

GLOUCESTERSHIRE MOTHS

2006 Newsletter 3

After a cold and wet May, June has turned out to be better for moth recording and I have a good number of interesting records to report.

There have been the usual good number of sightings of 1984 **Humming-bird Hawk-moth** and other common migrants. There has also been an influx of the considerably scarcer 2403 **Bordered Straw**, seen by Liz and Roy Radcliffe at Cinderford on 4th June, Matthew Oates at Culkerton on 7th, Roger Wasley at Gretton, Denis and Val Jackson at Tidenham, and Steve Chappell at Dursley all on 15th, and myself here at St Briavels on 23rd June.

Further records of 1878 **Drab Looper** are from Chris Tracey and Matthew Oates in Hailey Wood, Cirencester Park Estate, from Chris also at Daneway Banks, from Michael Bradley at Chase End Hill and from John and Viv Phillips. They saw about 6 – 10 at Blaisdon Wood, a new site. Sadly no other BAP species have been reported.

There have been four clearwing records, the first three that follow being observed without the use of pheromones. Pam Bryant sent me a picture of a 379 **Red-belted Clearwing** taken on a window blind in her home at Longlevens. Viv Phillips saw a 373 **Currant Clearwing** in her garden on Pope's Hill and with John saw another **Red-belted** at Flaxley Flushes. Trying out a new set of pheromones I was successful in attracting a 375 **White-barred Clearwing** on alders along the stream in Cinderford Linear Park. This is 2 km from the stronghold for this species at Woorgreens and a welcome additional site.

I have not seen the usual 1909 **Speckled Yellow** here this year, and the only report I have had of this species is from Steve Owen who saw one flying at Mallard's Pike on the 25th May.

The Cotswold Grasslands continue to provide good records. The most exciting is of the 2036 **Dew Moth**.



Peter Hugo tried for this species with actinic traps on Swift's Hill Reserve on Friday 23rd June, and was rewarded with singles in two places.

This is the first record since 1986 and Peter is now hoping to look for it elsewhere.

Angus Moir visited Stinchcombe Hill on 1st June and saw 2056 **Wood Tiger** (12), 1638 **Fox Moth**, 1637 **Oak Eggar** and 164 **Cistus Forester**.

Swift's Hill has also been visited by Michael Harper and Mike Bradley on 2nd June. There they recorded 595 *Biselachista biatomella*, 939 *Aethes tessarana*, 941 *Aethes hartmanniana*, 1490 *Oxyptilus parvidactylus* and 1687 **Lace Border** (8-10). They also recorded the plume at Strawberry Banks.

Guy Meredith, continuing his work on the micros, had 175 *Narycia monilifera* emerge from lichen covered bark taken on Edge Common, a probable 181 *Taleporia tubulosa* from Charlton Kings Common and tubes of 203 *Infurcitinea argentimaculella* on Leckhampton Hill.

Seb Buckton reported more than fifty 164 **Cistus Forester** on Rodborough Common.

Other daytime records include 2462 **Mother Shipton** on Bockeridge Common and 2039 **Red-necked Footman** in Welshbury Woods on 7th June (John and Viv Phillips) and 1901 **Little Thorn** and **Mother Shipton** seen by myself at The Wilderness, Mitcheldean. The Wilderness had however a very pleasant surprise for me.

I was invited to talk to the teachers there and then leave my traps overnight on 7th June, returning early the next morning to show the visiting youngsters some of the catch. On emptying the traps early the next day I had over 60 species including a most unexpected 2301 **Bird's Wing** – the first I have ever seen. There is a record from Nagshead in 1986, otherwise the only references in Gloucestershire are from the early twentieth century and before.



Trapping sessions away from home included a visit to Black Morgan's Wood below Tintern on 1st June by Angus Moir and myself. There were good numbers of 1676 **Mocha** and 1824 **Pauper Pug**, and several 1903 **Barred Umber**. Denis and Val Jackson visited East Wood in the middle of the month and recorded 2040 **Four-dotted Footman** and 018 **Map-winged Swift** (3). The Jacksons, Gordon Avery and myself visited Woolaston Lime Wood on 22nd June, but failed to find any specialist lime feeders. We did however see 1885 **Clouded Magpie**, 1872 **Blomer's Rivulet**, 1013 *Olindia schumacherana* and the plume 1490 *Oxyptilus parvidactylus*.

Many recorders have been busy with their garden traps and there is only space and time to record some of the highlights.

At Thrupp, Peter Hugo has had a lot of 200 *Psychoides filicivora*; also 417 *Argyresthia spinosella*, 1676 **Mocha** (several), 1879 **The Seraphim**, 2166 **The Champion**, 2423 **Oak Nycteoline** and a 1687 **Lace Border**. There are several possible limestone grassland sources for this moth near to his home.

Roger Wasley has had a 1995 **Puss Moth** at Gretton and on 16th June had five different species of hawk-moth!

Steve Chappell in Dursley observed a female 2068 **Scarlet Tiger** on the front of his house. She attracted no fewer than six males. When one of them coupled with her the others went away: the coupling continued for at least three hours. Steve has also had the fifth county record of a 1855 **Cypress Pug** on 14th June and 2422 **Scarce Silver-lines** on 16th June.

Gordon Avery continues to see a good range of moths at Hempsted. These include 1170 *Gypsonoma oppressana*, 726 *Metzneria metzneriella* and a new VC record of

121 *Pseudopostega crepusculella* on 23rd June. While making a brief visit to his trap he saw a 2475 **Waved Black** arrive and depart! This is a reminder to those who think it is enough to light the trap and have a look at what it contains only in the morning that often moths can be missed when this is the practice.

The following message from Richard Fox and Mark Parsons is self-explanatory.

Dear Moth recorder,

Following on from the great news of the grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to establish a national (UK) recording scheme for all macro-moths, we are currently awaiting their final agreement to start the project officially. We hope to get things really moving in the Autumn.

We have had a fantastic response to our fundraising appeal to help match the Lottery grant. Many thanks to all of you who contributed - we are very, very grateful. Every penny that you donated will free up significant funding for the project from the Lottery. If you have not yet donated but would like to make a contribution, there is still time. Please email David Bridges, our Head of Fundraising butterfly0@btinternet.com and he will be happy to send you a donation form.

Also, just a reminder, that The State of Britain's Larger Moths report, which was published earlier this year is available from Butterfly Conservation Head Office (0870 7744309 or www.butterfly-conservation.org) for just £5 plus £1.50 postage and packaging. This 32 page full-colour report contains all the findings of our research collaboration to examine trends in common moth populations since the 1960s from the Rothamsted light trap network (as well as information on colonisations and extinctions, progress with the conservation of UK BAP moths, and many wonderful moth images by the likes of Robert Thompson and Roy Leverton). The findings achieved massive media coverage at the time of the report's launch, being featured on prime-time radio news and in most national papers. The story spread around the world, being reported by ABC News in the USA and the Hindustan Times in India (amongst many others). Who says there is no public interest in moths!!

Another interesting spin off of The State of Britain's Larger Moths report is that Madeleine Moon MP put down an Early Day Motion emphasising the importance of the findings and supporting our calls for further government support for moth recording and conservation. To our astonishment, over 100 MPs have now signed this Early Day Motion expressing their support!

With best wishes and many thanks for your continued support

Richard Fox and Mark Parsons

I was saddened to hear of the death of Andy Stevens. Andy and Sue recorded moths at their home at Longney for a number of years and being in a less well covered part of the county were able to fill in many gaps as well as record such rarities as Silver Hook and The Crescent. We all extend our great sympathy to Sue in her untimely bereavement.

Roger Gaunt, St Briavels, 26th June 2006.