



**WARWICKSHIRE BRANCH
MOTH EQUIPMENT**

2017 - Ambitious Targets



Alan Prior & Val Weston

**Photographs by Martin Kennard & Alan Prior
Cover Photograph by Alan Prior**



1807 Grass Rivulet (Alan Prior)



1350 Beautiful China-mark (Alan Prior)



161 Leopard Moth (Alan Prior)



2418 Cream-bordered Green Pea (Alan Prior)



642a *Metalampra italica* (Martin Kennard)



990 *Aphelia unitana* (Martin Kennard)

Introduction

2017 was a remarkable year for many reasons. First and foremost the courage and sheer determination by Val to reach all of her targets was a total inspiration for everyone who came in contact with her. Without doubt these targets slowed her cancers progress and are a major factor in why she is still with us as this is written. As for the moths, it was an interesting and somewhat conflicting year. The number of species recorded was well up on the previous few years, but actual counts for some common species appeared slightly lower than in 2016. Our major targets of reaching sites in the South of Warwickshire that were terribly under-recorded took a huge step forward, enthusiastically aided by many helpful, cooperative farmers and landowners. Some memorable nights were had at these unfamiliar places, where many "new" moth species for all the attending recorders were found. That was due reward for everyone's efforts to venture into these new territories. As with last year's account, the following will include events that neither of us got to and the occasional explanation of why! We hope you enjoy the ride.

January

January's main focus wasn't really on moths. With Val's birthday being on a Sunday, Alan had a "little" idea about inviting people to come and wish her Happy Birthday in person. Val knew nothing of Alan's idea and as the day drew nearer he got increasingly stressed about the secret getting out! The number of people expected on the big day had got completely out of hand. Many members of the mothing community from all over England had committed to come, which could only mean what a lasting impression Val had made on them during our nighttime expeditions over the years. Along with friends from all the other areas of both our lives, it was going to be an extremely eclectic mix of characters that would pass through our door that day. Alan thought Val would never go to bed the night before and was kept waiting to rearrange the house for the imminent invasion for a lot longer than he'd hoped. However, with the secret still intact he set to work and three hours later everything was ready. He felt it would be unfair on Val to let her expect a quiet birthday and got up early to tell her, "that a couple of people might drop in today!" So at least she had time to prepare a little bit, however she had no clue what was about to happen. The first arrival was a very special one, as one of Val's oldest friends and someone she hadn't seen for around 25 years had flown in from the West of Ireland that morning and finally found herself on our doorstep. Val was completely stunned when she opened the door and this was just the start of one of the happiest and most fun times we'd ever had. By the end of this remarkable day we'd managed to accommodate 73 people in our little house! With fantastic donations of help with food from friends, Alan had managed to pull off the biggest surprise for Val she'd ever had. Everyone who came deserves our unending gratitude for such a fantastic effort and making this the most memorable day of our lives, which was so full of love and happiness. Val still finds it difficult to believe that all those people came to wish her Happy Birthday. THANK YOU ALL.

February

The mothing year got underway in mid February when Martin Kennard suggested making a visit to Snitterfield Bushes in the hope of recording **Small Brindled Beauty**. Alan arrived at the gate to find Chris Johnson waiting with Martin. When Pete Smith, complete with "tea shop", turned up a short while later the evening's compliment of recorders was complete. With no wind to speak of, trapping locations were quickly sorted out and once everything was up and running a long catch up chat was undertaken at the "tea shop". On the first tour of the traps Martin's never ending quest for new ways to catch moths came into view! It was an extraordinary looking contraption that caused much discussion and laughter about what to call it. Eventually it was christened the 'Activity Centre Trap' or A.C.T.! It had attracted moths and a Smooth newt also seemed to approve, as it was found half way up one of the sides finding it to be the perfect equipment for a winter workout! After another cuppa and with no sign of our target species it was decided to call it a night. It had been quite successful with ten species being recorded including the first **Spring Usher** for the site in over 30 years. Over a hundred **Pale Brindled Beauty** and a couple of **Dotted Chestnut** were amongst the other moths found.

March

Not one to be put off, Martin returned to Snitterfield to try again. Unfortunately, neither of us could join him this time due to being committed to playing hosts to Mike Tramp and his Band of Brothers as they were on a UK tour at that time. It was a dream come true for Val to have Mike staying with us. Thankfully, Peter Beasley made it and so Martin wasn't left lonely! The weather was decent and there was always something of interest when looking in the traps. Persistence finally paid off as a single **Small Brindled Beauty** arrived in one of Martin's traps. It was the only new species for the site amongst the 20 species recorded, but job done. **Agonopterix ocellana**, **Shoulder Stripe**, **Oak Beauty** and **Lead-coloured Drab** were some of the other species seen.

April

This was a completely uninspiring month and the weather didn't tempt us to make any mothing trips out at all.

May

The first officially scheduled mothing trip of the year came in mid May and was to Weethley Wood. After many years of visiting the site around this time of year with consistently unhelpful weather, would it be any different on this occasion? Nigel Stone was already waiting when Alan arrived to unlock the gate. They were both pleased and surprised that for the first time ever the deep ruts that lead to the gate had no water in them whatsoever! Chris, Martin, Pete and Peter were finally joined by last arrival Scott Hackett. A good turn out of recorders and a refurbished "tea shop" was also in evidence, complete with an impressive fold out table. It was relatively mild (warm for Weethley!) with broken cloud overhead and with trapping spots agreed, things had got off to a good start. Chris was plugging into Alan's generator and had decided to shelter his trap from the slight breeze in a patch of vegetation close to the wood edge. Attempting to be helpful, he thought he'd just remove some bramble that would be a nuisance in the dark when everyone else made their way to his trap. He happily chopped away until suddenly noticing that he'd gone through a particularly white piece of vegetation! Oops! That was his cable! Chris wandered up to the gathering at the "tea shop" to admit what he'd done and we saw he'd lost around 20 feet of cable with a now useless plug dangling from the end! Of course, the admission was greeted with much hysterical laughter. Scott lent Chris a penknife and then all of us carried on with refreshments before switching on our lights. Chris was still trudging about sorting his cable out, as it got quite dark. The "tea shop" discussion was whether Alan's generator would blow up when Chris finally took the plunge and plugged his trap in. Generally, the feeling was that it could go either way! Harsh, but fair! As it turned out Chris redeemed himself and everything was fine, including his own trap. Phew! By this time the sky had gone cloudy and there were plenty of moths making their way to the traps. The first spots of rain arrived not long after midnight. Later there were some annoying heavier bursts, but at least it meant the temperature was around 10°C higher than on any of our previous visits to Weethley at this time of year! By the time everybody had had enough and packed up, an impressive 93 species had been attracted to the traps with sixteen being new for the site. That managed to fill a lot of the gaps in the site list that we'd been attempting to do for a long time. So, a soggy but successful first visit of the year to Weethley. Amongst the new species recorded were **Incurvaria oehmanniella**, **Hysterothrips maculosana**, **Pammene argyrana**, **Dichrorampha aeratana**, **Brown Silver-line**, **Waved Umber**, **Orange Footman** and **Least Black Arches**. With this being the first 'all-nighter' of the year Alan was relieved to get home and find that Val had been fine and was sleeping soundly.

With Val still doing OK Alan was able to head down to the Army Base at Kineton for the first visit of the year. Martin, Chris, Pete and Peter also made the trip and they all met by the missile as usual. After signing in at the second checkpoint they all headed off to Dead Elms Wood where they expected to receive some shelter from the nagging breeze. It was back to normal this week, as conditions were clear and getting colder by the minute. With all the traps up and running everyone retired to the "tea shop" where Chris told the story of how he'd managed to break the barge he'd been working on during the past week! And a very entertaining story it was too! Anyway, the hoped-for shelter had worked, and the first round of the traps produced something of interest in each one. Martin actually suspected he'd got a first for Warwickshire. Nobody was overwhelmed with moths in their traps and so despite the cold, it was decided to give it as long as possible because it wouldn't take too long to count up. By the end a respectable 60 species had been recorded, with around a dozen being new for the site and so braving the cold had paid off. Martin had indeed found a County first with **Pammene ignorata**.

Amongst the other new species found were ***Semioscopis steinkellneriana***, ***Scrobipalpa acuminatella***, ***Ptycholoma lecheana***, **Flame Carpet**, **Sandy Carpet**, **Pale Tussock** and **Muslin Moth**.

A few nights later Alan headed down for his first visit of the year to one of his favourite places, Sun Rising Natural Burial Ground. Pete and Peter were waiting when he arrived and with no wind it meant the traps could be set up anywhere for a change. Despite the cloudless skies the air mass was a mild one and so a decent night was in prospect. Site managers and recent "stars" in an episode of TV's "Countryfile", Emma and David arrived to say "hello" and check for bat activity. One bat was seen emerging from under the huts roof and the bat detector was well used for a while after that. With the traps switched on and the "tea shop" beckoning Emma and David decided to head for home and left them to it. The temperature dropped only very slowly, so there was plenty of moth activity at the traps to make. The first tour of the traps took quite a while to complete before they made it back for more refreshments. After a second round the first signs of dawn were beginning to be seen and so it was decided to count up. A very pleasing 77 species were recorded, with 19 being newly recorded for the site. Amongst them were ***Coleophora alticolella***, ***Anania fuscalis***, **Chinese Character**, **Grass Rivulet**, **White-pinion Spotted**, **Pale-shouldered Brocade** and **Pale Pinion**. A very successful night.

It was a visit to Alvecote Wood that was next on the agenda. Alan was joined by Chris, Peter and out of 'hibernation' came Keith Warmington and John Finlay to complete the recorders line up for the night. Despite his recent loss of 20 feet of cable Chris was still able to set his trap at the bottom of the meadow and still plug in to a generator, while the others were concentrated in the wood. Just as everyone had finished setting up they had a very welcome surprise visit from the woods owners Stephen and Sarah. Shortly after the lights were switched on they headed for home, but it was great to catch up with them for a while. After some refreshments, where Chris told his latest hilarious story of being on the barge and being accused of "mutinous behaviour", a long tour of the traps was undertaken. A decent list was being built as the round was completed and more refreshments were required. After that it was decided the time had come to start to count up. The first 100+ species count of the year was achieved with seven newly recorded for the site. Amongst the species recorded were ***Triaxomera parasitella***, ***Caloptilia robustella***, ***Prays ruficeps***, **Oak Hook-tip**, **Latticed Heath**, **Brindled Beauty** and **Alder Moth**. After such a busy night Alan was pleased that he was only 15 minutes later heading for home than he'd hoped for.

After some discussion with Val it was decided that Alan would be able to go on his first visit to Cuttle Pool Nature Reserve and join Scott and Peter for a nights nothing. Alan has read about the place for the last couple of years as Scott produces an annual report about it, so it would be nice to be able to finally see the place for himself. He found the right place and parked behind Scott and Peter's vehicles before heading off in search of the owners. He found them not too far away and asked if he could plug a trap into Scott's generator. With that agreed, he then ran a cable to a location that Scott informed him had not had a trap set up in it before. With all five traps set up Scott went on a chip shop run and obviously Peter couldn't let him eat alone! Whilst dispatching the purchased items from the chippy run they had the backdrop of the very weird 'bubbling' call of a female Cuckoo. Scott saved a small portion of his dinner and put it in a small mammal trap that he'd just learnt how to use. With the lights switched on and small mammal trap set it was now a waiting game for things to arrive. After a while Alan decided to head for something to eat himself. It was then he heard a Barn Owl calling and when he'd finished eating he returned to hear that the others had great views of the owl flying around above them. It took a long time to get around the traps, as there was plenty to see and try to identify. It was time for a much-needed refreshment break on their return. Scott had set a battery actinic trap a long way from all the others and while he and Peter went to see what it had caught, Alan decided to start counting up. It wasn't very peaceful as Alan's concentration kept getting interrupted with Cuckoos calling and Muntjac's barking! He had just finished when the two intrepid mothers returned to see the new species for the night Alan had found. Then he packed up the trap before heading over to unplug. That's when Scott had a look in his small mammal trap and they saw two shining black eyes looking back at them. The eyes owner was a Yellow-necked Mouse, very cute! Scott opened the trap just a little too far at one point and the mouse disappeared like lightning back into the undergrowth. But it had been a rare treat to see one so close up. There then followed a discussion between Scott and Peter about why Scott's camera wasn't doing something or other. Before Alan descended into a coma, as he has absolutely no interest in the subject, he decided to leave them to it and head for home.

Just short of a hundred species had been found with plenty being new for the site. They included ***Monopis weaverella*, *Cochylis nana*, *Orthotaenia undulana*, *Epinotia rubiginosana*, Green Carpet, Dark Sword-grass, Green Silver-lines and Dark Spectacle**. Alan was pleased to have finally been to Cuttle Pool and that he'd been able to contribute to another very enjoyable and successful night's moth recording.

June

With last years late May visit to Abbey Farm being somewhat chilly to say the least, we'd decided to give it another go and hope for the weather to be a little warmer this time. After much discussion and a generous offer from Scott, Val was able to join Alan for her first moth night of the year. She'd really been missing our nighttime adventures and with a nice comfy barn to sit in she felt this was an opportunity not to be missed. Pete and Peter were chatting with Farmer Jon when we arrived and not long afterwards Martin and Nigel showed up. Ros and Steve Smith also appeared with a chap called Simon who was interested to see some moths, although they wouldn't be running a trap themselves. Scott, who similarly wasn't running a trap tonight, was the final attendee to arrive. While the guys sorted out trapping spots, Ros stayed with Val and they headed for the comfort of the barn. On they're way Ros spotted a **Hummingbird Hawk-moth** on some valerian and they enjoyed watching it flitting about. Ros went to find the others to let them know of their sighting, but by the time they got back the moth had disappeared. Farmer Jon had got a log fire going to warm up the barn. The "tea shop" was also set up, which Ros added some yummy homemade cakes to. After switching on and some refreshments, the first round of the eight traps was undertaken with the promise to bring back some moths for Val and Ros, who'd decided to keep her company, to see. That all worked out fine, but eventually the atmosphere in the barn was getting a little too stuffy for Val. Thankfully, Scott was ready to head off at the same time and his generous offer of dropping Val home on his way was gratefully accepted. It meant Alan could stay on and finish the nights recording. As it turned out the weather wasn't much better than the previous year, but with a few more traps the list grew to 66 species with nine being new for the site. So not a bad return, but more important was that Val had got out and enjoyed the company of old friends, seen some moths and got safely home when she needed to thanks to Scott. Apart from the "Hummer" the other new species for the site recorded were ***Coleophora caespititiella*, *Scrobipalpa costella*, *Notocelia cynosbatella*, *Dichrorampha acuminatana*, Tawny-barred Angle, Scalloped Hazel, Lime Hawk-moth and Pale Tussock**.

Our next target wasn't moth related, but involved getting Val back to seeing her first love - live music. It involved a three-day trek to Edinburgh through some truly atrocious driving conditions. Thankfully, we made it all safely and we had a fantastic time while in the Scottish capital. It was great to see Val's face light up with a giant smile as our beloved Airbourne hit the stage. The bands roadcrew looked after her magnificently and afterwards she was told in no uncertain terms that she would still be around to see them again when they came back in November! No complaints from anybody if that were to happen!

The weather had improved markedly on our return to the Midlands and Alan hastily arranged a trip to Sun Rising. He was expecting to be on his own as it was all done at such short notice, but he was delighted to find Nigel already on site and setting up a couple of traps when he arrived. David then put in an appearance and with Alan busy setting up his traps as dusk was falling, he joined Nigel to count the male **Ghost Moths** hovering above their territories. Nigel managed to catch one and give David a close up view before restoring it to resume its territorial battles. It was nice David was able to see this mesmeric sight in person after going home just a little too early last year and missing it. Just before switching the lights on David left them to it. Despite the lack of cloud, the air mass was warm and one of the most productive recording nights yet at Sun Rising was had. Over a thousand moths representing 120 species were spread amongst the five traps. A pleasing sixteen new species were newly recorded for site and they included **Leopard Moth, *Epiblema cirsiana*, *Dichrorampha flavidorsana*, *Dichrorampha alpinana*, *Dichrorampha plumbagana*, Poplar Kitten, Lobster Moth, Grey Arches** and a **Marbled Minor** (confirmed via dissection).

A few days later and Alan joined Martin for the first visit to one of the farms that had offered to host a moth recording session. Martin had arrived early and was joined by Peter for a look around the farm to search for good spots to set up some traps. Alan found Chris wandering around the local churchyard, which was the agreed meeting point. Not long afterwards Martin and Peter had driven down from the farm with a plan! There was to be three different spots around Alderminster that the traps would be sited at.

Peter and Chris would be in the churchyard, while Martin had picked out a spot for Alan back at the farm. Martin would also be at the farm, but half a mile up a hill in an orchard! Martin knows Alan so well that he knew he wouldn't mind setting up in the most unappealing of spots at the back of some horse stables. The area certainly had its own unique aroma and was certainly not the most scenic of places he'd ever recorded. The base for the night would be back at the churchyard, where Chris had a nice bench to relax on and set up the "tea shop" while watching moths arrive at his trap. Peter's trap was down by the River Stour that bordered the churchyard. Some very varied locations and so a healthy list was hoped for, as despite the lack of cloud it was a windless, very warm night. Plenty of moths kept us all in the churchyard with the occasional foray down to Peter's trap by the River. Martin spotted what he thought was a county first at Chris's trap and he was proved correct, as the moth was confirmed to be ***Metalampra italica***. So that was a major success early on. As the churchyard list grew and grew it was decided that it was going to take a while to count up and an earlier than usual start was agreed. Martin and Alan drove back to their respective sites at the farm and began the long slog of counting up what had arrived. It had long been light by the time it was all done and everyone convened at the farm gate to see some of the new species that each of them had found. The final list totaled 164 species and almost 1,800 moths counted. It was a cracking night in a very under recorded area of Warwickshire. Amongst the other species found were ***Coleophora adpersella*, *Aethes beatricella*, *Celypha rosaceana*, *Grapholita lobarzewskii*, Beautiful China-mark, *Homoeosoma sinuella*, Lackey, Blue-bordered Carpet, Lilac Beauty, Eyed Hawk-moth, Scarlet Tiger, Shark and Cream-bordered Green Pea.**

Nigel has wanted to visit Jean Cholerton and moth record in her garden and on the adjacent bit of old railway line that they owned for a while. Alan thought this date might be good as there could be a chance he could pop in and help at some point, as he and Val were off to see their friends in the bands Massive and Tequila Mockingbyrd play a gig in Evesham. They practically had to go past Jean's to get there and Alan thought it might be a nice surprise for Val to be able to drop in for a short while and see Nigel, Jean, her husband David and some moths after the show. Little did Alan know it would be the hottest night of the year! So Val was pretty exhausted after the gig and just wanted to go home and cool down a bit. That was completely understandable, but a little disappointing. Nigel and Jean got a bit overwhelmed with how many moths they had and decided the best they could do was a species list, if Nigel was to be heading home not too long after dawn. The list ended up at 160 species and they had a really enjoyable but tiring night. Some of the species recorded were ***Coleophora badiipennella*, *Ethmia dodecea*, *Acleris kochiella*, *Endothenia nigricostana*, *Sitochroa verticalis*, Drinker, Ruddy Carpet, Beautiful Carpet, Privet Hawk-moth, Heart & Club, Coronet, Light Arches and Blackneck.**

Nigel had postponed a visit to Wolford Wood from the weekend when we were in Edinburgh due to the bad weather then. Alan was now able to join him on the rescheduled visit and hoped for a better night than his last visit years ago which was on a very wet and cold supposedly Spring evening! Nigel was waiting at the gate when Alan arrived and they went on a wander to see where to put the traps. By the time they'd returned Martin and Peter had appeared. As there was only the single drivable track, the order of vehicles was discussed before anybody went to their trapping spots. With that sorted, everyone got to work setting up. Nigel plugged into Peter's generator as unbelievably, he'd had his stolen while he was unloading his car outside his house when returning from Jean's earlier in the week! There's a warning for us all! They were all expecting a big night as they were at a quality site and the weather was pretty good. So during refreshments it was concluded that there would only be time for one tour round if Peter's trap happened to be representative of what the others would be like. His was nearest the "tea shop" and was very busy from when it was switched on. That went as expected and it was already 2 a.m. when they all got back to the "tea shop" for a final refuel before starting the count. Martin went to start on his two, while the others trudged over to Alan's little heath trap, which hadn't been viewed before. Nigel helped Alan count it before it was switched off and they all retired to count up their final traps. Everyone finished around the same time, which was long after dawn! It had been a very good night with a final total of 197 species recorded. Martin was unsure about some particularly grey looking Timothy Tortrix moths he'd found and decided to take one home and check it was that species. Wolford's smaller moths had basically not been recorded until this year and on this night 78 new species were added to the site list. They included Martin's Timothy Tortrix, which turned out to be the closely related ***Aphelia unitana*** and another first County record. Amongst the others were ***Stigmella glutinosae*, *Coleophora betulella*, *Gelechia sororculella*, *Olindia schumacherana*, Willow Tortrix, *Hypsopygia glaucinalis* and *Amblyptilia punctidactyla*.** A few of the larger ones were new too and they were **Gold Swift, Double Dart, Grey Dagger and Scarce Silver-lines.** So in the end Alan was grateful for the poor weather earlier in the month as he could be part of this very productive and enjoyable, but long night.

Alan's journey home wasn't helped by having to give one particular, possibly drunk road user, a lot of space as the vehicle weaved all over the road for mile after mile! It's always worth being on your guard driving at that time of the morning, as over the years we've seen some worrying things on our way home after moth nights!

A couple of nights later on a cloudy warm night this edition's "cover star" appeared in our garden trap. It's such a "WOW!" looking moth that it has to be our 'Moth of the Year'. You would hardly think it was a British species, but it is just an extraordinary and seemingly very rare form of **Swallow-tailed Moth**. Absolutely stunning and a photograph could never do it justice.

Last trip of the month was the annual visit to River Arrow Local Nature Reserve in Alcester. After last years record turn out, it was the opposite this year. The weather hadn't been very good and Alan thinks that put some people off. However, he was confident it would be a lot better than forecast. Alan arrived to find the gate to the playing field open and so that was a good start. However, when he finally found Martin German he tried the key in the lock to the gate leading to the reserve and it didn't work! That wasn't good news at all. It meant all the equipment would have to humped over the gate to be set up. Jean and her cousin's husband Dick Byrne arrived to find this dilemma. It was decided to unload Jean's equipment and then drive around and park in the adjacent cul-de-sac. There was no way Jean would be getting over that gate all night! With Martin and Dick's help everything did get onto the reserve and the traps were set up. The next problem was the generator going off soon after it was switched on. So Alan put more oil in it and all was OK again. Mary and Mark Preston arrived, together with their daughter and her boyfriend. The first trap they stumbled across was Jean's. With the weather being cloudy and mild, a major rarity when we visit this site, there was plenty of moth activity to keep everyone interested. After viewing Alan's first trap daughter and boyfriend headed for home, while those remaining went through his other two. Martin then decided to call it a night. Mary and Mark stayed until it started to get a bit drizzly before similarly heading for home. So there was just Alan, Jean and Dick left on site. Dick had driven all the way down from St. Andrews in Scotland that day and Jean was concerned about getting home safely, so they decided to start packing up. It was around 2:30 am when they were on their way back to Jean's. It was a decision they both later regretted when they saw the final results of the evening. It wasn't easy counting up, especially when Alan found ten **Poplar Hawk-moth's** in one trap and then another in the cable reel bag! As most moth recorders know they can be a bit of a pain to get rid of at the end of a night due to them having a really good grip of whatever they are sitting on! However, it had proved to be the best night Alan had ever had at this site, with the most moths (823) and the most species (137) recorded. They included 42 new species for River Arrow! Amongst them was the first **Rabbit Moth** (*Ypsolopha sequella*) of the year and also **Schreckensteinia festaliella**, **Metzneria lappella**, **Epinotia signatana**, **Gold Triangle**, **Large Emerald**, **Dark Umber**, **Dingy Footman**, **Old Lady** (no not you Jean!), **Double Lobed**, **Small Rufous** and **Herald**. It was a major slog getting all his equipment back over the gate on his own afterwards and Alan certainly felt the effort, as everything ached terribly all the way home. However, it had taken so long to do it that by the time he arrived the garden trap had been off for quite sometime and so he didn't have as much as he should have had to count before finally heading to bed!

July

The first trip of the month was a return to Weethley Wood. It would prove to be a most memorable and historic night. Alan was first to arrive and managed to snap a lot of sedges back off the entrance track before the next arrival, which was Trevor Wright. He was attending his first ever moth night. Nigel arrived next and was closely followed by Peter who managed to park a little awkwardly, which made it a little difficult for Martin, Jean and another mothing 'newbie' Marian to get to their parking spots. Anyway, after Peter had unloaded the "tea shop" and trapping locations sorted, the vehicles were rearranged and everyone got to setting up. After switching on, the moths started to flood in. With Jean's trap being nearest to the refreshments it wasn't too long before curiosity got the best of us and we had to have a look in it. Around an hour later we hadn't moved and Martin said we're up to 70 species so far! After another quick cuppa it was decided to start a round of the other traps. Marian lasted until seeing in Nigel's first trap and Trevor until his second before heading home. It was maybe a good thing, as we remember when we started what it's like when you get blinded by so many moths that you find it hard to cope with. Jean made it as far as Peter's trap before returning to her own. Around an hour later everyone had returned in urgent need of more refreshment. As the food and drink was being consumed Martin matter-of-factly announced "Well that's 190 species so far!"

None of us could quite believe it and it certainly focused the mind on starting to count up sooner rather than later! So after refueling everyone disappeared to their own traps and began an epic count. Alan had been rather smart, as he knew Jean would require some help and so he had only put the little heath trap out himself. It took around two hours to count Jean's trap before it was ready for packing up and he could see what the heath trap had accumulated. That's when Alan found out how many moths you can stuff into quite a small trap. The answer was almost 200! He'd just about finished as everyone else was drifting back looking exhausted as they loaded their vehicles. It was after 6 a.m. before we all headed for home and the skies had now cleared with the sun gleaming down as we went on our way. The results from this night took some time to become finalised and were quite amazing when they had been. Almost 2,500 moths had been counted and the final species total was confirmed at an unbelievable 268! An impressive 46 species were added to the site list, including yet another first record for Warwickshire, which was

Caloptilia hemidactylella. Some of the other new species were ***Morophaga choragella***, ***Ypsolopha nemorella***, ***Coleophora lineolea***, ***Agonopterix angelicella***, ***Recurvaria nanella***, ***Carpatolechia alburnella***, ***Cnephasia pumicana***, ***Gillmeria pallidactyla***, **Small Emerald**, **Phoenix**, **Fern**, **Bordered White**, **Angle-striped Sallow**, **Silky Wainscot** and **Pinion-streaked Snout**. What a night!

The following Friday's scheduled visit to Kineton had provided somewhat of a problem for Alan. Val was very disappointed that she wouldn't be able to go to a gig in Birmingham due to nobody being available to take her and Alan's commitment at the Army Base. However, unbeknown to Val, Alan had been conspiring behind her back and just as he was ready to leave for Kineton, Josie and Louisa from the band Val wanted to go and see arrived on our doorstep. Val was somewhat surprised to say the least and with her being outnumbered three to one had no choice but to quickly get ready and be taken to the gig by the band themselves! All this made Alan a little later leaving than he'd hoped, but it was well worth it to see the stunned look on Val's face! Pete and Peter had beaten Alan to the "meeting missile" and not long after him Nigel and Chris arrived. Then it was fun and games at check-in point No. 2. The usual soldier who checks us in was on the phone and that left a guy who'd only been posted to Kineton the day before to do the honours. He wasn't sure of the protocols and so it took some time to sort us all out signing in the correct book. It gave Nigel time to find a roosting **Smoky Wainscot** though! The next problem was that he wasn't sure of the route to where we were going, so Alan had to lead the convoy to the first gate we needed to go through. Luckily, the dog handler had just finished his patrol on the other side of the road and so we were able to drive straight through the second gate. All was well and Alan managed to remember all the correct turns on the long drive out to The Oaks. The most pleasing thing was that the track you have to take to reach the trapping location had been made a lot smoother since the last time they'd visited. The Oaks itself appeared to remain untouched and was almost impenetrable as the vegetation was so high. However, there were still plenty of good habitat to set traps up in. This was Pete and Nigel's first visit to this part of Kineton and it would prove a good one. With everything set up and switched on it was time for some refreshments. Peter's trap was again the nearest and so got the most attention early on. As the night progressed the cloud cover was slowly increasing, which kept the temperature quite stable and with little wind there were plenty of moths to keep everybody interested. A round of the traps was started when Alan had to go back to the car for something to eat. He caught up with the others again while they were at Chris's trap. Nigel had mentioned to Alan that he was trying a new method of recording his moths by talking into his phone. So when they reached Nigel's trap, Alan asked him "when are you getting your dic out?" This caused much laughter before the comment being explained to the others as meaning "Dictaphone" and not what they were thinking! After the tour and some much needed refreshments it was decided to start counting up. Nigel helped Peter with his and Alan helped Pete as his battery had conked out and it was easier with one holding a torch while the other wrote stuff down. Unfortunately, that left Chris to do the best he could on his own. With everyone finally packed up and ready to leave Pete called the guardhouse and said that we were on our way. That worked out perfectly as just as we arrived the gates were being unlocked. After checking back out again we were all on our way home just as the first spots of rain began falling. Perfect timing! The results of our efforts was another impressive tally with over 1,600 moths counted representing 191 species, including 26 species new for the site. Amongst them were ***Coleophora juncicolella***, ***Depressaria badiella***, ***Blastodacna atra***, ***Gypsonoma oppressana***, ***Scoparia subfusca***, ***Anania lancealis***, **Small Scallop**, **Golden-rod Pug**, **Bordered Beauty**, **August Thorn** and Pete was most pleased with seeing his first ever **Garden Tiger**! Alan was desperate to get home and see how Val's evening had gone. She'd had a great time and been looked after brilliantly. Josie had even driven Val back home again and made sure she got in the house safely. We can't say "Thank You" enough to Tequila Mockingbyrd for coming to pick up Val, entertain her on stage and then bring her home again.

It put a big smile on her face and there can't be many people who can say that the headline band has actually come and picked them up from their house and taken them to their show. Above and beyond girls!

The following evening Nigel was out again. This time he met Martin at a farm in Honington to see what they could find. They had another cracking night at a lovely farm. It was cloudy and breezy all night, but it was particularly warm and so they had plenty of good moths to enjoy and show to the very interested farmer. He couldn't believe how much life his farm was supporting and the endless variety of all the moths. The results were over 1,000 moths counted representing 151 species. They included yet another site for the recent arrival ***Ypsolopha horridella***, a second county record of ***Dichomeris alacella***, ***Eucosma obumbratana***, ***Sitochroa palealis***, **Large Twin-spot Carpet**, **Maple Pug**, **Elephant Hawk-moth**, **Muslin Footman**, **Ruby Tiger** and **Lunar-spotted Pinion**.

A few days later and Alan set off for the scheduled visit to Sun Rising. Chris was waiting in the car park and shortly after Alan's arrival Emma and David turned up to say "hello". Peter and Pete were next, followed closely by Nigel and another "newbie" Bob Brooker. That completed tonight's line-up of attendees. It was a warm evening but there was a gusty southeasterly wind blowing and lightning could be seen in the far distance. After some discussion trap locations were agreed and the "tea shop" was sited in the hut just in case of any torrential downpours. With Emma and David having headed home the switch on was followed by the expected busy start, due to so much electricity being in the air. As the night progressed the thunderstorm threat diminished and the skies cleared leading to a lessening of moth activity and a noticeable drop in temperature. However, it was still extremely mild for Sun Rising and the 'damage' had been done early on with plenty of moths already in the traps. A decent list was built on a tour of the traps, but after recent trips everyone seemed confident when it came to count up time that they wouldn't be overwhelmed by the number of moths in their traps. As the count up got underway the sky started to fill with cloud and the odd large blob of rain was felt. However, it didn't amount to much and we were all relieved with that! Everyone had finished and decided to head for home except Alan and Chris. There was still the little heath trap to count, but that wasn't expected to take too long. That proved to be a very wrong assumption as the little box was stuffed full of moths again and it took a fair old while to tally. Chris was just as surprised as Alan and was glad he'd been able to witness it. There were almost as many moths in that trap as Nigel had managed in his two MV's combined! Amazing! Just as all was packed up and loaded into the car the rain proper started. It would appear that we'd all be fortunate with the weather tonight and were in the right place for a change. It was a lovely feeling to finally win one! The results of everyone's efforts were another 1,000+ moths counted producing records for 154 species with 33 being new for the site and including yet another first county record! This time it was ***Scrobipalpa artemisiella*** that proved to be the moth of the night, although none of us knew that at the time, as Nigel had to confirm it's identity via dissection. Amongst the new species for the site were ***Phyllonorycter cerasicolella***, ***Coleophora saxicolella***, ***Agapeta zoegana***, ***Acleris aspersana***, ***Acrobasis consociella***, **Small Dusty Wave**, **July Highflyer**, **Black Arches** and **Scarce Footman**.

After a weekend playing hotel for two Australian rock bands we were a bit too exhausted to head down with Nigel for a return visit to Jean's. It would seem we missed out on another good night as the weather was cooperative and 166 species were recorded with around 35 being new for the site. Jean was delighted with the result even if the 5 a.m. finished time was a bit late for her! Some of the species found were ***Caloptilia semifascia***, ***Coleophora hemerobiella***, ***Agonopterix liturosa***, ***Acleris holmiana***, **Wax Moth**, ***Platyptilia ochrodactyla***, **Pebble Hook-tip**, **Purple Bar**, **Yellow-barred Brindle**, **Lychnis**, **Lesser Common Rustic** and **Dusky Sallow**.

The final trip of the month was the annual visit to Focus Optics in Corley. It was a windy, damp but reasonably mild evening as Alan found Keith, John, Chris, Peter and Pete chatting with Tim when he arrived. As usual the nearest resident to the site was last to arrive and yes that would be you Nigel! With the weather not being kind it was decided to just run one trap each and set them in the most sheltered spots they could find. That didn't prevent a lot of varied habitats being covered by at least one trap. Tim was an innocent participant in the latest bit of nonsense from Chris. Whilst trying to get an umbrella over his trap that involved a long pole and a lot of sticky tape, Chris had managed a perfect tape job joining the two items together. However, it was so thorough a job that Chris had managed to cover the umbrella's release catch in tape as well and so he couldn't put it up! Doh! With the "tea shop" being set up inside tonight, the intermittent rain that came and went at regular intervals wasn't much of a problem. The first round of traps was undertaken when the rain had stopped and it became obvious fairly quickly that one particular moth species would provide a major challenge to count tonight. ***Blastobasis adustella*** was present at every trap and in large numbers!

Everything else was at a nice manageable level. As they returned to the "tea shop" the skies began to clear and the threat of any more rain seemed to have passed. A second round of the traps was done before the final tally and Chris managed to add a part two to his night's umbrella adventure! Now with clear skies overhead he decided it wasn't required any more and so released the catch to take it down. He hadn't thought it through and all the remaining water on the umbrella rained straight down into his trap! Doh, No. 2! We just managed to sneak over the 100 species mark, but felt we needed to add a new phrase to the mothing handbook, as we all felt a bit "adustellered" after the count. A staggering 82% of the 2,409 moths counted were the aforementioned **Blastobasis adustella**! The lowest trap count being around 150 and the highest being over 500! However, in addition we did manage to find some new species for the site, which were **Ypsolopha ustella**, **Rhyacionia pinicolana**, **Codling Moth**, **Phycita roborella**, **Flame Carpet**, **Sallow Kitten**, **Black Arches** and **Gold Spot**. So after an unpromising start, the night didn't turn out to badly in the end.

August

It was a return to Wolford Wood for the first trip of the month. Alan had a very frustrating journey getting there, but he'd done well compared to one of the others! Alan arrived to find Les and Martin Finch chatting with Nigel. They were wondering where Peter had got to, as Nigel had been following him until the turn off to the wood. Peter hadn't made the turn for some reason and hadn't arrived at the wood either! Martin and Scott made it before Peter finally showed up and the growing panic of being without the "tea shop" for the evening could be alleviated! There had been thunderstorms and showers all afternoon and now the skies were clearing, so it wasn't going to be a particularly warm night. Half of our number wanted to go relatively early and so parking and trapping locations were agreed accordingly. With the "tea shop" having arrived it would have been impolite to not give it some major use this evening, as there weren't too many moths around. The usual nonsense banter kept everyone amused until it was decided to do a round of the traps to warm up a bit. Not too much had arrived but **Devon Carpet** and some very fresh **Dark Marbled Carpet** provided some interest. After some more refreshment the "lightweights" decided to count up what few moths they had and head for home. That left Nigel, Peter and Alan to see what his little heath trap had produced this evening. A couple of **Chocolate-tip** and a **Small Wainscot** was the best it could offer, but at least there was no chance of us being "adustellered" this time! By the time everything was packed and we were heading for home, 60 species had been recorded with yet another first for Warwickshire being amongst them. On this occasion it was **Agonopterix astantiae** that was the star find of the night. A good number of the species were newly recorded for the wood as well and included **Ypsolopha scabrella**, **Acleris laterana**, **Epinotia solandriana** and **Udea lutealis**. So it was a worthwhile trip despite the less than perfect weather.

The following Friday night it was the third annual visit to Peastockings Meadows near Meriden. Alan kept up the tradition of nearest to the site being last to arrive, but it did mean he could give Keith a lift down the track after he'd locked the gate behind them. They joined Nigel, Scott, Martin, Pete, Peter, John Hunt and Glen Giles who were busy setting up traps all over the place. With that many Alan thought he'd be able to get away with just running the little heath trap tonight thanks to Scott allowing him to plug into his generator. It was a cloudy and mild night to begin with and the traps were busy from switch on. The clouds did start to disperse around 1:30 a.m. but the temperature only dropped slowly, so there was still plenty arriving to see. Alan helped a grateful Keith count his trap before going to find out what was in the little heath trap. The results from the twelve traps were very good, with almost 2,500 moths counted representing 156 species and almost half of them being new for the site. They included **Nemapogon clematella**, **Calybites phasianipennella**, **Leek Moth**, **Stenolechia gemmella**, **Cnephasia genitalana**, **Lesser Wax Moth**, **Clay Triple-lines**, **Canary-shouldered Thorn**, **Pale Prominent**, **Rosy Minor** and **Ear Moth**.

After missing out for the past three years for various reasons Val finally made it back to the public moth night at Wildfowl & Wetlands Centre at Slimbridge. Knowing that she could sit inside and wait for the moths to be brought to her, as that's the way it's always done, made it the perfect event for her to be at. Running the event as usual was our old friend Pete Cranswick and he was delighted to see Val had finally made it back to Slimbridge. Alan dropped Val as near as he could to the door leading to the film theatre, before heading to our usual trapping spot in the reedbed filtration area. Also making it down from the Midlands was Anna Ryder with husband and daughter in tow. They were on a camper van holiday in the area and couldn't resist joining us and she set up a trap on the boardwalk. The weather wasn't great, with a gusty wind and occasional showers. By the time Alan had set up, switched on and returned to the theatre, Pete was underway with his always informative and entertaining talk. There were around 40 "public" being educated about moths and the strange people that record them!

After Pete had finished it was time for a cuppa before splitting the group in half and heading out to see what had arrived in the traps. As Alan took his group out to his traps, Pete took the rest in the opposite direction to the others that had been set up. The reedbed traps weren't overly busy, but there was enough to keep people interested and we potted up as many different species as we could. With everybody else out at the traps, Val was enjoying a bit of peace reading a book and having a cuppa and a biscuit. That was until Alan returned with his group and her silence was shattered as everybody discussed what was in the pots they'd brought back. Pete's group had a number of kids contained within it and that held them up he explained when they did finally arrive back in the warm. Unfortunately by that time, some of Alan's group had decided to head for home and so didn't see the different species that had been caught in the other traps, which was a shame. However, plenty did stay long enough to go out to the traps they hadn't seen the first time. After that though the "public" pretty much disappeared en masse and it was just the hardcore left as usual! Alan eventually decided to go and count up and then he would come back and pick Val up in a little while. However, he wasn't quite expecting the sudden deluge of moths he'd found in the traps. It included 10 **Poplar Hawk-moths** in one of them! So it took him a lot longer than expected. So long in fact that Pete came up to see if he was OK! Alan explained about the extra moths as he was reeling in the last cable. Pete had locked up and chauffeured Val up to our car just as Alan was ready to drive down to get her. So that worked out well in the end and we all left at the same time. On a poor night 55 species were recorded and included **Orange Swift, Calamotropha paludella, Small China-mark, Adaina microdactyla, Peach Blossom, Magpie Moth, Dog's Tooth, Bulrush Wainscot, Brown-veined Wainscot and Nut-tree Tussock.**

Due to some unforeseen circumstances Alan was unable to make it to a moth night that he really wanted to go to. However, Scott, Peter and Chris managed to join Martin at Feldon Forest Farm. They had an excellent night with mild and windless weather conditions. Over 1,600 moths from 107 species were recorded at this excellent and unique farm that's in yet another under recorded part of Warwickshire. Amongst the species found were **Parornix torquillella, Epermenia falciformis, Catoptria falsella, Rush Veneer, Currant Pug, Tawny Speckled Pug, Nutmeg, Vine's Rustic and Red Underwing.** Alan does hope he gets there one night!

August Bank Holiday Sunday and Alan had agreed to lead a moth night for Emma and David at Sun Rising. He arrived to find Pete drinking a cuppa and chatting away with David, Emma and her Dad. John Finlay and Scott arrived shortly afterwards and discussions were undertaken about where to site the traps. With all agreed they set to work. As they were doing that the car park became ever fuller with people constantly arriving. Alan and Pete had brought some moths caught in their gardens the previous night and they were put out on a table adjacent to the "tea shop". When everything was finally set up the recorders found a lot of people listening to the end of Emma's introduction and safety talk before she introduced Alan. This came as a bit of a shock to him, as he wasn't expecting to have to make a speech! However, the rambling mess of words he managed to get out seemed to do the trick. They did though lead to a barrage of questions afterwards and he was extremely grateful to Pete, Scott and John for chipping in and helping him out with some answers. The moths that Alan and Pete had brought had obviously sparked interest, because as soon as the traplights were switched on people dispersed to all parts to see what was arriving. Thankfully everybody manned their own traps and showed off the moths to the fascinated onlookers. The weather was far better than Alan could have expected for a Bank Holiday and there was plenty to see. Scott managed to find a Common Toad and then two Leverets attempting to hide somewhere between Alan's two traps. They were cute and stayed around for many people to see them before they melted away into the night. It seemed a long time before things slowed down a bit and people started to drift off home. It was no less enjoyable for that, but refreshments were certainly required by everyone after all that mothy chat. The moths kept arriving steadily and some people stayed very late, as they didn't want to miss anything. Eventually, though David could head home himself, as he'd been volunteered to make sure everyone left safely and everything was as it should be. That just left the moth recorders to tally before they could do the same. Alan still had one trap left to do by the time John, Scott and Pete were ready to go and so they left him to it. That took a lot longer than expected as new species kept arriving while he was trying to count. Dawn had come and gone by the time he was finally able to head home! Then he had to spend another hour counting the garden trap when he arrived! However, it had been a very successful night all round with 74 species being recorded at Sun Rising, including five new for the site. Amongst them were **Bryotropha similis, Agriphila selasella, Eudonia pallida, Rusty-dot Pearl, Pale Eggar, Vapourer, Straw Underwing, Six-striped Rustic and Spectacle.** Alan was surprised to learn that this was the most well attended event that Sun Rising had ever hosted.

However, he would like to add that its success was also due to the exceptional help that Pete, Scott and John gave him and to whom he would like to extend his most grateful thanks. Alan would also like to thank all the people that came and were so enthusiastic, which made it such an enjoyable experience.

Alan's last trip of the month was pretty much doomed from the start. He had no proper address to where he was supposed to be heading, just some rough idea, which didn't inspire a lot of confidence to begin with! The journey was a disaster thanks to some absolute moron completely stuffing up the main A45 through Coventry with a ridiculous road system. That and more roadworks further on made him later and later. Dusk was falling by the time he reached the area he thought he should be in. He had a quick drive up to where he thought he should be, but with no sign of Nigel or Martin's vehicles and not knowing if he was in the right place anyway, he gave up. Desperately trying to make the best out of a bad situation, he decided to try and get to Ryton Meadows. Thankfully, he got on site OK and set up a couple of traps. The weather wasn't great. There was the odd spot of rain in the air, but the skies were clearing, which meant it was going to get cold. Things were as slow as he'd expected and after three hours he packed up and headed for home. He was surprised that he'd managed to record 27 species and one of them was new for the site! That was

Argyresthia bonnetella. Best of the rest was the seven **Feathered Gothic**, most of which were in the heath trap! Most numerous at the traps with 18 were *Limnephilus lunatus*, a caddis fly. Nigel and Martin managed to stay out a little longer at their 'mystery farm' location, as they had somewhere nice and warm to sit for most of the time! They also did a lot better than Alan by managing to record over 500 moths from 50 species between them. They were in yet another very under recorded part of Warwickshire and so around half the species were newly recorded for SP45. Congratulations to them for finding the right place to start with and then doing well with the recording too. To illustrate how under recorded this particular square is here's some of the new species they found, **White-shouldered House-moth**, **Blastobasis adustella**, **Red-green Carpet**, **Double-striped Pug**, **Square-spot Rustic** and **Flounced Rustic**.

September

We missed out on the last trip of the year to Welford Wood due to a long-standing date in Nottingham with "Val's Boys" (otherwise known as rock band The Treatment). However, Martin, Peter and Pete joined Nigel for a mediocre, but worthwhile night. Martin and Nigel managed to find quite a few new species for the wood by searching for leafmines. There were also some new species amongst the adults that slowly arrived at the six traps. 41 species of adult moth were recorded including **Hypatima rhomboidella**, **Acleris rhombana**, **Dioryctria abietella**, **Early Tooth-striped** (yes, really!) and **Frosted Orange**.

Alan did make it for a return visit to Abbey Farm and was last to arrive. Martin and Chris were chatting with Farmer Jon so he wandered over to join them. There had been showers on the journey and now the skies were clearing, so the prospects for a good night didn't seem good. But never having been to the farm this late in the year there was hope that something new would show up. It was a good time for Martin to search for leafmines and he did well adding substantially to what we thought would be a fairly small list. With traps set up and Farmer Jon having left them to it, the barn was very welcoming. Nobody was too eager to venture out to look in the traps as the temperature plummeted from a not very warm starting point. Eventually, it was decided we needed the walk to warm up and so a round of the traps was undertaken. As expected they weren't exactly full, but with the wind having dropped there were a few things flying. We decided to give it bit longer because of that. Alan then discovered his lights had gone out. He suspected that condensation around the generator cap was the problem and so it proved. After wiping it dry and filling the generator with petrol again so he wouldn't run out at count up time, all was well again. After more time spent in the barn, a second tour of the traps found that not too much had changed and so it was decided to pack up. The results of the evening's efforts produced records for 25 species of adult moth with four being new for the site. Martin managed a similar number of mines with 14 of them being newly recorded for the farm. So overall it wasn't too bad a return. The new adults for Abbey farm were **Eudonia angustea**, **Brown-spot Pinion**, **Centre-barred Sallow** and **Frosted Orange**.

A return visit to the Alderminster area was next on the agenda. Things looked pretty grim as Alan arrived at the churchyard with torrential rain hammering down. The lack of any wind meant this wasn't going to clear through very quickly either. So some time was spent sheltering in the cars before venturing out to sort out trapping locations with the other, just as mad attendees namely Peter, Pete, Martin, Chris and Jean.

After some discussion it was decided that Martin would go back to the farm and set his traps where he did last time, with Pete and Peter following him and they would have a go at Alan's rather aromatic location from the previous visit. Chris, Alan and Jean would try and find the best shelter they could around the churchyard. The rain seemed to be easing, but everybody received a bit of a drenching while setting up. With everybody set up and switched on the rain had finally passed and everybody met at the churchyard for some warming refreshments from the "tea shop". Both Alan and Jean had brought along some cakes to add to the stock. The first moth seen came to an unfortunate end, as it managed to land in Chris's steaming hot mug of tea. By the time it was fished out there weren't many signs of life for the poor **Square-spot Rustic**. Chris carried on and finished his cuppa and once empty, the "Mug of Doom" as it became nicknamed, resided on a gravestone for the rest of the evening! With the skies clearing the temperature started dropping and a mist descended. It did make everything very atmospheric as the traps provided some spooky light in the churchyard. That led to a rash of ghost stories being told before a final look in the churchyard traps was made and everyone decided to call it a night. The "Mug of Doom" received another visitor, but thankfully with it being empty this time, the **Lunar Underwing** fared somewhat better and was able to continue flying after it's encounter with the receptacle. With everyone starting to pack up, Chris and Alan helped Jean first to get everything back to her car before counting up what they had managed to attract through the mist. It didn't take long but when the others returned from the farm the final list was a creditable 24 species for such a damp and cold night. Amongst them were **Eudonia pallida**, **Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing**, **Black Rustic**, **Rosy Rustic** and **Red Underwing**. Martin also managed to find a lot of leafmines, which again almost doubled the list.

There was a large turnout for the last scheduled trip of the year, which was a return to Kineton. Alan arrived to find a small queue at the gate with "newbie" Jason Hawkes at the front. The guards seemed to be waiting for Alan to vouch for him, as he was in a camper van and they wondered if he was going to move in permanently! Once it was all sorted out and permits and passes allocated to everyone, the queue of vehicles reached almost to the main road! So Alan led Peter, Pete, Chris, Nigel and Jason around to the missile car park to await Martin who would be the last arrival. After checking through gate number two we headed for a site we'd only trapped at once before. Luckily we were early enough to have a good look round the area and sort out the best spots to set the eleven traps. For the time of year it was a mild night with bits and pieces of cloud coming and going. The temperature remained reasonable all night and with little or no wind the moths had no problem in making their way to the widespread traps. The "tea shop" was set up somewhere near the middle of the trapping area and Nigel produced a donation in the shape of a victoria sponge than had been exchanged for the loan of a moth trap to a farmer he'd visited recently. That was dispatched in record time by those gathered and an empty plate was the result. Jason decided to head back to his camper van as we were expecting to be around for a quite a while tonight, plus he needed to sleep off all that cake! Chris had been up to his old tricks again whilst setting up tonight and managed to wonder where he could stick the bulb in, as he'd managed to put the crossbar in upside down! Just another doh! moment for Chris! The tour of the traps took a very long time as they were so spread out and there was a lot to see. Alan went back to his trap and had to put both oil and more petrol in the generator before counting up. Jason put in an appearance and Alan helped him count his trap which proved to be the most populated of them all thanks in large part to there being 67 **Lunar Underwing** found in it. When everyone met up after finishing counting there were plenty of species to be seen that hadn't been found on the tour round. The slight southerly airflow seemed to have brought in some migrants and Nigel seemed to have been in the right spot to catch them. **False Mocha** was a new species for everyone except Martin and **Pearly Underwing** was new for many too. Our unofficial target of **Dusky-lemon Sallow** also showed up, which put the icing on the cake, well it would have done had the cake not been eaten earlier! A total of 839 moths had been recorded, representing 77 species with 16 being new for the site. If you add the results of Martin and Nigel's leafmine search as well, the list of species for the night totaled 107. So this was a pretty spectacular night on every level. After checking back out again it was just after 4 a.m. before everyone was on their way home. Some of the other species recorded included **Caloptilia stigmatella**, **Cosmiotes consortella**, **Epinotia sordidana**, **Feathered Thorn**, **Brindled Green**, **Orange Sallow** and **Pink-barred Sallow**.

October

This year's National Moth Nights were scheduled for the middle of the month and Martin organised a visit to Snitterfield Bushes for the first of them. Scott, Chris, Pete and Peter joined him on a reasonably mild night with a slight breeze. So conditions weren't too bad and a search of the ivy produced a good number of moths early on. The major event tonight was that Chris's "wind-up" torch finally bit the dust. That's a bit of a worry for the rest of us, as we'll never know where he is now! By the time everyone decided that it was time to go home a very good 35 species had been found which satisfied everyone. Amongst them were ***Acleris emargana*, *Epinotia maculana*, Feathered Thorn, Figure of Eight, Satellite, Dark Chestnut** and **Red-line Quaker**.

The following evening Scott arranged a visit to Cuttle Pool Nature Reserve and was joined by Chris, Peter, Glen, John Hunt and John Sirrett. It was a similar night to the previous one, although a little more cloudy early on. Scott was very pleased with the 38 species recorded as they included 8 new for the site. They were all species he was wondering how they hadn't been recorded before! So he was delighted that ***Ypsolopha ustella*, *Agonopterix arenella*, *Emmelina monodactyla*, Spruce Carpet, Square-spot Rustic, Brindled Green, Merveille Du Jour** and **Brick** were finally now part of the site list.

The last of the three National Moth Nights was a spectacular extravaganza. Jean had offered to host everyone and cook dinner too! So on a mild Saturday night we both joined the usual suspects Chris, Peter, Pete, Nigel, Martin and Scott by making our way down to Cranhill, where we were warmly welcomed by Jean and David. Trevor also came over to give Alan the trap back he'd been loaned over summer. We'd also taken our friends Rand and Karen, who'd come over from Norwich especially for this event. Before dinner everyone was given a tour of the place so that trapping spots could be decided upon. Eventually ten traps were set up all the way from outside the back door to a long way up the disused railway line. Then with everything switched on it was food time. Two tables had been laid out for the delights to be consumed on and as soon as everyone had found a seat Jean brought in Beef Stew and Dumplings with Mashed Potato for all. All that was, except Peter! Now he'd been a bit ambitious in his demands about what Jean should cook for this evening's meal when it was discussed back on the wet moth night in the Alderminster churchyard. We all thought he needed to be taught a lesson and so Jean brought him a plate of bread and drippin'! We all thought this was justice for his teasing of Jean last month and found it very funny. Peter being Peter was going to eat it too before Jean gave him his stew and dumplings! Hopefully, that was a lesson learned Peter! Alan had baked some muffins to add to Jean's cake for pudding and everyone had a thoroughly enjoyable chat over the sumptuous offerings. Nobody was overly keen to start a round of the traps, but it was felt that dinner's excess's needed to be walked off, a little bit at least. Every trap had moths of interest and it took a long while to get to them all. Somewhere along the way Chris had disappeared without anyone noticing. He'd begun with the rest of us, so where was he? People were looking down ditches just to see if Chris had been Chris and done something daft like falling down the bank. Eventually, Alan retraced their steps and found Chris chatting to Val in the conservatory! After seeing the traps in the garden, he'd decided to chat to Val and keep her company back at the house. Nice idea, but it would have saved a lot of wildly swinging torches down banks if he'd actually told somebody! Anyway, the moth list was growing from trap to trap to a very healthy tally. By the time everyone had got back to the house and partaken of some light refreshment it was getting quite late and so it was decided to start counting up. Rand and Karen stayed with Val this time, as they didn't have a trap to count. They were all delighted that when everyone returned they'd brought the best moths for them to see as well. The final total of 55 species was a worthy reward for Jean doing such an amazing job in looking after us all. Many of them were newly recorded for the site too. Amongst the species found were ***Phyllonorycter messaniella*, *Tuta absoluta*, Mallow, Cypress Carpet, November Moth, Swallow-tailed Moth, Barred Sallow** and **Large Wainscot**. Everyone had enjoyed the experience so much that it was secretly decided to have a collection to thank Jean and David for doing such a wonderful job. It took a lot of persuading for them to accept it, but we suggested the money be put towards helping to keep improving their reserve. What a great way to celebrate National Moth Night. Great site, great cooking, great company, great weather, great moths! Perfect!

November

The last moth target of the year was to find an opportunity to head back to Sun Rising and get **December Moth** on the list for the site. Martin recognised an opportunity and Alan helped him organise the short-notice visit. Unfortunately he wasn't able to go himself, as Val had her live music targets to achieve around that time and Alan needed to get her to the shows everywhere from Norwich to Nottingham, including those Airbourne ones! So a little bit of recovery time was required. However, Peter, Pete and Chris were able to join Martin for a very productive, cloudy night's mothing. They managed to record 19 species, with the **December Moth** target making up a quarter of the total moths caught and another eight new species for the site were a nice bonus. Martin was also kept busy with another leafmine search and managed to add another ten new species for the site by that method. Amongst the adult moths recorded were **Red-green Carpet**, **Winter Moth**, **Scarce Umber** and **Sprawler**. So it was a very successful end to the mothing year.

Summary

This was a year that neither of us thought would go the way it did. With Val in fairly decent health for the most part, Alan got to do a lot of night's he wouldn't have expected to. That was all thanks to Val's bravery, understanding and desire to keep the recording going. Managing to get Val to at least a few of these night's was a great joy and thanks to everyone who helped make that happen. The major target of reaching under recorded areas of the county received a huge boost from all the farmers who invited us to come and record "their" moths. Hopefully, we can keep visiting these places in future too, as there will be much more awaiting discovery. It was a very good year for discovering new species for the county as well, which is always quite exciting. Overall it was a very enjoyable year, although it was difficult at times balancing everything. Late in the year Val had a setback and broke her arm. As we write this we are unsure how well it will heal. We are keeping everything crossed that she gets the use of it back as soon as possible. We'd like to say a huge "Thank you" to everyone for they're help, best wishes and enquiries about how Val was doing throughout the year. It's all very much appreciated more than you'll ever know.

Clarification

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

Moth Nights 2017

Date	Site	Traps	Species	Individuals
17/02/2017	Snitterfield Bushes, Warwickshire	7	10	178
10/03/2017	Snitterfield Bushes, Warwickshire	4	20	146
13/05/2017	Weethley Wood, Warwickshire	12	93	542
20/05/2017	DSDA Kineton, Warwickshire	8	61	248
23/05/2017	Sun Rising NBG, Warwickshire	6	77	331
26/05/2017	Alvecote Wood, Warwickshire	6	108	520
31/05/2017	Cuttle Pool NR, Warwickshire	5	98	558
03/06/2017	Abbey Farm, Wolvey, Warwickshire	8	66	344
14/06/2017	Sun Rising NBG, Warwickshire	5	120	1,089
17/06/2017	Tithe Farm & Churchyard, Alderminster, Warwickshire	6	164	1,793
21/06/2017	Cranhill, Warwickshire	5	160	275+
24/06/2017	Wolford Wood, Warwickshire	6	197	2,178
30/06/2017	River Arrow LNR, Warwickshire	4	137	823
07/07/2017	Weethley Wood, Warwickshire	7	268	2,451
14/07/2017	DSDA Kineton, Warwickshire	7	191	1,657
15/07/2017	Highfield Farm, Honington, Warwickshire	5	151	1,155
18/07/2017	Sun Rising NBG, Warwickshire	7	154	1,148
25/07/2017	Cranhill, Warwickshire	5	166	443+
28/07/2017	Focus Optics, Corley, Warwickshire	7	101	2,409
05/08/2017	Wolford Wood, Warwickshire	9	60	262
11/08/2017	Peastockings Meadows, Warwickshire	12	156	2,367
18/08/2017	Slimbridge WWT Centre, Gloucestershire	6?	55	200
25/08/2017	Feldon Forest Farm, Frankton, Warwickshire	6	107	1,617
27/08/2017	Sun Rising NBG, Warwickshire	6	74	1,259
31/08/2017	Ryton Meadows, Warwickshire	2	27	86
31/08/2017	Hodnell Farm, Warwickshire	5	50	519
02/09/2017	Wolford Wood, Warwickshire	6	41	172
09/09/2017	Abbey Farm, Wolvey, Warwickshire	6	25	212
16/09/2017	Tithe Farm & Churchyard, Alderminster, Warwickshire	8	24	154
23/09/2017	DSDA Kineton, Warwickshire	11	77	839
12/10/2017	Snitterfield Bushes, Warwickshire (NMN1)	7	35	249
13/10/2017	Cuttle Pool NR, Warwickshire (NMN2)	7	38	243

Date	Site	Traps	Species	Individuals
14/10/2017	Cranhill, Warwickshire (NMN3)	10	55	414
14/11/2017	Sun Rising NBG, Warwickshire	7	19	48
TOTALS	*Note: (Species is average per night)	228	*94	26,211

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131	<i>Incurvaria oehlmanniella</i>	2	587	<i>Coleophora caespititiella</i>	4
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321	<i>Phyllonorycter messaniella</i>	13	724	<i>Metzneria lappella</i>	6
330	<i>Phyllonorycter cerasicolella</i>	8	755	<i>Stenolechia gemmella</i>	9
421	<i>Argyresthia bonnetella</i>	11	757	<i>Recurvaria nanella</i>	7
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452	<i>Ypsolopha nemorella</i>	7	780	<i>Bryotropha similis</i>	10
455	<i>Ypsolopha scabrella</i>	9	802a	<i>Gelechia sororculella</i>	5
456	<i>Ypsolopha horridella</i>	8	819	<i>Scrobipalpa costella</i>	4
461	<i>Ypsolopha ustella</i>	9, 12	820	<i>Scrobipalpa artemisiella</i>	8
462	<i>Ypsolopha sequella</i>	6	822	<i>Scrobipalpa acuminatella</i>	3
473	Leek Moth	9	825a	<i>Tuta absoluta</i>	13
481	<i>Epermenia falciformis</i>	10	851	<i>Dichomeris alacella</i>	8
485	<i>Schreckensteinia festaliella</i>	6	858	<i>Hypatima rhomboidella</i>	11
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AN IDIOTS TALE OF A NIGHT IN A WET CHURCHYARD!

By Jean Cholerton

Once upon a time there were six perfect idiots.

Martin Kennard (‘cos he arranged it all),

Alan Prior (‘cos he encouraged it),

Peter Beasley (Dreamin’ of bread and drippin’)

Pete Smith (Quietly going along with it)

Chris Johnson (Who can’t avoid trouble)

Jean Cholerton (Who should have known better)

They all joined up on Saturday night 16th Sept. 2017 at 6.30 pm in the soaking wet graveyard of Alderminster Church in South Warwickshire.

Well, it was dry when some arrived, but by 7.15 pm the storm clouds had gathered...

Their aim was to capture and log the moths in boxes encouraged to join the idiots by the lights that were supplied by Alan. Peter and Martin’s Generators.

By 10.00 pm they were all soaking wet.

Water was dripping off the gargoyles of the church roof and the sound of the owls hooting gave it all ‘atmosphere’.

They all fell about laughing when Chris excitedly exclaimed, “I see a moth! What is it? Ooo-err, it’s landed in my mug of steaming hot tea!”

Dragged out and laid to rest, it remained on the corner of Chris’s box all night.

For the rest of the evening, through to 12.30 am, they giggled their way through the cold, the wet and the misery of it all until..... ‘THE FINAL COUNTDOWN’! That was when they discovered the night was not a wash out after all! The moths, bless ‘em, had come to say hello and dry out in the warm boxes, (except the poor sod that had drowned in Chris’s hot mug of tea.)

And so the six idiots all went home, happy and contented to defrost their wet knees in warm blankets for 2 hours... or was that just Jean... who should have known better!





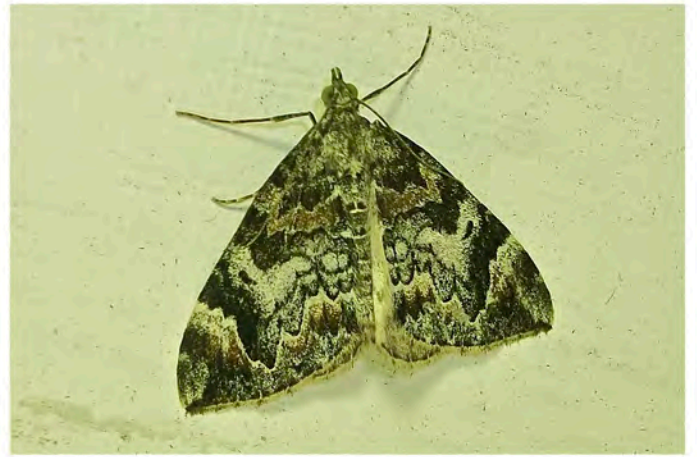
851 *Dichomeris alacella* (Martin Kennard)



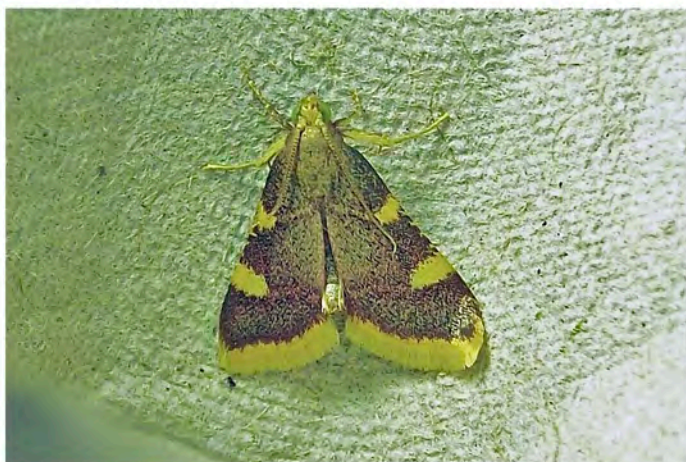
1426 Lesser Wax Moth (Martin Kennard)



1894 Latticed Heath (Alan Prior)



1762 Dark Marbled Carpet (Alan Prior)



1413 Gold Triangle (Alan Prior)



2119 Pearly Underwing (Alan Prior)



632 *Cosmiotes consortella* (Martin Kennard)



825a *Tuta absoluta* (Martin Kennard)



1771a Cypress Carpet (Martin Kennard)



2266 Brown-spot Pinion (Martin Kennard)



2271 Orange Sallow (Alan Prior)



1679 False Mocha (Martin Kennard)



Head Office and membership enquiries to:

Butterfly Conservation, Manor Yard, East Lulworth, Wareham, Dorset, BH20 5QP
t: 01929 400209 e: info@butterfly-conservation.org w: <http://www.butterfly-conservation.org>

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