

1867 (8620) Treble-bar *Aplocera plagiata* (Linnaeus, 1758)

ssp. plagiata (Linnaeus, 1758)

ssp. scotica (Richardson, 1952)

Common

Common

1868 (8622) Lesser Treble-bar *Aplocera efformata* (Guenée, 1857)

Common

Diagnostic external characters

At first glance this species pair appear to be very similar, and they were only recognised as two distinct species relatively late in the study of British moths. The differences in wing markings described by Waring *et al.* (2009) are a very useful guide, but the sharper, more acute angle of the basal line in *efformata* is not always obvious and both species vary to some extent in size and coloration. However, identification can usually be confirmed by close inspection of the tip of the abdomen. Waring *et al.* (2009) show the abdomen in male *plagiata* and both sexes of *efformata*, but not female *plagiata* and Clancy (2001) illustrates the males. The abdomen is generally shorter in *efformata*, and, significantly, an early common name for it was Short-tailed Treble-bar, as used by Tams (1941).

The differences in the shape of the abdomen can usually be seen on the live moths in both sexes without the need for anaesthetisation by viewing from underneath, for example through a transparent surface such as the base of a pill-box. In doubtful cases, examination of the valvae of the males, or dissection in the case of females, will provide confirmation.

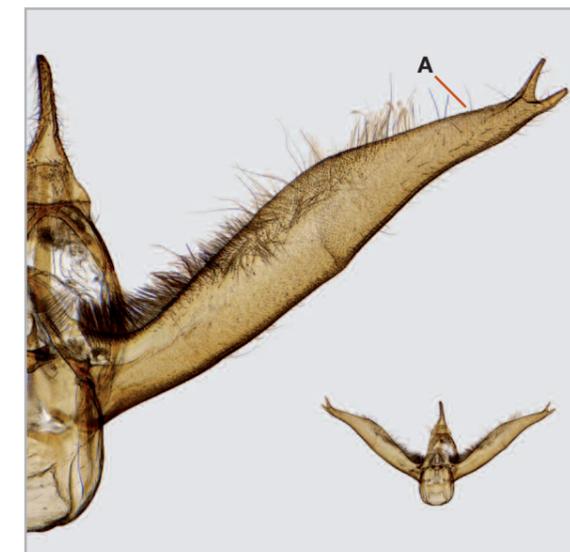
Diagnostic morphological characters of the males

Abdomen very pointed (Fig. 28). Valva (Fig. 29, A) very long and narrow, apex bifurcate.....*plagiata*

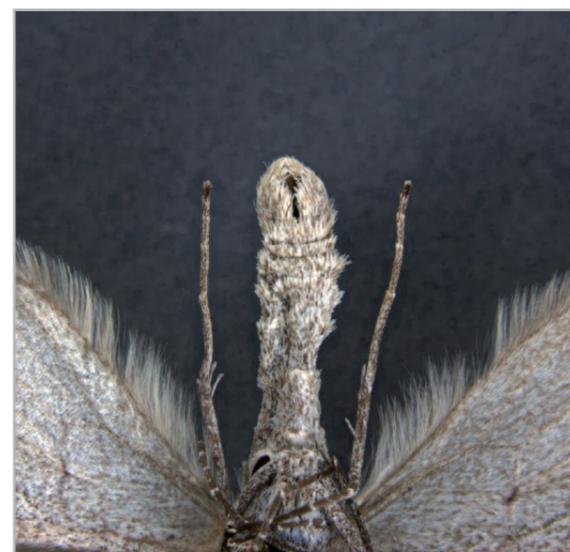
Abdomen shortly tapered to apex (Fig. 30). Valva (Fig. 31, A) much shorter and broader, curved strongly inwards, and constricted medially. Apical third rudder-shaped; also broad costal extension with rounded apex.....*efformata*



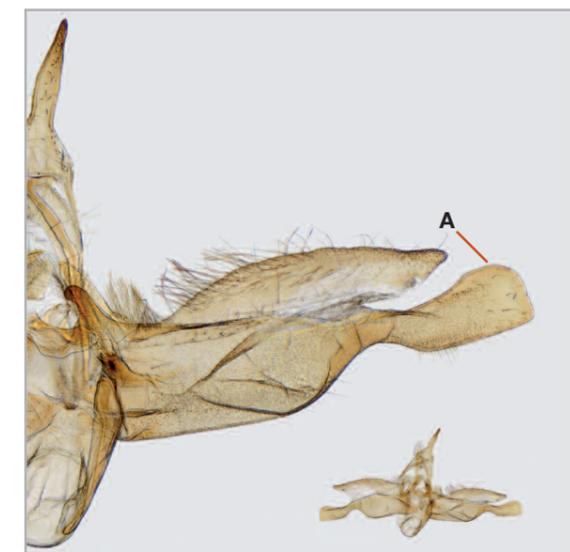
28. *Aplocera plagiata*



29. *Aplocera plagiata*



30. *Aplocera efformata*



31. *Aplocera efformata*

Diagnostic morphological characters of the females

Abdomen (Fig. 32), with distinctive stepped appearance, with seventh and eighth segments distinctly narrower than sixth, in both ventral and lateral view. Usually longer than in *efformata*.

Ostium slightly concave (Fig. 33, A). Sub-genital plate lacking central notch, lateral margins angled strongly inwards to posterior margin (B). Ductus bursae (C) relatively straight, forming shallow S-shape.....*plagiata*

Abdomen (Fig. 34) usually shorter, in ventral view rounded to apex, only narrowed sharply in lateral view.

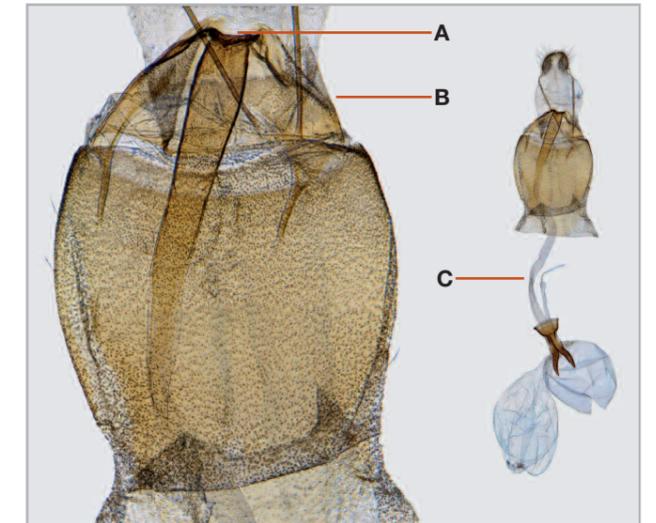
Ostium deeply concave, and adjacent part of anterior margin of sub-genital plate notched (Fig. 35, A).

Lateral and posterior margins of sub-genital plate almost at right angles (B).

Ductus bursae (C) very bowed, with sharp bend after straight section from ostium.....*efformata*



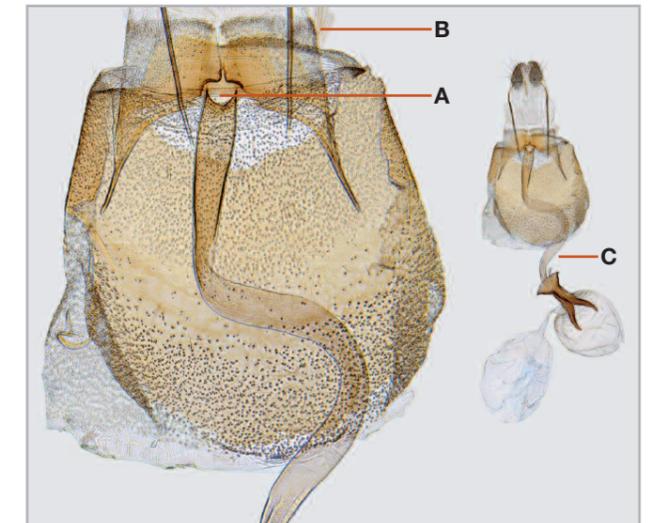
32. *Aplocera plagiata*



33. *Aplocera plagiata*, with ostium area enlarged



34. *Aplocera efformata*



35. *Aplocera efformata*, with ostium area enlarged