



MONMOUTHSHIRE MOTH & BUTTERFLY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No 50

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*A monthly newsletter covering
Gwent and Monmouthshire Vice County 35*

Editor: Martin Anthoney

Silurian Newsletter

After missing out October because of the lack of recent records and other highlights, this will be the last newsletter for 2007. The next issue should appear during February 2008.

Anyone who cares to check <http://www.chemlep.demon.co.uk> on the internet will find that we have made our first tentative steps towards establishing a website for the group. It is likely to be a slow process as I struggle with pressures of time and my total lack of experience in programming websites! Thanks are due to Dave Slade of SEWBRc for his help thus far.

Martin Anthoney

Revised "Section 42" List

The revised Section 42 list – the name commonly given to the list of Welsh Priority Species which the Welsh Assembly consider to be of principal importance for the conservation of biological diversity – has just been published on the Wales Biodiversity Group website (<http://biodiversitywales.org.uk>). The list should be confirmed and accepted by the Assembly during December.

The list is based on the revised UK Biodiversity Action Plan list of Priority Species (see Newsletter 46, June 2007) which contained 174 lepidoptera. Those species not known to occur in Wales have been removed and four important extra species added. This gives a total of 112 lepidoptera on the Section 42 Welsh Priority list: 16 butterflies, 89 macro moths and 7 micros. Seven further species, for which there are only historical records in Wales (Duke of Burgundy (*Hamearis lucina*) butterfly, False Mocha (*Cyclophora porata*), Sloe Carpet (*Aleucis distinctata*), Scarce Vapourer (*Orgyria recens*), Common Fan-foot (*Pechipogo strigilata*) macro moths and Mistletoe Tortrix (*Celypha woodiana*) and *Epermenia insecurella* micro moths), have been put on a separate addendum. The same fate has befallen four moths (Waved Carpet, Buttoned Snout, Double Line and Square-spotted Clay) which were among the 22 lepidoptera species on the previous Section 42 list (originating 2003) but which have now been removed.

Of the 89 macro moths on the list, 16 are full Priority Species, while the other 73 are so-called "research only" species. These are species which meet the criteria because there is clear evidence of significant decline in numbers but many of which are still widespread and sometimes common. The main target action for these species is to research the reasons for the decrease in numbers. Unfortunately, some of these species need more urgent action than others. Butterfly Conservation hope to produce a revised National Action Plan for Wales in early 2008 and hopefully such issues can be addressed then.

10 of the 16 Section 42 butterflies are still present in our county – Dingy Skipper, Grizzled Skipper, Wood White, White Letter Hairstreak, White Admiral, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Marsh Fritillary, Wall, Grayling and Small Heath. In addition, High Brown Fritillary and Pearl-bordered Fritillary were present within the past twenty years. The previous list contained only Marsh Fritillary, High Brown Fritillary and Pearl-bordered Fritillary, so the addition of nine extra species should provide a welcome impetus to butterfly conservation in our area.

Of the 20 full (non research-only) macro moths, 6 probably still occur in the county – Scarce Hook-tip, Silurian, Goat Moth, Forester, Argent and Sable and Drab Looper. It is particularly pleasing to see Scarce Hook-tip and Silurian on the Welsh Priority list. In Britain, Scarce Hook-tip only occurs in the Wye Valley and Silurian only in Blaenau Gwent. For reasons totally beyond my cognisance neither species appeared on the UK Priority list, and their status as Section 42 species should help in their conservation.

Several of the research-only macro moth priorities are in a bad way in Gwent; examples are *Chesias rufata* Broom-tip
This species has crashed in the last ten years. Previously it was recorded annually, albeit never in large numbers, but there have been only four VC35 individuals recorded in the last ten years. Habitat loss is, I suspect, one factor – does it require large, long-established areas of broom?

Entephria caesiata Grey Mountain Carpet
No VC35 records since 1994. In recent years I have targeted this species by light-trapping in historical sites, but without success.

Eulithis mellinata Spinach
Only 3 records in the last ten years. Like many similar species, it is suffering from loss of foodplant / habitat – the disappearance of fruit bushes from gardens and allotments (and use of pesticides on commercial fruit farms?).

Graphiphora augur Double Dart
Another formerly common species which has crashed in recent years. Only 3 VC35 specimens in the past twelve years. A mystery as to why.

Macaria wauaria V-Moth
Two specimens in 2001 are the only VC35 records in the past 18 years. Similar reasons to the Spinach, but an even steeper decline. Many species feeding on fruit bushes are in serious trouble.

Trichiura crataegi Pale Eggar
Only recorded from one VC35 site since 1986, and there have been no records from that site since 2003.

Others on the research-only priority list which have declined in our county and are worthy of particular consideration include Mouse Moth, Sprawler, Powdered Quaker, Dusky-lemon Sallow, Heath Rustic and Neglected Rustic.

Amongst the seven Section 42 micro moths, I would pick out the White-spotted Sable Moth (*Anania funebris*). This is a very pretty day-flyer, easily recognized, for which there have been very few recent records. A species to look out for next year!



Anania funebris

Martin Anthoney.

The full Section 42 list is:

Common name	Scientific name
BUTTERFLIES	
Dingy Skipper	<i>Erynnis tages</i>
Grizzled Skipper	<i>Pyrgus malvae</i>
Wood White	<i>Leptidea sinapis</i>
Brown Hairstreak	<i>Thecla betulae</i>
White Letter Hairstreak	<i>Satyrion w-album</i>
Small Blue	<i>Cupido minimus</i>
Silver-studded Blue	<i>Plebejus argus</i>
White Admiral	<i>Limenitis camilla</i>
Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria selene</i>
Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria euphrosyne</i>
High Brown Fritillary	<i>Argynnis adippe</i>
Marsh Fritillary	<i>Eurodryas aurinia</i>
Wall	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>
Grayling	<i>Hipparchia semele</i>
Small Heath	<i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>
Large Heath	<i>Coenonympha tullia</i>
MACRO MOTHS	(NON UK PRIORITY)
Welsh Clearwing	<i>Synanthedon scoliaeformis</i>
Scarce Hook-tip	<i>Sabra harpagula</i>
Weaver's Wave	<i>Idaea contiguaria</i>
Silurian	<i>Eriopygodes imbecilla</i>
MACRO MOTHS	(UK PRIORITY)
Goat Moth	<i>Cossus cossus</i>
Forester	<i>Adscita statices</i>
Dingy Mocha	<i>Cyclophora pendularia</i>
Silky Wave	<i>Idaea dilutaria</i>
Netted Carpet	<i>Eustroma reticulata</i>
Argent and sable	<i>Rheumaptera hastata</i>
Drab looper	<i>Minoa murinata</i>
Belted Beauty	<i>Lycia zonaria britannica</i>
Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth	<i>Hemaris tityus</i>
Lunar Yellow Underwing	<i>Noctua orbona</i>
Ashworth's Rustic	<i>Xestia ashworthii</i>
Pale Shining Brown	<i>Polia bombycina</i>
Bordered Gothic	<i>Heliophobus reticulata</i>
Sword-Grass	<i>Xylena exsoleta</i>
Orange Upperwing	<i>Jodia croceago</i>
White-spotted Pinion	<i>Cosmia diffinis</i>
MACRO MOTHS	(RESEARCH ONLY)
Ghost Moth	<i>Hepialus humuli</i>
Pale Eggar	<i>Trichiura crataegi</i>
Lackey	<i>Malacosoma neustria</i>
Oak Hook-tip	<i>Watsonalla binaria</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Oak Lutestring	<i>Cymatophorima diluta</i>
Small Emerald	<i>Hemistola chrysoprasaria</i>
Blood-vein	<i>Timandra comae</i>
Mullein Wave	<i>Scopula marginepunctata</i>
Oblique Carpet	<i>Orthonama vittata</i>
Red Carpet	<i>Xanthorhoe decoloraria</i>
Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet	<i>Xanthorhoe ferrugata</i>
Chalk Carpet	<i>Scotopteryx bipunctaria</i>
Shaded Broad-bar	<i>Scotopteryx chenopodiata</i>
Galium Carpet	<i>Epirrhoe galiata</i>
Grey Mountain Carpet	<i>Entephria caesiata</i>
Dark Spinach	<i>Pelurga comitata</i>
The Spinach	<i>Eulithis mellinata</i>
Small Phoenix	<i>Ecliptopera silaceata</i>
Pretty Chalk Carpet	<i>Melanthia procellata</i>
Grass Rivulet	<i>Perizoma albulata albulata</i>
Streak	<i>Chesias legatella</i>
Broom-tip	<i>Chesias rufata</i>
Latticed Heath	<i>Chiasmia clathrata</i>
V-moth	<i>Macaria wauaria</i>
August Thorn	<i>Ennomos quercinaria</i>
Dusky Thorn	<i>Ennomos fuscantaria</i>
September Thorn	<i>Ennomos erosaria</i>
Brindled Beauty	<i>Lycia hirtaria</i>
Figure Of Eight	<i>Diloba caeruleocephala</i>
Garden Tiger	<i>Arctia caja</i>
White Ermine	<i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>
Buff Ermine	<i>Spilosoma luteum</i>
Cinnabar	<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>
Garden Dart	<i>Euxoa nigricans</i>
Double Dart	<i>Graphiphora augur</i>
Autumnal Rustic	<i>Eugnorisma glareosa</i>
Small Square-spot	<i>Diarsia rubi</i>
Neglected Rustic	<i>Xestia castanea</i>
Heath Rustic	<i>Xestia agathina</i>
Dot Moth	<i>Melanchra persicariae</i>
Broom Moth	<i>Melanchra pisi</i>
Hedge Rustic	<i>Tholera cespitis</i>
Feathered Gothic	<i>Tholera decimalis</i>
Powdered Quaker	<i>Orthosia gracilis</i>
Minor Shoulder-knot	<i>Brachylomia viminalis</i>
Sprawler	<i>Asteroscopus sphinx</i>
Brindled Ochre	<i>Dasypolia templi</i>
Deep-brown Dart	<i>Aporophyla lutulenta</i>
Green-brindled Crescent	<i>Allophyes oxyacanthae</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Dark Brocade	<i>Blepharita adusta</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Flounced Chestnut	<i>Agrochola helvola</i>

Common name	Scientific name
Brown-spot Pinion	<i>Agrochola litura</i>
Beaded Chestnut	<i>Agrochola lychnidis</i>
Centre-barred Sallow	<i>Atethmia centrago</i>
Sallow	<i>Xanthia icteritia</i>
Dusky-lemon Sallow	<i>Xanthia gilvago</i>
Grey Dagger	<i>Acronicta psi</i>
Knot Grass	<i>Acronicta rumicis</i>
Mouse Moth	<i>Amphipyra tragopoginis</i>
Dusky Brocade	<i>Apamea remissa</i>
Large Nutmeg	<i>Apamea anceps</i>
Rosy Minor	<i>Mesoligia literosa</i>
Ear Moth	<i>Amphipoea oculea</i>
Rosy Rustic	<i>Hydraecia micacea</i>
Haworth's Minor	<i>Celaena haworthii</i>
Crescent	<i>Celaena leucostigma</i>
Rustic	<i>Hoplodrina blanda</i>
Mottled Rustic	<i>Caradrina morpheus</i>
Anomalous	<i>Stilbia anomala</i>
MICRO MOTHS	
Currant-shoot Borer	<i>Lampronia capitella</i>
Scarce Long-horn Moth	<i>Nematopogon magna</i>
Pied Tineid Moth	<i>Nemapogon picarella</i>
Scarce Aspen Midget Moth	<i>Phyllonorycter sagitella</i>
Greenweed Flat-body Moth	<i>Agonopterix atomella</i>
Scarce Crimson And Gold	<i>Pyrausta sanguinalis</i>
White-spotted Sable Moth	<i>Anania funebris</i>

Review of 2007

Perhaps we have been spoiled over recent years, but 2007 came as a shock to the system, memorable only for the lack of butterflies and moths.

Butterflies

2007 started with a mild January. The first Red Admiral was seen on 14th January, but by the end of the month this species had been reported from most of the county, surely removing any doubts that it now overwinters successfully in Gwent. The first Peacock was seen on 3rd February and the first newly hatched butterfly of the year was Brimstone on 7th March, nearly two weeks ahead of the 2006 date.

Holly Blue appeared a whole month earlier than 2006 on 26th March. This was one of the few butterflies to have a good year in 2007. The end of April and beginning of May were warm and saw a clutch of new species emerging – Dingy Skipper, Common Blue, Green Hairstreak and Small Copper, with a very early Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary on 5th May. Numbers, though, were generally low and were depleted further as the weather changed for the worse.

A remarkably early Small Skipper on 26th May was the only noteworthy record until the first Marbled White and White Admiral both appeared on 13th June. Sadly, after last year's bonanza, this was the only White Admiral record of the year. Summer and autumn species were generally thinly spread, with only a few Silver-washed and Dark Green Fritillaries to lighten the depressing weather; the occasions when we did get a few days of sunshine usually being accompanied by cool winds.

2007 was a poor year for immigrants. Painted Lady numbers were low and Clouded Yellow did not appear at its favoured Newport Wetlands Reserve until 24th August, with a maximum count of only five individuals. 29 species of butterfly were reported in 2007, considerably down on the 37 species in 2006 – a clear indication of a disappointing year.

Moths

New Year's Day produced the first moth record, a December Moth, though this was a late record rather than an early one. The warm weather brought out the moths as well as butterflies, with a remarkable seventeen species of macros being logged by the end of February. Oak Beauty turning up in January would have been unthought of a few years ago.

On 15th March a Humming-bird Hawk was seen flying in a temperature of only 5^oC, raising the possibility that this might be another species successfully overwintering in the county. In 2007 there were only five reported sightings of this immigrant, well down on 2006's total of 59. Unusually, one was caught in a light trap as opposed to the normal field observations.

The rest of March and April brought a succession of species emerging up to two months ahead of schedule. As one example, my trap on 18th April contained Maiden's Blush, Orange Footman and Peach Blossom, all six weeks ahead of their 2006 dates. Even the ubiquitous Heart and Dart was in full swing by the end of April.

A new locality for Scarce Prominent was found in Chepstow Park Wood, and Cypress Carpet in Newport on 21st May was another first, the only macro to be added to the county list in 2007. The following day, 22nd May, brought the earliest ever Scarce Hook-tip record from Wyndcliff, the early

emergence rather spoiling the survey for CCW on this species carried out by John Harold at the end of June! The same day produced the moth photograph of the year, and I make no apologies for repeating Ray Armstrong's superb portrait of Beautiful Yellow Underwing.



*Beautiful
Yellow
Underwing*

Small Scallop at Uskmouth on 23rd July was the first county record since 1887, and in a very poor year for migrants, the Great Brocade at Penallt in August, only the third VC record, was the only migrant worthy of note. The autumn was very quiet; Oak Lutestring seemed to turn up everywhere (including four new sites) and Merveille du Jour produced several records, but otherwise little of note.

On the micro moth front, *Cameraria ohridella*, the Horse Chestnut miner, continues to spread. It is widely distributed throughout Newport and has also been recorded this year from Dingestow and Abergavenny.

Despite the general paucity of moths, nine new micros were added to the VC35 list in 2007. June saw six added (*Phlyctaenia stachydalis*, *Pempelia formosa*, *Ectoedemia intimella*, *Agonopterix purpurea*, *Elachista biatomella* and *Scrobipalpa artemisiella*; see Newsletter 46) and three more were added in October (*Stigmella samiatella*, *Stigmella obliquella* and *Phyllonorycter platani*, see Recent Highlights section). By Sam Bosanquet's reckoning this brings the VC35 list to 722 micros.

Martin Anthony.

Newport Report

Butterflies

This has, unsurprisingly, been our worst year since we began doing the transect at the Newport Wetlands Reserve. In 23 visits we recorded just 2792 individuals. Compare this to 2004, one of our better years, when 7283 individuals were recorded. We live in hope for 2008!

Roger James

Moths

As the year progresses so the number of species recorded diminishes so this report is rather brief. On 28th September I recorded Merveille du Jour at Melbourne Way, the first of five individuals of this species. On 2nd October Kevin saw Figure of Eight at Uskmouth and the following night I found a Large Ranunculus on the wall next to my trap.

On 5th I had Feathered Thorn whilst Kevin recorded Yellow-line Quaker on the Gaer. On 10th my trap produced Green-brindled Crescent and Red-line Quaker and on 13th Kevin had Cypress Carpet on the Gaer, the first record for this site. My garden produced a Brick and Brown-spot Pinion, only the second Newport record for this species. A long gap then ensued until I recorded another Cypress Carpet and an *Epirrita* sp (possibly Autumnal Moth) on 30th October. These are the last records I have for the year, which has produced 335 species of macro in Newport. Certainly not as depressing as butterfly numbers.

Next year will be our 10th year of organised recording in Newport during which we have made some exciting discoveries, vastly increased our knowledge of Lepidoptera in the area and, most of all, had a lot of fun in the process.

Roger James

Recent Highlights

- | | | |
|----------------------|---|-----------------|
| 3 rd Oct | Large <i>Ranunculus</i> to light at Melbourne Way, Newport. | (Roger James) |
| 12 th Oct | <i>Stigmella obliquella</i> , 1, Abergavenny, SO2913, and <i>Phyllonorycter platani</i> , mines, Abergavenny, SO2913.
Two new micro species for VC35. | (J.R. Langmaid) |
| 13 th Oct | Cypress Carpet on the Gaer, Newport. Following the 1 st VC record in May, it seems to be established in Newport. | (Kevin Dupé) |
| 29 th Oct | <i>Stigmella samiatella</i> , vacated mine on <i>Castanea</i> , Clytha, SO359090, confirmed by Dave Slade. A third new micro species for VC35 in October. | (Bill Jones) |
| 30 th Oct | Another Cypress Carpet, this time at Melbourne Way, Newport | (Roger James) |

Dates for your Diary 2008

Saturday 16th Feb Gwent Recorders' Forum.

Sunday 24th February Work task at Blackrock Quarry, Clydach, in conjunction with Usk Conservation and Environment Group, clearing cotoneaster from this important lepidoptera site with superb views. Tools provided, but bring lunch, drinks etc. Meet at 10am at the lay-by adjacent to the old lime kilns (SO215125).
[Head east along the A465 Heads of the Valleys road from the Brynmawr roundabout. After 1½ miles take the left turn for Clydach Village. Continue along Main Road through Clydach village and the lay-by is then on your right.]

- Saturday 1st March (To be confirmed). Butterfly Conservation (South Wales Branch) spring members' day, with talks and fieldwork.
- Saturday 7th June National Moth Night. Target species this year are *Anania funebris* (a pretty day-flying micro which does occur in our county), Bordered Gothic, Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk and Orchards as a new UK BAP priority habitat.
- Saturday 14th June "Go Wild" show, this year in Blaenau Gwent at Bryn Bach Park, Tredegar.

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