



MONMOUTHSHIRE MOTH & BUTTERFLY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No 62 September 2009.

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

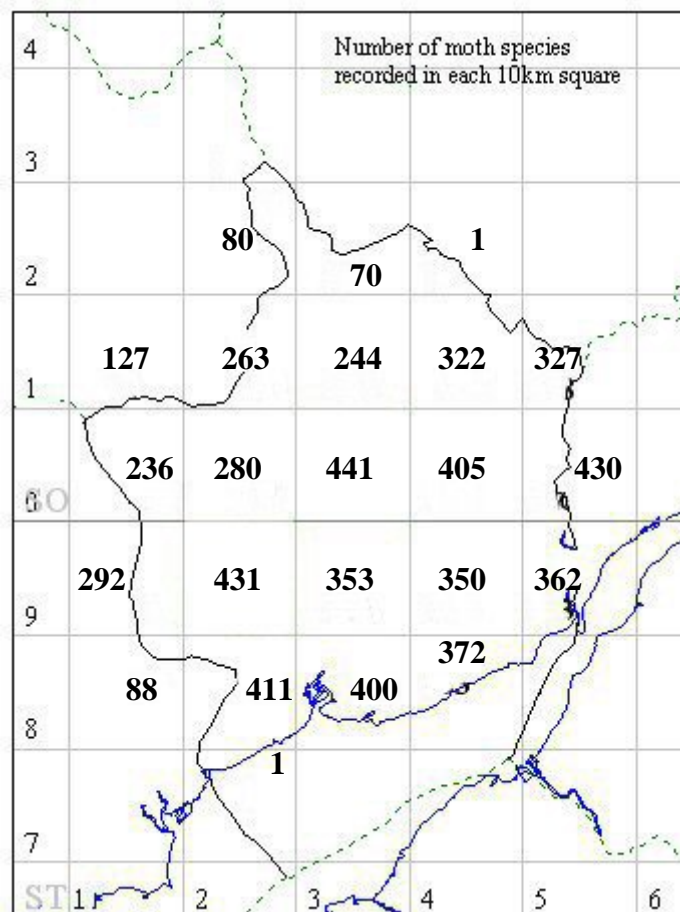
Editor: Martin Anthoney

Gwent Records Update

It was issue 43, March 2007, when I last reported on the progress of the VC35 Gwent records database and, with most 2009 records already entered, a further update seems in order.

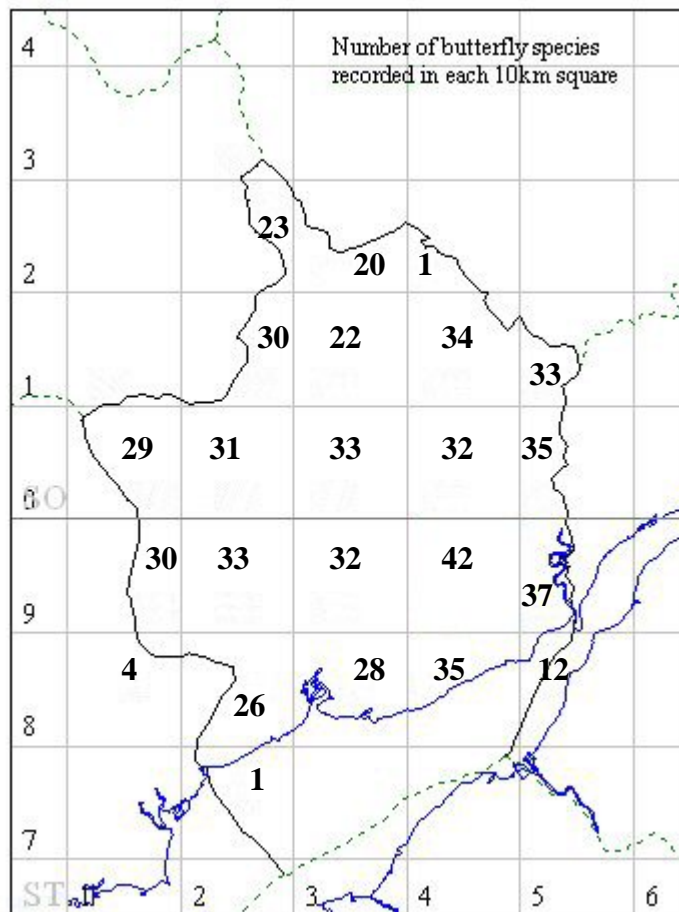
Year	No. macro moth records held	No. macro moth species	No. butterfly records held	No. butterfly species
March 2004	28,000	545	5,000	47
March 2007	41,395	562	7,332	47
September 2009	54,600	566	9,567	47

It is remarkable that in five years we have almost doubled both the number of macro moth and butterfly records. The four new moth species since March 2007 are Cypress Carpet (2007), Wormwood (2008), Deep-brown Dart (2009), and an early confirmed record of Lesser Common Rustic (1987) which has only recently surfaced.



10km Square	Moth Species (up to 2003)	Moth Species (up to 2005)	Moth Species (up to 2007)	Moth Species (up to 2009)
SO10	140	145	146	236
SO11	122	127	165	246
SO20	233	248	268	280
SO21	222	250	252	263
SO22	79	79	80	80
SO30	439	440	440	441
SO31	238	243	243	244
SO32	66	67	68	70
SO40	395	398	403	405
SO41	269	290	294	322
SO42	1	1	1	1
SO50	394	406	420	430
SO51	296	298	320	327
ST18	87	87	88	88
ST19	290	292	292	292
ST27	1	1	1	1
ST28	340	369	381	411
ST29	405	418	423	431
ST38	342	367	390	400
ST39	290	311	329	353
ST48	358	363	365	372
ST49	320	341	346	350
ST58	1	1	1	1
ST59	329	343	350	362

The above map and table show the number of macro moth species recorded from each 10km square. Most progress has been made in the NW of the county (SO10 and SO11), where several new recorders have taken up running light traps in the past two years. The squares with the highest species counts have not changed – SO30 (441) and SO29 (431), which just happen to include the sites where my predecessor, Neil Horton, and myself ran light traps for many years! The gap is closing, so hopefully the distribution maps for moths are less dependent on the distribution of recorders than in past years. The least recorded squares remain those in the north, particularly the north-east, of the county.



The corresponding map showing the number of butterfly species recorded from each 10km square is much more even. This is due in part to the smaller number of butterfly species, but also because butterflies generate many more records from the general public than do moths – hardly surprising in view of the minimal contact most members of the public have with moths. In contrast, a high proportion of moth records come from a few enthusiasts running light traps. To this end, it is encouraging that there are currently over 20 individuals running light traps at various places in the county, a huge increase in recent years compared to fifteen years ago when Neil Horton published “The Moths & Butterflies of Gwent”; then about six people living in the county contributed light-trap records. Neil still heads the list with the 498 macro moth species he recorded in the county, though I am catching him up with 493 species to date!

Martin Anthoney

National Moth Night 2009

The Monmouthshire MBG ran its usual National Moth Night event on Friday 18th September this year at Gwent Wildlife Trust’s Cwm Merddog reserve, part of the Silent Valley LNR. Over 20 people attended on (surprisingly considering the reputation of NMN for bad weather) a warm, cloudy evening. Thirty species of macro moth were attracted to two MV lights, the highlight probably being a very fresh Grey Chi, and everybody seemed to enjoy the event.

1 Angle Shades	1 Double-striped Pug	14 Pine Carpet
5 Autumnal Rustic	3 Dun-bar	1 Pink-barred Sallow
8 Barred Sallow	2 Flounced Chestnut	1 Purple Bar
4 Black Rustic	2 Garden Carpet	2 Red-green Carpet
4 Brimstone	1 Grey Chi	1 Sallow
1 Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing	6 Grey Pine Carpet	1 September Thorn
2 Canary-shouldered Thorn	1 Iron Prominent	1 Shuttle-shaped Dart
27 Common Marbled Carpet	1 Large Ranunculus	1 Snout
4 Copper Underwing	3 Large Yellow Underwing	2 Square-spot Rustic
2 Dark Arches	3 Lesser Yellow Underwing	4 Straw Dot

Newport Report

Uskmouth Butterfly Transect

The long-promised Indian summer did sporadically appear in September, giving us an extended recording period. On 9th September, individuals of 12 species were recorded. Speckled Wood topped the list with 40 sightings. On 13th Sept there was a predictable decrease in numbers to 63 individuals. Small Tortoiseshell were still in evidence together with a few Red Admiral, Painted Lady and Comma. On 24th September and 1st October numbers dipped below 50 but there was a late showing of 9 Small Copper on the latter date.

At the start of the year we were pessimistic about the number of butterflies we would see in view of the past two disastrous summers. Our fears have not been born out, and between 17th April and 1st October we have recorded 5148 individuals. There was one worrying aspect, however. Very few Marbled Whites were recorded compared to previous years. We are continuing to receive spasmodic reports of Clouded Yellows. Despite ideal conditions, and much to our chagrin, we have yet to record one on our transect this year. Perhaps one could make a guest appearance before the end of October?

National Moth Night

Seven Newport sites were trapped over the two nights of 18th and 19th September, including Melbourne Way, Home Farm and Anthony Drive Caerleon, Haisboro Avenue, Llanvaches, Goldcliff and St Brides. 53 macro species (675 individuals) were recorded in total plus 6 micros (58 individuals). The main theme for the year was intended to be migration, but we had very few migrants: a single Dark Sword-grass at St Brides and 10 Silver Y at four of the sites. The largest numbers recorded were, unsurprisingly, Large Yellow Underwing and Setaceous Hebrew Character (114 and 180 respectively).

Among the “autumnal species” recorded were Large Ranunculus, Blair’s Shoulder-knot, Lunar Underwing, Frosted Orange, Autumnal Rustic, Dusky Thorn, Black Rustic, Red Underwing, Sallow and Pink-barred Sallow. The highest number of individuals for a micro was 36 of the ubiquitous Light Brown Apple Moth. Worthy of note was a late Scalloped Hook-tip at St Brides (only the seventh Newport record) and two Cypress Pugs at Melbourne Way.



Scalloped Hook-tip

New Moths For The Year

The first arrivals for September were Large Wainscot and Black Rustic on 8th. On 11th I recorded a pristine Frosted Orange at Melbourne Way. There was then a gap until 18th (see above). The last new record for September was a Brindled Green in my garden on 25th.

Roger James

Recent Highlights

Despite mainly dry weather, September has proved a very quiet month, with few records submitted and no significant immigration.

21st August Clouded Yellow butterfly seen at Llandogo. (Gail Reynolds)

27th August. Wall Brown butterfly at Peterstone Gout. (Luke Phillips)

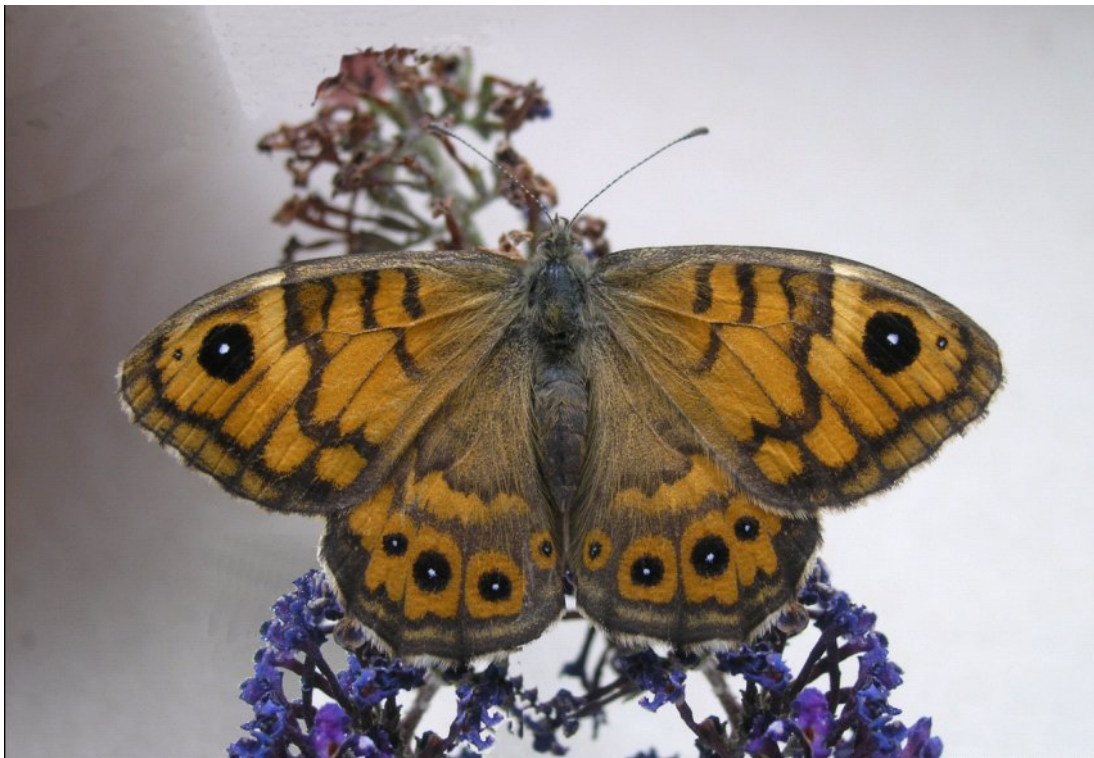
30th August. Tissue to light at Llandogo. (Simon Phipps)

3rd September. Red-necked Footman to light at Llandogo. (Simon Phipps)

Oblique Carpet to light at Rassau. Only the ninth county record. (Rodney Morris)

8th September. The first of 10 Brown-spot Pinions recorded at Penallt during September. Not a common species in this county. (Stephanie Tyler)

10th September. Two Wall Browns on a rocky outcrop near Llanthony .
(Wendy Campbell, BC Upper Thames Branch)



*Wall Brown
butterfly*

18th September. National Moth Night at Silent Valley (see reports above). Large Ranunculus and, after a gap of 8 years, the second site this year for Grey Chi.

A late Scalloped Hook-tip to light at St Brides. (Diana Westmoreland and John Morgan per Kevin Dupé)

20th September. Cypress Pug to light at Risca. (Martin Anthony)

25th September. Brindled Green and Cypress Pug at Melbourne Way, Newport. (Roger James)

30th September A late Common Blue flying at Newport Docks. Painted Ladies also still flying.
(Stephanie Tyler)

Dates for your Diary 2009

Sat 24th October Butterfly Conservation (South Wales Branch) Members' Day and AGM

The annual day of talks and discussion. Despite the name, non-members are welcome to attend. The venue is Kenfig Visitor Centre, the same as for the recent National Moth Recording Scheme event.

The programme for the day is as follows:

- 10.30 am Arrival and coffee
- 11.00am Garden Moth Scheme Cymru Update. Norman Lowe, Breconshire County Moth Recorder.
- 11.30 am The Biodiversity of the Post-Industrial Landscape. Steve Williams (Torfaen CBC).
- 12.15 pm Conservation of Lepidoptera in Scotland. Tom Prescott (Butterfly Conservation).
- 1.00 pm Lunch
- 1.45 pm Branch AGM, including reports of activities.
- 2.15 pm Branch Projects and Activities. Richard Smith.
- 2.30 pm Butterflies: Priorities for 2010 and Beyond. Russel Hobson (BC Wales)
- 3.00 pm Tea break and Networking
- 3.45 pm approx Close of meeting

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