

GLOUCESTERSHIRE MOTHS

2006 Newsletter 4

Since the last newsletter written on 26th June, conditions have continued to be good and it has been quite difficult to keep up with the flow of records and information. A number of recorders have been out and about light-trapping away from home and it is with these that I will begin.

A visitor from Cornwall, George Davis with a friend from Bristol visited Lancaut NR on the 24th June, having misread my directions for Ban-y-gor Wood on the other side of the road. Ban-y-gor is much easier to work! They had a very strenuous time packing up as the slope of the reserve is very steep. They were however rewarded with 1650 **Scarce Hook-tip** (3), 1885 **Clouded Magpie** (20), 1872 **Blomer's Rivulet** (20+), 1676 **Mocha** (10) and 1735 **Ruddy Carpet**. Roy Leverton in a recent edition of *Atropos* drew attention to the problem he has as a recorder for a Scottish vice-county of people coming north to trap, with the odd moth still in their trap from home. This is what the bird people call assisted passage. We must all be aware of this problem if we travel. It is very difficult to be sure that there are no moths in one's equipment or vehicle that may have hitched a lift. One or two of George's records will be ignored for this reason as they are unlikely, though not impossible.

On the same night Roger Pearce decided to have an all-night trapping session at the farm on Haresfield Hill where he is helping to manage a small conservation area. He recorded over 100 species. One specimen he was unable to identify, but Gordon Avery immediately recognised 1408 *Palpita unionalis* a migrant only recorded twice before in the county (in 1958). There were no fewer than twenty-nine 2040 **Four-dotted Footman**, a moth that has only been recorded once east of the Severn since 1980 and not for many years in VC33. He also had 2039 **Red-necked Footman** (7) and 1999 **Lobster** (17). A very busy night! Walking a transect in the daytime he counted over seventy 1386 *Opsibotys fuscalis*. Later, on the 7th July, he had 2195 **The Delicate**.

Gordon and I trapped at Beechenhurst cycle track on 29th June, and recorded 2488 **Common Fan-foot** (2), 1943 **Great Oak Beauty** (8) and 1384 *Phlyctaenia stachydalis* (2). We've seen the latter twice before at two other sites in the Forest, and having Goater with us were able to check that they were not the common *Phlyctaenia coronata*.

Peter Hugo has again been working on Swift's Hill and has followed up his record of 2036 **Dew Moth** with eight more of the same species on 12th July. In addition he had 1731 **Chalk Carpet** (23), a BAP species not recorded from this site in recent times.

Jon Brock was asked to run a trapping session for the public on Leckhampton Hill on July 7th. Despite interruptions due to rain he managed to show those present over 100 species, including 2466 **The Blackneck** (29) and 1179 *Epiblema incarnatana*.

Val and Denis Jackson and I had another public session at The Park, Tidenham Chase on 15th July. In 105 species we had 2268 **The Suspected** (3), 1665 **Grass Emerald** and 1211 *Rhyacionia pinicolana*.

Liz and Roy Radcliffe trapped at the north end of Cinderford Linear Park on 8th July. 1874 **Dingy Shell** and 2330 **Dusky Brocade** were top of an otherwise unexciting list. At Wigpool on 14th July, they recorded 1665 **Grass Emerald** and 1715 **Plain Wave**. Their list has added a lot of species to the list for this heathland restoration site.

Robert Homan has left a Heath trap at Whittington on several occasions. Records of note are 1102 *Endothenia nigricostana* on 21st June, 1976 **Privet Hawk-moth**(2), 2323 **Reddish Light Arches** (3) and 2466 **Blackneck** on 24 June. Robert has also noted 366a *Cameraria ohridella* is now well established on Horse Chestnut in Cheltenham. He has recorded it from six 1km squares so far. In addition he has seen 409a *Argyresthis trifasciata* (also noted by Andy Bendall from two places in Dursley – obviously this species is becoming quite common).

There are several clearwing records from known sites, and three from new sites. Angus Moir had two 379 **Red-belted Clearwing** come to a pheromone lure on crab apple at Woodmancote, I had a 382 **Six-belted Clearwing** come to a lure at a GIG meeting at Beachley Point and John and Viv Phillips reported a 380 **Red-tipped Clearwing** at their home on Pope's Hill.

In addition to the 1735 **Ruddy Carpet** mentioned in paragraph 2, this species has also been recorded by David Armstrong at Clifford's Mesne and Roy and Liz Radcliffe at Cinderford. Roy and Liz have also recorded 1992 **Small Elephant Hawk-moth** (37), 161 **Leopard Moth** (2), 2039 **Red-necked Footman** (2), 2136 **The Gothic** and 2170 **Varied Coronet**.

The usual common migrants have been recorded and also several more 2403 **Bordered Straw**. Roger Pearce has had 2195 **The Delicate** on Haresfield Hill (mentioned earlier), and Angus Moir 1716 **The Vestal** on 21st July at Bishop's Cleeve.

I have had two surprises here at St Briavels. As I hadn't examined the genitalia of any coleophorid I thought I would practise on a nice big one like 516 *Coleophora trifolii*. Imagine my surprise when I found had in fact the very similar but slightly smaller 517 *Coleophora frischella*. A female and a new county record.

Welsh Wave



The other surprise was the 1873 **Welsh Wave** that I had here on 20th July. It wasn't in the trap but on the wall of a shed nearby. Apart from a record from Westonbirt in 1993 this is the first record in the county since the early twentieth century. The only Monmouthshire site is at Trellech Bog NNR about 3 miles from here, so it had probably strayed from there.

Observant readers of these newsletters may have noticed that Guy Meredith has not been mentioned so far. He recently sent me a complete list of records he has made away from home, mostly in the daytime, in the first six months of this year. There are nearly 500 records many of which are worthy of mention. I have not been able to sort through them so far but hope to pick out the highlights for a separate section in the next newsletter.

A few more reports follow.

Steve Chappell (Dursley) had 1976 **Privet Hawk-moth** (2) on 4th July and 1676 **The Mocha** on 5th July.

Steve Owen (Winchcombe) had 2068 **Scarlet Tiger** (15) on 2nd July and 1910 **Lilac Beauty** on 3rd July.

Simon Barker (Clifford's Mesne) also had 1910 **Lilac Beauty** and also 2441 **Silver Y** (35) on valerian.

Angus Moir (Bishop's Cleeve) had 1716 **The Vestal** on 21st July.

Andy Bendall (Dursley) has had 2336 **Double Lobed**.

Peter Hugo (Thrupp) trapped and photographed 1699 **Least Carpet** the second county record and first for VC33.

Robert Homan (Cheltenham) found a vacated mine of 275 *Bucculatrix bechsteinella* on hawthorn in his garden and 523 *Coleophora hemerobiella* on his kitchen ceiling both on 13th July.

Gordon Avery (Hempsted) has had 1976 **Privet Hawk-moth**, 1167 *Gypsonoma aceriana*, 1792 **Dark Umber**, 2336 **Double Lobed** and 878 *Batrachedra praeangusta*. The latter is a new vice-county record for VC33.

Here at St Briavels I recorded my first 2368 **The Crescent** last night. This is the first record from west of Severn. It seems to me that the prolonged spell of hot weather is encouraging moths to disperse. I have also had 1392 *Calamotropa paludella* a couple of days ago, and this once very scarce moth has been recorded by several other people in the last two weeks. Our first county record was in 1999.

Those of you who have 'Gloucestershire Moths – A Second Account' will know that on page 8 there are lists of macro-moths that have not been recorded for some considerable time – what might be termed WANTED lists. So far this year the following can be ticked off, 1735 Ruddy Carpet, 1873 Welsh Wave, 2036 Dew Moth, and 2301 Bird's Wing. One wonders 'What next'?

I must get this newsletter off before I check my email and find another flood of records!

Roger Gaunt, St Briavels, 23rd July 2006.