

***Opostega spatulella* H.- S. (Lep.: Opostegidae) in Essex**

During 2005, I have been identifying smaller microlepidoptera collected by Martin Heywood from the Rothamsted Insect Survey light trap at Writtle College, Essex (O.S. grid reference TL 678066). This trap is run more or less nightly and is situated in the grounds of the college, an area of mostly short grassland with a scattering of amenity trees. Amongst approximately 500 examples of worn, scale-less *Elachista* species dissected, one specimen, taken on the night of 25 May 2005, has proved to be a male of *Opostega spatulella*.



Male genitalia, ventral view of *Opostega spatulella* (Writtle, Essex, 25.v.2005).

There are, apparently, only three previous British occurrences published in the literature: Southend-on-Sea, Essex (Stainton, 1860. *Entomologist's Annual* **1860**: 126 – 136), Witham, Essex (Cansdale, 1877. *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine* **14**: 139 – 140) and North Curry, Somerset (Barrett, 1877. *Entomologist's Monthly Magazine* **26**: 8). These records date from 1859 to 1877 with moths recorded in June and September and are summarised in Pelham-Clinton (1976. In Heath, J.(Ed.) *The moths and butterflies of Great Britain and Ireland* **1**:271. Curwen Books). In this work, Pelham-Clinton suggests this species has possibly been overlooked, and that nothing is known of its life-cycle although there are tentative links with elms. The disparate nature of two of the early locations and the fact that only eighteen years separate the earliest and last of these records is interesting.

The adult is figured in Pelham-Clinton (*op. cit.*), but a somewhat better illustration may be found in Johansson, R., Neilsen, E.S., van Nieukerken, E.J., and Gustafsson, B., (1990. *The Nepticulidae and Opostegidae (Lepidoptera) of north west Europe* **23**, **2**: 471). Pelham-Clinton does not figure the genitalia. Although the figures in Johansson et al (*op. cit.*) are excellent, this work is not widely represented in the personal entomology libraries of British lepidopterists and so the opportunity is taken here to illustrate the genitalia of the Writtle specimen.— BRIAN GOODEY, 298 Ipswich Road, Colchester, Essex CO4 0ET (E-mail: brian@essexmoths.org.uk).



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