



# DEVON MOTH GROUP

Please reply to: The Secretary/Treasurer  
Roy McCormick  
36 Paradise Road  
TEIGNMOUTH  
Devon TQ14 8NR  
Telephone: 01626 779543  
181525131225.devvm@talktalk.net

## NEWSLETTER 2015 ISSUE 1 (January)

A belated Happy New Year to you! The mothing year has got off to an early start with good catches reported, especially on mild nights at the beginning of the month. These included not only the usual winter-flying moths, but also a very early *Orthosia gothica* Hebrew Character (4 January), *Macroglossum stellatarum* Hummingbird Hawk-moth and *Udea ferrugalis* Rusty-dot Pearl.

The news of 2015 moth records should act as a reminder to all to get their 2014 Devon records submitted as soon as possible please to the County Recorder, Barry Henwood. If at all possible, please send them by 20th January, as they will then be included in the 2014 Annual Report. However, Barry is always happy to receive records, so if you are unable to meet this deadline, please just send your records along in due course. If you are not sure how to send in your records, please see the detailed guidance on the website at <http://devonmoths.org.uk/recording-moths/>.

Please also remember that membership subscriptions are due now (see form at the end of this newsletter) and also that it is our AGM at the end of the month (see article on p2).

Finally, a nice piece of non-moth related news: Devon Moth Group member Charlie Stripp was awarded the MBE in the New Year's Honours List for services to education. Many congratulations Charlie!

Wishing you a moth-filled 2015.  
Richard Fox

### *Pancalia leuwenhoekella* new to Devon

On the 19th April 2014, the Devon Fly Group began its first field meeting of the year at Whitlands on the East Devon coast before moving over to Goat Island nearby.

It was at Goat Island in the afternoon that I collected and subsequently determined a smart micro-moth as *Pancalia leuwenhoekella*. The location of the discovery ties in with the species' association with chalk and limestone habitats quoted on the UK Moths website.

It was only when discussing my records for the year this January with Barry Henwood and Bob Heckford that I became aware it was a new species for Devon.  
Andrew Cunningham



**Members of Council: Richard Fox (Chairman) Nicola Bacciu (Membership & Distribution) Bob Heckford (Ordinary Member)  
Roy McCormick (Secretary/Treasurer) Rob Wolton (Conservation) Barry Henwood (County Moth Recorder)**

**[www.devonmoths.org.uk](http://www.devonmoths.org.uk)**

## Notice of AGM and Indoor Meeting to be held on Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2015 at the Kenn Centre, Kennford, 19.30 for 20.00 start

### **AGM Agenda**

1. Minutes of the last AGM to be approved and signed
2. Chairman's Report
3. Treasurer's Report
4. Secretary's Report
5. County Moth Recorder's Report
6. Election of Officers of Council
7. Any other business

Under Rule 6 (a) of our Constitution the Officers, with the exception of The Chairman, will be elected each year at our AGM. The following Officers, Nicola Bacciu (Membership and Distribution), Bob Heckford (Ordinary Member), Barry Henwood (Ordinary Member), Roy McCormick (Secretary/Treasurer) and Rob Wolton (Conservation) are all willing to stand again for 2015.

Under Rule 6 (c) of our Constitution, if anybody has any nominations for posts of Council Officers they must notify the Group at least 24 hours before the meeting (via [info@devonmoths.org.uk](mailto:info@devonmoths.org.uk) or to Richard Fox on 07711 657322). Except as may be necessary to fill vacancies, no further nominations can be made at the meeting itself.

### **Indoor Meeting**

After the AGM, we are delighted that Phil Page, a very experienced nature conservationist, Dartmoor guide and author will give an illustrated and thought-provoking presentation entitled "Dartmoor Wildlife – Past Present & Future".

### *Phyllocnistis citrella* Stainton, 1856 – an adventive species new to Devon

*Phyllocnistis citrella* Stainton, 1856, a member of the Gracillariidae, was originally described from two specimens from Calcutta, India, where the larva was known to feed on a species of citrus. Since then it has spread with commercial citrus production.

The following is taken from comments by Dr Chris Malumphy (Senior Entomologist and Collections Manager, The Food and Environment Research Agency) reported at <http://www.leafmines.co.uk/html/newsletter27.htm>. It appears that the moth was first noted in the British Isles in 1991 on leaves of *Citrus hystrix* imported from Thailand. Since then mines have been found to be relatively common on citrus plants imported from the Mediterranean and citrus leaves imported from Asia. The importation of citrus leaves from outside the EU is prohibited and so those from Asia have been intercepted at airports. Most of the imports from the Mediterranean have been found on growing plants at nurseries and garden centres, and most of the records are of mined leaves, but occasionally the larva mines the skin of citrus fruit.

Interceptions at airports are not treated as 'British' records, and because it appears that imports found at nurseries and garden centres were only of mines and not of adults, the species was not 'officially' added to the British list until 2012 (Homan, R. 2012. A British record of *Phyllocnistis citrella* Stainton, 1856 (Lep.: Phyllocnistidae). *The Entomologist's Record and Journal of Variation* **124**: 279-281). This was on the basis of tenanted mines found on a citrus plant at a garden centre in Oxfordshire on 7 October 2012 from which three moths were reared. Since then a vacated mine with a cocoon with a pupal exuvia was found on a lemon leaf at a Waitrose in Huntingdonshire on 28 December 2012. I am not aware of any other records although there have doubtless been interceptions and probably other finds in garden centres or supermarkets.

On 17 and 18 December 2014 respectively I found vacated mines and tenanted cocoons on leaves of 'Meyer' Lemon at garden centres near Ivybridge and Brixton near Plymouth. The plants at both places were stated to have originated from Portugal. On 2 January 2015 I visited a garden centre near Ottery St Mary where I found vacated mines and two cocoons with pupal exuvia on leaves of an unspecified citrus plant whose origin was unstated and over 20 vacated mines and a similar number of cocoons with no sign of pupal exuvia, so perhaps moths had not yet emerged or possibly the pupae had died. Most of the mines were on the underside of the leaves, although sometimes they were on the upper surface. The mines often appear shiny and usually there is an obvious central

line of frass. The cocoon is usually spun on the edge of the leaf causing a slight fold, in typical *Phyllocnistis* fashion.



*P. citrella* uppersurface mine (left) and lower surface mine (right) each with cocoon within folded leaf edge (Bob Heckford)

This is certainly a species to watch out for whenever you come across leaves of citrus plants.

Because this is a pest species, these records will be reported to Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate (PHSI) before this article is published.

Bob Heckford

### *Ectoedemia heckfordi* found in Austria

A note about this moth appeared in the May 2010 Newsletter. By way of recap, it was described as new to science in 2010 and, until very recently, was known from only five 1 km squares in south Devon and nowhere else in the world. This is despite the fact that the larva mines the leaves of Sessile Oak, *Quercus petraea*, and Pedunculate Oak, *Quercus robur*, both widespread and common trees. A limited area at Hembury Woods holds probably the largest known population and indeed is the type locality (meaning that the holotype is from Hembury Woods).

That was the situation until late October 2014 when I received an email from Dr Peter Huemer, one of Europe's leading Microlepidopterists, of Innsbruck, Austria. The email said:

'Dear Bob,

enclosed specimen, firstly identified by barcode, may be of particular interest for you.

*Ectoedemia heckfordi* in Austria

Best wishes,  
Peter'



The photograph above is the 'enclosed specimen'. It also appears, together with three of the original specimens from Devon, on a website devoted entirely to identifications of Lepidoptera made by DNA barcoding, which is how the Austrian moth was determined:

[http://www.boldsystems.org/index.php/Taxbrowser\\_Taxonpage?taxon=Ectoedemia+heckfordi+&searchTax](http://www.boldsystems.org/index.php/Taxbrowser_Taxonpage?taxon=Ectoedemia+heckfordi+&searchTax)

Peter tells me that there was just one specimen taken at light in an extraordinary habitat in Austria, a deep natural canyon with a few *Quercus* species, probably both *Q. robur* and also *Q. petraea* but this needs to be checked. The

record was of such significance that there was a press release, in which the species was given the vernacular name 'Heckfords Zwergminierfalter' (Heckfords dwarf miner moth). I suppose it could be worse.

Anyway, the surprise is that the first record outside Devon is from Austria, rather than somewhere nearer such as western France. Perhaps it occurs there but so far undetected. But it is odd that it has not yet been discovered anywhere else in the British Isles.

Bob Heckford

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

Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2015, National Moth Recorders' Meeting at Birmingham & Midland Institute, Birmingham. See [http://www.mothscount.org/text/54/national\\_conferences.html](http://www.mothscount.org/text/54/national_conferences.html) for more details.

Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> March 2015, Spring 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 Barry Henwood entitled *Looking for larvae*.

### Welcome to New Members

**Jenny Plackett**, 15 Storrs Close, Bovey Tracey, TQ13 9HR  
Telephone: 07905 0062592. e-mail: [jenny.plackett@btinternet.com](mailto:jenny.plackett@btinternet.com)

**Richard Rogers**, 2 Well Cottages, Buckfastleigh, TQ11 0JU  
Telephone: 01803 762947. e-mail: [richardrogers@buckfastleigh.org](mailto:richardrogers@buckfastleigh.org)

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### **Membership subscription for Devon Moth Group**

Membership subscriptions, **£8.00 for single and £12.00 for a family annual membership**, are due by the end of February 2015.

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Email address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I am happy to receive Devon Moth Group newsletters by email.**

Please return with a cheque payable to Devon Moth Group to: Roy McCormick, 36 Paradise Road, Teignmouth TQ14 8NR.

For payment by Standing Order, please obtain the necessary form from your Bank. The account details are: **Devon Moth Group, A/C No: 94850593, sort code: 60-21-47 at NatWest Bank, Den Road, Teignmouth, TQ14 8AR.** Make the reference your own name as that will then be shown on our statements. Payment date is 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015, or a date soon after that, and 1<sup>st</sup> January from then on.