

Some of my more interesting Lepidoptera site records for the year 2007

By John L. Gregory

After an excellent start, the year as whole was a big disappointment, mainly due to the very wet summer during which some of the normally very common species were exceptionally scarce or, in some cases, surprisingly completely absent from the year's records. Despite this, and perhaps because of the long spell of inclement summer weather, I noted many interesting, slightly out-of-normal-season Leps. However, not counting species seen only as leaf-mines or larvae, the year ended with only 408 species being recorded by me in the living adult stage in the wild, this total being well below my corresponding total for 2006. As in my previous report for CMG, I show here the JLG numbering, and where no locality data are shown, the sightings are from my lighted windows at home, SX-04,55, or in a couple of instances indoors at home, or day flying in my garden, or on nearby Eden Project land.

1st Jan. **L1570 *Cosmopterix pulchrimella***. Occupied and vacated leaf mines on Pellitory Of The Wall were found at Perranporth, followed by numerous occupied and vacated leaf mines which were found on many other Cornish coastal sites during the year, and examples of a few of the occupied mines from several sites were collected for rearing. The captive reared mines were virtually 100% successful, and no parasitoids occurred amongst any of them, so the apparent complete absence of any parasitoids in any of the batches suggests a probable contributory factor which might explain the rapid spread of this little moth which seems to have arrived here without any of its natural predators.

17th Jan. **L8 *Vanessa atalanta*** (Red Admiral). Very early for a first-of-the-year sighting of this species, which continued to do well during the year, despite the weather, butterflies being seen in the garden almost continuously until early December.

1st Feb. **L236 *Hofmannophila pseudospretella*** (Brown House Moth). A bit early in the year for this species to be seen flying indoors.

5th Feb. **L957 *Colostygia multistrigaria*** (Mottled Grey). My earliest-ever home record for this species.

7th Mar. **L873 *Eupithecia abbreviata*** (Brindled Pug). An early specimen at the windows.

8th Mar. **L210 *Acleris cristana***. Almost certainly this species, at the lighted windows, after overwintering.

10th Mar. **L660 *Gonepteryx rhamni*** (Brimstone Butterfly), my earliest home record in recent years. This was followed that evening by an early **L350 *Orthosia incerta*** (Clouded Drab) at the windows.

11th Mar. **L695 *Biston strataria*** (Oak Beauty). Slightly earlier than usual for this species to be seen at the lighted windows.

8th Apr. **L4 *Pieris rapae*** (Small White), **L5 *Pieris brassicae*** (Large White), and **L21 *Pieris napi*** (Green Veined White). It is most unusual to see several first-of-the-year butterflies of all three of these common "Whites" flying together in my garden on the same date.

12th Apr. **L256 *Plutella porrectella***. Cocoons, and later larvae, were found in my garden on Dame's Violet, though surprisingly no moths were recorded during the year at my lighted windows.

13th Apr. **L221 *Xanthorhoe ferrugata*** (Dark Barred Twin Spot Carpet). An early home record for this species which later turned out to be much more common than usual during the summer. Then on the same date an early **L149 *Eupithecia vulgata*** (Common Pug) turned up at the windows.

14th Apr. **L380 *Macaria alternata*** (Sharp Angled Peacock) and **L802 *Nola confusalis*** (Least Black Arches). My earliest records for both of these species in recent years.

18th Apr. **L663 *Ectropis bistortata*** (Engrailed). A moth, probably this species, at my windows, though it is difficult to be absolutely certain of the precise identification.

20th Apr. **L152 *Eupithecia subfuscata*** (Grey Pug) and **L860 *Xanthorhoe designata*** (Flame Carpet). Early specimens of both of these species at the windows, but surprisingly very few further moths of either of them turned up during the summer.

21st Apr. **L810 *Eupithecia pulchellata*** (Foxglove Pug). After an early start, this species was unusually scarce at the windows during the summer, despite the presence of many Foxglove plants in the garden.

23rd Apr. **L862 *Polyommatus icarus*** (Common Blue). Flying in my garden, much earlier than usual. Then in the evening an early **L247 *Colostygia pectinataria*** (Green Carpet) came to the windows, this species having done exceptionally well in both generations during the year..

25th Apr. **L271 *Ptilodon capucina*** (Coxcomb Prominent). Earlier than usual for this species to be flying.

26th Apr. **L64 *Elachista argentella***. Several moths seen at rest on grass stems, indicating a local early synchronised emergence.

27th Apr. **L146 *Shargacucullia verbasci*** (Mullein). This species is more often seen in the larva stage on Figwort and Mullein, but it was good to record a moth at my lighted windows.

30th Apr. **L266 *Pseudoswammerdamia combinella*** and **L863 *Charanyca trigrammica*** (Treble Lines). After these two early records no further specimens of either of these normally common species were seen at my windows during the year.

1st May. **L537 *Glyphipterix simplicella*** (Cocksfoot Moth). After a rather early start, very few further specimens were seen during the summer.

2nd May. An early day-flying **L526 Epiblema scutulana**, which was followed by a very good moth night with early specimens of **L24 Spilosoma lubricipeda** (White Ermine), **L25 Celypha lacunana**, **L674 Scopula marginepunctata** (Mullein Wave), **L1295 Pterapherapteryx sexalata** (Small Seraphim), and an unconfirmed **G1275 Coleophora otidipennella** at my windows.

3rd May. **L1213 Grapholita compositella**. My earliest-ever date for this little day-flying species to be seen in my garden.

9th May. **L29 Hypena proboscidalis** (Snout). Another earliest-ever home record.

11th May. **L1110 Protodeltote pygarga** (Marbled White Spot). A further earliest-ever home record.

12th May. **L1463 Tinea semifulvella**. Less common than usual in my home area, but this is an early date for a first-of-the-year home-record.

13th May. **L861 Coenonympha pamphilus** (Small Heath), **L1106 Boloria selene** (Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary), and **G845 Phytometra viridaria** (Small Purple Barred), were three of the Leps. recorded during a "Fungus Foray" event on Breney Common.

15th May. **L18 Macrothylacia rubi** (Fox Moth). A female, my first home record of this species in the moth stage.

19th May. **L46 Tyria jacobaeae** (Cinnabar), **L423 Crambus lathoniellus**, and **G127 Aricia agestis** (Brown Argus). Early specimens of these three species were seen flying at Gwithian during a Butterfly event, during which I recorded my first sighting for many years of **G1030 Aethes tesserana**.

20th May. **L319 Idaea aversata** (Riband Wave). An early specimen at rest on a leaf in Prideaux Wood Reserve.

21st May. **L1324 Mythimna comma** (Shoulder Striped Wainscot). An early specimen at my windows.

22nd May. **L551 Rivula sericealis** (Straw Dot). Another early home-record.

24th May. **L11 Pandemis cerasana** (Barred Fruit Tree Tortrix). A surprisingly early day-flying specimen was netted in my garden. In the evening of that day a little moth, which soon turned out to be **L1614 Buccatrix nigricomella**, came to my windows, this being my first sighting of this species for many years. Then during the following weeks, many leaf-mines on Ox Eye Daisy, caused by the larvae of this tiny species, were found in the Eden meadow area, where Ox Eye Daisy is abundant, and also in my garden. I collected some of the occupied mines for rearing. Though a few of the tenanted mines later proved to be parasitised, others, after abandoning the mining stage of their life-cycle, fed openly for a while on the leaves before making their strange ribbed cocoons, the reared moths successfully emerging in late July and August.

25th May. **L1211 Teleiopsis diffinis**. Another first record for many years, at my windows.

26th May. **L1130 Eulithis pyraliata** (Barred Straw). A bit earlier than usual for this species to be flying.

31st May. **L250 Jodis lactearia** (Little Emerald). Another early home record, at my windows.

1st Jun. **L315 Xestia triangulum** (Double Square Spot). Another earliest-ever home record.

4th Jun. **L1239 Dipleurina lacustrata**. Five days earlier than my previous earliest-ever record.

5th Jun. **L190 Sphinx ligustri** (Privet Hawk). A freshly emerged moth at rest beside one of the Eden cycle tracks, totally unnoticed by passing cyclists. Then in the evening of that day my earliest ever **L461 Habrosyne pyritoides** (Buff Arches) and **L843 Polia nebulosa** (Grey Arches) came to the windows.

6th Jun. **L113 Mythimna impura** (Smoky Wainscot), **L805 Campaea margaritata** (Light Emerald), **L1042 Tortrix viridana** (Green Oak Tortrix), and **L1387 Mythimna turca** (Double Line). These four are only a selection from the large number of moths which came to my windows that night.

7th Jun. **L57 Hemithea aestivaria** (Common Emerald). An early date for this species at my windows, but surprisingly very few further moths of this species turned up during the following few weeks.

9th Jun. **L96 Lasiocampa quercus** (Oak Eggar). A rather early, freshly emerged moth on Breney Common, seen during a Butterfly event.

10th Jun. **L33 Phragmatobia fuliginosa** (Ruby Tiger). A day-flying specimen, rather worn, was seen on Dunsdon Reserve, Devon, during a scheduled event, and a bit late in the year for the first generation of this species to be still flying. Then at home that evening **L65 Ebulea crocealis**, **L235 Lyonetia clerkella** (Apple Leaf Miner), **L648 Argyresthia brockeella**, **L1565 Mythimna vitellina** (Delicate), and an unconfirmed **L281 Coleophora serratella** were among the numerous moths which came to my windows.

13th Jun. **L773 Mythimna l-album** (L-Album Wainscot), and **G930 Epiblema costipunctana**. A rather early date for these two species to be at my windows.

14th Jun. **L7 Eupithecia absinthiata** (Wormwood Pug). An early specimen at the windows.

16th Jun. **L348 Callimorpha dominula** (Scarlet Tiger), **L882 Melanargia galathea** (Marbled White), **G748 Eupithecia plumbeolata** (Lead Coloured Pug), and a very tiny moth, identified as **L207 Buccatrix frangutella** which, according to Frank Smith's book, was last recorded in Cornwall in 1976. These are just four of the species which were recorded during the Butterfly event in Greenscombe Wood. Then at home that evening, the moths at my windows included early specimens of **L70 Hydriomena furcata** (July Highflyer) and **L1281 Myelois circumvoluta** (Thistle Ermine).

17th Jun. **L432 Eilema griseola** (Dingy Footman). First-of-the-year moths of this species continue to arrive earlier and earlier at my windows.

21st Jun. A probable **L116 Phyllonorycter rajella** at the windows, along with **L155 Blastodacna hellerella** and either a late first generation or an early second generation specimen of **L286 Selenia dentaria** (Early Thorn)..

22nd Jun. **G49 Endothenia quadrimaculana** and **G1281 Pseudopostega crepusculella**. My earliest home-records for each of these species in recent years.

26th Jun. **L558 Apamea scolopacina** (Slender Brindle) and **G224 Melantheria procellata** (Pretty Chalk Carpet). Two further earliest-ever home-records

28th Jun. **G1479 Argyresthia conjugella**. Netted in flight on the bridle path near to my home, this being my first-ever site record for this species.

29th Jun. **G1405 Celypha aurofasciana**, almost certainly this species, being another first-ever home-record if this identification is correct. Later that night **L1062 Nycteola revayana** (Oak Nycteoline) appeared at the windows.

2nd Jul. **L1618 Perinephela lancealis**. A female moth, netted in my garden, obliged by laying eggs for me, and the resulting pale green larvae were reared on Hemp Agrimony. They did well and turned bright red when fully grown, before spinning up. They would normally overwinter before pupating, but one moth forgot to diapause and emerged in late November.

3rd Jul. **L517 Eilema depressa** (Buff Footman). An early specimen at my windows.

4th Jul. **L1444 Argynnis paphia** (Silver Washed Fritillary) and larvae of **L1586 Anarta myrtili** (Beautiful Yellow Underwing). Just two of the species seen during a scheduled Invertebrate event in Greenscombe Wood and Luckett.

7th Jul. **G754 Dolicharthria punctalis** and an unconfirmed **L1120 Cnephasia longana**. These are two from the many moth species seen during the Butterfly event near Porthgwarra.

11th Jul. **G40 Ostrinia nubilalis** (European Corn Borer). A male at the windows, and only my second home-record for this species.

12th Jul. **L227 Acleris kochiella**. A very surprising record for a species which probably has not been recorded in Cornwall before. The moth was at my lighted windows, and though it was not checked for genitalia I am fairly confident of the identification from wing-markings.

18th Jul. A very good moth-night, with 84 species recorded in the MV trap. These included **L60 Lozotaenia forsterana** and **L107 Selenia tetralunaria** (Purple Thorn).

24th Jul. **G1486 Epinotia bilunana**. A day-flying moth at Tregonnett, and **L1338 Schreckensteina festaliella** at rest on a leaf in my garden.

30th Jul. Of the 38 common species in my MV trap perhaps the most interesting was **L493 Watsonalla cultraria** (Barred Hook Tip), this being only my second home record for this species.

1st Aug. **L59 Pterophorus pentadactyla** (White Plume). A bit later than usual for this species to be still flying in my garden.

4th Aug. **G552 Ipimorpha retusa** (Double Kidney). At my windows, my first record for many years.

8th Aug. **L335 Phyllonorycter coryli**, almost certainly this species, at my windows, together with **G403 Lithosia quadra** (Four Spotted Footman).

11th Aug. National Moth Night, with 75 species in the MV trap. These included **L22 Odontopera bidentata** (Scalloped Hazel), **L393 Lomographa temerata** (Clouded Silver), **L402 Eupithecia simpliciatata** (Plain Pug), **L931 Falcaria lacertinaria** (Scalloped Hook Tip), **G744 Pseudatemelia josephinae**, and a probable **L574 Dichrorampha consortana**.

19th Aug. **L1616 Blasobasis decolorella**. So far my latest date for this species which is not only rapidly becoming more common but is also gradually extending its flight dates in recent years, both earlier and later. I was able to obtain ova from a female which I had captured earlier, and the resulting larvae were reared on old and dead leaves, mainly of Sallow and Bog Myrtle. The larvae were dark brown and eventually made tough brown cocoons beneath their food material. In warm captive conditions moths emerged during October and November.

22nd Aug. Among the 39 species in the MV trap that night were **L678 Caryocolum tricolorella**, which I have not seen in the moth stage for many years, together with a late **L965 Eupithecia virgaureata** (Golden Rod Pug).

23rd Aug. **L38 Adaina microdactyla**. Another latest-ever home record.

28th Aug. **L809 Tinea dubiella**. An unconfirmed identification, and slightly later than usual for this species to be flying at home.

29th Aug. **L440 Agriphila straminella**. Last sighting of the year for this species at my windows.

2nd Sep. **G214 Hipparchia semele** (Grayling). Several late-season butterflies on Rosenannon Reserve during a scheduled event, then that evening an early home record of **L84 Xanthia togata** (Pink Barred Sallow) at the windows.

4th Sep. **L907 Crambus pascuella**. My latest-ever date for this species to arrive at my windows.

8th Sep. **L1014 Bryoptropha domestica**. Another latest-ever date.

9th Sep. **L9 Noctua janthe** (Lesser Broad Bordered Yellow Underwing) and **L385 Carcina quercana**. Slightly later than usual for both these species to be still flying.

11th Sep. **L49 Argyresthia bonnetella**. A late record for this species.

14th Sep. **L268 Cabera pusaria** (Common White Wave). A rather late season record for this species.

17th Sep. **L1623 Dichrorampha acuminatana**. Several moths were seen in my garden during the summer, but this is a late date for this species to be still flying.

26th Sep. **L877 Stigmella nylandriella**. An occupied leaf-mine on Rowan in Prideaux Wood Reserve. I am sure I must have overlooked mines of this species on various sites in recent years.

1st Oct. **L137 Erannis defoliaria** (Mottled Umber). A much earlier date than usual for the first of the new generation to appear at my windows. Then on the same night late specimens of **L185 Noctua comes** (Lesser Yellow Underwing), **L345 Idaea dimidiata** (Single Dotted Wave) and **L1518 Blastobasis lignea** turned up.

6th Oct. **G1716 Stigmella obliquella**. A single vacated mine in a Willow leaf was found at Hale Mills, near Bissoe, and it is interesting to note that, according to Frank Smith's book, this species was last found in the same general locality back in 1984.

7th Oct. **G1115 Dryobotodes eremita** (Brindled Green). A rarity in Cornwall, and my first-ever home record.

13th Oct. **L23 Noctua pronuba** (Large Yellow Underwing), **L32 Lacanobia oleracea** (Bright Line Brown Eye), and **L115 Luperina testacea** (Flounced Rustic) were three of the moths seen on Redmoor Reserve at the opening of Phil Boggis's MV trap which had been set up the previous night as one of the scheduled "Heath Fest" events.

17th Oct. **L72 Acleris variegana** (Garden Rose Tortrix). A slightly undersized specimen at the windows, and a bit later than usual for this species.

21st Oct. **G785 Stigmella sakhalinella**. An occupied mine in a Birch leaf was found during a scheduled "Cornwall Fungus Recording Group" event in Greenscoombe Wood. This species is probably more common than records indicate, as mines in Birch leaves need to be carefully examined to determine the identification of the mine causers, because several other species of small Lep. are leaf miners of Birch. It is not unusual to find mines of two or three species at the same time, all on the same Birch tree.

31st Oct. **L302 Xestia xanthographa** (Square Spot Rustic). My latest-ever home record.

1st Nov. **L829 Mompha divisella**. Flying indoors before entering winter diapause.

15th Nov. **L251 Pararge aegeria** (Speckled Wood). My latest-ever recorded date for this species to be still flying in my garden.

21st Nov. **L300 Agonopterix arenella**. A moth, flying by day, was recorded near Dunmere Wood during an unscheduled "Cornwall Fungus Recording Group" event. Then shortly afterwards and in the same general locality several rather late specimens of **L684 Thera britannica** (Spruce Carpet) were seen flying. And in the evening of that date a late **L114 Chloroclysta truncata** (Common Marbled Carpet) came to my windows.

30th Nov. **L1100 Epirrita autumnata** (Autumnal). Almost certainly this species and my latest-ever date for it.

11th Dec. **L97 Epirrita dilutata** (November Moth). Another almost certain identification and my latest-ever date for the species.

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<http://www.cornwallmothgroup.org.uk>