



GMS NEWS

Weeks 19-27

Late Summer 2011

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A. tristella weeks 19-27
commonest micro

Scheme overview for late summer 2011 – Norman Lowe

Here's Norman's report on the scheme results for the late summer 2011, Weeks 19-36. Probably the most encouraging headline is that the results are from a massive total of 343 gardens, an increase of over 63% since last year. So well done to all of you who contributed records, and well done to the Area Co-ordinators who worked so hard to encourage their recorders to contribute to GMS.

As most of you will know, my first table usually shows the Top 20 core species moths for the whole of the British Isles, together with their position last year. However, this year I had a problem with the species that would have been No. 20, True Lover's Knot. This is because of the 2200 moths recorded, 1933 were from one garden in Scotland (and only another 7 in total were recorded from the whole of the rest of Scotland). So I've just included the Top 19 this time. All of the numbers will of course go into the main database, but you can see how difficult it can be to draw conclusions about apparent trends in numbers!



True Lover's Knot – very common in just one garden

You can see from the table that there have been very few major changes in position since last year with Flounced Rustic and Square-spot Rustic up 8 places and Flame Shoulder down 10.

Rank	Name	2011		2010		Increase/ decrease since 2010
		343 gardens		210 gardens		
		Total	No. per garden	Total	No. per garden	
1(1)	Large Yellow Underwing	26877	78.4	37624	179.2	-56.26
2(3)	Dark Arches	12274	35.8	9628	45.8	-21.95
3(4)	Common Rustic aggregate	8873	25.9	9374	44.6	-42.05
4(6)	Lesser Broad-bordered YU	8661	25.3	6671	31.8	-20.51
5(2)	Setaceous Hebrew Character	6353	18.5	12947	61.7	-69.96
6(12)	Agriphila tristella	5389	15.7	3570	17.4	-9.78
7(13)	Heart & Dart	5065	14.8	3342	15.9	-7.21
8(5)	Garden Grass-veneer	4991	14.6	6760	33.0	-55.87
9(17)	Square-spot Rustic	4926	14.4	2512	12.0	20.06
10(8)	Shuttle-shaped Dart	4829	14.1	4673	22.3	-36.73
11(10)	Riband Wave	4790	14.0	3983	19.0	-26.37
12(7)	Common Footman	4578	13.3	5060	24.1	-44.61
13(11)	Vine's Rustic	3771	11.0	3691	17.6	-37.45
14(16)	Lesser Yellow Underwing	3767	11.0	3054	14.5	-24.48
15(14)	Agriphila straminella	3611	10.5	3188	15.6	-32.30
16(19)	Willow Beauty	2607	7.6	2233	10.6	-28.52
17(25)	Flounced Rustic	2475	7.2	1499	7.1	1.09
18(21)	Brimstone Moth	2310	6.7	1852	8.8	-23.63
19(9)	Flame Shoulder	2254	6.6	4079	19.4	-66.17

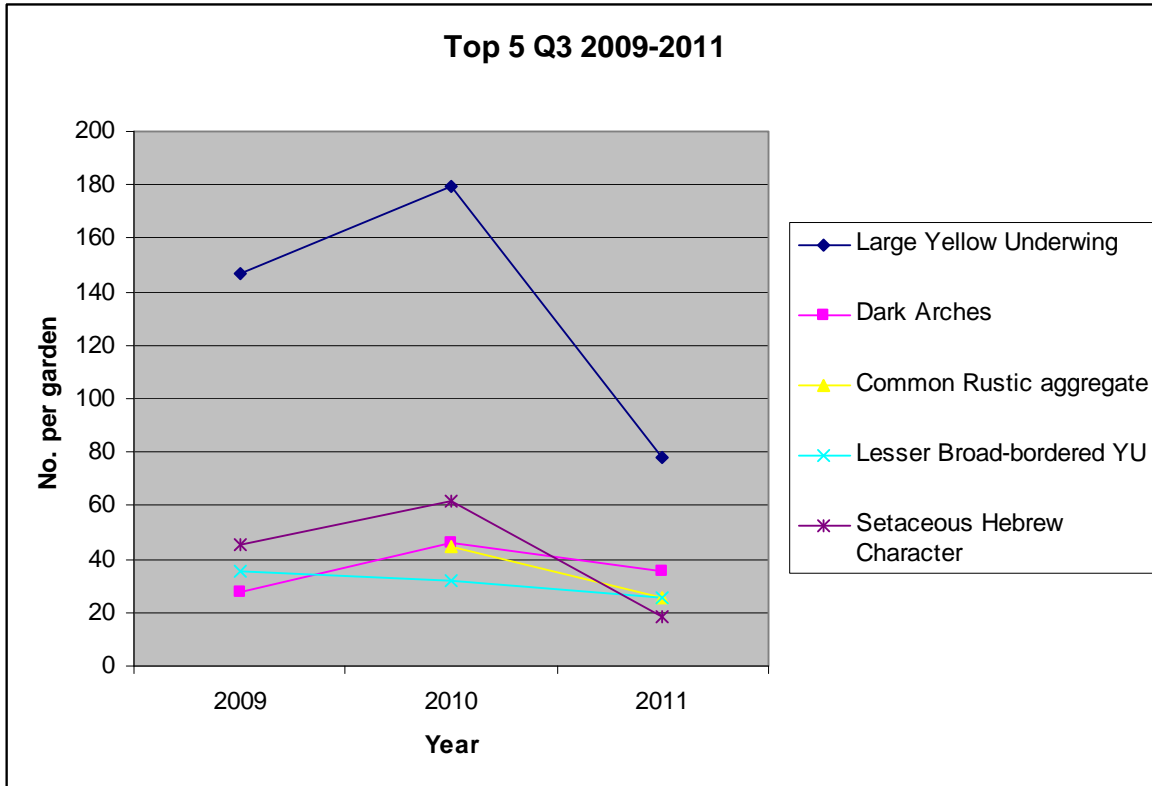
The last column shows the percentage increase (in black) or decrease (in red) from last year and, as you can see, with the exception of Flounced Rustic and Square-spot Rustic, all the Top 19 were found in smaller numbers than last year.



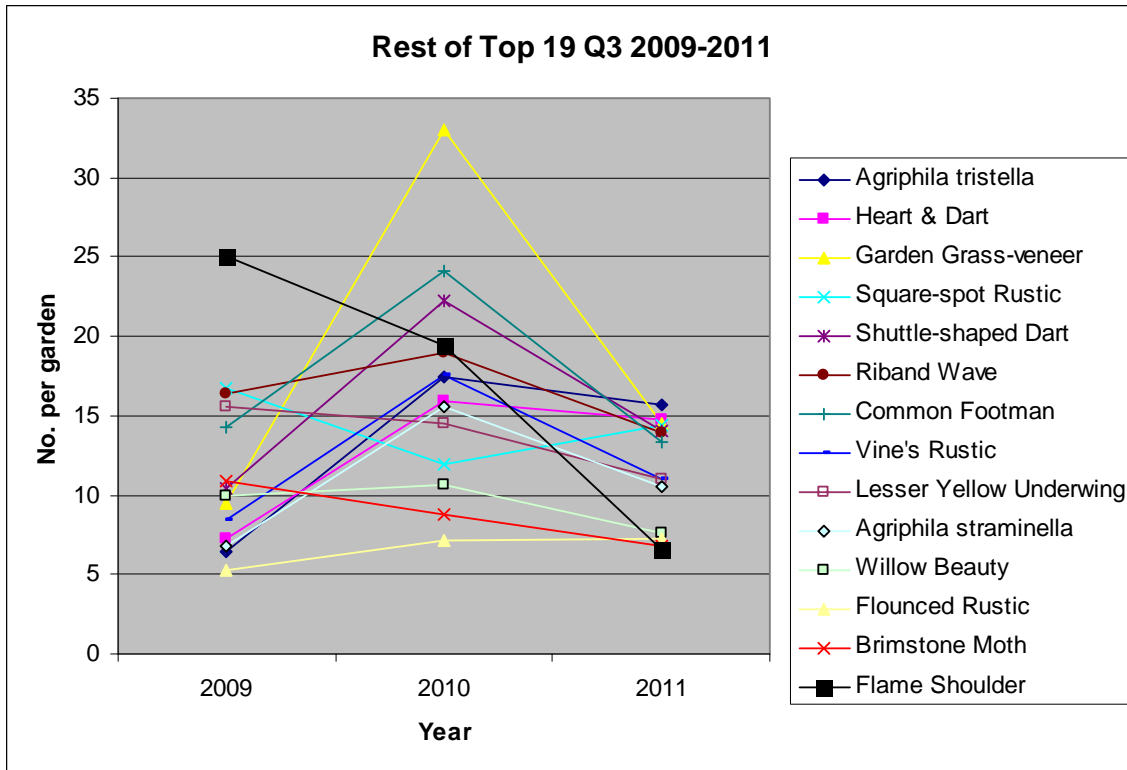
Flounced Rustic – increasing slightly

Four species have gone down by more than 50%, these being Large Yellow Underwing, Setaceous Hebrew Character, Garden Grass-vener and Flame Shoulder. Of course it might be that these falls were because 2010 was a comparatively good year. So, in order to get a slightly longer time period (all we've got for the scheme as a whole of course!) I've looked at the numbers for the last three years and plotted them on charts.

First the Top 5. Large Yellow Underwing, Setaceous Hebrew Character and Dark Arches all went up from 2009 to 2010 then dropped back this year, though only Dark Arches was higher in 2011 than 2009. Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing declined steadily and Common Rustic has only been recorded since 2010.



Most of the other species in the Top 19 showed a similar pattern, with a peak in 2010 then dropping back this year to a level broadly similar to that in 2009. However, three species have declined consistently over the three years. Lesser Yellow Underwing and Brimstone Moth showed fairly gradual falls but Flame Shoulder dropped sharply with numbers more than 70% lower than 2009. So this might be a species to keep an eye on in future. Only one species, Flounced Rustic increased steadily year on year, but only by a small amount. So it does seem that for most species 2011 was similar to 2009, but worse than 2010.



Flame Shoulder – sharply decreasing trend

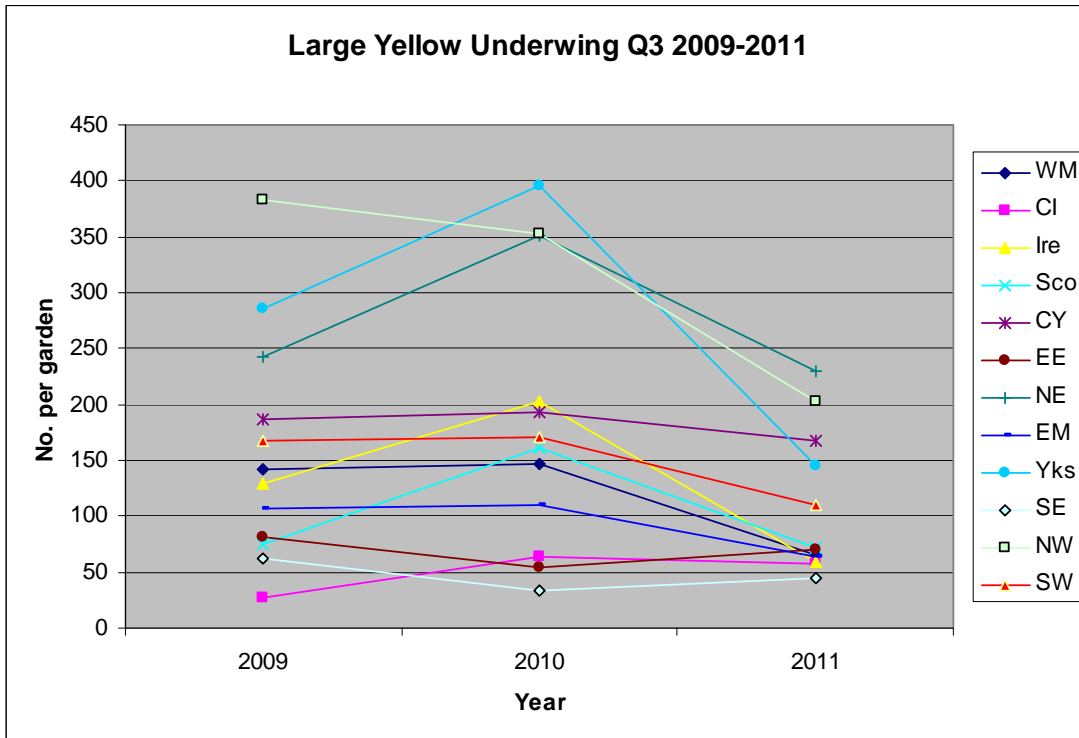
Differences across the British Isles

At this point I usually show you a big table showing the average numbers in each area for the Top 20 core species. As this time it didn't seem to show much I've taken it out to prevent this report getting too long, but if anyone wants to see this let me know. However when writing this report I was given to understand that recorders were finding that the numbers of Large Yellow Underwing were in free-fall in certain parts of the country. So I was very keen to produce my table plotting the mean number per garden for each of the Area Top 10's across the country for each area, including any non-core species.

North West	Mean	Scotland	Mean	North East	Mean
Large Yellow Uwing	211.4	Dark Arches	135.1	Large Yellow Uwing	229.7
Dark Arches	49.7	True Lover's Knot	102.1	Dark Arches	96.0
Common Rustic agg.	40.8	Large Yellow Uwing	71.5	Common Rustic agg.	67.0
Lesser BBYU	41.6	Common Rustic agg.	44.9	Heart & Dart	47.7
Lesser Yellow Uwing	23.2	Lesser BBYU	32.2	Lesser Yellow Uwing	39.0
Square-spot Rustic	13.7	Square-spot Rustic	24.4	Shuttle-shaped Dart	26.0
Setaceous Heb Ch	13.4	Dotted Clay	20.8	Lesser BBYU	25.7
Riband Wave	10.7	Antler Moth	18.3	Agriphila straminella	21.0
Common Footman	9.7	Bird-cherry Ermine	17.2	Marbled Beauty	20.0
Agriphila straminella	9.1	Lesser Yellow Uwing	16.6	Riband Wave	18.7
Ireland	Mean	Yorks & Humber	Mean	East England	Mean
Large Yellow Uwing	58.6	Large Yellow Uwing	144.5	Large Yellow Uwing	70.2
Lesser BBYU	28.5	Dark Arches	92.5	Shuttle-shaped Dart	48.1
Dark Arches	23.1	Common Rustic agg.	70.8	Uncertain	47.7
Setaceous Heb Ch	21.3	Agriphila straminella	52.4	Setaceous Heb Ch	38.6
Common Rustic agg.	18.7	Common Footman	45.1	Lesser BBYU	26.1
Heart & Dart	18.2	Agriphila tristella	36.7	Vine's Rustic	23.7
Lesser Yellow Uwing	16.5	Garden Grass-veneer	32.4	Common Footman	22.9
Garden Grass-veneer	15.0	Lesser Yellow Uwing	31.1	Garden Grass-veneer	21.9
Square-spot Rustic	13.0	Square-spot Rustic	29.9	Dark Arches	19.3
Agriphila tristella	12.5	Uncertain	28.4	Common Rustic agg.	16.6
Wales	Mean	West Midlands	Mean	East Midlands	Mean
Large Yellow Uwing	168.2	Large Yellow Uwing	64.7	Large Yellow Uwing	63.9
Dark Arches	41.8	Dark Arches	35.8	Dark Arches	57.2
Lesser BBYU	33.2	Lesser BBYU	35.3	Common Rustic agg.	33.6
Common Rustic agg.	24.6	Common Rustic agg.	26.1	Heart & Dart	27.5
Setaceous Heb Ch	23.0	Riband Wave	25.1	Square-spot Rustic	24.8
Agriphila tristella	19.4	Heart & Dart	23.6	Lesser BBYU	22.5
Antler Moth	19.1	Setaceous Heb Ch	23.0	Setaceous Heb Ch	21.6
Heart & Dart	17.8	Agriphila straminella	22.3	Lesser Yellow Uwing	19.9
Triple-spotted Clay	16.9	Square-spot Rustic	22.0	Garden Grass-veneer	18.3
Dingy Footman	16.4	Lesser Yellow Uwing	17.7	Riband Wave	18.3
South West	Mean	Channel Islands	Mean	South East	Mean
Large Yellow Uwing	109.6	Shuttle-shaped Dart	96.6	Large Yellow Uwing	44.2
Setaceous Heb Ch	41.7	Vine's Rustic	87.9	Lesser BBYU	30.0
Common Rustic agg.	39.6	Lesser BBYU	73.4	Shuttle-shaped Dart	28.8
Lesser BBYU	37.2	Agriphila tristella	60.6	Vine's Rustic	27.7
Heart & Dart	36.4	Large Yellow Uwing	57.3	Dark Arches	26.5
Dark Arches	30.7	Garden Grass-veneer	46.9	Riband Wave	24.7
Garden Grass-veneer	29.5	Common Rustic agg.	42.6	Garden Grass-veneer	22.4
Common Footman	28.1	Rusty-dot Pearl	34.1	Agriphila tristella	21.5
Vine's Rustic	26.5	Setaceous Heb Ch	30.4	Agriphila geniculea	21.2
Agriphila tristella	26.0	Blastobasis adustella	28.1	Flounced Rustic	16.9

Looking at the table it is clear that numbers are very different across the British Isles. In the NW and NE of England over 200 were recorded per garden and I've shown them in red. In Yorkshire and Humberside, Wales and the SW, between 100 and 200 were recorded per garden, shown in orange and elsewhere less than 100, shown in blue.

But did these numbers really show any big differences from earlier years? Have a look at the chart below. In the NW, Yorkshire and Ireland there has certainly been a big overall reduction since 2009 and in most places numbers are down to some extent. But in Wales, the Channel Islands, and E and SE England, numbers have been fairly constant over the three years. So it does seem that the Large Yellows have had a bad year in some places, but less so elsewhere. Some people have suggested that it might be due to the dry weather, but has it been especially dry in 2011 in the NW, Yorkshire and Humberside and Ireland?



To finish on a cheerful note, here's a pic that shows Large Yellow Underwings in large numbers. It shows a sheet covered with moths, mainly Large Yellows, but it was taken by Dave Grundy last year, not this.

Finally, if you have any comments or suggestions, don't keep them to yourself, but let me know at norman@enviro-consulting.com, or write to the editor.



“Large Yellow Underwings – still very common in some places”

Notes for GMS News Week 27 – 2011 – D. Grundy - GMS Year End

GMS 2011 is now getting close to the end of recording for 2011 – our last week of recording will be week 36 on Friday November 4th. How has your year been for moths in your garden – better than average or worse than average? As usual we will be producing a newsletter after week 36 with the usual 2 week turn around to get records in to your area coordinator for the newsletter and please send in articles to the newsletter of how 2011 treated moths in your garden. Week 36 is doubly important though as it is when we need to get all of your recording forms back to your area coordinator, so that we can get all 36 weeks of records from your garden in 2011 onto our GMS Mapmate database – to assess annual trends. So, for this reason, we will be needing to get all 36 weeks of records back from all recorders as soon as possible. If for whatever reason you didn't manage to complete the 2011 GMS recording year, then please don't be embarrassed about this – just let us know and then you will save us time in hassling you for records.

So, get those records in fast at the year-end – just ask your area coordinator if you need more help with them.

GMS Winter 2010/11

We have now successfully run the Winter GMS for 3 winters and are looking forward to our fourth winter of GMS recording. Those of you who took part last winter will know exactly what's involved, but, some of you might not be familiar with the scheme and might like to join in. So here's a quick outline of what's involved.

The Winter GMS is for people who trap all winter anyway, or for people who fancy having a go at winter moth-trapping. The plan is to just use one Britain and Ireland species list of 58 species and not to have regional variations and the list is designed to include species that recorders see commonly in their back gardens in November, December, January or February. We are happy to keep the same species list that we used last winter.

The species on the list are seen commonly somewhere in Britain and Ireland in winter in gardens. So don't be surprised if you've never even seen an Oak Rustic – they are common in winter on the Channel Isles. If you have already decided that Winter GMS is not for you then that is fine – it is our main summer GMS that will record the vast majority of our moth records and therefore that is the more important scheme.

We understand that many of you look forward to a rest over the winter and that is good, you need to be raring to go next March 2012! If you do want to join in the winter GMS then please get in touch direct with your area coordinators, so we can know who will be involved. Do remember that on cold nights you will quite likely have an empty trap, **but that is all part of the picture of when moths are flying and when they are not flying and therefore is also important to our records.** Be prepared for empty traps in some if not most weeks.

In general more moths are seen in gardens that are further south and west and especially in the Channel Isles, but we do need some gardens in the scheme from further north and east. If you do want to learn more about the scheme then please get in touch as soon as possible and also if you want to join in. We will send out recording forms and instructions to everyone planning to take part and also make copies of these available in the files section of the GMS chatsite and also on the website. These will come out to you by the start of November, again please get in touch if you don't receive all the details in time. The first recording week for Winter GMS will be on Friday November 11th (the week after the last week of the main GMS on November 4th). There will be one winter newsletter which will go out to all of you, even if you decide not to take part in the winter GMS. This will go out at the end of the winter in March 2012. Hope you're looking forward to GMS Winter, good luck for a trap full of December Moths and Spring Ushers all winter.

GMS AGM 2012

This is advanced notice to remind you that the GMS AGM will be held in 2012 on Sunday March 11th 2012 – make sure that this date is in your diary and that you are not double-booked. It will be held somewhere in the West Midlands to keep the venue reasonably central to all recorders in GMS (apologies to recorders from Ireland, Scotland and the Channel Isles etc. that this means it will be quite a way from where you live.)

The event will be held in a village hall or similar venue, still to be confirmed – watch this space in future newsletters for confirmation of where it will be. There will be stalls selling books and traps etc and an excellent set of talks on subjects related to moths and especially GMS. So make sure you are coming along, we want to see as many people as possible at the event and from as many areas as possible!

Situations Vacant – sorry no wages involved!

As you know, GMS is completely run by volunteers for volunteers and therefore it is people like you who have volunteered to help us organise the scheme as it grows and grows and goes from strength to strength. So, we need help from you with two vacant posts to help the GMS continue to run smoothly and don't worry if you do volunteer and don't have much experience then there are other coordinators who can help you with advice and support. So, what are you waiting for – volunteer now!

GMS News Editor

After 3 years of excellent newsletters as our Newsletter editor, Malcolm Bridge has decided to stand down and just concentrate on his other GMS work as joint SE Coordinator. I'm sure that you will all agree that he has done an excellent job bringing out all these newsletters over the last 3 years – thank you Malcolm. Malcolm has compiled this current newsletter and will also complete the year by producing the week 36 newsletter as well. I'm sure you will want to join me in thanking him for this excellent job he has done.

So, if you want to volunteer then please get in touch as soon as possible and let me or Malcolm know and we will get you to produce the first newsletter in 2012 which will be the Winter Newsletter due out in March 2012. Of course we will give you help and support and can proof read the newsletter before it goes out for you. So, get in touch straight away if you can help, or ask us if you want more details about what is involved, before committing yourself?

GMS North East Area Coordinator

For a similar length of time, Tom Tams has done an excellent job as our NE England Area Coordinator for recorders and records and has done an excellent job in enthusing NE recorders about the scheme and bringing records together. In particular he has been at the forefront in getting recorders to submit records from MapMate. He plans to stand down after sorting out all the 2011 records for the area and we thank him for his excellent work in coordinating things so well. I'm sure that NE recorders will join me in thanking him for the excellent job that he has done.

So therefore we need someone new to take over in looking after the area in sending out newsletters and pulling in records from recorders and enthusing them and looking for possible new recruits. Is this the sort of help that you could give us? We would love to hear from you if it is? Or maybe you would like to find out more details before making up your mind? If so then please contact me or Tom Tams to let

us know of your interest as soon as possible. Ideally we are looking for someone who comes from the North East of England, but do let us know if you come from elsewhere and might like to help? Or maybe you would like to help us in some other way in some other part of GMS? If so then get in touch with me.

For both these vacancies or any other GMS help, please contact Dave Grundy on dgcountryside@btinternet.com as soon as possible

D. Grundy – GMS Coordinator

Porritt's Lists

by David Baker



It does what it says on the cover!

Butterfly Conservation, Yorkshire Branch and Yorkshire Naturalists Union have produced a reprint of George Porritt's records first published between 1883 and 1922. The British checklist by Bradley (2000) has been utilised to enable readers to refer directly to the modern counterparts, as so readily used in identification books and reports.

Sections in this 320 page soft-back include Porritt's life work on butterflies and moths, his contribution to recording, collecting and work on industrial melanism. Photographs of specimens in Porritt's collections, now retained in Kirklees Museums and Galleries, have been used alongside some modern images taken by local amateur lepidopterists. Over 2000 species have been researched by our local stalwarts and there is even a weather summary covering 1800 to 1924.

It may seem like a book only bought by Yorkshiremen for Yorkshiremen but I am sure we have exiles, and even non-Yorkshiremen, all over the country who will be interested in the history of lepidoptera recording across the last two centuries. Copies can be obtained at an excellent thirty pounds (£30) each by contacting GMS coordinator for Yorkshire and Humberside at d.baker99@mypostoffice.co.uk or by going onto the website at www.yorkshirebutterflies.org.uk.

The End of an Era...

by Chris Gibson

23 August 2011 saw my final night trapping in my garden in Dovercourt, Essex, a site at which I had been trapping in one form or another since 1994, and both regularly and consistently (in terms of the light source, a 125W MV bulb with a Robinson trap) since 1997.

The garden

My trapping site was a suburban garden on the edge of Dovercourt, Essex, about 0.15ha in extent, one which we sought to manage and enhance with wildlife in mind, through the provision of food, water and shelter for all forms of wildlife.



Facts and figures

The (preliminary) bare facts:

> 17 years

> 2771 trap nights

- > 1010 lepidoptera species recorded
- > 404612 moths trapped and counted....

Of the species recorded, just 22 were butterflies, and the remainder almost evenly split between micros and macros, although micros were just in the majority.

The reasons why my garden had such an apparently high biodiversity are many and varied. Garden management generally adhered to the principles of ‘gardening with wildlife in mind’, but I have direct evidence of breeding of only a handful of the recorded species. Its location is advantageous: on the edge of town, it is pretty rural, within sight of the sea and the extensive salt marshes of the Walton Backwaters, and not too distant from a range of other habitats, from the heaths and conifer woods of the Suffolk Sandlings to the ancient woodlands of the Tendring peninsula. But the main reason surely is due to the recording and identification effort which has taken place – I tried to identify and count all the moths, including the micros.

The most frequent species recorded in descending order were:

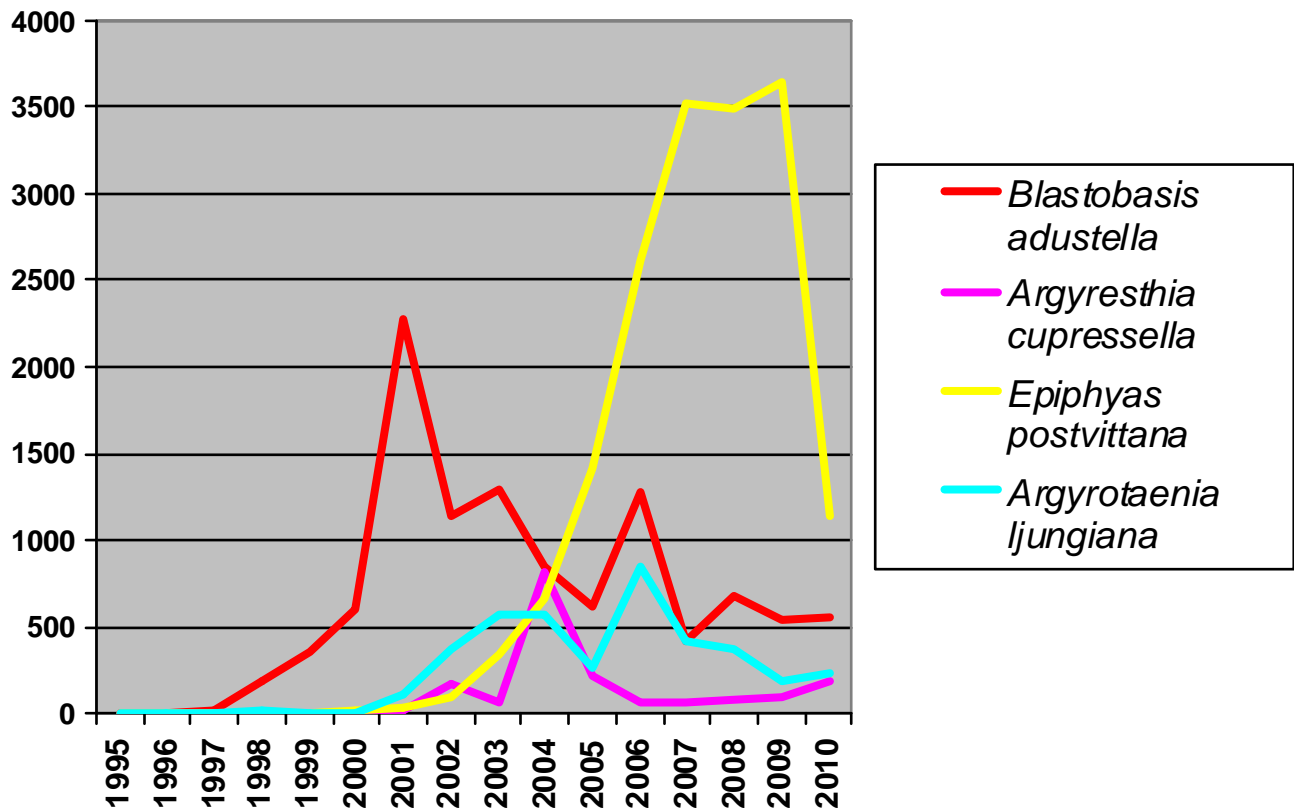
Position	
1	large yellow underwing
2	<i>Chrysoteuchia culmella</i>
3	setaceous Hebrew character
4	common wainscot
5	heart & dart
6	dark arches
7	shuttle-shaped dart
8	lesser/common rustic
9	Vine’s rustic
10	uncertain
11	<i>Epiphyas postvittana</i>
12	<i>Crambus pascuella</i>
13	bright-line brown-eye
14	<i>Blastobasis adustella</i>
15	square-spot rustic

The summed figures mask an awful lot of variation. For example, during the years with an almost consistent amount and type of trapping, the total number of species varied between 423 and 588, while the total catch fluctuated even more markedly, between 14976 and 39301. Much of the fluctuation has obvious causes - the weather, and the timing of non-trapping holiday periods, for example – but a long-term evaluation of the limits of change is useful in helping to interpret the real value of consistent trapping: trends in abundance of particular species, groups of species, and indeed moths overall.

A full evaluation of trends must wait for now, as it will need robust statistical scrutiny, but eyeballing the data is sufficient to identify a couple of points. First in respect of total moth species, there are no obvious trends, and in terms of total catches, annual figures are fairly constant, though with some

suggestion of a downward trend. But of course, this lack of clear trends must be viewed in the context of the enhancement and maturation of the wildlife garden – given the effort I put into it I could have hoped for at least some tangible evidence of a return on my investment!

Of course, some trends are particularly obvious, most notably those species which arrived for the first time during the course of my trapping, and then proceeded to become more-or-less abundant. Typically adventives, the yearly number of four such species is shown below.



These recent colonists typically show a strong peak a few years after colonisation, followed by a decline, perhaps as parasites and pathogens adjust to the novel host. This is shown dramatically by Light-brown Apple Moth *Epiphyas postvittana* which first occurred in the garden as recently as 1999, and in 2009 for the first time achieved top place in the rankings, followed by a substantial population crash in 2010, though this decline may be related to the exceptionally cold preceding winter.

The Best Bits

Or perhaps that should be ‘some of the best bits’: every year had its highlights and its disappointments, and it seems rather unfair to focus on just the few mentioned below. But it is worth anticipating the inevitable questions to tell the world of my best times mothing in the garden.

1. Numerically, the best nights of all were 23 August 1997 (1983 moths, although only 66 species) and 19 July 2006 (154 species, albeit only 965 specimens). These both stick in the mind, the latter for the fact that I needed a whole day to conclude my identifications, and the former for the abundance of just one species: latticed heath. Part of an unprecedented and thus far unrepeated influx (or emergence) of this species into east Essex and south-east

Suffolk, an amazing 387 individuals of this normally uncommon moth the night before grew to a completely incredible 1384 the next day, and of course that is a minimum figure, given that the whole of the trap was a fluttering mass of wings, inside and out, before I actually delved inside.



2. Always memorable are the big game, individually and collectively. Having trapped hundreds of the commoner hawk-moth species, the multiple hauls, of up to 20 Elephants, or eight Privets, or indeed (on a couple of nights) five different species stick long in the mind. And then of course, the rare big game – single Bedstraw and (especially) Death's-head (on 19 August 2002 and 8 July 1998 respectively) – will never be forgotten.



3. The rarest of the rare however was somewhat less spectacular, and it took several weeks to get confirmation after its capture on 7 August 1997. Although small, it was at least distinctive enough for me to identify it tentatively: the montane, Bearberry-feeding *Celypha arbutella*, probably never before recorded definitively in England.
4. But for me, perhaps the very best moment was not entirely unexpected. Fisher's Estuarine Moth has its UK stronghold within 10km of Dovercourt, and the food plant Hog's-fennel grows within 3km of the garden. However, it is such a poor disperser that only a small handful of moths has ever been found more than 20m from a food-plant, and just one example made it into my trap, on 27 September 2008. Having studied and been involved in the conservation of Fisher's Estuarine for many years, that was the final consummation of our relationship.



Fisher's Estuarine moth

Interlopers

Of course moths are not the only creatures attracted to moth traps. Over the years, I have recorded (outside the trap) several species feasting upon the moths which never made it into the trap – bats (four species, flying in the light and occasionally seen to land on the sheet), hedgehogs, frogs, little owls and the early birds, particularly robins and blackbirds.

And then there are the other flying insects which found themselves in the trap, in many cases (the aquatic species) no doubt thinking the light was the moon reflected off water. While I never found time to explore fully the identification of caddis-flies, for example, I always sought to identify the by-catch as far as I could, at least to group, and these data too will hopefully tell an interesting story.

Again many species, or groups, fluctuated widely, with no obvious trends, but there is a suggestion of trends in others: for example, green lacewings, the ground beetle *Harpalus rufipes*, and harlequin ladybird increased, while click beetles (Elateridae), summer chafer *Amphimallon solstitialis*, and the burying beetle *Necrodes littoralis* apparently decreased. Interestingly, three unrelated groups which share some ecological features, most notably a dependence upon aquatic habitats (mayflies, water beetles and to a lesser extent water boatmen) showed a peaked distribution, the peak occurring in the first couple of years of the Millennium. This may seem counter-intuitive: surely, population levels should be highest when it is wettest, whereas populations have been rather low during the past three wet summers? Of course, an alternative explanation is that drier conditions trigger dispersal, and thus increase the propensity to enter the trap.

The colonisation of Britain by the harlequin ladybird *Harmonia axyridis* is now well-documented, along with concerns about the potential ecological impacts this alien species, which habitually feeds upon other ladybirds, may have. The first UK record was reported in September 2004 from Sible Hedingham in Essex. The photo published with this first report enabled me to identify a prior record from my by-catch just a few weeks previously on 21/22 August 2004.

Some of the most dramatic fluctuations in numbers year-on-year are shown by another beetle, the strawberry seed beetle *Harpalus rufipes*. This is a typical, medium-sized ground beetle (Carabidae),

with reddish legs and sometimes yellowish hairs on the black wing-cases. It was unrecorded in the trap until 1998, but has occurred most years since then, with marked peaks of 560 and 1617 in 2003 and 2004. During those peak years, there were several nights when it was so abundant as to be almost a pest, disturbing the intended targets, the moths, making them particularly difficult to count. Indeed on the peak nights, significant numbers of *Harpalus* also entered the house, presumably attracted by indoor lights, something which I never observed at other times. Why these nights and these years of course remains a mystery.

Next steps

More than four hundred thousand moths over 17 years must be able to tell an interesting story, only part of which is captured by my annual moth reports. So now begins the task of serious analysis, looking at fluctuations and trends over a range of time scales, and perhaps also considering more esoteric issues, such as the influence of weather, wind direction, phase of the moon etc on the performance of the trap. This will take time to do it properly, but I hope the results will be sufficiently valuable to get them published and so available for posterity. You have not heard the last from Dove House Cottage...

And finally...

As you all know, moth trapping is addictive, especially when carried out regularly in a place you know well, such as your garden. Its hold on me only grew as the years progressed, as the amassing data started to show interesting trends, and the quest for new species and new identification challenges became ever more difficult.

It is also time-consuming, a sometimes challenging activity to fit around a full-time job and a home life. Now, having moved away and into a top-floor flat, I can see that – time now to take that early morning stroll into work along the river, rediscovering my roots as a birder. And time also to think about analysing and publishing the fruits of my past efforts. Therein lies my key message, one which might resonate with anyone faced with the prospect of a long-running site coming to an end: without this enforced closure, I would probably have trapped moths in my garden until the day (or at least night before) I died. And then what of the however-many million moths which had graced my trap? Yes, the basic data may be captured by the national recording schemes, but no full analysis, and little wider benefit to repay my moths for the nightly interference in their lives. There is a silver lining in every cloud – though I have watched the chat-site longingly in recent days and dreamt of Nonpareils: perhaps I will leave the bathroom window open and the light on tonight!

Dr Chris Gibson

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Our 2011 garden mothing from Bewdley, Worcs

Ian Machin

We had a scattering of Winter records involving December Moth, Winter Moths, Early Moths and Pale-Brindled Beauty.

Trapping on February 11th accounted for Dotted Border, Common Quaker and a few micros. March Moth and Chestnut were new on the 22nd. Thereafter it was a classic early Spring with 10 species nightly, highlights being our first Lead-Coloured Drab, Small-Brindled Beauty, Engrailed, Satellite and up to 8 March Moths.

March began with another Lead-Coloured Drab. Numbers of Common Quakers picked up from the 11th when Clouded Drab and Oak Beauty arrived, followed by Early Grey on the 14th. We then had an amazing run of trapping with record numbers of Spring moths. March 15th was notable for Pine Beauty, Red Chestnut, Grey Shoulder-Knot and Twin-Spotted Quakers. The 20th brought 201 Common Quakers, 34 Small Quakers alongside Satellite, Blossom Underwing, Early Tooth-Striped and Double-Striped Pugs. This was the forerunner to a stunning 21st when 250 Common and 40 Small Quakers came in, with 20 Hebrew Character, 6 Clouded Drab, 8 Early Grey, Oak Nycteoline, Dark Chestnut, Blossom Underwing, Twin-Spotted Quaker, 2 Engrailed, 5 Shoulder Stripe, 7 Oak Beauty and a lovely micro-decorella. High numbers continued to the 25th. New on the 26th were Water Carpet and Early Thorn. Even better were Powdered Quaker, Lunar Marbled Brown and Streamer on the 27th. March macro total was 1,924(1,138 Common Quaker) with 28 species, plus 6 species of micro. A wonderful start to 2011!

Early April was windy and we didn't trap until the 6th when day temperatures warmed up. Brimstone and Brindled Beauty were both new for the year, plus more Blossoms, Early Tooth-Striped, Water Carpet and Lunar Marbled Browns. Micros were subpurpurella and subbistrigella. The 7th brought a lovely Frosted Green, with Pine Beauty and Streamer. We had our 2nd Acleris literana on the 9th alongside Common Pug and Powdered Quaker. A masculella appeared in the greenhouse next to the trap.



We were on holiday thereafter and missed the continued unseasonably warm weather. Returning on the 29th we trapped Waved Umber, Nut-Tree Tussock (picture left), Lime Hawkmoths and Light Brocade, followed by a male Muslin Moth on the 30th.

May 1st saw our only kitten of the year-an Alder, plus Pale Prominent and Pale Tussock, with sulphurella, musculana, freyerella and another masculella. Temperatures improved from the 4th and likewise moth numbers jumped sharply. We had 40 species that night including Poplar Grey, Alder Moth, Knotgrass, Least Black Arches, Dwarf, Ochreous and Oak Tree Pugs. New moths on the 5th were

Common Wave, Foxglove Pug and Rustic Shoulder-Knot plus *Mompha epilobiella* the pick of the micros. There were several notable micros on the 6th-*regiana*, *jungiella*, *germana* and *atricapitana*, all firsts for the garden! A Light Brocade was nice on the 8th. The following evening we had Golden Rod Pug, Little Emerald and a diamondback. The greenhouse scored again on the 10th with *marginana* and *cloacella*, while the trap produced Great Prominent, Orange Footman, White Spotted Pugs, Marbled Brown and Small Phoenix. More year firsts followed on the 11th with Cabbage, Iron Prominent, Peppered, Poplar Hawk and Cream Wave. Highlights of the 12th were Cinnabar and Barred Umber. Warmer conditions on the 15th saw Treble Bar, Clouded Bordered Brindles and Silver Y, plus a distinctive micro-*luculella*. It was calmer on the 19th when Eyed Hawk, Scorched Wing and Freyer's Pug were new, with *ekebladella* and *nubiferana*. A garden first Lesser Treble Bar was recorded on the 20th, and the supporting cast included Light Brocade, Lime and Eyed Hawks, *vulgella* and *leucographella*. Strong winds on the 21st necessitated a calm location and came up with two super moths-*Lychnis* and Large Nutmeg. Two micros were a total surprise-*denticulella* and the scarce *laichartingella*! A Grey Arches was welcome on the 23rd. After a break, we resumed on the 28th in warm, cloudy conditions and were rewarded with Broken Barred Carpet, Common Fanfoot, Northern Spinach and Pale Shouldered Brocade, with *forsterana* and *trimaculana*. The next night we had 80 species including 11 species of Pug! Our favourites were Lobster, May Highflyer, Green Silver Lines, Large Nutmeg, *conjugella*, *giganteana* and another *denticulella*. A female Eyed Hawk reared and released, attracted a male and the pair spent over 30 hours together on the *surfina* (new Latin name-*viagra*!!). We had our lowest numbers of May macros in 5 years trapping and only average numbers of species.

June 1st with warm temperatures brought in Broad- Barred White, Barred Yellow and Shoulder-Striped Wainscot and we had our first *ruficapitella* and *semifulvella*, plus *combinella*, *plumbana* and *parasitella*.

Similar temperatures on the 2nd attracted Small Clouded Brindle, Dusky Brocades, Large Nutmeg, Shears, Lobster (pictured right) and Single-Dotted Wave alongside some more super micros-*forsterella*, *albifrontella*, *atricomella*, *croesella* and *finitimella*.



A garden first Mother Shipton was caught by Laurence in the Conservatory! The nights just got warmer and we recorded Pebble Hook-Tip, Vine's Rustic, Beautiful Golden Y plus a mystery micro which Oliver Wadsworth helped to identify-*rectifasciana*. (It's better in real life than the UK Moths picture!). A cooler 5th brought Brown Rustic, while the 6th had Figure of Eighty, *loeflingiana* and *bonnatella*. Late on the 8th, 100's of moths came in, including Turnip, Poplar Grey and Buff Arches. Heart and Darts began to arrive in unprecedented numbers. The 9th attracted Pale Mottled Willow, Mottled Rustic and Burnished Brass. A cold 10th still accounted for Clouded Brindle, Small Angle Shades, Blotched

Emerald and Buff Tip. Both Dusky and Light Brocade arrived on the 12th with a couple of Sharks. Lacticolella and diffinis were new on the 13th when Gothic was early. June 14th was spectacular with 292 moths of 92 species (incl. 120 Heart and Dart!). Star moth was a garden first Golden Plusia, and plenty of micros...achitana, thrasonella, weirana, consociella, brockeella and semifulvella. We had Beautiful Golden Y and Turnip on the 16th with ocellana. More new arrivals on the 19th - Dinky Shears, Grey Dagger, Short Cloaked Moth and Leek Moth. Hellerella was new on the 21st, likewise a Ruddy Streak on the 22nd with Sandy Carpet, True Lover's Knot and Coxcomb Prominent. The 25/26th of June was probably the busiest spell of 2011. We recorded 128 species (503 moths) on the first evening and 110 species (468 moths) on the second. Highlights were many-Ruddy Carpet, Broom, Miller, Small Elephant Hawk, Green Arches, Bird's Wing, Pine Carpet, Scarlet Tiger, Lilac Beauty and Blue-Bordered Carpet, with leucatella, salicella, repandana, proximella, ochraceella and fraxinella. A Drinker came in on the 28th, a Satin Wave on the 29th and the month ended with 2,527 macros and 706 micros recorded (best June in 5 years trapping), although, once again, numbers of species were only average at best, with some notable absentees which are usually annual.

July began quietly with Shark, Ghost, bistriga, ramella and germana. Then the very warm weather from the 2nd accounted for huge numbers of moths. On the 2nd we had another Ruddy Carpet, Oak Eggar, Double Lobed, Plain Golden Y and a garden first Dark Spectacle. More firsts arrived on the 3rd in the form of Blackneck and Grass Rivulet, plus Small Dotted Buff, Small Emerald, Slender Pug, sticticana, taeniolella and blandella. This was followed on the 4th by an amazing Small Marbled, the 5th county record after Gavin Peplow had 4 in South Worcs two nights earlier!!



We had three Tawny-Barred Angles that night, plus pinella and suavella. Things quietened down on the 5th with just formosanus and pentadactyla of note. Another Lychnis was a surprise on the 7th, plus scabrella. We then had yet another garden first in the form of a Six-Spot Burnet, nectaring on buddleia on the 8th. New moths on the 10th were Black Arches, Large Twin-Spot Carpet and Rusty Dot Pearl. Pronubana and isertana were the best micros of the 11th when we trapped Broad-Barred White and Slender Brindle. There was an apicipunctella on the 12th with Clouded Brindle, two Oak Eggars, July Highflyer and Grey Arches. Three Gothic came in on the 13th plus a Clouded Border. A major surprise on the 14th was our 2nd Lunar-Spotted Pinion with two nice micros-Batia Lunaris and Monochroa

cytisella. Ruby Tigers started to arrive in numbers from the 16th. We had interesting micros on the 19th-coracipennella, flavipennella and acuminatella. July 20th brought Satin Beauty, Drinker, Knotgrass, binaevella, brunichana and another Rusty Dot Pearl. September Thorn and Scarce Silver Lines were welcome additions on the 21st. We recorded 90 species on the 25th with Zelleria hepariella, Tawny-Speckled Pug, Ear Moth and increasing variety and numbers of carpets, plus Small Emerald and Buff Footman. There were a flurry of new and interesting moths at the end of the month: Straw Underwing, Broad-bordered Yellow underwings, Wormwood Pug, Angle-Striped Sallow on the 26th...Waved Black, Orange Swifts, Copper Underwing, Bulrush Wainscot, Double Lobed and phragmitella on the 28th...Narrow-Winged Pug, Barred Chestnut, adpersella, fraternella, unitella, tringipennella and tetraquetra on the 29th...and both Bordered Pug and Beauty on the 30th. July saw relatively high numbers of moths, yet again species lists were well down on the previous two years.

August trapping began on the 4th with overdue Yellow-Barred Brindle, plus Wormwood Pug and Blood Vein. We had aurata on the 5th. Moths dwindled by the 7th, but we still found Lime-Speck Pug and Svensson's Copper Underwing. Once again we recorded a rare migrant-a Ni Moth, on the 11th, a 4th County record and appreciated by many. Yellow Underwing numbers were still way below par, but Square Spot, Flounced and Rosy Rustic numbers increased. We had a good selection of micros on the 11th-clerkella, quadripuncta and paludella. Both Iron and Pale Prominents came in on the 12th, plus Least Yellow Underwing and a garden first azaleella. A Mouse Moth appeared on the 16th, when Vine's Rustics finally arrived in strength. Albistria and Leek Moths were also found. An Old Lady graced the trap on the 19th alongside unexpected Wax moth. A few Six-Striped Rustics were trapped from the 20th, and 2nd generation White-Spotted Pug. After a holiday in the Brecon Beacons we recommenced trapping on the 28th and had good numbers of Feathered Gothics, which continued to the month end. A new micro that night was Stenolechia gemmella. The 29th finally saw some variety with Small Square Spot, Barred Chestnut, Frosted Orange and unseasonal Flame, Ingrailed Clay and Bright-Line Brown-Eye. A garden first Dotted Clay on the 30th. August had the lowest macro numbers for 4 years and the species list was very poor.

Some macro species have obviously enjoyed bumper numbers in 2011-Heart and Dart, Buff Ermine, Uncertain, Treble Lines, Double Square Spot and Light Arches.



However more than half of our annual 250 species of macros have seen lower numbers this year and some have been absent or nearly so-Angle Shades (left), Chinese Character,Purple Thorn, Swallow Prominent,Oak Hook-Tip, Dusky Thorn. Most of the carpets and other Geos fared badly(some better 2nd gen in August) and where were the Large Yellow Underwings? 2011 has nonetheless brought us 11 new macros and 69 new micros to take our garden list to just over 700. I can recommend a well-stocked open greenhouse which produced many super micros during the day and towards dusk during warm conditions.

NIMBY moth-trapping, or..... Someone else's patch!

by David Baker

For four of the last five years I have been fortunate to be able to visit a couple of friends who were holidaying in Scotland and to spend 3 nights per year moth-trapping on someone else's patch. The initial 2 years were spent way up at Kinlochewe and I relied on the traps taken up by my pals, my own 410 mile journey being by railway. However, the last two years were down south in the Wood of Cree area, Dumfries and Galloway, much more within my driving distance and I was able to take my own trap in the car-boot, still arriving for a nine o'clock breakfast cuppa.

The traps were set within a garden and would be a great place to spend a year filling in report sheets for Garden Moth Scheme. Dream on, David..... What does one hope to see when well away from home; certainly new moths or moths not regularly seen around ones own locality. So what did the initial trap opening bring this year: Oh dear, plenty of Large Yellow Underwings, Setaceous Hebrew Characters etc., plus a smattering of moths not often seen at home but nothing new. The lads said it had been their poorest night yet, well they would, wouldn't they.



But we did find **Dotted Clay** and **Beautiful Golden Y**, followed by **V-Pug** and **Peach Blossom**.



All very nice, but nothing new! The day was spent around the area looking for any day-flying insects, including dragonflies and butterflies but an unexpected find came next and under unusual circumstances. Whilst looking for a convenient spot to relieve myself of the morning's Earl Grey tea an **Emperor Moth larva** was found, and thankfully missed.



Another moorland moth which turned up was the **True Lover's Knot**, which believe it or not has been a visitor to my semi urban garden in Tadcaster on 3 occasions since 2004.

The following two days brought a large selection of moths, some in large numbers, including many Clouded Borders and Large Emeralds. However, for me, the best of the moths which I had already seen, albeit rarely, were the **Purple Bar**, **Bordered Beauty**, **Grey Arches** and **Minor Shoulder-knot**.



I must assume that I am one of the few people who see many more of the Red Data Book species, the Dark Bordered Beauty, than the “common” Bordered Beauty which has been a very irregular visitor to my moth-traps, wherever they are run.

On our second day searching the moors for other wildlife we were rewarded with sightings of several **Scotch Argus** butterflies on a blustery, but reasonably bright day. Not an easy subject to photograph

but after traipsing across much rough ground eventually we managed to get a shot or two. Even without using mirrors??



When in Scotland one hopes to find some particularly Scottish moths, so what did I find in the trap but a **Welsh Wave**, which according to the “Provisional Atlas of the UK’s Larger Moths” is more prevalent in the uplands of Northern England and Scotland than in Wales. My only complete newcomer was the **Dotted Carpet**, a moth not on our Yorkshire list and more likely seen across the western side of England and throughout Scotland.



After three great days in The Wood of Cree area it was time to check the final night’s trapping. Very much the same result except for an unusual form of a **Tawny-barred Angle**, (f. *nigrofulvata*). It was quite worn but very different to the light form I have seen back at home.



But, finally, there came a reminder that it was time to get myself home! Deep in the trap was a lonely **Old Lady**.

What a great three days, it is well worth taking a moth trap onto someone else's patch. Has anyone any similar experiences? I am sure other GMS members would be interested.

David Baker August 2011

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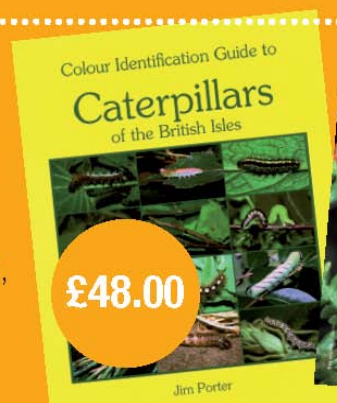
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Last words – the GMS News editor, Malcolm Bridge

Once again, my thanks to those of you who have contributed articles to this GMS News and made my job of editor a joy and a pleasure. Why then do I feel the need to stand down after the next and final GMS News of 2011? Like many of you I do a number of jobs and, as BC butterfly recorder for Surrey/SW London, I have embarked on a major project to produce a new county atlas for 2013. I need to commit my modest energies towards that goal and I am cutting back, at least for the next couple of years, some of my other commitments. I hope that this makes some kind of sense.