

GLOUCESTERSHIRE MOTHS

2005 Newsletter 2

For most of the time since the last newsletter on 23rd April, there has been little to report as the weather has generally been poor. Things are beginning to improve now and I have enough of interest to make up a newsletter for circulation.

Now is the time to look out for **Drab Looper** wherever there is Wood Spurge in open sunny situations. I saw one at a BC meeting in Hailey Wood on 15th May and Chris Tracey (with Matthew Oates) saw 13 there on the 27th May. Having spotted a potential site south of Tintern some months ago, I was pleased to go there and find plenty of food-plant and the moth present, despite a strong wind. This is a new 10km square for Gloucestershire, though it has been recorded about 5km away in Monmouthshire.

Other records away from garden sites.

Angus Moir saw **Latticed Heath** and **Small Purple-barred** on the BC Masts Reserve and met someone who had just seen a **Wood Tiger**.

Paul Chapman has been up from Bristol and has trapped at James's Thorns where he recorded **Scarce Prominent** and **Square**

Spot, and **Hardwicke** where he recorded **Silver Cloud** among others.

Guy Meredith has retained a voucher specimen of *Ancylis upupana* which was flying with *Adela reaumurella* near Broadwell in the Forest of Dean. This is a new county record. He has found mines of *Eriocrania chrysolepidella* in several places and *Epinotia fraternana* near Parkend.

Robert Homan has found a tenanted mine of *Celypha woodiana* at Coombe Hill Canal.

This is a known site for this RDB species. He has also found a tenanted mine of

Phyllocnistis unipunctella in Pittville Park.

Today in East Wood I saw several of the tiny little plume moth *Adaina microdactyla* and at least 16

Speckled Yellow.



From garden traps.

Gordon Avery (Hempsted); **Mullein**, **Sallow Kitten**, **Silver Cloud**, **Seraphim**, **Orange Footman** and *Aspilapteryx tringipennella*.

Peter Hugo (Thrupp); **Northern Drab**, **Tissue**, **Mullein**, **Orange Footman (max 7)**, **Pine Beauty**, **Seraphim**, **Alder Moth** and **Marbled White-spot**.

Denis Jackson (Tidenham); a fine **Tawny Pinion** which he brought to show me.

Steve Chappell (Cambridge); **Silver Cloud** and **Orange Footman**.

Roger Wasley (Gretton); **Scarce Tissue**.

Robert Homan (Cheltenham); a worn but unmistakable **Pinion-spotted Pug**, the first record for eight years.

As I reported in the last newsletter, I am having trouble with birds entering my trap. It has also been cold many nights here at Coldharbour, so on Friday 27th May when it was so warm, I decided to have a good session positioning the trap away from the house in a new location. I stayed up late and rose again in the night and at dawn to attend to the trap. It was worth it as I had 54 macro species and 8 micros. The macros included **Alder Kitten**, **Mocha** and three **Lime Hawk-moths**. I have also seen **Little Thorn** here twice during the day.

I had intended to publish an updated version of Gloucestershire Moths by now, but have missed my self-imposed deadline. The species accounts are nearly finished, but I wish to include in this edition more comment and analysis than in the first edition. This will take some time to complete to my

satisfaction. It may be possible to make available the species accounts on CD for those desperate for an update at a cost to be deducted from the eventual cost of the second edition.

Below are dates copied from the last newsletter. For further information about times and precise locations phone me on 01594 530475.

Saturday June 4. Near Beechenhurst, trapping for Common Fanfoot.

Friday June 10. Trapping at Greathough Brook Valley, near Brierley, prior to the GNS Bughunt on the following day.

Saturday June 18 (daytime). GIG meeting Clearwell Meend and Gorsty Knoll (FOD).

Saturday July 2. Trapping at Coombe Hill Canal in conjunction with the GWT. This is a big recording weekend for the reserves when it is hoped to record over 500 species. We should be able to produce at least 100 moths.

Saturday July 9. National Moth Night (and day). Details later.

Saturday August 27. Trapping at Crabtree Hill (FOD) for heathland species.

The other day I read in the paper how chemical substances called phthalates can disrupt male (human) babies' reproductive organs in the womb leading to loss of fertility on maturity. The decline in populations of butterflies and moths is often attributed to climate change and loss of habitat. My feeling is that there is something much more sinister going on with minute chemical particles affecting the fertility of many species. When one sees clearwings responding to pheromones, one realises how sensitive insects are. Added to this, there is still plenty of excellent habitat and one can spend time there in perfect conditions and see very little. I think we are unlikely to see butterflies and moths ever again in the numbers seen a generation ago.

Roger Gaunt, St Briavels, 30th May 2005.