

2006 Gloucestershire Moth Report

At the time of writing I have over 7500 records for 2006 on the database with more awaited.

General Observations

Moth recording always produces results of interest and the year 2006 was no exception. There were three principal differences from an average year, all of which might be attributed to changes in weather patterns, or perhaps just random variation. We can't really be sure, but suspicions are gaining ground that the weather is changing.

The first was the remarkable influx of migrants. Since becoming moth recorder about twenty years ago I do not remember a year like it. There have certainly been good years in the past and we did not record any additions to the county list, but the numbers are what stand out in my mind. For example I recorded eleven **Vestal** at my home including three on September 11th and another three on the 28th. Fifteen **Scarce Bordered Straw** were recorded at Culkerton, including three on September 16th (Matthew and Millie Oates).

Not quite as obviously, there seemed to be more dispersal. Moths were turning up unexpectedly in unusual places. For example the **Cream-bordered Green Pea** at Culkerton (Matthew and Millie again), the **Beautiful Snout** at Bishop's Cleeve (Jon Brock) and the **Welsh Wave** and **The Crescent** here at St Briavels. This is in addition to the apparent spreading north and west of some species.

The third difference was the number of second generation adults. The reference books mention the occasional second brood specimens for some species, and we certainly had plenty of these. No mention is made of such broods for the **Rosy Footman** seen here on October 28th or the **Buff Footman** at Thrupp on October 18th (Peter Hugo).

The weather in 2006 started with a fairly average spring, cooler than in recent years. May however was cold, wet and disappointing followed by a hot and sunny June when moth numbers soared. This carried on into July, another good month. The weather in August was rather mixed but September saw a return to fine sunny weather continuing right up to the end of October.

For the next part of this report I will deal with the Macrolepidoptera and Microlepidoptera separately.

Macrolepidoptera

In 'Gloucestershire Moths – A Second Account' published early in 2006, I have two lists of resident (as opposed to migrant) macromoths that have not been seen for some time. One with 43 species is of moths recorded, in many cases vaguely, earlier than 1930 that we are unlikely to see again.

A longer list with 60 species is a list of moths that have not been seen since the millennium, or well before. Some of these are in serious decline nationally. No fewer than five on this list were recorded in 2006. The previous last year is given.

1735	Ruddy Carpet (1998)	Cinderford 23.vi.2006 Liz and Roy Radcliffe
		Lancaut NR 24.vi.2006 George Davis
		Clifford's Mesne 7.vii.2006 David Armstrong
1873	Welsh Wave (1993)	St Briavels 20.vii.2006 Roger Gaunt

- 2036 **Dew Moth** (1986) Swift's Hill NR. 23.vi.2006 (2) Peter Hugo
 Swift's Hill NR 12.vii.2006 (8) Peter Hugo
 2301 **Bird's Wing** (1986) The Wilderness, Mitcheldean 7.vi.2006 Roger Gaunt
 2480 **Buttoned Snout** (1955) Lechlade 31.x.2006 David Scott-Langley

The last was hibernating in a garden umbrella in a shed!

The fine weather in mid-summer produced large numbers of some species that are usually seen singly. Worth mentioning are:

Small Elephant Hawk-moth (37) Cinderford 23.vi.2006 (Liz and Roy Radcliffe)

Chalk Carpet (a BAP species) (23) Swift's Hill NR 12.vii.2006 (Peter Hugo)

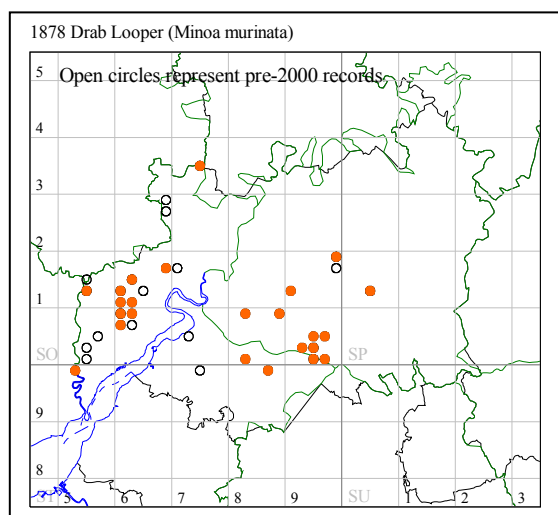
Clouded Magpie (20) Lancaut NR 24.vi.2006 (GeorgeDavis)

Blackneck (29) Leckhampton Hill 7.vii.2006 (Jon Brock)

Four-dotted Footman (29) Haresfield Hill 24.vi.2006 (Roger Pearce).

The last record is particularly interesting as this species is rarely recorded east of the Severn. There have been other records from Haresfield Hill, otherwise the only recent record has been from Stinchcombe Hill.

BAP species



In addition to the **Chalk Carpet** and **Buttoned Snout** mentioned above, the **Drab Looper** was recorded from thirteen woodland sites. Gloucestershire must be a stronghold for this species. Two **Common Fan-foot** were recorded by Gordon Avery and myself on June 29th near Beechenhurst in the Cannop Valley, Forest of Dean. This is the only site from which this species has been recently recorded, and it is hoped to investigate other sites in 2007.

'New' Species

Cypress Pug This was first recorded in 2002. There have been four further records.

Least Carpet First recorded in 2005 in VC34, this has now been recorded in VC33 at Thrupp on July 18th (Peter Hugo).

Migrants

The full list of migrant species so far reported is as follows. NB The eleven Vestal from St Briavels and the fifteen Scarce Bordered Straw from Culkerton mentioned earlier only count as one on this list.

Where there is only one record, more detail is given.

1716 **Vestal** Ten sites

1720	Gem	Culkerton 27.x.2006 (Matthew and Millie Oates)
1972	Convolvulus Hawk-moth	Withington Woods 18.vii.2006 (Peter Hugo)
1984	Humming-bird Hawk-moth	At least 30 sites.
1985	Oleander Hawk-moth	Maidenhall, Highnam August 2006 (David and Win Smith). This record was accepted after a detailed telephone conversation with Mrs Smith.
1990	Striped Hawk-moth	Old Sodbury 7.viii.2006 (WD Putt per Mike Bradley).
2051	Four-spotted Footman	St Briavels 26.ix.2006 (Roger Gaunt)
2091	Dark Swordgrass	Seven sites.
2119	Pearly Underwing	Seven sites.
2194	White-point	Culkerton 1.vii.2006 (Matthew and Millie Oates).
2195	Delicate	Three sites.
2385	Small Mottled Willow	Six sites.
2400	Scarce Bordered Straw	Eleven sites.
2403	Bordered Straw	Nine sites.
2432	Ni Moth	Two sites.
2441	Silver Y	At least 72 sites.

Most recorders of macromoths running light traps limit themselves to their own gardens. I should mention the smaller number who go forth and try elsewhere. These include Robert Homan, Guy Meredith, Denis and Val Jackson, Liz and Roy Radcliffe, Jon Brock, Mike Bradley and two more in particular.

Roger Pearce has, for a number of years, been recording intensively at Ringhill Farm on Haresfield Hill.

Peter Hugo has been placing his three actinic traps overnight in all sorts of places many of which have difficult access.

To all the above many thanks for turning out as you do. Garden records, especially rural gardens are useful to a point, but records from nature reserves and other good habitat are particularly useful.

Microlepidoptera

Recording the microlepidoptera requires time and patience as well as access to quite a number of expensive specialist books. In addition a number of species cannot reliably be determined without genitalia examination.

Because it is such a wide field – there are more than 1800 species of micros on the British list, of which only about a half have been recorded in Gloucestershire – there are opportunities to make new county records in all of the families of microlepidoptera.

Some of the following new county or vice-county records have been determined by visual examination, some by dissection and some by recognition of an early stage such as a leaf mine or a gall. All records of this nature have to be carefully checked.

New records

<u>Code</u>	<u>Taxon</u>	<u>Site</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Recorder</u>	<u>Stage</u>	<u>New to</u>
74	<i>Stigmella assimilella</i>	N of Leckhampton Hill	18/10/06	Guy Meredith	Mine	Glos
104	<i>Stigmella magdalenae</i>	Crabtree Hill	15/10/06	Guy Meredith	Mine	Glos
121	<i>Pseudopostega crepusculella</i>	Hempsted	23/6/06	Gordon Avery	Adult	33
138	<i>Lampronia fuscata</i>	Parkend Walk	2/4/06	Guy Meredith	Gall	Glos
144	<i>Nemophora fasciella</i>	Bushy Grove near Berkeley	21/7/06	Chris Wiltshire	Adult	Glos
265	<i>Bucculatrix cristatella</i>	Whittington Lodge Farm	10/8/06	Robert Homan	Cocoon	33

273	<i>Bucculatrix thoracella</i>	Highland Road, Cheltenham	21/7/06	Guy Meredith	Adult	33
274	<i>Bucculatrix ulmella</i>	Highland Road, Cheltenham	18/6/06	Guy Meredith	Adult	33
275	<i>Bucculatrix bechsteinella</i>	The Apiary, Cheltenham	13/7/06	Robert Homan	Mine	33
492	<i>Coleophora flavipennella</i>	Lineover Wood	26/3/06	Guy Meredith	Case	33
596	<i>Elachista poae</i>	Ashleworth Ham	7/8/04	Mike Bradley	Adult	Glos
662	<i>Pseudatemelia subochreella</i>	St Briavels Common	16/6/05	Roger Gaunt	Adult	Glos
806	<i>Gelechia nigra</i>	Leckhampton	17/7/06	Guy Meredith	Adult	Glos
878	<i>Batrachedra praeangusta</i>	Hempsted	28/6/06	Gordon Avery	Adult	33
891	<i>Mompha stumipennella</i>	Cheltenham St Nicolas	27/7/06	Robert Homan	Gall	Glos
1157	<i>Crociosema plebejana</i>	The Apiary, Cheltenham	31/10/06	Robert Homan	Adult	33
1222	<i>Strophedra nitidana</i>	Saltridge Wood	30/6/06	Guy Meredith	Adult	33
1247	<i>Grapholita funebrana</i>	The Apiary, Cheltenham	30/8/06	Robert Homan	Larval	33
1252	<i>Grapholita lunulana</i>	The Apiary, Cheltenham	3/8/06	Robert Homan	Adult	33
1438	<i>Trachycera suavella</i>	Bishop's Cleeve	17/7/06	Jon Brock	Adult	33
1469	<i>Euzophera cinerosella</i>	The Apiary, Cheltenham	12/6/06	Robert Homan	Adult	33
1699	<i>Idaea rusticata atrosignaria</i>	Thrupp	18/7/06	Peter Hugo	Adult	33
0409a	<i>Argyresthia trifasciata</i>	Dursley	3/6/06	Andy Bendall	Adult	34
1228a	<i>Pammene ignorata</i>	Wetmoor	29/5/06	Guy Meredith	Adult	Glos
1266a	<i>Cydia illutana</i>	Brierley	2/7/06	Guy Meredith	Adult	Glos

Special mention should be made of the tortrix *Pammene ignorata* in the table above.

Guy gave me a number of moths to dissect at the end of the year, and some more that he considered of special interest for David Gibbs to dissect.

Among those that I dissected I found a female that appeared to be *Pammene ignorata*. I sent this off to Dr John Langmaid who is probably the foremost authority in the country, and he agreed with my identification. This was only the second British record, the first having been taken at Axminster, Devon in June 1986. This is not the end of the story, for when I took the other moths to Bristol for David to work on he found another female *ignorata* and as this was taken in May whereas the one I did was taken in July (both from Wetmoor) the May one takes precedence so that we have both the second and third British specimens. It would seem that there must be a colony at Wetmoor, which is part of the enormous Lower Woods GWT Reserve.

Migrants

There are three common migrant micro-moths, the Diamond-back Moth, Rusty-dot Pearl and Rush Veneer. Records for each of these run into double figures. There is a record worth mentioning however and that is the *Palpita vitrealis* (formerly *unionalis*) recorded by Roger Pearce on Haresfield Hill on June 23rd. There have only been two previous Gloucestershire records, both in October 1958.

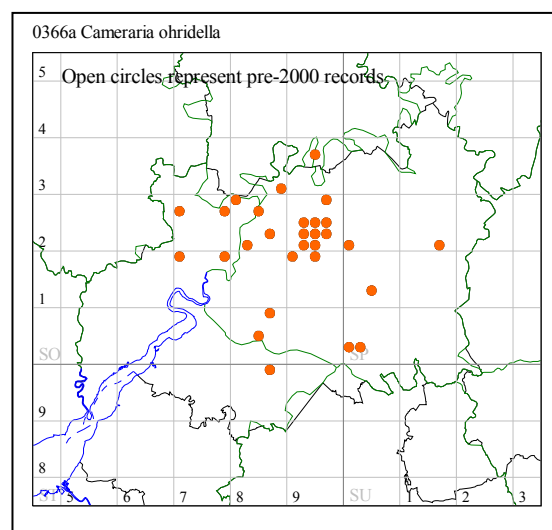
Other micros

The leaf miner *Cameraria ohridella* which mines Horse Chestnut leaves was first recorded in Gloucestershire in September 2005.

It has spread like wild-fire and the map shows how it has since been recorded.

No doubt it is present elsewhere.

Another micro that seems to have expanded its range is the RDB leaf



miner *Stigmella aceris*. This moth was only known from a few trees on the roadside near Apperley. Suddenly it seems to have had a population explosion and has been found almost anywhere within a few miles radius of Cheltenham. The larva mines the leaves of Field Maple.

The tortrix *Crociosema plebejana* in the table above was first recorded in the county by John Martin at Pilning in 2004.

I had no fewer than three here at St Briavels in October 2006. Here is another moth that seems to be spreading.

Robert Homan has produced many more records, among them *Ectoedemia quinquella* (8 records), *Ectoedemia heringi* (3 records), *Phyllocnistis saligna* (15 records), *Bucculatrix ulmella* (3 records) and *Bucculatrix bechsteinella* (5 records). All of these have hitherto been under-recorded. A stem mine in broom made by a larva of *Trifurcula immundella* found near Bromsberrow is the first record for many years.

Guy Meredith probably holds the record for the number of species seen in 2006. His total is no fewer than 558, 340 of which being recorded in daytime. The majority of these are micros.

I would like to thank Guy and Robert in particular for all the work they have been doing on the micros. It is impossible to list all their valuable records and I hope I have not overlooked some really important ones.

Finally I would like to thank all the recorders who have sent in records for 2006. Altogether I have had records from over 40 people. I apologise to any who have not had a mention in the above report. It has been quite difficult to decide what to include and what to omit.

Roger Gaunt, St Briavels, 5th February 2007.

