

**Life history notes on the moths *Gonodontis luteola* (Turner, 1904) (Lepidoptera : Geometridae) and *Speiredonia spectans* (Guenée, 1852) (Lepidoptera : Noctuidae) – Peter Hendry and John Moss**

*Preamble*

In November 2005 John Moss and Ross Kendall returned from a field trip to the Hendry's bush block, some 28 km SW of Gin Gin. They were excited by a large collection of various lepidoptera larvae collected in dry vine scrub. Peter was called upon to photograph the collection and over the following weeks recorded the subsequent pupal and adult stages. This is where the story began and nearly ended! At the time, with his computer down, Peter transferred the images to disk via a work computer and in spite of several searches over the ensuing years the images were not to be found. In a subsequent mishap John lost the adults when a storage freezer broke down.

After completion, in late 2010, of a lepidoptera studio to house his collection, Peter moved all the computer disks from the house to the studio. In February 2011 Jak Guyomar gave him a disk of unrelated larvae for identification. After an initial look the unmarked disk was placed with all the others. Subsequently, finding the time to have another look at Jak's images, the first disk placed in the computer contained the missing images from 2005!

*Gonodontis luteola* Geometridae : Ennominae



*Gonodontis luteola*  
Larvae Figs. 1 to 3  
Adult Fig. 4 & 5

This species, found feeding on *Flindersia australis*, fam. Rutaceae, had the most unusual larvae collected on the trip. The larvae have a pair of long dorsal protuberances on the second abdominal segment. While other geometrids e.g. *Oenochroma* species and indeed larvae from other families have short dorsal protuberances, the length of these makes them quite bizarre. A larva collected on the 15/11/2005 had pupated and emerged by the 9/12/2005. At that time both of us were clueless as to what the species was. When Peter recovered the images he immediately recognized it as a *Gonodontis* species. After co-authoring, with the late Murdoch De Baar, an article on *Gonodontis orthotoma* (*Metamorphosis Australia* issue 59), in which they stated they could find nothing on its biology, Peter is now happy to find something on one of the five known Australian species. It is

noted that of the plant families recorded as hosts for overseas species, Rutaceae is not amongst them! On the 10/04/2010 a specimen of *G. luteola* was taken at a light trap at the same site.

*Speiredonia spectans* Noctuidae : Catocalinae



*Speiredonia spectans*

Larvae Figs. 6 & 7

Pupa Fig. 8

Adult Fig. 9

It has long been reported (Common 1990, Monteith 2007) that nothing is known of the biology of the

Granny's Cloak Moth, *Speiredonia spectans*. This common species is often found clustering under houses, in garages and other dark places. On Peter's bush block it has appeared in large numbers in the outdoor loo! Once, when jumping on top of a hollow log, hundreds flew from within! John found the larvae feeding on Yellow Tulip, *Drypetes deplanchei* fam. Euphorbiaceae. While this plant is widespread, mainly in dry vine scrub, we do not believe it can be the only host plant involved, due to the appearance of the moth in other situations. *S. spectans* occurs in the Northern Territory and from the Atherton Tableland, Queensland, to central New South Wales (Common 1990). Common noted a V.J. Robinson record of the related species *S. mutabilis* feeding on acacia. John subsequently found the larvae at Mt. Elliott, Townsville, in 2006, again feeding on *D. deplanchei*. The larvae collected on the 15/11/2005 had pupated by the 25/11/2005 and emerged by the 9/12/2005.

Photos Peter Hendry

References:

Common, I.F.B. 1990. *Moths of Australia*. Melbourne University Press.

Monteith, G.B. 2007. Butterflies and Moths. In *Wildlife of Greater Brisbane*.  
2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. Queensland Museum.

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