



# Gwent - Glamorgan Recorders' Newsletter

Issue 7—Autumn  
October 2012

## Creating a haven for wildlife in West Glamorgan

**Welcome** to the seventh issue of the Gwent-Glamorgan Recorders' Newsletter. What a summer! According to the MetOffice, it was officially the wettest summer for 100 years, the second wettest since 1910 (when records began), and the dullest summer since 1987! The weather certainly made it challenging to get out and about this year, and it remains to be seen whether the number of records from 2012 will reflect this.

This month sees the first ever *Wales Fungus Day* taking place on the 14th October. See **page 16** for further details on how to help find the largest fairy ring in Wales!

We are asking for your opinions on possible changes to the Gwent and Glamorgan Recorders' Fora (see **page 4** for further details on how to get involved). The survey will not take very long to complete and will really help us decide on the future format of these events.

Enjoy the newsletter!

**Rebecca Davies, SEWBR<sup>e</sup>C (Editor)**

### Included in this issue:

Wildlife haven in West Glamorgan	1-2
SEWBR <sup>e</sup> C News	2-4
Monmouthshire Meadow Group	5
Botanical highlights in 2012 (VC35)	5-6
Canada Tips & Quarry Pools, Blaenavon	7
Blaencanoid Raven Roost Update	8
Rare Fungus in Dingestow	9
Wildboar in Gwent	9-10
Recording around Ebbw Vale	11
Wasp Spider Record - First for Wales	12
Taf Fechan Nature Reserve	13
Swift Nesting	14
Disaster.....or succession	14-15
Volunteering & Events	16



Shrilc carder bee © Buglife

Wildlife charity, Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust have been awarded funding from WREN, a landfill tax grant giving body, to carry out an exciting new project for wildlife on ex-industrial sites in South Wales.

This 3 year project will focus on 5 brown-field sites in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot – these are Kilvey Hill and Pluck Lake (Swansea); and Cymmer Tip, Bryn Tip and non-operational land at Tata Steel (Neath Port Talbot). The rich industrial heritage of this area, including coal mining and heavy metal smelting, has created a legacy of sites, some of which contain contaminated soils and substrates that can be highly alkaline or highly acidic. It is these varied ground conditions that create pockets of different habitat types such as bare ground, wildflower rich grassland, heathland and scrub – making brownfield sites a haven for wildlife, especially for invertebrates and reptiles.

During the next 3 years Buglife and partners plan to collate existing baseline data, and gather further data on all sites for invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and flora. Work will be undertaken to restore and enhance 48 hectares of habitat and these

areas will be monitored for key species throughout the life of the project to assess the effectiveness of the habitat works.

Survey data gathered during year 1 of the project will be used to inform habitat management and enhancement work which is likely to include:

- Scrub clearance and thinning to promote the establishment of wildflower rich grassland and heathland;
- Enhancing microhabitat features through the creation of bare ground scrapes. Bare patches of ground are ideal for basking invertebrates and reptiles, and will encourage the development of early successional vegetation;
- Wildflower meadow creation to enhance floral diversity and provide high quality forage resources for invertebrates;
- Bee bank creation to provide burrowing habitat for bees and wasps. Bee banks will provide topographical variation and will vegetate over time creating microhabitats that will be able to support a variety of invertebrates to include ground beetles and spiders.

Through survey, management and monitoring, this project will work at a landscape scale to provide habitat for many threatened invertebrates including UK and Local BAP species such as Shrilc carder bee (*Bombus sylvarum*), Brown banded carder bee (*Bombus humilis*), Dune tiger beetle (*Cicindela maritima*), Dingy skipper

## Creating a haven for wildlife in West Glamorgan (...cont)

(*Erynnis tages*), Grayling (*Hipparchia semele*), Small blue (*Cupido minimus*) and Grizzled skipper (*Pyrgus malvae*). UK BAP reptiles and amphibians to benefit from the project include Adder (*Vipera berus*), Grass snake (*Natrix natrix*), Common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) and Slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*).

Buglife hopes to work with planners, ecologists, developers, land managers and consultants to raise awareness of the importance of brownfields; and will also be carrying out brownfield resource mapping in Swansea and Neath Port Talbot to identify good quality brownfield sites. Numerous events such as Bio-blitzes, wildlife walks and talks will be organised to engage and inspire local communities.

Partnership working will be key to the success of the project and Buglife are working closely with Swansea and Neath Port Talbot Councils and Tata Steel; as well as Bumblebee Conservation, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation and Swansea University. It is hoped



Cymmer Tip, Neath Port Talbot © Buglife

that additional partnerships will be made throughout the course of the project.

If you would like any further details about the project or would like to be involved with survey work or habitat management please contact Buglife Brownfield Officer, Clare Dinham on

01733 201210 or [clare.dinham@buglife.org.uk](mailto:clare.dinham@buglife.org.uk).

**Clare Dinham, Brownfield Stepping Stones Officer, Buglife - The Invertebrate Conservation Trust**

## SEWBReC News

### Financial Update

Despite continuing difficult times in the wider economy, SEWBReC remains on a very stable financial footing. As reported at the SEWBReC AGM on 20<sup>th</sup> September 2012, accounts produced for 2011/12 financial year end showed a profit of £9,835. This has enabled us to build up a healthy financial surplus which equates to almost four months of total running costs of the business, exceeding our target of holding three months' of running costs in reserve. As well as providing welcome relief from any cash-flow difficulties, the financial surplus has allowed us to carefully plan some additional expenditure, such as replacing some ageing IT equipment, as well as considering further investment in our broadband connection and IT systems to allow us to begin to provide new products and services to our data suppliers and users (see the following article for more information).

Progress on funding agreements for 2012/13 has been excellent. New agreements are in place with the three bodies (Countryside Council for Wales, Environmental Agency Wales and Forestry Commission Wales) which are due to be merged into a new Natural Resources Body for Wales, which will start functioning in April 2013. Service Level Agreements and Data Licence Agreements are in place with ten of the twelve Local Authorities in our region. In addition we have agreements with South Wales Trunk Roads Agency and Gwent Wildlife Trust and continue to receive welcome funding from Wales Biodiversity Partnership to run our annual programme of training courses.

As well as the funding success stories, there remain a few frustrating funding gaps. We remain committed to achieving full coverage of Local Authority usage of SEWBReC products and services, by pursuing funding agreements

with Swansea and Cardiff Councils. We also continue to seek direct funding from the Welsh Government (WG). Apart from a small amount of funding for some data layers to feed into the Glastir agri-environment scheme, it is now more than two and a half years since we had any formal funding agreement in place with WG. With the advent of the new Natural Resources Body for Wales next year, we aim to work with the other three Welsh Local Records Centres to secure a single 'Pan Wales' agreement, combining funding from WG as well as the new Single Body.

Sales of products and services to the private sector have made a huge contribution to our current financial position in recent years. We reported in the last

## SEWBReC News (...cont)

issue that 2011/12 saw sales totalling over £51,000. I am pleased to report that the trend of increased sales seems to be continuing, with figures for the first half of 2012/13 showing an increase in income of 7.5% compared to the same period last year. Already this year 207 enquiries have been dealt with from 66 separate bodies.

### Digitally Networking the Welsh Local Records Centres

In the last issue of this newsletter we reported on how the Welsh LRCs were being considered by the 'ICT Exploitation Department' within the Welsh Government (WG) as potential candidates for their 'Digitally Networked Business' (DNB) programme. We also pledged to provide progress updates on this initiative, but sadly we do not have a great deal to report. The Welsh LRCs welcomed the report that was produced following workshops that took place in November and December 2011, but it appears that things have been moving rather slowly within WG and it also seems likely that the focus of the DNB may have shifted to trying to tackle broader issues relating to biodiversity data in Wales, rather than the original idea of helping the four Welsh LRCs to work more closely together.

The decision has been taken by the managers of the Welsh LRCs that we cannot afford to sit and wait for something to happen with the DNB and that instead we should press ahead with a number of initiatives to share technical developments between the four LRCs.

The first and most imminent development is our plan to join the Wales public sector broadband network. This would enable high speed movement of data between the Welsh LRCs and fast data sharing with other public sector partners. Following this development, SEWBReC will be in a position to benefit from work that is being undertaken at the Biodiversity Information Service for Powys and Brecon Beacons National Park (BIS) in Brecon to pull together biodiversity data from different sources

using software called GeoServer. This will enable SEWBReC to seamlessly report on data from other Welsh LRCs and the NBN Gateway. It will also enable the Welsh LRCs to better deliver combined data products at the Wales level, as well as opening up possibilities of delivering data products to our users in new ways via the internet. If all goes to plan, we could be up and running with this new system within 4-6 months.

The second major strand of our planned technical developments involves utilising two excellent systems which have been developed at Cofnod (North Wales Environmental Information Service). The first of these is ORCA (Online Records Centre Administration) which will streamline a lot of internal information management within SEWBReC. The second system, which links into ORCA, is ORS (Online Recording System). This is a system which enables users to enter and view records online, but more importantly from our point of view, it would enable local experts to view and assess data online, thereby greatly enhancing the options available to us for data verification. The full integration of ORCA and ORS into SEWBReC is a slightly longer-term project, but we hope that everything could be in place within a year.

In the meantime, the Welsh LRCs are continuing to push for the full implementation of the DNB programme, as that should bring about many more significant developments which are currently beyond the scope of the LRCs.

### Biodiversity Blitzes

Despite the exceedingly wet weather, SEWBReC managed to battle on and hold / attend several successful summer events during 2012. Both Glamorgan and Gwent Biodiversity Blitz Days were well attended, though we did lose a few people when the sheets of heavy rain appeared at the Glamorgan blitz!

Please see the summary below for a break down of attendance and species records for both events:

#### Ty Mawr Convent

- 20 attendees
- Over 300 species recorded; over 230 species new to site
- >75% new species records

#### Cefn-pennar-uchaf Farm

- 18 attendees (+2 that night, & 2 next day)
- Over 275 species recorded; over 200 species new to site
- 82% new species records

Cefn-pennar Uchaf's mixed pasture and damp grassland revealed some nice plant species, including Ivy Leaved Bellflower (*Wahlenbergia hederacea*) and Bog Asphodel (*Narthecium ossifragum*). A Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary (*Boloria selene*) also appeared during one of the brief sunny spells.

Tymawr Convent resulted in a very nice record of slime mould, *Trichia botrytis* var. *cerifera*, which as you can see from the NBN distribution map (see overleaf), is very rarely recorded. We also managed to find a colourful Scarlet Tiger (*Callimorpha dominula*) on the site.



Scarlet Tiger © David Slade

Thanks, as always, to everyone who

## SEWBRc news (cont...)

Grid map of records on the NBN Gateway for *Trichia botrytis* var. *cerifera* © Crown copyright and database rights. 2011 Ordnance Survey [100017955]



attended these events, and to the land owners and managers who happily let the hordes of recorders loose in the name of conservation.

We are currently on the look out for 2013 blitz sites, so if you know of anywhere suitable, please get in contact.

### Data holdings update

The proportion of records for each taxonomic group has only changed very little since the last newsletter, hiding significant increases in bryophytes (thanks to Barry Stewart and Sam Bosanquet) and of course birds and insects. We have

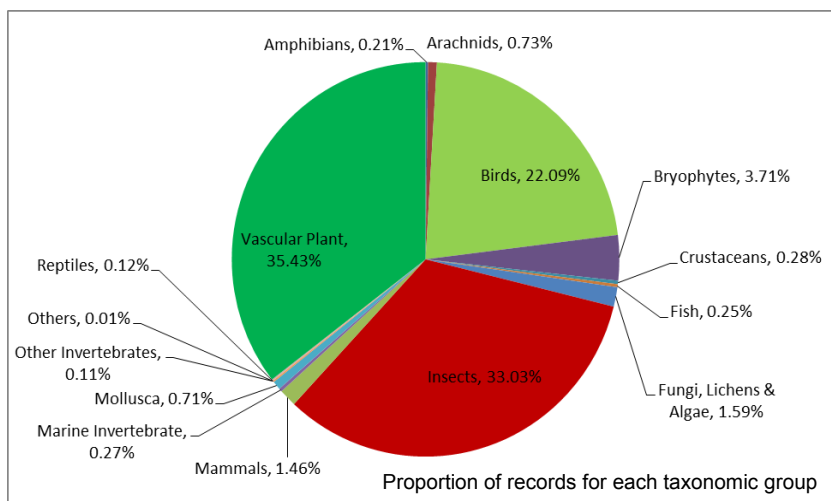
also received an update of the VC35 vascular plant records from Steph Tyler and Elsa Wood - with about 15,000 new records.

The total number of records held in the database has increased by about 105,000 since the spring edition, and around 75,000 of these fall within the post-2010 time slot.

The number of 10km squares that SEWBRc area includes is 61, and there are 31 species that have been recorded from all of them. The majority of these are plants, but there are three species of bird in this illustrious list too,

and they are not what I would have expected: Winter Wren, Common Swift and Peregrine Falcon! There are a lot more species that have been recorded from 60 of the 61 squares, and it is the Burry Holms square (SS39) that lacks things like Blackbird, Robin and Chaffinch! There's a challenge for you Gower birders!

**Adam Rowe, Elaine Wright & David Slade, SEWBRc**



## The future of the Recorders' Fora Meetings depend on you!

We would like your opinions on possible changes to the annual Gwent and Glamorgan Recorders' Fora Meetings. We have compiled a short survey with a number of questions seeking your thoughts on whether we should merge the Gwent and Glamorgan meetings together, add the SEWBRc AGM to the proceedings, and/or include workshops and training events in the programme(s).

If you are reading this newsletter as a PDF, please click on the following link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/SEWBRc-Events-2012> to go straight to the survey. If you are reading a paper copy of the newsletter, you will find a paper version of the survey enclosed

(Nb. please return any completed paper copies of the survey to: *SEWBRc, 13 St Andrew's Crescent, Cardiff, CF10 3DB*). The survey will not take very long to complete (roughly 10 minutes) and will really help us decide on the future format of these events. The closing date for the survey is **Friday 26th October**, so make sure you complete it as soon as possible to ensure that your voice is heard!

### SEWBRc Membership

We are also seeking to increase the membership of SEWBRc. Membership is open to anyone who supports the aims of the company and with whom a

working relationship exists (e.g. an individual recorder who submits records, a member of a local recording group, or a representative of a partner organisation that utilises SEWBRc services). Becoming a member of SEWBRc allows you to vote at the AGM and help direct the future of SEWBRc.

If you are interested in becoming a member, please get in touch so that we can supply you with the relevant documents (Memorandum and Articles of Association) and membership form. Email: [info@sewbrec.org.uk](mailto:info@sewbrec.org.uk)

**Rebecca Davies, SEWBRc**

## Monmouthshire Meadow Group

The MMG had a busy season of events through the spring and summer. We counted Green-veined Orchids in early May at New Grove Farm and the adjacent GWT New Grove Meadows; we held two training courses in May on plant identification and thanks to GWT we used Pentwyn Barn at Penallt; we also had open days at some members' fields, including: Peter Smith's and Sheelagh Kerry's lovely upland small-holding with orchid-rich hay meadows between Bettws and Fforest Coal Pit, Richard Cornock's fascinating small-holding down at Leechpool near Portskewett, the delightful series of small fields and woods at Parson's Grove in a basin alongside the Cas Troggy at Earlswood and further afield a visit to Chris Parson's hay meadows and orchard near Little Dean across the border. Chris and friends have set up a similar group to MMG in the Forest of Dean. At the inaugural meeting at which MMG spoke of its experiences, there were 120 enthusiastic people present.

Surveys have been carried out for at least 12 new MMG members who have land from half an acre to 76 acres, and

advice given on management to maintain and enhance their land. Some superb species-rich fields have been 'found' at various sites including at Panddy, Gilwern, Newchurch, Cwmcavan and Penyvau. Harebells, Wild Thyme, Agrimony, Betony, Field Scabious, Burnet Saxifrage and Tormentil were among the many species seen at these sites. One particularly important site with Wild Clary, Butterfly Orchids and many other exciting species was sadly a few 100m over the border into Herefordshire!

MMG members also attended the SEW-BReC bioblitz at Tymawr Convent land at Lydart near Monmouth.

On 9 September MMG volunteers cut the small wet pasture at Tymawr Convent and raked and pitchforked off the cut material into piles for Grass Snakes and Slow Worms. We avoided the wettest lower area where Devil's-bit Scabious and Ragged Robin were still flowering. For several years we have tried to



Privet Hawk Moth Caterpillar © Jon & Marilyn Dunkelman

manage this small pasture, cutting it and grazing it with Exmoor Ponies.

A bonus as we packed up to leave was the discovery of a Privet Hawk Moth caterpillar by Lindsay and Steph Tyler and then photographed by Jon and Marilyn Dunkelman. We were pleased to have a new species for Tymawr but Martin Anthoney told us that, much more excitingly, it was the first record for the vice county since 1972! It is strange as the foodplants – Privet, Guelder Rose, and even Ash, are not rare in the vice county, and in other parts of Britain the moth is quite common.

**Stephanie Tyler**

## Botanical highlights in spring and summer 2012

As vice county recorders for the BSBI we need all your plant records for a new atlas of the British Isles running since 2000. Trevor Evan's superb Flora of Monmouthshire, published in 2007, gives an excellent picture of the distribution of plants, but already this needs updating as plants are found in 'new' tetrads (2km x 2km squares) and 'new' hectads (10km x 10km squares). If you know your plants and would like to take on a tetrad or two, then we would be delighted to hear from you. If you cannot take on tetrads, then do please send us any interesting finds.

The Botanical Society's threatened plant project saw surveyors out looking for and counting Green-veined Orchids *Anacamptis morio* in early May. These scarce orchids were found at 20 sites, mainly in east and southeast Mon-

mouthshire, but there was a small population on the Usk slip road off the A449. 12 sites had from one to 24 flower spikes; four had 100-300, another over 400 and at three sites plants numbered into thousands - over 1,500 at GWT's Pentwyn and Bush Meadows, almost 2,400 on a small meadow on Star Hill near Devauden, and almost 5,000 at New Grove meadows near Trellech.

Slender Hare's-ear *Bupleurum tenuissimum*, an inconspicuous little umbellifer that grows on saltmarshes and on the seawall was found at a few locations along the Severn, the biggest colony growing close to the Wye Bridge near Chepstow. The Brackish Water Crowfoot *Ranunculus baudotii* has done well this year, growing in many rain-filled pools in the saltmarsh along the estuary from the old Severn Bridge along to

Goldcliff. The aquatic Beaked Tasselweed *Ruppia maritima* was found by Elsa and Adrian Wood and by Julian Woodman in a few of these pools for the first time since 1920. Other highlights of the estuary included new records for *Trifolium striatum* and *T. scabrum*, both uncommon clovers in Monmouthshire, and the rediscovery of *Carex distans* along the banks of the Wye.

*Onobrychis viciifolia* had been declared extinct in the county but several plants were found on the floor of the old Livox quarry together with *Anthyllis vulneraria* and *Scabiosa columbaria*, both having few recent records. (cont. overleaf...)

## Botanical highlights in spring and summer 2012 (...cont)

Dave Green found 10 clumps of Bulbous Canary-grass *Phalaris aquatica* near Osbaston in a corner of a cornfield by Manson Lane, and the grass Water Bent *Polypogon viridis* on a footpath from Saltmarsh Lane, Newport Wetlands on 27 July. He also found a second specimen in the garden centre at Mitchel Troy on 28 July. Kris Roberts noted some Viper's Bugloss *Echium vulgare* at Greenmeadow Community Farm in Cwmbran, a new record for this site. Above the canal at Llanfoist, Graham Harris and Steph Tyler noted several Great Burnet *Sanguisorba officinalis* plants in early August; this species is uncommon and mainly found in the west of the Vice-County.

Heather Colls has been active and amongst her finds was a single plant of Motherwort *Leonurus cardiaca* near Jingle Street (considered extinct in the vice-county), six Hairy Buttercups *Ranunculus sarduus* at Treowen, a patch of Herb Paris *Paris quadrifolium* at a new site at Wonastow, and Bee Orchids *Ophrys apifera* by the slip road onto the dual carriageway near Mitchel Troy, as well as 15 or 20 plants of narrow-leaved Pepperwort *Lepidium ruderale* around Mitchel Troy.

Steven Heaton, a seasonal surveyor with GWT, has turned up some previously unknown species-rich grasslands

and so too have botanists from the Monmouthshire Meadows Group. These sites are spread from Pandy to Gilwern, and Shirenewton to Penyvan near The Narth. Steven also found Bee Orchid and Twayblades *Neottia ovata* on some grassland by Raglan Services. Kay Swift found 10 or more Bee Orchids near Crick where unfortunately a farmer sprayed the plants on a bank below an old disused MOD rail line. We, with Trevor Evans, also found some Bee Orchids and Southern Marsh orchids *Dactylorhiza praetermissa* at Dinham, MOD Caerwent where such scarce plants as Fragrant Agrimony *Agrimonia procera* and Small-flowered Buttercup *Ranunculus parviflorus* were also seen. Greater Butterfly Orchids *Platanthera chlorantha* have also turned up in several new tetrads as at Penallt and near The Hendre.

Graham Motley found 50 old spikes of Ivy Broomrape *Orobanchae hederaceae* at Robert Price's entrance in Abergavenny and Common Twayblade *Neottia ovata* in Abergavenny by Waitrose; Pat Johns turned up Grass-leaved Pea *Lathyrus nissolia* on a patch of waste ground in Monmouth (this species has a stronghold along the estuary as at Newport Wetlands and GWT's Solutia fields); Linda Smout told us of a fine stand of trees and sapling Wild Service Trees *Sorbus torminalis* along 10m of hedge near Kingcoed.

Elsa & Adrian Wood found some Marsh St John's Wort *Hypericum elodes* in a pond on Whitelye Common; this species is rare in eastern Monmouthshire with its only other recent site at Penyvan no longer being suitable as it has been shaded by trees.

Trevor Evans and Colin Titcombe have been busy botanising too and amongst their finds was Mistletoe *Viscum album* growing on a Marsh oak *Quercus palustris* planted near Pontypool (first spotted by Graham Harris in the winter months) and Wood Vetch *Vicia sylvatica* at sites in Wentwood.

Apologies if your discoveries have not been included in this brief report but rest assured all and every record is welcomed, even of common plants in poorly covered tetrads. Steve Williams sent some excellent records, including Moonwort *Botrychium lunaria* from three sites at Blaenavon and at Blaenserchan, Fir Clubmoss *Huperzia selago* at Blaenavon and Varteg and Marsh Foxtail *Alopecurus aequalis* from Llandegfedd Reservoir for 2010 and 2011 and no doubt he will have made important finds in 2012.

**Steph Tyler & Elsa Wood Joint BSBI Recorders for VC35.** Contact: steph\_tyler2001@hotmail.com

## Records from Brynna Woods and Llanharan Marsh



Violet oil beetle © Mark Steer

As a volunteer with Wildlife Trust South and West Wales in Brynna Woods and Llanharan Marsh reserve, I have made the following sightings this year:

**Violet oil beetle** *Meloe violaceus*. Identification confirmed by Dr. B. Levey (Biosyb Dept., Cardiff Museum), and specimen now held as a Voucher Specimen at the Museum; **Bloody nosed beetle** *Timarcha tenebricosa*. Identification confirmed by Dr B. Levey; **Chimney sweeper moth** *Odezia atrata*; **Pignut** *Conopodium majus*; **Cuckoo** *Cuculus canorus* heard calling twice in one day (in 10 years living on edge of Brynna Woods, this is the first time I've heard a cuckoo!); **Marsh violet** *Viola palustris*; **Broad leaved helleborine** *Epipactis*

*helleborine*; **Stinkhorn** *Phallus impudicus*; **Jew's ear** *Auricularia auricula-judae*; **Dryad's saddle** *Polyporus squamosus*; **Three cornered leek** *Allium triquetrum*; **Cannabis** *Cannabis sativa* (reported to local police!); **Beech woodwart** *Hypoxylon fragiforme* recorded in June. This seemed to be early and (rather unusually) growing on dead *Leylandii* (according to my books it should be around in late summer/autumn and on Beech). Identification confirmed by Barry Thomas, Glamorgan Fungus Group.

**Mark Steer**

## Canada Tips and nearby quarry pools, Blaenavon

### BLAENAVON – invertebrate life of the Canada Tips and nearby quarry pools.

We first visited this area on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2012 with the Cardiff Naturalists' Society on a walk led by Rhian and Andy Kendall to look at the geology and industrial archaeology of this mainly man-made landscape. We rambled from Keeper's Pond via the Canada tips (so-called from the open-casting process developed during WW2) to Carreg Maen Taro boundary stone and disused quarries to the north. It is an upland area of rough grassland, heather and bilberry.

Findings included a Fox Moth caterpillar and both Bloody-nosed and Green Tiger Beetles.

The many pools in hollows

within the spoil tips and quarries encouraged us to think the area would be good for dragonflies, so we duly returned on 23<sup>rd</sup> July, a sunny but breezy day.

Odonata seen were Golden-ringed dragonfly 1f, Emperor dragonfly 1m (also at Keepers Pond), Common Hawker 2, Four-spotted Chaser 1, Common Darter 1 (teneral), Black Darter 1, Scarce Blue-tailed Damselfly 1m (Canada Tips pool). Common Blue Damselfly, Large Red Damselfly and Emerald Damselfly were widespread in small numbers.

Small Heath butterflies were widespread. We found one Oak Eggar caterpillar, 2 Green Tiger beetles and a



Canada Tips Pool © Linda & Rob Nottage

very large Horsefly thought to be *Tabanus sudeticus*.

We don't know if this area has been well studied in the past, but it would certainly repay further exploration in ideal weather conditions (not easy to get this summer!) Without a GPS locator we found it difficult to identify the exact locations of the

pools because the site is so disturbed by past workings.

### Linda and Rob Nottage

**Editors Note:** Coincidentally this area was the location for the SEWBReC/Wales Biodiversity Partnership dragonfly identification course in August this year where a number of dragonfly species were spotted.



Scarce blue-tailed damselfly © Linda & Rob Nottage



Horsefly (poss *Tabanus sudeticus*) © Linda & Rob Nottage



Quarry Pool © Linda & Rob Nottage



## Rare (or just under-recorded) fungus found near Dingestow

Gwent Fungus Group member, Lee Johnson, sent me a fantastic photograph she had taken of a very rare fungus she had found in her local woods near Dingestow back in July this year.

I am sure we all know the much more common Stinkhorn, *Phallus impudicus*, well this particular species *Phallus duplicatus* or now renamed *Dictyophora duplicata*, is closely related and looks very similar but has a net-like veil underneath the head, where the green 'slime' is, rather like a ballet dancer's 'Tutu'! Much like the Stinkhorn, this species also has a strong fetid smell and long cellular stem rising out of its initial 'egg' shape which emerges from the ground.

Whilst there are many, many records for

the more common *Phallus impudicus* I can find only one instance of *Dictyophora duplicata* being recorded in Wales before, and that was back in 1977 I believe. Like so many fungi, this species may well be more common than we think, just under-recorded. Whilst so many of us are guilty of recording the species as a Stinkhorn from the smell we should not maybe start searching harder for the true species hiding under the bracken or brambles as we pass along.

**Sheila Spence, County Recorder for Fungi (VC35)**



*Dictyophora duplicata* © Lee Johnson

### British Mycological Society (BMS) Common Fungi Project

The British Mycological Society are asking people to report sightings of six common species: fly agaric, jelly ear, yellow stagshorn, birch polypore, blushing bracket, and stump puffball. The aim is to gather data on the distribution, times of fruiting and ecological associations of common, easily identifiable fungi. For further information about the project go to [www.britmycolsoc.org.uk/mycology/have-you-seen-this-fungus/](http://www.britmycolsoc.org.uk/mycology/have-you-seen-this-fungus/). Full colour photographs and a key to all six species of fungi can also be found on the website.

Data submitted should include: name, date, site name, grid reference, vice-county, tree species under, on or near to which the fungus is growing, including on which kind of wood it is growing. Where a fungus is growing near different tree species, list them all, with the nearest first. The name of the recorder is important so that suitable acknowledgements can be made. No specimens need be sent. The details may be sent in any form, as records on paper, or as an Excel or Access file, by post or by e-mail. Records from previous years will be welcome as long as the ecological details are available. Please send records to: Bruce Ing, Tigh na faoileige, Rhue, Ullapool, IV26 2TJ or e-mail to: [commonfungi@britmycolsoc.info](mailto:commonfungi@britmycolsoc.info)

## Wildboar in Gwent

After hearing initial rumours of Wild Boar having been released in the Forest of Dean close to Staunton during 2004, and subsequent newspaper reports relating to the presence of Boar in the north east Gwent woodlands (High Meadow Woods) in November of that year, a steady trickle of information regarding the presence of these animals in parts of eastern Gwent continues to come in. In addition, evidence of Boar activity in the form of rootings (where pigs use their snouts to plough up the ground surface in their search for food) and wallows (where they bathe in water filled hollows, covering themselves in mud) were also to be found.

Initially such obvious sign could be seen widely in the Highmeadow, Reddings Inclosure and Hadnock areas (2005-

2011) but in 2008 such sign could also be found in the upper Angiddy Valley to the West of Tintern (Buckle Wood, Ravensnest Wood and Fedw area).

On the 1st July 2009, while in the company of Chris Hatch and Pete Boddington, I again came upon what seemed obviously to be Wild Boar rooting activity on fields in the Monnow Valley near Deep Holm Farm (Ancre Hill, Rockfield). In a situation such as this the Boar are likely to be shot for causing such damage, and reports suggesting that this had already happened came through to me on the 12th June 2006. This report related to one Boar being shot at The Cot (Devauden) and another in the Angiddy Valley.

Where these animals come from in the

first place is not known but it is widely accepted that the animals crossed the Wye from the original 'release' area (High Meadow Woods). This 'release' of 2004 is the one that was widely reported on and involved a number of animals. It is also known that smaller numbers were already present in the Forest of Dean area prior to that—the results of earlier releases or escapes.

The Wild Boar (*Sus scrofa*) used to be a native species in Britain, and indeed, in Gwent. The remains of one adult Wild Boar were amongst those of even more exotic species (Woolly Mammoth, Wool-

## Wildboar in Gwent (...cont)

ly Rhinoceros, Lion etc) found in cave deposits in Caerwent Quarry in 1969/70 (see 'Gwent—its Landscape and Natural History', Colin Titcombe, 1998). Boar remains have also been found at a number of sites in the Flandrian deposits of the Severn Estuary in Gwent, and it would appear that they continued to roam Welsh woodlands as late as the 1500s (see 'Changes in the Fauna of Wales within Historic Times', Colin Mathesan, MA, BSc, National Museum of Wales, 1932), though by this time the combination of hunting and cross-breeding with domestic stock was bringing about the demise of the true species—*Sus scrofa*.

The Boar of today may or may not be pure *Sus scrofa*, but their re-introduction, whether intended or not, is going to be controversial, and in the Forest of Dean it already is with two opposing factions regularly debating the matter in the local press.

With this in mind, Chris Hatch and I set out to re-assess the situation in Gwent during 2012. We found evidence of Wild Boar presence at Whitelye, Llan-dogo, Itton and Trellech Grange, but the evidence did not suggest numbers

of animals, maybe as few as one or two. Meanwhile reports of Boar activity came in from other people adding Botany Bay (Tintern), Cwmcarvan Hill (Trellech) and the area between Itton and Mynydd Bach (Shirenewton) to the list of sites.

At this stage it is difficult to foresee the future of the Wild Boar in Gwent, west of the River Wye at least (they should have a far better chance in the High Meadow/Hadnock Woods to the east of the Wye for these areas are contiguous with the Forest of Dean).

For the animals themselves, and for those people who would like to see them recolonize Gwent woodlands (and British woodlands generally for that matter) it is now largely down to luck. Large wooded areas such as Chepstow Park and Wentwood could provide sufficient cover to enable them to thrive. If, however, these wandering animals resort to foraging over farmland then I feel their ongoing future here is likely to be short lived.

On a more positive note, that other large mammal which has escaped into the Gwent countryside in recent years, the Red Deer, continues to roam the woodlands of eastern Gwent at least, and manages to remain fairly unobtrusive while doing so.

The accompanying map shows the approximate range of Wild Boar wanderings in Gwent based on field sign. Other reports



Approximate range of Wild Boar wanderings in Gwent based on field sign © Colin Titcombe

suggest an even wider area of occurrence but these could relate to localized and short-lived escapees.

*Acknowledgements: in the production of this article I would like to thank Chris Hatch for his fine photograph and his assistance in tracking the Wild Boar. Also Colin Elliott, Elspeth Reid (and others whose names I do not know) for their reports on Wild Boar activities in Gwent.*

**Colin Titcombe**



Wild Boar © Chris Hatch

## The challenges and rewards of recording around Ebbw Vale

This year at Gwent Wildlife Trust's Silent Valley Local Nature Reserve and Environmental Resource Centre we decided to renew our efforts in recording species that have in the past been a bit overlooked. The idea was to recruit a hardcore group of volunteer recorders, train them on the identification of butterflies and reptiles and then get a strong idea throughout the season of how these species are faring at the reserve.

We already have many years of data on bird nesting, thanks to the nest box checkers who visit the reserve throughout the season, but we just don't have the time to dedicate to all of the wildlife at the reserve.

Butterflies were chosen as we have several nice species at the reserve, including small pearl bordered and dark green fritillary, grayling and records of pearl bordered fritillary in the past. They are also a very visible group to survey and it has to be nice weather to see them so it is an easy survey to offer volunteers - or so we thought.

We also chose reptiles because, even though we know there are many common lizards on the reserve, it was a chance to find out what other reptiles live there and if adder still occur as our last record is from about 40 years ago.



Slowworm © ERC

The initial interest was very good with 15 people contacting us to be involved.

This number dropped slightly as we reached the training days and sadly by the time we came to handing out maps and deciding on dates for people to visit we only had 2 people willing to take it on as all the others had dropped out for various reasons. This was a bit of a blow to the recording effort as we could not ask 2 people to cover all of the weeks throughout the season and I was only able to fit in surveys when I could be between my various work tasks on the reserve and at other sites. We decided to give it a go anyway as some records are always better than none.

I laid out a butterfly transect covering the main route that runs around the bottom section of the reserve taking in many different habitat types and is an obvious and safe route for recorders to follow. Along this transect I laid out 10 reptile refugia so we could check both reptiles and butterflies as we walked around.

Sadly the weather was against us and after a lovely April we had a whole month without many records, except a single speckled wood and a couple of lizards.

We pressed on regardless and in the brief spells of nice weather we started to pick up some records and were pleased

to see the butterflies we had hoped for, with some good counts of small pearl bordered and, later in the season, the grayling started to appear along the spoil heaps which is great to see.

The common lizards have been regularly found under the refugia but still no sign of adders which makes me wonder if they are higher up on the reserve (if at all) and we will have to expand the survey next year.

Meanwhile, at the Environmental Resource Centre, a reptile survey has been carried out by Chris Hatch. We were aware that the site was home to common lizard and slow worm but were pleasantly surprised to find that so many slow worms were found that the site qualifies for the Key Reptile Sites

Register. We've also observed a healthy population of palmate and smooth newts, as well as common toad and frog. During warmer weather, the site has been full of dragonflies and damselflies and in terms of birds we were lucky to see a water rail and a pair of reed buntings.

It has been an interesting continuation to the surveying of these wonderful sites and a good example of how the best laid plans do not always work out as you would like. Finding volunteer recorders is not always easy as people are very busy with their own lives and can't always drop everything to go hunting butterflies and reptiles, however much they want to.

I think the few who were able to spare the time have been rewarded with many other wildlife sightings along the way. I was lucky enough on some of my transects to see nesting tree creeper and redstart, many different dragonfly species including golden ringed and southern hawk, hedgehog, goshawk, tawny owl and several green tiger beetles to name a few.

Recording any wildlife is a great way to learn your species, but many people overlook the fact that walking quietly around a nature reserve repeatedly throughout the year also means you will see a multitude of creatures you never expected and will never forget (it is kind of payment for your time) and leaves you with a good feeling inside.

As we are now reaching the end of our recording season we are looking at our results to see where we did well/badly and formulating a plan for next year.

In closing I would like to say a huge thank you to the brave few who took on the recording effort for us this year, and if anyone has the time and would like to join us next year then please get in touch. You only need to do as little or as much as you are able, but any help is massively appreciated.

**Tom Eyles, Silent Valley Reserves Officer, Gwent Wildlife Trust, Environmental Resource Centre**

## Wasp Spider Record - A First for Wales

I am the voluntary warden for Coed Cefn Lla, a Woodland Trust nature reserve near Usk. The site was purchased about 5-6 years ago by the Woodland Trust, as improved agricultural land, but has been heavily planted with native broadleaf species. However, it also includes a pinetum, and ancient orchard. These two areas apart, as the oldest trees are no more than 5 years old, so the site is currently unmanaged grassland with saplings. This habitat has proven to be excellent for orthoptera, with Roesel's Bush Cricket *Metrioptera roeselii* being abundant throughout. Steve Williams, county Orthoptera recorder tells me this is the third Gwent record of this cricket.

On Saturday 1st September I was joined by Roger James and Martin Anthony of Monmouthshire Moth Recording Group for a walk around the site prior to some moth trapping. Site manager Barry Embling also accompanied us. In the course of this walk Roger James spotted a spider that turned out to be *Argiope bruennichi*, usually called the Wasp Spider. According to Peter Harvey of the national Spider Recording Scheme this is the first official record of this species in Wales, although I am aware of a previous unpublished

record from the Gwent levels some years ago. At the time, our group located five adult female spiders, although I returned to the site later in the day and counted 18 adult females, and 2 males. The males have a very short season, so I was delighted to see them.

Later counts have taken the total number of adult females to at least 25, but the spiders are very restricted within the reserve to a small area. Nonetheless, the presence of males must indicate the first breeding population of this species in Wales. *Argiope bruennichi* is fairly common in southern and eastern England, but rarely found in the west. Its habitat is unmanaged grassland, as it makes a distinctive orb web with a prominent vertical zigzag of silk, but as it makes the web low down in the vegetation (typically no more



*Argiope bruennichi* © Mike Kilner

than 18 inches from the ground) it is easily overlooked, despite the appearance of the spider. It feeds mainly on grasshoppers.

I would be very interested in any other records of this species from the SEW-BREC region.

**Mike Kilner** (Spider Recorder, Gwent and Glamorgan). *Email: harvest-man@hotmail.co.uk*

## WBP—Book Award Fund

The Wales Biodiversity Partnership (WBP) is offering a small grant to all Vice County Recorders in Wales. This can be used towards the purchase of identification books, keys, CDs, or other small equipment.

A claim can be up to £25, and may only be claimed once in each financial year. The invoice date must match the financial year in which the claim is made. To claim, please send the form below together with your receipt(s) to the following address:

Bioamrywiaeth Cymru  
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**Sean McHugh,**  
**WBP Communications Officer,**  
**Wales Biodiversity Partnership,**  
**C/O Wildlife Trusts Wales,**  
**Baltic House,**  
**Mount Stuart Square,**  
**Cardiff Bay, CF10 5FH.**

*E-mail:*

[s.mchugh@welshwildlife.org](mailto:s.mchugh@welshwildlife.org)

*Phone:* 02920 480 070 (direct),  
07817 148524 (mobile)

**Sean McHugh, WBP Communi-**  
**cations Officer**

Name:		
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I am the VC Recorder for:	Vice County Name	
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Receipt attached?		

## Taf Fechan Nature Reserve



© Wildlife Trust for South & West Wales

Even after walking its paths many times, over several years, Taf Fechan Nature Reserve never ceases to surprise and excite me. The other day, whilst carrying out a riverfly survey at the north of the reserve, I looked upstream and thought 'I wonder what's around that corner...'. The river at this point meanders out of sight, and can only be followed if wearing waders or if climbed (or jumped) into from upstream, where the river thunders through a narrow bottleneck and pours down a little waterfall into a wide swirling pool.

I happened to be wearing waders at the time and made my way upstream with my camera, expecting to find an interesting view of the waterfall. Instead, a spectacular gorge came into view, hung with creepers and dripping from many sources, with its towering stratified limestone cliffs beautifully up-lit by the play of late afternoon sunshine on the water.

Dark corners and overhangs seemed to conceal cave entrances, and thoughts of emerging bats and resting otters came to mind. In a narrow crevice a dipper nest lay empty, viewed through a glistening water-misted spider's web, and below, a huge calcite formation jutted out into the gorge, dripping with crystal water and dancing with light from glowing pebbles and shallow ripples below.

How on earth had I not come across this place before?

Maybe those teenage boys who make the deadly leap into the Blue Pool on hot summer days are not so crazy after all, maybe they are onto something?

But then this is just like Merthyr Tydfil, full of hidden gems that make you wonder why it's not more visited, and make you wonder at its lingering reputation as an industrial wasteland. It's enough



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to make me want to stand on the rooftops and shout 'The Brecon Beacons are old-hat! Come and explore the Valleys!'. The area is positively bursting with interesting wildlife, hidden gorges, historical ruins and breathtaking beauty, all to be found, for example, on Taf Fechan Nature Reserve and the surrounding hills.

Last year around 50 nest boxes were installed at Taf fechan Nature Reserve, Merthyr Tydfil, in the hope of attracting the scarce Pied Flycatcher to the area. There had been no record of the species on the reserve for over 40 years, despite an abundance of suitable habitat, and despite sporadic sightings of the species in woodland a few miles away. Nestboxes were situated in tight groups so that the inevitable invasion of blue tits would be somewhat self-controlling, and were closely monitored with the help of local volunteers.

This spring, the Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales were delighted to report that their efforts had been rewarded by the arrival of a pair of Pied Flycatcher on the reserve, who were nesting in one of the boxes. A few days after the chicks had hatched some truly awful weather moved in, with strong gales and heavy rain, which didn't pass for over 24 hours. The parents either abandoned the nest or were predated during this time and were not seen again, and the five chicks sadly perished.

An unfortunate end to what is nonetheless an positive example of the rewards of conservation work, and fingers are crossed for the return of the Pied Flycatcher (and better weather) next spring.

**Cary Solman, Wildlife Trust for South & West Wales**



© Wildlife Trust for South & West Wales

## Swift Nesting!

After learning that very little was known about the location of swift nest sites in Cardiff, we (Linda and Julia) decided that we'd have a go at finding some! This seemed important since we were aware that swifts are now an Amber conservation species and the numbers breeding in the UK are falling markedly. We decided to spend an evening a week hunting, firstly by visiting areas of Cardiff where we knew swifts had nested in the past. It's fair to say that it was a bit hit and miss to begin with - we found a few nests on some nights and none on others. However, we were privileged to watch between 50-100 swifts feeding just above our heads one rather gloomy evening in Cardiff Bay - the swifts were so low, we could hear their wing beats

over our heads.

We ended up finding a good number of swift nests in Cathays. At first we just found three nests, but it became clear that there were nests in a number of properties down one entire street. And we discovered that an easy way to find them was to walk about after dark, listening intently. The gentle chirruping sounds coming from the roofs gave away their location.

We had a rather difficult day when we discovered that one of the properties with a swift nest was being renovated. Despite lots of phone calls, the intervention of the Police and Linda meeting the property's owner, we weren't able to

save the nest.

Next year, we will be going out again - and again logging all the nests we find with the local authority (via the biodiversity officer), the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre ([www.sewbrec.org.uk/recording-form.page](http://www.sewbrec.org.uk/recording-form.page)) and the RSPB ([www.rspb.org.uk/things/todo/surveys/swifts](http://www.rspb.org.uk/things/todo/surveys/swifts)). It's only if the nest sites are known about that there's any chance of protecting them. We would also urge you to log any swift nest sites you're aware of with these organisations. For more information about swift conservation - [www.swift-conservation.org](http://www.swift-conservation.org).

**Linda Newton and Julia Barrell**

## Disaster or interesting example of succession?

The piece of land in question is bordered by a major road to the west, a minor road to the south and a brook followed by an industrial estate to the north-east. Thus it is roughly a triangle, a little over 3 acres in area in a suburban setting. It is a brownfield site, though this would be hard to detect now, unless you knew its history. The owner wishes to sell it for development, hence the small sign by his agents in the middle facing the major road. It is protected on the two accessible sides by a very nominal metal fence which can be cleared with a stride. At its south-west corner there is a depression, surrounded by amenity-type *Acers* with a very large, high metal sign for the industrial estate. At its north-west tip, where the brook enters the site there are large limes and Norway maples and some spruce. Between the brook and the land there is a narrow strip of woodland containing examples of many deciduous tree species but dominated by alder. This woodland fades into grassland through a strip of bramble and nettles at its edge. The remainder of the land is a "meadow".

I first noticed the land when the local authority ceased to manage any of it other than the very northern tip. Walking past in the summer of the year following this change I saw a very small group of bee orchids. I contacted the local authority ecologist who gave advice on how the owner might be identified and contacted through the land registry I obtained the registered plans of the land, the name and address of the owner and something of the land's history and previous own-

ers. The owner agreed to a botanical survey and Rebecca Price of Gwent Wildlife Trust kindly provided me with a provisional species list. This contained ten species which together would justify conservation of the land possibly as a SINC. Discussion with the owner suggested no interest in taking this route. His price for the land was beyond any immediate possibility for raising funds. No objection was raised to my continuing to take an interest in the land. It has paths used by dog-walkers and by people walking to work at the industrial estate so my regular appearance on the land raises no eyebrows.

I believe the owner has been advised by his agents not to manage the land in any way but to allow it to naturally become more unkempt and less valuable from a conservation point of view. In this way, when development is planned, the local authority will not raise objections on grounds of biodiversity and conservation. The owner has allowed an employee's son to use the land for motor cycling. I was distressed to see the vegetation chewed up and a large scar of bare ground exposed. However, my fears were unfounded as this proved to be a piece of management. Even two years after this, the recovery on the exposed ground still hosts the most valuable plants and far less of the cock's foot and false oat grass which is slowly choking the rest of the land. A belt of fine cherry laurel trees at the south east corner of the land were suddenly felled and left where they fell. I could see no reason for this and their stumps are now producing

coppice growth. A good number of native deciduous trees are springing up as saplings all over the land. A few foreign oak saplings from amenity plantings nearby are also appearing. My photographs from the first years show thousands of milk-maid plants in the spring. In 2012 I could easily have counted the few that appeared. The build-up of dead grass from the dominating cock's foot and false oat grass is choking the flowering plants. My fear is that a casually discarded cigarette in a dry spell could see the whole field go up in flames very readily.

I started to walk a complicated but constant transect across the land and now have a few years of butterfly population data. Although numbers fluctuate between years there are strong colonies of Large Skipper, Green-veined White, Meadow Brown, Ringlet, Speckled Wood, Gatekeeper and Common Blue. Essex Skipper was recorded within a few miles of this site so I proceeded to net and carefully examine all Small Skippers in 2012. A good colony of Small Skipper has turned into two good colonies, one of Small Skipper and one of Essex Skipper. Half of a total of 20 "small skippers" caught on one occasion proved to be Essex Skippers. I suspect the latter were probably present in 2011 and possibly before. Visits by the occasional Marbled White also give me hope of an eventual colony of this species. I also record any other animal species that I can confidently identify and have added a few plants to the original list. I ran a light-trap there once in 2011, brav-

## Disaster or interesting example of succession? (...cont)

ing the police and a local security guard. Since then I have run the light-trap a number of times in 2012. I hope to take a look at life in the brook. I have seen no fish but it hosts mallard and moorhen and I think I had a glimpse of a kingfisher. I have seen brown rat on its bank and the owner tells me of seeing mink from an office window. The brook is interesting also in that it passes through an old heavy industry site which is now a local nature reserve and then travels some miles piped underground before surfacing near the north-west tip of "my" land. What vertebrates and invertebrates could undertake or survive that journey? On "my" land it is crossed by two very large pipes forming bridges. One has trapped so much debris that it has formed a dam holding a quiet pool of water above it. It is partially stone lined on its banks and culverts carry run-off from the nearby main road. Sometimes it smells slightly of detergent suggesting the industrial estate on its other bank has culverts entering it too.

This is land well within a town and yet it shelters at least 15 species of butterfly. It has a good range of other insects, many birds and I have seen mice, voles, a dead shrew, hedgehog and a common toad. Although the bee orchids have never re-appeared (I suspect that they may even have been dug up!), this land could be a fine wildflower meadow with the right management. Instead I am monitoring the changes in a succession to deciduous woodland. I suppose things could be worse. At least my wife, who accompanied the light-trapping expedition and convinced both police and then security man that I was harmless, thinks it keeps me out of mischief! The local authority has recently designated the land as a SINC. This should give it a little more protection.

### Bob Roome



© Bob Roome



© Bob Roome

### Site Species Lists

**Butterflies:** Brimstone, Comma, Common Blue, Essex Skipper, Gatekeeper, Green-veined White, Holly Blue, Large Skipper, Large White, Marbled White, Meadow Brown, Orange-tip, Painted Lady, Peacock, Red Admiral, Ringlet, Small Copper, Small Skipper, Small Tortoiseshell, Small White, Speckled Wood.

**Moths:** Angle Shades, Black Arches, Brimstone, Burnet Companion, Canary-shouldered Thorn, Cinnabar, Clay, Common Carpet, Common Footman, Copper Underwing, Dingy Footman, Double-striped Pug, Double Square-spot, Dunbar, Fanfoot, Flame, Flame Carpet, Flame Shoulder, Flounced Rustic, Garden Carpet, Ghost Swift, Heart and Dart, Ingrailed Clay, Large Yellow Underwing, Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing, Lesser Yellow Underwing, Mesapamea agg., Mottled Rustic, Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet, Pale Mottled Willow, Pale Prominent, Riband Wave, Scalloped Oak, Shaded Broad-bar, Silver Y, Six-spot Burnet, Smoky Wainscot, Snout, Square-spot Rustic, Straw Dot, Uncertain, Willow Beauty.

**Micro-moths:** *Acleris forsskaeana*, *Acleris schalleriana*, *Acrobasis advenella*, *Agapita hamana*, *Agonopteryx arenella*, *Agriphila geniculea*, *Agriphila straminella*, *Agriphila tristella*, *Ancyliis badiana*, *Aphomia sociella*, *Bryotropha domestica*, *Calyptria falsella*, *Celypha lacunana*, *Celypha striana*, *Chrysoteuchia culmella*, *Crambus pascuella*, *Crassa unitella*, *Cydia nigricana*, *Dipleurina lacustrata*, *Epiphyas postvittana*, *Eucosma odumbratana*, *Helcystogramma rufescens*, *Metzneria metzneriella*, *Notocelia uddmanniana*, *Orthotaenia undulana*, *Pandemis cinnamomeana*, *Pleuroptya ruralis*, *Stenoptilia pterodactyla*, *Tineola bisselliella*.

**Plants:** Species listed as "indicator species" for neutral grassland in 'Guidelines for the Selection of Wildlife Sites in South Wales' and identified by Rebecca Price of Gwent Wildlife Trust: Cuckoo flower, Common Knapweed, Perforate St.John's Wort, Imperforate St.John's Wort, Meadow Vetchling, Birds-foot Trefoil, Lesser Stitchwort, Zig-zag Clover, Red Clover, Tufted Vetch. Grasses: Creeping bent, Sweet vernal, False oat grass, Crested dogs tail, Cock's foot, Red fescue, Yorkshire fog, Perennial rye grass, Rough meadow grass, Timothy. Herbs: Yarrow, Rosebay willow herb, Spear thistle, Great willow herb, Marsh bedstraw, Cleavers, Hogweed, Prickly lettuce, Greater bird's-foot trefoil, Black medick, Ribwort plantain, Silverweed, Creeping cinquefoil, Self heal, Fleabane, Meadow buttercup, Creeping buttercup, Common sorrel, Broad-leaved dock, Clustered dock, Ragwort, Hedge woundwort, Dandelion, Goat's beard, White clover, Common nettle, Germander speedwell, Bush vetch, Common vetch, Red bartsia. Sedges and Rushes: Soft rush, Hard rush, Hairy sedge, Field horsetail. Trees and Bushes: Alder, Silver birch, Pedunculate oak, Willow, Goat willow, Sycamore, Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Bramble, Dog rose, Wild cherry, Holly, Ivy, Elder.

## Volunteering for SEWBRc and beyond

Volunteering is a fantastic way to build up experience and knowledge, which can be the first step onto the conservation career ladder. It can also be a fun way to get to know new people, and learn new skills, even if you don't plan on joining the competitive conservation jobs market!

At SEWBRc, we are always happy to accommodate volunteers (though sometimes there is a waiting list), and it can be a great way to learn more about what we do, and how your records are utilised by the wider conservation community. If you would like more information about volunteering for us, please contact me on [elaine.wright@sewbrec.org.uk](mailto:elaine.wright@sewbrec.org.uk), and arrange to come in and have a chat (and a cuppa). If sitting at a desk isn't your thing, there are always plenty of local organisations who would be thrilled to have extra hands for their field based conservation work. Several hold regular work parties, for example:

Organisation	Location	Dates	Contact
Gwent Wildlife Trust (GWT)	Silent Valley Reserve, Blaenau Gwent	Tuesdays	Tom Eyles - 07788565459 or 01495307525
GWT: WING (Wildlife in Newport Group)	Allt-yr-yn Reserve & Solutia Wetlands, Newport	1st Sunday of the month	Julia or Roger James - 01633 215627
Wildlife Trust of South & West Wales	Taf Fechan Nature Reserve, Merthyr Tydfil	Thursdays	Carys Solman - 07896 798371
Rosehill Quarry Group	Rosehill Quarry, Swansea	1st Sunday of the month	Jannie Cherry - 01792 477863

For more ideas on volunteering and other events, please visit the SEWBRc website for a jam packed events calendar and links to local conservation organisations: [www.sewbrec.org.uk](http://www.sewbrec.org.uk).

Elaine Wright, SEWBRc

## Events

### **Pentywn Farm Fungi Walk, Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> October, 2pm – 4pm** **- Held by Gwent Fungus Group as part of Wales' first Fungus Day**

Join **Gwent Fungus Group** members on an informal wander around Gwent Wildlife Trust's Pentywn Farm Nature Reserve (Penallt, nr Monmouth) to see what fungi are out and about. Meet at 2pm at the Medieval Barn.

We'll be looking for the site's largest fairy ring, as part of a nationwide search for Wales' largest fairy ring. There will be a small exhibition of photos and specimens, 'name that fungus' quiz, plus Gwent Fungus Group members will be on hand to help identify any fungi you've seen – bring samples or photos with you. Directions to Pentywn Farm Nature Reserve see: [www.gwentwildlife.org/reserves/Pentywn](http://www.gwentwildlife.org/reserves/Pentywn)

*The day forms part of a nationwide series of activities in celebration of Wales' first Fungus Day, hosted by The National Botanic Garden of Wales. This includes a nationwide search for Wales' largest fairy ring. The Welsh public, including British Mycological Society (BMS) members, wildlife trusts, the National Trust and park managers, will be asked to look for, measure, photograph and possibly identify the biggest fairy ring on their patch in the weeks leading up to Wales Fungus Day. A rolling record of these finds will be viewable at [www.gardenofwales.org.uk](http://www.gardenofwales.org.uk).*

### **Wales Amphibian and Reptile Symposium 2012 and Welsh & Marches ARGs meeting, Llandrindnod Wells, Saturday 3rd November**

Talks include: *South Wales Ponds Project, Reptile refugia study, Million ponds project in Wales, Wales Amphibian and Reptile Link (WARL), Aesculapian snakes in Wales*, amongst many others....

It is open to anyone with an interest in Welsh herpetofauna and their conservation. For a provisional programme and further information about how to book a place please go to [www.arc-trust.org/welshdragons/](http://www.arc-trust.org/welshdragons/) or call Mark Barber on 07810 770569. **Spaces are limited. Bookings should be made by the 19th October.**

**A big thank you** to all those who have contributed to this newsletter! But, thinking ahead to the next issue, we want more articles from Recorders – it could be just a list of species you have recently recorded, or an update of where you have been surveying in the last year. This is an opportunity to plug your favourite recording location, to raise awareness of the species that you record, and to communicate to a wide range of individuals about your hard work! Please forward any comments, articles, events, species sightings etc to SEWBRc.

### Gwent-Glamorgan Recorders' Newsletter

**SEWBRc**  
**13 St Andrew's Crescent**  
**Cardiff, CF10 3DB**

**Telephone:** 029 20 64 1110  
**Fax:** 029 20 38 7354  
**E-mail:** [info@sewbrec.org.uk](mailto:info@sewbrec.org.uk)  
**Web:** [www.sewbrec.org.uk](http://www.sewbrec.org.uk)

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