

NO:13 MAY 2024

MOTH NEWS

FOR DERBYSHIRE 2024

Derbyshire Moths Facebook Group (DMFG)

Derbyshire
Moths
Facebook
Group

VC57

MAY Moth News - From the DMFG pages

The moth highlight for this month clearly goes to the **Brindled White Spot** that Neil Ward discovered whilst moth trapping at the Rosliston Forestry Centre on 17 May. A new species for Derbyshire and VC57, taking the Macro Moth species list to 574.

Neil managed to take a photograph of the specimen which is shown below. This species is found in ancient Oak woodland, being widely and patchily distributed through southern and eastern England.

Despite being documented as experiencing a long term decrease in distribution, it is possible that the moth is expanding its range from East Anglia, through Leicestershire into South Derbyshire. We certainly have the habitat for the Brindled White Spot in the south of the county.

The white spots in the forewing, positioned centrally and towards the outer edge, are diagnostic.



Brindled White Spot - Neil Ward©

May Moth Records cont'd

Continuing with the rest of the moth highlights for May, which have been gathered mainly from the pages of the Derbyshire Moth Facebook Group (DMFG).

Well the county's moth recorders were certainly busy throughout the month, adding 169 species for the year, bringing the 2024 total to 286 by the month end. A mix of weather caused a number of low counts, with many nights of cold and wet conditions.

Dave Evans recorded a superb **Puss Moth** overnight 30 April from his Belper light trap. Only a few of these beautiful moths are caught each year. The first **Pale Tussock** was recorded by Don Cambridge at Staveley on 1st. Still a few records of the **Mullein** were being reported, with singles during first few days of the month from Belper and New Mills. The first 15+ **Common Heath** were recorded at Bray Clough, Glossop on 1st by Christian Heintzen.



Puss Moth - Dave Evans©



The Mullein - Dave Evans©

Brian Hallam from Findern recorded a good tally of species with 20/14 overnight on 1st May, including **Poplar Hawkmoth**, **Green Carpet**, **Pale Tussock**, **Lunar Marbled Brown** and **Chocolate-tip**, being highlights from his garden light trap.



Chocolate-tip - Brian Hallam©



Pale Tussock - Brian Hallam©

May Moth Records cont'd

Dave Evans had a superb **Iron Prominent**, along with **Knot Grass** and a **Small Phoenix** on 1st from his Belper garden light trap.

It seems to be a good year for **Green Carpet** with many records throughout the month. Sid Morris recorded 48 during a moth trapping session at Markham Vale overnight on 2nd. Some recorders during the first few days of the month were reporting zero catches, so the Markham Vale site was really bucking the trend with 77/17.

Dave Evans garden is certainly a pot of Moth Gold in Belper. Another good session overnight on 2nd produced **Scalloped Hook-tip**, **Alder Kitten** and **May Highflier**.



Alder Kitten - Dave Evans©



Scalloped Hook-tip - Dave Evans©



May Highflier - Dave Evans©

The first **Peppered Moth** for the year was recorded by Brian Hallam from Findern on 4th and Mark Radford recorded two micro moth firsts for the year, **Grapholita internana** (White-underwing piercer) and **Cydia ulicetana** (Common Gorse Moth). I ran my garden moth trap in Melbourne on 4th and recorded **Poplar Hawkmoth**, **Waved Umber**, **Least Black Arches**, **Yellow-barred Brindle** and **Oak Tree Pug** being the main highlights.



Least Black Arches - Tony Davison©



Poplar Hawkmoth - Tony Davison©

May Moth Records cont'd

Lots of reports of the micro moth ***Tachystola acroxantha*** (Australian Orange-tip). A species that certainly seems to be expanding its range across the UK and one that appears to be well established in the county. The species is very distinctive. Another species that has expanded its range across Derbyshire, is the **Orange Footman**. First recorded in the county in 2004, there has been numerous records reported during this month



Tachystola acroxantha - Tony Davison©



Orange Footman - Steve Thorpe©

The first of the hibernating **Autumn Green Carpet**, along with 5 **Golden-rod Pug**, were recorded at Gnat Hole on 4th per Christian Heintzen. Clive Ashton ran his light trap at Cromford on 5th and recorded 10/8 which included the **Streamer**. Also on the 5th, Martin Roome recorded **Orange Footman** and **Mullein** from his Chaddesden garden moth trap. Brian Hobby recorded the very attractive micro moth, ***Ancylis badiana*** on 5th from Kirk Hallam. On the 6th, I managed to record the first **Ruby Tiger** of the year from my Melbourne light trap.



Ruby Tiger - Tony Davison©



Streamer - Clive Ashton©

May Moth Records cont'd

Dave Evans recorded a **Maiden's Blush**, **Poplar Kitten** and **Orange Footman** from his magical Belper garden on 7th. Stephen Moores recorded the **Seraphim** on 7th from Darley Bridge. The Seraphim is a localised species in the county, favouring Aspen and it has been recorded from a number of sites this year.



The Seraphim - John Turner©



Maiden's Blush - Dave Evans©

Several spectacular Hawkmoth species began turning-up during second week of May including the **Lime Hawkmoth** and the **Eyed Hawkmoth**. The first **Lime Hawks** were reported on the 7th by Sid Morris (Markham site) and Martin Roome (Chaddesden).

Brian Hallam recorded the smart little micro moth, *Pseudoswammerdamia combinella* (Little Buff-tip) from Findern on 9th and Dave Evans had another good micro moth on the 9th from his Belper garden light trap - *Aproaerema anthyllidella* (Vetch Moth).



Aproaerema anthyllidella - Dave Evans©



Pseudoswammerdamia combinella - Brian Hallam©

Christian Heintzen recorded the first **Glaucous Shears** of the year at Glossop on 8th and Steve Thorpe recorded the first **Toadflax Brocade** of the year on 9th from his Breaston garden moth trap, along with **Coronet**, **Freyer's Pug**, **Lime-speck Pug** and **Mottled Pug**.

May Moth Records cont'd

Sid Morris recorded yet another **Mullein** at Staveley on 10th. This species seems to have had a good year in the county. William Grange recorded an **Alder Kitten** from his Allestree garden light trap also on 10th, with the first one being reported by Dave Evans on 2nd from Belper. Note the "pinched-in" cross-band which helps to ID it.



Toadflax Brocade - Steve Thorpe©



Alder Kitten - William Grange©

The **Millar** was recorded by Christian Heintzen, with 2 at Wildboar Clough, Longdendale on 8th. Dave Evans recorded 30/52 to his MV garden moth trap on 10th, quite a bumper list of species. A good selection of Pugs, which can cause a lot of head-scratching to ID them. In due course an ID guide will be published by the Recording Team, to help with identifying this difficult group of macro moths.

The first **Peach Blossom** of the year was recorded by Matt Leedell on 11th from his Belper garden moth trap. There seems to be very few reports of this very pretty species. Martin Roome recorded the micro moth, **Bucculatrix nigricomella** on 12th from his Chaddesden garden.



Bucculatrix nigricomella - Martin Roome©



Peach Blossom - Matt Leedell©

May Moth Records cont'd

On 11th Clive Ashton recorded 44/28 from his Cromford garden moth trap. A good variety of moth species that included, **Chinese Character, Brown Silver-line, Orange Footman, Grass Rivulet** and **Rivulet**. Christian Heintzen recorded the first **Light Knot Grass** and **Small Angle Shades** of the year at Glossop on 11th.

Brian Hallam recorded an **Alder Moth** from Findern on 12th, along with other highlights of **Elephant Hawkmoth, Pale Prominent, Orange Footman, Oak Hook-tip** and **Common Swift**. The first **Purple Bar** for the year was at Gnat Hole, Glossop on 12th per Christian Heintzen.

Will Soar ran his garden moth trap from Kings Newton on 12th and had 107/50, an incredible haul for the time of year. Highlights included **Grass Rivulet, Nematopogon schwarziellus, Barred Hook-tip, Broken-barred Carpet, Orange Footman, Scorched Wing** and **May Highflier**. Twelve **Grey Pine Carpet** and an **Ochreous Pug** were recorded at Longdendale by Christian Heintzen on 14th.

Three amazing macro moths were recorded on 13th, 15th and 17th, which included a first for Derbyshire. First of all, Brian Hobby trapped what appears to be a **Pale Oak Beauty** at Kirk Hallam on 13th, which if accepted would be the first county record since 1992. The species has a distinctive pale white spot on the tip of the underside of the forewing, which would clinch the ID beyond any doubt.

Clive Ashton sent me a record of **Peacock Moth**, which was recorded from Stonebroom by John Bradley on 15th. An extremely rare species in Derbyshire, with the last one recorded from Findern by Brian Hallam on 23rd June 2023. Prior to that, the last one was in 2004.

Then Neil Ward sent me a record of **Brindled White Spot**, which he trapped during a moth event at Rosliston Forrest Centre on 17th. A new species for Derbyshire and VC57.

What an amazing few days of rare macro species.



Possible Pale Oak Beauty - Brian Hobby©



Possible Pale Oak Beauty - Brian Hobby©

May Moth Records cont'd



Peacock Moth - John Bradley©

Another good moth trap from Dave Evans in Belper on 17th with 22/29 which included **Sandy Carpet** and **Diamond-back Moth**. Also on 17th the first **Latticed Heath** of the year at Longdendale per Christian Heintzen.

On 15th Clive Ashton recorded a superb **Eyed-Hawkmoth** from his MV Skinner trap in his Cromford garden, also other highlights were a **Poplar Hawkmoth**, **Treble Lines** and **Common Swift**.

On 18th Ian White from Buxton posted photographs of an unusually coloured **Xanthorhoe** species. and various conversations over the moths ID took place. Common Carpet was mentioned, but once the photos had been circulated, it was eventually sorted out as a **Red Twin-spot Carpet**, albeit not a typically coloured one.

The superb monochrome little micro moth, **Ethmia quadrillella** (Comfrey Ermine), has been reported a number of times during May. A moth that I've not seen many records of in previous years, so could it be due to possible range expansion? It is described as a possible wanderer or immigrant, occurring predominantly in the eastern area of England.

Steve Thorpe recorded the first one for the year on 17th from his garden moth trap in Breaston. Other records came from Darley Bridge on 17th (Stephen Moores) and from Whaley Bridge on 27th (Angie Seymour).



Red-Twin-spot Carpet - Ian White©



Ethmia quadrillella - Angie Seymour©

May Moth Records cont'd

Clive Ashton recorded another superb **Peach Blossom** from Cromford on 17th, along with the first record for 2024 of **Ingrailed Clay**.



Peach Blossom - Clive Ashton©



Ingrailed Clay - Clive Ashton©

Ken Orpe notified me of another sighting of **Argent and Sable**, recorded by David Kershaw-Wright on 17th, from his garden on the edge of Shining Cliff Wood. David possibly has the only site in Derbyshire now of this rare species.



Argent & Sable - David Kershaw-Wright©

Dave Evans reported on 18th that 22/51 arrived to his Belper garden moth trap prior to midnight, after that temperatures fell away. Highlights were **Shears, Alder Moth, Common Swift** and the micro ***Caloptilia azaleella***.

Clive Ashton recorded **Pale-shouldered Brocade** and **Freyer's Pug** as NFY from his Cromford garden moth trap on 18th

Regular county moth recorders were now racking up a decent year list, as we begin to enter the busy three months of the year.

May Moth Records cont'd

A **Light-feathered Rustic** was discovered on a petrol station window in Bakewell on 19th by Darren Clarke. An unusual place to find such a scarce and localised species in the county.



Light-feathered Rustic - Darren Clarke©



Caloptilia azaleella - Dave Evans©

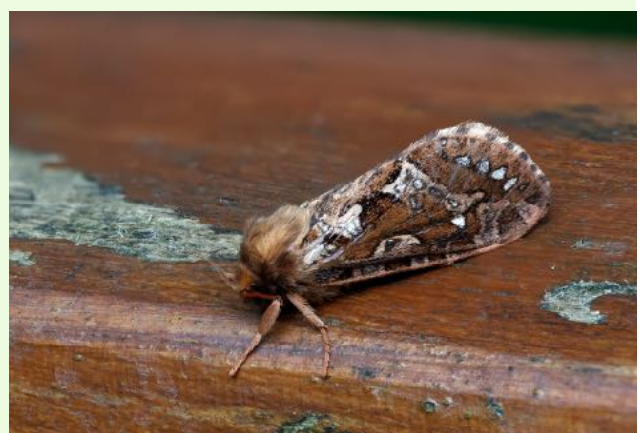
John Turner recorded **Purple Clay** and a **Clouded Brindle** from his New Mills garden moth trap on 18th and Graham Pollock from Quarndon had an **Orange Footman**, **Seraphim**, **Common Swift**, and **White Ermine** as highlights from his garden light traps on 19th.

Sandy Carpet was turning up from a number of locations across the county. A species that is locally common and more frequent in the lowland areas of Derbyshire, being scarce further north. So John Turner's record from New Mills on 21st is a rather good one.

Martin Roome ran a trap again at South Wood on 24th and recorded 16/78 including 47 **Brown Silver-lines**, **Map-winged Swift** and the rather smart **Pseudoswammerdamia combinelli** (Little Buff-tip).



Pseudoswammerdamia combinelli - Martin Roome©



Map-winged Swift - Martin Roome©

May Moth Records cont'd

Dave Evans had a really fresh **Lime Hawkmoth** to his Belper moth trap on 25th, along with **Straw Dot, Gold Spot, Figure of Eighty, Uncertain** and **Middle-barred Minor**.

I ran my garden moth trap at Melbourne on 27th and recorded the first **Turnip Moth** of the year along with a fresh **Sandy Carpet** which was NFG.



Sandy Carpet - Tony Davison©



Turnip Moth - Tony Davison©

Steve Thorpe ran two traps again at High Leas Farm on 25th, returning 236 moths of 48 species, of which 23 were new additions to the farm list, bringing the total there to 116. Highlights of **Treble Lines, Clay Triple-lines, Dwarf Pug** and **Marbled White Spot**.

As the month drew to a close the weather became very cold and wet and some traps were recording very low numbers for the time of year. There were still a few good moths being recorded though, including **Green Silver-lines** from Dave Evans in Belper on 27th and **Scorched Wing** on 27th and 28th. The micro **Thyraylia nana** on 29th from Dave Evans in Belper. **Grey Pug** from Clive Ashton on 29th, **Eyed Hawkmoth** from Dave Evans in Belper on 30th, a **Green Arches** recorded by John Turner from New Mills on 30th, a first record for the year of this species, and finally Emily Louise Milnes recorded the first **Large Yellow Underwing** for the year from her Sandiacre garden on 31st.

A bumper edition this month, filled with great moth records and I'm very grateful to all the recorders and to Neil Ward for supplying the photograph and record of the **Brindled White Spot**. Also further thanks to Emily Louise Milnes for her super article on the **Currant Clearwing**, containing some observations that may never have been recorded before, and finally to Christian Heintzen for his fabulous identification plate on a selected few species of **Diarsia**.

Good "Mothing" for June

Tony Davison.

May Moth Records cont'd

With so many good moths and photographs posted during the month, I thought I would dedicate a couple of pages to some of the special species seen and recorded during May 2024.



Glaucous Shears - Christian Heintzen©



Latticed Heath - Christian Heintzen©



Alder Moth - Brian Hallam©



Grey Pine Carpet - Christian Heintzen©

May Moth Records cont'd



Eyed Hawkmoth - Clive Ashton©



Ancylis badiana - Brian Hobby©



Iron Prominent - Dave Evans©



Ochreous Pug - Christian Heintzen©



Dwarf Pug - Steve Thorpe©



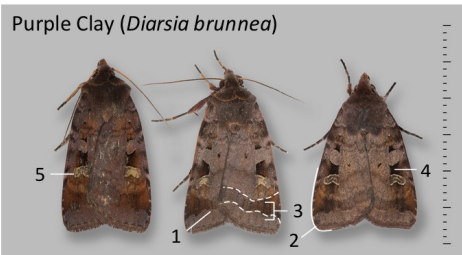
Lime Hawkmoth - Dave Evans©

May Moth Records cont'd

Guide to the separation of some of the *Diarsia* species (Christian Heintzen May 2024)

- 1a subterminal fascia distinctly pale, dark chestnut (female) to mottled orange-brown (male) with broad wings and forewing distinctly rounded at leading edge. Flying later than the other species (August- September) **Barred Chestnut (*Diarsia dahlii*)**
- 1b Subterminal line not distinctly pale, dark or lighter coloured species, usually flying earlier ----- 2
- 2a Darker coloured species with purplish hue and rounded broad wings **Purple Clay (*Diarsia brunnea*)**
- 2b Lighter orange brown to pinkish brown species with straighter leading edge of forewing and more pointed wing tip ----- 3
- 3a Area between subterminal fascia and termen lighter coloured than area between subterminal fascia and postmedian fascia often with larger dark triangular-shaped mark above oval. Variable species **Ingrailed Clay (*Diarsia mendica mendica*)**
- 3b Area between subterminal fascia and termen darker coloured than area between subterminal fascia and postmedian fascia without dark triangular-shaped mark above orbicular stigma. Slightly smaller species. **Small Square-spot (*Diarsia rubi*)**

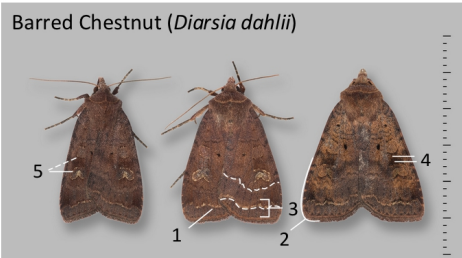
Purple Clay (*Diarsia brunnea*)



General colouration: Dark brown-purple

- 1 subterminal fascia absent
- 2 wing appearing broad with leading edge of wing and wing tip rounded but this is variable
- 3 area between subterminal fascia and termen lighter than area between subterminal and postmedian fascias
- 4 area between orbicular stigma (oval) and renal stigma (kidney mark) darkened
- 5 Renal stigma edged pale and with pale centre

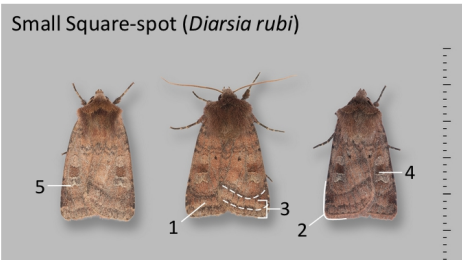
Barred Chestnut (*Diarsia dahlii*)



General colouration: Female: rich chestnut, male: dark orange brown

- 1 pale subterminal fascia distinct
- 2 wing broad, leading edge of wing/ wing tip rounded but this is variable
- 3 area between subterminal fascia and termen lighter or of similar tone to area between subterminal and postmedian fascias
- 4 area between oval and kidney mark usually not darkened or if (as in this male) than not extending to the oval
- 5 Renal stigma and to a lesser extent oval in female clearly edged pale, both stigmas indistinct in male

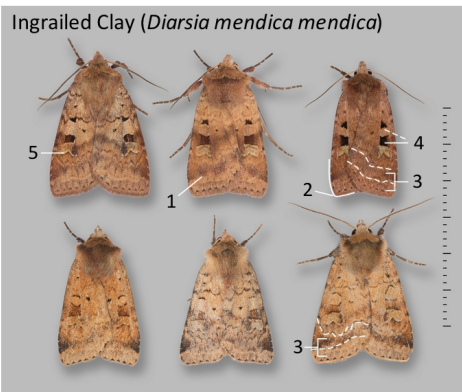
Small Square-spot (*Diarsia rubi*)



General colouration: Light to dark orange-brown often with pinkish hues.

- 1 subterminal fascia absent
- 2 wing appearing less broad with leading edge of wing quite straight, wing-tip pointed
- 3 area between subterminal fascia and termen generally darker than area between subterminal and postmedian fascias *
- 4 area between oval and kidney mark generally darkened
- 5 oval and kidney mark only indistinctly edged pale

Ingrailed Clay (*Diarsia mendica mendica*)



General colouration: Lighter orange-brown in my specimens but variable

- 1 subterminal fascia (more or less) absent
- 2 wing appearing less broad with leading edge of wing often more or less straight and more pointed wing tip but this is variable
- 3 area between subterminal fascia and termen lighter than area between subterminal and postmedian fascias *
- 4 area between oval and kidney mark generally darkened. There is often a triangular-shaped dark spot basal to the oval
- 5 Renal stigma not or only indistinctly edged pale

* diagnostic feature to separate Small Square-spot and Ingrailed Clay

Currant Clearwing – *Synanthedon tipuliformis*

On the 4th of April 2024, my very wild toddler accident snapped a branch off one of my currant bushes. I have two red currants, two black currants and a white currant in my small Sandiacre garden.

I took the branch to put in the compost bin but notice the stem was hollow with some frass visible. I had previously recorded Currant Clearwing moths in my garden on 3 occasions over 10 years and knew there was a possibility that this could be evidence of one. I checked over the rest of the plant and found further evidence of frass on a different branch.

Before throwing the branch, I decided to chase up the stem and see whether there was anything alive and to my surprise came across a pale 'grub'. Initially I thought I was wrong and that it was a beetle larva, but its head and legs didn't look correct. I posed my finding with the Derbyshire moth verifiers, and it was confirmed that this was likely a currant clearwing caterpillar but without an adult it was an educated guess.



On the 6th April, after some research and advice, I moved the caterpillar to a new enclosure where it could be observed and placed it in an unheated greenhouse. A new piece of white currant was placed into some damp soil and a hole was cut into the side with a bit hollowed out with the aim for the caterpillar to be able to access the core of the branch on which it feeds.

I guessed it would be a few weeks before anything happened and after taking some advice predicted mid May for any further activity.



On 20th of May, I noticed on the side of the pot what looked like mould and was convinced that the caterpillar had died. I took the branch out and emptied the soil to see if I could find any cause for failure but instead found a small silk cocoon with soil attached to the outside. I very carefully removed it from the side of the pot to photograph as recent research on the species had found very little information and I knew this would be a good opportunity for some learning. I can only guess as to why it pupated underground and not inside the stem, but my current theory is that there was not enough time for it to make a suitable side hollow in the branch provided.

I moved it to a smaller enclosure and brought it inside the house as temperatures in the greenhouse were increasing. It also meant I could keep a closer eye on it.



On the 27th of May while making a coffee, I noticed a very definite colour change on the pupa and for the second time was convinced it was dead. I removed it again to see whether I could find any cause of death, maybe damage or mould etc, but instead it wriggled around on my paper, very clearly alive.

I guessed at this point that it was getting ready to emerge and took some further photos. At 15:40 I shared the picture with the Derbyshire moth verifiers and at 16:34 my suspicion was confirmed by Dave Evans.



At 16:52, while making another coffee, I noticed that the pupa was in a different place and to my utter disbelief, an adult female Curren Clearwing moth on the lid of the pot. I had missed her emerging by minutes. I left her to rest and fully inflate her wings, then transferred her to some currant leaves, suggested by Tony Davison, for some better photos.

She was quickly quite flighty, and after a tour of the kitchen, she was recaptured on the window and released safely the following morning in the garden next to her original food plant. A satisfying little project and I look forward to seeing more in the garden.

**Notes:**

- A small species, wingspan being 17-20 mm.
- Yellow collar with the Female having three yellow cross-bands on the abdomen and the Male having four.
- The larvae feed internally on the shoots of red and black currant bushes and occasionally gooseberry. I cannot find any information about feeding on white currant although it is the same family of plants.
- Found in rural and urban locations and seem to favour neglected bushes in sheltered and sunny positions.
- Currant Clearwing are considered widespread and nationally scarce although increased records since the increased availability of pheromone lures.

Reference:

Norfolk Moths:

<https://www.norfolkmoths.co.uk/index.php?bf=3730>

UK Moths:

<https://ukmoths.org.uk/species/synanthedon-tipuliformis/pair-in-cop/>

Butterfly Conservation:

<https://butterfly-conservation.org/moths/currant-clearwing>

Nature Spot:

<https://www.naturespot.org.uk/species/currant-clearwing>

Charlie Streets Blog:

https://charlielepidopteraofcalderdale.blogspot.com/2011/11/clearwingschoreutidae-and.html?m=1&fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAR0wbTGjea68iF_INKteY74LOmw-cUHgVpqkaBes4OWpwO9eNGv1v1VPYWs_aem_ASX1yPbnijmr5V2yAXW8PmHDCdxCNkAh01TQzCVCh_Jky_-bslGTsXrXRRGNVfobSoH4gnB1QtGO3HfCFVw-xeoX