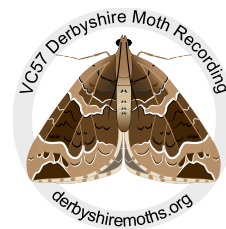


## **Scientific Dissection and “Gen Det” for Identification Purposes**



In entomology and wildlife recording, a “Gen Det” (Genitalia Determination) is conducted to conclusively identify, in most cases, a moth species when it cannot be distinguished by its external wing patterns alone.

Many moth species are “cryptic”, meaning they look completely identical from the outside. Because the structural shapes of insect genitalia act like a unique lock-and-key mechanism specific to each species, examining these organs under a microscope is often the only definitive method to tell them apart. As a recording team we are well aware that not everyone supports this scientific determination process.

The recording Team is pleased to announce that one of our team members has now completed a course on Scientific Dissection and is able to conduct a “Gen Det” to determine to species.

Our team member is happy to undertake this process, but for the time being we have decided to limit this to potential new species and 2nd, 3rd records for VC57 and species that are extremely rare or are a migrant and in both cases would represent a very significant record for the vice-county and that cannot be confidently identified by any other means.

Any species that is considered to be readily identifiable as adults should not be submitted or considered for dissection. Any moth that is worn or damaged, in the vast majority of occasions it is highly likely they will be common, i.e. pugs and noctuids, taken at light in gardens, and unless there are compelling reasons that a moth is something unusual, they are best left unidentifiable and unrecorded.

### **What to Do**

**First of all there must be a good reason and value in conducting any “Gen Det”.**

**Our team member does not want to be inundated with masses of specimens, so please consider each situation carefully.**

In the majority of occasions, the requirement of a “Gen Det” will most likely relate to a Micro Moth species, but there may be some instances where a Macro Moth may need to be scientifically determined, such as a new species for the vice-county or a migrant etc.

In all cases of submission for a “Gen Det”, a quality photograph of the adult moth is required, preferably in its live state, an idea of the potential species and any specialised/specialist habitat.

In the first instance, if you think you have trapped a moth that meets the above criteria then first of all do not release it. Please contact myself via the website **Contact Page**, I will then get back to you and advise what to do further.

Many thanks.

*Tony Davison*

Tony Davison  
Joint Derbyshire Moth Recorder.