







## MOTHS FOR BEGINNERS : PART 2

### A BRIEF GUIDE TO SOME COMMON BROWN NOCTUIDS

This guide emphasises flight season and wing markings, but flight season may vary depending on the weather. Also some moths have a second generation (see text). Although the basic ground colour is brown, for many of these moths it can vary from greyish through shades of brown to a yellowish or reddish tinge.

<p>Late winter into Spring</p>	 <p><u>Common Quaker</u> Large rounded pale-outlined oval (1) and kidney (2) marks with pale outer crossline (3) and rounded wing tip (4)</p>	 <p><u>Hebrew Character</u> Pale-edged oval mark set within black bar to make 'character'</p>	 <p><u>Small Quaker</u> Small size, pale ground colour with partially dark kidney mark (1) and curved row of dark spots (often faint) (2)</p>	 <p><u>Chestnut</u> Red-brown colour with kidney mark part-dark (1), cross lines (2) and veins (3) usually visible</p>
	 <p><u>Clouded Drab</u> Very variable darkish grey-brown or reddish with oblique dark shading between marks (1) and in patches along pale outer crossline (2), with slightly sharp-tipped wing (3)</p>	 <p><u>Twin-spotted Quaker</u> Shades of brown with two dark dots next to outer crossline</p>		

late Spring into  
early Summer



Shuttle-shaped Dart  
Oval mark shaped like weavers' shuttle (1), kidney mark usually dark (2)



Flame Shoulder  
Distinctive pale stripe down leading edge of wing (1); bright oval mark set in dark inner stripe (2)



Nut-tree Tussock Thickset  
with dark brown basal region including eye-like oval mark (1), contrasting with lighter outer part (2)



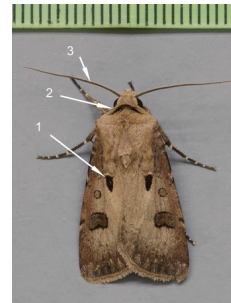
Treble Lines  
Three distinct crosslines on plain ground colour



Turnip Moth  
Elongated form, club-like mark (1), variable dark shading, white hindwing, male with feathered antennae (2), (also later generation)



Heart & Club  
Stocky form, open club-like mark (1), often paler central shading (2), brown hindwing, male has feathered antennae (3) (one generation)



Heart & Dart  
Dart-like solid mark (1) with relatively plain background and dark 'collar' (2); antennae not feathered (3)



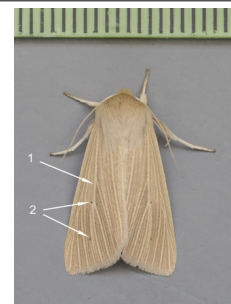
Ingrailed Clay  
Very variable but often pale orange-brown base colour with dark area between marks (1) small dark spot next to oval mark (2) is diagnostic



Setaceous Hebrew Character  
Pale 'collar' (1) and pale triangular blotch piercing central dark band (2)



Rustic Shoulder-knot  
Black streaks on 'shoulders' (1) and pale oval and kidney marks with dark blotch in latter (2)



Common Wainscot  
Straw-coloured or reddish plain background with pale veins (1) sometimes with black dots (2)



Brown Rustic  
Dark brown with lighter central band traversed by blackish shading (1) and pale spots along leading edge of wing (2)



Marbled/Rufous/Tawny Marbled  
Minor\*

Three similar small but highly variable species, with broad (sometimes pale) outer band (1) and dark central bar (2)

Summer



Dark Arches

Large with dark vertical streaks (1) large pale oval and kidney marks (2), and pale 'W' mark at outer edge (3)



Large Yellow  
Underwing

Very large and variable but with dark kidney mark (1) and small discrete dark marks near outer wing edge (2)



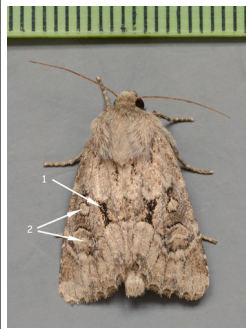
Lesser Yellow  
Underwing

Large with diffuse dark sub-terminal area (1); crosslines variably present (2)



Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow  
Underwing

Greenish 'collar' with pale edge extending down wing (1); broad purplish-brown crossbands (2)



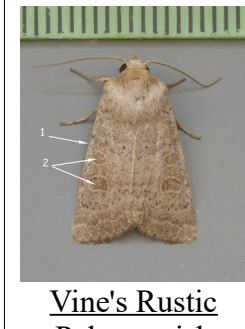
**Flounced Rustic**  
Thickset with variable dark central bar or club/hook (1) and pale oval and kidney marks (2)



**Common/Lesser Common Rustic\*\***  
Very variable with kidney mark at least partly with thick pale outline (1), crosslines just visible



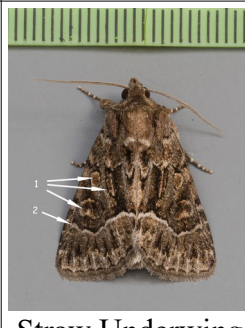
**Rustic/Uncertain\*\***  
Oval and kidney marks relatively small and dark often with thin pale outline (1), crossline strength varies.



**Vine's Rustic**  
Pale greyish brown with straight costa (1) and relatively large oval and kidney marks (2) (+ small earlier generation)



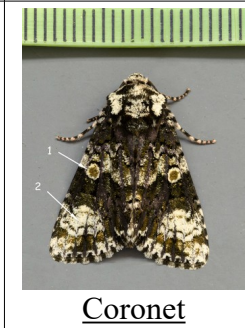
**Bright-line Brown-eye**  
Orange patch ('eye') in kidney mark (1) and white 'W' mark at outer edge (2)



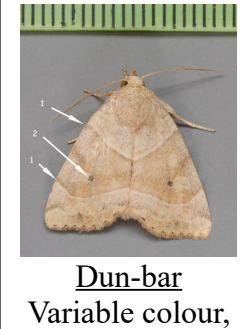
**Straw Underwing**  
Pale-outlined oval/kidney marks as well as club-like mark (1) and white crossline (2), with pale straw underwing



**Copper Underwing\*\*\***  
Large with eye-like oval mark set in dark streak (1), and pale crosslines (2), coppery underwing



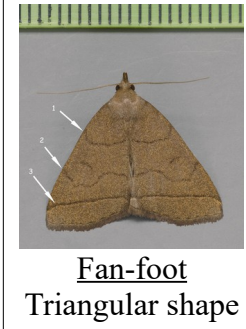
**Coronet**  
Commonly dark greenish ground colour with round eye-like oval mark (1), and white 'crown' beyond kidney mark (2)



**Dun-bar**  
Variable colour, distinctive angular cross-lines (1) enclosing shaded central area with dark spot in kidney mark (2)







**Snout**  
Overall triangular shape with long palps ('snout') (1), dark crosslines (2), and hooked wing apex (3) (two generations)



**Fan-foot**  
Triangular shape and uniform mid-brown colour, with two curved crosslines (1,2) but the outer line almost straight (3)



**Small Fan-foot**  
Similar to Fan-foot but smaller and crosslines differ: first is almost straight (1), second curved (2) and third curves to meet wing apex (3)

<p>late Summer into Autumn</p>	 <p><u>Square-spot Rustic</u> Pale squarish kidney mark (1), often linked to oval by dark patch (2), crosslines variable</p>	 <p><u>Black Rustic</u> Elongated shape, deep brown-black with outer edge of kidney mark outlined in white (1)</p>	 <p><u>Beaded Chestnut</u> Colour variable, dark patches along wing edge (1) and near apex (2), oval mark at steep angle (3), oval and kidney marks narrow and at least partly dark</p>	 <p><u>Lunar Underwing</u> Colour variable, often with prominent pale veins (1) and crosslines, discrete dark marks at wing edge (2) and pale outer band (3). Lunar mark on underwing.</p>
--------------------------------	---	---	---	---

\*There are 3 highly variable Minor species; these may be separated in some well-marked examples (see Field Guide), but commonly are not well-marked and blackish.

\*\*See [http://www.mothscount.org/text/105/guide\\_to\\_difficult\\_species\\_online.html](http://www.mothscount.org/text/105/guide_to_difficult_species_online.html). No reliable features have been found to separate the Common Rustic and the Lesser Common Rustic without dissection. Fresh specimens of the Rustic and the Uncertain can be separated on some features given in the Field Guides, but often this is difficult (see also <http://www.northumberlandmoths.org.uk/> and look under 'id tips').

\*\*\* There are two equally-common species of Copper Underwing which can be distinguished mainly by the extent of copper colour in the underwing (see Field Guides)

Text by John Thacker. Photos © John Thacker