



DEVON MOTH GROUP

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NEWSLETTER 2021 ISSUE 4 (December)

After the last bumper issue in September, full of exciting sightings including two new macro-moths for Devon, the subsequent months have been quieter, resulting in this slim pre-Christmas issue. Having said that, the conditions have been pretty good for mothing, with October temperatures well above the long-term average and spells of mild weather dotted through November and December too. I expect quite a few people will have their moth traps out in these last few days leading up to Christmas, as warm air is brought in on southerly winds providing good conditions for our winter-flying moths and the possibility of immigration from Africa or the Iberian Peninsula. Good luck if you are still trapping – fortune favours the brave!

Some important dates for your diary:

- Wednesday 12th January 2022, which is the deadline for getting all your 2021 moth records to Barry Henwood (barryhenwood@gmail.com) if you want them to be included in the Devon Moth Group Annual Report for 2021.
- Thursday 27th January 2022 is the Devon Moth Group AGM and Winter Meeting. This will be held online using Zoom – there will not be a face-to-face meeting. Speakers are still being arranged.
- Saturday 29th January 2022 is the UK Moth Recorders' Meeting organised by Butterfly Conservation. This is also online only. Bookings are now open, and you can book your place at <https://butterfly-conservation.org/moths/uk-moth-recorders-meeting>

Interesting sightings over the past few months included *Macdunnoughia confusa* Dewick's Plusia caught by Andy Trout in his garden trap at Shaugh Prior near Plymouth on the night of 17th October. Judging from the number of Dewick's Plusia records in eastern England this year, the moth must surely be established as a breeding species over there, but in Devon it is likely still an immigrant from continental Europe. There are only 29 previous records of Dewick's Plusia in the DMG database and only one, in 1995, from the Plymouth area.



Dewick's Plusia
(Andy Trout)

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

Staying on the migrant moth theme, Phil Dean reported that two larvae of *Acherontia atropos* Death's-head Hawk-moth were discovered in a garden in Avonwick in late August. They were found on Yellow Loosestrife, but it is unclear whether they were actually feeding on that plant rather than their preferred potato. However, when Phil went to take a look they had moved on and couldn't be found, thwarting his plans to rear through. The image below was provided to Phil by the owner of the garden.



Death's-head Hawk-moth larvae

Finally, Phil Dean recorded an *Antitype chi* Grey Chi in his mercury vapour Robinson trap near South Brent on 12th September. This is a much-declined moth of moorland and upland grassland, and Dartmoor holds the most southerly populations in Britain. Prior to the latest sighting, there have only been 14 records in Devon this century, with only two of these occurring since 2013. Phil's garden is on the edge of Dartmoor and this is the second time he has recorded the species there.

Finally, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all DMG members from myself and the rest of the Council. We look forward to a moth-filled 2022, which is the 25th anniversary of Devon Moth Group!
Richard Fox



Grey Chi (Phil Dean)

Moth Night 2022

The dates of 19th – 21st May have recently been announced for Moth Night 2022, with the theme of *Woodlands*. Late spring is a lovely time to be looking at moths in Devon's woods (weather permitting!) with the springtime species on the wane and summer generations getting underway. Of course, you can take part in Moth Night anywhere, you don't have to be in a woodland. It is also a really good time of the year for day-flying moths, so Moth Night 2022 is also encouraging daytime recording for species such as *Hemaris tityus* Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth, *Saturnia pavonia* Emperor Moth, *Pseudopanthera macularia* Speckled Yellow and *Euclidia mi* Mother Shipton. Find out more at www.mothnight.info and many thanks to all those DMG members who submitted records for Moth Night 2021.



Emperor Moth (left) and Speckled Yellow (right) (Iain Leach)

Books for sale

The wife of the late Tom Sleep (a former DMG member) wishes to sell a few books. The following are available at £5 each + P&P. Please contact Phil Barden phil.barden@tiscali.co.uk

- 1) Concise Guide to the Moths of GB & I by Townsend & Waring (Softback) 2007 - condition good
- 2) Field Guide to the Moths of GB & I by Waring & Townsend (Softback) 2003 - condition used but fairly good
- 3) The Butterflies of Britain & Ireland by Jeremy Thomas & Richard Lewington -in association with National Trust (Hardback) 1991 - condition very good.
- 4) The Moths of the British Isles by South (1st and 2nd series Hardback) 1961 - worn
- 5) This is Hong Kong Butterflies by Gwenith & Bernard Johnson (Hardback) 1980 - condition good, cover slightly faded.
- 6) Tetrad Atlas of the Breeding Birds of Devon by H P Sitters. Published 1988. Condition very good (Hardback).