



# DEVON MOTH GROUP

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## NEWSLETTER 2016 ISSUE 4 (September)

September is often the best time of year to see scarce immigrant moths in Britain and many moth recorders will be waiting in anticipation. Indeed some from up-country regularly travel down to the south-west at this time of year to witness the immigration and in the hope of recording rare and exotic moths.

For moth recorders based in Devon there is always a chance of an exciting immigrant, throughout the year. This summer for example, Barry Henwood caught a *Catoptria verellus* (see photo below) in his Abbotskerswell garden on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, the second Devon record (after one in 2010) during a small UK influx of this scarce migrant Crambid from continental Europe. Not to be outdone, Roy McCormick caught two rarities during August: *Duponchelia fovealis* on 10<sup>th</sup> August in his Teignmouth garden trap (see image on p.4) and *Drepana curvatula* Dusky Hook-tip on 26<sup>th</sup> August at Cockwood near Dawlish Warren (image below). The latter is a scarce migrant in the UK (with 89 records ever according to Clancy, S.P. (2016). Atropos website: migrant totals. <http://www.atropos.info>) and Roy's sighting is only the second in Devon (the first was in 2007). *D. fovealis* on the other hand is thought to be an adventive species, accidentally imported with plants, which was first recorded in the UK in 1996. There are two previous records in the Devon Moth Group database, from VC3 in 2003 and from VC4 in 2015.



*Catoptria verellus* left (Barry Henwood) and Dusky Hook-tip right (Roy McCormick)

Another scarce immigrant moth species, *Cyclophora ruficiliaria* Jersey Mocha, may now be resident in the county. Phil Barden caught one in his garden at Bere Alston in the Tamar Valley on 30<sup>th</sup> July (see image on p.4). This is the fourth Devon record but, interestingly, the second year running that Phil has caught it in his garden! Another surprise summer sighting was *Stathmopoda pedella* new to Devon (see overleaf).

Away from recent sightings, there has been literary success for DMG member Adrian Spalding at the annual Holyer an Gof publishing awards, which celebrate publishing in Cornwall. His book *Loe Bar and the Sandhill Rustic Moth* scooped the top prize, for the most outstanding entry in this year's competition, and received a trophy

**Members of Council:** Richard Fox (Chairman) Nicola Bacciu (Membership & Distribution) Roy McCormick (Secretary/Treasurer)  
Barry Henwood (Recorder), Rob Wolton (Conservation), Phil Dean (Ordinary member)

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from the Grand Bard of Cornwall at a ceremony in Truro in July. Adrian's book also won the non-fiction section covering the topics of marine, industrial heritage and environment. Many congratulations!

Richard Fox

### *Stathmopoda pedella* new to Devon

The first Devon record of the distinctive micro-moth *Stathmopoda pedella* was made by Ken Bibbings when he caught one individual at a black 125w MV light in Torquay on 6.8.2016 (image right).

This species occurs in many counties of southern and eastern England, and in a few northern areas, but seems to be scarce throughout its range and is listed as Nationally Notable B. It is rare in Dorset and Somerset, with just a handful of sightings over a long period, but has not been recorded before in Devon or Cornwall. It is associated with alder, with the larvae living in the cones.

It is somewhat ironic that this species, the only one in its family to be native to the UK, has not been recorded previously in Devon whereas two non-native species in the same genus, *S.diplaspis* and *S.auriferella* have already been found here. Bob Heckford recorded both these adventive species as new to Britain, by finding their larvae in the dead calyx part of pomegranates purchased in Sainsburys, Plymouth in 2000 and 2005 respectively.

Richard Fox



### Field Meeting Reports

#### **Plymbridge Woods, Plymouth, 29.7.2016**

Eleven members and guests attended to be greeted by a warm, still but rather damp evening. Paul Butter set up two MV and one Wemlite traps within the wood beside the river and Graham Davey set up two MV traps just outside the wood. Moths soon started steadily arriving but not in such large numbers as Paul was expecting.

We ended with a total of 80 species including the following which I consider good records:- *Lampropteryx otregiata* Devon Carpet, *Venusia blomeri* Blomer's Rivulet, *Angerona prunaria* Orange Moth, *Schrankia taenialis* White-line Snout, *Lithosia quadra* Four-spotted Footman, *Acleris umbrana*, *Meganola albula* Kent Black Arches, *Watsonalla cultraria* Barred Hook-tip and *Hydrelia sylvata* Waved Carpet. My thanks to the National Trust Rangers for allowing us to hold the event, and to Paul, Graham and Bob Heckford for their identification skills.

Dave Gibbon

#### **Dumpdon Hill, nr Honiton, 13.8.2016**

Dumpdon Hill is an Iron Age Hill Settlement near to Honiton in East Devon and is in the under-recorded square ST10 with records of just 74 macro-moth species since the year 2000. As a result, and with a view to the forthcoming national atlas, this square is a target area for DMG recording in 2016. The site is owned by the National Trust and comprises a mixture of secondary woodland, scrub and fields. The Devon Wildlife Trust "The Rough" Reserve adjoins the hill and is an area of damp unimproved grassland.

The DMG meeting at Dumpdon Hill followed four previous moth recording visits by myself earlier this year in an effort to increase the number of species recorded for this square. The night of the meeting was unfortunately clear and fairly cool, but without any noticeable wind. Six members attended and we trapped from 21.00 – 01.00 hours. Eighty-three moths of 42 species were recorded, 36 macros and only six micros. Highlight of the evening was a Clay Triple-lines *Cyclophora linearia* and a well-marked White-spotted Pug *Eupithecia tripunctaria*. Small Phoenix *Ecliptopera silaceata* was the most numerous moth with 10 turning up at the light.

With my previous four visits to the site, one in May, one in June and two in July the number of species so far recorded at the site this year has reached 164 (including 122 macro-moths). Blue-bordered Carpet *Plemyria rubiginata*, Broom Moth *Ceramica pisi* and Green Arches *Anaplectoides prasina* have been the pick of the larger moths, while two Tortrix were the best of the micro's, *Spatalistic bifasciana* and *Capua vulgana*.

Many thanks to the National Trust for allowing access to the site.  
Kim Leaver



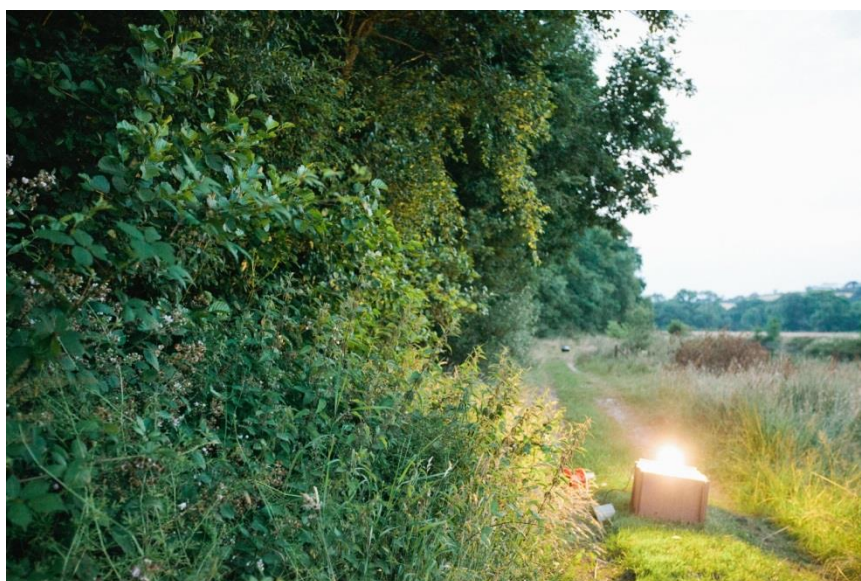
Clay Triple-lines left and *Spatalistic bifasciana* right (Kim Leaver)

### Putting SX39 moths on the map

The 10 km x 10km map square SX39 was one of five highlighted in the last DMG annual report as being particularly in need of more records ahead of the new Britain and Ireland atlas of macro-moths: this year is the final year of recording for this atlas. From year 2000 onwards, only 31 macro-moth species had been recorded from the square. The relocation of some friends to the square, one third of which lies in Cornwall and which spans the River Tamar between Holsworthy and Launceston, has given me the chance to do something about this.

Fortunately their new home is a farm containing just about all the main habitats likely to be found in the square – oak woodland, conifer woodland, ponds with good marginal and emergent vegetation, a stream and disused railway line, both lined with trees, flower-rich pasture and even a small patch of Culm grassland. Even better, these habitats all just about converge on their backdoor, so I don't even have to bother about using a generator – I can run the traps off the mains.

So far, I've been over three times – once in early June and twice in July. I have had the luxury of being able to choose good mothing nights, the last being 19 July when we had an exceptionally warm night, the temperature not falling below 18°C, and, amazingly, it was not raining. So the catches in the three or four MV light traps I've been using have been high - 103, 85 and 116 species respectively. The total species list currently lies at 204 moths, of which 148 are macros. I hope to do a couple more nights trapping there, which will make for a respectable total for the atlas.



The woodland has plenty of bilberry, and reflecting this there have been Beautiful Snout *Hypena crassalis* in the traps on each occasion, including some fine fresh specimens, and a single Bilberry pug *Pasiphila debiliata*. Other nice macros include Blue-bordered Carpet *Plemyria rubiginata*, Northern Spinach *Eulithis populata*, Oblique Carpet *Orthonama vittata*, Double Line *Mythimna turca*, Garden Tiger *Arctia caja* and a stunning Lime Hawk-moth *Mimas tiliae*. Among the micros, the pond vegetation has yielded not just Brown China-mark *Elophila*

*nymphaeata*, but also Ringed China-mark *Parapoynx stratiotata*, Beautiful China-mark *Nymphula nitidulata* and Water Veneer *Acentria ephemerella*. A surprise was catching about ten *Catoptria falsella*, a pyralid which may not have been recorded in VC4 before.

Rob Wolton



Rob examining the catch (left) and moth trap (previous page) (Rosie Anderson)

### Moth trap and books for sale

As reported in the last newsletter, DMG member Fred Slatter passed away earlier this year. Fred's widow, Heather, has kindly donated his moth trap and moth books to Devon Moth Group and we are selling these, with the proceeds going to Group funds. The trap is an Anglian Lepidopterists Supplies Robinson-type trap in very good condition with full mains electrics, rain guard etc. We are looking for £100 o.n.o. for the moth trap, to be collected at the autumn indoor meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> November. Offers to [rikfox@btinternet.com](mailto:rikfox@btinternet.com) please before 3<sup>rd</sup> November. The books will be on sale at the same meeting.

### Forthcoming events (see [www.devonmoths.org.uk](http://www.devonmoths.org.uk) for more details)

Thursday 3 November 2016 Autumn indoor meeting at the Kenn Centre, Kennford ([www.kenncentre.co.uk](http://www.kenncentre.co.uk)) 19.30 for 20.00 start. Illustrated talk by Ed Parr Ferris of the Devon Greater Horseshoe Bat Project.

Saturday 3 December 2016 Winter get-together/Christmas meal at The Welcome Stranger, Liverton ([www.thewelcome.co.uk](http://www.thewelcome.co.uk)) at 19.30. Full details will appear in the next newsletter.



Jersey Mocha left (Phil Barden) and *Duponchelia fovealis* right (Roy McCormick)