



MONMOUTHSHIRE MOTH & BUTTERFLY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No 92 June 2013.

A monthly newsletter covering

Gwent and Monmouthshire Vice County 35

Editor: Martin Anthony

Scarce Hook-tip Survey

The Scarce Hook-tip moth (*Sabra harpagula*), a Red Data Book and Wales Priority (Section 42) species is now restricted in Britain to the woodlands of the lower Wye Valley on the border of Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire. First discovered in Britain in 1837, at Leigh Woods near Bristol (where it has not been seen since 1938), it was not until June 1961 that it was discovered in the Wye Valley by D S Fletcher and J D Bradley, when a male was recorded in early June, followed by two more individuals on 24 June.

The larvae feed on small-leaved lime, though very little is known about them in the wild. Since 1961, the moth has been found in several Monmouthshire and Gloucestershire localities where this tree occurs adjacent to the River Wye. Given the abundance of lime, it is no surprise that the Wyndcliff area is the best known, and most regularly trapped, site in Monmouthshire. Specimens are regularly reported, the most recent being 16th June this year. It attracts immigrant lepidopterists from all over Britain. One anecdote is quoted by George Peterken in his *Wye Valley* book in the *New Naturalists* series:

“..on one summer night, Martin Anthony found the Wyndcliff looking like the Blackpool illuminations – 17 light traps were being run simultaneously..”



Scarce Hook-tip (Chris Manley)

In 2000, Scarce Hook-tip was recorded from Livox Estate just north-east of Wyndcliff and in 2004 at St Pierre's Great Wood west of Chepstow away from the River Wye, but has not been recorded from either site since. A survey was organised this June to determine if the species still occurs in the two sites.

On a cool night (24th June) seven people light trapped in St Pierre's Great Wood. Six fresh Scarce Hook-tips came to lights spread throughout the wood. To confirm its residence in the wood, a week later (1st July) four hardy souls trapped all night and recorded at least 20 individuals. Clearly Scarce Hook-tip is well-established in St Pierre's Great Wood even though small-leaved lime is nothing like as common as at Wyndcliff.

On 26th June eight people visited the woodland on the Livox Estate. Although 126 moth species were recorded, there was no sign of Scarce Hook-tip. So whilst a colony of Scarce Hook-tip has been confirmed at St Pierre's Great Wood, a question remains over the Livox Estate.

On 29th June a corresponding survey on the Gloucestershire side of the river yielded around nine Scarce Hook-tip at Ban-y-gor Wood north of Tutshill, and around thirty were recorded at James's Thorns (west of Tidenham), a Forestry Commission area a short distance north.

Thanks are due to George Tordoff (Butterfly Conservation Wales) for organising the survey in conjunction with Natural Resources Wales and for co-ordinating with our Gloucestershire colleagues.

Martin Anthony

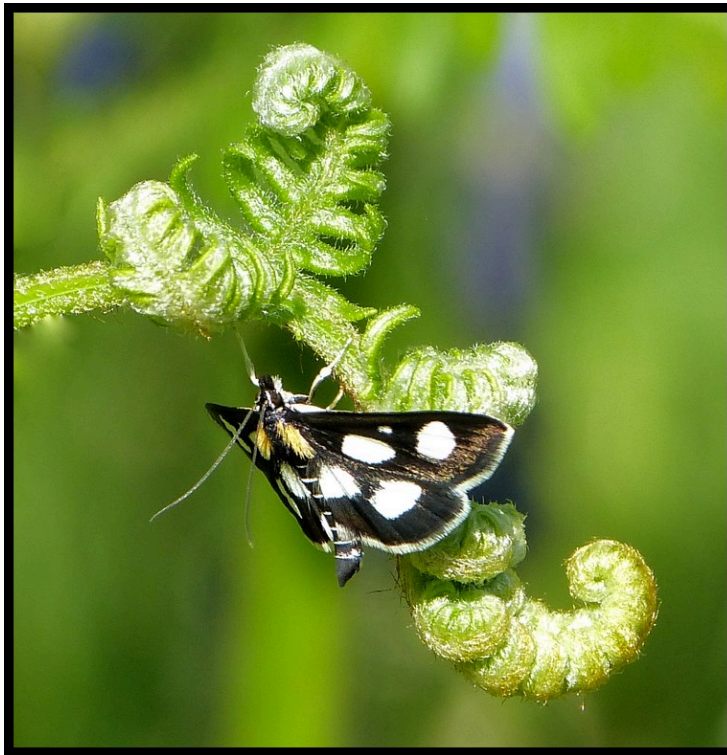
Recent Highlights

June saw the gradual appearance of summer at long last, with increasing sunshine and temperatures through the month. Most benefit seemed to accrue to butterflies and day-flying moths, with respectable numbers to be seen, albeit often very late in the season. Common Blue and Speckled Wood continued their poor season.

Moth numbers, both species and individuals, also improved, though sunny days often produced clear cool nights, with cloudy, warm nights, the ideal for moth-trapping, being few and far between.

1 st June	13 Dingy Skipper, a Green Hairstreak and 7 Speckled Yellow at Blackrock Quarry, Clydach. (Martin Anthony & Roger James)
	1 Dingy Skipper at the Whistle Inn end of Garn Lakes. (Martin Anthony & Roger James)
	30 Dingy Skipper and Burnet Companion at Pontypool (Cwm Du). (Nick Felstead)
	Chamomile Shark at Haisbro Ave, Newport. (Sheila Dupé)
2 nd June	3 Drab Looper at Lower Hale Wood, a known site. (Martin Anthony & Roger James)
3 rd June	11 Drab Looper, 5 Grizzled Skipper and 1 Dingy Skipper at MoD Caerwent. (Martin Anthony & Roger James)
	34 Drab Looper, Grizzled Skipper and a Mocha at Llanmelin Hill Fort. (George Tordoff)
	1 Grizzled Skipper at Slade Wood. (George Tordoff)
	4 Drab Looper at Hendre Wood. (George Tordoff)
	Small Eggar web at Whitson. The only one reported this year, which is worrying. (Kevin Dupé)
4 th June	8 Grizzled Skipper, 7 Dingy Skipper at MoD Caerwent. (Martin Anthony & Roger James)
	Green Hairstreak at Broad Meend. (Nick Felstead)
	Sharp-angled Peacock at Uskmouth. (Kevin Dupé)

- 6th June Mocha, Brindled White-spot, Barred Umber, Square Spot among 39 macro species to light at Slade Wood (Martin Anthony & Roger James)
- 7th June 8 Dingy Skipper at Wyllye and 4 at Penllwyn Grasslands, Pontllanfraith. (Martin Anthony & Roger James)
- 8th June 3 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, 13 Dingy Skipper and 3 Wall Brown butterflies at Coed Cefn-rhychdir, New Tredegar. (Nick Felstead)
- 9th June 350 Marsh Fritillary, 40 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary and 20 Dingy Skipper at Aberbargoed NNR. Just as important was the sighting of *Anania funebris*, a pretty micro now assigned UK Priority status and last recorded in the county in 1998. (Bill Jones)
- 7 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary , 20 Dingy Skipper at Blaenserchan (George Tordoff)
- 2 Dingy Skipper near Cwmtillery lakes. (George Tordoff)
- Alder Moth, Orange Footman to light at Llandogo (Linda Pullin)



Anania funebris

(Bill Jones)

- 11th June Eyed Hawk, Satin Lutestring and Broad-barred White at Lower Ochryth. (Richard Clarke)
- 14th June 4 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary at Blaenserchan (Steve Williams)
Silky Wainscot at Uskmouth . (Kevin Dupé)
- 15th June Dark Spectacle at Chepstow. (Nick Felstead)
- 16th June Cream-spot Tiger and Dog's Tooth at St Brides. (Diana Westmoreland & John Morgan)
- 17th June Forester Moth (first site record for 30 years), 1 Drab Looper, 1 Grizzled Skipper, 1 Dingy Skipper at MoD Caerwent . (Martin Anthony & Roger James)

- 18th June Obscure Wainscot, Gold Spot at Goldcliff (Kevin Dupé)
Mocha, Blomer's Rivulet and Green Arches among 43 species at The Cwm.
(Martin Anthony & Roger James)
- 19th June 2 Dingy Skipper at Marine Colliery, Cwm (Martin Anthony & Roger James)
Brindled White-spot and Satin Lutestring at Penallt (Stephanie Tyler)
- 20th June Champion and Freyer's Pug at Rassau (Rodney Morris)
- 21st June Forester Moth at Flatwood Meadows, Crosskeys (a known site) (Martin Anthony)
- 22nd June A very late Red-green Carpet at Risca. (Martin Anthony)
- 24th June During the Scarce Hook-tip survey at St Pierre's great Wood, the micros *Incurvaria oehlmaniella* (fourth county record), *Ephestia parasitella* and *Nematopogon metaxella* were recorded. (George Tordoff)
Among other macros found were Mocha, Little Thorn, Brindled White-spot, Blomer's Rivulet and Clay Triple-lines. (Various)
- 25th June 4 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary at Silent Valley reserve (Tom Eyles)
- 25th June 5 very fresh Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary, 1 Dingy Skipper and several Small Argent and Sable moths at Ebbw Vale (Aneurin Bevan Stones) (Martin Anthony & Roger James)
(cont) A very fresh Dark Green Fritillary at Markham Tip. (Martin Anthony & Roger James)
A sign of our mixed-up season that Small Pearl-bordered and Dark Green Fritillaries seem to be emerging at the same time!



Eudonia pallida (Keith Jones)



Ephestia parasitella (George Tordoff)

- 26th June During the Scarce Hook-tip survey at Livox Estate, the micros *Bucculatrix demaryella* (a new county record), *Eudonia pallida* (another new county record) and *Pseudatemelia flavifrontella* (nationally scarce and only the second county record) were recorded. (George Tordoff)

Also, the macros Pauper Pug, Haworth's Pug, Sycamore, Alder Moth, Blomer's Rivulet, Fern, Small Waved Umber, Mocha, Maiden's Blush and Brindled White-spot. (Various)
 Coincidentally, the same evening another *Eudonia pallida* turned up at Undy. So joint first county records! (Keith Jones)



Orange Moth

- 29th June Dark Green Fritillary and 9 Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary at Blaenserchan (Rupert Perkins)
 Several *Pyrausta cingulata*, a black and white micro, flying at Ochryth (Richard Clarke)
 Orange Moth amongst 38 species to light at The Cwm. The first county record for four years. (Martin Anthony)
- 30th June First Marbled White butterfly record for 2013 at Chepstow (Nick Felstead)
 Welsh Wave and Lead Belle to light at Bal-Bach, near Llanthony (George Tordoff)
 Red-necked Footman at Llandogo (Linda Pullin)

Newport Report

First 2013 records for Newport:

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|----------------------|-------------------------|--|
| 31 st May | St Brides | Common Carpet, Green Carpet, Small Square-spot, Ruby Tiger, Clouded-bordered Brindle, Dog's Tooth, Coronet, Poplar Hawk. |
| 1 st June | Haisbro Ave | Chamomile Shark |
| 2 nd June | Whitson | Small Eggar (web) |
| 3 rd June | Uskmouth | Small Yellow Underwing |
| 4 th June | Haisbro Ave
Uskmouth | Flame, Dusky Brocade
Sharp-angled Peacock, Shaded Broad-bar |
| 5 th June | St Brides | Dark Arches, Elephant Hawk, Burnished Brass |

8 th June	Melbourne Way	Heart and Dart, Small Elephant Hawk, Clouded Silver, Shears, Figure of Eighty, Marbled White-spot, Alder Kitten, Satin Lutestring
9 th June	St Brides	Light Arches
10 th June	Melbourne Way Uskmouth	Marbled Minor, Mullein, Red Twin-spot Carpet Latticed Heath, Burnet Companion
11 th June	Goldcliff	Middle-barred Minor
12 th June	Melbourne Way	Purple Bar, Dark Brocade
14 th June	Uskmouth	Silky Wainscot
15 th June	Goldcliff	Light Emerald
16 th June	Goldcliff	Eyed Hawk, Straw Dot, Large Yellow Underwing, Blood-vein
17 th June	Goldcliff Haisbro Ave	Mother Shipton Tawny Marbled Minor, Common Rustic, Smoky Wainscot, Cinnabar
18 th June	Uskmouth Goldcliff Melbourne Way	Six-spot Burnet Lobster Moth, Snout, Gold Spot, Mottled Rustic, Scorched Wing, Obscure Wainscot Rustic Shoulder-knot, Cabbage Moth, Green Pug, July Highflyer, Miller
20 th June	Uskmouth Melbourne Way	Spruce Carpet Clouded Brindle, Beautiful Golden Y, Yellow Shell, White-spotted Pug, Uncertain, Shoulder-striped Wainscot, Heart and Club, Small Fan-foot
Recorders:	St Brides Haisbro Ave Uskmouth Goldcliff Melbourne Way	Diana Westmoreland and John Morgan Sheila Dupé Kevin Dupé, Sheila Dupé Kevin Dupé Roger James

My thanks as always to my fellow moth-ers in Newport for the above records. After a very poor start to the year the weather seems to have improved somewhat with a good short-term forecast (promises, promises!).

Roger James

Gwent Distribution Maps

Accompanying this newsletter is a file containing the fourth 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

Thursday 8 th Aug to Sat 10 th Aug Thursday 8 th August	National Moth Night 2013. Two events are planned: Moth trapping session at Aberbargoed NNR Education Centre. 9pm onwards. ST166996
Saturday 10 th 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 19 th October	Butterfly Conservation (S Wales Branch) AGM and Members' Day. Kenfig NNR Visitor Centre.

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