

For over a hundred years this species was rarely reported in Britain outside south Devon. However, in the 1990s and after it was noted increasingly along the South Coast eastwards and small colonies became established in the vicinity of Portland, Dorset, the Isle of Wight and Rye, Sussex in that order suggesting extended territorial expansion eastwards from the South Devon stronghold (B. Skinner, pers. comm.) rather than immigration from the Channel Islands or the Continent. In 2004 and 2005, the species was observed on the Kent coast; for 2004 Ferguson (*Kent Moth Report, 2004* Butterfly Conservation) states that *E. quadripunctaria* again occurred in the Dover area, and was recorded from the area around Dungeness, but that the concentration near Dover was not typical of migration, and could possibly indicate local breeding. The reporting of the three specimens at Dartford has been delayed while extensive enquiries could be made regarding the possibility of release of specimens, but no evidence for this has been found.

In recent years colonies of several other unlikely species have been established here. *Mythimna albipuncta* (D.& S.) and *Eumichtis lichenea* (Hb.), coastal insects presumably having arrived via the Thames Estuary and *Cryphia algae* (Fabr.) from the Continent. The *E. quadripunctaria* probably came by the same route, either direct from the Continent or from the Kent coast.

The specimen attacked in the mv light trap had the thorax and abdomen, which was almost severed from it, bearing signs of the assault, but were not eaten. Although it was undoubtedly the most conspicuous moth, numerous others were plainly visible. The bright warning colours of this aposematic species were perhaps unheeded because of the rarity of such insects to-day.

The larvae of *E. quadripunctaria* have been found eating a considerable number of herbaceous plants, but I have not seen mention of forget-me-not (*Myosotis* sp.). I observed several larvae on scattered plants of this on an allotment on the northern outskirts of Exeter in June 1938, but on no other species of plant.— B. K. WEST, 36 Briar Road, Dartford, Kent DA5 2HN.

Moths at birch sap

Whilst waiting for moths to arrive at a single 125 watt mv Robinson trap on 29 March 2006, during a visit to Fenns and Whixall Moss National Nature Reserve, Shropshire, it was noted that several of the birch trees along the ride glistened in the torchlight. Investigation of this revealed that the ride-side trees had been mechanically flailed with many of the smaller saplings roughly broken off and the larger trees having gashes in their trunks resulting in copious amounts of sap running from the birches. Moths were noted buzzing around these trees and saplings and on closer examination many were found feeding. We only stayed at the site for about 1.5 hours from dusk onwards, but it was clear in this time that the sap runs were far more attractive than the single light trap. The results are as follows:

Species	MV light	Birch sap
<i>Semioscopis avellanella</i>		1
<i>Tortricodes alternella</i>	1	
<i>Acleris notana</i> (not gen. det.)		2
Yellow Horned <i>Achyla flavicornis</i>	approx. 10	approx. 25
March Moth <i>Alsophila aescularia</i>	1	
Oak Beauty <i>Biston strataria</i>		1 (though not feeding)
Pine Beauty <i>Panolis flammea</i>	1	
Small Quaker <i>Orthosia cruda</i>	1	
Common Quaker <i>Orthosia cerasi</i>		2
Clouded Drab <i>Orthosia incerta</i>		2
Twin-spotted Quaker <i>Orthosia munda</i>		approx. 10
Hebrew Character <i>Orthosia gothica</i>		3
Satellite <i>Eupsilia transversa</i>	1	approx. 25
Chestnut <i>Consitra vaccinii</i>		approx. 5

It is possibly worth noting that although there were plenty of willows in the general area, none appeared to be in blossom at the time.

A quick look through available literature indicates that this appears to be an infrequently reported observation, although birch sap has long been known as an attractant for moths. J. W. Tutt (1902. *Practical hints for the field lepidopterist* 2: 18) gives an observation by P. C. Reid who refers to the “common practice to bore holesin the trunks of birch-trees” in Scotland and in early spring finding species such as the Yellow Horned *Achyla flavicornis*, Sword-grass *Xylota exsoleta* and the Red Sword-grass *X. vetusta* amongst many others at the resultant sap runs, adding that they fed on this sap “even more freely than.... insects come to sugar”.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr Joan Daniels (Site Manager, English Nature) for permission to record moths at the site.— MARK PARSONS & KELLY THOMAS, Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset BH20 5QP.



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