, Purple Thorn, Great Prominent, Lunar Marbled Brown, Blossom Underwing and Nut-tree Tussock.

On 7th in Grayshott (RTu), Small and Common Quaker were still appearing in double figures, but of more interest perhaps were the first reports of *Eriocrania subpurpurella*, *Alucita hexadactyla*, Scalloped Hook-tip and Scarce Prominent, and RGLT at Cheriton saw Water Carpet and Early Tooth-striped and the year's first Brimstone Moth. DPH trapped at Stubbington for only the second time in the year and had a new species for the garden in Blossom Underwing (as was an individual in SI's Eastleigh garden on the same night, along with *Agonopterix alstromeriana*): Blossom Underwing is another species that appears to have had a productive spring. DPH also had *Epiphyas postvittana*, which is notable as this adventive has been showing signs of a

decline over the past two or three years and has been very thin on the ground so far in 2011. GCE ran actinics near Bossington, with further Purple Thorn, Swallow Prominent and a Muslin Moth of note. A Knot Grass in New Milton (Brian Pink) was rather early, as was Least Black Arches for Dave Wallace.

Above average daytime temperatures saw *Pyrausta aurata* making appearances in gardens, and encourage winter hibernators to emerge: on 8th, DBO found a number of tiny moths emerging from his Alton garage during the afternoon. A number were *Mompha subbistrigella*, but more surprisingly at least five were nepticulids and courtesy of Brian Goodey via dissection identified them as *Stigmella aceris*; presumably these were emerging from leaf litter blown into the garage, rather than overwintering adults. A Buttoned Snout was attracted to a house light in Fleet (GCS), and a White-pinion Spotted found on the outside of a car showroom window in Sway - along with an incredible 24 *Alucita hexadactyla* and a number of other species - broke the earliest ever record by over a week (SKe). By 9th, GCE was reporting from Chilbolton that Hebrew Character were now just about outnumbering the 'Quakers', accompanied by a Yellow-barred Brindle (along with another for HE in Cholderton, the earliest county records by three days). Scarce Prominent, Frosted Green and Red Chestnut were the highlights of a small catch in Hundred Acres (JRDS), with Shuttle-shaped Dart in Cadnam (MP).

The morning of the 10th saw a *Calybites phasianipennella* at Bransbury (TJN), and the evening produced Great Prominent and another White-pinion Spotted at Hundred Acres (JRDS). In Upton, Common Quaker were still a majority component of 177 moths of 18 species for GCE, but of more significance were Red Chestnut and Iron Prominent. An off-course Scarce Prominent in Basingstoke was new for the garden and well away from its normal birch woodland habitat (MJW).

On 11th, JRL and IRT found *Mompha bradleyi*, a species which was new to Hampshire last year, to be flourishing at Great Salterns NR in Portsmouth; the larva mines the stems of Giant Willow-herb *Epilobium hirsutum* (photo left © MJW). On 14th, ACr's Overton trap was graced by Mullein Moth - a first for the garden - and a number of early visitors including the earliest Eyed Hawk-moth on record, Swallow Prominent and Yellow-barred Brindle, and followed this on the 18th with two Poplar Hawk-moth and yet another Dotted Chestnut; also on the 14th at Leckford, GCE turned up The Shears, the earliest area record by over two weeks, accompanied by *Ypsolopha mucronella*, Barred Tooth-striped, Chinese Character and Scorched Carpet. A Coronet for ARC in Sholing was also astonishingly early. A paltry return of just seven



moths for JRDS in Hundred Acres was brightened by the presence of a Maiden's Blush. SJW commented that the year had been slow for him so far, but new for year were Buff Ermine and *Eudonia angustea*.

The first report of **Chocolate-tip** emanated from Chilbolton on 15th (GCE). On 16th, JRL and MJW went for a wander over Portsdown, encountering *Pancalia leuwenhockella* (right) and later at Great Salterns NR found a number of *Mompha bradleyi* still to be flying. On the same day, TJN saw an **Emperor Moth** at Hicheslea Moor, New Forest and a **Tawny-barred Angle** in St Cross was the second earliest ever (THW). On the 18th DBO had his earliest ever **Pale Prominent** in Alton, with a **Lobster Moth** for JGr in Romsey, **Pebble Hook-tip** at South Hayling (SJW), **Ochreous Pug** at St Cross, Winchester (THW), **Coxcomb Prominent** and **Flame Shoulder** (MP, Cadnam) and *Pyrausta nigrata* at Martin Down (PA), all on 19th.



Adela reaumurella appeared around about the 20th, seen by MP at Magdalen Hill Down, along with *Grapholita jungiella*, and thereafter turned up in a number of new localities, including Hundred Acres (JRDS), Basingstoke (MJW) and Romsey (JGr); TJN reported that on a walk in Harewood Forest on 25th, there were literally hundreds dancing around the oaks. **Pale Tussock**, **Sallow Kitten** and **White Ermine** were new for the year for MP in his Cadnam trap on 21st, and on the same night in Anna Valley, a **Seraphim** was the second earliest ever (TJN, with another two days later), with further craziness not much further away in Chilbolton with record-setting **Clouded-bordered Brindle**, **Figure of Eighty** and another **Coronet** (GCE).

The 20th was remarkable in heralding an explosion of Brindled Pug: 28 to DBO's Alton trap was quite unprecedented for the site and would equate to an annual haul in other years (also of note were **Waved Umber** - which was seemingly having a good spring occurring in good numbers throughout - **Common Pug** and **Ruby Tiger**). DPH reported eleven from Stubbington, with a further ten on 22nd and 24th: this in a context where the previous highest was six; MJW had 29 on the same night, compared to a previous garden maximum of five and just 44 in total in eight previous spring trapping sessions in his garden in Basingstoke - this was exceeded by 34 two nights later and a further 24 on 23rd! In Pennington, where RFC had seen 51 previous individuals over a similar eight year period, there were 15 on 20th, 23 on 22nd and 17 on 23rd; there were at least 25 at Exbury on 22nd. On 21st, RTu in Grayshott reported trapping 482 moths of 32 species, with no less than 376 of them being pugs, many undetermined and including **Narrow-winged** and **Oak-tree**, but the majority are likely to have been Brindled. Other species of note on the same night were **Red Twin-spot Carpet**, **Small Phoenix**, **Waved Umber**, **Lime Hawk-moth**, **Dark Sword-grass**, **V-pug** and **Birch Mocha**. The highest confirmed count was 109 in KG's Ashurst MV trap on the 24th.



The **Oblique Striped** (shown right) was photographed on Broughton Downs on 20th by MBa who saw two on the wing in a few minutes along with lots of *Pyrausta nigrata*. In the same day found he found a **Small Yellow Underwing** in meadows at Plaitford, the first ever April sighting.



A *Mompha divisella* (left) caught by day in MJW's Basingstoke garden on the afternoon of the 21st was apparently the first record for VC12 for over 50 years; on the same day, SJW reported **Cabbage Moth** on Hayling. By this time, *Cameraria ohridella* could be seen literally in their hundreds swarming around Horse Chestnut trees, with the adults resting head up on the trunks.

There was some migrant activity on the 22nd, with a **Bordered Straw** in Overton (ACr), with another perhaps more predictably on the coast in Christchurch on the same night (JSw - also **Heart and Dart** and a late **Dotted Border** there), and a **Small Mottled Willow**, with three

Plutella xylostella for company, on Hayling Island for AJ, who also reported **Brindled Pug** in relatively huge numbers for the site (27); also on Hayling was a **Pinion-spotted Pug** for JWP. **Orange Footman** was first seen by MP in Cadnam and RFC and JBl at Exbury Gardens, one of 27 species, with **Bright-line**

Brown-eye, Scalloped Hook-tip and **Balsam Carpet** in Winchester (THW). Another session at Andover Down, Harewood Forest (TJN, LF) resulted in *Tinea trinotella*, *Incurvaria masculella*, 12 Great Prominent and a Dotted Chestnut. The first report of **Foxglove Pug** came from Stubbington (DPH).

A further 24 Brindled Pug on 23rd in Alton were accompanied by *Syndemis musculana* (DBO). In Basingstoke Vine's Rustic was another early emerger - only four records have been earlier - and *Nematopogon swammerdammella*, *Adela reaumurella* (lekking by day around a Wild-service Tree) and *Phyllonorycter heegierella* were new for the garden, with *Capua vulgana*, *Pseudococcyx turionella*, *Ypsolopha ustella*, and Ochreous Pug supporting, and *Argyresthia trifasciata*, *Epiblema cynosbatella*, Garden Carpet, Broken-barred Carpet were new for the year (MJW), as were Common Carpet and Oak Hook-tip in Cadnam (MP) and a Puss Moth in Catherington was the first for 13 years for RJM (TJN also reported one from the previous day in Anna Valley). KG had two attractive micros add themselves to his garden list in Ashurst: another *Pseudococcyx turionella* and on the morning of the 24th, the rare bluebell-feeding cochyliid *Hysterophora maculosana*. Trapping in Over Wallop (TJN, WL, LF) resulted in *Phyllonorycter blancardella*, *Swammerdamia pyrella*, *Pyrausta purpuralis*, Light Brocade, Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet, Buff-tip, Pinion-spotted Pug, Rustic Shoulder-knot, with yet more Dotted Chestnut, and a Cinnabar and May Highflyer back home in Anna Valley. It was still slow for IRT in Portsmouth, but a **Small White Wave** was only the second ever recorded there.

On the 24th, *Caloptilia populetorum* was a new site record for KG in Ashurst, and **Riband Wave** was first reported from Hundred Acres (JRDS). In Stubbington, DPH's record-breaking run of Brindled Pug was joined by Oak-tree, where the night's total of 8 exceeded the previous maximum of three, accompanied by the *Elegia fallax* detailed above. **Green Carpet**, *Bucculatrix ulmella* and *Bryotropha affinis* were notable. A **Large Yellow Underwing** was a surprise for PGLT in Cheriton, although there are very rare instances of this species emerging as early as February. There were early Clouded-bordered Brindle, **Treble Lines**, **Poplar Grey**, Seraphim and **Alder Moth** in Goodworth Clatford, the latter four days earlier than any previously reported (TJN, WL et al), a record equalled by one in Cadnam for MP on a night that saw half the 106-moth catch consist of Brindled and Oak-tree Pug. Andy Mitchell visiting Hayling from his native Surrey had a good day at the seaside, finding vacated mines of *Ectoedemia heringella*, *Psyche casta* cases, *Choreustis pariana*, *Glyphipterix fuscoviridella*, *Elachista rufocinerea*, *Pempelia genistella* larvae, *Pammene rhediella*, and *Pyrausta despicata*.



The 25th saw a number of good day-flying records, with two **Drab Looper** seen in Harewood Forest on 25th (TJN, LF), RBW finding and photographing (left) a **Broad-bordered Bee Hawk** nectaring from bluebells and lilacs in his Brockenhurst garden that evening - yet another earliest date - and an **Argent and Sable** seen in Bentley Wood by Philip Hack and David Holt. Three **Marbled Pug** overnight for RBW were also notable. Another Broad-bordered Bee Hawk was reported from the Forest by KG in Ashurst on 30th.

PRD had **Dog's Tooth** in his trap at Normandy on 26th, and reported that a friend of his undertaking a beetle survey reported seeing at least four **Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk** at a site in the New Forest on the same day, and on 27th, PRD added to this with one and PDB another two (right) so it would appear this species is still present and doing reasonably well in the Forest. Another Bordered Straw was found in the Avon Valley, along with **Little Thorn** (DGE).

On 29th, JHa found a **Jersey Mocha** in Bonchurch, Isle of Wight, the fourth record for the county all of which have been at this site, and the first spring record. The first **Pale Tussock** and **Spectacle** were reported from Alton on the same day (DBO), with a **Light Brocade** in Cadnam closing out the month (MP).





MBA found **Large Emerald** eggs laid last year in the trap and they hatched out in the late summer. After feeding for a short time the small larvae took up position on the end of twigs (photo left) where they spent all winter motionless before finally resuming feeding in late March and have since pupated this week.



FAREHAM MOTH GROUP REPORTS

MARCH 2011

During March the group, KC, RJD, AG, MLO and KW, made three visits each totaling about three hours using up to 5 lamps and sheet. Although with using sheets you cannot obtain an accurate count of moths, the numbers estimated are a minimum. The majority of the moths at one sheet were potted to obtain some idea of quantities present.

11th March we visited High Lines area of West Walk and caught in excess of 250 moths at one sheet (all potted) so if multiplied by the 5 lamps used would result in approx. 1250 in 3 hours. The number of species was 22 with **Shoulder Stripe**, **Grey Shoulder-knot** and **Oak Nycteoline** amongst the usual *Orthosias*.

17th March saw us visit Orchard Copse nr Wickham Common on a much cooler and full moon night. This resulted in only a minimum of 250 moths of 15 species all the usual common early spring species.

25th March saw us back at Orchard Copse on a much milder and cloudy night. This resulted in a minimum of 500 moths of 23 species. Highlights included three **Red Chestnut**, one **Pale Pinion** and a *Pammene giganteana* which is our first record for five years; the larva feeds on galls of Oak.

APRIL 2011

During April we managed all our five Friday visits to various sites around the area with many nice moths seen.

The 1st saw KC, RJD and KW visit Austin's Copse nr Upham, on a rather chilly night, with three lamps operated. Highlights being **Water Carpet**, **Red Chestnut** and **Powdered Quaker**, among the usual woodland fare.

On the 8th KC, RJD, MLO and KW visited West Walk (High Lines) nr Boarhunt finding good numbers of 29 species including *Pammene argyrana*, three **Scarce Prominent**, **Dark Sword-grass** and **Least Black Arches**.

The 15th was a clear moonlight night and this resulted in lower numbers of 32 species. Amongst these were three *Semioscopis steinkellneriana*, seven **Water Carpet**, four **V Pug** and **Chamomile Shark**.

KC, RJD, AG, MLO and KW visited Orchard Copse, on the edge of Wickham Common, on 22nd. This was our first encounter of the year with the dreaded Cockchafer with well in excess of 200 between the five lamps. However, we did manage 55 species of moth, which included *Micropterix tunbergella*, *Perittia obscurepunctella*, **Mocha**, **Birch Mocha**, **Barred Umber**, ten **Great Prominent** and **Orange Footman**.

The 29th saw KC, RJD, AG, MLO and KW make a repeat visit to Austin's Copse on a much more fruitful night, despite a brief thunderstorm. We caught 65 species in all and amongst these were *Hysterophora maculosana*, *Pyrausta despicata*, **Pretty Chalk Carpet**, **Little Thorn**, **Lime Hawk-moth**, and four **Alder Moth**. Again we were plagued with about 200 Cockchafer.

Also during April KC had two **Light Feathered Rustic**, **Scarce Prominent** and **Dark Sword-grass** in his garden trap, and two **Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth** in Botley Woods.



KC and MLO visited Westbury Park during the day on 27th with records of **Small Purple-barred**, **Burnet Companion**, *Grapholita jungiella* and *Pyrausta purpuralis* amongst the thirteen species of butterfly recorded. These included 10+ Duke of Burgundy, 1 Dingy Skipper, 1 Green Hairstreak and 15+ Grizzled Skipper.

At Funtley during April I had 65 species of macro moths and 27 species of micro's. Amongst the macro's were **Humming-bird Hawk-moth** on 7th, **Silver Y** on 9th and 30th, **Scarce Prominent** on 13th, **Great Prominent** on 20th, **Grey Birch** on 25th, **White Point**, **Shark** and **Lychnis** on 30th

Among the micro's were *Parornix anglicella* 19th, *Ocnerostoma friesei* 21st, *Plutella xylostella* 24th, 26th and 30th, *Caloptilia populetorum*, *Phyllonorycter blancardella* and *Caloptilia azaleella* on 24th

MLO



Early Dates for Moths

As will be evident from the review of the past two months above, and not surprisingly considering the remarkably warm weather in the last few weeks, there have been some unseasonably early dates on which the spring, and summer, moth species have been emerging. Charted below are those species that are within a week of the previous earliest record, or are the earliest ever, mostly taken from the Hantsmoths email newsgroup with some that have been emailed to me direct; no doubt other species will be reported in time and there are likely to be records with even earlier dates than those shown below. The "previous earliest" relates to the earliest record on the Branch database for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight up to 2010. New records are highlighted in blue.

B&F	Taxon	Date	Difference (days)	Observer	Previous earliest
0149	<i>Adela cuprella</i>	24-Mar-11	-1	RJD	25-Mar-03
0317	<i>Phyllonorycter heegeriella</i>	24-Apr-11	-7	MJW	01-May-09
0438	<i>Swammerdamia pyrella</i>	23-Apr-11	-2	TJN	25-Apr-02
1007	<i>Capua vulgana</i>	24-Apr-11	+3	MJW	21-Apr-84
1209	<i>Pseudococcyx turionella</i>	23-Apr-11	-9	KG, MJW	02-May-09
1366	<i>Pyrausta nigrata</i>	19-Apr-11	+2	PA	17-Apr-10
1654	Figure of Eighty	21-Apr-11	-1	GCE	22-Apr-10
1718	Oblique Striped	20-Apr-11	-8	MBa	28-Apr-08
1844	Ochreous Pug	19-Apr-11	+3	THW	16-Apr-07
1879	Seraphim	21-Apr-11	+3	TJN	18-Apr-09
1883	Yellow-barred Brindle	09-Apr-11	-3	HE, GCE	12-Apr-06 & 2007
1893	Tawny-barred Angle	15-Apr-11	+1	THW	14-Apr-07
1902	Brown Silver-line	06-Apr-11	=	RFC, JBI	06-Apr-09
1957	White-pinion Spotted	08-Apr-11	-9	SKe	17-Apr-61
1976	Privet Hawk-moth	24-Apr-11	-7	DAS	01-May-07
1980	Eyed Hawk-moth	14-Apr-11	-4	ACr	18-Apr-04
1981	Poplar Hawk-moth	18-Apr-11	+4	ACr	14-Apr-07
1982	Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk	26-Apr-11	+9	Per PRD	17-Apr-03
1983	Broad-bordered Bee Hawk	25-Apr-11	-5	RBW	30-Apr-07
2078	Least Black Arches	15-Apr-11	+1	GCE	14-Apr-07
2147	Shears	14-Apr-11	-16	GCE	30-Apr-1993 & 2003
2281	Alder Moth	24-Apr-11	-4	WL, IMcP, MP	28-Apr-07
2291	Coronet	14-Apr-11	-9	ARC	23-Apr-07
2326	Clouded-bordered Brindle	21-Apr-11	-2	GCE	23-Apr-07
2334	Rustic Shoulder-knot	23-Apr-11	-3	TJN, LF	26-Apr-07
2384	Vine's Rustic	23-Apr-11	+5	MJW	18-Apr-04
2397	Small Yellow Underwing	20-Apr-11	-11	MBa	01-May-09

TJN



Butterflies

The Butterfly Conservation Branch reserve at Magdalen Hill Down, Winchester is always an early site for Green Hairstreak and Grizzled Skipper due to its south-facing aspect and so it was no surprise that both were seen here on 7th April (PRe). Small Copper was also seen that day at Browndown (MLa).

(right) Green Hairstreak © AT

The first Duke of Burgundy was seen at Noar Hill by P&PG on 9th followed a week later on 16th by the first Dingy Skipper on 16th (H&AP). At Afton on 22nd IP saw the first Common Blue, Small Blue and Small Heath while Pearl-bordered Fritillary was also seen in the New Forest by CLB that day.

(below) Pearl-bordered Fritillary (© CLB)



Seven Glanville Fritillary were seen on 23rd at Wheelers Bay, IoW with Brown Argus and Wall Brown on 25th at Bonchurch Down (IP). If the numbers of larval webs found earlier in the year are anything to go by it should be another excellent year for this lovely insect.

(below) Glanville Fritillary (© IP)



The mating Brimstones that LF reported in the last newsletter from her garden at Ropley were still in cop eight days later as the weather had been largely cool in the intervening period.

Perhaps surprisingly no Large Skipper have been reported yet but Adonis Blue will surely emerge early if the warm weather continues. A small number of Painted Lady have been reported in the last two weeks of April.

TJN

Hazards of Mothing

Lynn and I were going through the contents of the moth trap early on Easter morning with her acting as scribe as usual. Her fresh cup of coffee was beside her on the grass. I tapped out a tray of moths behind me into the vegetation but one moth then flew up and in a wide sweeping arc landed in Lynn's coffee about 4m away! I thought it expedient to quickly tip out the contents of the mug as being the most likely way of retrieving the moth alive. To my surprise a Cockchafer also fell out of the mug with the dregs of the coffee! The residents of Anna Valley would have been woken early that morning had it not been for the hapless Common Quaker.

TJN



Book Review: Bird-dropping Tortrix Moths of the British Isles

By Jon Clifton and Jim Wheeler

Available from Anglian
Lepidopterist Supplies for £15
plus £2.50 postage

This 70 page softback is subtitled
**A Field Guide to the Bird-
dropping Mimics.**

The authors admit at the start that there is no formal list of the many similar-looking and often confusing moths that, through convergent evolution, have adopted the survival strategy of mimicking bird-droppings when at rest to avoid predation. However, having consulted several authorities, they have come up with the 49 species that feature in this book.

Each species is given its own page and starts with a photograph of both live and set specimens. These are followed with details of wingspan, flight period, foodplant and national status. There is a figure showing actual size of the live and set specimens. There is also a flight graph and a map showing the vice-county distribution. This is followed by a description of the adult and hints on its separation from similar species. A few more comments on habitat and habits follow.

This is a useful book on an interesting group of moths that I am looking forward to using this summer.

PBo



New Title:
**A Photographic Guide to the
 Insects of the New Forest and Surrounding Area**

Packed with over 1600 stunning images, this unique photographic guide is the first book on the fascinating range of insects in the New Forest and surrounding area. The New Forest National Park is one of Britain's richest areas for insects, with an estimated 63% of the UK species. This guide will appeal not only to experts and wildlife-enthusiasts of all ages living in or visiting the New Forest, but also those throughout the UK and abroad. The photographs include behavioural images and are accompanied by a concise text with key information and locations in which to identify, enjoy and photograph these insects. Around 1300 species are included, with full coverage of butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies, shieldbugs, grasshoppers and related insects, amongst others. Sections on the history of entomology in the New Forest and information on different habitats are also included.

Moths are heavily featured, with around 60 pages devoted to the specialities of the Forest.

£18.95

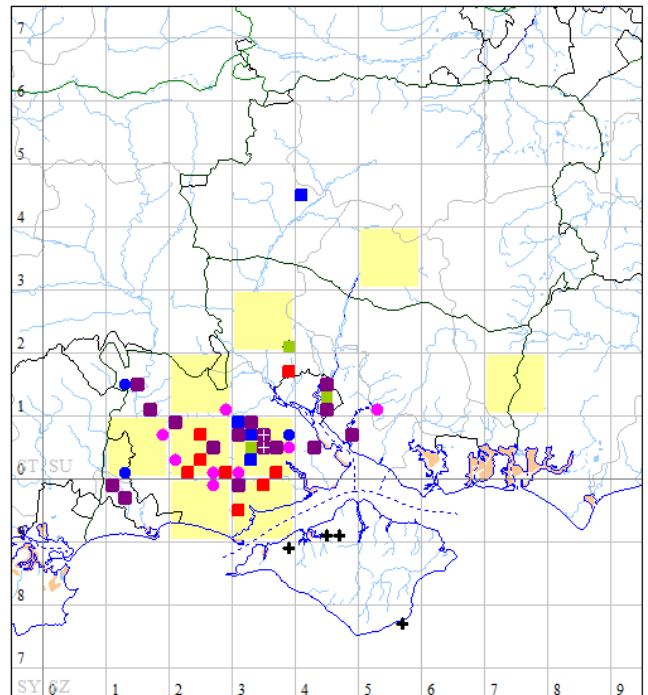
<http://www.naturebureau.co.uk/photographic-guide-insects-new-forest-and-surrounding-area>



Southern Grass Emerald – A Potential Hampshire & Isle of Wight Species?

The Ent. Rec. for January/February 2011 contained an intriguing piece about the discovery that the 'Small Grass Emeralds' *Chlorissa viridata* seen on Guernsey and Jersey are in fact *C. cloraria*, a closely related species otherwise found in the southern half of western Europe. Small Grass Emerald is associated with damp and boggy areas on heathland in the New Forest, whereas *cloraria* appears to associate with dry, arid areas, being found on clifftops where Gorse grows in the Channel Islands. The vernacular 'Southern Grass Emerald' is proposed for this species, with reference to its main European distribution, and the authors suggest that it might be worthwhile looking closely at *Chlorissa* found well away from damp or boggy lowland heathland.

Looking at the historic distribution of *viridata* in our area, perhaps the odd record from Harewood Forest in VC12 and the old Isle of Wight records are most worthy of a second glance...?



Reference: Sterling, P H and Costen, P D M, 2011. *Southern Grass Emerald Chlorissa cloraria (Hubner, [1813]) (Lep.:Geometridae) New to the Channel Islands*. The Entomologist's Record and Journal of Variation Vol. 123 Part 1 Jan/Feb 2011.

MJW



Request for help with BTO Tetrad Survey

2011 marks the last year of the five-year survey period for the BTO national breeding bird atlas. It is difficult to get a comprehensive picture of the distribution of nocturnal species with normal field survey methods, and moth recorders are perfectly placed to assist and are being asked to help by submitting all records of species such as owls, Woodcock, Nightjar - even Stone Curlew - but records for any species at all in any tetrads, would be very welcome. To submit your records, and to find more information about Bird Atlas 2007-11, please go to www.birdatlas.net or www.birdtrack.net, and sample Hampshire maps can be found on the Hampshire Ornithological Society's website at www.hos.org.uk.

GCE



Events

NEW FOREST BIO BLITZ, Denny Wood, New Forest 17th June

As part of the event we will be running moth traps in Denny Wood. It would be great to see some Hants mothers come along to this fantastic location with the aim of recording as many species as possible. I will be setting up from 9pm so I can chat to any members of the public who turn up but at that time of year 10pm is probably a more realistic time to arrive. It is a big site so just spread yourselves out amongst the wood or on the edge of the heath.

PRD

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As ever, this newsletter would not be possible without 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 the county moth recorders, either Tim Norriss (tim@kitsmail.com) (Macros) or myself (micros), or see www.hantsmoths.org.uk/recording.htm

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