



## MONMOUTHSHIRE MOTH & BUTTERFLY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No 139 March 2018.

*A monthly newsletter covering*

*Gwent and Monmouthshire Vice County 35*

*Editor: Martin Anthony*

### A Review of Monmouthshire Microlepidoptera Recorded in 2017

The number of Micro records produced in Monmouthshire in 2017 rose again, from 1915 in 2015, through 4100 in 2016, to 5202 in 2017! The major contributors of last year again played a significant role – Kevin Hewitt (672 records), Mel Oxford (575) and Nick Felstead (566) – whilst newcomer Hazel Mitchell provided an amazing 549 records (with ID support from her migrant moth expert son, Steve Nash), Bob Roome made 367 records, and I had a productive year with 1434 records. Surprisingly only 343 Micro species were recorded in the county during the year, which is well down on 2016's total of 458 species, suggesting that the increase in numbers was in no small part down to more people trapping common species more regularly. Three quarters of the county's 829 Micro moth species have been recorded somewhere in the county since 2015, when the popularity of Micro recording really took off, but there are still more than 200 species with no post-2014 county records, and 73 that were last recorded before I started looking at Micros in 1998. These 'lost 73' will be discussed in a future *Silurian* article (I hope).



*Prochoreutis sehestediana* (left) and *Pammene trauniana* (right), two species new to VC35 in 2017.

The county Micro total now stands at 829 species. The leap up from the total of 798 reported at the end of 2016 results in part from 18 additions made in 2017, and in part from me realising that 15 species reported in Dr Horton's *Monmouthshire Lepidoptera* were not represented in my Micro database. This highlights the problem of trying to keep track of records when some species on the official county list, maintained by the national Microlepidoptera Recorder(s) and published in *The Entomologists Record*, are decidedly old and vague (for example *Mompha miscella* 'Monmouthshire (DJLA per. AME)' and *Aethes williana* 'Bradley (1973 1: 60) "Monmouthshire (Chepstow)".') Again, this subject needs to be covered in a future *Silurian* article.

The 2017 **County Firsts** were:

- Stigmella trimaculella* — Llandeenny mines on *Populus* hybrid 25/9/2017 — Nick Felstead;
- Stigmella assimilella* — Wonastow Road Ind. Est. mines on *Populus alba* 3/10/2017 — Sam Bosanquet;
- Stigmella incognitella* — Chepstow mines on *Malus* 20/10/2017 — Nick Felstead;
- Caloptilia populetorum* — Slade Wood 19/9/2017 — Nick Felstead;
- Phyllonorycter comparella* — Wonastow Rd Ind. Est. mines on *Populus alba* 3/10/2017 — Sam Bosanquet;
- Pancalia schwartzella* — The Tumble 28/5/2017 — Sam Bosanquet;
- Cosmopterix pulcherimella* — Chepstow mines on *Parietaria* 12/8/2017 — Nick Felstead;
- Caryocolum blandella* — Llanthony 27/7/2017 — Sam Bosanquet;

*Elachista gangabella* — Slade Wood 31/5/2017 — Sam Bosanquet;  
*Prochoreutis sehestediana* — Blorengre 25/7/2017 — Sam Bosanquet;  
*Isotrias rectifasciana* — Caerwent Quarry 31/5/2017 — Sam Bosanquet;  
*Acleris umbrana* — Imperial Park 3/2/2017 — Mel Oxford;  
*Endothenia ustulana* — Caerwent Quarry 31/5/2017 — Sam Bosanquet;  
*Notocelia incarnatana* — Oakfield Road, Cwmbran 6/8/2017 — Bob Roome;  
*Pammene populana* — Blackwood 13/8/2017 — Kevin Hewitt;  
*Pammene trauniana* — Dewstow 18/5/2017 — Nick Felstead;  
*Pempelia palumbella* — Blackwood 24/6/2017 — Kevin Hewitt;  
*Cydalima perspectalis* — Caerleon 7/10/2017 — David Brooks.



*Acleris umbrana* (top left), *Pempelia palumbella* (top right), *Notocelia incarnatana* (bottom left) and *Cydalima perspectalis* (bottom right), four more species recorded new to VC35 in 2017.

Almost as remarkable as the 18 new species for the county recorded in 2017 were 18 **County Seconds**: *Ectoedemia angulifasciella* - Hendre Woods mines on *Rosa* 26/10/2017 - George Tordoff; *Stigmella incognitella* - St Ann Street, Chepstow mines on *Malus* 30/9/2017 - Nick Felstead; *Leucoptera malifoliella* - Dingestow Court, West Lodge lane mines on *Pyrus* 24/9/2017- Sam Bosanquet; *Bucculatrix nigricomella* - Glyn Road, Penallt 18/5/2017- Ian Rabjohns; *Ocnerostoma friesei* - Dixton Embankment 3/4/2017 - Sam Bosanquet; *Epermenia falciformis* - Chepstow Park Wood, Devauden 26/8/2017 - Nick Felstead; *Prays ruficeps* -- Slade Wood 16/5/2017 - Nick Felstead; *Coleophora albicosta* - The Tumble 28/5/2017 - Sam Bosanquet; *Coleophora paripennella* - Slade Wood 9/10/2017 cases on *Cirsium arvense* - George Tordoff; *Pleurota bicostella* — Garnddyrys 28/5/2017 — Sam Bosanquet; *Agonopterix scopariella* - Tintern 30/3/2017 - Hazel Mitchell; *Monochroa lucidella* - Dingestow Court 19/6/2017 - Sam Bosanquet; *Stenolechia gemella* - Cleddon Bog 12/8/2017 - Nick Felstead; *Scrobipalpa artemisiella*- Garnddyrys 8/7/2017 - Sam Bosanquet; *Spuleria flavicaput* - St. Pierre's Great Woods 9/5/2017 - Nick Felstead; *Sitochroa palealis* - Imperial Park 9/7/2017 - Mel Oxford; *Oncocera semirubella* - Livox Quarry 2/7/2017 - Nick Felstead; *Etiella zinckenella* - Caerleon 8/10/2017 - Dave Brooks



Three remarkably rare pyralids from the south of the county: *Sitochroa palealis* (left) was previously recorded from the SW corner of VC35 at Lamby Tip and was caught in 2017 by Mel Oxford; *Oncocera semirubella* (above) had one previous VC35 record as a wanderer to Newport Wetlands Reserve, but Nick Felstead's record from Livox Quarry suggests it may be a Gwent resident, whilst *Etiella zinckenella* (below) is an exceptionally rare migrant to Britain, with David Brooks' record from Caerleon following one caught by Nick Felstead in Chepstow in October 2013.



Among the most notable of the 19 **County Thirds** were mines of *Eriocrania chrysolepidella* found by George Tordoff at Llanmelin Hillfort and at Penallt by Ian Rabjohns; *Eulamprotes atrella* caught at Grondra Great Wood by Nick Felstead; *Teleiopsis diffinis* swept on Ysgyryd Fawr by Sam Bosanquet; the migrant *Crociosema plebejana* caught at Lighthouse Park by Mel Oxford; *Acleris kochiella* (gen. det.) from Penallt (Ian Rabjohns) and Whitson (Lance Hutchings); *Pammene albuginana* found by George Tordoff at both Hendre Woods and Llanmelin Hillfort; *Phlyctaenia perlucidalis* caught at Lighthouse Park by Mel Oxford; and *Assara terebrella* caught at Tintern by Hazel Mitchell.



*Pammene albuginana* (left) and *Phlyctaenia perlucidalis* (right), both of which had their third VC35 records in 2017.

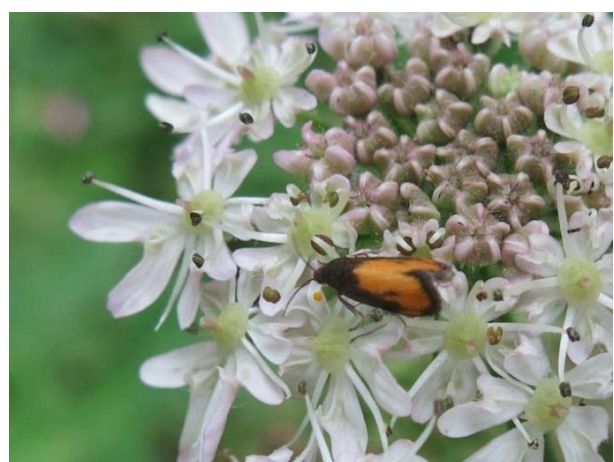
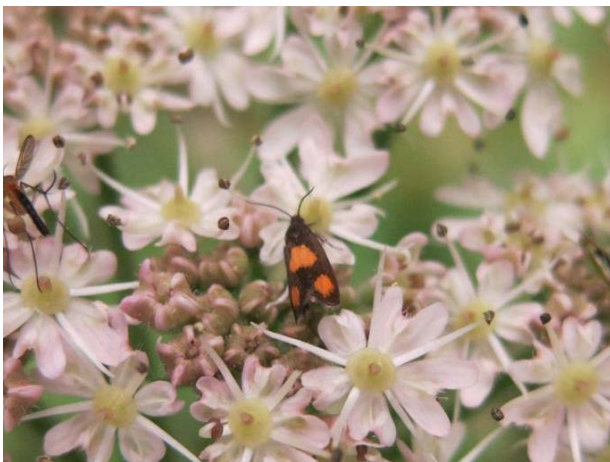
Many of the species for which 4th and 5th VC35 records were made in 2017 were leafminers, with

*Stigmella myrtillella*, *S. viscerella* and *Bucculatrix bechsteinella* perhaps the most interesting. The first county records of the bird-dropping mimic *Phtheochroa rugosana* since 1981 were one by Michael Cordner and one by me (I think there was another emailed to me by someone who never sent me any end-of-year records so it got lost), whilst another scarce black and white Tortricid was the *Metendothenia atropunctana* caught by Nick Felstead. *Cochylis molliculana* is now established in Mel Oxford's area west of Newport, with five records from 2014–2017. The 4th and 5th records of *Crambus pratella* came during southerly winds, again suggesting this is a wanderer to VC35, whereas all five records of *Pyrausta nigrata* are from MoD Caerwent where this is clearly a resident.



The fifth *Phtheochroa rugosana*, from Dingestow, and the fifth *Metendothenia atropunctana*, from St Pierre's Great Woods.

Finally, one record may trump all the others, at least if one is into 'variations' of lepidoptera: an extensively orange form of *Pammene aurana* was photographed alongside typical examples of this common species on Hogweed flowers at Dingestow on 30th June 2017. I cannot find any references of this form *aurantiana* having been seen in Britain before (eg in MBGBI 6), so this could be the first British record of this form, although it is frequent on the continent.



*Pammene aurana* typical form (left) and form *aurantiana* (right) at Dingestow Court.



Mines of *Chrysoesthia sexgutella* (left) and *Cosmopterix pulcherimella* (right)





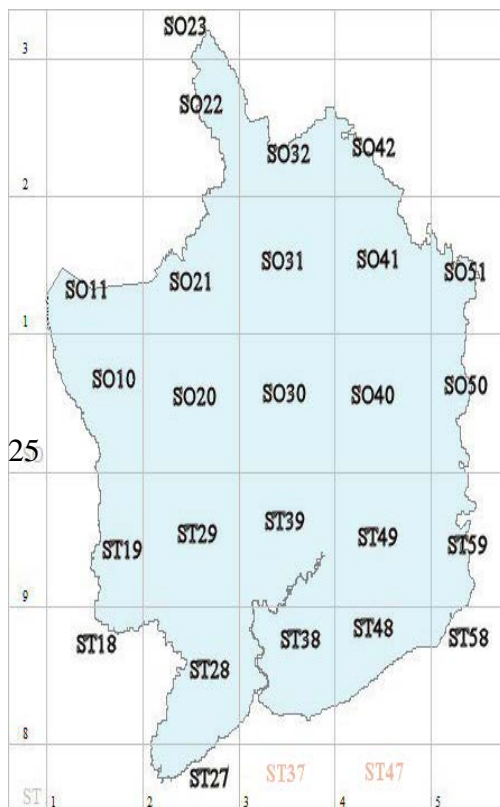
Mines of  
*Eriocrania cicatricella*  
(left) and  
*Phyllonorycter comparella*  
(right)



Photo credits: David Brooks (*Cydalima perspectalis* & *Etiella zinckenella*), Nick Felstead (*Metendothenia atropunctana*, *Pammene trauniana* and *Cosmopterix pulcherimella*), Kevin Hewitt (*Pempelia palumbella*), Lance Hutchings (*Acleris umbrana*), Mel Oxford (*Phlyctaenia perlucidalis* & *Sitochroa palealis*), Bob Roome (*Notocelia incarnatana*), Ian Rabjohns (*Eriocrania cicatricella*) & George Tordoff (*Pammene albuginana*); all others by Sam Bosanquet. I wish I could have included more photos, as a lot of gorgeous Micros were seen in the county during the year – please look at (and contribute to) [www.gwentmothing.blogspot.com](http://www.gwentmothing.blogspot.com) where most of these photographs appeared along with many others!

Sam Bosanquet

## Gwent / VC35 10km<sup>2</sup> Squares



One of the most frequently used systems for plotting distribution maps is on the basis of 10km by 10km squares (“hectads” or 10km<sup>2</sup>). Nominally there are twenty seven such squares in Gwent or VC35, shown on the map (left), but two of these (ST37 and ST47) lie off the coast and play no part in lepidoptera recording.

Thus the effective maximum for the county is twenty-five 10km<sup>2</sup> squares. For comparison, the whole of Wales contains 288 squares, of which three lie off the coast with no islands, giving an effective maximum of 285.

Only two butterflies have been recorded from all Gwent squares, Peacock and Speckled Wood. Another eleven have been found in 24 squares, the missing square in every case being the small northern tip of the county in SO23. Equal with Small Tortoiseshell, Peacock has the highest number of Welsh squares, both being recorded in 282 of the available 285 squares. There is a good match between the most widespread Welsh and Gwent butterfly species, the only two disparities being Brimstone, which is more common in Gwent (24/25) than most of Wales (184/285) and similarly Marbled White (23/25 against 87/285).

The following tables show the most widespread butterfly species.

<b>Gwent Butterflies – Number of 10km<sup>2</sup> Squares In Which Recorded</b>	
<b>Species</b>	<b>No Squares (Max 25)</b>
Peacock	25
Speckled Wood	25
Brimstone butterfly	24
Comma	24
Common Blue	24
Gatekeeper	24
Green-veined White	24
Large White	24
Meadow Brown	24
Orange-tip	24
Ringlet	24
Small Tortoiseshell	24
Small White	24
Holly Blue	23
Large Skipper	23
Marbled White	23
Painted Lady	23
Red Admiral	23
Small Copper	23
Small Heath	23
Small Skipper	23

<b>Wales Butterflies – Number of 10km<sup>2</sup> Squares In Which Recorded</b>	
<b>Species</b>	<b>No Squares (Max 285)</b>
Peacock	282
Small Tortoiseshell	282
Painted Lady	281
Red Admiral	281
Small White	281
Large White	280
Meadow Brown	278
Green-veined White	277
Small Copper	271
Small Skipper	271
Large Skipper	267
Ringlet	267
Orange-tip	265
Small Heath	265
Comma	264
Speckled Wood	264
Wall	261
Common Blue	254
Gatekeeper	248
Clouded Yellow	228

Eleven macro moths have been recorded in all 25 Gwent squares, mainly as a result of one solitary light-trapping session in SO23 completing the set for several species. A further eighteen macro-moths have been recorded in 24 squares. As expected, there is a close match between the most widespread Gwent and Wales species. Iron Prominent is surprisingly high on the Gwent list, while Silver Y heads the Wales list with 274 squares out of the maximum of 285. It is interesting to note how widespread an immigrant such as Humming-bird Hawk can be, with 24/25 Gwent squares and 235/285 Wales squares.

The tables on the next page show the most widespread macro moths.

<b>Gwent macro moths – Number of 10km<sup>2</sup> Squares In Which Recorded</b>	
<b>Species</b>	<b>No Squares (Max 25)</b>
Brimstone Moth	25
Buff Ermine	25
Common Carpet	25
Common Marbled Carpet	25
Dark Arches	25
Flame	25
Flame Shoulder	25
Heart and Dart	25
Ingrailed Clay	25
Iron Prominent	25
Large Yellow Underwing	25
Angle Shades	24
Burnished Brass	24
Double Square-spot	24
Drinker	24
Dun-bar	24
Humming-bird Hawk	24
Lesser Broad-border	24
Lesser Yellow Underwing	24
Riband Wave	24
Silver Y	24
Silver-ground Carpet	24
Small Phoenix	24
Snout	24
Spectacle	24
Square-spot Rustic	24
Straw Dot	24
White Ermine	24
Willow Beauty	24

<b>Wales macro moths – Number of 10km<sup>2</sup> Squares In Which Recorded</b>	
<b>Species</b>	<b>No Squares (Max 285)</b>
Silver Y	274
Large Yellow Underwing	262
Dark Arches	260
Flame Shoulder	257
Drinker	249
Brimstone Moth	249
White Ermine	247
Smoky Wainscot	246
Heart and Dart	246
Buff Ermine	243
Angle Shades	243
Bright-line Brown-eye	240
July Highflyer	240
Poplar Hawk	240
Brown Silver-line	239
Lesser Broad-border	239
Small Square-spot	239
Antler	238
Common Carpet	238
Lesser Yellow Underwing	238
Peppered Moth	238
Snout	238
Square-spot Rustic	238
Elephant Hawk	237
Green Carpet	236
Straw Dot	236
Burnished Brass	235
Humming-bird Hawk	235
Riband Wave	235

Thanks to the Aderyn (<https://aderyn.lercwales.org.uk/>), BRC (<http://www.brc.ac.uk/>) and cucaera (<https://www.cucaera.co.uk>) websites for help in compiling some of the data when I was stuck indoors during the bad weather!

Martin Anthoney



*Spring Usher*



*Small Brindled Beauty*

## Recent Highlights

The second half of February and all of March saw temperatures well below normal, with the “Beast from the East” delivering two periods of heavy snow. In my garden, the maximum temperature on St David’s Day only reached *minus* 5 °C. Despite the bad weather, 7 species of butterfly were recorded in March, the same as March 2017, but the number of macro moth species at 32 was well down on the 53 of March 2017. It is noticeable in poor weather how records tend to concentrate around the few good days. Hence, for both butterflies and moths, more records were received for the pleasant spring weekend of Sun 25<sup>th</sup> March and Mon 26<sup>th</sup> than for the rest of 2018 so far put together.

The following list contains all first records for the year plus other records of interest:

11 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Oak Beauty to light at Risca. One species which seems to have had a good season; many records, several in double figure numbers.	(Martin Anthoney)
15 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Early Grey at Melbourne Way, Newport	(Roger James)
16 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Dotted Chestnut, March Moth at Penhow Woodlands	(Nick Felstead)
	Early Thorn at Goldcliff	(Lance Hutchings)
18 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Satellite to light at St Pierre’s Great Wood	(Nick Felstead)
19 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Clouded Drab, Satellite among 8 species to light at Melbourne Way, Newport	(Roger James)
	3 Spring Usher at Cumberland Plantation, Llanishen	(Nick Felstead)
20 <sup>th</sup> Feb	Red Admiral at Cwmbran	(Bob Roome)
	Shoulder Stripe at bGoldcliff	(Lance Hutchings)
21 <sup>st</sup> Feb	Mottled Grey, Spring Usher among 9 species at Melbourne Way, Newport	(Roger James)
6 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Small White butterfly at Sudbrook	(Ed Stevens)
	6 Small Brindled Beauty, Spring Usher to light at Buckle Wood , Tintern	(Nick Felstead)
9 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Small Quaker to light at Melbourne way, Newport	(Roger James)
10 <sup>th</sup> Mar	11 Small Brindled Beauty, Spring Usher, Yellow Horned to light at Ravensnest Wood	(Nick Felstead)
11 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Red Chestnut to light at Catbrook	(Richard Clayton)
13 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Peacock butterfly flying at Chepstow	(Nick Felstead)
	Twin-spotted Quaker to light at Melbourne Way, Newport	(Roger James)



16 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Small Tortoiseshell at Abergavenny	(Mike Hoult and Val Deisler)
21 <sup>st</sup> Mar	White-marked, Brindled Beauty, Yellow Horned and Herald among 14 macro moth species to light at Mill Bank, Penallt	(Ian Rabjohns)
22 <sup>nd</sup> Mar	Another Herald at Lone Lane, Penallt	(Stephanie Tyler)
24 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Male Brimstone butterfly at Fairwater, Cwmbran	(Kelly Atherton per Bob Roome)
	8 Brindled Pug, Herald, Yellow Horned among 12 species to light at Lower Hale Wood	(Nick Felstead)
	and another Brindled Pug at Llandogo	(Gail Reynolds)
	Pale Pinions at Abergavenny (Mike Hoult and Val Deisler) and Goldcliff.	(Lance Hutchings)
25 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Male Brimstone butterfly and 5 Comma at Cuhere Wood, Caerwent	(Martin Anthony and Roger James)
	Brimstone and Peacock butterflies at Llandogo.	(Gail Reynolds)
	Brimstone, Comma, Peacock, Red Admiral and Small Tortoiseshell at Mill Bank, Penallt.	
	Also the first Engrailed and Water Carpet moths.	(Ian Rabjohns)
	2 Peacock butterflies at Lone Lane, Penallt	(Stephanie Tyler)
	Brimstone, 3 Comma and 7 Small Tortoiseshell at Chepstow	(Nick Felstead)
	Comma at Llandegfedd Reservoir	(Steve Williams)
	Red Admiral at Slade Wood	(Martin Anthony and Roger James)
	Double-striped Pug at Caerleon	(David Brooks)
	24 Scarlet Tiger caterpillars feeding at Chepstow	(Nick Felstead)
26 <sup>th</sup> Mar	Small Tortoiseshell flying at Risca. Also Mottled Grey to light.	(Martin Anthony)
	Early Tooth-striped, Yellow horned to light at Buckle Wood, Tintern	(Nick Felstead)
	Pale Pinion to light at Melbourne Way, Newport	(Roger James)
31 <sup>st</sup> Mar	Holly Blue at rest at Melbourne Way, Newport	(Roger James)
	Pale Pinion to light at Blackwood	(Kevin Hewitt)
	Another Pale Pinion at Goldcliff	(Lance Hutchings)

## Dates for your Diary 2018

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June** *Go Wild* Show at Parc Bryn Bach, Tredegar

**Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> June to Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> June** National Moth Night. The theme will be *Pyralids*. For more information, see <http://www.mothnight.info/>.

**20<sup>th</sup> July to 12<sup>th</sup> August** Big Butterfly Count. Details at [www.bigbutterflycount.org](http://www.bigbutterflycount.org)

**Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> Oct** Butterfly Conservation (South Wales Branch) Members Day and AGM at Kenfig.

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