



MONMOUTHSHIRE MOTH & BUTTERFLY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No 91 May 2013.

A monthly newsletter covering

Gwent and Monmouthshire Vice County 35

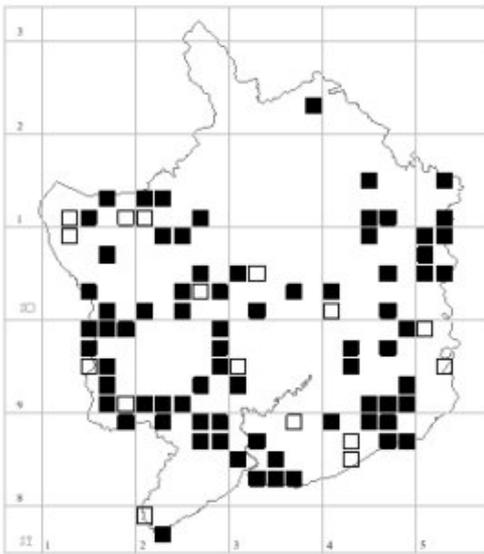
Editor: Martin Anthony

Burnet Moths In Gwent

The Burnets are brightly coloured, day-flying moths (genus *Zygaena*) which have greenish-grey forewings with red markings and predominately red hindwings. In keeping with the warning colouration, the adults secrete a toxic fluid and cyanide has been shown to be present in all stages. This greatly reduces predation by birds, though some birds seem able to cope with the toxin.

Of the seven British species of burnet, two occur commonly in Gwent and a third is considered extinct. The commonest and most widespread is the Six-spot Burnet, *Zygaena filipendulae*, which is found in grassy, flowery areas such as verges, rides or brownfield sites where the larval foodplants, bird's-foot trefoils, proliferate. It is absent in some farmland areas where such habitats are scarce. The caterpillar is full grown by late June and pupates in a papery cocoon, often to be seen attached halfway up a grass stem. The adults are on the wing from late June to August, rarely September, though these are probably late emergences rather than a second generation.

0169 Six-spot Burnet (*Zygaena filipendulae*)



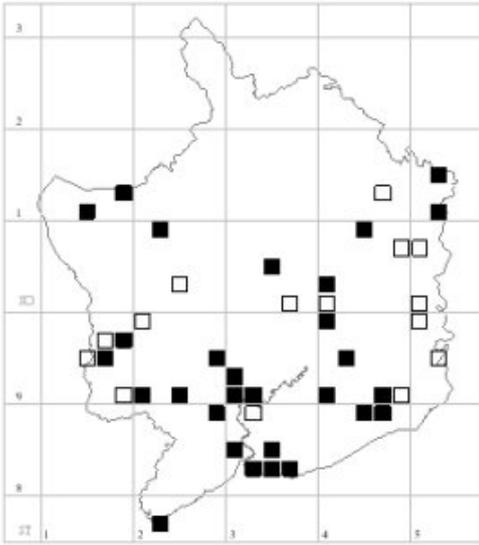
Six-spot Burnet
(*Zygaena filipendulae*)



The two red spots closest to the head are often difficult to separate, though the species is easily identified as “head spot(s) plus four other spots”.

The Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet, *Zygaena lonicerae*, is also common in Gwent, though less widely spread than the Six-spot.

0171 Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet (*Zygaena lonicerae*)



Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet
(*Zygaena lonicerae*)



The adult appears longer relative to its width than the Six-spot Burnet, but is identified as having “head spot(s) plus three other spots”. It occupies similar habitat to the Six-spot Burnet, but the larvae feed on meadow vetchling and clovers as well as bird’s-foot trefoil. Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet is on the wing in late June and July, usually appearing before the Six-spot, though the two species are often seen flying together.

A third species, the Five-spot Burnet (*Zygaena trifolii*) has been the cause of much confusion regarding its occurrence in Gwent. Unconfirmed records have turned up sporadically for many years, but it is difficult to distinguish from Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet and my predecessor as County Recorder, Neil Horton, had detailed correspondence with W.G.Tremewan, Britain’s leading authority on the Burnet moths, the outcome of which was summarised in Neil’s 1994 book:

“In 1968 /1969 ..a strong colony flourished in a hill-side meadow at Old Furnace in the Angidy Valley but soon after the colony was obliterated by overgrazing ..this was the only known Monmouthshire station for this Burnet and none has been discovered since”.

This remains the situation today, and Gwent records for Five-spot Burnet will not be accepted without very strong supporting evidence.

Five-spot Burnet occurs in Britain as two subspecies: ssp *palustrella* occurs on dry calcareous grassland, and this is the form which occurred in the Angidy Valley. It flies in May and June, earlier than other burnets. The second subspecies, ssp *decreta*, usually inhabits damp grassland or wetlands, flies in July and August and is unknown in Gwent.

Martin Anthony

Help Needed In Caddisfly Recording

Our adult British caddisflies are very much under recorded. In a bid to address this I established the *Adult Caddisfly Recording Scheme* in 2006. Since this time I have had many samples sent to be identified and all of these have been added to the national database. Those who collect samples come from very varied backgrounds; some from angling clubs, some from nature reserves, some from natural history societies and some from those running light traps for moths. However, I only have a few records from Wales.

Basically, if you see what you think is any type of adult caddisfly (and we have almost 200 different types here in the UK) while you are running a light trap I would love to see a sample. Unfortunately due to the problems with identification I can only identify positively those sent to me (preserved in alcohol). If you are interested and would like to be part of this survey just drop me an e-mail, with your name and postal address and I will send you a couple of sample tubes and very simple instructions.

Thank you

Stuart M Crofts

The Adult Caddisfly Occurrence Scheme

Email: stuart@riverflies.org

MMBG Polo Shirts

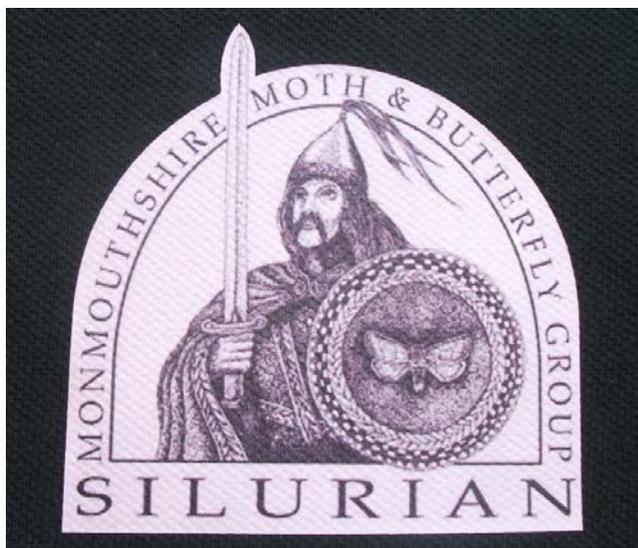
Kevin has arranged for the supply of Monmouthshire Moth & Butterfly Group polo shirts.

Cost £11 each plus £3 P&P, (no P&P if collected).

Orders to Kevin Dupe, 44 Gaer Park Lane, Newport NP20 3NE.

Cheques made payable to Monmouthshire Moth & Butterfly Group.

Orders in by 25th June please.



Recent Highlights

At last, May produced some welcome, and lengthy, periods of sunny weather, though the effects of one of our coldest-ever springs are taking a long time to be alleviated. The sunny days turn to cool clear nights, exacerbated by ground and water temperatures well below normal, and catches at moth traps have been very poor, in single figures for many sites. Open sites to the north of the county and at higher levels have been

particularly badly hit. Emergence seems to be a month or more behind normal, though the flight period of some spring species has been elongated – Hebrew Character has been coming to my garden light for five months so far this year (first record 8th January, latest record 11th June)!

Of the butterflies, Speckled Wood, Orange-tip, Common Blue and Small Copper have all been scarce so far this year, while others such as Dingy Skipper caused worries before eventually reaching reasonable numbers albeit a month or more late. With such a late season, what will the effect be on the second generation of those species which are normally double brooded?

1st May Mottled Grey, Streamer and Pebble Prominent amongst 11 species to light at Ochryth. (Richard Clarke)

Holly Blue, Brimstone, Comma, Large White, Peacock, Small Tortoiseshell and Green-veined White. 20 butterflies of 7 species seen at St Pierre's Great Wood. The first sign of things improving after a very poor spring. (Martin Anthony & Roger James)

2nd May Red Admiral at Uskmouth – a species almost totally absent this spring (Sheila Dupé)

6th May Puss Moth and Vine's Rustic to light at Haisbro Avenue, Newport (Sheila Dupé)

Purple Thorn and Lunar Marbled Brown to light at Ochryth. (Richard Clarke)

Buttoned Snout to light at Cefn Ila. The first county record for five years.

(Martin Anthony, Roger James & Mike Kilner)



*Buttoned
Snout*

7th May The butterfly transect at Uskmouth yielded 41 Green-veined White, but only 7 Orange-tip, 9 Speckled Wood, 3 Peacock, 3 Small Tortoiseshell, 3 Large White and 1 Holly Blue. (Sheila Dupé)

Marbled Brown at Beacon Hill, Trellech (Ray Armstrong)

8th May 10 Scarlet Tiger larvae at Newport Wetlands Reserve (8 on bramble, 2 on hemp agrimony) (Kevin Dupé)

13th – 17th May A total of 17 Grizzled Skipper (but no Dingy Skipper or Drab Looper) recorded at MoD Caerwent Training area. (Martin Anthony & Roger James)

*Grizzled
Skipper*
(Nick Felstead)



- 16th May The micro *Eucosma aspidiscana* found in Slade Wood. (Nick Felstead)
Confirmed when ten or more were seen flying above golden rod
at the same site on 22nd May. (George Tordoff)
- 17th May 2 Red Sword-grass to light at Rassau (Rodney Morris)
- 18th May A Humming-bird Hawk moth nectaring on wallflowers at St Mellons. (Michael Field)
8 Dingy Skipper butterflies at Bedwas Tip (Richard Clarke)
Grizzled Skipper at Caerwent Quarry. A new site. (Nick Felstead)



Eucosma aspidiscana
(Nick Felstead)



Pancalia leuwenhoekella
(George Tordoff)

- 19th May Poplar Hawk, Coronet and Alder Kitten to light at Haisbro Avenue, Newport. (Sheila Dupé)
- 22nd May Two *Pancalia leuwenhoekella* at Ifton Quarry, near Slade Wood. Only the third county record
for this micro. (George Tordoff)
- Dingy Skipper and Common Blue, plus Orange-tip, at Rogiet Country Park. (Martin Anthony)
- The season's first Drab Looper and *Pyrausta purpuralis* at Slade Wood. (George Tordoff)

- 25th May Dingy Skipper at Caerwent Quarry. A new site for this species. (Martin Anthoney)
- 27 Dingy Skipper at Wyllie and a further 18 at Aberbargoed. At last this species is appearing in numbers. Also, 6 Small Copper at Aberbargoed. (Nick Felstead)
- 26th May Chocolate-tip and Buff Tip among 21 species to light at Melbourne Way, Newport. (Roger James)
- 29th May Lime Hawk and Orange Footman among twelve species to light at Melbourne Way, Newport. (Roger James)
- Dog's Tooth to light at Newport Wetlands. (Kevin Dupé)
- 31st May An important new site for Drab Looper at Llanmelin Hill Fort. Over 50 were counted flying, plus Burnet Companion. Close to a known site at MoD Caerwent, but the numbers recorded are exceptional. (Martin Anthoney & Roger James)
- Two Drab Looper also at St Pierre's Great Wood. (George Tordoff)
- Orange Footman, Spectacle, Alder Kitten, Pebble Hook-tip, Broken-barred Carpet, Knot Grass and *Syndemis musculana* among 26 species to light at Ochrwyth (Richard Clarke)
- Elephant Hawk, Lobster, Orange Footman and Herald to light at Llandogo (Gail Reynolds)
- Dingy Skipper at Churchwood and Springvale Ponds LNR, Cwmbran. (Steve Williams)
- First Marsh Fritillary of the season at Aberbargoed NNR. (Mark Allen)

Silurian Update

Further to the 2013 larval searches described in the last newsletter, on 15th May, despite arctic conditions (temperature down to 1.2 degrees C), four hardy souls (George Tordoff, Norman Lowe, Chris Manley and Dave Grundy) found 21 Silurian larvae on the Darren Lwyd ridge (centre of search area SO241329), this being the next ridge to the west of Hatterrall in the Black Mountains.

* Recorded in 4 new 1km squares (SO2332, 2333, 2432, 2433). Altitude 580-615m.

* These are the most northerly breeding records in the UK, being about 4km to the north-west of the most northerly Hatterrall record.

* All records were in VC42 Breconshire and are new to the county, much to Norman Lowe's delight (and he found the first one!).

Gwent Distribution Maps

Accompanying this newsletter is a file containing the third batch of distribution maps for Gwent macro moths. Plotted on a 2km basis, black squares indicate records for 2000 onwards, whereas open squares indicate sites where pre-2000 records exist but no post-2000 records. Historical records which were too vague to be assigned at the 2km level have been omitted.

Martin Anthoney

Dates for your Diary 2013

Friday 28th June – Tuesday 2nd July Silurian Moth Trapping, Black Mountains

Dave Grundy (West Midlands) will be organising several nights of moth trapping for Silurians on the Hatterrall Ridge, Black Mountains. Trapping will require staying out all night as Silurians do not come to light until late in the night. The ridge is very exposed and warm and waterproof clothing are essential. A vehicle may be available to transport equipment and trappers to the ridge; if not then a steep climb will be required from a car park in the valley. Dates are liable to change depending on weather and will be finalised nearer the time. If you are interested, please contact Dave Grundy via email <dgcountryside@btinternet.com>.

Thursday 8th Aug to Sat 10th Aug
Thursday 8th August

National Moth Night 2013. Two events are planned:
Moth trapping session at Aberbargoed NNR Education Centre.
9pm onwards. ST166996

Saturday 10th August

Moth trapping session at GWT Magor Marsh Reserve.
9pm onwards. ST425867
An appropriate venue since Gwent Wildlife Trust is celebrating its fiftieth birthday this year and Magor Marsh was its first reserve.

Saturday 19th October

Butterfly Conservation (S Wales Branch) AGM and Members' Day.
Kenfig NNR Visitor Centre.

MMBG – Contact Names and Addresses.

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