

Ted Edwards (Australian National Insect Collection) reply to our request for the biology background of *B. Asblaea*

Perhaps I should detail my role in identifying your *Barea osbolaea*. Images of adults and male genitalia were sent to me by Martin Honey in April this year and I was able to confirm that Martin's identification of *Barea asbolaea* was correct in the present state of our knowledge. Martin had been able to reach such an identification because the species was described by Edward Meyrick from Deloraine, Tasmania, and the holotype was in the British Museum (NH). What Martin could not do was compare it with other related species described by A.J. Turner where the holotypes are in the ANIC (Australian National Insect Collection, Canberra). This I was able to do for him and could establish that your specimens were not one of the species described by Turner. This was essential in confirming the identification of *B. osbolaea*. This involved some work in the collection and in all the manuscript material we have here (for example we have photographs of Meyrick's holotype and photographs of the male genitalia of his specimen). I was also able to conclude that we have no specimens from mainland Australia and the only specimens definitely identified as *B. osbolaea* are from Tasmania.

At this stage I should point out that our knowledge of Australian moths is very very different from that in UK. There are something over 2000 described species of Oecophoridae and probably more than 2000 as yet undescribed although a significant proportion of the undescribed species are represented in the ANIC. It means we know very little about them and every act of curation in the collection is really a small research project. I am retired and there is currently no professional microlepidopterist in Australia. Nor are there amateurs who can tackle microlepidoptera, there are too many and too little is known of them to make progress without institutional facilities.

What we can say is that the species of *Barea* whose biology is known feed on moist and decaying bark or wood or other dead plant material. Details of the foods of other species may be found on p. 153 of Common, I.F.B. 2000. Oecophorine Genera of Australia. Vol. 3. Monographs of Australian Lepidoptera Vol. 8. CSIRO Publishing, Collingwood. 453 pp.

We can also say that the short series of *B. asbolaea* in the ANIC were collected in the months of November, January and February. We can say no more about their biology in Australia than this. They (*B. asbolaea*) have not been reared in Australia. So there simply is no information of the type you are seeking available, either published or unpublished.

Ted Edwards