

GLOUCESTERSHIRE MOTH REPORT - 2008

The weather in 2008 was again disappointing and following a poor year in 2007 there has been generally low numbers and some lack of incentive to run a moth trap, compared with earlier years.

March was only just average and April rather poor. The early part of May brought some respite and things started to move but the second half of the month was again not very rewarding. During June the weather was reasonable however numbers continued to be below average and the same pattern continued into July. August was so wet that trapping between the downpours became difficult. The following months were average or below.

Nevertheless over 7000 records have so far been received for the year with more expected.

MACROLEPIDOPTERA

Although a below average year in many respects, 2008 was notable for the recording of several species after long periods with no sightings.

Perhaps the most notable of these was the **Hornet Moth** not seen in the county since 1946. The first record of this came from David Iliff at Woodmancote, Cheltenham who found and photographed a freshly emerged specimen in his garden on 24th June. On emergence early in the morning the moth may be found on the trunks of the tree from which it has emerged. The reference books give various poplars as being the host trees, yet David's was on *Salix acutifolia* and there seem to be no poplars in the vicinity so this suggests an unrecorded host. Three days later Robert Homan found another Hornet Moth on poplar at Deerhurst. Not having his camera he took it home to photograph. On his return he found another attracted to a female and managed to photograph a pair *in cop*. Subsequently Robert has found several trees with possible emergence holes.

WWT Slimbridge is a regular site for a number of trappers as there is a good range of habitat. On 29th August five trappers met for a session and two, Roger Ward and Neil Woodward, were surprised to each trap an **Oblique Carpet**. This species is new to the site and the first record since 1987 when one was taken in the Rothamsted trap at Westonbirt.

The only known site west of the Severn for **The Forester** (on the new list of BAP Priority species) had been Poors Allotment where the last was seen in 1995. This is a metallic green day-flying species. On 31st May Mike King, when 'birding', found and photographed one at this site. Two weeks later two were found 300m apart in Cinderford Linear Park on a GNS Field Meeting. The first was spotted by Steve Whitehouse. This is an entirely new site for this species.

The **Broom-tip** has only been recorded from four sites in the county since 1990 with the last record from East Wood in 1997. I was therefore pleased to have it here (again)

at St Briavels on 25th April when I found one on the trunk of a Scots Pine several feet from my trap site.

The **Clouded Buff** is another elusive day-flying species (it also comes to light). It has only been recorded from three sites in the county in the last century, all in the Forest of Dean. Guy Meredith found one in Cinderford Linear Park on 29th June. The last was seen in the same area in 1999.

There were very few migrants in the year under review. Apart from small numbers of the common ones, the only records I have are as follows. **Convolvulus Hawk-moth** was seen at Oldcroft on 20th September (Alec Kear) and Culkerton on 26th September (Matthew Oates). There were only three sightings of the usually fairly common **Humming-bird Hawk-moth**. The **Pearly Underwing** was recorded in three places, all at the end of August. Finally a **Small Mottled Willow** was recorded at Elcombe on 9th May by Richard Morris and confirmed by Peter Hugo.

I can now confirm that the **Pine Hawk-moth** is in the county at last! An unconfirmed report came from Dursley in 2006 so I was pleased to see a photo of one taken at Chalford Hill by Bob Smith on 9th June. Gordon Avery had an **Obscure Wainscot** at Hempsted on 1st June. It was first recorded in the county at WWT Slimbridge in 2001 and has been recorded subsequently there and at two other places in VC34. Gordon's record is the first for VC33.

John Martin (Pilning) has been sending me records from time-to-time when something particularly interesting has turned up. I decided to send him a species list of the records I have. In return he sent me a spreadsheet with all his records from 1997 tabulated by species and year. Comparing these lists I found that there were many species that he had recorded that were not in my records. Two macro-moths in particular must be mentioned. He recorded **Dark Spinach** in 2005 and **Royal Mantle** in 1999. These, with the four mentioned earlier in this report, are on the list of 'missing' species on page 8 of 'Gloucestershire Moths – A Second Account'. Dark Spinach was last recorded in 1952 and Royal Mantle in 1960. John is one of the authors of the recently published Moths of the Bristol Region.

In no particular order I will mention some of the other rare macromoths that have been reported in 2008.

Satin Lutestring was recorded in Dursley by Peter Cranswick on 29th May. There are very few records from east of the Severn.

Cypress Carpet. Two were recorded at Pilning on 7th June by John Martin. John had the first county record of this species the previous year. It would seem to have become established in his vicinity.

Bird's Wing was recorded by David and Susan Dewsbury at Milkwall, Coleford on 5th June. This is the third record since 1986.

Double Lobed was recorded five times in the second half of July and seems to be becoming more common.

Devon Carpet was recorded in Dursley on 27th July by Peter Cranswick. The only other site east of the Severn from which it has been recorded is the Arboretum at Westonbirt.

Plumed Prominent. Peter Hugo ran what is now becoming an annual field meeting for this species on 15th November. There was a good turnout at Lineover Wood where more than 7 were recorded and some of those present went on to Withington Woods where a further 7 were recorded.

Alder Kitten has been reported from Cinderford (Liz Radcliffe) and Brockweir (Paul Wilkins).

Oak Lutestring and **Blossom Underwing** both from Liz Radcliffe at Cinderford.

Garden Dart has been recorded from Thrupp (Peter Hugo) and Slimbridge (Alan Prior).

White-line Dart has been recorded from Chalford Hill (Bob Smith) and confirmed by Peter Hugo.

David Green has been doing some survey work in Dymock Woods and I have just received his records in time for this report. He made four visits and made 278 records altogether. Most significant was a **Pauper Pug**, an entirely new site for this RDB species. He also recorded **Orange Moth**, **Waved Black** and an astonishing total of 154 **Oak Lutestring** on 31st August.

I should give particular thanks to Peter Hugo who not only traps nightly in his own garden but also places a number of actinic traps in sites all over the eastern part of the county. Not content with this, as Gloucestershire Branch of Butterfly Conservation Moth Officer, he has encouraged quite a number of people to start recording using the branch equipment for starters.

MICROLEPIDOPTERA

The following table shows all the new county records and vice-county records in check-list order.

| <u>Code</u> | <u>Taxon</u> | <u>Site</u> | <u>Date</u> | <u>Recorder</u> | <u>Stage</u> | <u>New to</u> |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|--|-------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| 3 | <i>Micropterix aureatella</i> | Buckle Wood | 13/05/2008 | Guy Meredith | Adult | VC33 |
| 10 | <i>Eriocrania salopiella</i> | Edge Common | 03/04/2008 | Guy Meredith | Adult | VC33 |
| 19 | <i>Bohemannia quadrimaculella</i> | Stanway Park | 24/07/2008 | Robert Homan | Adult | Glos |
| 19 | <i>Bohemannia quadrimaculella</i> | The Delves | 26/07/2008 | Guy Meredith | Adult | VC34 |
| 30 | <i>Ectoedemia arcuatella</i> | Pitchcombe Wood | 03/10/2008 | Guy Meredith | Mine | Glos |
| 31 | <i>Ectoedemia rubivora</i> | Lineover Wood | 16/10/2008 | Guy Meredith | Mine | VC33 |
| 72 | <i>Stigmella myrtilella</i> | The Park, Tidenham Chase below Charlton Kings | 13/10/2008 | Guy Meredith | Mine | Glos |
| 78 | <i>Stigmella incognitella</i> | Common | 01/10/2008 | Guy Meredith | Mine | VC33 |
| 129 | <i>Incurvaria pectinea</i> | Littleworth Wood | 10/05/2008 | Jon Brock | Adult | VC33 |
| 157 | <i>Heliozela hammoniella</i> | Siccaridge Wood | 08/07/2008 | Guy Meredith | Adult | VC33 |
| 185 | <i>Luffia ferchaultella</i> | Lineover Wood | 22/02/2008 | Guy Meredith | Case | Glos |
| 185 | <i>Luffia ferchaultella</i> | Botloe's Green | 20/03/2008 | Robert Homan | Case | VC34 |

| | | | | | | |
|------|----------------------------------|--------------------------|------------|---|-------|------|
| 272 | <i>Bucculatrix cidarella</i> | Dowdeswell Wood | 12/08/2008 | Guy Meredith | Mine | VC33 |
| 387 | <i>Prochoreutis sehestediana</i> | Brassey | 02/08/2008 | Guy Meredith | Adult | VC33 |
| 495 | <i>Coleophora spinella</i> | Bill Smyllie Reserve | 18/05/2008 | Martin Kennard | Case | VC33 |
| 498 | <i>Coleophora alnifoliae</i> | Dowdeswell Wood | 12/08/2008 | Guy Meredith Roger Ward (gen det Alan Prior) | Case | VC33 |
| 565 | <i>Coleophora saxicolella</i> | Charlton Kings | 20/08/2008 | | Adult | VC33 |
| 632 | <i>Cosmiotes consortella</i> | Cheltenham | 09/05/2008 | Guy Meredith | Adult | VC33 |
| 656 | <i>Tachystola acroxantha</i> | Pilning | 06/05/2008 | John Martin | Adult | VC34 |
| 770 | <i>Carpatolechta proximella</i> | NT Sherborne Estate | 20/06/2008 | Guy Meredith | Adult | VC33 |
| 880 | <i>Mompha langiella</i> | Jubilee Wood | 28/06/2008 | Guy Meredith | Mine | VC33 |
| 1144 | <i>Epinotia signatana</i> | NT Sherborne Estate | 20/06/2008 | Guy Meredith | Adult | VC33 |
| 1225 | <i>Pammene obscurana</i> | The Park, Tidenham Chase | 12/05/2008 | Guy Meredith | Adult | Glos |
| 1229 | <i>Pammene albuginana</i> | Ban-y-gor Wood | 07/06/2008 | Roger Gaunt | Adult | Glos |
| 1249 | <i>Grapholita lobarzewskii</i> | Edge Common | 04/07/2008 | Guy Meredith | Adult | Glos |

Guy Meredith, now retired, has continued to visit all parts of the county. He has acquired the skills and equipment for doing dissections, necessary in many cases for accurate determination. This has enabled him to contribute a good number of new records again this year as can be seen from the table. In addition he has added many records for species already on the Gloucestershire lists.

In addition to the new county records in the table there are others made in earlier years by John Martin at Pilning. Precise dates are not at present available.

- 93 *Stigmella centifoliella* Mine determined by John Robbins. Year 2000.
 1336 *Eudonia pallida* Gen det by Mike Bailey. Year 2003. First definite county record.
 1370 *Sitochroa palealis* Year 2006. New to VC34.
 1480 *Homoeosoma nebulella* Year 1997. New county record.

The following is a list of all those who have contributed more than one record in 2008. I would like to thank them all for the contribution they have made to the recording of Moths in Gloucestershire.

Gordon Avery, Philip Barden, Gavin Black, Juliet Bailey, Joyce Barrus, Rick Benson-Bunch, Mike Bradley, Jon Brock, Steve Chappell, Peter Clarke, John Coates, Peter Cranswick, David Cross, David and Susan Dewsbury, Peter Fitchett, David Green, Sten Grendon, Ken Heron, Roy Hilton, Robert Homan, Peter Hugo, David Iliff, Val Jackson, Rosalind Jon, Martin Kennard, John Knowles, Mel Lloyd, John Martin, Guy Meredith, Richard Morris, Joan Oakley, Matthew Oates, Claire Overhill, Steve Owen, Mark Parsons, Roger Pearce, Ian Peters, John and Viv Phillips, Alan Prior, Liz Radcliffe, Bob and Sue Smith, Paul Taylor, Roger Ward, Val Weston, John Widgery, Paul Wilkins and Neil Woodward.

Roger Gaunt, St Briavels, January 2009.