

GLOUCESTERSHIRE MOTHS

2006 Newsletter 6

The long run of warm weather has probably come to an end now, so it is possible to review what has been quite a remarkable autumn.

There have been two unusual features of this autumn: the numbers and variety of migrants and also some strange second generation appearances.

First the migrants.

Some time after it appeared in early August I received a report of an **Oleander Hawk-moth** that was seen in a garden at Highnam. I was given the phone number of the couple who hosted it and after some discussion I came to the conclusion that this is indeed an acceptable record, though unfortunately no photograph was taken.

Scarce Bordered Straw has been seen by many recorders, sometimes several at a time. The same applies to **The Vestal** and the **Pearly Underwing**. Gordon Avery has had another **Ni Moth**. Chris Tracey passed on to me the record of a **Convolvulus Hawk-moth** seen in Cirencester on the 12th September. I have had no fewer than four **Delicate** here at St Briavels, two of which were on the same night. They were all different shades so definitely different individuals. Matthew Oates has had **The Gem** and also **The Delicate** at Culkerton.

When I went to look at my trap on the morning of 26th September I noticed in the grass nearby an extraordinary looking large footman. I managed to bottle it and it was a male **Four-spotted Footman**. This is the first county record since 1969 and only the third since 1891.

Examples of newly emerged second generation moths here are **Peach Blossom** and **Shoulder-striped Wainscot** on 29/10, **Rosy Footman** on 28/10. Peter Hugo had **Swallow-tailed Moth** and **Buff Footman** at Thrupp on 18/10.

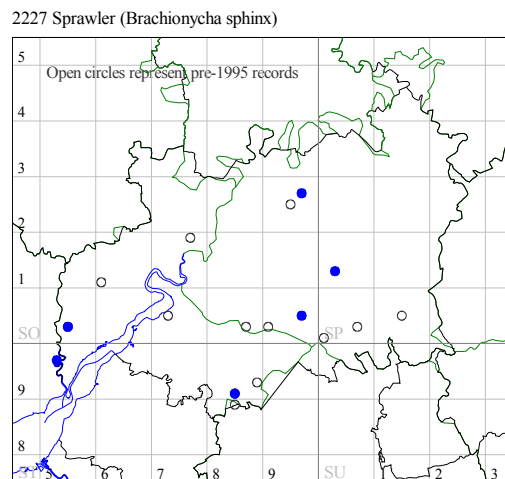
I had an unfamiliar tortrix on 14th October and was unable to identify it visually, so resorted to doing a dissection. It turned out to be a female 1157 *Crociosema plebejana*. Only the second county record, the first being from John Martin at Pilning in 2004. Subsequently I have had two more of the same species. Robert Homan has just reported another from Cheltenham (a first for VC33) so this species seems to be on the move as well.

Records for the year are beginning to come in. I am pleased to welcome records for 2005 and 2006 from Richard Tyler who lives in Lower Slaughter. It is useful to have someone recording night-fliers in the Cotswolds, as nearly all the records I receive from that part of the county are from daytime observation. Richard has produced a very good list with most not previously recorded from this 10km square, even the very common ones. Worth a special mention is the photo of the **Dusky-lemon Sallow** that he sent. This is well away from any previous records.

Steve Owen (Winchcombe) has recorded 173 macro-moths this year. There are a lot of good records again, the **Antler** being one that stands out. This has possibly come off Cleeve Hill.

Peter Hugo set his traps again in Withington Wood last Monday and was rewarded with four **Plumed Prominent** (recorded for the first time after many years in 2005), thirty-seven **Feathered Thorn** and an amazing seventy-six **Sprawler**.

The map shows the records I have for the last species. It is quite scarce.



Next year I would like to change the format of these newsletters a little by inviting contributions from anyone who has interesting information or observations to pass on. I hope also to write about some of the better sites in the county, describing them and mentioning species that may be seen there.

I am looking forward to receiving records for 2006, and earlier years if not already received. For garden records, I will only enter one representative record for each species each year, so it would be helpful if this is borne in mind when preparing your lists. A date and number on that date is desirable. There is a field for comments, so this can include such phrases as 'The first record' or 'One of 12 records' or 'The record with the largest number'. All records from other sites, even if repeated, are recorded.

I have been advised that owing to unforeseen circumstances, two posts for the National Moth Recording Scheme have been re-advertised. I have a copy of the details, so if anyone reading this wants to know more I can forward a copy. The closing date is 17th November 2006.

This is the last newsletter of the year, but I will be circulating an annual report in due course.

With best wishes for the remainder of this year, and looking forward to another interesting moth year in 2007.

Roger Gaunt, St Briavels, 4th November 2006.