

How to find a new moth family

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In October 2009, Richard Glatz, an insect molecular biologist with the Waite Institute, Adelaide, collected a small moth which looked 'very unusual' to him and was fortuitously passed on to the Australian National Insect Collection at CSIRO, Canberra, where it was pronounced sufficiently different to become the target of a special field expedition. My involvement in a trip to Kangaroo Island in October 2012, and its outcome, will be discussed. The result is indeed a new family of primitive moths with some extraordinary features that place it close to the base of Lepidopteran phylogeny. The age of discovery is clearly not yet over—a little serendipity and a sharp eye can achieve results where perhaps a massive research grant and expeditionary force might not.

