

GLOUCESTERSHIRE MOTH REPORT 2005

At the time of writing this report I have received about 6000 records from 30 recorders who have sent more than 10 records. There are several others who have sent in a handful of records. From garden traps I only include one representative record per species per year. For example I may receive 2500 records from one garden, but will only enter on my database 190 records if that is the number of species. When it can readily be done, I do however record such information as 'one of 34 records'. All records from sites other than gardens are included.

The weather was quite favourable for much of the season after a bad start, and several trapping sessions were rewarded with good numbers of species. For example on National Moth Night we recorded 122 species at The Park, Tidenham Chase.

Having said that I continue to express concern about moth numbers as there seems to be a general decline. This has implications for many birds, bats and invertebrates. This has been shown to be true on a national scale by work done by Rothamsted Research after analysing the data gained over several decades from the network of traps that they run.

There have been several **new county records**. The numbers refer to the Checklist drawn up by Bradley and Fletcher.

55 *Stigmella aeneofasciella*. A leaf mine on Agrimony was recorded by Guy Meredith at Snows Farm NR on 9.x.2005.

366a *Cameraria ohridella*. A leaf mine on Horse Chestnut was recorded by Guy Meredith near Nailsworth on 24.ix.2005. This is a fairly new species to Britain and information about it is only available on the internet.

638a *Denisia albimaculella*. This is an oecophorid and was recorded by Michael Harper (Herefordshire Moth Recorder) and Mike Bradley at Betty Daw's Wood NR on 19.vi.2005.

662 *Pseudatemelia subochreella*. Another oecophorid. This was recorded on the same night at Betty Daw's Wood by the two Michaels. The larva constructs a case and feeds on leaf litter on the ground.

836 *Caryolum kroesmanniella*. John Langmaid found larvae on Stitchwort near Speech House on 18.v.2005 and bred out at least one moth. Apparently this moth has been recorded here before, but I had no reference for it.

1121 *Ancylis upupana*. This tortrix was seen flying with a swarm of *Adela reaumurella* near Broadwell by Guy Meredith on 14.v.2005, and netted. The specimen was retained for identification.

1269 *Cydia conicolana*. Another tortrix. This was netted by Guy on Rodborough Common on 1.v.2005 and I have confirmed the identification.

1699 Least Carpet *Idea rusticate atrosignaria*. This is a macromoth, and was first recorded in the London area in 1831. It remained quite rare until the mid 20th century when it began to expand its range. This first county record was recorded by Val and Denis Jackson at their home on Tidenham Chase on 12.vii.2005.

Two new county records from 2004 have also been reported.

605 *Elachista pomerana*. Recorded at Ashleworth Ham NR on 7.viii.2004 by Mike Bradley and confirmed by Michael Harper.

704 *Agonopterix scopariella*. Recorded at Chase End Hill (south end of the Malvern range) on 5.viii.2004 by Mike Bradley and also confirmed by Michael Harper.

There are 10 further records, not new to the county, but new to either VC33 or VC34.

Migrants.

2005 was a poor year for migrants. Apart from common ones such as Silver Y and Humming-bird Hawk-moth (19 records so far) the only records were of the **Gem** at Thrupp (Peter Hugo), **Vestal** at Tidenham (Val and Denis Jackson) and Dursley (Steve Chappell) and **Delicate** at Dursley (Steve Chappell) and WWT Slimbridge (Neil Woodward).

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species

Again it has been rather disappointing. Only two of our 17 species have been reported. The **Drab Looper** has been recorded from 9 sites, four of which are new, and the **Silky Wave** from its known stronghold in the Avon Gorge.

Moth recording often produces memorable experiences.

John Coates was helping a tree surgeon pollarding a *Salix caprea* in Charlton Kings last July when they noticed a pair of mating **Lunar Hornet Moths**. These were taken away and photographed before release. Next day John returned to finish clearing up and found a female laying eggs on the bark of the tree. This is the only record I have of anyone actually seeing this elusive moth. The other 11 records I have are all of larval workings or pupal cases after emergence.

I mentioned in my last report that Peter Hugo had searched in vain for the **Plumed Prominent**. This year (2005) he has been successful! He left his trap overnight in Withington Woods on 10th November and at lunchtime the next day there were still 14 in and around the trap. This was the first record since 1976. On the 3rd December Peter was again successful in finding two in Overley Wood. Inspired by this, Guy Meredith tried in Lineover Wood the next day and also found two. The male of this species has most remarkable antennae.

The **Scarce Hook-tip** has until recently been confined (nationally) to the Wye Valley woodlands between Tintern and Chepstow. In 2004 it was recorded in Monmouthshire from St Pierre's Great Wood which is west of Chepstow and outside the Wye Valley.

On 9th July 2005, Val and Denis Jackson trapped one in their garden again outside the Wye Valley at Tidenham. Could it be that this species is getting a little more adventurous? If this is the case there are plenty of places where the larval food-plant (small-leaved lime) can be found and, who knows, we may find further sites in 2006.

I would like to thank all the many recorders who have sent in their records. I cannot mention them all by name, but I must mention Guy Meredith and Peter Hugo who have spent a lot of time away from home producing many valuable records. I must also mention Angus Moir who has been recording in many parts of the county, and whose enthusiasm has infected others.

Finally, rather later than I had intended, I have completed 'Gloucestershire Moths – A Second Account'. I had hoped to publish it in May 2005 but the amount of work involved was underestimated and it has only just been finished. All species accounts now go up to 2004, and there is a list of important records arising in 2005. Full details can be found on the GNS website.

Roger Gaunt, St Briavels, February 2006.



Plumed Prominent Photo: Guy Meredith