



MONMOUTHSHIRE MOTH & BUTTERFLY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No 79

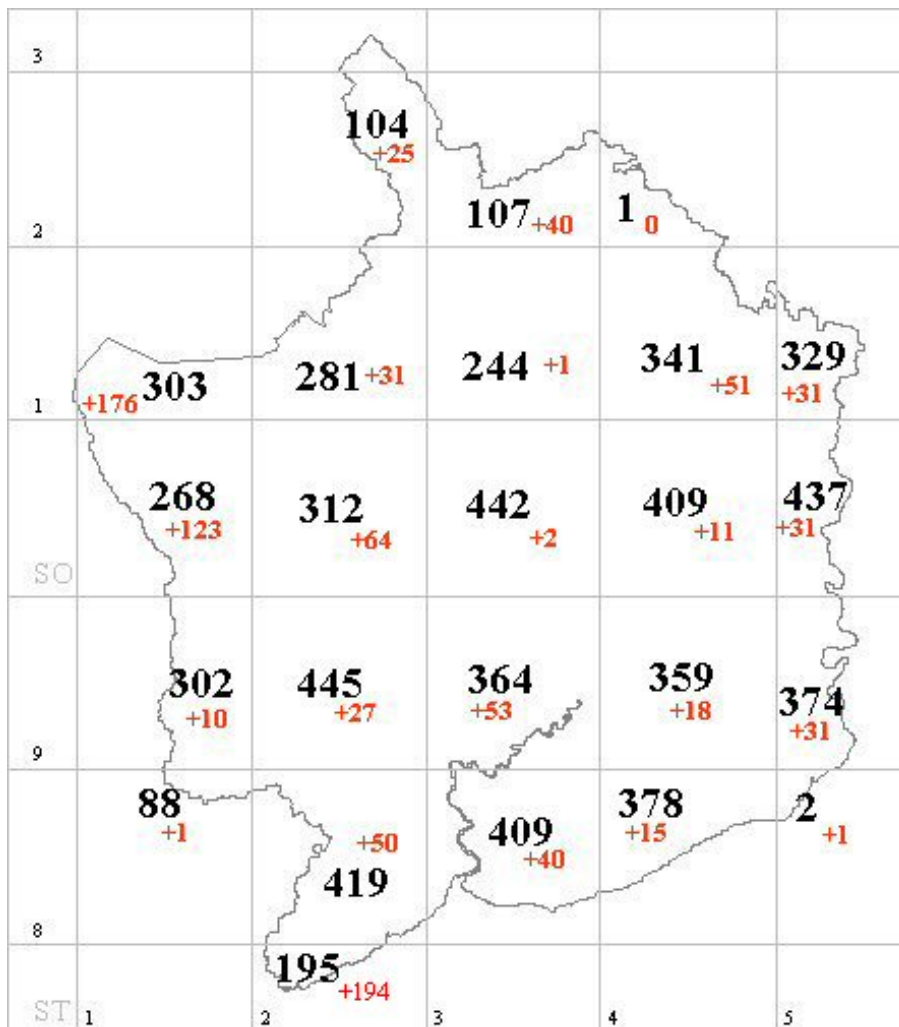
September 2011.

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

Editor: Martin Anthoney

Gwent Statistics Update

The L-album Wainscot caught on 29th September (see Recent Highlights below) brought the total number of macro-moth species on the Gwent (VC35) list to 571. This compares with the British list (excluding adventives accidentally imported by man) of about 900 macro-moths. The map below shows how many of these 571 species have been recorded from each 10km square. The small red figures show the number of new species recorded since the last such map was produced in 2005 (see Silurian issue 32, Feb 2006), at which time the county list stood at 557 species.

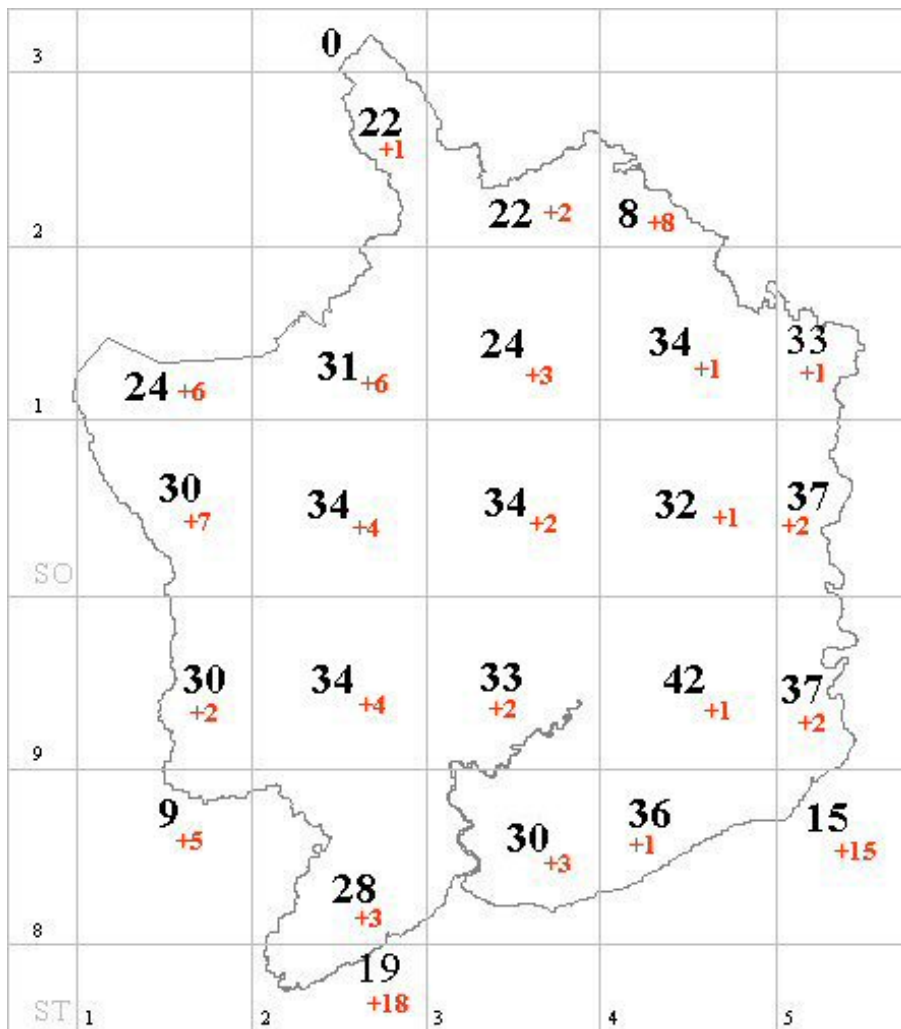


*Number of macro-moth
species recorded in
each 10km square*

In 2005, square SO30 had the highest tally of moth species. It contained the Usk garden where my late predecessor as County Recorder, Neil Horton, ran an MV light for over 26 years. It has now been overtaken by ST29, which just happens to contain my Risca garden where I have run an actinic light for over 30 years! This goes to show how diligent trapping on one site can clock up the species and what a gaping hole has been left in moth recording around the Usk area since Neil's sad death in 2005.

It is pleasing to see that the largest increases in species recorded have been in the west of the county. I suspect this is due to a number of new people taking an interest in moths in what has been the under-recorded half of the county plus the number of excellent new sites arising from regeneration of post-industrial areas in the western valleys. The increase in recording is demonstrated by the fact that even by September, with many records for the year still to come in, the number of moth records held in the county database has already increased by 7% during 2011.

For butterflies, the county list now stands at 51 species compared to 47 in 2005. Small Blue is the only recent newcomer, the other 3 additions result from locating extra historical records for species long since extinct in Gwent. The British list, excluding adventives, is just over 70 species. The distribution of Gwent species amongst the 10km squares is shown below. The small red figures again show the number of new species recorded since the last such map was produced in 2005.



Number of butterfly species recorded in each 10km square

Most progress has been made in those squares where only a small portion lies in Gwent. Previously very poorly recorded, an effort has been made to target these areas and fill in the gaps. The success of this effort can be judged by the fact that, as of September, 2011 records have already increased the Gwent butterfly database by nearly 12%. As in 2005, 10km square ST49 has the highest butterfly total, with 42 species. This is no surprise, since it contains the butterfly hotspots of Slade Wood, MoD Caerwent and part of Wentwood.

Martin Anthony

Recent Highlights

September began as August finished, with cool, showery weather, few butterflies and even fewer moths. Although Gwent often missed the worst of the showers, clearing skies led to many cold and very poor mothing nights. A weekend of storms in the middle of the month seemed to be followed by reports of Painted Ladies and Humming-bird Hawks, though the numbers of “white” butterflies nose-dived. A blocking high pressure finally produced a week-long “Indian Summer” at the end of the month with southerly winds at long last delivering some immigrant interest to our moth traps.

20 th Aug.	Frosted Orange at Llandogo	(Simon Phipps)
22 nd Aug	Maiden’s Blush to light at Llandogo.	(Simon Phipps)
23 rd Aug	Grey Chi at Llandogo.	(Gail Reynolds)
25 th Aug	Barred Chestnut at Llandogo.	(Simon Phipps)
1 st Sept	Pale Eggar to light at Wonastow.	(Heather Colls)
	Small Copper near Cleddon Hall. A butterfly which has been decidedly scarce this autumn.	(Simon Phipps)
2 nd Sept.	Deep-brown Dart, Grey Chi, Anomalous and Chevron to light at Trefil (Pen-y-lan) (MMBG – thanks to Ken Humphries)	
	Sharp-angled Carpet to light at Llandogo.	(Simon Phipps)
4 th Sept.	Dark Marbled Carpet and Centre-barred Sallow at a very cold and very damp Blaen-y-Cwm!	(MMBG)
6 th Sept.	65 Marsh Fritillary larval webs counted at Aberbargoed. (Mark Allen, Dunia Hatuga and Karen Wilkinson)	
8 th Sept.	Large Wainscot at Newport Wetlands (Goldcliff).	(Kevin Dupé)
10 th Sept.	Grey Chi to light at Rassau.	(Rodney Morris)
	Cypress Carpet at Haisboro Avenue, Newport. A first site record.	(Sheila Dupé)
13 th Sept	Painted Lady in a Risca garden for three days.	(Martin Anthoney)
	2 Large Ranunculus to light at Melbourne Way, Newport. Nine specimens of this species were recorded from the same site on 23 rd Sept.	(Roger James)
14 th Sept.	Painted Lady at Penallt.	(Ian Rabjohns)
15 th Sept.	Large Ranunculus to light at Risca, the first of eight so far recorded at this site. This species is having its best year ever in the county.	(Martin Anthoney)
16 th Sept.	Humming-bird Hawk at Penallt.	(Ian Rabjohns)
19 th Sept.	Humming-bird Hawk at Melbourne Way, Newport.	(Roger James)
22 nd Sept.	Blair’s Shoulder-knot to light at Risca.	(Martin Anthoney)
23 rd Sept.	Painted Lady at Hendre Lake Park, St Mellons.	(Martin Anthoney & Roger James)

Figure of Eight moth at Penhow Woodlands. (Martin Anthoney & Roger James)

24th Sept. 2 Feathered Ranunculus to light at Undy. The first for two years, this species is much less common in Gwent than its relative the Large Ranunculus. Also Brown-spot Pinion. (Keith Jones)

25th Sept. Humming-bird Hawk in Monmouth. (per Ray Armstrong)

Red-green Carpet and Cypress Pug at Risca. (Martin Anthoney)

26th Sept. Another Humming-bird Hawk at Melbourne Way, Newport. The fourth county record this month. (Roger James)

Mottled Umber to light at Risca. (Martin Anthoney)

27th Sept. Flounced Chestnut and Dark Sword-grass to light at Llanishen. (David Hathaway)

29th Sept. L-album Wainscot to light at Redhouse Barn, Newport Wetlands Reserve. A first VC35 record for this migrant. (Kevin Dupé).

Oak Lutestring (new site) and Flounced Chestnut at Fedw Wood near Chepstow. (Martin Anthoney & Roger James)



L-album Wainscot
(Kevin Dupé)

30th Sept. An immigrant Scarce Bordered Straw (first county record for five years) at Melbourne Way, Newport. Also a Mullein Wave. (Roger James)

The night for Merveille du Jour, with specimens recorded at Newport, Risca and Rassau. (Roger James, Martin Anthoney & Rod Morris respectively)

1st Oct. An immigrant Vestal, plus Cypress Pug and Cypress Carpet at Undy. Another new site for Cypress Carpet, which now seems well established in the coastal area. (Keith Jones).

2nd Oct. Another Vestal, this time at Penallt. (Stephanie Tyler)

Martin Anthoney

Newport Report

Moths

Thanks to a southerly airstream, more migrants were recorded including another surprise! First Newport records for 2011 during September, plus a few noteworthy ones, are:

30th Aug Goldcliff Red Underwing.

2nd Sept Melbourne Way Centre-barred Sallow, Sallow and a very late Elephant Hawk.



*Two pictures of
a Sallow moth
(Ray Armstrong)*



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8 th Sept	Goldcliff	Large Wainscot.
9 th Sept	Melbourne Way	Black Rustic.
10 th Sept	Haisboro Avenue	Cypress Carpet (a first site record).
13 th Sept	Melbourne Way.	Large Ranunculus. On 23 rd Sept, nine were recorded at this site.
15 th Sept	Haisboro Avenue	Pink-barred Sallow, Barred Sallow.
19 th Sept	Melbourne Way	Humming-bird Hawk.
21 st Sept	Melbourne Way	Brindled Green, Beaded Chestnut, Lunar Underwing.
22 nd Sept	Goldcliff	A “woolly bear” Garden Tiger larva; sadly a noteworthy record today reflecting a UK decline of 89% over the period 1968-2002 according to a Butterfly Conservation report.
23 rd Sept	Haisboro Avenue	Blair’s Shoulder-knot
	Melbourne Way	Autumnal Rustic
	Penhow Woodlands	Figure of Eight
26 th Sept	Melbourne Way	A further Humming-bird Hawk.
27 th Sept	Goldcliff	Frosted Orange.
	Melbourne Way	Green-brindled Crescent.
29 th Sept	Goldcliff	The surprise! A first VC35 record of L-album Wainscot. Also recorded were Red-line Quaker and 53 Beaded Chestnut.
30 th Sept	Melbourne Way	Scarce Bordered Straw (first Newport record since 2006 when 23 individuals were recorded). Also, Mullein Wave, Red-green Carpet and Merveille du Jour.

My thanks as always to the recorders who made this article possible.

Thanks to the recorders:

Haisboro Avenue	Sheila Dupé
Goldcliff	Kevin Dupé
Melbourne Way	Roger James
Penhow Woodlands	Martin Anthony & Roger James.

Roger James

Silurian Newsletter

The next issue of the Silurian newsletter, the last for 2011, will appear at the end of November.

Dates for your Diary 2011/2012

- Saturday 15th Oct. Butterfly Conservation (South Wales Branch) Members' Day and AGM.
Kenfig NNR Visitors' Centre. 10.30am to 3.30pm.
Members and non-members welcome. Free to all. Speakers include:
Chris Manley (author of *British Moths & Butterflies- A Photographic Guide*)
George Tordoff (Butterfly Conservation)
Kathy Seddon (Education on butterflies in Europe)
- Sunday 29th January 2012 Work task at Blackrock Quarry, Clydach. 10am to 1pm.
- Sunday 11th March 2012 Drab Looper work task at Hendre Wood, near Monmouth.
10am to 1pm.

MMBG – Contact Names and Addresses.

Secretary: Kevin Dupé
44 Gaer Park Lane
Newport
NP20 3NE

Phone 01633 216599
e-mail the.dupes@virginmedia.com

Chairman: Roger James
44 Melbourne Way
Newport
NP20 3RF

Phone 01633 263374
e-mail smallranunculus@btinternet.com
or in case of problems
julia.james@btinternet.com

Treasurer: Sheila Dupé
18 Haisbro Avenue
Newport
NP19 7HY
Phone 01633 256475

Newsletter Editor & Recorder for
Butterflies & Macro Moths
Martin Anthony
23 Malvern Close
Risca
Newport
NP11 6QY
Phone 01633 612272
e-mail Martin@Chemlep.demon.co.uk

Recorder for Micro Moths
Sam Bosanquet
Dingestow Court
Monmouth
Monmouthshire
NP25 4DY
e-mail s.bosanquet@ccw.gov.uk