

WARWICKSHIRE BRANCH MOTH EQUIPMENT

2009 - A SENSE OF NORMALITY RESTORED



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Alan Prior & Val Weston

*Photographs by Keith Warmington
Cover Photograph by Alan Prior*



Shoulder Stripe



Lozotaeniodes formosanus



Scorched Wing



Magpie



Early Tooth-striped



Buff-tip



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WARWICKSHIRE BRANCH MOTH EQUIPMENT 2009- A Sense Of Normality Restored

Introduction

We saw the slow improvement that began last year continue after the low of 2007. Generally, it was a fairly average kind of year apart from an extremely disappointing July. Luckily, the only good nights for mothing in July seemed to be the Saturdays and so we did well on those nights, but the wind and rain prevented any extra sessions from being viable. An early end to the years recording was the only other disappointment, due to the constant low-pressure systems crossing the country. Otherwise, it was another enjoyable year with plenty of good moths recorded. Enjoy the read!

February

With winter holding firm throughout January, it wasn't until mid-February that we could venture out mothing. It couldn't have worked out better either. The Garden Moth Scheme AGM was being held at Chaddesley Corbett Village Hall this year and so, on the off chance, we loaded some equipment into the car just in case we could pop round the corner and do Chaddesley Wood afterwards. With unusual light winds being the order of the day we decided to have a go. Martin Kennard and Roger Ward also decided to run traps and so as soon as the meeting was drawing to a close, we took the short drive to the wood to set up. Things looked promising on the way as we saw some moths already on the wing. As soon as the four traps were switched on the moths came flooding in. It appeared they'd been waiting for this night as well. The only disappointing part of the night was that only Dave Grundy, Ian Machin and Mervyn Needham decided to call in on their way home from the meeting. All those who couldn't spare half an hour or so really missed out, as over 600 moths were recorded of twelve species. Most numerous were ***Tortricodes alternella*** (269) and **Pale Brindled Beauty** (231). **Early Moth** was a highlight and we also had good numbers of **Small Brindled Beauty** (40). After such a promising start it was only a couple of days later before Alan ventured out again. This time, Hilary and Geoff Harvey joined him. Martin then arrived, after he'd finished work, to complete the line-up. Alan's project this year was to record Waverley Wood and that's where he, Hilary and Geoff set their traps. Martin decided to revisit the adjoining Weston Wood that proved to be so good last year. All the traps were very busy and, as at Chaddesley, ***Tortricodes alternella*** and **Pale Brindled Beauty** were largest in number. Amongst more than 400 moths of eleven species recorded, **March Moth** numbers were on the rise and we still had plenty of **Spring Usher**. A week later and Alan and Martin were out mothing again. This time to the under-recorded, (at this time of year), Tiddesley Wood. It was a nice cloudy, mild night with little wind and the traps were busy once again. Oliver Wadsworth had joined us as the lights had been switched on.

He hadn't thought of mothing in February before and was surprised by the abundance of winged life that continued to enter the traps all evening. An excellent range of spring moths were recorded amongst the 20 species. The first **Yellow Horned** and **Shoulder-stripe** of the year were amongst the almost 500 moths recorded. The highlight though had to be the superb **Dotted Chestnut** that Martin had in one of his actinic traps.

March

The first official visit of the year to Chaddesley Wood was met with an excellent turnout of recorders. Val and Hilary had a wander up the track to see if it was driveable and they decided it was, with care. After much discussion it was decided in what order people should drive up the track, turn round and be able to park without blocking anyone who would be leaving early. With everyone happy, the arrangements were executed and the traps were set up and switched on. The weather was reasonably mild and so we expected a good night. Events took a turn for the worse when a particularly late arrival threw all the previous arrangements into confusion as he'd driven too far up the track to turn round without inconveniencing others. His impatience to leave caused immense problems as Martin, who attempted to accommodate his request, ended up getting his car stuck on an obscured tree stump. It took over an hour to free the car so we could all go home. The situation got worse later on, as Martin discovered the tree stump had caused some damage to the car and he ended up with an extremely costly repair bill. The moral of this story is that event meeting times are made to avoid this sort of nightmare scenario and make sure everyone has an enjoyable experience. So, please get to the appointed place at the correct time and help avoid this sort of unfortunate story from being repeated. Oh! And the moths put on a good show with 23 species being recorded. *Amblyptilia acanthadactyla*, **Oak Beauty** and another **Dotted Chestnut** were amongst them.

The time of year had come when Patrick Clement gets enthusiastic about mothing again and so after his phone call Alan was out again. Uffmoor Wood was the venue the following day. Alan arrived just as Patrick was unlocking the gate and they were soon setting up the traps. Patrick's were slightly more sheltered and so he was expected to get more moths. However, it wasn't expected that they would be mainly **March Moth** as he ended up with 188! **Early Tooth-striped** was sighted for the first time this year and Alan managed to get only the second recorded **Small Brindled Beauty** for Uffmoor. They were also both happy to get a **Pale Pinion** amongst the 23 species recorded.

It was over to Wyre Forest Visitor Centre for the next trip. The spring indoor social meeting provided an opportunity to run a couple of traps near the centre. Setting up in daylight we didn't foresee the problems we'd cause later because of where we'd situated the traps. Some of the people who'd attended the meeting came and had a look in our traps, but as it had been indoors they hadn't brought any torches and kept disappearing into a ditch whilst walking between the traps. Thankfully, the ditch was dry and wasn't that deep and so everyone could have a laugh about it. Thirteen species were recorded and as expected **Small** and **Common Quaker** were the most numerous.

Another social night was next as we went over to Ray Healey's 'wilderness' at Brandon. Chris Johnson and Martin joined us on not a particularly good night for mothing due to a nagging easterly breeze. However, Ray's conservatory is always welcoming on a cold night. We all had a good laugh as Martin managed to plug in to the house and set up a trap in the Spinney, which seems like miles away on the other side of a field. He was only able to do this by using Jack Watkins old equipment, which, was kindly donated by his widow, Margaret, to be used by his old mothing friends. We are absolutely sure Jack would have seen the funny side of this and delighted that his legendary cable reels are still in regular use. It wasn't too much of a surprise that we only managed to attract nine species to the traps on such a cold night. The good news was that **March Moth** was a new species for the site! The bad news came later, as Ray decided age was catching up with him and so couldn't carry on mothing safely. We shall miss the regular trips over to Brandon but hope to be able to do the odd night here and there. We'd like to thank Ray for his outstanding hospitality and company over the last couple of years. The following night we paid a visit to Crown East Wood. We feel guilty about not having been here as regularly as we should have over the last couple of years due to other commitments. For this reason we invited Oliver along to see if he could record it more often, as he lives locally. The wood owners, Richard and Carol Moore, also joined us for a less windy but clearer night than yesterday. The four traps that were set up produced almost 400 moths of fourteen species. Again, **Small** and **Common Quaker** had the highest counts with **Early Tooth-striped** being a first record for the site. Patrick's enthusiasm for mothing hadn't waned as it was going to be a cloudy night and so Alan joined him at Uffmoor again on the last day of the month. However, Patrick's enthusiasm did dampen as he saw the clear skies that greeted his arrival at the wood! When Alan showed up, Patrick was still having a good old moan about the incompetence of weather forecasters. We always ignore them and look out of the window! The forecast cloud did finally arrive and with it a large influx of **Oak Beauty**. In the end, 24 species were recorded with *Eriocrania semipurpurella* and *Agonopterix ocellana* amongst the micros and both **Early** and **Purple Thorn** being two of the macros. At least *A. ocellana* was new for the wood and Patrick left for home with a smile!

April

Another clear night began the new month, but Alan still went mothing! This time at Ryton Meadows where Martin arrived just before Alan locked the gate. Martin had a spot in mind where he wanted to go and disappeared, while Alan went up 'Scrub Hill' and searched for somewhere sheltered from the traditional northerly breeze! Despite the conditions all the sheltered traps did OK and almost 300 moths of 27 species were recorded. *Eriocrania chrysolepidella*, *Eriocrania cicatricella* and *Eriocrania sangii* were all found along with *Semioscopis avellanella* amongst the micros. **Streamer**, **Brindled Beauty** and **Red Chestnut** were some of the macros. The most notable was a huge eruption of **Lead-coloured Drab** that totalled 57 by the end of the night!

A few days later and it was Chaddesley Wood time again. Another good turnout meant plenty of traps, which were quite widely spread. Val's 'tea shop' was certainly going to be well used tonight with all the walking required to complete a round of the traps. Everybody managed at least one tour and the effort was rewarded, as there was always a different species to see. A total of 26 species were found with *Ocnerostoma freisei* and *Diurnea fagella* being a couple of the micros. **Frosted Green, Water Carpet** and **Lunar Marbled Brown** were some of the macros.

The following evening Alan joined the search for **Barred Tooth-striped** at Cold Knapp Wood. As there were plenty of traps he decided to just use a torch and a net. This led to him nearly netting a startled Dunnock as he shook one Privet bush! Most of the site was covered one way or another and the weather was good. After the initial search, Steve Whitehouse provided a slice of entertainment as he managed to walk in to a pond! I don't imagine the newts enjoyed it either, Steve! However, after everyone putting in a lot of time and effort, none of the target species were forthcoming. The most notable moth found amongst the 20 or so species was a **White-marked** that Dave Grundy caught. It was the most easterly record ever in Worcestershire and nowhere near its known sites.

Good Friday arrived and we made the tortuous journey up the M6 to Widnes. We made the kick-off between Widnes and Leigh with seconds to spare. It proved a bad afternoon for the home team as they managed to lose the game 10 –8 in the last minute. Anyway, it meant our friend Helen would probably leave work in the executive boxes a bit earlier and we could get back to her house and set up a trap in the garden. It proved to be a drizzly night and we only managed to get four species recorded. Even so, we duly sent our records off to the appropriate county recorder. We received a message back that we had actually sent them to the wrong county as the trap had been in South Lancashire and not Cheshire as we'd assumed! We also found out that three of the species we had were newly recorded for that 10k square and only **Hebrew Character** had been seen before. The new ones being *Diurnea fagella*, **Early Thorn** and **Common Quaker**.

Easter Sunday and a trip to Waverley Wood was made. With everybody else busy, it was just the two of us who arrived to find pretty good weather and so the night had promise. We got off to a nice start, as a **Streamer** was first to arrive. In the end **Purple Thorn**, surprisingly, proved to be the most numerous species. We had good numbers of **Pine Beauty** and **Dark Chestnut** was a first for the wood amongst the 22 species we recorded.

Alan managed to talk Patrick into joining him at Tiddesley Wood for the last trip of the month. Harry Green, who'd come to give Tony Simpson a key to the gate, met them when they arrived. The 'key hand over ceremony' was similar to being given the key to the door when you're a youngster! However Tony had recently retired! Harry said his farewells and the others headed off into the wood to set up the traps. After the traps were switched on, it was time for a catch up chat, as the evening got off to a slow start due to clear skies. On the way back up a mighty hill to Tony's trapping area we got quite an interesting sight. The light he'd hung over a sheet was going on and off. It gave the impression that the moths were holding a disco in our absence! The truth was that his generator was running out of petrol. Not quite as entertaining!

The moths did eventually come in and we were all surprised by how many species we ended up with. Amongst the 39 species were *Digitivalva pulicariae*, **Mocha**, **Chocolate-tip**, **Orange Footman**, **Flame Shoulder** and **Powdered Quaker**. On his way out of the wood, Alan found the car had developed an annoying rattle. It drove OK and after stopping several times on the way home, eventually found out that the shock absorbers were shot. The only real surprise was that it had taken this long for them to snap, as we do drive over some pretty rough ground on occasion!

May

The month began with a return to Chaddesley Wood for the monthly session. Another good turnout meant plenty of traps to visit. The time went really quickly and it was soon 2 a.m. and time to pack up. That's when Martin appeared and said he needed help pushing his car again, as he was stuck in a bit of mud. After a quick shove the car was on its way and we could all get back to counting. At least there was nobody else to blame this time and no damage either! With all the traps contributing something different a very pleasing 69 species were recorded. *Semioscopis steinkellneriana* and *Pammene argyrana* were a couple of the micros and **Barred Hook-tip**, **Golden-rod Pug**, **Barred Umber**, **Silver Cloud** and **Nut-tree Tussock** (which was new for the wood) were amongst the macros.

With the weather not very good, Alan decided to go and join Dave at his Wyre Forest session. He took some equipment but didn't really have much intention of using it. There was a huge turnout despite the weather and organising all the traps took a while. Eventually, Roger decided he wanted to run his trap and so Alan offered him the use of the generator. Alan also put a trap up 'to keep Roger's company!' It was difficult to find anywhere sheltered from the biting wind and they finally settled on the Great Bog area. Once set up, they also enjoyed watching a pair of Woodcock roding around as the light faded. You normally only see one Woodcock surveying its territory, but the sight of two flying together without squabbling appeared quite unusual. As there were 22 traps set out, time allowed only one tour.

It was quite a slow night due to the conditions, but Roger and Alan were pleasantly surprised that they'd done OK when they finally returned to their traps. Almost 50 species were seen in the end with *Pseudotelphusa scallella* and *Acleris literana* being two of the micros and **Scorched Wing**, **Waved Umber**, **Grey Birch** and **Pale-shouldered Brocade** amongst the macros.

A couple of days later Alan headed over to Ryton Meadows. The usual combination of clear skies and a stiff breeze greeted his arrival. It was so bad, that to get any shelter, one trap ended up in Ryton Wood with the other on the edge of the meadows. A slow but steady night resulted in 29 species being recorded. Both *Caloptilia robustella* and *Phyllonorycter harrisella* were new micros for the meadows. **Purple Bar**, **Seraphim**, **Great Prominent** and **Treble Lines** were some of the macros seen.

The weather was still poor over a week later and the usual mid-May dip in moths was taking its toll on Alan. He decided to join Dave on his scheduled night at Bannam's Wood to break the monotony. Dave had his usual five traps set out and Alan decided to run an actinic.

The six traps really struggled and they didn't even get 50 moths between them. It was an entertaining night though, as Dave was trying out a new stool and he kept sinking in it. With bits also falling off it, this particular stool was considered a complete failure, although the reaching of that conclusion proved amusing to the onlooker! A poor tally of 21 species was the result of their efforts with *Prays fraxinella* and *Syndemis musculana* being a couple of the micros and **Chinese Character**, **Clouded Silver** and **Brown Rustic** three of the macros.

Two days later the weather had improved a little and Alan went over to Waverley Wood to do the monthly trap. It was a vast improvement on the result at Bannam's Wood as he managed to record 52 species and had over 200 more moths with four fewer traps. A pretty successful night produced new records for the wood of *Elachista rufocinerea*, *Lobesia reliquana* and *Epinotia subocellana* amongst the micros. **Peach Blossom**, **Ochreous Pug**, **Pale Oak Beauty** and **Marbled Brown** were some of the macros.

Patrick decided to reappear with another visit to Uffmoor Wood and so Alan, of course, joined him. Thankfully there was no moaning about the weather this time, as it was a nice mild, cloudy night. Patrick had trouble with the gate and couldn't get it open, so plan B was put into operation and a different entrance was used. It was even more sheltered here and so it worked out well.

The traps were busy and after a couple of tours Patrick decided to pack up and head for home. It was getting light before Alan had finished counting and did the same. A respectable 79 species recorded was the final result. The micros were starting to grow in number and *Bucculatrix demaryella*, *Phyllonorycter cerasicolella*, *Glyphipterix fuscoviridella* and *Schreckensteinia festaliella* were amongst them. A migrating **Painted Lady** put in an appearance in one of Patrick's traps and **Small White Wave**, **Square Spot**, **Lime Hawk-moth** and **Green Silver-lines** were some of the macro moths

Our first visit to Middleton Hall for the year proved to be an excellent one. We had the usual warm welcome from Bob and Fen, the caretakers, who opened up the usual places for us. Keith and Heather Warmington had arrived early, to set up the gazebo in preparation for the weekends bird fair event, as well as their own trap. Others joining the moth recording effort were Hilary, Geoff, Roger, Martin and Chris. It made for a nice range of traps to wander round in between tea breaks! With the clear skies, it took ages to get dark this evening and so the tearoom was especially welcome. Once the lights were on, Val was busy getting moths in pots and labelled to show off at the weekends event. As it approached 4 a.m. it was felt that Val better get home for her traditional two hours sleep before returning! Martin and Roger were still counting and so for the first time ever we were not the last to leave the hall! They knew the routine well enough to lock up behind them before they left. The night's totals were over 500 moths of 114 species. *Stigmella salicis*, *Isotrias rectifasciana* and *Epinotia demarniana* were a few of the micros. **Figure of Eighty**, **May Highflyer** and **Treble-bar** were amongst the macros. Val was especially pleased that we'd managed to catch four species of **Hawk-moth** (**Lime**, **Eyed**, **Poplar** and **Elephant**), as they would go down well with the public tomorrow.

The moths put on a great display at the fair and the Hawk-moths behaved impeccably for the hundreds of photos that were taken of them throughout the event. Val had to leave a little early, as she had to get the car back for Alan to go out mothing again. He was joining Dave Brown's night at Nelson's Quarry. Familiar faces from the previous night, Roger and Martin also turned up. With the Warwickshire Moth Group also in evidence there was no shortage of traps, only space! Alan decided to run just one trap with Roger also plugging in to the same generator. It was another clear, cool night and things got off to a slow start. As usual, it would be down to Alan and Martin to record any micro moths on these events and so they had a wander round them, while our leader and some of the others had disappeared to a local hostelry. As Alan returned to the car for 'lunch' he overheard a disappointed comment about there being no Hawk-moths. Luckily, Alan knew there was a **Lime Hawk-moth** in one of Martin's traps and so pointed them in that direction. They were grateful and stayed around long enough to see an **Eyed Hawk-moth** fly into another trap. So, more satisfied customers! It was after 5 a.m. before Alan, with a lot of help from Roger, locked up and was on his way home. Despite the cool conditions, a reasonable 63 species were recorded. All nineteen species of micro were new for the site and two of them *Cnephasia communana* and *Dichrorampha aeratana* were new for Alan! **Light Feathered Rustic** was an obvious highlight, as it was Dave's target for the night. Also **Shears**, **Obscure Wainscot** and a deluge of **Rustic Shoulder-knot** near the end were memorable.

June

The month began with a visit to a new site at the request of Mike Slater. He got us permission to record Bubbenhall Wood. The list for this wood stood at barely one hundred species most of which were from a visit in 1997. So plenty of scope for improvement! Mike met Alan and Martin, who was curious himself to see the place, at the gate after retrieving them from 50 yards short of where they should have been and showed them round. The wood seemed similar to the surrounding ones and so should provide some decent mothing. The more impressive site was across the road. Bubbenhall Meadows looked superb from the gate and considering it's been left to its own devices since it ceased being quarried only a couple of years ago, seems to have enormous potential. So after Mike left us to it, Martin decided to run a trap in there while Alan did the wood as originally planned. It was a reasonable night weather-wise although there was a bit of a breeze. Martin packed up around midnight, as he had work in the morning, while Alan stayed until the first sign of daylight was visible. A total of 48 species were recorded, 30 of which were new for the site. *Coleophora albicosta*, *Carpatolechia proximella* and *Udea olivalis* were three of the 'new' micros while **Sandy Carpet**, **White Ermine** and some very fresh **Green Arches** were also new records for Bubbenhall. A disappointing night at Chaddesley Wood was next. Only Dave Grundy, Martin, Roger and us braved the awful weather. Mervyn and Rose did put in appearance and managed to find a cute Vole under a metal sheet in Black Meadow across the road.

Dave was the only one mad enough to drive up the track, as it was soaking wet. Thankfully, Martin took no chances this time and stayed just inside the gate with the rest of us! With the weather getting worse, it was decided to pack up around 1 a.m. and it didn't take long. A miserable 114 moths of 32 species were recorded between everyone. A couple of decent micros were ***Ectoedemia albifasciella*** and ***Ptycholomoides aeriferanus*** while the macro highlight were the two **Devon Carpet**.

Alan was so devastated by the previous night that he ran away to his Mums in Essex! Not really, it was just the usual trip to help with this and that. He'd asked his Mum to run a Heath Trap the previous night and so was interested to see what she'd caught. Unfortunately, she forgotten to put egg boxes in it and so it wasn't a particularly taxing count. At least there were some moths in it! The first night was clear and cool with 24 species being recorded. Not bad compared to last night in Chaddesley! Alan had great difficulty in identifying one of them and it took ages to get a correct result. Thanks to Roger Ward and Roy Ledbury who both agreed on a **Nutmeg**. Being very variable and not a species we come across very often, it was no surprise we needed help.

Most of the following night heavy rain was around but it kept the temperature up and the back garden was sheltered. The species count went up to 34 with **Treble Brown Spot** and **Miller** being a couple of them.

The last night was about as good as it gets. The weather was cloudy and mild with no wind - perfect! Alan was busy all night checking both traps for new arrivals, one in each of the front and back gardens. On one trip out to the front garden Alan turned a corner to see what looked like a small bird flapping on the ground near the Heath Trap. He rushed over to see what it was. On inspection it turned out to be a moth and panic ensued as he said to himself "I'll need the big pot for that". By the time one large enough had been found, he returned to find that the moth had settled down. It now adorns the cover of this tome! Alan was very glad to find out that some idiot jumping around a cul-de-sac at 2:30 a.m. trying to catch a moth hadn't disturbed the neighbours. A **Privet Hawk-moth** doesn't cause such a flap – sorry couldn't resist it – further south as it's relatively common, but it was only the second one Alan had ever seen. As dawn arrived the final tally was 80 species. It proved to be the best nights mothing he'd had at his Mums. Other highlights were provided by ***Argyresthia cupressella***, ***Coleophora striatipennella*** and **Thistle Ermine** amongst the micros and **Rosy Footman**, **Heart & Club** and **White-point** by the macros.

Little did he realise that on his return to the Midlands an even more spectacular night awaited a couple of days later. A night that he'd been dreaming of for five years! A cloudy, warm and windless night at Ryton Meadows! Mike met us at the gate, as we needed to know exactly where the white clover was to be found on the meadows. There was a particular target species in mind as we were taken to the best spot. Martin, Hilary and Geoff joined us for what proved to be a truly memorable night. Martin was the one who surrounded the clover while the rest of us spread out on Scrub Hill. With no wind to worry about it made a nice change not having head for shelter. With all the traps up and running it was time for a tea-break before doing the first round. Refreshed, we arrived at Hilary's first trap. We were there quite a while as it already contained more than 50 species!

The other traps were similar and getting fuller by the second. We only had time to do one tour before it was tally time. Alan went and had a quick look in Martin's traps while Hilary and Geoff began to try and count their first trap. When Alan returned, he found Hilary still reeling from finding fourteen **Elephant Hawk-moths** in the first trap! She was in need of help to cope with the other trap and so Alan helped before starting on our own. The last bulb went off at 5:30 a.m. long after daylight had appeared. When the results came in we were amazed to find out that well over 2,000 moths had been recorded of a superb 175 species. As for the target species of *Coloephora frischella*, Martin had success in confirming two individuals. Other notable micros were *Apotomis capreana*, *Ancylis diminutana* and **Ringed China-mark**. Some of the new macros for the site were **Scallop Shell**, **Alder Moth**, **Dark Dagger** and **Clouded Brindle**. It turned out that around half the species recorded at the meadows for the year were seen on this one night!

A break was certainly required after that night and so it proved for Alan. However, Val wasn't so lucky as she was due at Tudor Grange Park in Solihull to help set up the stand at Environmental Day with Keith and Heather. A couple of Hawk-moths from last night also made the journey and proved to be the 'stars of the show'. How Val copes running the tombola and dealing with the public after getting no sleep, only she knows! It's a certainty that the moths appreciate the good publicity she gets for them, as they always provide great interest.

It wasn't until the following week when Dave Grundy arrived to drive them both over to the heart of the Black Country for a night's mothing that Alan was out again. Dave had been contracted to run three moth recording nights at Wrens Nest National Nature Reserve. With it being an urban site, Dave always feels more comfortable having company and the help is welcome as well. One of the Rangers, Anna, was waiting to greet us to finalise details of where we were going. It was going to be a bit of a carry to the recording site. It was great to get some help from other Rangers and some of the 'Friends of Wrens Nest' group so all the equipment got to the right place. Some of them also had a go at putting the traps together, which was quite entertaining. With a little guidance they did manage to complete them eventually. The moths were slow in arriving at first, due to the clear skies but Dave kept his 'audience' interested with his mothing tales. Thankfully, moths did start coming in and most people saw enough to be impressed before heading for home. Some cloud did come over in the middle of the night and things improved so the final tally was just over 100 species. Amongst the micros were *Deltaornix torquillella*, *Coleophora trifolii* and *Platyptilia gonodactyla* whilst the macros included **Swallow Prominent**, **Sycamore** and **Marbled White-spot**. Our next trip was down to Slimbridge WWT Centre. There have been a few changes and our good friend Neil Woodward has moved on to pastures new. Luckily, we know Pete Cranswick who is a keen mother and works for the Trust. We were hoping that we would be able to carry on recording, when we could, as well as help out on official moth nights as we had before. We were hoping that we could encourage the same arrangement to continue by proving to the newer people that we didn't cause any problems and could be trusted on site overnight. A visit to Slimbridge also gave us an opportunity for local mother, Steve Chappell, to take us on the short trip to his Dads place where we'd been asked to record next month, as we'd not been there before.

So after setting up in our usual spot, we had enough time to do that before switching on. Pete got a lift with Steve and his partner Joan while we followed closely behind. Steve's Dad, Richard and his wife Ennis greeted us when we arrived. After a quick tour of an impressive variety of different habitats we ended up in a hide. It was extremely difficult to drag Val out of the hide, as she was enthralled watching nine Fox cubs playing just in front of the window. However, we needed to get back to the Centre and switch the traps on. The visit was well worthwhile, as we now had an idea of where and how many traps we could accommodate next month. On our way we had to stop a take a quick look at a Little Owl sitting on a telephone wire, as we hadn't seen one of those for years. Finally, the lights were on and due to the clear skies and being surrounded by water, the temperature began to fall. Pete and Joan then disappeared to their respective homes while Steve stayed with us for a few hours. While we were standing by one trap chatting, something shot out of the reed bed and crashed into Steve's leg! After realising its error, it returned to the reeds just as quick. We don't know who got the biggest shock, Steve or the Rat! With the temperature still dropping, Steve decided to head for home and we began counting up. Considering the weather, we hadn't done too badly and managed to record 58 species. *Phtheochroa inopiana* and *Donacaula forficella* were a couple of the brave micros with **Barred Straw**, **Lychnis**, **Light Arches** and **Cream-bordered Green Pea** amongst the macros. The annual event at Hartlebury Common was next. It normally drags in recorders from all over the place, as it's such a unique site. Tonight was no different with traps spread over a large part of the Common. It was a nice cloudy, mild night and there were plenty of moths to keep people busy. With so many traps there was no chance of getting round them all and you just do what you can. Being a place that has public access at all times it's never secure. Some recorders had already left and the rest of us just thinking of calling it a night when we heard shouting coming from somewhere on the Common. A couple of the local degenerates had deigned to pay us a visit. Alan was on his own having something to eat before tallying started when our unwelcome visitors wandered past. They then hung around at the car park exit before throwing stones at the nearest vehicle. They managed to smash the back window, before running off feeling very proud of themselves. Alan didn't recognise who the car belonged to but decided to stay in case they had another go. Thankfully, the car's alarm had brought Val and Roger back to the car park to find out what was going on. They told Alan to go and count up while they called the Police. As people slowly drifted back with their traps from the Common, the details of what had happened were retold. It turned out that the vehicle was a courtesy car, which is why nobody recognised it. With the spirit of the night ruined, everybody who was left did the best job they could at packing up as quickly as possible. In all the confusion we never did find out if the Police did actually arrive or not. Thankfully, these events are a rare occurrence, but it does remind you that you always have to be alert on sites with open access. It was a sad end to what had proved to be a very good night otherwise, with over 1,600 moths of 167 species recorded. With so many good moths it's hard to pick out some to mention. Amongst the micros *Opostega salaciella*, *Coleophora pyrrhulipennella* (a species Alan had been wanting to see for ages!), *Aroga velocella* and *Pempelia palumbella* were found.

Some of the macros were **Satin Wave**, **Small Seraphim**, **Beautiful Brocade** and probably everybody's highlight, two **Dotted Border Wave**.

A request from Mervyn sent Alan on a different sort of moth night. As it was in Warwickshire he felt a duty to attend. A teacher at Alcester Grammar School that Mervyn knows runs a sort of 'end of term wildlife experience'. The school's playing field borders the River Arrow Local Nature Reserve and the students do various wildlife related activities based from there. Mervyn was waiting to direct Alan to the right place and once he'd negotiated his way around the tents, parked the car. A brief look round the area was undertaken before deciding where to put the traps. With so much water around and clear skies, Alan knew it was going to be a cool night. He thought that keeping away from the water would be a good idea and so the hedge around the playing fields would be about the best place tonight. As Mervyn and Alan set up the traps the students, some of their parents and the teachers went on a bat walk. By the time they returned there were some moths to show them. They were all very interested as there was a nice selection from **Small Magpie** to **Swallow-tailed Moth**. Just after midnight most of the 'crowd' had either returned to their tents or gone home, so Mervyn decided to pack up. Alan however, would be there until it was light again. This surprised some of the teachers who doubted that they would see him again before they left on their dawn chorus walk. As expected, the night was cold and became misty by first light. Considering he was trapping on a sports field, on a cold night, a very respectable 73 species was a good result for his efforts. Some nice species had arrived while everyone else had been asleep and so **Buff Arches**, **Peppered Moth** and **Burnished Brass** impressed the early risers. One of the students even took a **Buff-tip** on the dawn chorus walk with her! A very enjoyable night and certainly more relaxing than Hartlebury turned out to be.

Summer finally arrived at the end of June and a trip to Waverley Wood was overdue. Val was undecided about whether to go or not but she did in the end. An extremely busy night started with a bit of time for counting the **Gold Swift** on territories at dusk. Between us we managed to get up to an impressive 54 before the lights went on. A clear spell in the middle of the night gave us a short break from the myriad of moths that kept arriving. As the cloud returned so did the volume of moths entering the traps. It took a long time to count everything and at the end there was a moth flying round that we didn't recognise. Val managed to eventually pot it and we took it home for later identification, as we were exhausted! Almost a thousand moths had been counted of 134 species. The moth Val potted at the end revealed itself to be a **Rannoch Looper**, which was a county first (along with another caught elsewhere on the same night)! However, Val was more impressed by the two **Lilac Beauty** we saw, as they're her favourite species of moth! Other highlights included *Pseudatemelia josephinae*, *Mompha propinquella* and *Spatalistis bifasciana* amongst the micros and **Clay Triple-lines**, **Bordered White** and **Pine Hawk-moth** for the macros.

We were still recovering from Waverley a couple of days later, but had the opportunity to join Dave Grundy and Jon Clifton in Wyre Forest where they were doing survey work. As we knew they were running twelve traps between them, we felt we didn't need to add any more and so could have a lazy night 'glory mothing'! We arrived in Longdon Orchard to find the guys hard at work running up and down hills and over fences to set up the traps.

Val's 'teashop' was very welcome after all of that exertion and they could take a break for a chat. Some of the traps were almost inaccessible so we didn't get around them all. The ones we saw were all pretty full though. Jon managed to get a county first for Shropshire. Surprise, surprise it was a ... **Rannoch Looper!** With so many moths we decided to let Dave and Jon count up in peace. We managed to see around 150 species on our visit but who knows what the final tally will be. Highlights for us were the lovely Plume Moth *Capperia britanniodactyla*, **Satin Lutestring**, **Bilberry Pug** and **Beautiful Snout**.

Patrick was still in keen mode and so it was back to Uffmoor Wood for Alan. A brief spell of rain halted the setting up process on arrival. Once that had passed, it was another busy night with plenty of moths as well as the banter keeping spirits high. Patrick did his best to lose his 'lightweight' tag, as he didn't leave for home until 3:45 a.m.! A total of 118 species were recorded and Patrick saw most of them for a change! *Epagoge grotiana*, *Olindia schumacherana* and **Brown China-mark** were some of the micros with **Drinker**, **Red-necked Footman** and **Grey Arches** amongst the macros. Val was disappointed to learn she'd missed out on seeing five more **Lilac Beauty** that all came in near the end of the night.

July

Summer was still with us and Keith had arranged for access to Purley Quarry, in North Warwickshire, for us to do some moth recording. Heather was also present along with Ron Thomas and John Liggins. After driving into the quarry, Alan was given a guided tour of the site so a decision could be made about where to set up the traps. There was no hurry, as it was such an open site and with clear skies it would be a while until darkness descended. Another reason was the high humidity, which was good for mothing but not so good for lumping heavy equipment around very quickly! On the tour Alan got to see a rare moth for him, a **Six-spot Burnet!** Unfortunately, the best places to trap meant a long carry of the gear, but it was felt worth it. When the traps finally were up and running it was time for a break. Only John and Alan took advantage however, as the others were busy seeing what was happening at the traps. Keith returned and said that one of Alan's traps was full of flies! His reply, " Why do you think I'm sitting here!!" Eventually, it was time to see if there was anything other than flies in the three traps. It took almost three hours to get round them because there were not only flies, but lots of moths too! After returning to the cars for a break, Heather, John and Ron decided to head home while Keith and Alan readied themselves to begin counting. It had been daylight for a good couple of hours and it was 5:30 a.m. before the last plug was pulled. Over one thousand moths of 147 species was the result of the count. Some excellent moths were recorded such as *Leucoptera spartifoliella*, *Agonopterix kaekeritziana* and form *purbeckensis* of *Scoparia pyralella* amongst the micros. An excellent count of **Buff Arches** (69), **Double Dart**, **Dot Moth** and **Suspected** were some of the macros. Keith and Alan did get an inquisitive look from a truck driver, as he came out of the still working quarry opposite, when they left around 6:15.

As the weather was still good, the monthly Chaddesley Wood session was split into two. Martin and Roger ran traps in Black Meadow while Mervyn, Rose, John Finlay (freshly returned from the U.S.A.) and us set up in Jubilee Ride. Mervyn had nipped home to get a trolley so Martin and Roger didn't have to carry their equipment up the meadow. It worked a treat, just as it had before, and Martin and Roger were very impressed. It was a fair trek between the two sites but the variety of habitat covered certainly made it worth it. Mervyn and Rose had already left and it was getting light by the time we'd finished looking at the traps in the meadow. So the counting began and was finally completed just before 6 a.m. with a pleasing result of more than 1,500 moths of 150 species. Highlight of the night was a **Great Oak Beauty**, the first recorded in the area since 1968! Other highlights were nine species of *Coleophora* including *ibipennella* and *tamesis*, *Monochroa lutulentella*, and *Pseudosciaphila branderiana* amongst the micros. **Blue-bordered Carpet**, **Round-winged Muslin**, **Lunar-spotted Pinion** and **Pinion-streaked Snout** were some of the other macros. After leaving for home at 6:30 a.m., Val felt fortunate (for once) as she could go to sleep as soon as we got home, while Alan still had the garden trap to go through!

A couple of days later Alan joined Dave Grundy at Severn Valley Country Park for his pre-training course moth night. Summer was almost over, as we had clear skies and a full moon with plummeting temperatures. Alan decided to only run the one trap, which was just as well, as there wasn't enough petrol left in the can to fill the generator. It was a slow and steady night due to the weather, with the final count being just over one hundred species. The macros provided most of the highlights with **Phoenix**, **Twin-spot Carpet** and a superb **Waved Black**.

The following night Alan was back out with Dave again as they went to do their second stint at Wrens Nest NNR. John Finlay joined the outing as well. It was a different part of the site tonight, although the carrying of the equipment didn't seem any easier. It was another cool night, in quite dense woodland. We had a group similar to last time to entertain, which Dave did in his usual inimitable way. We had a few nice moths to show off before the 'crowd' dispersed for home. That left the three regulars. As there wasn't too much activity around the traps, it was decided to have an early night and pack up. John decided to go just before the count started. It didn't take too long as there was only 69 species to count with **Gothic** being about the best.

We'd been looking forward to the next trip since we saw the place briefly on our last visit to Slimbridge. Martin and Roger also made the trip to Richard and Ennis' garden. Steve Chappell was there to greet us on arrival. There was a light drizzle in the air and a welcome cuppa was consumed while trapping locations were sorted out. The ten traps were spread out over the seven-acre site, but the furthest couldn't be sorted until after the local wildlife had finished their activities in front of the hide. Val could see how much the Fox cubs had grown in the month since she last saw them and as an added bonus got to see two Badgers as well. Once the hide was vacated the last of the traps were put up and switched on. With the rain starting to get heavier umbrellas were required over the traps to save the moths from drowning! There was also a strong breeze, but it was mild though and the temperature didn't alter from 15°C all night.

Generally this area is noted for being flat, and so these conditions would be a big problem, but with all the trees and shrubs that had been planted, the traps were sheltered and the wind was going straight over without affecting them. We were lucky to be able to watch the weather from the dry luxury of the cottage and wait for the worst to pass over.

It was about four hours before the heavy rain eased off and we ventured out from our cosy habitat. Steve was apologetic about dragging us down on such an awful night. Alan continuously reassured him it would be fine and we'd get plenty of moths. Unfortunately, Richard and Ennis couldn't stay awake long enough to witness Steve's change of belief as we looked in the first trap and saw it full of moths. At one trap on our way round Martin spotted a moth that had landed on Steve's leg and got it in a pot. His eagle eye had spotted the first adult *Celypha woodiana* to be seen in Gloucestershire! The larva of this moth makes mines in the leaves of mistletoe. It was quite funny as we all looked up slowly and saw mistletoe directly above the trap in an apple tree! The moth had flown about six feet! With such a wide variety of habitats within the garden, the species tally was rising at every trap. By the time all the counting had been completed, almost a thousand moths of 147 species had been recorded, which was quite a spectacular result considering the weather. Our biggest problem counting up was that Steve had forgotten to shut the chickens in their house and they were attempting and succeeding to pinch the moths off the boxes before we'd finished with them. Other (moth) highlights, apart from *woodiana*, were *Catoptria falsella*, *Orthopygia glaucinalis* and *Pempelia formosa* amongst the micros and **Small Emerald**, **Sloe Pug**, **Triple-spotted Clay** and **Shark** for the macros. The only disappointment afterwards was that we weren't able to thank Richard and Ennis personally before we left at 7 a.m. Steve could finally relax, as the night had been a success (apart from the chickens!). So much so, that we organised another visit next month!

It took us a full week for us to recover and venture out again. This time it was to the annual B-B-Q and moth night at Norton Covert. For the first time, Patrick joined us this year, so we had four traps set up in the old quarry. Even Val managed to put one up before she was shown a bottle of wine! Barry was particularly optimistic this year, as he hadn't bothered putting any shelter up for the guests. We told him he ought to rectify that, as we expected a bit of precipitation at some point. After last year's torrential deluge it was better to be safe than sorry. We did get a bit of drizzle on and off but it didn't dampen the enjoyment of the attendees. There were plenty of moths for the kids to ferry back and forth to show everyone and the night went as well as normal. As usual we were left to complete our mothing in peace as everyone had drifted off by 1 a.m. Patrick packed up first and then us. By the end we'd managed to record 135 species with over a third of them being new for the site. Highlights amongst the micros were *Morphaga choragella*, *Pammene fasciana* and **Rush Veneer** with **Bordered Pug**, **Triple-spotted Clay**, **Scarce Silver-lines** and **Dark Spectacle** for the macros.

Another poor week of weather passed until we were out again. This time Keith had arranged for us to record the Focus Optics site near, Corley. A good turn out meant we could cover the site well. Martin, Hilary, Geoff, Roy and John Liggins provided extra traps and so we had nine in total.

We even had a guest of honour, as Nigel Stone (Ex? -mother but still webmaster) joined us for a rare evening away from a computer screen. Our host, Tim, didn't really know what to expect from this invasion as nothing had only been done on a very small scale previously. In fact the site list stood at 43 species! There was only time for one tour of the traps before they were counted and we felt confident we would add a few to the list. The final result of 1,700 moths recorded of 176 species for the night, saw that our confidence had been justified! Tim did very well and managed to stay awake until the end. At least he knows what to expect if we descend on him again! Highlights for the micros were **Rabbit Moth** (*Ypsolopha sequella* to the uninitiated!), **Caryocolum fraternella** and **Mompha raschkiella** with **Sloe Pug**, **Antler Moth** and **Olive** for the macros.

It had been a month since the last visit to Waverley Wood and so Alan decided to give it a go even though the skies were clear. Once the traps were on, the bats put on a good display. They looked like little shooting stars darting across the sky. It appeared to be a slow night even though the final count was 87 species. It was good to record **Apotomis sororculana** again, as we also had it Weston Wood last year. Both **Dioryctria abietella** and **Dioryctria simplicella** were amongst the other micros. The macros produced another two **Pine Hawk-moth** and both traps were 'plastered' in **Black Arches**. So it proved a worthwhile visit even though it got quite cool by the 3:30 a.m. finish. The last day of the month proved a frustrating one to begin with, as we attempted to head back up to Widnes. Leaving even more time than usual it still took four hours to arrive outside Helen and Gary's house! Helen's Mum and her friend were also worrying if we would make it in time, as they were expecting a lift to the game from us! Luckily, we were just in time to put the trap up and tell Gary when to put it on, before going to the match. Things improved from then on, as Widnes thumped Halifax 42–16 and we found that Gary had remembered to put the trap on. It was a wet and windy night and so we were quite pleased with the 75 moths of 20 species that we'd managed to attract. All were valuable records to this under-recorded area. Three of them were **Gothic**, **Dot Moth** and **Dark Spectacle**. We managed to do the journey home in less than half the time it took on the way!

August

It was Chaddesley Wood time again. With the holiday season in full swing it was a select group tonight. Just Martin and John Finlay joined us for the recording effort this time on yet another cool, clear night. Mervyn and Rose did pop in but decided against running any traps. With the track very wet, we played safe and put the five traps up in a line just inside the gate. After one tour of the traps Mervyn and Rose headed home. A collective decision was made to count up at 1 a.m., as there didn't seem a lot of point staying any longer due to the weather. A disappointing 60 species were recorded. The seemingly annual **Purple Hairstreak** turned up again. The second brood of **Devon Carpet** was also recorded with **Yellow-tail** and **Rufous Minor** being a couple of the other species recorded. So an early night was had and Val actually got to bed while it was still dark!

The weather improved just enough to tempt Alan to go over to Ryton Meadows. Trying to get up 'Scrub Hill' could have proved an adventure, due to the ground being absolutely saturated. Even having to try and set the traps far enough away from the puddles so the moths didn't get their feet wet, was better than getting stuck up the hill. One of the traps did far better than the other. There was only a slight breeze, but the trap in it did far worse.

No early night this time for Alan, as he had plenty of moths to count with the eventual tally being 120 species. Amongst the micros were the very pretty *Eucalybites auroguttella*, *Coleophora alcyonipennella*, *Gypsonoma aceriana* and *Acrobasis consociella* while **Magpie Moth**, **Dusky Sallow** and **Rosy Rustic** were some of the macros.

Next it was the annual 'Moths in the Middle' group field trip. This year it was at Middleton Hall. Joining us were Martin, John Finlay, Anne Cole, Richard Orton, Mike and Annie West. We know it's all getting a bit repetitive, but it was yet another clear and cool night! However, we still had quite a few moths to enjoy, as well as Mike and Annie's home made wine! Hilary and Geoff popped in for a while but didn't run a trap. It was a very social night, enjoyed by everyone. At the 4 a.m. finishing time, it was the usual suspects who were last to leave. The night had gone well and 129 species were recorded. Amongst the micros were *Depressaria badiella*, *Acleris aspersana* and Martin managed an amazing 22 **Small China-mark** in one trap! The macro highlights were **Sallow Kitten**, **Mouse Moth**, **Old Lady** and **Double Lobed**.

The following evening was another annual event, this time at Crown East Wood. Richard and Carol seem to organise more around this every year. This time there was archery and stargazing (just as well you could rely on a clear night!), as well as the bat walk, B-B-Q and moths. No chance of this being a boring night then! John Finlay also helped us tonight, as he was on his way down to Devon and Crown East was on the way. Well, any excuse will do! For our part, we did better than last year and so, were reasonably happy with our contribution by the end. Over the years, the regulars have got to know us and the banter gets more personal every year! It's always an enjoyable event to be a part of and we hope it continues that way. Our cue to start packing up was the smell of sausages and bacon being cooked as it wafted down to the traps. Highlights moth-wise were the three new species for the wood amongst the 71 recorded. They were, the micro *Udea lutealis* and the macros **Bordered Beauty** and **Bulrush Wainscot**. What Richard and Carol have in store for next year we can't wait to find out!

With a rare free weekend we decided to give Robin Hemming a call and see if he fancied doing a moth night in his area. He suggested going to the Doward in Herefordshire. Having returned from Devon, John joined us again. We all met at the entrance to Biblin's Wood and then drove to the trapping site. It was a warm, cloudy night with the odd burst of drizzle. With the 'tea shop' relocated to Robin's camper van it was a relaxing evening in relative luxury. After a slow start, the moths arrived in better numbers the longer the night went on. Robin was still apologetic that it wasn't better, but we were very happy with how it was going. Around 1:30 we started a leisurely count up. It was so leisurely that the generator ran out of petrol just as we finished at 5 a.m.! With the final tally a satisfying 116 species recorded.

Some of the micros were *Agonopterix liturosa*, *Psoricoptera gibbosella* and *Evergestis pallidata* with **Mocha**, **Tawny Speckled Pug**, **August Thorn** and **True Lover's Knot** amongst the macros. Thanks to Robin for a very enjoyable night.

Knowing we had a very busy time coming up, Alan decided that he had better get Waverley Wood done for August. Within 45 minutes of leaving home the first light was on in the wood. It was back to a clear, cool night after our trip to Herefordshire and so it was a slow night with only 50 species recorded. The best moths arrived early on, as the second and third **Devon Carpet** for Warwickshire were recorded. That was about as good as it got, but it was job done.

It was a slightly better night as Dave and Alan went back to Wrens Nest NNR for their third and final session for the year. John also made the journey over to the Black Country. Thankfully, no long carrying this time as Dave managed to get a barrier opened so he could drive to the tapping site. The area contained probably the best bit of habitat we'd found. We also had great views across the Black Country as we were on the top of Mons Hill. The night went much as the previous two and Dave managed to show off some nice moths to the 'crowd'. A respectable 71 species were recorded with the best being a very fresh **Tissue**. The number and variety of **August Thorn** was also memorable. With all the changes going on at Slimbridge WWT Centre, the usual annual public moths nights were cancelled. However, Pete Cranswick had called us earlier in the week and said we could still go if we wanted to. Not wanting to miss an opportunity we did just that. John and Steve Chappell added a further two traps for the evening. Pete dropped by as we were setting up, before going back to finish work. The theme of clear, cool nights continued but we had an enjoyable time wandering between the traps. Steve was getting a lift home sometime after 3:30 a.m., so we attempted to finish counting and packing around then. Not being overwhelmed by moths (except **Setaceous Hebrew Character** which numbered 111), we made the target time and Steve was ready for his lift home when we began our journey. We managed to record a mediocre 46 species including a **Common Blue** butterfly that was roosting next to Steve's trap. Some of the moths recorded were **Yellow-barred Brindle**, **Canary-shouldered Thorn**, **Ruby Tiger** and **Dog's Tooth**.

The following night we joined Dave Brown and the Warwickshire Moth Group at Weethley Wood. There were lots of people and traps and while they were all dithering about where to put their traps, we started putting ours up. It was a rare mild and cloudy night, which wasn't forecast. With Martin and Oliver around as well, it meant at least three of us could have a go at recording the micro moths. While the usual suspects retired to a local pub, that's what we did. On returning from the pub, Dave had an entertaining story to tell. There was a wedding reception taking place and while moving around the pub he felt the floor was a bit soft. Looking down he found he was standing on the train of the brides dress! He didn't hang about long enough to find out how she explained all the muddy boot prints to the groom! Meanwhile, it was an unexpected, very busy night with lots of moths and one trap even managed to attract a **Silver-washed Fritillary**! By the time we'd managed to get round all the other traps, some people were packing up and going home.

Alan helped Hilary and Geoff count their trap before they did the same. Eventually, there was only Martin, Oliver and us, for Dave to bid farewell to as he disappeared as well. It was now getting late and we hadn't even looked in our own traps, so everyone dispersed to count up. The result of our efforts was a spectacular 156 species recorded. There were some excellent moths amongst them, such as the micros ***Nemapogon clematella***, ***Phyllonorycter sagitella***, ***Elachista bisulcella*** and ***Cnephasia genitalana***.

The macros included **Pale Eggar**, **Poplar Lutestring**, **Poplar Kitten**, **Pearly Underwing** and **Frosted Orange**. The last big night of the year had come as a welcome surprise.

Next it was a return to Gloucestershire for a second visit to Richard and Ennis' garden. The traps were put in the same areas and Steve, Martin and Roger were again the other suppliers. We had a drier night this time and caught more moths as well! Over half of them were of one species though. We counted an amazing 672 **Setaceous Hebrew Character** between us. Thankfully, Steve had remembered to shut the chickens in this time and the so final total was 58 species! Some of the micros were ***Parornix finitimella***, ***Epinotia tenerana*** and ***Eudonia angustea*** with **Blood-vein**, **Centre-barred Sallow** and **Red Underwing** amongst the macros. After the success of the two nights we had this year, we're sure to try and return in 2010. Thanks to Richard, Ennis and Steve for there warm welcome and hospitality.

The following evening we went to Chaddesley Wood, a week earlier than usual, as we would be somewhere else next Saturday. After not leaving for home until after 6 a.m. this morning, we didn't expect to see Martin or Roger and so it proved. However, John did join us for what was a relatively quiet night moth-wise. Mervyn was giving a guided tour of the wood to the Kidderminster Wildlife Trust Group. When they finally reached us, we were relieved to have at least a few moths to show them. It didn't take long to count up tonight, as we only managed to attract 28 species to the traps. So, we were pleased to have an early finish after last night being the opposite. The first **Autumnal Rustic** seen this year was amongst the few moths we did catch.

September

The first Saturday of the month and so it must be Chaddesley Wood! Oh, that was last week. Instead, it was a trip to Windmill Hill in Nuneaton for the annual moths and nosh night. We arrived to find Chris and Martin lingering in the car park. They were waiting for Lloyd Lees to arrive with the keys to the centre. Dave Grundy arrived as well and with Richard Dawkins made up the recorders for the night. With power restored to the Centre most of the traps were able to be plugged in to it. Martin, of course, had no problems as he was using Jack's old 'never ending' cables! We had a possible future mother with us for the first time tonight. Derek came from Lichfield as he'd heard about the event and can't find anything going on moth-wise locally. He was very welcome and made it all the way to the end. Not many first timers do that! The night went as well as normal and the final count was a respectable 59 species. We had some nice moths to show the people who stayed on after the food was consumed. They included the micros ***Chequered Fruit-tree Tortrix*** and ***Cryptoblabes bistriga*** with **Autumnal Rustic**, **Sallow** and **Frosted Orange** amongst the macros.

A couple of days later Alan called Martin for a weather update and after consultation decided to give Ryton Meadows a go. After a stressful journey, Alan was late and so immediately got to work setting up the traps on arrival. Just after finishing, he noticed a familiar light in the distance and also saw a recognisable torch light heading his way. Martin had set up nearer the entrance and was on his way up 'Scrub Hill'. It was a good night weather-wise for Ryton, as it was mainly cloudy even if there was an occasional breeze. There were plenty of moths to keep Alan and Martin busy. After a couple of tours it was time for Martin to count up. He managed the most unusual visitor to a trap tonight. A hungry looking Smooth Newt, possibly looking for an easy meal, was hanging around, before being disturbed and melting away into the meadow. Alan stayed a little longer and waited for the first **Rosy Rustic** to arrive before counting up. Amazingly, the temperature was 2°C warmer when the last light went out than it was when it was first lit! A pleasing total of 61 species were recorded. Surprisingly, **Brown House-moth** was new for the site! Other micros included *Cochylis dubitana*, *Pyrausta purpuralis* and **Rush Veneer** whilst **Purple Bar**, **Feathered Gothic**, **Mouse Moth** and **Oak Nycteoline** were amongst the macros.

It was back to clear and cool a couple of days later when Martin and John joined Alan at Waverley Wood. Martin attempted to get a trap to a more promising part of the wood, but as it was difficult to access it was only visited when it was time to count up. It wasn't a very taxing night with only 29 species recorded by the end. However three of them were new for the wood. They were the micro *Stenolechia gemmella* and the macros **Centre-barred Sallow** and **Small Wainscot**. It always makes it worth going when you catch something new.

The first of the National Moth Night Double-header was next. Val had a shock when Alan informed her that he wasn't well enough to go, as he'd got a heavy cold. The good news was that the venue was Middleton Hall and so she new the set up well enough to have a go on her own. With help from Martin, Roger, John Bates, Keith and Heather, Alan was sure she would be fine. Derek and quite a few people from the Windmill Hill event last week joined in as well. With the normal tearoom out of commission, Caretaker Bob had to show Val her new venue in which to set up the refreshments. Val commented that, even though it was upstairs, it was very palatial! All enjoyed a very sociable evening as they wandered between traps and tearoom. It was a reasonable night for nothing too. Martin had graciously agreed to take over collating the records for the event and the final result of 56 species was very pleasing. Some of the micros were *Zelleria hepariella*, *Plutella porrectella* and *Acleris emargana* whilst **Deep-brown Dart**, **Pale Pinion**, **Crescent** and **Large Wainscot** were amongst the macros. Val was pleased and relieved that it had all gone so well and thanks everyone for their help. Alan wasn't idle at home as he ran two traps in the garden and was with them in spirit!

The good news for the second part of National Moth Night was, that Alan had recovered enough to make the trip south. We were going to join Peter Hugo and Pete Cranswick at Lower Woods Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust Reserve. We arrived a little later than planned and the other recorders were busy setting up traps. Peter had saved a little space for us and so we went there. Roger brought a friend called Ged with him tonight, in the hope he may get some company on future trips.

There were quite a few inquisitive members of the public to entertain so we were hoping for a good start. It certainly helps when **Barred Sallow** are one of the first species to enter the traps. It was cloudy early on and so the moths came in steadily. Then we had a brief shower after which the skies cleared and things slowed down. People generally drifted away after the shower and Roger decided to pack up as well. Then it was Pete and Peter's turn to head for home. They were leaving their traps to be checked in the morning, but we were welcome to have a look in them before we followed suit. As the temperature was still dropping, we decided to tally before having a final tour of the other traps and heading home. It was a successful night with 50 species being recorded. A new one for us was the micro *Caloptilia semifascia* and **Dark Sword-grass, Black Rustic, Brown-spot Pinion** and a surprising **Small Fan-foot** were some of the macros.

As the end of the month approached, Alan made a return visit to Crown East Wood. With it being such a late decision to go, he couldn't contact anyone in case they wanted to join him. As it was decent weather he could have expected to see more moths than he did early on. There was a distinct lull in proceedings for a few hours after the initial arrivals. Maybe it's those immortal words "It's time to pack up" that brings the moths in. As soon as Alan had made the decision they started arriving! It took a lot longer than he'd expected to count up and the final tally of 26 species was only a dream early in the night! *Hypatima rhomboidella* and *Acleris rhombana* were a couple of the micros with **September Thorn, Brindled Green** and **Lunar Underwing** amongst the macros.

The last visit of the month was to Chaddesley Wood. As we hadn't been for ages and just in case there was bad weather on the official day, Alan decided to go a few days early. With perfect weather for a change he was hopeful of a good nights mothing. However, exactly the same thing happened as at Crown East a couple of nights earlier. After the initial rush when the lights went on, barely anything arrived in the next few hours. Then, at midnight, they all started coming in again. The weather hadn't changed all evening, so there must be some other factor involved in this phenomenon. Whatever the reason, at least Alan stays long enough for it to happen. So the final tally of 32 species made it a very worthwhile venture. It was weird though seeing **Merveille Du Jour** sitting on the same egg box with a **Blotched Emerald**. That's something that doesn't happen too often round here. Another surprise was finding out that **Red-line Quaker** was a new species for the wood!

October

There was a certain sense of de-ja-vu for Alan as he was back at Chaddesley a few days later for the official session. Conditions were certainly different from his last visit, with clear skies and a full moon this time. Martin, John Finlay and Ian Machin made up the other recorders. With those extra traps, the final tally of 30 species was similar to that which Alan achieved with just three earlier in the week. More traps certainly make a difference in marginal weather. There were two more surprising addition to the species list for the wood, as both **Orange Sallow** and **Sallow** were recorded for the first time.

With nothing much happening, Alan decided on a fairly impromptu visit to his Mums for a couple of nights.

It was to incorporate an early Christmas present delivery (Yes, that's right!) and to do the odd job. The weather was reasonable on the first night and he managed to get his two target species of **Mallow** and **Feathered Ranunculus** amongst the sixteen species recorded. The second night was better with three new species for the garden amongst the 24 recorded. They were **Red-green Carpet**, **Green-brindled Crescent** and **Chestnut**.

For the final visit of the year to Waverley Wood, John joined Alan. In not great conditions, they managed to record almost one hundred moths of thirteen species. **November Moth**, **Feathered Thorn** and **Brick** were three of them. So not a bad return really.

A better night was had at Ryton Meadows a few days later. With it being a work day for Martin and John, we agreed to make the meeting time 8 p.m. As we knew the site well, we didn't expect any problems setting up in the dark. We were proved correct and as soon as the lights were on, the moths started to arrive. There were enough moths to keep our interest and enjoy the breaks between tours of the traps. Even a couple of short, sharp showers didn't make much difference and by the time the last light went out at 1 a.m., we were all pleased we'd made the effort. Twenty species had been recorded. *Ypsolopha sylvella* and a late *Scoparia ambigualis* were a couple of the micros and **Mottled Umber**, **Dark Sword-grass** and an impressive 46 **Satellite** were amongst the macros.

A good period of settled weather meant Alan had the luxury of organising a moth night two days in advance! He does find it a struggle though having to set off at 3:30 in the afternoon, or just after breakfast as he calls it! Why we have to go through the farce of changing the clocks by an hour twice a year, we will never understand! Anyway, we found a good area of Tiddesley Wood and were just finishing putting up the traps when Tony Simpson arrived. Once we'd switched on the lights, Alan walked the mile to the gate to let Martin and John in. At least he didn't have to walk back as John gave him a lift! It was an excellent night and the traps were consistently busy. Alan was particularly pleased to find a **Figure of Eight** in one of the traps, as he hasn't seen one since 2006! It took quite a while but the skies were starting to clear when Martin and Tony decided to call it a night. John and us stayed a little while longer before doing the same. The final 28 species tally was a great return for our efforts. Some of the micros were *Diurnea lipsiella*, a surprising *Lozotaeniodes formosanus* and *Epinotia maculana* with **December Moth**, a pristine **Blood-vein** and **Northern Winter Moth** some of the macros.

November

The final trip of the year turned out to be the usual Chaddesley Wood night. Roger, John and Steve Whitehouse added further traps to our two. What promised not to be such a good night turned out all right. Mervyn and Rose were welcome visitors, as they brought cake and stories from the day's entomological meeting. That kept us amused while we waited for the moths to arrive. In the end we managed to record over one hundred moths of sixteen species. The only micro was *Acleris sparsana* with a ragged **Pine Carpet**, **Winter Moth** and the one we all waited to arrive, **Sprawler** amongst the macros. A decent end to the year, even if it was a bit more premature than we'd hoped for.

Summary

Another year over and it proved to be a more 'normal' one than the past couple. Summer came at the end of June and finished at the beginning of July, but at least we got a taste. We didn't get as wet, as often as we had in 2007 or 2008 and that has to be a plus. Moth numbers were generally up and there was even the odd migrant around. We could definitely have done without so many clear and cool nights and a few more cloudy ones, but this is Britain! As always thanks to all the people that put up with us over the year and especially to those mad fools who have invited us back! Let's hope the upward trend continues in 2010.

Clarification

All species mentioned in the text have been adults. No leaf-mines or cases etc. have been included. Difficult to identify species will have been confirmed via dissection.

Further Information

For information on Moth Nights or Butterfly Walks in Warwickshire see the Butterfly Conservation web site at: <http://www.warwickshire-butterflies.org.uk>

Or contact David Brown on 01789 840295 or Keith Warmington on 01827 715873



| 2009 Trip List | | |
|-----------------------|---|----------------|
| Date | Site | Species |
| 15/2/09 | Chaddesley Wood, Worcestershire | 12 |
| 17/2/09 | Waverley/Weston Wood, Warwickshire | 11 |
| 25/2/09 | Tiddesley Wood, Worcestershire | 21 |
| 7/3/09 | Chaddesley Wood, Worcestershire | 23 |
| 11/3/09 | Uffmoor Wood, Worcestershire | 23 |
| 14/3/09 | Wyre Forest, Worcestershire | 13 |
| 19/3/09 | Highlands, Brandon, Warwickshire | 9 |
| 20/3/09 | Crown East Wood Worcestershire | 14 |
| 31/3/09 | Uffmoor Wood, Worcestershire | 24 |
| 1/4/09 | Ryton Wood Meadows, Warwickshire | 27 |
| 4/4/09 | Chaddesley Wood, Worcestershire | 26 |
| 5/4/09 | Cold Knap Wood, Worcestershire (No Traps) | 20 |
| 10/4/09 | Widnes, Lancashire | 4 |
| 12/4/09 | Waverley Wood, Warwickshire | 22 |
| 21/4/09 | Tiddesley Wood, Worcestershire | 39 |
| 2/5/09 | Chaddesley Wood, Worcestershire | 69 |
| 8/5/09 | Wyre Forest, Worcestershire | 48 |
| 10/5/09 | Ryton Wood/Meadows, Warwickshire | 29 |
| 18/5/09 | Bannam's Wood, Warwickshire | 21 |
| 20/5/09 | Waverley Wood, Warwickshire | 52 |
| 27/5/09 | Uffmoor Wood, Worcestershire | 79 |
| 29/5/09 | Middleton Hall, Warwickshire | 114 |
| 30/5/09 | Nelson's Quarry, Warwickshire | 63 |
| 4/6/09 | Bubbenhall Wood, Warwickshire | 48 |
| 6/6/09 | Chaddesley Wood, Worcestershire | 32 |
| 7/6/09 | Weeley, Essex | 24 |
| 8/6/09 | Weeley, Essex | 34 |
| 9/6/09 | Weeley, Essex | 80 |
| 12/6/09 | Ryton Wood Meadows, Warwickshire | 175 |
| 16/6/09 | Wren's Nest NNR, Staffordshire (No Traps) | 102 |
| 18/6/09 | Slimbridge WWT, Gloucestershire | 58 |
| 20/6/09 | Hartlebury Common, Worcestershire | 167 |
| 23/6/09 | Alcester Grammar School, Warwickshire | 73 |
| 25/6/09 | Waverley Wood, Warwickshire | 134 |
| 27/6/09 | Longdon Orchard, Wyre Forest, Shropshire (No Traps) | 145 |
| 30/6/09 | Uffmoor Wood, Worcestershire | 118 |
| 1/7/09 | Purley Quarry, Warwickshire | 147 |
| 4/7/09 | Chaddesley Wood, Worcestershire | 150 |
| 6/7/09 | Severn Valley Country Park, Shropshire | 103 |
| 7/7/09 | Wren's Nest NNR, Staffordshire (No Traps) | 69 |

| | | |
|----------|---|-----|
| 11/7/09 | Ryall's Cottage, Gloucestershire | 147 |
| 18/7/09 | Norton Covert, Worcestershire | 135 |
| 25/7/09 | Focus Optics, Corley, Warwickshire | 176 |
| 27/7/09 | Waverley Wood, Warwickshire | 87 |
| 31/7/09 | Widnes, Lancashire | 20 |
| 1/8/09 | Chaddesley Wood, Worcestershire | 60 |
| 5/8/09 | Ryton Wood Meadows, Warwickshire | 120 |
| 7/8/09 | Middleton Hall, Warwickshire | 129 |
| 8/8/09 | Crown East Wood Worcestershire | 71 |
| 14/8/09 | Biblin's Wood, Doward, Herefordshire | 116 |
| 17/8/09 | Waverley Wood, Warwickshire | 50 |
| 18/8/09 | Wren's Nest NNR, Staffordshire (No Traps) | 71 |
| 21/8/09 | Slimbridge WWT, Gloucestershire | 46 |
| 22/8/09 | Weethley Wood, Warwickshire | 156 |
| 28/8/09 | Ryall's Cottage, Gloucestershire | 58 |
| 29/8/09 | Chaddesley Wood, Worcestershire | 28 |
| 5/9/09 | Windmill Hill, Nuneaton, Warwickshire | 59 |
| 7/9/09 | Ryton Wood Meadows, Warwickshire | 61 |
| 9/9/09 | Waverley Wood, Warwickshire | 29 |
| 18/9/09 | Middleton Hall, Warwickshire | 56 |
| 19/9/09 | Lower Woods, Gloucestershire | 50 |
| 27/9/09 | Crown East Wood Worcestershire | 26 |
| 29/9/09 | Chaddesley Wood, Worcestershire | 32 |
| 3/10/09 | Chaddesley Wood, Worcestershire | 32 |
| 12/10/09 | Weeley, Essex | 16 |
| 13/10/09 | Weeley, Essex | 23 |
| 19/10/09 | Waverley Wood, Warwickshire | 13 |
| 23/10/09 | Ryton Wood Meadows, Warwickshire | 20 |
| 29/10/09 | Tiddesley Wood, Worcestershire | 28 |
| 7/11/09 | Chaddesley Wood, Worcestershire | 16 |



Drinker Moth



Waved Umber



Buff Arches



True Lover's Knot



Streamer



Sycamore



Feathered Thorn



Lime Hawkmoth



Purple Thorn



Early Thorn



Poplar Hawkmoth



**Butterfly
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