

**Dates of 2011 Indoor Meetings:**

Thursday 3rd February

Monday 18th April (AGM)

Tuesday 19th July

Wednesday 9th November



ALAN PRICE, GATEHOUSE STUDIO/Sussex Wildlife Trust.

**Sussex Moth Group Committee**

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I'm so glad to see that articles in previous newsletters are inspiring people to get out mothing in new places, or looking for day-flying moths for example. Check out Graeme Lyon's article on page 14, you may even like to start exploring other species that are found in your moth traps! As always, this newsletter is only as good as the articles and pictures that you send in, and I'm very grateful to the writers who have contributed to this excellent autumn issue - thank you! Come along to the indoor meetings over the winter, we look forward to seeing you there!  
Best wishes, Penny

Many thanks to the SxBRC for printing this newsletter.



Gypsy Moth by Michael Blencowe

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### Chairmans report by Graeme Lyons

Well, first of all I'd like to say a great big thank you for allowing me on board as chairman. I've come a long way from the spotty teenager counting Heart & Darts in his Mum's back garden twenty years ago! Secondly, I'd like to say a big thank you to Steven Teale for his hard work in the role of chairman; Steve is still very much active in the mothing community in Sussex so I don't think he will ever be that far away.

So what can you expect from me as chairman? I currently don't have a garden, so I won't be writing a regular 'chairman's trap' section in the newsletter. I'll try and keep my highlights of the summer to a paragraph in the chairman's report. Working full time as an ecologist, I'm in a good position to try and write more about such topics as conservation projects, wider natural history, entomological survey techniques etc. I've also built up quite a list of contacts over the years so I will try and get some guest speakers in from further afield too.

My low point of the year has been slipping a disk in my back which three months on is giving me grief even as I write this article. This year has been a struggle. I ran some traps for the Friends of Benfield Country Park earlier this year and could do nothing but watch as half a dozen senior citizens unloaded the generators and traps and carried them up the hill. Fingers crossed that this business will all be sorted out by my next field season.



Marsh Dagger

My highlight of the year was a joint record with Penny Green of **Marsh Dagger** at Woods Mill on the 22<sup>nd</sup> July. This moth went extinct in the UK in 1933 and this moth is only the third in the UK since then, the second record being caught at Pagham Harbour on the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2010! Another joint record of note (with Mike Edwards) was the **Raspberry Clearwing** at Friston Forest which will feature in an article by Michael Blencowe in this issue of the newsletter. Possibly my favourite find this year was a micro, the Notable A **Orange Conch Commo-**

**phila aeneana**, again at Friston Forest during an invertebrate survey where I was focusing on Lepidoptera. When we have written the survey up I will write an article about it in the next newsletter as it is a fairly simple methodology that could be repeated on any site.

It does feel that there have been more migrants and dispersing residents this year than there have been in recent years. Steve Teale's first for Sussex, **Tamarisk Peacock**, being particularly memorable. One of my first jobs was to set up a Facebook page for the moth group which has been done and is active now. The Sussex Moths Yahoo email group had more emails in July this year since



Orange Conch

Pigmy Footman subsp. *pallifrons*

noticeable how many official signs there were requesting anyone using the ranges to try not to disturb the wildlife and the shingle habitat. It is probable that if the MoD did not own this land then the habitat there would have been lost long ago. As it is now the moths, their habitat and their food plants are all left alone to get on to their own devices. Well, apart from any moths deciding to alight on the targets themselves; they may experience a certain amount of 'human intervention'!

The Midrips and The Wicks are a fantastic and hidden part of Sussex hosting many of the unusual moth species that the Dungeness area is so famous for. The very fact that this area is not easily accessible has helped the habitat many of these moths require to flourish, and who knows what other species are lurking in this most easterly of Sussex sites! Sussex has lost the breeding moth species named after it, with Lewes Wave and Brighton Wainscot long since departed. Although Sussex Emerald does occasionally turn up in Sussex as a wanderer, there just could be a small population hanging on at the Midrips just waiting to be discovered.....



Dark Tussock

With very small numbers of moths visiting the traps we decided to head further into Sussex in the hope of netting moths around some of the reed and sedge beds. After much searching we managed to spot a couple of moths, however without the ability to chase after them over the shingle (in case we stepped on anything slightly explosive) we endured the frustrating experience of trying to tempt moths to us with our spotlight. After much trying we netted two Fen Wainscot and six Reed Dagger (Nb) that we managed to encourage towards us away from the vegetation.

We drove back towards the traps past a sniper range and, when we got there, things were looking up. Although the temperature was still cool moths were starting to come to the traps in good numbers and we set about sorting through and identifying the various species, many of which we had not encountered before.

Graeme Lyons had recommended a few species for us to keep a look out for and one of these, *Synaphe punctalis* (Nb), was already in evidence in some numbers. The micro moth we were really hoping to see though was a beautiful species called *Cynaeda dentalis*, whose caterpillars feed internally in the stems of Viper's Bugloss. In the UK this RDB3 species is confined to the coasts of southern England, and as we got towards midnight the first of five turned up at the lights. With their striking zig-zag markings highlighted by the MV bulbs they instantly became one of our favourite moths!

Another species we hoped to see was the Red Data Book classified Pigmy Footman, although what we didn't expect was to record anything like the numbers we found. Fifty-four of the nominate sub-species were attracted to the traps along with three of the yellow sub-species *pallifrons*, which in Britain is known only from the coastal shingle around Dungeness.

As the night wore on the species count crept slowly towards forty and we were rewarded for staying late, as at 2:30am the first of three Dark Tussock appeared; a salient reminder that finishing trapping at midnight can lead to some species being missed. At about 3:30am we started to pack up the traps and then slowly made our way back along the maze of roads towards the Lydd exit. After handing back our walkie-talkie we drove out through the gates and as we headed towards Rye Harbour we reflected on the long night we had just enjoyed.

The ranges were such an alien landscape and it was a privilege to trap in them for the night. It was



Reed Dagger



Cynaeda dentalis

when it was set up in 2004! For more sightings of all types of natural history in Sussex see my blog <http://analternativenaturalhistoryofsussex.blogspot.com/>.

At a recent Butterfly Conservation conference, I caught up with Richard Fox and we were discussing my move to Sussex. He immediately commented on the quality of the Sussex Moth Group Newsletter, making a particular mention of the enthusiasm, humour and excellent content of the production. I can't stress enough how lucky we are to have such a dynamic group with so many keen and accomplished authors and naturalists willing to put pen to paper for every edition and to have Penny Green to pull it all together into such a professional format. Keep up the good work! Enjoy this issue and I look forward to seeing you around a bright light in a field sometime soon!

### The Magic Carpet result by Sam Bayley and Colin Pratt

In the spring newsletter we showed a couple of photos of an unidentified macro moth. It's time to put you out of your misery.....

#### Sam says:

The moth that was pictured in the Spring Newsletter was a real head spinner and had myself, Colin Pratt and Mark Parsons giving uncertain thoughts ranging from Common Carpet, Balsam Carpet or a strange form of Red Twin-spot Carpet. Finally, after much to-ing and fro-ing, I sent the moth to Colin to look at in the flesh and the resultant finding was something else, in fact it was a Barred Rivulet.

I wasn't really convinced by Colin as I couldn't find reference to any Barred Rivulet looking like this on the net or books, until Martin Honey contacted me after seeing the newsletter second-hand from someone else who directed me to a website that showed it perfectly. I will never doubt you again Colin!!

#### Colin says:

Difficulties over identifications stem from the fact that a moth photograph does not always look like real life and different forms occur in different parts of the UK. Identifying moths from photographs is far more difficult than from a specimen, as they bring to the fore markings that are not normally evident to the unaided human eye. Some County Recorders refuse to identify all moths from photographs - and they are the wise ones!

### Cover picture: Gypsy Moth by Michael Blencowe

The cover picture is of a Gypsy Moth *Lymantria dispar* recorded at Friston on 21st August 2010. Another Gypsy Moth was also trapped that night, 120 miles away at Dunwich Heath, Suffolk.



Jacob Everitt



## An ace up my sleeve - an off-the-cuff approach to recording Common Fanfoot by Michael Blencowe

Inspired by the success of April's Sloe Carpet discovery, I revisited Colin Pratt's 'Opportunities for Big Game hunting' article in April's SMG newsletter. Another of Colin's targets that attracted me was the Common Fan-foot *Pechipogo strigilata*. For those would-be scholars out there *Pechipogo* comes from *pekhus*; the forearm, and *pogon*; a beard. This is a reference to the fine hair forelegs of this family. The specific name *strigilata* refers to this species streaked wing patterning. For once I have to agree that the latin name makes a lot more sense than the English name because one thing that the Common Fan-foot definitely isn't is common.

The Common Fan-foot is a Nationally Notable A species and, as Colin described in his article, is now in serious danger of extinction in Sussex. It was last reported in Plashett Wood, a private woodland near Ringmer, in 2001 and I hoped to confirm that it was still there.

I have been granted access to Plashett by its owners to undertake an annual butterfly survey and on the evening of 4<sup>th</sup> June I was given the keys to the gate and allowed to drive into the heart of this fantastic woodland. I was joined by David Burrows, Steve Wheatley and Keith Alexander and we were armed with six traps and a packet of Jelly Babies. Colin had given me advice on where the moth had been previously found and I had also received tips on the best way to search for it: avoid the rides and place your traps right under the oaks – the larval foodplant.

At 20:50 we arrived at the site, parked up and got out of our cars to survey the habitat and decide where to place our traps. At 20:53, as we strolled along a ride, a moth flew past. I instinctively reached out my hand to try to cup it in my palm. At 20:54 the moth flew up the sleeve of my fleece. At 20:55 all four of us peered down my sleeve to see a Common Fan-foot resting on my wrist.

At 21:00 four men stood in a wood and debated whether we should bother staying or head home. This could have been one of the shortest field trips in SMG history and I must admit finding the target species so soon had quickly dispelled all the anticipation and excitement from the evening. However, we unpacked our traps and continued with the survey.

All in all, ten Common Fan-foots (Fan-feet?) were recorded in Plashett that evening (and I again proved irresistible to them when Keith noticed I had been walking around with one settled on my hat). Also amongst an impressive haul that evening was my first Mocha *Cyclophoria annularia*. We had proved that the Common Fan Foot is still doing well at Plashett however the real test will be to try and find this moth at other locations within the county. Be sure to keep your eyes – and sleeves – open as you walk around. With thanks to Keith Alexander, Steve Wheatley, David Burrows and Colin Pratt.



## Nothing in the danger zone by Dave A. Green

Reading through the species descriptions in Waring and Townsend, Dungeness repeatedly crops up as a hot-spot for a variety of enigmatic moths, and the final stronghold in the UK for some. The Dungeness complex of shingle, gravel pits and wetlands extends over a huge area (it is reputedly the largest vegetated shingle spit in Europe) but rarely is it noted that part of this area falls within the Sussex county boundary.

Most of the Dungeness complex falling within Sussex is owned by the military, and forms the Lydd Ranges firing range. As with many military ranges, permits are issued to wildlife surveyors to allow access for recording at times when the ranges are not being used. It was with one of these permits that Pen and I arrived at the ranges in late July aiming to carry out a moth survey but, importantly from our point of view, hoping to get out of Kent and onto the Sussex side of the Ranges. Wielding our passes, we stopped at the entrance gates and rather apprehensively presented them to the Military Police, before being told that they knew nothing of our visit that night! At first we were worried that we wouldn't be able to gain access to the Range, but after some sorting out of paperwork and making a few calls the helpful Military Police gave us a walkie-talkie, our own call sign and directed us to where we needed to go to meet a guard to gain access to the Range.

A few minutes later we were ushered through a gate onto the range and told we were the only people there that night. With the reminders not to leave the prescribed areas because of possible unexploded ordnance ringing in our ears, the gate closed behind us, and we started driving out through one of the weirdest landscapes we had ever seen. Amongst the fossilised shingle dunes and low-lying scrub were firing ranges and targets of many assorted kinds. We started our journey towards the Sussex end of the complex and, 3 kilometres later, the GPS showed we had made it into Sussex in between the Midrips and The Wicks. With the wind picking up, and the temperature dropping quickly, we searched around for somewhere to set up our traps without straying from the roads. In the end we settled on a spot at the end of one of the firing ranges and a few minutes later two 125 MV bulbs shone brightly out over the shingle, the only lights for quite a distance.

Close to traps there was an area of brambles and our dusking efforts elicited around 70 Silver-Y accompanied by a couple of Yellow Shell and a Chinese Character; however as darkness fell the conditions did not seem conducive towards a good nothing night. We surveyed our surroundings and considered that we were in one of the most surreal landscapes we had ever encountered; accompanied by a cacophony of noise from the geese on the nearby Scotney Court Gravel Pits, and with calling waders in the background, the huge expanse of shingle dotted with odd military buildings felt like no-where else we had been.

Back at the traps, moths were in short supply and a Ruby Tiger was our first species, however within a few minutes the first of nine Grass Eggar (Na) turned up and, a little while later, a Pale Grass Eggar (RDB) made it to the trap.



Pale Grass Eggar

### Moth trapping in a Sussex garden by David Webb

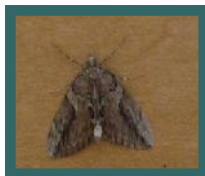
I had wanted to set a moth trap in my garden in Partridge Green, West Sussex, for some time but as I have neighbours either side a bright light was out of the question. I back onto open fields with woodland so I thought there must be quite a variety of moths as quite a few came to the light shining from my window at night. However last year I went to a car boot sale and bought a black light. This is superb because the light it gives off attracts moths but does not disturb the neighbours. I made a wooden box, and put the black light on top of the box with its connections and filled the box with egg boxes. I managed to trap species many moths which I had never seen before. Armed with my textbook I managed to identify the macro moths but the micros presented me with a challenge. Unless I was sure, I left them out.

I set the trap up in the green house then if it rains it doesn't fuse the electrics. Unfortunately I am not alone in finding moths. A family of sparrows soon found out there was an easy ready-made meal in the greenhouse and if I wasn't early enough they would strip the trap of moths. You could say it was the first fly in restaurant. And then there were the spiders who again found out that making a web in a moth trap was an easy way of insuring a steady supply of food. We won't mention the moths who thought that tomato plants make a good source of food for their caterpillars, particularly the knot grass where a family of caterpillars was steadily munching their way through my tomato plants.

However June this year was particularly successful. The Cyprus Carpet was a first for me and one which I needed help in identifying. Sorting out the small brown Noctuid moths is also a long-winded task but I am getting better at it as time goes by especially as I have the help of the British Moths and Butterflies book by Chris Manley which shows photographs of the moths in their natural state.

Here is a summary of the moths I caught in the trap in June from only a small back garden in a village in West Sussex: I caught 82 species of macro moths and 31 species of micro moths that I could identify. What I find unusual is that often only one species is caught on one night and I never see it again on subsequent nights. I am making a list of number of species caught per night and I will send it in at the end of the year.

Among the more notable sightings this year that were new to me were the Cypress carpet, and the Cyprus pug, both indicative of the growth of the cypress trees round here. Also seen were the Beautiful Oak tip, Wormwood, Leopard moth and the Delicate, a migrant passing through. I only had one hawk-moth, the Poplar and only a few Ruby Tiger moths, but no Garden Tiger moths this year. Only the var *stramineola* of the Dingy Footman turned up on two successive nights and of the many micros, *Oncocera semirubella* was the most outstanding being mostly pink and quite spectacular to see.



Cypress Carpet

### Kent Tubic no longer by Steve Wheatley

On 19<sup>th</sup> July whilst packing up my traps at a coppiced hornbeam wood near Rye I spotted a tiny orange micro moth on one of the egg-boxes. It was new to me so I snapped a couple photos before the moth promptly disappeared.

When I got home I leafed through the excellent 'British Moths and Butterflies: A Photographic Guide' by Chris Manley to look for the little orange micro. There aren't that many bright orange micro-moths so I thought it would be easy to find. No luck; it certainly wasn't in the book so my interest was piqued and I vowed to ID it the next morning.



The next morning I downloaded the (rather poor) photos to my computer so that I could get a good look and started searching the UK Moths website. All likely candidates were quickly discounted. Not to be out-done by such a distinctive moth I reverted to simply clicking moth-by-moth through the UK Moths species pages. It took about 80 mouse-clicks before a matching moth suddenly appeared on screen. There was no mistaking the distinctive patterning – it was *Bisigna procerella*. I was excited to read this is a provisional Red Data Book species (pRDB1) with "only a very few records from the south-east of England" and the National Biodiversity Network map showed them all to be in Kent.



I knew for sure this was a significant find when I told Tony Davis and he displayed genuine surprise; I've never seen Tony surprised before! County Recorder, Colin Pratt, confirmed this to be a new species for Sussex. On the continent the moth is widely but thinly distributed. Peter Davey & Dave Green reported "a few to light each night" during a group trip to Farm Lator in Hungary, 2006 [2]. It might possibly be a new colonist in the UK but the larvae has never been found here. On the continent the larvae are known to feed on lichens on tree-trunks (Beech and Birch), especially on sandy soils [3]. It is listed as a 'house moth' in some sources. Possibly this lovely little moth is another indicator of climate change and an increasingly continental climate in the South East.

Jim Porter [4] gives the common name to be 'Kent Tubic'. Obviously it should now be called 'Kent and Sussex Tubic', however, if climate change continues as predicted maybe this beautiful little moth will become the 'Common Orange House Moth'.

[1] Manley, C. (2008) *British Moths and Butterflies: A Photographic Guide*. London: A & C Black.

[2] Davey & Green (2006) *Farm Lator & north-east Hungary moth report 8th - 15th July 2006*

[3] [http://www.angelfire.com/nm2/natuur/vlinders/bisig\\_procer.html](http://www.angelfire.com/nm2/natuur/vlinders/bisig_procer.html)

[4] Porter, J. (2002) A Label and Checklist of the British Micro-Lepidoptera with Vernacular Names

### The mysterious world of bats by Jim Barrett

No doubt a few eyebrows would have raised when it was announced that this year's National Moth Night had the broader theme of 'Bats and Moths'.

As a brand new moth recorder I have not yet had the time to develop any particular prejudices towards bats or birds, though I must admit to feeling slightly foolish when upon chasing a really attractive moth disturbed from the long grass in my garden, missing the moth by a fraction with my sample pot, only for a robin to swoop down and gobble up my moth as if to say, "this is how the professionals do it, loo-ser".

So as night fell on National Moth Night at Rowland Wood I went down to the large pond to see if I could learn something about bats.

Deep in the human psyche there lies a strong attraction to water. A pond or lake in daylight is a shimmering, dynamic, sensuous mirror, it ripples, it shimmers and glints as if decked with sunlight encrusted jewels, but at night its aspect is altogether different. As cold mists drift across the surface it becomes a dark and sinister presence, a malign shadow, the cauldron rim of the subconscious, a portal to the timeless void of eternal chaos.

But this is my imagination and not the world as it is. For this sepulchral vision is not what it seems. In fact, it teems with life and activity. In the water newts and larval insects swim, thousands of tiny insects throng above its surface and intrepid natural aviators, swift of wing and cunning of mind, feed in frenzy. So fast and fleet are they, as to defy our senses.

To detect these elusive creatures humans need some instruments, and fortunately two young women from the Sussex Bat Group, Kim and Helen, were there to show us how to use them most effectively.

As moth recorders we are able to examine what we catch. A moth caught in a trap can be potted, examined, photographed and discussed for days if necessary. This must seem like luxury to a bat recorder who can only infer what species are present by interpreting the clicks and booms through a bat detector. We heard common pipistrelles and soprano pipistrelles, each of whom call at distinctive ultra-sound frequencies, from which the experienced listener can distinguish different types of behaviour by the sounds they hear. We had also hoped to detect the water feeding specialists, Daubenton's bats, but alas they were not present on this occasion.

The other invaluable instrument for the bat recorder is a high power torch. These are used as search lights, scanning the water in wide sweeping arcs. Occasionally a twisting, vanishing shape is seen, a tantalising glimpse, the briefest of impressions, before it is gone and the mind is left wondering whether this spectral flicker was any more substantial than a dream.

Contrary to the proverb bats are not blind, but as nocturnal creatures their eyes are a secondary sense. I suspect that we have all stood in a big empty building at some time and been intrigued by hearing our own voice echoing from the roof and walls. This is essentially what bats do, only



Some reports will tell you that Sloe Carpet have a similar habit to Barred Tooth-striped moths in that they tend to sit on the end of blackthorn twigs adopting a pose comparable to the way that that species sits on privet. After surveying for Barred Tooth-striped at Mill Hill and Hope Gap it doesn't take long to 'get your eye in'. A scan over the privet with a torch will soon reveal Barred Tooth-striped moths clinging to the end of the twigs. However the difference there is that you are locating a pale moth against the dark background of privet. Here we are trying to find a pale moth against the white background of blackthorn in bloom. This wasn't going to be easy.

After netting some Streamers, Shoulder Stripes and a Yellow-barred Brindle we approached the infamous blackthorn hedge. Clare, who had opted to wear wellies, was able to walk into the Blackthorn through the deep cattle-poached mud while the rest scanned the thicket with our torches. My torch beam picked out a moth flying high above the blackthorn and Matthew's torch locked on to it too. The moth – illuminated like a WW2 zeppelin - started to flutter lower, drawn in by twin tractor-beams of the torches. Clare, who was now in position within the blackthorn, swung her net above her as the moth came into range – but it somehow managed to duck under the net and avoided capture. Luckily Clare was able to get a fix on where it had landed.

When I arrived with my pot in hand Clare was able to point to a branch with the net handle and there in front of me was a small pale moth clinging to the end of a blackthorn twig in a similar manner to the Barred-tooth Stripe. I managed to gently collect the moth in a pot and as I peered in I was thrilled to see a bland, greyish moth.

Tony rushed over and, with some amazement, was able to confirm that it was indeed a Sloe Carpet – confirmation that this species is still a Sussex resident. Alf and Matthew were thrilled that their careful management of the reserve has enabled this species to remain on the Sussex list. However it is no doubt a much under-recorded moth.

SMG Chairman Graeme Lyons has suggested that one afternoon next Spring could be spent surveying for suitable blackthorn in NW Sussex returning to a few sites in the evening to search for Sloe Carpet with torches. This could also be combined with a Brown Hairstreak egg search to support the BC atlas and a visit to The Stag at Balls Cross for a pub meal. If you would like to join us please contact us over the winter.

Michael Blencowe ([michaelblencowe@aol.com](mailto:michaelblencowe@aol.com)). With thanks to Alf Simpson, Matthew Sennett, Tony Davis and Clare Jeffers for an enjoyable evening's mothing.

References: Pratt, C. (1999) A Revised History of the Butterflies and Moths of Sussex. Brighton: Brighton and Hove Council.





### Carpet baggers by Michael Blencowe

As the autumn draws in and those first Feathered Gothics herald the beginning of the end, my thoughts go back to one of my highlights of the 2010 season – way back in April.

A few years ago, at one of the first SMG indoor meetings I ever attended, Sam Bayley brought along an exhibit. As the little plastic pot was passed around the room its inhabitant elicited gasps of admiration from the attendees. The pot was eventually passed to me and I gazed in, anticipating a colourful or intricately patterned specimen. The bland, greyish moth in front of me was rather a disappointment.

The moth was a Sloe Carpet and its value does not come from its appearance but from its rarity. It had not been seen in Sussex for many years and this specimen had been caught in Surrey and Mr Bayley had smuggled it over the border to exhibit it that night.

Over the following years the Sloe Carpet has kept up its profile at moth group meetings. Tony Davis has encouraged members to go on the hunt for this species and a similar request featured in Colin's 'Big Game Hunting' article in the last SMG newsletter. Tony suggested that areas on the borders with Surrey may be the best place to search. Colin's 'History of the Butterflies and Moths of Sussex' states that the moth can no longer be found in East Sussex. His research reveals a series of records – mainly singletons – recorded around the Surrey / Sussex borderlands, the last of which being a record by John Radford of an individual near Petworth in 1997.

The moth flies early in the year with Colin quoting its flight season as late March to late April – with extreme records in early March and the third week in May. The sole foodplant is, unsurprisingly, Blackthorn.

When I think of Blackthorn for some reason I always imagine one particular Blackthorn – a big old sloe thicket tucked away in the corner of the SWT reserve at Ebernoe Common. In April 2009 Clare Jeffers and I had headed there armed with nets, a torch and high hopes. However as we started out into the reserve the spring temperature plummeted – and despite catching my first Powdered Quaker there was little to report and we headed home.

In April 2010 Alf Simpson – SMG member and Voluntary Warden of Ebernoe Common – contacted me as he was keen to look for the moth and his thoughts had similarly been drawn to the same blackthorn hedge at Ebernoe. Alf is justifiably proud of this piece of Blackthorn – he has chosen to leave it unmanaged and as a result it is something to behold when in full flower. In 2009 Alf and Matthew Sennett were able to find Brown Hairstreak larvae in the hedge – proof that this elusive butterfly is breeding on the reserve. Alf was hoping to top this record in 2010 by proving that Sloe Carpet was a resident here too.

On April 24th 2010 we met with Alf, Matthew and Tony Davis at the car park next to the country church at Ebernoe and strolled into the reserve. The night rolled in and we were serenaded by two nightingales (and two not so melodic Mandarin Ducks) and in the fading light we began to survey the blackthorn in the area.

on a much grander and more refined scale. Bats shout, and their shout is so loud that could we but hear, it would be as noisy as an aircraft taking off, yet they receive the resounding echo no louder than a pin dropping. Both frequency modulated and constant frequency ultra-sound helps them find their prey and determine their surroundings, backed up by a neurological and physiological architecture of such sensitivity and precision, that it would make a state of the art ballistic missile detection system seem like smoke signals by comparison.



Bats are sociable and gregarious. During May the females gather together in maternal colonies to roost and each female will rear a single pup in June. For the next month or two they will rear their young and teach them how to hunt. The colonies will then disperse in September to mate before hibernating in November.

As with so many of our native species UK bats are in trouble. Development pressure, the loss of natural woodland habitat, declining insect numbers and the reclamation of disused buildings have all contributed to an alarming decline in bat numbers. Sound at all familiar?

I was also mightily impressed by the dedication and spirit of the Sussex Bat Group recorders. As Helen told me, "it's the mysterious and enigmatic nature of bats that makes them such an interesting and challenging group to study". Far from being the creatures of nightmare, or a well worn cliché to horror stories innumerable, these intriguing and deft little flying mammals are an integral part of our national biodiversity and as such they should be treasured. As moth trappers we may find it hard to love them, but bats deserve our utmost respect.

### Puss in boots by David Burrows

At the beginning of August I was contacted by Stella and Colin of Udimore, to whom my telephone number had been given by Steve Wheatley after they reported a mystery large creature that had woven a cocoon in the mat in the boot of Colin's classic 1979 MGB and found as he was giving the car a pre-MOT spring clean. After carefully detaching the cocoon, a small 'window' on the underside revealed a freshly formed (still greenish) pupa within – about a third of its length was visible and showed tiny hooks on each segment. I then asked them if they knew of any poplar or willow trees nearby and they showed me a large-leaved hybrid poplar a yard or two from the parked MGB, and bingo! It was a Puss Moth. Colin has photographed and will be sending it off with a note to the MG car club newsletter too.



By Colin Knight

### The hunt for day-flying moths by Heather Martin

At the AGM when Tony Davis urged Sussex Moth Group members to leave their traps at home and go out and see what they could find, I thought, "There's something useful I can do after counting butterflies for the Rother Woods Project and clearing tracks of fallen twigs!"

In June 2009 I had photographed a small black and white moth that landed on the back of my chair in a clearing only to discover later it was a little recorded *Telechrysis tripuncta*, Treble-spot Tubic. Also that month, a very handsome *Atolmis rubricolis*, Red-necked Footman with its black wings and bright red neck collar spotted resting on a bramble leaf in a small glade, so I knew if I made a concentrated effort to prowl amongst the trees and coppice re-growth in our wood there could potentially be some rather interesting species to be found.

*Nematopogon swammerdamella* and *Nemorpha degeerella* were easy to record – they were fairly numerous and sat still, unlike many other minute fluttering insects. Oh for younger eyes and better eyesight! Is it a moth, a beetle, a fly or a bug? Do I attempt to whack a pot over it or will I have a better chance of capturing an image on camera if I leave the creature resting in situ? Will it still be there at all by the time I have made a decision?

With limited knowledge and experience each specimen requires careful observation of every detail, their mannerisms, beautiful patterns or strange appendages marvelled at even if they are later identified as 'common' or 'ubiquitous' like *Alabonia geoffrella* with its oversized labial palps and strikingly marked wings.

Some micro moths are very well camouflaged for example *Eudonia pallida* and *Agonopterix ocellana* whose pale brown speckled wings blend perfectly with the bark of tree trunks and branches.

Others almost scream, "Look at me!" One sunny afternoon in June this year I couldn't fail to notice a tiny black and yellow moth on low plants at the edge of a grassy clearing. I managed to photograph, then pot it. With closer inspection I could see a white band on each antenna and a gleaming stripe of mauvy-blue scales across each wing between the golden triangles. Through a magnifying glass I admired the insect for a couple of minutes then removed the pot lid. How exciting to later have this moth's identification confirmed as *Esperia oliviella*, Scarce Forest Tubic, which as its common name suggests is scarce and 'local', found mainly in mature woodland in the south of England where the larvae feed on dead and decaying wood.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my summer season spent lurking in the undergrowth and now have a short but varied list of micros as well as several day-flying macros to add to our records of moths trapped at night. My thanks to Colin Pratt for accepting this list far later than he would have liked as I know it has made extra work for him.



Alabonia geoffrella



*Esperia oliviella*

### Eridge Rocks field trip report by Alice Parfitt

Eridge Rocks Nature Reserve is best known for its sandstone outcrops and associated lower plants, and as its moth list consisted of species that I had run into during the day while carrying out other work, I decided it was about time I organised some light trapping on site.

The first night's trapping was at the end of May when two MV's were run along the path below the rocks. Sadly it was rather a cold night, probably best remembered for the number of Brown Silver-lines seen (well we were trapping in bracken). Only 26 species were recorded, the most interesting of which were Satin Lutestring and Brindled White Spot, both local species.

Thankfully the night chosen in July was much more productive with over 70 species recorded. The night started relatively calmly with the common woodland and garden species coming in, but it wasn't long before a Waved Carpet and Festoon appeared. Soon I had given up recording numbers, and just tried to identify all the species. At one point Mark, my colleague said he'd just spotted a 'different looking moth' which turned out to be an Olive Crescent, not a species that I was expecting to record from the site but which does seem to be showing up at more and more sites. The highlight of the evening for me however, came just as we were packing up. A small pinkish moth caught my eye as it landed on the trap, which turned out to be a Rosy Marbled.

### A bunch of Old Ladies...

In July a bunch of Old Ladies were found in an outhouse in Horsham. And before you ask, no I'm not referring to a WI meeting in a make-shift village hall! There are only around 100 records of this local species in Sussex, and none are of numbers like this found without a trap. Wendy and Keith Alexander once trapped 16 at their actinic moth trap!



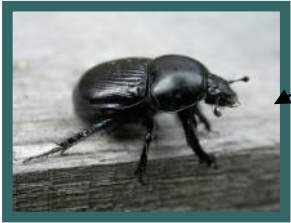
Photo by Peter Challis



**Scraping the barrel – Isopoda: Oniscidea (Woodlice):** You all get them in egg boxes at the bottom of the trap. There is a very good key '**A Key to the Woodlice of Britain and Ireland**' by **Stephen Hopkin** and again being a FSC publication, it is reasonable at £6.95.

Other things I have recorded in moth traps include Migrant Hawkets, Red Admirals, a cat, a Great Tit and a Black Redstart but I figure their identifications are a little more straight-forward. I see this article very much as a work in progress, if there is anyone out there that would like to add to this in future newsletter editions I very much welcome it.

Thanks very much to Tony Davis and Mark Telfer for their help in putting this article together.



*Geotrupes spiniger* – a huge dor beetle readily comes to light but you are unlikely to see it by any other means.



One of the few caddisflies that I can identify - *Glyphotaelius pellucidus* - easy to tell by the pattern and distinct notch in the wing. Other caddisflies are not so easy to identify.

### Dark-angled Peacock by Michael Blencowe

Whilst inspecting my morning's catch at Friston on August 20th I was intrigued to see a dark geometrid whose rich deep brown and orange colouration which initially lead me to think it was the nigrofulvata form of Tawny-barred Angle *Macaria liturata*. After ensuring it was safely potted I was able to examine it more detail and realised from its wing shape that it was not this species but a very dark Sharp-angled Peacock *Macaria alternata*. This is not a species I encounter with great regularity at Friston however, aside from this dark individual, there were a further three fresh individuals in the trap that morning suggesting a local emergence. The moth was duly photographed and I consulted Colin Pratt who informed me that this was a melanic form of Sharp-angled Peacock - never recorded before in Sussex. The moth was also shown to Sean Clancy in Kent who has seen a similar specimen before which he referred to as *ab. fusca* (extreme). The moth was then released back in Friston Forest.



### Kingstanding moth trap (1st July) by Dennis Dey

Steve Wheatley asked me if I would like to do some moth-trapping at Kingstanding on the Ash-down Forest. He'd arranged an evening with the Plumpton Wildlife and Habitat Group in the hope of hearing and seeing Nightjars. He didn't have to ask me twice!

In the past the weather on our trapping nights there has been passable. That is to say, whilst they have been dry, at least, there was usually a breeze or a wind which has all but spoiled it. Not so for that night however, it was nigh on perfect, being still, cloudy and muggy. A rare occurrence up on the forest in my experience. I'd set us a target species for the night, Silvery Arches, as it hasn't been recorded there before. We'd set up two traps in the bunker area (for those who know Kingstanding).

The Wildlife Group left soon after dark as they had seen and heard two Nightjars, leaving just Steve and myself to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of the area. So, in the Kingstanding tradition, we retired to the gatehouse for tea and biscuits! At about 00:30 we thought we'd better go and have a look at the traps. It was perfect outside, not a breath of wind.

As we approached our first trap we could see a lot of moth activity; they were everywhere! Steve pointed to a grey noctuid close to the trap – it was a Silvery Arches – his first. Unfortunately it was the only one of the night (it is widespread on Ashdown Forest but doesn't turn up in numbers).

We spent a while there, and then moved on to the other trap. It wasn't on – oh dear. When Steve checked he found the fuel cap on the generator wasn't switched to 'on'. That done, on it came and we went back to the other trap again. It was even more alive with moths than before. We commuted between the two traps, as you tend to do, not believing our luck. We were checking moths to the sound of churring Nightjars in the distance and a vixen Fox calling close by. By the end of the night we'd logged 105 species of macros. We were very pleased.

Marbled White-spot was the commonest moth of the night, not True-lovers Knot as you would expect there at that time of the year (we were in amongst birch etc. with very little heather, but we did get seven of them). Other moths of interest were:

Common Lutestring (1), Satin Lutestring (2), Lobster (2), Peach Blossom, Broom Moth (4), Festoon (2), Rosy Marbled (6), Grey Arches (9), Suspected (1), Sharp-angled Carpet (2), Bird's Wing (1), Coronet (1), Scalloped Shell (1), Beautiful Brocade (1), Light Brocade (1), Pale-shouldered Brocade (1), Beautiful Snout (2), Clouded Buff (1) and six species of Hawkmoth including Privet. There were a whole load of micros of all shapes and sizes! There is never a John Radford around when you need one!

All in all a very good night. We didn't leave until 03:00, it was that good! My thanks go to Steve for inviting me.

## Raspberry ripple by Michael Blencowe

On 11<sup>th</sup> August 2010 Mike Edwards netted a Clearwing moth during an invertebrate survey in the Sussex Wildlife Trust's Friston Forest project area; an area of the 1969 acre forest adjacent to Lullington Heath which is being managed by the Trust through felling and grazing to improve biodiversity.

The moth was identified as a Six-belted Clearwing but was later re-identified as a Raspberry Clearwing. Graeme Lyons announced the discovery via our 'sussexmoths' internet group and made the moth available for moth group members to photograph. Friston is the second known site for this species in Sussex. Readers will recall that Keith Alexander had discovered Raspberry Clearwing on his allotment in Bexhill in 2009. The species had first been detected in the UK in Hertfordshire in 2007.



By Graeme Lyons

That night Graeme's internet posting got me thinking. In 2009 I also caught a Clearwing in the Friston Forest Project area while leading a 'Grayling Festival' walk across the Downs. This was the first time I had ever seen any Clearwing and at the time it was identified as a Six-belted. Unable to sleep, I crept upstairs and looked back over my old photos of that Clearwing and reached for my fieldguides. Unfortunately, due to its relatively recent arrival in this country, this moth was not described in any of my identification guides. I sent a few emails to the internet group and received some identification tips for Raspberry Clearwing, courtesy of Keith and Graeme and I was convinced that my 2009 Friston Forest Clearwing was indeed a Raspberry Clearwing.

Then another thought struck me. Butterfly Conservation volunteer David Bradford had photographed one of a pair of Clearwings on his Lewes allotment in 2009 and had sent me the slides. If I held them to the light and squinted I could see it was indeed a Clearwing with yellow bands but without the means to view these images in more detail I could go no further and the slides found their way to my 'to-do' pile. I now frantically scrambled through the pile and located them and I discovered I was able to view them, backlit, through my microscope. Peering down the eyepiece under 15x magnification I was able to see the diagnostic features of a female Raspberry Clearwing.

All these photos were reviewed by Keith, Graeme and Colin Pratt. Colin confirmed that both David's and my records were Raspberry Clearwing - placing this species in Lewes and Friston in 2009. These Friston Forest sightings are unusual as it has been presumed that the moth has been introduced into the country via imported raspberry canes - raising the question of how and when it became established in the middle of Friston Forest.

With thoughts of raspberries blowing through my mind I had another bright idea. My neighbour has a sizeable cottage garden. A quick peer over the wall revealed that amongst the marrows and lettuces she has a rather lush raspberry patch. On August 16<sup>th</sup> 2010, following advice from Keith, I popped into her garden at 6pm armed with a HYL clearwing lure. After a quick lap of the patch - and after a few false alarms as wasps and hoverflies flew past - a male Raspberry Clearwing flew to

**Ladybirds.** You can get a fold out sheet from AIDGAP that has all the ladybirds in the UK on for about £2.99. I haven't used this as I use an old book that is now out of print. I imagine it works OK though, as this is a small group and like the shield bugs, most of it can be done by eye.

**Click beetles.** The key in Joy's publication is good for click beetles. With around 70 species they are not too hard but again a microscope is required.

**Longhorn beetles.** All can be identified with relative ease from two editions of **British Wildlife** featuring excellent drawings by Richard Lewington himself. These are **Volume 18 Number 6 August 2007 and Volume 19 Number 1 October 2007.**

To get records of beetles in Sussex I am happy to identify specimens sent to me at Woods Mill or to have a go at photographs sent to my email address [graemelyons@hotmail.com](mailto:graemelyons@hotmail.com).

**Trichoptera (Caddisflies):** Perhaps the most abundant by-catch species and the order most closely related to Lepidoptera. I got hold of a test version of a key to families '**A Guide to the Adult Caddisflies or sedge flies (Trichoptera)**' by Peter Barnard and Emma Ross. It is only a key to families. A microscope or hand lens is required to look at the 'spur formula' (the number of spines on the tibia of each of the three pairs of legs). I am told that there is a key to this family that is about to go to print, this will be a welcome addition to my library when it is published.

**Diptera (True Flies):** I'm just going to talk about craneflies here (Tipulidae). There is a test key that I received from Alan Stubbs in 2004 and this is workable, if anyone is serious about craneflies I will see if I can get you a copy. Mark Telfer tells me that dipterists have commented on how moth traps do not seem to catch anything other than very common flies, quite the opposite to beetles.

**Neuroptera (Lacewings):** There is a key (that also includes scorpion flies, snake flies and alder flies) produced by AIDGAP that is quite reasonable and OK to use. '**A key to the adults of British lacewings and their allies**' by Colin Plant. It costs around £6.95. Also, please remember if you catch any lacewings to pass them on to our very own Tony Davis.

**Aculeate Hymenoptera (Particularly Social Wasps):** Hornets can be a real pain with moth traps (I know from first-hand experience) but there are quite a few species of social wasp that turn up too. If you can bring yourself to get them into a pot you can have a go at identifying them. There is a very good article from about 15 years ago in **British Wildlife, Volume 5, Number 5, June 1994.** This has all the social wasps in the UK and can be done with a hand lens if the specimen is stationary.

**Hymenoptera: Parasitica (Parasitic wasps, particularly Ichneumon Wasps):** A vast and huge group of insects that I have absolutely no experience with at all. Ichneumon wasps are well known in moth traps. Gavin Broad at the NHM is a national specialist and has sent me a key to nocturnal species (i.e. the ones that come to light). He has given me permission to pass this on to anyone who wants it, I can't just post it on the internet. Other than that it will be the old RES handbooks which are again unfortunately out of print. Either way, these are not for the faint hearted!

**By-catch** by Graeme Lyons

I wanted to write something that is perhaps going to be helpful to some of you or at least be a way of generating some more records for the county. In recent years, I have increasingly been branching out into more and more difficult and obscure areas of natural history. As you may know I have very much become obsessed by beetles this year and I now get as excited by seeing a new beetle as I do a new moth! Moth-trapping pulls in lots of other insect orders other than just Lepidoptera. Not only that, you can find some things by light trapping that are quite rare and difficult to find by any other means. This article is an attempt to show which orders and families occur most frequently in traps and what you can do to identify them.

Firstly, this is by no means an exhaustive list of invertebrates or literature. Secondly I should say a word of caution with identifying invertebrates. The generic field guides, such as Chinery, are incomplete and you cannot rely on an accurate identification with an incomplete fauna. Thirdly, for many of these groups, to carry out an accurate identification, specimens need to be dead and a microscope is required to identify them. I know this might put people off but I whole heartedly recommend getting a decent stereo microscope; literally a whole new world of natural history can open up before your eyes, without you having to go anywhere! Here is a breakdown of some insect orders that commonly occur in moth traps and what you can do/use to identify them.

**Hemiptera (True Bugs):** Perhaps the most commonly occurring and obvious bugs in moth traps are the shield bugs. There is an excellent identification guide '**A Photographic Guide to the Shieldbugs and Squashbugs of the British Isles**' by Martin Evans and Roger Edmondson and retails at about £14.95. The good thing here is that most of this can be done in the field by eye. Another publication that just covers the aquatic bugs is available, this is heavily key based – there are no plates – but you can generally get to your species. '**Adults of the British Aquatic Hemiptera: Heteroptera**' by A. A. Savage. This costs about £16.50. This website, <http://www.britishbugs.org.uk/gallery.html>, is great for photos of bugs but is by no means complete.

**Coleoptera (Beetles):** The Coleopterists bible, '**A Practical Handbook of British Beetles Vol I & II**' by Norman H Joy is available now as an eBook for about £65. I have this installed on my laptop and is a very useful edition to my library. This is quite a financial commitment though so here are some cheaper ways to identify the more likely beetle families in moth traps:

**Dung beetles and chafers.** There is a key that is out of print unfortunately but I was able to get a copy for about £20 from Pemberley Books. '**Dung Beetles and Chafers Coleoptera: Scarabaeoidea**' by L. Jessop. The chafers and dor beetles are easy to identify but the smaller dung beetles require microscope identification. Alternatively, you can get a key just to the dor beetles from John Walters <http://www.johnwalters.co.uk/pubs/GBB.php> for around £2 and these keys are very good.

**Sexton beetles.** There is a great website here that has keys to all the sexton beetles, as long as you don't mind the stench of dead flesh! <http://www.amentsoc.org/publications/beetle-news/>

the lure. This was fantastic news – not just because I had found a new site for this species – but because for the last 3 years I have taken these lures around Sussex and sat and stared at them for hours while nothing happened. At last this was conclusive proof that I hadn't been sold five small pieces of rubber for £20. The male Raspberry Clearwing was particularly smart with seven yellow bands and feathered antennae. I also managed to pinch some of my neighbour's raspberries while I was there. Delicious!

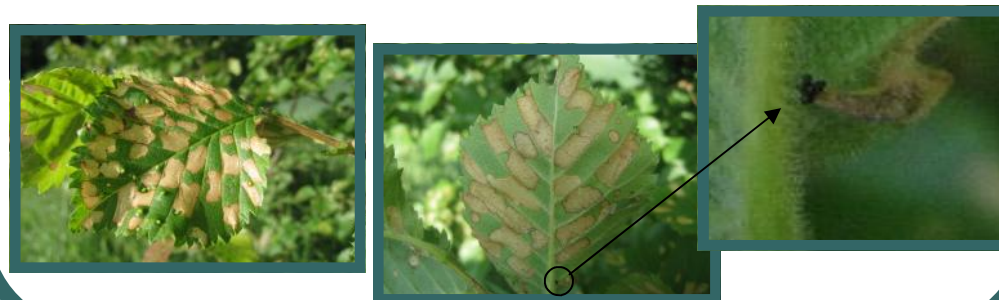
Despite being on the edge of the forest this raspberry patch is still some 2.5km from the other Friston sightings. Wiping any incriminating raspberry stains from my mouth I went and had a chat with my neighbour to find out more about her raspberry patch. Had she recently purchased any raspberry canes and unwittingly imported the moth into Friston? I was informed that the raspberry patch had been planted in 1982 and she had never imported any raspberry canes.

This recent punnett-ful of Raspberry Clearwing sightings indicates that this species is much more widespread than previously thought and under-recorded – which is unsurprising for a member of this elusive group of moths. How long has the Raspberry Clearwing been an overlooked resident of Sussex? Time spent near local allotments anywhere in the county armed with a HYL lure could well be rewarded next July and August.

Thank you to Keith Alexander and Graeme Lyons for causing the splash that inspired me to look more closely in my records (and in my neighbour's garden) and thanks to Colin Pratt for further information on this species.

**Coleophora serratella** by Howard Matcham

In the pictures below you can see the infestation of elm leaves caused by the moth *Coleophora serratella* on *Ulmus procera* saplings. John Langmaid kindly identified the moth for me and pointed out the lava case on the right bottom of the photograph of the leaf underside. Holes left where the larvae have dropped off to pupate are also very obvious. Apparently such heavy infestations are most unusual. There are literally thousands of mines. The galls refer to the mite *Aceria ulmicola*; the mines belong to *Coleophora serratella* and the lava case belongs to the latter which is just visible in the bottom of the 'leaf underside photograph'. The black head of the lava can be seen emerging from the case.





## Treasures of the far east by Steve Wheatley

The Rother Woods Project comes to an end this season and has recorded over 600 moth species in the woods of the Rother District at the far eastern end of the county. This includes 22 Nationally Notable or Red Data Book species. Based on the data collected it's possible to rank the woods according to the presence of priority woodland moths (e.g. Drab Looper scores high, White-banded Carpet less, and Large Yellow Underwing gets nil points). This quick assessment was devised by Butterfly Conservation and Forestry Commission to assess FC sites<sup>1</sup>. It provides only a broad indication but it was a fun exercise to apply it to the Rother area.

Based on an assessment of 68 woods in Rother here are the top five woods for priority moths:

### 5. COCK WOOD at Peasmarsh

This small, privately owned wood is part of a series of coppiced Sweet Chestnut woods with oak standards. Sixty-six Clay Fan-foot were recorded here (50 in one trap) in 2009. Scarce Merveille du Jour and Triangle have also been regulars in the traps. There has been a good continuity of coppicing in the wood with various stages of re-growth. There are also damp and undisturbed areas with plenty of fallen dead wood; this is where the Wild Boar seem to linger.

### 4. MILL WOOD at Peasmarsh

Just ½ mile west of Cock Wood, this is another coppice wood with oak standards. It has a wide wayleave dominated by heather, gorse, broom and scrubby birch. Half the wood has been divided up and sold in small blocks, resulting in different owners' activities creating different habitat niches. Over 200 moth species have been recorded in three visits (July-August only), including good numbers of Clay Fan-foot, Olive Crescent, and Festoon.

### 3. BREDE HIGH WOOD

A vast and varied 700 acre wood above Powdermill Reservoir and the Brede Valley. A wide wayleave provided open space when little else was being done in the wood. The Woodland Trust purchased the wood in 2007 (at the time their largest acquisition) and have embarked on an ambitious management programme which includes restoration of over 30 acres of open space from dense conifer. Waved Carpet, Triangle and Dusky Peacock have recently been recorded. There's good access with many available entry points.

### 2. CROWHURST FARM WOODS, Netherfield

Over 500 acres of coppice, conifer and oak straddling a high ridge northwest of battle. There had been little management for 20 years, even so Clay Fan-foot, Olive Crescent and Waved Carpet were all found the first time we trapped. An extensive programme of management has just started which will see many parts of this wood opened up. There are also areas of minimal intervention and several ancient meadows which have remained unchanged for decades.

## The best wood in Rother for notable, scarce and threatened moths is....

### 1. PETLEY WOOD, near Battle

Formerly a deer park, paintball arena and now an equestrian centre, this 150 acre oak wood at the head of the Brede Valley is home to an excellent diversity of moths including all of the species mentioned above. The wood has an excellent network of rides between low scrub and mature oaks with some dense undergrowth. There are sunny clearings with different aspects and some lovely ponds. The rare Tortrix, *Acleris umbrana*, was recorded here in 2010 – a first for Sussex.



Petley Wood

More surveys at these woods would be welcomed (although strictly by pre-arrangement with the owner or manager). If you're interested in moth trapping in any of these woods the contact details are available via the Sussex Moth Group committee.

<sup>1</sup> Butterfly Conservation/Forestry Commission (2007) "Lepidoptera on Forestry Commission Land in England Conservation Strategy 2007 – 2017".

## Garden Moth Scheme taken from [www.gms.staffs-ecology.org.uk](http://www.gms.staffs-ecology.org.uk)

What do you need to do to take part? You just need to count the numbers of common moths you see in your moth trap, for one night every week from March to November (and you are probably doing that already). The list of moths consists of about 200 species, common in your area and those that are difficult to identify are intentionally left out. This means that the GMS is open to recorders of all abilities - you don't have to be an expert, just get yourself a moth trap and field guide and you will be welcome! This is a rapidly expanding garden moth-recording scheme that measures the fortunes of our common moths. And to make it even more attractive to recorders the GMS now has its own popular chat-site, regular newsletter, annual report and meeting.



To answer questions about what is happening to our environment and more particularly our moths and our gardens then we need more moth recorders throughout the UK. If you count moths in your back garden and want to make a real difference to the future of moths and our environment then get in touch with us to sign up for the new recording season.

So, get in touch straight away if you want to join the GMS - your records will be really valuable. If you do decide to join in the GMS then please still send all your moth records to your County Moth Recorder as well, whether common or rare, in your garden or on your travels.