



MONMOUTHSHIRE MOTH & BUTTERFLY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No 158 November / December 2019.

A monthly newsletter covering

Gwent and Monmouthshire Vice County 35

Editor: Martin Anthony

November - December

November was a mostly cloudy month with showery rain at times, but there were occasional cold bright days with overnight frosts. Most of the month was colder than average but it was mild on the first four days and again between the 23rd and 27th. The mean temperature for the month was provisionally 0.8 °C below the long-term average. Rainfall was 106% of average and sunshine was just 76% of average.

December overall was rather mild, with only limited colder interludes and fewer frosts than average. Low pressure and the regular passage of frontal systems produced some large daily rainfall totals during the first three weeks but the final Xmas week was rather drier in most areas, and it became quite mild at times.

The paucity of sunshine meant butterflies were a rarity, the only records for the two months being:

- 5th Nov Three Red Admirals on ivy blossom at Magor Marsh. (Martin Anthony and Roger James)
- 12th Nov One Red Admiral at Goldcliff lagoons. (Kevin Dupé)
- 16th Nov One Red Admiral at Llandogo (Gail Reynolds)
- 25th Dec A pleasant Xmas day produced a Red Admiral and a Peacock butterfly sunning themselves on a wall near Cleddon. (Stephanie Tyler)
- 29th Dec A Peacock butterfly flying in Cwmyoy churchyard. (Christine Knight)
Also, a Red Admiral flying at Harlech Retail Park, Newport. (Nick Felstead)

35 species of macro moth were recorded in November, well below the 50 species of Nov 2018, and 13 species in December was again well below the 21 species of Dec 2018. Highlights included:

- 1st Nov Brick, Figure of Eight, Merveille du Jour, Pale November Moth and Sprawler among 22 species to light at Dingestow (Sam Bosanquet)
- 2nd Nov Merveille du Jour, Mottled Umber, Sallow and Sprawler to light at Great Crwys, Hendre (Wendy Tyler-Batt)
Grey Shoulder-knot to light at Risca (Martin Anthony)
- 4th Nov Merveille du Jour, Mottled Umber and Satellite to light at Tintern (Hazel Mitchell)
- 5th Nov Grey Shoulder-knot and Blair's Shoulder-knot at Abergavenny (Mike Houlton and Val Deisler)
- 6th Nov Dark Sword-grass to light at Risca (Martin Anthony)

- 16th Nov 14 Feathered Thorn among 6 species to light at Wentwood (Nick Felstead)
Satellite to light at Llandogo (Gail Reynolds)
- 24th Nov 25 December Moth, 12 Feathered Thorn, Merveille du Jour and Satellite among
11 species at Tintern (Hazel Mitchell)
- 25th Nov Scarce Umber, Mottled Umber and Red-green Carpet at Llanishen (Nick Felstead)
Scarce Umber, Mottled Umber, Satellite, Northern Winter Moth and Winter Moth
among 12 species to light at Dingestow. (Sam Bosanquet)
- 6th Dec 5 December Moth, 1 Feathered Thorn, 1 Mottled Umber and 42 Winter Moth at
Buckle Wood, Angidy Valley (Nick Felstead)
- 7th Dec Scarce Umber, December Moth, November Moth, Red-line Quaker and Winter Moth
to light at Risca. (Martin Anthony)
- 21st Dec 9 December Moth, 2 Mottled Umber, 11 Winter Moth and 1 Yellow-line Quaker at
St Pierre's Great Wood. (Nick Felstead)
- 24th Dec Pale Brindled Beauty to light at Risca. Very early for a spring species. (Martin Anthony)



Pale Brindled Beauty



Female

Winter Moth



Male

- 26th Dec 32 Winter Moth at Wentwood, including three of the flightless females.
Also Mottled Umber and Spruce Carpet. (Nick Felstead)
2Mottled Umber, 1 Chestnut and 28 Winter Moth at Llantarnam Abbey Wood. (Bob Roome)
- 28th Dec Chestnut, Mottled Umber, Red-green Carpet, Spruce Carpet, Winter Moth and
Yellow-line Quaker to light at Tintern (Hazel Mitchell)

- 29th Dec Grey Shoulder-knot at Abergavenny (Mike Hoult and Val Deisler)
- 30th Dec Grey Shoulder-knot to light at Risca (Martin Anthony)
- 31st Dec Chestnut, Mottled Umber and Winter Moth to light at Llantarnam Abbey. (Bob Roome)

Stop press:-

- 6th Jan 2020. A specimen of the micro *Acleris abietana* (Perth Button) to light at Ninewells Wood, Llandogo. A new species for VC35 and a first for Wales. (Nick Felstead)
- The same date a Red Sword-grass came to light at Risca. (Martin Anthony)



Acleris abietana (Nick Felstead)



Red Sword-grass (06/01/2020)

Summary of 2019 Butterflies and Macro moths

Butterflies

37 species of butterfly were recorded in Gwent in 2019, the same number as in 2018. The year will be remembered for its abundance of Painted Ladies. The first specimen appeared on 21st Feb and numbers built up slowly to late July when a population explosion reached a peak in August and early September. Painted Lady was the commonest butterfly, with counts of 100+ not uncommon. As the reverse migration southwards set in, numbers fell back rapidly so only five individuals were recorded in October.

After an early appearance on 17th Jan, Red Admiral numbers built up to have a good summer, but hardly any survived the cool autumn into winter. Immigrant Clouded Yellows usually appear in the autumn, but disappointingly only six individuals were recorded this year, from late Aug to early Oct. on the coast.

Macro Moths

472 species of macro-moth were recorded in Gwent in 2019, less than the 2018 figure of 481. The average annual count for the decade 2010-2019 was 448 species, with the figure slowly edging up. Whether this is due to more recording, new arrivals and/or climate change is a moot point.

Two new macro moths were added to the VC35 list in 2019: Pine Hawk (*Sphinx pinastri*) at Dingestow on 28th July and Gypsy Moth (*Lymantria dispar*) at Undy on 19th Aug.

Amongst the immigrants, 40 Humming-bird Hawks was the highest total for several years, 2 Bedstraw Hawk, 1 Convolvulus Hawk, 1 Cosmopolitan, 30 Dark Sword-grass, 1 Pearly Underwing, 2 Scarce Bordered Straw, 5 Vestal, 2 White-point and of course the ubiquitous Silver Y. Hopefully, 5 Clifden Nonpareil may indicate a new colonist rather than migrants.

Up to date numbers of species are

	Butterflies	Macro moths	Micro moths
Wales	~59	682	1159
Gwent VC35	50	586	840

Monmouthshire Moth & Butterfly Group Annual Meeting

You are cordially invited to our AGM and Members' Evening:

Wednesday 18th March 2019

Royal British Legion Club,

Old Market Street, Usk, NP15 1AL

7.30pm - 9.30pm

Our speaker will be Andrea Rowe, appointed in September to take over as Butterfly Conservation (Wales) Conservation Officer. (George Tordoff will remain in Wales but has a new full time role as UK Senior Moth Ecologist).

Atlas of Britain & Ireland's Larger Moths



Now published and available from most booksellers (rrp £38.50).
Each species has a sponsor and the following are relevant to our area:-

Page 28	Welsh Clearwing	Sponsored by South Wales Branch of Butterfly Conservation
Page 42	Scarce Hook-tip	Sponsored by Monmouthshire Moth and Butterfly Group
Page 119	Welsh Wave	Sponsored by South Wales Branch of Butterfly Conservation
Page 243	Scarlet Tiger	Sponsored by Monmouthshire Moth and Butterfly Group in memory of Bill Jones (1956-2017)
Page 372	Red Sword-grass	Sponsored by Monmouthshire Moth and Butterfly Group in memory of Rodney Morris (1943-2016)
Page 381	Grey Chi	Sponsored by Monmouthshire Moth and Butterfly Group
Page 406	Small Ranunculus	Sponsored by Monmouthshire Moth and Butterfly Group
Page 518	Silurian	Sponsored by Monmouthshire Moth and Butterfly Group in memory of Neil Horton (1915-2005)

Dates for your Diary 2020

Saturday 18th Jan SEWBReC Recorders Forum **at** Heronston Hotel, Ewenny Rd, Bridgend, CF35 5AW
info@sewbrec.org.uk or call 01443 808 896 to book a place.

Thursday 23rd January Work task at Hendre Wood – 11am Old Lodge entrance SO462146
Contact: Richard Smith 07977 811404.

Saturday 25th January 10th UK Moth Recorders' Meeting at Birmingham
<https://butterfly-conservation.org/moths/moth-recording/uk-moth-recorders-meeting>

Sunday 8th March Provisional date for work task at Blackrock Quarry, Clydach
At the Brynmawr roundabout on the A465 Heads of the Valley road, take the new exit after the Abergavenny exit and before the Brynmawr one. Proceed over the new white bridge and then turn right, following signs for Blackrock (access only). Continue along the same road to the tarmac layby before the lime kilns (SO215125)

Wednesday 18th March. MMBG Annual Meeting at Usk – see article above.

Saturday 21st March UK Butterfly Recorders' Meeting: in Birmingham. More info at
<https://butterfly-conservation.org/butterflies/uk-butterfly-recorders-meeting>

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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.