

# MOTH MUMBLINGS – DECEMBER 2021

## THE END OF THE YEAR IS NIGH!

Over the last few nights, the seasonal species started to attend moth traps in unexpected number. December Moth (*Poecilocampa populi*) was especially numerous and the Winter Moth (*Operophtera brumata*) could best be described as arriving in “swarms” at some lights. Several other species, both noctuids and geometers are on the wing too. The Black-spotted Chestnut (*Conistra rubiginosa*) is reported from its site at Bengoe – although the best efforts of people to find it in nearby areas have so far failed miserably. It probably does not start to fly until well after midnight? One oddity is a seriously out-of-season Lesser Yellow Underwing (*Noctua comes*) caught in central Herts by John Murray on 11<sup>th</sup> December, whilst Simon Knot found a Bee Moth (*Aphomia sociella*) on 15<sup>th</sup> December at Bengoe.

So – if you plan to carry on nothing over the next two weeks, then please do so – the winter records will be especially useful, even if they are few in number. Remember, as of tomorrow morning the day lengths start to increase again as we hurtle relentlessly towards summer again!

## MEANWHILE ...

**It is now the start of record-submitting season.** If you have no intention of doing any more recording this year you can now send your lists to me. If you do plan to carry on to the end of December then you have the option to either wait until January or else send me lists now and send an extra, supplementary list in the new year. There is no tearing hurry, but it would be good to get everything in by the end of January, if at all possible.

Taxon	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O
	English name	Site	GridRef	WC	Recorder	Determiner	Date	Quantity	Method	Sex	Stage	Status	Comments	NOTES OF EXPLANATION	
1	Noctua pronuba	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	John Langmaid	20/06/2011	4	Light Trapping	Female	Adult	Not Recorded			
2	Noctua pronuba	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	10/07/2011	3	Light Trapping	Male	Adult	Not Recorded			
3	Noctua pronuba	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Colin Plant	15/07/2011	2	Light Trapping	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
4	Noctua pronuba	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	30/07/2011	1	Light Trapping	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
5	Noctua pronuba	The local park	X7987654	20	Kilroy Wazzir	Kilroy Wazzir	21/11/2014	1	Sighting	Not Recorded	Mina	Not Recorded	hundreds on a single tree	sorry do not know the Latin name	
6	Noctua pronuba	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	someone else	11/06/2011	2	Light Trapping	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
7	Noctua pronuba	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	20/06/2011	10	Light Trapping	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
8	Noctua pronuba	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	20/06/2011	5	Light Trapping	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
9	Noctua pronuba	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	10/07/2011	1	Light Trapping	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
10	Mamestra lunaeactylis	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	01/05/2011	1	Light Trapping	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
11	Autographa gamma	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Harry Bloggs	24/07/2011	1	Light Trapping	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
12	Autographa gamma	The site on holiday	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	05/08/1987	1	Light Trapping	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
13	Callistege mi	The site	TL123456	21	Elisav Peavley	Fred Smith	01/05/2011	1	Sighting	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
14	Callistege mi	a different site	Q9876543	43	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	07/05/2011	2	Sighting	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
15	Callistege mi	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	14/05/2011	4	Sighting	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
16	Callistege mi	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	21/05/2011	5	Sighting	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
17	Callistege mi	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	29/05/2011	4	Sighting	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
18	Euclidia glyphica	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	07/05/2011	4	Sighting	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
19	Euclidia glyphica	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	14/05/2011	1	Sighting	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
20	Euclidia glyphica	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	21/05/2011	3	Sighting	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
21	Euclidia glyphica	another place altogether	AB235647	51	James Handrix	Fred Smith	29/05/2011	3	Sighting	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
22	Euclidia glyphica	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	03/06/2011	2	Sighting	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
23	Euclidia glyphica	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	11/06/2011	5	Sighting	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
24	Euclidia glyphica	The site	TL123456	21	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	20/06/2011	2	Sighting	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			
25	Euclidia glyphica	Jimmy's Place	TL123456	20	Fred Smith	Fred Smith	10/07/2009	1	Light Trapping	Not Recorded	Adult	Not Recorded			

- I want ALL moth records from ALL of you – even if it is only one record of one moth/caterpillar! If you have not seen a single moth, or caterpillar, during 2021 I will be most interested to read your feeble excuses!
- The ONLY exception is any leaf mines from the last few weeks **that I have personally named for you**, since I have already entered these and don't want repeats. If I did not see them, or otherwise excuse you, then I do also want these records.
- I collate **all** moth records from **all** areas of **Hertfordshire and Middlesex**.
- If you have holiday records etc from elsewhere and it is a problem to separate them, or to deal with multiple CMRs, you may feel free to send me these and I will pass them on to the appropriate CMR on your behalf. These records will be passed on direct without changes – it will be for the relevant CMR to query anything that he or she does not believe.
- I also want unreported data from earlier years if this was not included in your submission last winter (but only the extras – please don't sent me complete lists that include data already sent to me).

- Ideally, I want lists of species, with numbers, for each separate date. If you ran a garden trap on 365 nights – then I want 365 lists (except that I don't want/need zero counts). This level of detail is crucial for monitoring climate change and other issues of equal importance.
- I also want records of any single species (including caterpillars) seen out and about.
- As a County Moth Recorder (CMR) I will, of course, accept data in any format, but if you want me to love you, please use the format in the attached Excel file.
- Please **only list species that are positively identified**. I do not want aggregates (e.g., Dagger species, Minor species) – only positively named members of such aggregates.
- Remember to include the determiner's (= identifier's) name in the appropriate column. In most cases this is likely to be you. For clarity, the "Determiner" is the HIGHEST authority. So if you named it, but then passed it to Fred to dissect the genitalia then in this particular case Fred would be the Determiner. If a national expert then agreed, the national expert becomes the Determiner (but out of courtesy, in this example you might want to record in the Comments column the fact that Fred did the dissection).
- Text in the Comments column goes into the database. If there is extra information/rude comments/etc that probably does not need preserving for posterity, this goes in my extra column in the attached spreadsheet so it can be easily deleted by me before entry.
- **If in doubt, please ask me.**

**Do** expect me to query any dodgy records – and don't be offended. It is a part of your learning process (and often mine too). Note that I am just as likely to challenge the experts as I am the beginners (very often this is more likely – they do get sloppy sometimes!).

### DATA PROTECTION

Nobody gets to see the full database apart from myself and Andrew Wood. I can't really imagine any master criminal, or for that matter any commercial venture, hacking into a moth database! However, as a point of principle, for garden moth traps etc the house number will normally be removed from the "Locality" before garden records are added to the database. If records are passed "uphill" (e.g., to the national moth recording scheme), grid references are supplied only as 4 figures (accuracy = 1000 metres = 1Km). This avoids any accidental betrayal of your address.

However, **please do** supply the house number to me as well as, ideally, a six-figure grid reference (accuracy = 100 metres), so I can accurately map your records. I will then take it out. If you don't know your home grid reference, please give me the house number, street name and postcode so I can work it out.

One final thing ... please **do not** record your site as "My garden". A few dozen people have beaten you to it – it does not help! I need a name to enter in the database, so use the road name where there is one.

**Remember – if in doubt ask me!** My contact details are all given at the end of this newsletter. Any phone calls should be after midday (and ideally before 11pm).

### GET A FREE COPY OF: *ENTOMOLOGIST'S RECORD & JOURNAL OF VARIATION*

I imagine that you all know by now that I am the editor of this outstandingly wonderful moth-oriented rag! Data protection rules say that I am not allowed to cross-reference mailing lists and then try to flog you a subscription, as that would be a breach of your personal privacy. That said, however, I can deduce from conversations that at least some of you might not be subscribers! Therefore, I am now making a special one-off offer.

Receive a free copy of the upcoming January 2022 issue as well as, of course, a subscription application form. All you need to do to take advantage of this offer is to send me a self-addressed and pre-stamped envelope of adequate size to contain an A5 publication. Postage should be the equivalent of a large letter stamp (first or second class is your own choice). Normally, postage would be just a standard second class letter stamp, but this issue will also come with the *2021 Contents & Index* and so will exceed the normal 100gm limit. You must also mark the front of the envelope with the words “**ENT. RECORD FREEBIE**”.

Do this before 7<sup>th</sup> January 2022. We print the journal on 10<sup>th</sup> January, or thereabouts, so need to know how many extra copies we will need before that happens.

Offer applies to UK postal addresses only and to people who have not had a subscription in the last five years.

We do this in the hope that when you have read it you will subscribe for the rest of the year.

Alternatively, you could just subscribe now! It is a measly £30 for the year (for all 6 parts), which means that each issue is ridiculously cheap at only a fiver. **Dinosaurs** send a cheque for £30 to “Ent. Rec. Subscription”, PO Box 8774, London SW7 5ZG – remembering to state what the money is for and also giving your name and address for postage. **Tech-savvy people** can pay electronically by going to <https://shop.amentsoc.org/adult-or-family-membership.html> and selecting “Entomologist’s Record”. **Gift subscriptions** can also be obtained (go to <https://www.amentsoc.org/membership/gift-membership.html>).

**For legal reasons**, not to mention for avoiding any potential financial disaster, I must make it clear that we have a numerical limit on free copies for this offer. They will be distributed on a first-come-first-served basis. By sending the requested *sae* you are making an application and nothing in law compels us to supply a free copy to any applicant.

I am happy for this offer to be forwarded to other groups, but the same rules apply to all.

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Enjoy the next couple of weeks before it all starts again!

**REMEMBER TO CHANGE MY E-MAIL ADDRESS IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO.** The old address ([cpauk1@ntlworld.com](mailto:cpauk1@ntlworld.com)) is now discontinued. Delete it – permanently from address books, mailing lists etc. !

Colin

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