

The Glamorgan Moth Recording Group

Founded 1995

Recorder (West): Barry Stewart

Recorder (East): David Gilmore

Orthoptera Recorder: Greg Jones

Secretary/Newsletter Editor: Mike Powell

Treasurer: Stefan Golaszewski

Committee: Mark Evans, Steve Moon, David Slade, Martin White



Dichonia aprilina

NEWSLETTER No. 81 – MAY 2005

WINTER INDOOR MEETING & AGM, SATURDAY 8th JANUARY 2005

A total of just 10 members attended the winter indoor meeting on Saturday January 8th 2005 held at the National Museum of Wales. Following the formal part of the AGM (see below) Kelly Thomas gave a short presentation on some of the work currently being undertaken by Butterfly Conservation in Wales & Barry Stewart gave a presentation on the 'highlights of a poor year'. Finally Dave Slade gave an update on the work currently being undertaken by Sewbrec and how this will impact on the GMRG.

The main points of discussion from the AGM.

President:

After nearly ten years as president Steve Moon had decided to stand down. The secretary thanked Steve for his work during the formation of the GMRG and confirmed that he would remain on the committee and continue to chair the work of the publication working group.

Treasurers report:

Stefan Golaszewski presented an up to date set of accounts to 31st December 2004 that showed we had £6009.26 in the bank of which £403.89 was held in our current account & £5605.37 in the deposit (book fund) account. During the year £1060.00 had been received for survey work undertaken/desktop surveys provided (net of expenses). The proposal not to increase subscriptions for 2005/06 was agreed with the proviso again that if this survey income ever dried up this decision would be revisited. It was agreed that the cost of survey work would rise to £100.00 per session.

Macrolepidoptera of Glamorgan:

Considerable work had taken place on the proposed book since the last AGM on 7th February 2004. The publication working group now meet approximately every three months. Drafts on a number of species were in preparation by Dave Gilmore, Dave Slade & Barry Stewart following the end of official 'recording' on 31st December 2004 & CCW had assisted by providing the Welsh names although further work was required on this. It was announced that there would be two companion volumes covering Micro and Macro moths in one & Butterflies in the other with a likely publication date in mid to late 2006. A flyer would be produced to advertise this important publication by the GMRG.

Field Meetings, 2004:

It was agreed that we would again only run three meetings during 2005, as follows:

National Moth Day/Night, Saturday 9th July
A square bash in August (date to be agreed)
Forest Farm, Cardiff, Sunday 7th August

Special thanks once again go to Mike Wilson for allowing use of the room without charge.

NATIONAL MOTH NIGHT, SATURDAY 9th JULY 2005

The date of Saturday 9th July 2005 has been set for the next National Moth Night. As in previous years events will be run in both the east and west of the county.

In East Glamorgan the NMN event will be in two parts with the evening session taking place at the St Fagans Folk Museum, Cardiff looking for Double Line. The daytime session will take place elsewhere and concentrate on day flying species, the targets being Chalk Carpet & Welsh Clearwing. Full details will appear in the next newsletter.

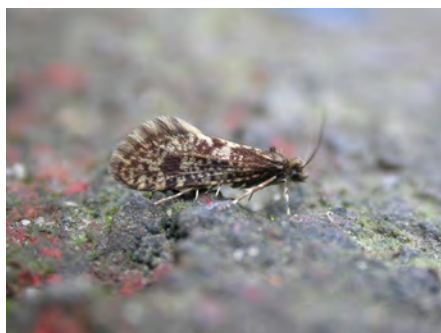
South Wales Butterfly Conservation Branch Member's Day & National Moth Night takes place at Magor Marsh Centre and other local sites. Site visits are planned during the afternoon, then a talk on moths in the early evening, followed later by moth trapping. Contact for further information is Martin Anthony on 01633 612272.

Further details on NMN can be found at <www.nationalmothnight.info>

Bankesia conspurcatella (Zeller, 1850), A NEW PSYCHID TO WALES AND A TAXONOMIC NIGHTMARE

Just a few days after moving into my new flat in Mynachdy, Cardiff I caught a micro-moth that I did not recognise just off the Gabalfa Interchange. In fact I was not even sure what family it belonged to. I managed to get a photograph and posted it to the ukmoths email group, and Martin Corley quickly responded to say that it was a member of the Psychidae family, and although he was uncertain as to which species he felt that either *Bankesia* or *Dahlica* were the likely genera.

The discussion that followed threw up the possibility that it might be a winged male of *Dahlica lichenella*. This would have been particularly interesting since no one has ever seen a male in the UK. Some species of Psychid only occur as 'parthenogenetic' females, which reproduce asexually. On the continent, *D. lichenella* is known to be bi-sexual, but only the parthenogenetic form has ever been recorded in the UK.



Bankesia conspurcatella

Over the next month, I saw four more individuals, two of which were actually in my new back garden. I managed to get a much better picture of one of these and re-posted it to the group to see if anyone could tell whether it was indeed *Dahlica lichenella*. After seeing this new photo, Chris Steeman of Belgium suggested *Bankesia douglasii* as it looked very similar to moths that he had photographed. Eminent British Micro-lepidopterist John Langmaid agreed, although he said that the correct name for the species was *Bankesia conspurcatella*

The primary difference between the two genera (*Dahlica* and *Bankesia*) is in the antennae, and after examining my specimens, and comparing them with specimens in the national collections in NMGW I was able to confirm that my Mynachdy moths were indeed *Bankesia conspurcatella*.

What then followed was a lengthy discussion on the name and status of *Bankesia douglasii/ conspurcatella*, all of which was neatly summed up by John:

“There has been a horrendous mix-up over the identity of *douglasii* and *conspurcatella*. Bradley's checklist, 2000, has it wrong. The muddle was sorted out in a somewhat opaque article by Sattler & Shaffer, 2002, Entomologist's Gazette 53: 239-242, Notes on British Psychidae. To condense what they say: *Bankesia conspurcatella* (Zeller, 1850), Logbook no. 182, is a good species and is the one which occurs in the Channel Islands, Hampshire, Kent and Yorkshire. *Dahlica douglasii* (Stainton, 1854), Logbook no. 178, is only known by the type specimen which was caught at Birchwood in Kent about 150 years ago”

The 'Review of the Scarce & Threatened Incurvariid, Prodoxid, Adelid, Heliozelid, Psychid, Tineid and Ochsenheimeriid moths of Great Britain' says for *Bankesia douglasii*:

“In the period since 1969, the species has been recorded from Fareham and Segensworth, South Hampshire, Faversham and Sittingbourne, East Kent and Thorne Moors, South-west Yorkshire. A 19th century record from Brandon, West Suffolk and a 1907 example from Breinton, Herefordshire require confirmation.

A turn of the century record from Worcester is considered to be an error for *Proutia betulina*. This moth has also been recorded from Guernsey in the Channel Islands. Abroad, it has been reported from Belgium, Netherlands and northern France.”

As far as I can tell from the various electronic correspondence, this species was previously only known from five sites on the UK mainland. One of those sites was recently destroyed, and another is due to be developed. I do not think that the moth is liable to population explosions and does not seem to be a particularly active colonist, so I think it is more likely that the species has simply been overlooked in Wales. Given the time of year, location and the fact that it is one of the more obscure groups of Micro this is not at all surprising.

The next step will be to try to find the larvae, which live in portable cases feeding on lichens and dead insects on rocks. Given that the area in which the adults were seen is largely urban it may prove very difficult to survey. The flip-side to that is that the population is likely to be pretty secure from development – unless someone decides to demolish the old council estates in favour luxury flats.

Many thanks to Martin Corley, Chris Steeman and John Langmaid for their assistance in the identification of these moths, and to the National Museum & Galleries of Wales for the use of their collections and facilities.

David Slade

Reference:

Heath & Emmet, Moths and Butterflies of Great Britain & Ireland, Volume 2. Harley Books 1985

NEW MEMBER

We are pleased to welcome this month Mike Hogan of Abercanaid, Merthyr to the GMRG taking our current membership to 75.

MOTH POPULATIONS ON THE DECLINE

The Rothamsted Insect Survey has operated a UK-wide network of light-traps since 1968. During that time, an enormous amount of data has been collected and analysed, providing one of the best datasets for the analysis of insect populations in the world.

The survey utilises a standardised moth trap design to ensure that the collection method is comparable across the whole of the survey area. The Rothamsted trap is designed to only attract moths that fly relatively close to the trap, but the use of Perspex in a pyramidal structure means most of the moths that are attracted are drawn down to the killing chamber. The killing jar is changed daily, and the trap operates every night of the year.



The primary aim of the survey is to monitor insect populations over a very long period of time, and it is only really now that the true trend in moth populations are beginning to show. In a recently published paper (Conrad et al, 2004) population trends over the past 35 years were extensively analysed and the results painted a rather gloomy picture for our moth fauna, and suggested that it is a combination of habitat loss and climate change that is to blame.

Overall a quarter of the species looked at were considered to have a fairly stable population (<10% change in abundance). Six species have had a major increase in population (>50%). Depressingly, over half of the species examined has shown a decrease in population over the 35 years.

By splitting the country into three sections (North, Southeast and Southwest), the authors were able to examine the regional variations in the populations. The greatest proportion of species showing any increase were found in the North, the Southwest showed the greatest number of stable species, whilst the southeast showed the greatest decrease in populations.

The study also looked at species with specialist feeding habits. The strengthening of our air-quality regulations has led to an increase in the populations of lichens over the past three decades, and the moths that feed on them are doing similarly well. The other major change to our countryside has been the increased planting of conifers, not just by the forestry commission, but also as ornamentals in gardens, and as such the moths that feed on them have also been on the increase.

Habitat dependence was then examined, and as might be expected, our grassland specialists have fared the worst, whilst the most stable species were associated with woodlands.

Perhaps the most interesting part of the study looked at how life history affected the population. Species that overwinter as adults were generally on the increase – milder winters being suggested as the major factor. However species that overwinter as an egg have generally suffered sharp declines in population. This is thought to also be due to the milder winters, which are in turn wetter. The authors suggested that more work should be done to investigate these trends.

We can do little about the changes in our planet's climate, and it may be that we have to accept that as the weather patterns change, some species will not be able to adapt. However this study only looked at the changes in population of resident species, and took no account of the recent increase in migrant activity. Over the last couple of years we have had several new additions to the British list, and they have generally not arrived as singletons. It may not be many years before some of these recent additions become established to compensate for the species that we are losing.

The overall message of the article will not come as a surprise to most moth recorders that have been trapping for ten or more years. But it is not just our countryside that is changing, urban areas are becoming increasingly important habitats. The fact that conifer feeding species have been doing so well in recent years seems to indicate to me that if we could persuade gardeners to utilise more of our native plants it would be of great benefit to other moth species.

Reference:

Conrad, K. F. Woiwod, I. P. Parsons, M. Fox, R. & Warren, M. S. 2004 Long-term population trends in widespread British moths. *J. Insect Conserv.* **8**, 119–136

David Slade

BUTTERFLY CONSERVATION 2005 EVENTS

Butterfly Conservation will be holding a series of training events this spring/summer. The programme starts on May 21st with a Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth training day. The day will be led by Barry Stewart on Llantrisant Common and is aimed to help those interested in looking for the Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth at sites in Glamorgan away from the Gower Commons.

We will look at survey techniques to help spot both adult moths and caterpillars. Work carried out previously by Richard Smith on the Marsh Fritillary will be used to help guide recorders to the best sites on offer in the county, so even if Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moths are thin on the ground there should still be plenty of interesting things to record. We will meet at 13:00hrs on Llantrisant Common and the event will last no more than two hours. Please remember to bring your wellies and a notepad!

For further information or to request a copy of our 2005 events programme please contact: Kelly Thomas, Butterfly Conservation Wales

☎ 0870 770 6153 or ✉ kthomas.bcw@btconnect.com

mike.powell2@coorsbrewers.com

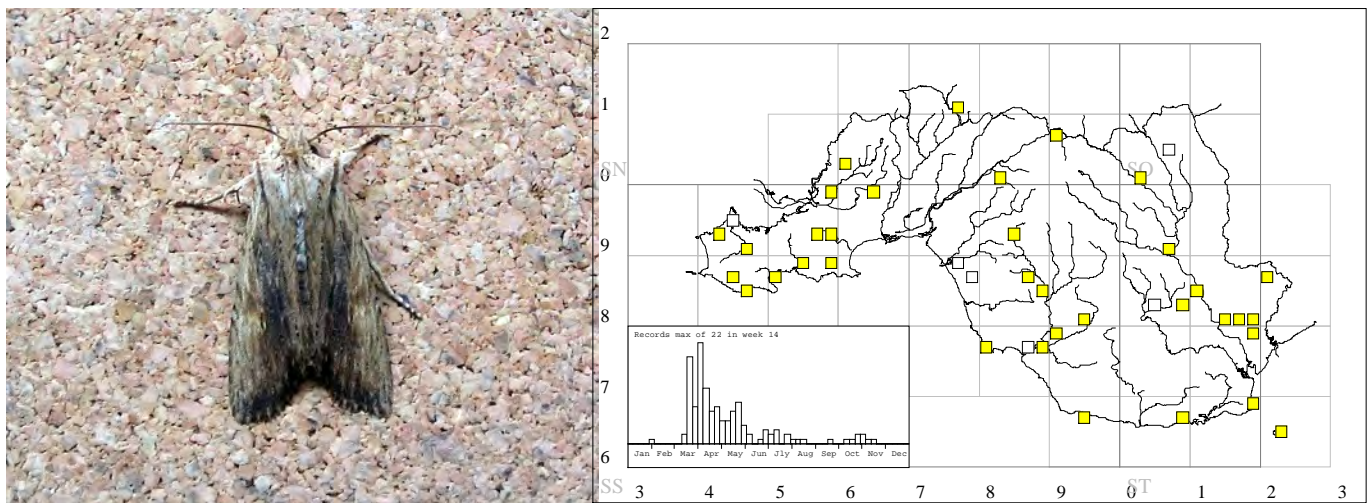
MOTH HIGHLIGHTS FOR GLAMORGAN - JANUARY, FEBRUARY & MARCH 2005

Code Species	Site	Gridref	No.	Stage	Date	Recorder	Comment
85 <i>Stigmella suberivora</i>	Bute Park, Cardiff	ST1777	1	Larval	22-Feb-05	D.J. Slade	
182 <i>Banksia conspurcatella</i>	Gabalfa, Cardiff	ST1678	1	Adult	18-Jan-05	D.J. Slade	New to Wales.
182 <i>Banksia conspurcatella</i>	Gabalfa, Cardiff	ST166789	1	Adult	24-Jan-05	D.J. Slade	
182 <i>Banksia conspurcatella</i>	Gabalfa, Cardiff	ST1678	1	Adult	26-Jan-05	D.J. Slade	
182 <i>Banksia conspurcatella</i>	Gabalfa, Cardiff	ST166789	1	Adult	18-Feb-05	D.J. Slade	
182 <i>Banksia conspurcatella</i>	Gwaun Treoda, Cardiff	ST1679	1	Adult	17-Feb-05	D.J. Slade	
200 <i>Psychoides filicivora</i>	Gowerton	SS596961	1	Larval	07-Feb-05	Barry Stewart	New SS59
200 <i>Psychoides filicivora</i>	Nicholaston Pill	SS5187	p	Larval	01-Mar-05	Barry Stewart	
200 <i>Psychoides filicivora</i>	Oxwich	SS5087	p	Larval	01-Mar-05	Barry Stewart	
203 <i>Infurcitinea argentimaculella</i>	Bute Park, Cardiff	ST1777	1	Larval tube	22-Feb-05	D.J. Slade	
313 <i>Acrocercops brongniardella</i>	Bute Park, Cardiff	ST1777	20	Larval	22-Feb-05	D.J. Slade	New ST17
1025 <i>Tortricodes alternella</i>	Bosch Factory, Miskin	ST0579	1	Adult	28-Jan-05	M. Hnatiuk	New for site
1044 <i>Acleris ferrugana</i>	Cwmbach, Aberdare	SO028018	1	Adult	31-Jan-05	M. Evans	
1342 <i>Eudonia angustea</i>	Whitchurch Hospital, Cardiff	ST145805	1	Adult	21-Mar-05	D.R.W. Gilmore	
1455 <i>Dioryctria simplicella</i>	Cwmbach, Aberdare	SO028018	1	Adult	31-Jan-05	M. Evans	
1631 December Moth	Sea View, Cwm Ivy	SS438937	1	Adult	01-Jan-05	Veronica Shenston	
1631 December Moth	Sea View, Cwm Ivy	SS438937	1	Adult	02-Jan-05	Veronica Shenston	
1631 December Moth	Sea View, Cwm Ivy	SS438937	1	Adult	14-Jan-05	Veronica Shenston	
1718 Oblique Striped	Liangennith Burrows	SS4192	3	Adult	26-Mar-05	B. Stewart & S.J. Stewart	
1718 Oblique Striped	Broughton Burrows	SS4092	1	Adult	26-Mar-05	B. Stewart & S.J. Stewart	
2179 Pine Beauty	36 Pencoedrwn Road, Gorseinon	SS585995	1	Adult	29-Mar-05	B. Stewart & S.J. Stewart	
2236 Pale Pinion	Cwmdulais Cottages	SN617035	1	Adult	26-Mar-05	B. Stewart & S.J. Stewart	
2256 Satellite	Sea View, Cwm Ivy	SS438937	1	Adult	17-Feb-05	Veronica Shenston	
2423 Oak Nycteoline	Roath Central Cardiff	ST188781	1	Adult	22-Mar-05	D.R.W. Gilmore	

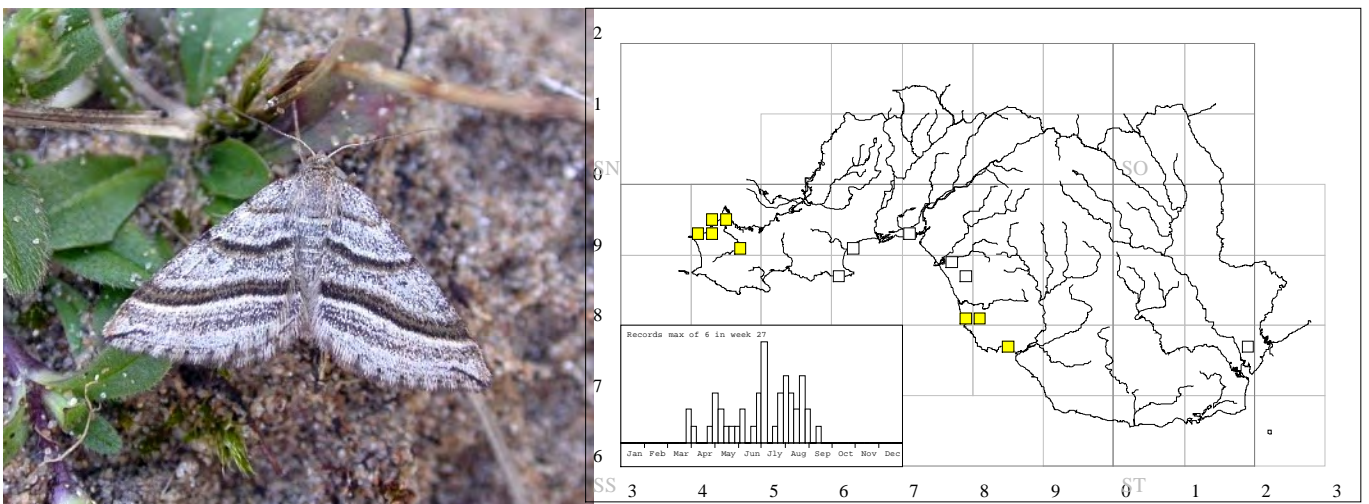
PHOTO GALLERY 35



Left: *Bankesia conspurcatella*, Mynachdy, Cardiff, Feb 2005 (D. Slade). Right: Oak Nycteoline, Roath, Cardiff, 5 Mar 2005 (D.R.W. Gilmore).



Left: Pale Pinion, Whitchurch Hospital, 29 Mar 2005 (D.R.W. Gilmore). Right: Distribution map showing all vc41 records for Pale Pinion (white squares represent records before 1980 and yellow squares represent post 1980 records).



Left: Oblique Striped at Broughton Burrows, 26 Mar 2005 (B. Stewart). Right: Distribution map showing all vc41 records for Oblique Striped (white squares represent records before 1980 and yellow squares represent post 1980 records).