

## Significant moth records in Worcestershire VC37, 2017

Tony Simpson & Oliver Wadsworth

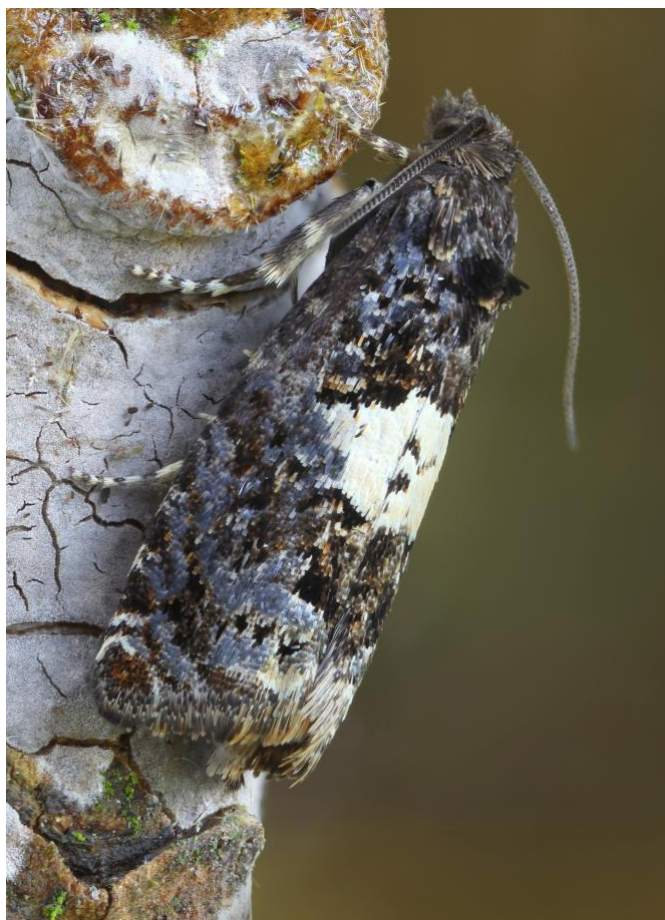
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### New species

There were six species new to the vice county:

*Bohemannia auriciliella* Patrick Clement caught this nationally rare species at light at Shoulton Planted Wood SO803587 on 28/8/17. The life history of this moth is unknown. It was also recorded in Gloucestershire in 2017.

*Pammene ignorata* (01) Pete Smith had one at light at Dodford on 26/5/17 confirmed by Patrick Clement. An apparently spreading or possibly newly recognised species in the UK. Life history unknown.



01. *Pammene ignorata*. Patrick Clement

*Dioryctria sylvestrella* (02) A specimen of this probably migrant conifer feeding species came to Sue Wright's moth trap at Wolverley on 17/8/17 and was confirmed by Patrick Clement. This species needs to be carefully distinguished from the resident *D. abietella* (D&S) and has been found more frequently in UK in recent years.



02. *Dioryctria sylvestrella*. Sue Wright.

Box Moth *Cydalima perspectalis* (03) Nicki Rowberry found our first specimen of this potential pest species which came to light in Malvern on 3/7/17. It is thought to have originated in China and has been spreading through Europe, has reached the UK recently, and is a threat to cultivated Box bushes. The larva makes a large web and can cause a lot of damage.



03. Box Moth *Cydalima perspectalis*. Nicki Rowberry

Jersey Tiger *Euplagia quadripunctaria* (04) Steve Whitehouse attracted one to light in Berkeley-Pendlesham, Worcester on 21/8/17. This species has been spreading rapidly in southern England and Wales having been previously confined to south Devon area for many years.



04. Jersey Tiger *Euplagia quadripunctaria*. Steve Whitehouse

Clifton Nonpareil *Catocala fraxini* (05) Ken Willets had our first specimen of the Blue Underwing at light at Highwood, Eastham on 24/9/17. Probably a migrant but this Aspen feeding species has been found increasingly commonly in parts of the UK recently and is now becoming resident again, possibly assisted by captive breeding and releases. Another was recorded nearby in Shropshire shortly afterwards.



05. Clifden Nonpareil *Catocala fraxini*. Ken Willetts

**Other notable records:**

Large Red-belted Clearwing *Synanthedon culiciformis* Gavin and Francis Peplow attracted two to a pheromone lure in Wyre Forest, between Lodgehill Farm and Uncllys SO757765 on 21/5/17. There had been a recent record from the Shropshire part of Wyre but this is the first confirmed VC37 record since 1991.

Brian Harley has recorded Pine Hawk Moth *Sphinx pinastri* again this year at Defford Airfield SO897443 on 9/7/17 and it is therefore likely to be resident and breeding there.

There were six Garden Tigers *Arctia caja* seen in Eastham, Malvern, Avon Marshes, Norchard (two), and Hall Green whilst Scarlet Tiger *Callimorpha dominula* continues to increase in numbers and is now found throughout the county.

Mike Williams had the only Dusky-lemon Sallow *Cirrhia gilvago* of the year in Stourport on 14/10/17.

The Mouse Moth *Amphipyra tragopoginis* had become very uncommon in recent years but there were a few more seen in 2016 and a further increase to 11 records in 2017.

Cypress Carpet *Thera cupressata* continues to spread with records from Lickhill (Steve Jacques) and Berkeley-Pendesham (Steve Whitehouse) and *Ectoedemia heringiella* mines were found by Robert Homan at Witley Court which is a big jump north westwards in distribution from previous records.

Joy Booth has been running a light trap at Clump Farm, Broadway SP109367 on the edge of the Cotswold escarpment and recorded two classical species of calcareous grassland: Galium Carpet *Epirrhoe galiata* on 23 & 31/5/17 & and seven Reddish Light Arches *Apamea sublustris* between 13/6/ & 3/7/17. The former only previously recorded in the past once in Malvern and the latter with only a few sporadic records in the county.

Steve Whitehouse found the birch feeding micro *Buccalatrix demaryella* at Trench Wood which is the first record away from the Wyre Forest area where it is fairly common.

More moths previously thought last year to be *Epinotia pygmaeana* (Hubner) from Grove Farm, Dines Green have been caught in 2017 and identified as *Epinotia subsequana* (Haworth) and so we have no confirmed record of *pygmaeana* in VC37. This species occurs in nearby Herefordshire and should be looked for around Norway Spruce in April and May.

The Thyme feeding *Deplanqueia* species recorded in VC37 is likely in fact to be *D. inscriptella* (Duponchel) not *D. dilutella* (D&S), which seems to be a western and coastal species, but both could occur here and future specimens need to be dissected to confirm

what we have in the county. Oliver Wadsworth dissected one from Broad Down area on the Malverns caught on 22/7/16 and it was *D. inscriptella*.

Following the identification of a specimen of *Caryocolum proxima* caught at light by Rick Benson-Bunch at Darkham Wood SO740299 on 12/8/2015 and confirmed by dissection by Tony Simpson in 2016, he went with Oliver Wadsworth to search for larvae there in early May 2017. Some Common Chickweed *Stellaria media*, the recorded food plant, was found in a clearing in the wood and more along the adjacent roadside. There was no sign of feeding but some collected at random later showed larval feeding with the extrusion of frass from the unopened flower buds and later two moths were bred out.

Patrick Clement recorded three *Catoptria margaritella* at Hartlebury Common SO821706 on 1/7/17. This species is usually associated with wet peaty habitats in northern and western UK but also sometimes occurs sporadically as a probable migrant. It could have come from the small bog at Hartlebury Common but had not been found there previously. The only other VC37 record is of a singleton caught by Dave Grundy at Penorchard Meadows in 2001.

*Dystebenna stephensi* is a very local moth whose larva feeds under the bark of oaks and is usually found on very old oaks often in ancient parkland such as at Mochas Park in Herefordshire. Our previous records where four seen at light at Crown East by Oliver Wadsworth in 2011. Steve Whitehouse caught one at Light at Berkeley-Pendesham on 18/7/17 and Tony Simpson one also at light at Bransford on 6/7/17. This suggests that perhaps it is more widespread and not always associated with ancient trees.

**Migrants:**

Among the common migrant species over 250 Silver Y *Autographa gamma* recorded and Humming-bird Hawk Moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* was very widely recorded with over 50 seen but with the usual concentration on the Malvern Hills.

There were only 12 Vestal *Rhodometra sacraria* records, 18 Dark Sword Grass *Agrotis ipsilon* and 28 Rush Veneer *Nomophila noctuella*. Diamond-Back *Plutella xylostella* were widespread as usual but in much smaller numbers than in 2016.

**Rarer Migrants apart from *sylvestrella* and Clifton Nonpareil mentioned above:**

Mike Southall had his usual Convolvulus Hawk Moth *Agrius convolvuli* at Norchard SO847685 on 8/9/17 and the only other one was disturbed in his garden whilst mowing the lawn by Ray Bishop in Malvern Link on 9/7/17.

Mike Southall had a Purple Marbled *Eublemma ostrina* at light at Norchard on 24/10/17 which was the second county record.

There was a Delicate *Mythimna vitellina* at Bromsgrove on 29/9/17 (R. Price) and a White Point *Hyphilare albipuncta* in Hall Green on 7/8/17 (Alan Prior).

A Ni Moth *Trichoplusia ni* came to Ian Machin's moth trap in Bewdley on 14/7/17

There was only one Scarce Bordered Straw *Heliothis armigera* at Dodford (Pete Smith) and only five records of Small Mottled Willow *Spodoptera exigua* and two of Pearly Underwing *Peridroma saucia*.

Steve Jacques caught a European Corn-borer *Ostrinia nubilalis* at Lickhill on 16/9/17 which is the 4<sup>th</sup> county record.

Liz & Neil Harris recorded another Kent Black Arches *Meganola albula* in Welland on 7/7/17 having had the first county record there in 2013; so was it another migrant or is it now resident in the south west of VC37?

### New Species in 2018?

Look out for *Metalimnobia italica* which has now been recorded in our neighbouring counties but not so far in Worcestershire.

We received just under 30,000 records of 1100 species in 2017. A small improvement on the last couple of years, perhaps reflecting a better than average summer. Compared to recent years, some reasonably prolonged spells of warm weather in May and June provided more good trapping nights with good variety and quantities of moths.

The VC37 distribution maps did not survive a recent update to the Butterfly Conservation West Midlands website so, for now, there is no online data for the county. The intention is to produce and maintain a more up to date website atlas covering all the West Midlands counties. Discussions are still at an early stage and it is not known, at time of writing, when this will be available. In the meantime we still maintain a spreadsheet county list which can be supplied on email request.

While many recorders send in their data by spreadsheet, MapMate, or written lists, a few have found the online iRecord system to be a convenient way to get their data to the county recorder. The system has its flaws, but several advantages too. For example you can attach corroborative photos to records which save us having to ask for them!

The website is at:

<https://www.brc.ac.uk/iRecord/>

Butterfly conservation have their own online recording system at:

[http://www.mothscount.org/text/28/online\\_recording.html](http://www.mothscount.org/text/28/online_recording.html)

Many thanks to all who have submitted records for the 2017 season, by whatever means.

### Images

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