

Gloucestershire Moth Report 2007

2007 got off to a slow start with wet and windy conditions initially, however normal weather returned in March and April was outstanding with 'summer' weather. Indeed many of the summer species appeared up to a month early. May was only average and June and July are best forgotten being cold and wet for the most part. Though the weather was a little better in August moth numbers did not improve much. September was reasonably dry, but in general the autumn was only average.

Having had such a brilliant year in 2006, the year now being reviewed was very disappointing. Even so with many species to consider, a small army of active recorders and over 7000 records for the year already in the database with more to come there is plenty to report.

MACROLEPIDOPTERA

There is one new species for the county and that is **Cypress Carpet**. This was recorded and photographed by John Martin at Pilning (VC 34) on 14th October. This was first recorded in mainland Britain in 1984 and has become well established along the south coast.

There were far fewer migrants than in 2006. The only ones worthy of special mention are **Pearly Underwing** (Cheltenham – Guy Meredith, and Thrupp – Peter Hugo), **Delicate** (Cinderford – Liz Radcliffe) and **Great Brocade** (Pilning - John Martin; John had two different individuals on 23rd and 28th August).

There is news of the **Barberry Carpet** one of our Red Data-book species. One was recorded in the Rothamsted trap at Westonbirt on 3rd September 2006. Larvae were recorded a couple of days later by Paul Waring *et al* however 2007 saw the first record away from Westonbirt for a long time. Matthew Oates had a worn specimen at his home at Culkerton on 30th August.

Until 2007 the Lower Woods complex had the only known population of **Light Orange Underwing** in the county. The knowledge that a good number of Aspen trees grow in Collinpark Wood took Guy Meredith there on the 5th April. There he found a female of the species and was able to confirm the identity.

The **Chalk Carpet** was a target for National Moth Night and Day. Despite several sites being searched the only ones found were on the Postlip side of Cleeve Hill where Robert Homan was successful in finding four altogether.

When discovered, the young alders at Woorgreens were for several years the only known site for the **White-barred Clearwing**. Slowly new sites within the main part of the Forest of Dean are being found. A male was attracted to my pheromone lure in the Greathough Brook Valley on 2nd June.

The **Pauper Pug** (Red Data-book) has hitherto been found only in the Wye Valley in this part of the country. Guy Meredith knocked one up in Welshbury Wood on 10th June. This is not entirely surprising as this wood has a marvellous stand of ancient Small-leaved Lime coppice.

The **Great Prominent** is worth a mention. It has been recorded regularly in the Forest of Dean and also at Westonbirt. Peter Hugo has found that there is a good population at the GWT Midger Reserve where he has recorded up to eight at a time and most surprisingly Steve Owen had one at Winchcombe on 4th May. As far as I can tell this is the first ever record from VC 33.

The spectacular **Emperor Moth** turns up once or twice a year in the Gloucester – Cheltenham area so it was interesting to have two records this year from the Stroud Valleys.

Only the second **Bird's Wing** in many years was trapped at Pool Hill near Newent by Mike Bradley on 17th May.

Mention should be made of the BAP species **Drab Looper**. For reasons that are not entirely clear, Gloucestershire seems to be a hot-spot for this day-flying species. It is well established in several parts of the county where the food-plant is present and this year there were no fewer than 22 records with as many as 30 being seen at the same site.

Peter Hugo had a field meeting in Withington Woods in early November to show quite a large gathering the **Plumed Prominent**. Some people came from far afield as this species is quite rarely recorded. Roy Hilton also recorded this species at one of our other sites Lineover Wood.

Though by no means common, the **Waved Black** seems to be becoming less uncommon. Our first modern record was in 2001, since which time it has been recorded in six different places. This year the new records are from Cinderford (Liz Radcliffe) and Clifford's Mesne (David Armstrong).

There were two more records of the **Ruddy Carpet** in 2007 following the three in the previous year. These were from Neil Tappin at Northwood Green on 10th June and David Armstrong at Clifford's Mesne on 11th July.

Other species recorded just once in 2007 and worth mentioning are

Blossom Underwing - Yorkley Wood, 13th April, Rosie Castle

Small Brindled Beauty - St Briavels, 6th March, Roger Gaunt.

Double Lobed - Thrupp, 6th August, Peter Hugo

Alder Kitten - Cinderford, 17th May, Liz Radcliffe

Wood Tiger - Haresfield Hill, 2nd June, Roger Pearce - a new site. There were two other records from known sites.

Great Oak Beauty - Kidnalls, 16th June, George Davis - a new site.

Chevron - The Park, Tidenham Chase, 11th August, Alan Prior *et al.*

Devon Carpet - Greathough Brook Valley, 9th August, Roger Gaunt *et al.*

MICROLEPIDOPTERA

Guy Meredith and Robert Homan in particular have continued intensive recording of the smaller moths. Guy has devoted many hours to this work and has produced over 1400 records of micro-moths this year. As he knows the county so well from his years as butterfly recorder he knows where to look for food-plants and suitable habitats for his target species.

In a year when weather conditions were not helpful they still managed to find a number of new county and vice-county records. These are tabulated below along with those from other recorders.

| <u>Code</u> | <u>Taxon</u> | <u>Site</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Recorder</u> | <u>Stage</u> | <u>New to</u> |
|-------------|---|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| 39 | <i>Ectoedemia heringi</i> Mine VC33 | Lineover Wood | | 16/11/07 | Guy Meredith | |
| 41 | <i>Ectoedemia atrifrontella</i> Mine Glos. | Collinpark Wood | | 2/4/07 | Robert Homan | |
| 74 | <i>Stigmella assimilella</i> Mine Glos. | Collinpark Wood | | 24/8/07 | Robert Homan | |

| | | | | |
|------|---|-----------------|----------|--------------------------|
| 289 | <i>Caloptilia falconipennella</i> Fold Glos. | Cheltenham | 20/9/07 | Robert Homan |
| 440 | <i>Paraswammerdamia</i> VC33 <i>albicapitella</i> | Haresfield Hill | 31/8/07 | Roger Pearce Adult |
| 473 | <i>Acrolepiopsis assectella</i> Larval VC33 | Cheltenham | 11/10/07 | Robert Homan |
| 602 | <i>Elachista apicipunctella</i> VC33 | Dowdeswell Wood | 8/5/07 | Guy Meredith Adult |
| 666 | <i>Semioscopis avellanella</i> Adult VC33 | Thrupp | 13/4/07 | Peter Hugo |
| 691 | <i>Agonopterix purpurea</i> VC33 | Colesbourne | 8/4/07 | Guy Meredith Adult |
| 1023 | <i>Cnephasia genitalana</i> | Brassey NR | 4/8/07 | Guy Meredith Adult Glos. |
| 1055 | <i>Acleris hyemana</i> Adult Glos. | Wigpool | 26/9/07 | Colin |
| 1314 | <i>Catoptria margaritella</i> Adult Glos. | Dursley | 5/8/07 | Peter Cranswick |

The above are all species that have never been recorded in the vice-county (or county). There are more records of species that have not been recorded for many years - perhaps as long as a century ago! I will list the species below, and if anyone wishes to know more please ask!

| <u>Code</u> | <u>Taxon</u> | <u>Last year recorded</u> | <u>Site</u> | <u>Recorder</u> |
|-------------|---|---------------------------|---|-----------------|
| | | No firm | | |
| 82 | <i>Stigmella paradoxa</i> | record | Leckhampton Hill | Guy Meredith |
| 101 | <i>Stigmella pyri</i> | 1977 | N of Leckhampton Hill | Guy Meredith |
| 101 | <i>Stigmella pyri</i> | 1977 | Cheltenham | Robert Homan |
| | | No firm | | |
| 107 | <i>Stigmella regiella</i> | record | Cheltenham | Robert Homan |
| 128 | <i>Phylloporia bistrigella</i> | 1922 | Welshbury Wood | Guy Meredith |
| 245 | <i>Tinea pallescentella</i> | 1955 | Bishop's Cleeve Greathough Brook | Jon Brock |
| 478 | <i>Phaulernis fulviguttella</i> | 1941 | Valley | Guy Meredith |
| 617 | <i>Elachista obliquella</i> | 1924 | Cotswold Water Park Greathough Brook | Robert Homan |
| 764 | <i>Pseudotelphusa scalella</i> <i>Pseudotelphusa</i> | 1977 | Valley Greathough Brook | Roger Gaunt |
| 773 | <i>paripunctella</i> | 1937 | Valley | Roger Gaunt |
| 855 | <i>Acompsia cinerella</i> | 1936 | Hailey Wood | Guy Meredith |
| 1122 | <i>Ancylis obtusana</i> | 1964 | Cannop Valley | Dave Grundy |
| 1254 | <i>Cydia strobilella</i> | 1930 | Cannop Valley | Guy Meredith |
| 1330 | <i>Donacaula mucronellus</i> | 1900 | Hempsted | Gordon Avery |

I have also had some older Slimbridge records from Alan Prior. His group recorded 1328 *Schoenobius gigantella* there in 2005. This is the first record of this species for over 100 years.

I have already mentioned the work done on the micros by Guy Meredith and Robert Homan. I must also make special mention of the work done by Peter Hugo mainly on the macros. Peter traps frequently in many different places. A quick check of my records makes over 40 trapping visits in 2007. He has concentrated on the Midger Reserve and Greystones Farm this year adding 53 to the species list for the former and 91 to the species list for the latter.

The following is, I hope, a full list of those who have contributed records this year and many thanks to them all.

David Armstrong, Tricia Atkinson, Gordon Avery, Michael Bradley, Jon Brock, Rosie Castle, Peter Cranswick, Rob Crofton, David Cross, George Davis, Peter Fitchett, John Fleming, Dave Grundy, David Haigh, Robin Hemming, Ken Heron, Roy Hilton, Robert Homan, Peter Hugo, David Iliff, John Martin, Guy Meredith, Clive Mowforth, J. Oakley, Matthew Oates, Grace O'Donovan, Steve Owen, Mark Parsons, Roger Pearce, Gavin Peplow, Vic Polley, Alan Prior *et al*, Ivan Proctor, Liz Radcliffe, Ian Ralphs, Neil Tappin, Kelly Thomas, Chris Tracey, Colin Twissell, Richard Tyler, Roger Ward, Paul Waring *et al*, Steve Whitehouse and John Widgery.

Roger Gaunt, St Briavels, 11th February 2008.