



MONMOUTHSHIRE MOTH & BUTTERFLY GROUP

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Gwent and Monmouthshire Vice County 35

Editor: Martin Anthoney

Langmaid's Yellow Underwing (*Noctua janthina*) at Dingestow

A new species for Gwent

Sam Bosanquet

In 2001 John Langmaid caught the first British specimen attributable to *Noctua janthina* in Hampshire. This close relative of Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing *N. janthe* was first described in 1991 and has a more eastern distribution in Europe. Initially it was thought to be a rare migrant to Britain but was recorded more and more regularly in southern England in the early 2000s and is thought to be resident in some coastal areas according to the *Atlas of Britain and Ireland's Larger Moths* (2019). The first Welsh records came from Montgomeryshire in 2009 but there have been very few records in Wales since then.

The feature of Langmaid's Yellow Underwing that is best known to British moth recorders is its very dark hindwing: classic individuals having a yellow spot in the middle of a black hindwing rather than the broad black border on a yellow hindwing seen in Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing. This hindwing feature is extremely difficult to observe, however, and a perception that the species were otherwise almost identical meant that I only half-heartedly checked for Langmaid's when trapping at home. However, on the night of 21st July 2021, one of three 'Lesser B-b YU' in my MV trap was very obviously smaller and darker than the other two and I potted it up for checking. Sure enough, this one had extensive black on the hindwing, and a bit of research and asking experts on Twitter revealed that the darker brown, less strikingly marked upperwing and relatively broader, shorter forewings than Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing (right in my photo below) were good pointers to Langmaid's (left in the photo of the Dingestow moths, below).



Repeated attempts to photograph the hindwing of the live moth failed – indeed it escaped into my kitchen and was only recaptured a couple of hours later. With a heavy heart I popped it into the freezer so I could get the conclusive proof of its identity. This turned out to be more difficult than anticipated. The upperside of the hindwing was much more extensively black than would be typical of *janthe*, but the other feature that is regularly quoted in the literature as indicating *janthina* was decidedly ambiguous: the underside of the forewing had a few thin fingers of orange scales projecting into the extensive black patch. Genitalia dissection might have provided a conclusive answer, but the procedure – everting the aedeagus with a syringe – is far more difficult than the dissections I occasionally carry out on Micromoths and I could not get a clear result.



A bit more research leads me to consider my moth is indeed a Langmaid's Yellow Underwing. The Moth Dissection UK website ([Noctuidae : Noctua janthina - mothdissection.co.uk](http://mothdissection.co.uk)) presents plates of *Noctua janthe* and *N. janthina* (males shown below) confirmed by genitalia dissection, and my individual fits comfortably within the variation shown by male *janthina* but the upperside of the hindwing is too extensively black to be male *janthe*. The hindwing cilia show a dark patch at the apex that is not shown in *janthe* or in female *janthina* ([Layout 1 \(butterfly-conservation.org\)](http://butterfly-conservation.org)), whilst the forewing underside 'fingering' is considered too variable to be diagnostic. It seems highly likely that *N. janthina* is expanding westwards into Wales in the same way as species such as Jersey Tiger, Kent Black Arches, Clifden Nonpareil *et al.*, but is easier to overlook. Gwent moth recorders are urged to keep an eye out for Landmaid's Yellow Underwing, particularly in late June before the main emergence of *N. janthe* takes place.



Orange-tailed Clearwing.

On 15th July, Lee Gregory attracted twelve Orange-tailed Clearwing adults to a pheromone lure on a wayfaring tree at Slade Wood. Wayfaring tree (*Viburnum lantana*) is the usual larval foodplant for this species, the larvae spending two years feeding in thin stems of the foodplant, overwintering as larvae. Some references quote the moth as being found in S E Wales, but though it is recorded from Glamorgan I do not know of any previous confirmed records from Monmouthshire which is now the second Welsh county for this clearwing. The species brings the tally of macro moths recorded from VC35 to 592 species.



Orange-tailed Clearwing
(*Synanthedon andrenaeformis*)
(Lee Gregory)



July and August

The first part of July was mainly unsettled, and wet and windy at times. Thereafter it became quite hot, with several sunny days but also isolated thunderstorms. The month ended with a return to cool, unsettled weather. Mean temperatures for the month were provisionally 1.4 °C above average, making it the ninth warmest July in a series from 1884. It was a rather dry month, especially towards the west, with 86% of average rainfall. Sunshine totals amounted to 114% of the long-term average.

The first part of August was mainly unsettled, with plenty of rain especially between the 5th and 9th. The second half of the month was more settled, if often rather cloudy, with very little rain after the 21st. Mean temperatures for the month were provisionally 0.2 °C below average. Most of Wales was both drier and duller than average.. There was 71% of average rainfall overall, and 74% of average sunshine.

July produced 315 species of macromoth, dropping to 211 species in August.

July and August Highlights

1 st July	Privet Hawk to light at Penallt.	(Ian Rabjohns)
	Blomer's Rivulet to light at Risca.	(Martin Anthoney)
	3 Scarce Hook-tip to light at Tintern, with another on 13 th July.	(John Dawson)

2 nd July	6 Silver-washed Fritillary at Panta Arches, Angidy Valley. (Roger James and Martin Anthoney)	
	A new site for Blackneck moth, to light at Great Crwys,. Hendre	(Wendy Tyler-Batt)
	2 Blotched Emerald to light at Tintern	(Hazell Mitchell)
	Red-belted Clearwing to pheromone lure at Dingestow.	(Sam Bosanquet)
	Cloaked Carpets to light at Catbrook (Richard Clayton), Tintern (Hazell Mitchell) and Great Crwys (Wendy Tyler-Batt).	
3 rd July	Blomer's Rivulet to light at Caerleon, with a Bordered Straw the following night. (Chris Jones)	
6 th July	Barred Umber at Ebbw Vale (Environmental Resource Centre)	(Jane Corey)
7 th July	Scarce Silver Y to light at Blaenavon	(Lee Gregory)
8 th July	Brussels Lace to light at Newport Wetlands, with a second on 14 th July	(Kevin Dupé)
	Exuvia of 5 Welsh Clearwing moths found on old Birches at Twyn-y-gaer	(Lee Gregory)
9 th July	Bordered Sallow to light at Blackwood	(Kevin Hewitt)
	Waved Carpet to light at Penallt.	(Ian Rabjohns)
10 th July	2 Brown-tail, 3 Round-winged Muslin, Kent Black Arches to light at Newport Wetlands.	(Kevin Hewitt)
	Cream-bordered Green Pea and Round-winged Muslin at Magor Marsh	(George Tordoff)
11 th July	Barred Umber to light at Newport (Melbourne Way)	(Roger James)
	Beautiful Snout to light at Tintern	(Hazel Mitchell)
13 th July	Yellow-legged Clearwing at Dingestow	(Sam Bosanquet)
	Privet Hawk at Tintern. Not common in Gwent,, only the 14 th county record.	(John Dawson)
14 th July	4 Dark Green Fritillary at Slade Wood	(Lee Gregory)
	4 Red-tipped Clearwing, 5 Six-belted Clearwing and 2 Yellow-legged Clearwing to pheromone lures at Blaenserchan	(Lee Gregory)
	2 Bordered Straw to light at Newport Wetlands	(Kevin Dupé)
15 th July	12 Orange-tailed Clearwing, 1 White Admiral, 1 Silver-washed Fritillary and a Purple Hairstreak at Slade Wood.	(Lee Gregory)
	Scarce Hook-tip to light at Llandogo. A new site for this species	(Gail Reynolds)
	Four-spotted Footman at Tintern; the first of 21 records this year for what is now surely a resident species..	(John Dawson)
	Small Ranunculus larva at Magor car park	(Lee Gregory)
16 th July	Suspected moth to light at Blackwood	(Kevin Hewitt)

16th July 5 Silver-washed Fritillary and 1 Dark Green Fritillary at Slade Wood (Highmoor Hill). Also 7 White Admiral seen at Slade Wood (Frank Sengpiel 4 and Martin Anthoney 3), A pleasant surprise, since clear felling of large areas had left Slade Wood looking like a bomb site, with most of the White Admiral honeysuckle foodplant having gone.



White Admiral butterfly



(Frank Sengpiel)

17th July Orange Moth at Tintern

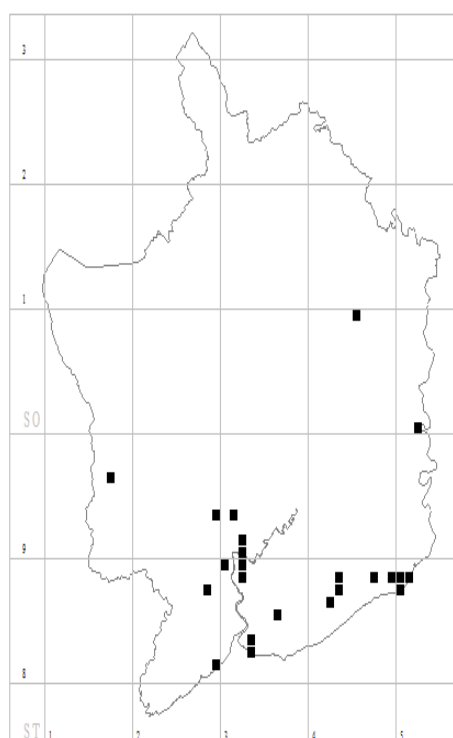
(John Dawson)

Jersey Tiger at Caerleon. The first of 21 specimens this year for what is now an established and spreading species.

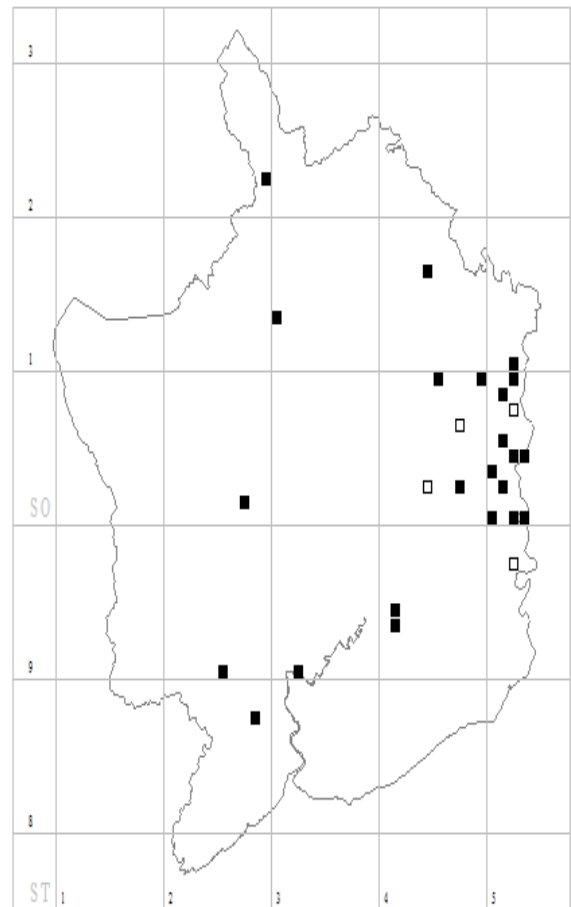
(Chris Jones)



Jersey Tiger and its Gwent distribution



- 24th July Three Varied Cotonet (*Hadena compta*) caterpillars at Tintern, feeding on sweet william plants.
Only the second Gwent record and the first breeding record. (John Dawson)
- 25th July Another Beautiful Snout at Tintern. Also a Suspected moth. (John Dawson)
- 26th July Silver-washed Fritillary flying at Tintern. (Hazell Mitchell)
- 27th July 4 Brown-veined Wainscot and Fen Wainscot to light at Newport Wetlands (Kevin Dupé)
- Cloaked Carpet to light at Risca (Martin Anthoney)
- This year Cloaked Carpet seems to have spread out westwards from its normal headquarters in the Wye Valley.



Cloaked Carpet and its Gwent distribution

- 29th July Silver-washed Fritillary at Llandogo (Juliette Phipps)
- 31st July Dog's Tooth, Four-spotted Footman to light at Great Crwys, Hendre (Wendy Tyler-Batt)
- Lunar Thorn to light at Llandogo (Simon Phipps)
- 1st Aug 5 Painted Lady butterflies at Goldcliff (Rupert Perkins)
- 3 Silver-washed Fritillary at Llandogo, the first of fifteen during August.
Also Scalloped Hook-tip (Simon Phipps)

1 st Aug	Devon Carpet to light at Risca	(Martin Anthoney)
2 nd Aug	Silver-washed Fritillary at Chepstow Park Wood)	(Paul Lidgett)
3 rd Aug	Purple Hairstreak at Tintern. Also an Ear Moth (confirmed by gen det)	(John Dawson)
4 th Aug	The first of six Silver-washed Fritillary at Tintern during August.	(Hazel Mitchell)
	Red Sword-grass to light at Pentrepiod, Pontypool	(Rupert Perkins)
	A White Letter Hairstreak flying at Llandogo, with two more on 11 th and 12 th August.	(Simon and Juliette Phipps)
5 th Aug	Mocha to light at Llandogo, the first of ten Gwent records in August.	(Simon Phipps)
9 th Aug	Devon Carpet at Tintern	(John Dawson)
10 th Aug	Dark Green Fritillary at Tintern	(Kathryn T. Dawson)
12 th Aug	Galium Carpet at Tintern	(John Dawson)
	Bulrush Wainscot at Ebbw Vale (Environmental Resource Centre)	(Jane Corey)
13 th Aug	3 Olive moths to light at Newport (Melbourne Way)	(Roger James)
17 th Aug	Nutmeg to light at Blackwood	(Kevin Hewitt)
	First Old Lady of the season at Llantarnam Abbey Wood	(Bob Roome)
18 th Aug	First Centre-barred Sallow of the season at Penallt	(Ian Rabjohns)
20 th Aug	Anomalous moth on Twmbarlwm	(Bob Roome)
	Oblique Carpet to light at Newport Wetlands	(Kevin Hewitt)
24 th Aug	Brown Argus at Goldcliff	(Jeremy White)
	Lesser-spotted Pinion to light at Tintern	(John Dawson)
25 th Aug	Grey Chi, Feathered Gothic and Fern to light at Catbrook	(Richard Clayton)
26 th Aug	A Little Thorn to light at Tintern. A very late date but this species has a small second generation in Gwent some years.	(John Dawson)
27 th Aug	Lesser Treble-bar to light at Wonastow	(Heather Colls)
30 th Aug	A novel way of recording moths: run a small light trap on a canal boat (Mon-Brecon canal near Llanover). Autumnal Rustic was a first for the year and a bonus was finding a White Letter Hairstreak egg on a bush adjacent to the canal!	(Elizabeth Goodyear)
	Another Lesser Treble-bar, at Tintern	(Hazel Mitchell)
31 st Aug	Red Underwing to light at Haisbro Avenue, Newport	(Kevin Dupé)



Lesser Treble-bar (Hazel Mitchell)



Olive Moth



Red-tipped Clearwing (Hazel Mitchell)



*Yellow-legged Clearwing
(Sam Bosanquet)*

Keep up to date with the MMBG blog/ website

<http://gwentmothing.blogspot.co.uk/>

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