



MONMOUTHSHIRE MOTH & BUTTERFLY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No 68

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

Editor: Martin Anthoney

Small Blue – A new butterfly for VC35 Gwent

On 28th June Bill Jones watched and photographed at the Newport Wetlands Reserve a small butterfly with sooty brown upperwings and blue / grey undersides. It could only be a Small Blue, a new addition to the county butterfly species list for VC35. There have been a few rumours of its occurrence in the past, but nothing that could be substantiated.

Small Blue occurs in both Glamorgan and Gloucestershire, so why is there a gap in its distribution in Gwent? The answer is that its foodplant, kidney vetch, is extremely rare in the county. There were a few records from Newport Docks in the 1990s of kidney vetch; this is not far from the Wetlands Reserve and might be worth following up.

The butterfly is regarded as a sedentary species, but the Millennium Atlas states that there is evidence that mobility may be greater and dispersal more frequent in hotter years. So the chances are that our first definite Small Blue was merely a vagrant, but you never can tell.....



*Small Blue butterfly
(Bill Jones)*

Martin Anthoney

Newport Report

Butterflies

A very slow start to the season compared to other years; my garden produced only three species during June. On 22nd May Sheila recorded 151 butterflies on the Uskmouth transect, the majority being Green-veined White. Orange-tip numbers held up with 15 recorded and a pleasing number of 26 Common Blue. On 25th May 185 individuals of only four species were recorded, made up mainly of 140 Green-veined White. Most of the June transects were very poor, with less than 100 individuals per visit. Numbers picked up on 28th June with ten species recorded, including 50 Ringlet. I have had sporadic reports of single Marbled Whites, but nothing like the numbers we have experienced in previous years.

Moths

Due to pressure of work, I have adopted a different, shorter format for my records this month which is quicker to produce. The following are the first dates the species have been recorded in Newport this year:

- 20th May Marbled Minor (Home Farm), Dog's Tooth, Burnished Brass (Goldcliff), Angle Shades, Common White Wave, Poplar Kitten, Rivulet (Haisboro Avenue).
- 21st May Buff Tip (Home Farm), Broad-barred White, Seraphim, Oak Hook-tip, Orange Footman, Treble Brown Spot, Tawny-barred Angle, Alder Moth (Melbourne Way).
- 22nd May Vine's Rustic (Home Farm), Yellow Shell, (Uskmouth), Scorched Wing, Peach Blossom, Shoulder-striped Wainscot, White Ermine, Limespeck Pug (Haisboro Avenue), Small Square-spot, Common Wave, Common Wainscot (St Brides).
- 23rd May Clouded Silver, Setaceous Hebrew Character (Home Farm)
- 25th May Ingrailed Clay, Sandy Carpet (Home Farm), Spruce Carpet (Goldcliff)
- 26th May Straw Dot (Home Farm), Burnet Companion (Goldcliff)
- 27th May Silver-ground Carpet (Home Farm)
- 29th May Heart and Club, Grey Pine Carpet, Marbled White-spot, Buff Ermine, Tawny Marbled Minor, Light Emerald (Melbourne Way)
- 31st May Shears, Broken-barred Carpet, Cinnabar, Alder Kitten (Melbourne Way), Chinese Character, Green Carpet, Latticed Heath, Cabbage Moth Small Fan-foot, Miller, Flame, Grey Dagger, Fan-foot (Haisboro Avenue)
- 2nd June Figure of Eighty, Willow Beauty, Middle-barred Minor, Little Thorn, Lobster Moth, Mottled Beauty (Melbourne Way), Purple Clay (Haisboro Avenue)
- 4th June Snout, Mottled Rustic, Silky Wainscot, Dark Arches (Goldcliff), Poplar Grey, Light Brocade, Blood-vein, Dusky Brocade, Cream-spot Tiger, Obscure Wainscot, Broom Moth (Uskmouth), Green Pug, Coronet, Buff Arches (Melbourne Way), Large Yellow Underwing, Ruby Tiger (Haisboro Avenue)
- 8th June Currant Pug, Double Square-spot, Common Emerald, Small Clouded Brindle, Light Arches (Melbourne Way)
- 9th June Ghost Moth (Uskmouth)
- 11th June Riband Wave, Grey Arches, Small Dusty Wave, Swallow-tail, Slender Pug, Small Angle Shades (Melbourne Way), 15 Oblique Carpet (Gwastad Mawr), Golden Plusia, Square Spot (Haisboro Avenue).
- 12th June Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet (Home Farm)
- 14th June Pinion-streaked Snout (Haisboro Avenue)
- 15th June Green Silver-lines, Freyer's Pug, Dot, Cypress Carpet, Plain Golden Y, Striped Wainscot, Small Elephant Hawk (Melbourne Way)
- 17th June Barred Yellow, Clay Triple-lines, Short-cloaked (Goldcliff), Smoky Wainscot (Haisboro Avenue)
- 18th June Scallop Shell, Rosy Minor (Melbourne Way)
- 19th June Blackneck (Uskmouth)
- 20th June Lychnis (Melbourne Way)

21st June Leopard Moth, Rufous Minor, Phoenix (Melbourne Way), Six-spot Burnet, Mother Shipton (Pilton Vale ST311907).
 22nd June Beautiful Hook-tip, Bordered White, Common Rustic (Haisboro Avenue)
 24th June Scalloped Oak, Lilac Beauty, Beautiful Golden Y (Haisboro Avenue), Rustic (Goldcliff)
 25th June Small Blood-vein, Clay, Blue-bordered Carpet, Sycamore (Melbourne Way)
 26th June Small Fan-footed Wave, Triple-spotted Clay (Haisboro Avenue), Double Line (Gaer Fort)
 28th June Single-dotted Wave, Barred Straw, Dun-bar, Dinky Shears, Crescent, Cloaked Minor (Goldcliff), Small Emerald, Lunar-spotted Pinion (Haisboro Avenue), Garden Tiger (St Brides)
 29th June Small Yellow Wave, Green Arches, Toadflax Pug (Melbourne Way)

Recorders:

Haisboro Avenue	Sheila Dupé	Melbourne Way	Roger James
Pilton Vale	Roger James	St Brides	Diane Westmoreland and John Morgan
Goldcliff	Kevin Dupé	Home Farm, Caerleon	Kath & Chris Jones
Gaer Fort	Kevin & Sheila Dupé	Gwastad Mawr	Roger James & Kevin Dupé
Uskmouth	Kevin & Sheila Dupé & Roger James.		

Roger James

One web leads to another continued.....

Following last months article on Small Eggar and Orchard Ermine (*Yponomeuta padella*) webs at Caerleon, similar webs of the Bird-cherry Ermine (*Yponomeuta evonymella*) in a children’s playground at Tredegar Park, Newport, made a lengthy story in the South Wales Argus newspaper of 11th June. Four mature bird cherry trees were covered from the base of the trunk to the branch tips with silken web, giving a very ghostly appearance, or to quote the Argus, “like something from a horror or science fiction film”.

As usual in such cases, there were requests for the caterpillars to be sprayed. Thanks to the biodiversity staff of Newport CBC, particularly Katie Godfrey, who produced notices to hang on the trees explaining what was happening, the larvae were spared, produced thousands of pupae and eventually numerous moths. In the meantime, once they realised it was harmless, the silk web started to disappear as the children had great fun trying to collect it. I am not sure all the parents were so pleased though!



Trunk covered with silk web (K Godfrey)



Yponomeuta evonymella larvae & pupae (K Dupé)

Yponomeuta evonymella adult



Recent Highlights

The trend of the previous two months, April and May, was continued into June: a dry month with often sunny weather, warm at times but with a preponderance of cool clear nights, greatly reducing the numbers of moths. Interesting moths tended to be concentrated into a few cloudy nights. Butterfly numbers in the general countryside were generally low, but a few specialised sites did extremely well.

- 25th May 7 Dingy Skipper below Cwmtillery reservoir , near Millennium Woodland site, SO219067. Yet another new site for this species which is having an excellent year.
(Jeremy Richards)
- 2nd June Dingy Skipper and Burnet Companion at New Tredegar Business Park SO147025. Needless to say, another new site for Dingy Skipper!
(Martin Anthony)
- 36 Marsh Fritillary, 2 Dingy Skipper, Mother Shipton, Small Heath and Burnet Companion at Aberbargoed Grasslands.
(Martin Anthony)
- 3rd June Little Thorn, Red Admiral at St Pierre's Great Wood. (Martin Anthony & Roger James)
- Northern Drab to light at Cwmcarn Scenic Drive. (Rob Coles & Anna Gambarini)
- 4th June Little Thorn at Ty -fry Big Wood ST430975. A good year for this species.
(Martin Anthony & Roger James)
- Alder Moth at Uskmouth. Laid eggs which Kevin is breeding through. (Kevin Dupé)
- 5th June Red-necked Footman and Brindled White-spot at Llandogo SO523042 (Linda Pullin)
- Marbled Brown to light at Beacon Hill, Trellech. (Ray Armstrong)
- 2 Painted Ladies SO490 057. Very few reports this year after the extravaganza of 2009.
(Shelley Cross)
- 7th June Alder Kitten to light at Risca. First site record since 1980. (Martin Anthony)
- 11th June Golden Plusia to light at Haisboro Avenue, Newport. (Sheila Dupé)
- 15 Oblique Carpet to light at Gwastad Mawr, Newport. (Kevin Dupé)
- Dingy Skipper at Broad Meend. Good to see the heathland restoration project at this site attracting priority butterfly species. (Ray Armstrong)
- Painted Lady, Small Purple-barred moth, Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, Green Hairstreak, Small Heath and Dingy Skipper at Blackrock, Clydach.
(Martin Anthony & Roger James)
- 12th June Painted Lady at Llandogo.
Dingy Skipper at Cleddon Hall SO516041. (Simon Phipps)
- 14th June Little Thorn at Llandogo. (Simon Phipps)
- 15th June Cypress Carpet and Striped Wainscot at Melbourne Way, Newport (Roger James)
- 17th June Little Thorn and Green Hairstreak at Broad Meend, Trellech.
(Martin Anthony & Roger James)

18th June Scallop Shell at Melbourne Way, Newport (Roger James)

19th June Blackneck at Uskmouth (Kevin Dupé)

21st June 3 Marbled White at Cotswold Way, Risca. (Martin Anthony)

22nd June Beautiful Hook-tip at Haisboro Avenue, Newport (Sheila Dupé)
4 Dark Green Fritillary, Small Heath, Burnet Companion and six-spot Burnet at
Tyrpentwys LNR, Pontypool (SO254002). (Martin Anthony)

At the regenerating coal tip at Blaenserchan (SO258023):

14 Dark Green Fritillary, 2 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, 20 Small Heath, 3 Burnet
Companion, 6 Marbled White, 5 Six-spot Burnet and Ringlet. (Martin Anthony)

24th June Plain Wave and Pretty Chalk Carpet to light at Risca. (Martin Anthony)

25th June Another visit to Blaenserchan:
25 Dark Green Fritillary, 3 Dingy Skipper, 10 Large Skipper, 4 Small Skipper, 2 Small
Pearl-bordered Fritillary, 50 Common Blue, 12 Marbled White, Red Admiral and Peacock.
This site has produced some amazing butterfly counts this year. (Rupert Perkins)

Leaf mines of the micro *Mompha terminella* on Enchanters Nightshade
in his Newbridge garden ST207973. Possibly a VC35 first. (Dave Beveridge).



Mompha terminella on
Enchanters Nightshade
(Dave Beveridge)

26th June Double Line at Gaer Fort, Newport (Kevin Dupé)

Marbled White, Small Copper, Ringlet, Large Skipper and Small Skipper at New Grove
Meadows. (Ray Armstrong)

27th June 7 Ringlet, 4 Marbled White, 4 Small Pearl –bordered Fritillary, 1 Dark Green Fritillary
at Blackrock , Clydach. (Jeremy Richards)



Scallop Shell on valerian (Ray Armstrong)

3 White Admiral at Lower Minnetts Wood, (adjoining Slade Wood), Rogiet.
(Hadyn Jones)

28th June Small Blue butterfly at Newport Wetlands Reserve. 1st VC35 record. (Bill Jones)

48 Silurian moths (all male), Double Line and Northern Rustic to light near Blaentillery Farm.
(Colin Plant).

Lunar-spotted Pinion at Haisboro Avenue, Newport. (Sheila Dupé)

30th June 2 White Admiral, 2 Silver-washed Fritillary at Ravensnest Wood, Angiddy Valley.
Other species of note were 3 Comma, 5 Small Tortoiseshell and a single Scarlet Tiger.
Further up the road at the Fedw Pool a single Marbled White. (Bill Jones)

Dates for your Diary 2010

Saturday 16th October Butterfly Conservation (South Wales Branch) Members' Day and AGM at Kenfig NNR. Non-members also welcome to a day of talks.

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