



# DEVON MOTH GROUP

Please reply to: The Secretary/Treasurer  
Roy McCormick  
36 Paradise Road  
TEIGNMOUTH  
Devon TQ14 8NR  
Telephone: 01626 779543

## NEWSLETTER 2021 ISSUE 2 (July)

Apologies for the long delay since the last newsletter. With the numerous frosty nights in April and then a completely washed-out May, moth recording only really got going in June and many people, with nothing memories longer than mine, have commented on it being a truly awful year for moths. Personally, I've had some really exciting moth encounters and some productive evenings, especially during the much hotter weather in July, so I hope you have also had some good nights to offset all the poor weather and low abundances.

Bill and Sara Hudson in Newton Abbot certainly had a memorable start to this year's Moth Night celebrations recording *Hyles gallii* Bedstraw Hawk-moth in their garden trap and *Comibaena bajularia* Blotched Emerald on their patio doors, both on 8 July and both new for their garden.

Chris Vincent recorded four *Triaxomasia caprimulgella* in his Plymouth garden on the night of 22 July, two of which were at the LUN pheromone lure and two in an actinic trap placed close by. This pRDB1 species was recorded new to Devon last year, when Jack Oughton caught the species twice, at different sites, using the same lure. Prior to that, the only UK records of this rare Tineid were from south-east England.

David Turrell, meanwhile, has been spotting clearwings without the use of pheromone lures. After finding a *Bembecia ichneumoniformis* Six-belted Clearwing in Dorset, he then went one better, in the same week, spotting a *Synanthedon formicaeformis* Red-tipped Clearwing (image right) at Devon Wildlife Trust's Meeth Quarry reserve on 25 July. According to the Devon Moth Group database, this is the first VC4 record since 1960 and only the third ever in North Devon.



Red-tipped Clearwing (David Turrell)

Finally, one of the silver-linings of the whole covid disaster has been the proliferation of online talks about moths and other wildlife. Our own Barry Henwood recently gave a talk on *Aspects of Defence Mechanisms in Lepidoptera* for the BENHS and Field Studies Council and you can watch the recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Oo02UipnBo>  
Richard Fox

Members of Council: Nicola Bacciu (Membership & Distribution) Phil Dean (Ordinary member) Richard Fox (Chairman)  
Barry Henwood (Recorder) Roy McCormick (Secretary/Treasurer) Rob Price (Publicity) Rob Wolton (Conservation)  
[www.devonmoths.org.uk](http://www.devonmoths.org.uk)

## Field Meeting Reports

### **Moth Night 2021: South Efford Marsh, 8.7.21**

Six DMG members attended and were greeted with very favourable warm calm conditions. Six light traps were set out around the perimeter of the reserve from dusk till dawn (or very nearly). In total, 106 species were recorded but not many specialist wetland moths. The best species of the night were *Leucoma salicis* White Satin, *Coenobia rufa* Small Rufous, *Apeira syringaria* Lilac Beauty and *Phtheochroa inopiana*. In addition, we recorded 30+ *Mythimna impura* Smoky Wainscots and *Deilephila porcellus* Small Elephant Hawk-moths.

Overall it was a very enjoyable and busy evening.  
Dave Gibbon



South Efford Marsh (Paul Burgess)



White Satin (left) (Paul Burgess) and *Clepsia spectrana* (right) (Dave Gibbon)



### A trio of North Devon VC4 “Firsts”

I have been lucky enough to have three North Devon VC4 first records so far in 2021. When I received the DMG newsletter in April this year I was interested in Richard Fox’s introduction about the use of pheromone lures to record *Pammene giganteana*. I immediately ordered a pheromone trap with two different lures. When it arrived on 15th April, I immediately put it in my small wood, in an area containing some youngish Oak trees badly damaged by squirrels but with some large hedgerow Oaks on one side. It was a warm afternoon and I left it and went to do some gardening, more in hope than expectation, but on returning I was excited to find a single *P. giganteana*, the first VC4 record. Three days later I recorded two more in a local Oak wood.

May then passed and was very cold and wet for the time of year. I recorded 186mm of rain, which is the wettest since I started recording in 1999. It was awful for any sort of mothing and it was a relief when warmer June weather arrived. On June 8th I netted a small moth in the afternoon that I disturbed from an overgrown clump of Xmas trees (Norway Spruce I think) that I had planted in my orchard many years ago. At first sight I thought it was *Pammene germmana* but closer inspection showed it to be *P. ochsenheimeriana*, a pRDB2 species, another first for VC4 and the 4th Devon record.

On 13th June I set my LED trap in a Larch plantation, part of my neighbour’s conifer wood and caught a *Cydia illutana*, a pRDB3 species, confirmed by dissection, another VC4 first and I believe only the second Devon record. I count myself very lucky to be able to record three VC firsts before the year is halfway through!

Mike Braid

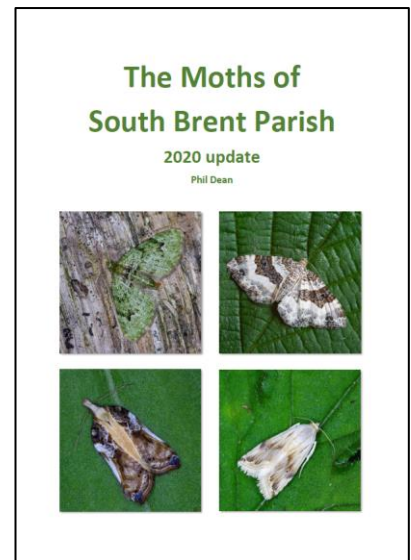


*Pammene ochsenheimeriana* (left) and *Cydia illutana* (right) (Mike Braid)

## Moths of South Brent – an update

This is an update of moth records in the parish of South Brent up to and including 2020 and is a pdf update to the book published over 3 years ago. It uses all 30,356 records to show the phenology and distribution of 399 macromoths and 316 micromoths recorded across 37 of the 52km squares in the parish. This is up from 352 macromoths and 238 micromoths across 27 squares three years ago. It also shows the number of records for each species before 2001 and in every year since.

The pdf can be accessed via the Devon Moth Group website at <https://devonmoths.org.uk/devons-moths/moths-of-south-brent/>  
Phil Dean



## Moth art exhibition

DMG members may be interested in an exhibition called “Moth” at the Moretonhampstead art centre, Greenhill Arts, Fore street, TQ13 8LL. The artist is Sarah Gillespie. The artworks comprise mezzotint engravings and silverpoint drawings of moths. The artist has also created a limited-edition book called “Moth” containing these works. More details can be found at [www.greenhillarts.co.uk](http://www.greenhillarts.co.uk). The exhibition is open 10am – 4pm, Thursday – Saturday until 25th September.

Pete Hurst

## Encounter with a Tiger

I know that *Arctia caja* Garden Tiger is classed as “common”, but I haven't seen one for many years, not since I was little more than a child in Hampshire. I was therefore delighted to find a caterpillar on 24 June at Heybrook Bay. I had no containers so improvised with my camera case. It didn't feed and pupated the next day making a cocoon between some leaves. Yesterday, nearly a month later, the stunning moth emerged. I released it after dusk on the coastal footpath at Heybrook and it flew into some vegetation overlooking the bay. I am so pleased that this lovely moth is breeding here.

Karen Williams



Garden Tiger larva (above) and adult (right) (Karen Williams)

