



MONMOUTHSHIRE MOTH & BUTTERFLY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No 156 September 2019.

A monthly newsletter covering

Gwent and Monmouthshire Vice County 35

Editor: Martin Anthoney

Recent Highlights – September

September started off with changeable westerly winds. The weather gradually settled down after the 6th, and from the 13th to 20th there was a lot of fine sunny weather, but during the last third of the month it turned increasingly showery and wet.

The mean temperature for the month was provisionally 0.5 °C above the long-term average. Due mainly to the very wet end of the month, rainfall was 159% of average, making it the wettest September since 1999. Numerous sunny days around mid-month ensured that sunshine totals were also above average, with 120% of average for Wales as a whole, though many nights were clear and cool.

Painted Lady

The first half of September 2019 saw a continuing abundance of the Painted Lady butterfly (*Vanessa cardui*), usually on buddleia flowers, but by the third week of the month it had almost disappeared save for a few worn individuals. Studies in recent years have shown that the Painted Lady migrates south each autumn - but makes this return journey at high altitude out of view of butterfly observers on the ground. Radar records have revealed that Painted Ladies fly at an average altitude of over 500 metres on their southbound trip and can clock up speeds of 30 mph by selecting favourable conditions. In the course of a year, this species travels 12,000 km and crosses the Sahara Desert twice to seasonally exploit resources and favourable climates. The whole journey is not undertaken by individual butterflies but is a series of steps by up to six successive generations so Painted Ladies returning to Africa in the autumn are several generations removed from their ancestors who left Africa earlier in the year. (<https://www.york.ac.uk/news-and-events/features/painted-lady-migration/>).

2019 months v Painted Lady counts in Gwent

| <i>Month</i> | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sept |
|--------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|
| <i>Count</i> | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 54 | 31 | 1172 | 98 |

The figures show a small inward migration in June, whose offspring combined with further major immigration to produce a peak in numbers in late July/ August, followed by a rapid decline at the time of return migration.

Other Butterflies

17 butterfly species were recorded in September 2019, the highest since 2015; 139 Large White, 89 Small White, 66 Red Admiral and a pleasing recovery of Small Tortoiseshell with 69 individuals. 4 immigrant Clouded Yellow, Brown Argus and Wall Brown were other notable records.

Three More Clifden Nonpareil Moths

The first VC35 record of Clifden Nonpareil (*Catocala fraxini*) was to light at Undy on the night of 25th/26th September 2018 (see newsletter issue 145). Almost exactly a year later three more specimens have turned up, all to light:

21st September in the north of the county at Hendre (Great Crwys) by Wendy Tyler-Batt

24th September at Tintern by Hazel Mitchell, with another clearly different specimen the following night, 25th, at the same site.

An aspen feeder, the species was a former resident in Kent and the Norfolk broads in the 1930's and has recolonised southern England from 2007, spreading remarkably quickly. In the latest newsletter from neighbouring Gloucestershire, Roger Gaunt reports that nine recorders have seen one or more specimens during September.



Clifden Nonpareil 21st Sept
(Wendy Tyler-Batt)



Clifden Nonpareil 24th and 25th Sept
(Hazel Mitchell)

Other moths

129 species of macro moth were recorded in Gwent in September 2019, much lower than the 147 of September 2018 but identical to September 2017. One Cosmopolitan, one Scarce Bordered Straw and five Dark Sword-grass were the only migrant records.

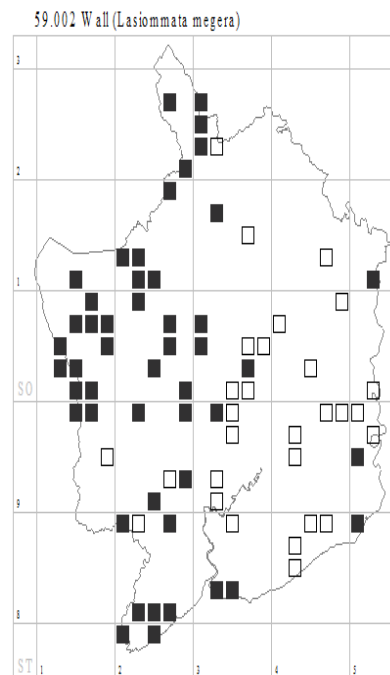
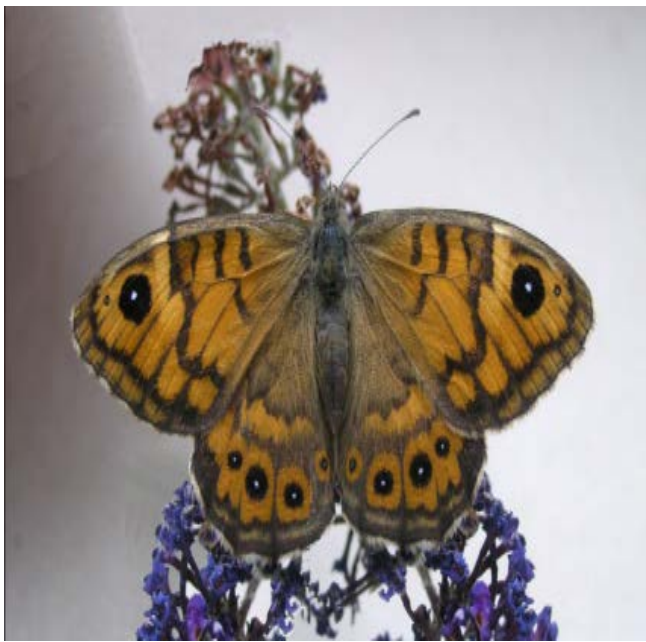


Northern
Rustic

Anomalous



- 1st Sep Northern Rustic to light at Risca (Martin Anthony)
- 2nd Sep 14 Painted Ladies at Redhouse Barn, Newport Wetlands Reserve (Kevin Dupé)
Also Bordered Beauty to light
Another 8 Painted Ladies at Cwmbran (Bob Roome)
A late Cloaked Carpet, Dark Marbled Carpet, Maiden's Blush and Six-striped Rustic to light at Tintern (Hazel Mitchell)
Hedge Rustic to light at Risca (Martin Anthony)
- 3rd Sep Wall Brown butterfly at Blackrock Quarry, Clydach . A declining species which now seems confined to the western half of the county (Mike Hoult and Val Deisler)
A late adult Elephant Hawk moth to light at Risca (Martin Anthony)



Wall Butterfly Wall distribution

- 4th Sep Purple Bar moth at Chepstow Park Wood (Nick Felstead)
- 5th Sep Anomalous moth to light at Risca (Martin Anthony)
Mocha to light at Grondra Great Wood, Shirenewton (Nick Felstead)
- 10th Sep The first Brick moth of the season at Ebbw Vale ERC (Jane Corey)
- 12th Sep First Large Ranunculus of the year at Melbourne Way, Newport (Roger James)
The first of ten Pinion-streaked Snout during September at Tintern (Hazel Mitchell)
- 13th Sep Clouded Yellow butterfly at Cold Harbour Pill. (Darryl Spittle)
15 Small Tortoiseshell, 8 Painted Lady at Pwll Du, Blorenge (Martin Anthony and Roger James)
- 14th Sep 16 Small Tortoiseshell and 11 Speckled Wood) at Ebbw Vale (Central Valley) (Jeff Chard)

- 15th Sep Scarce Bordered Straw immigrant to light at Caerleon (Chris Jones)
- 18th Sep A very late Gatekeeper at Blackrock Quarry, Clydach (Mike Hoult and Val Deisler)
 L-album Wainscot to light at Redhouse Barn, Newport Wetlands (Kevin Dupé)
 Pink-barred Sallow at Blackwood (Kevin Hewitt)
- 19th Sep Brown Argus and 3 Clouded Yellow butterflies at Rumney Great Wharf, Cardiff.
 (Dave Gilmore and Phil Bristow)
 10 Red Admiral at Magor Pill (Martin Anthony and Roger James)
- 20th Sep Orange Sallow to light at Penallt (Stephanie Tyler)
- 21st Sep A Grey Chi moth to light at Hendre (Great Crwys). A mainly northerly species, but declining.
 (Wendy Tyler-Batt)
- 22nd Sep First Merveille du Jour of the year to light at Risca (Martin Anthony)
- 23rd Sep L-album Wainscot at Tintern, with further individuals on 25th and 30th. (Hazel Mitchell)
 Orange Sallow among 35 species to light at Melbourne Way, Newport (Roger James)



Merveille du Jour



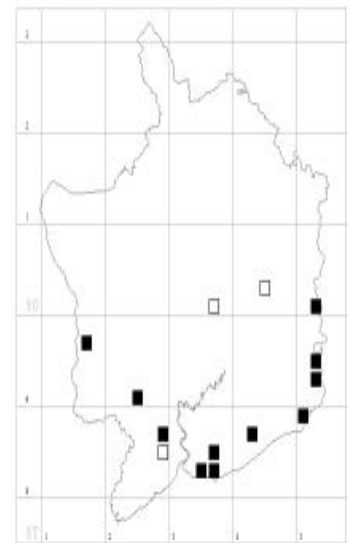
Four L-album Wainscot ((Kevin Dupé)

- 24th Sep Deep-brown Dart to light at Ebbw Vale (ERC) (Jane Corey)
 Yellow-line Quaker to light at Llantarnam (Bob Roome)
- 25th Sep Merveille du Jour to light at Blackwood (Kevin Hewitt)
 Mottled Umber and a late Rosy Footman to light at Tintern (Hazel Mitchell)
- 26th Sep Satellite to light at Tintern (Hazel Mitchell)
- 27th Sep Dark Marbled Carpet and a late Scallop Shell to light at Penallt (Ian Rabjohns)
- 29th Sep A worn, immigrant, Cosmopolitan moth to light at Penallt. Only the third county record. (Stephanie Tyler)
 Merveille du Jour and a very late Barred Hook-tip to light at Penallt (Ian Rabjohns)
- 30th Sep A Feathered Ranunculus to light at Risca. More coastal and less common in Gwent than its relative the Large Ranunculus. (Martin Anthony)
 Red-line Quaker at Ebbw Vale (ERC) (Jane Corey)

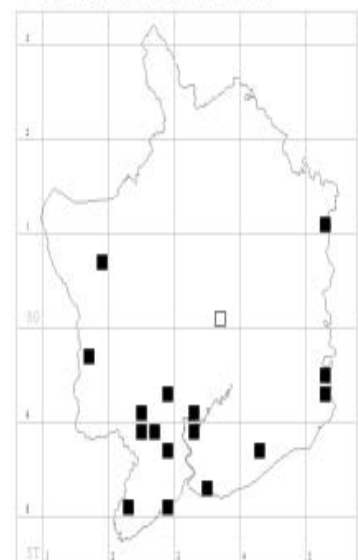


Feathered Ranunculus and Large Ranunculus

73.235 Feathered Ranunculus (*Polymnia ichenea*)



73.237 Large Ranunculus (*Polymnia hibernica*)



Dates for your Diary 2019

Saturday 19th Oct Members Day and AGM of Butterfly Conservation South Wales Branch,



**Butterfly
Conservation**

South Wales Branch Members Day

**Saturday 19th October 2019 at Kenfig NNR Visitors Centre
Kenfig, Bridgend CF33 4PT**

10.30am to 4pm; non-members welcome.

Programme

10:30 Tea or coffee, biscuits

10.55 Welcome & introduction to the day

Norman Lowe

11.00 The new macro-moth Atlas

George Tordoff

11:45 Leafminers and Casebearers – the fascinating lives of the smallest of moths
Andy and Melissa Banthorpe

12.30 A demonstration of Aderyn for butterfly and moth recorders

Dave Slade

13.15 to 14.00 Lunch Break.

Bring your own food or there are outlets within 5 minutes' drive. Teas/coffees will be available at centre.

14:00 Branch AGM, including brief reports.

14.15 All the Moor Butterflies - conserving rare fritillaries in the South-West of England
Simon Phelps

15.00 Tea break

15.15 50 years of Butterfly Conservation

Russel Hobson

End 16.00 approx.

MMBG – Contact Names and Addresses.

Secretary: Kevin Dupé
120 Roman Way
Caerleon
Newport
NP18 3FS
Phone 01633 547897
e-mail Kevin.Dupe@btinternet.com

Chairman: Roger James
44 Melbourne Way
Newport
NP20 3RF
Phone 01633 215627
e-mail smallranunculus@uwclub.net
or in case of problems juliajames@uwclub.net

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

Website / blog <http://gwentmothing.blogspot.co.uk/>
Queries to Richard Clarke
e-mail chykembro2@aol.com

Newsletter Editor & Recorder for
Butterflies & Macro Moths
Martin Anthoney
23 Malvern Close
Risca
Newport
NP11 6QY
Phone 01633 612272
e-mail chemlep@btinternet.com

Recorder for Micro Moths
Sam Bosanquet
c/o Dingestow Court
Monmouth
Monmouthshire
NP25 4DY
e-mail sambbryo@aol.com

Unless you tell us otherwise, the records you submit may be collated and disseminated manually or electronically, including via the internet, for conservation, environmental decision-making, education, research and other public benefit uses in accordance with Butterfly Conservation's data access policy. Records are added to Butterfly Conservation's UK butterfly and moth recording schemes (BNM and NMRS) and to the South East Wales Biodiversity Record Centre (SEWBRc). Names and contact details of recorders will be used for administration and verification purposes only. Your name and contact details will not be passed to other parties without your consent, whilst your name will form part of the record that is collated and disseminated in accordance with Butterfly Conservation's privacy policy.