

# 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. 85 – OCTOBER 2005

### FIELD MEETING, SUNDAY 7<sup>th</sup> AUGUST, FOREST FARM, CARDIFF

Our final field meeting of the year took place at Forest Farm near Whitchurch, Cardiff on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> August. The event was a joint meeting with the Community Park Rangers with more than a dozen members of the public also attending. 12 members and guests of the GMRG attended to assist in showing the public the moths caught. Three traps were run around the site and 42 species were recorded.

<i>Pyrausta purpuralis</i>	Mother of Pearl
<i>Agriphila straminella</i>	Light-brown Apple Moth
<i>Cydia splendana</i>	<i>Blastobasis lignea</i>
<i>Pandemis heperana</i>	<i>Pandemis cercana</i>
<i>Catoptria pinella</i>	Straw Dot
Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet	Brimstone Moth
Dingy Footman	Ruby Tiger
Herald	Snout
Small Phoenix	Small Fan-footed Wave
Pale Prominent	Dunbar
Wormwood Pug	Lesser Swallow Prominent
Single-dotted Wave	Six-striped Rustic
Peppered Moth	Dark Arches
Marbled Beauty	Flame Shoulder
Dusky Thorn	Swallowtail Moth
Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing	Double Square-spot
Sallow Kitten	Common Rustic agg.
Rosy Rustic	Yellow Shell
Large Yellow Underwing	Common White Wave
Willow Beauty	Common Carpet
Square-spot Rustic	Haworth's Pug

### SUBSCRIPTIONS

To date a total of 68 members have renewed their membership. Enclosed with this newsletter is a final reminder to those few members who have as yet not returned the subscription renewal form. The subscription rate remains unchanged at £5.00 for individuals & £8.00 for families. Please endeavour to complete the form and return it with your cheque by return rather than putting it away "to fill in later".

Every member is important to our small group & we hope you will continue to support us.

## WORMWOOD OVER THE BORDER

On 25 August I received an email from Ian Morgan who informed me that he had found several Wormwood *Cucullia absinthii* larvae on the species' namesake plant Wormwood *Artemisia absinthium* at the proposed site for the new Scarlets rugby stadium at Pemberton (SS529998). The following day I went to the site and within an hour recorded the following larvae on either Wormwood or Mugwort *A. vulgare*:

- Wormwood *Cucullia absinthii*: 24 larvae (see photogallery), 23 on *A. absinthium* & 1 on *A. vulgare* (equal time was given to each species of *Artemisia*; the results indicating that Wormwood larvae show a marked preference for *A. absinthium*)
- Wormwood Pug *Eupithecia absinthiata*: 1 larva on *A. absinthium*
- Bordered Pug *Eupithecia succenturiata*: 8 larvae on *A. vulgare*
- *Coleophora artemisicolella*: 1 larva on *A. vulgare*

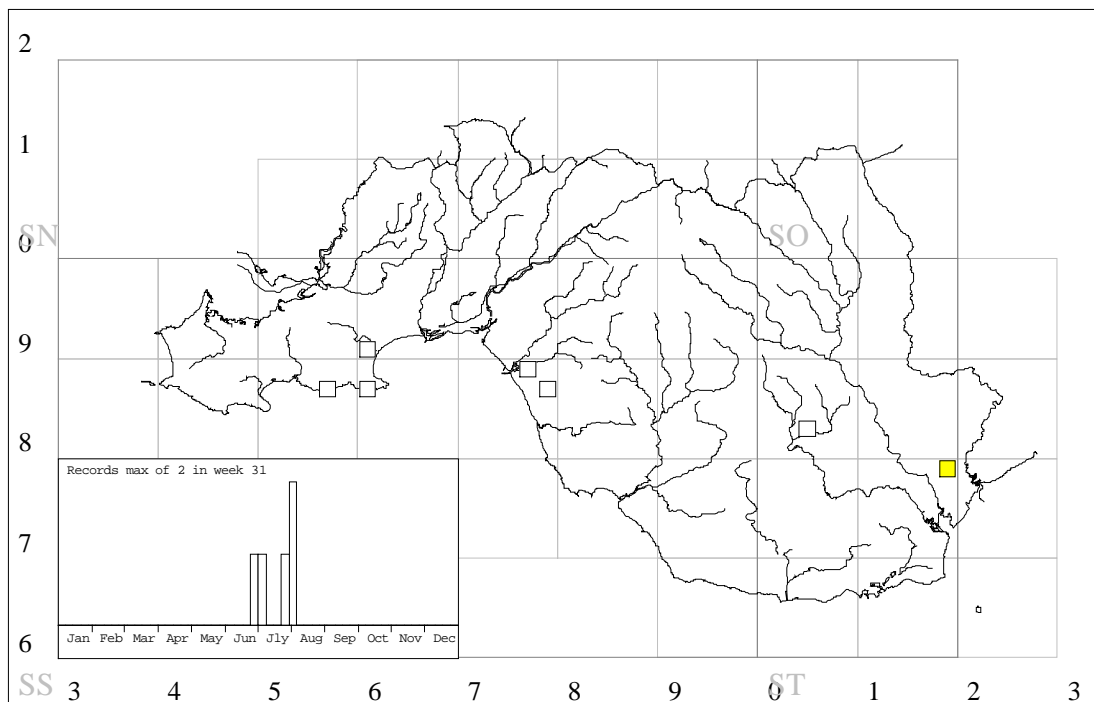
Also of significance, the pyralid *Euzophera cinerosella* was recorded by Sandra Stewart and myself on 18 Jul 2004 at nearby Penclacwydd (SS532987), and it is likely that this probably originated from the Pemberton site.

The Vice County Recorder for Carmarthenshire, Jon Baker, informed me that the Wormwood, *Euzophera cinerosella* and *Coleophora artemisicolella* were all new species for VC44. *Euzophera cinerosella* has also been recorded by Veronica Shenston (det. D.Painter) in Glamorgan at Cwm Ivy recently, although the record has been pended until David finds time to trawl through his many photographs. Interestingly there is a very good population of Wormwood plants near this site. *Coleophora artemisicolella* is not on the Glamorgan list, but is almost certainly likely to be present here also.

Ian Morgan informed me that until the late 1980's an extensive area of horse-grazed wasteground extended westwards from the proposed stadium site South of Cefncaeau to the SW edge of Trostre Retail Park. Here Wormwood was common and highly visible due to its light grey foliage. Nowadays, the only known site for this species in the Llanelli area is the former tip on which the new Scarlets rugby stadium will stand. Llanelli, like other urban areas, has lost much of its `wasteground` in recent years, to the detriment of wildlife and, incidentally, the places where children play and interact with the natural environment.

It is hoped that, as part of the mitigation proposals, transplanting of Wormwood can be undertaken with plants relocated at suitable localities within the Llanelli Millennium Coastal Park at Machynys and just east of Burry Port. This may just save the Wormwood (both plant and moth) as Carmarthenshire species.

In Glamorgan the Wormwood (moth) is rare with only one modern record, that of an adult at MV Light on 02 Aug 1996 at Roath, Central Cardiff (ST188781) (D.R.W. Gilmore). However, the moth is easily overlooked as it does not appear to come freely to light though the larval stages are easier to record. A little botanical knowledge is required first to identify the Wormwood foodplant, which superficially is like the much commoner Mugwort. However, Wormwood is silvery-grey on both sides of the leaf and is exceptionally smelly if you rub the foliage. Once you've found some plants, bend the flowers over a sheet and give them a sharp tap with a stick. Beating the over the next few weeks will hopefully be profitable and will enable us to locate a breeding population in Glamorgan.



Distribution of Wormwood *Cucullia absinthii* in Glamorgan. White squares pre-1980, filled squares post-1980.

**Barry Stewart**

### **OVER THE BORDER – THE BURREN, AUGUST 2005.**

I briefly visited the Burren a few years ago and as I left I said to myself that I must return sooner rather than later with a moth trap & net. So it was that David Gilmore, Paul Parsons & I set off on the 02.30 sailing from Pembroke Dock to Rosslare on the 3<sup>rd</sup> August, car filled with generators, traps, tents & sleeping bags and headed for our base at Corofin at the south end of the Burren for four nights of trapping.

David Wedd wrote an excellent article in *Atropos* 11 (August 2000) entitled *A Guide to the Burren District of Counties Clare & Galway* and this formed the basis of our pre-trip reading. Special thanks must also go to Maurice Hughes of Butterfly Conservation Northern Ireland who provided a great deal of additional information on specific species & sites. He also put us in touch with Vincent McLoughlin from Co.Fermanagh who was due to be trapping in the area at the same time as us. The trip would be primarily for lepidoptera but we also planned to look for birds, dragonflies and Irish Ladies Tresses *Spiranthes romanzoffiana* and to sample a little of the legendary Irish hospitality. We were not to be disappointed on any front.

After arriving at Rosslare we looked briefly at the excellent wetlands at Tacumshin in Co. Wexford before heading over to the Shannon Airport lagoon via Waterford, Tipperary & Limerick. After finding the summer plumaged Long-billed Dowitcher feeding in a huge flock of Black-tailed Godwits we headed onto the campsite at Corofin, our base for two nights. The afternoon was spent looking around the eastern shore of the famous Lough Bunny. Highlights here in less than ideal conditions were a rare second brood *Anania funebris*, Grayling, Barred Yellow and the only Latticed Heath (form *hugginsi*) of the trip.

One of the target moths we really wanted to see was the Burren Green, in fact the trip was timed so that we would be on site for the main flight period. Maurice Hughes had given us a site for this species where he had seen them in 2004, so we decided to try Creevagh on our first night. Two traps were set alongside a very quiet lane and we trapped here until around 01.00 but not before we had seen a Hen Harrier pass over the road on the way to the site. We did not get Burren Green but we were very pleased to see Map-winged Swift, *Pyrausta despicata*, Small Emerald, two Royal Mantle, Barred Yellow, Sharp-angled Carpet, Barred & Grass Rivulet, no less than 25 Pretty Pinion, Dotted Clay, Shark, Sweet Gale Moth and Crinan Ear.

The 4<sup>th</sup> August stayed very wet until the middle of the afternoon so we used this period of 'liquid sunshine' to catch up on our missed sleep. In the early evening we headed for an area of limestone pavement & turloughs near the small village of Cooiloorta and trapped here until after midnight. Trapping after heavy rain can often be frustrating but we were rewarded with no less than seven of our target species, the Burren Green along with Northern Eggar, Tissue, Barred Rivulet, Pretty Pinion, Narrow-winged Pug & Yellow-barred Brindle.

The 5<sup>th</sup> proved to be a very hot day, ideal for dragonflies so we headed for the well known Scarce Emerald Damselfly *Lestes dryas* site at Ballyvealaghan Lough in Burren village. On the way we stopped near Cooiloorta and had Wall Brown, good numbers of Grayling, a single Burren Green and the rare Straw Belle. Upon reaching the lough we netted over 15 *Lestes spp.* but only two proved to be *dryas* upon examination through a hand lens of the tell tale club shaped anal claspers. At the lough we had another Wall Brown along with good numbers of Ruddy Darters and several Brown Hawkets were seen en route. We then decided to drive north via Galway City to Loughs Corrib & Mask to search for Irish Ladies Tresses, a very local species of orchid restricted to the West coasts of Ireland & Scotland. The first site we visited was on the south-west shore of Lough Mask where in early August 2001, 57 flowering spikes had been found but despite a thorough search we found none. Always have a back up site when searching for rare species and so it proved as at our second site on the north shore of Lough Corrib near Cornamona Paul & I found seven spikes within a minute of our arrival.

Flushed with success we drove back to the south-west corner of the Burren and camped at Doolin Pier close to the famous Cliffs of Moher. Our target species here was The Grey but despite our best efforts we had a disappointing night with only Northern Eggar & Pod Lover of interest. Rain set in as we left and it was still with us at breakfast next day.

Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> August was to be day we met up with Vincent McLoughlin and others to search for Wood White & Brown Hairstreak. In the overcast and damp conditions we decided to go birding during the morning instead but also called into the B&B where Vincent was due to stay to leave a message. The Villa Maria B&B run by Mrs. Ann Martin at Leigh South right on the Clare & Galway border is famous amongst visiting lepidopterists. The owner is very knowledgeable about the Burren, some of the best trapping localities and is very tolerant of weary trappers returning in the early hours of the morning. The back garden of the house opens onto the Burren and anyone staying can run a trap either in the garden or with an extension on the limestone itself drawing power from the garage plug point.

We returned in the early evening and met up with Vincent and his friend Bob, swapped records and experiences. It was at this point we learnt that our Small Emerald on the 3<sup>rd</sup> was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Irish record and we had hardly given it a second glance. Royal Mantle was also considered an excellent record. Our target for the final night was the very range restricted Irish Annulet, the larva of which feed on Purgling Buckthorn *Rhamnus cathartica* and the adults can apparently only be trapped when the light is set directly next to/below the bush. Additional information on this very rare Irish species can be found at <http://homepage.tinet.ie/~vmaria/dumetata/INDEX.HTML> .

Mrs. Martin led the small convoy down various lanes until we ended up at Coooororta, where unknown to us we had trapped on the night of the 4<sup>th</sup> about 250mtrs from the best known Irish Annulet site !! Between us we ran 3 MV lights & an actinic on the limestone pavement where the best stands of Buckthorn and Scrubby Cinquefoil existed. Closer to the cars a further 3 actinics were run (and subsequently left unmolested over-night). We were not to be disappointed and by the time we headed for the ferry back to Wales we had seen no fewer than 9 Irish Annulets along with Northern Eggar, Tissue, Barred Rivulet, Narrow-winged Pug, Four-spotted Footman, Least Yellow Underwing & three more Burren Green.

Overall a great short trip with 139 species recorded. We all agreed we would like to undertake another visit but this time in June or early July and to visit parts of the area we simply did not have time to visit. A full list of the species recorded is available from me.

**Mike Powell**

### **THE LONGHORN BEETLE *ROSALIA ALPINA* AT LLANGENNITH**

Surely one of the most strikingly coloured European beetles is *Rosalia alpina*. A specimen of this rare and beautiful insect was photographed by Pat & Colin Willins in their Llangennith garden, shortly after they spotted it crawling up the leaf of a potted *Mimosa* plant (see photogallery) on their decking area. They released the specimen but took the photograph to Swansea University where it was identified by Tristan Bantock. I received the following replies from the national longhorn recorders:

[Martin Rejzek]

*Many thanks for this very interesting record. It is really Rosalia alpina and I quite agree that it must have been introduced with some timber, very likely beech but also possibly maple. I occasionally hear about records of this species but nothing indicates a breeding colony in the UK. It is however not completely out of question that under convenient conditions the species might become established. It is fairly polyphagous and in the Continent it is known to cope with altitudes from 0 to 1500 m. It is a rare, declining species, however, protected by law in most European countries.*

[Peter J. Hodge]

*What an exciting find! I believe this species has been recorded a few times in Britain, as an import. The most recent is a specimen from the New Forest a few years ago (Halstead, K. 1997. Coleopterist 6(3):108). It was found on 31 Jan 1997 by Mrs. M. Smith of Lymington, Hampshire and reported by local entomologist Ken Halstead. The specimen apparently emerged from the leg of a beech rocking chair made in Romania! The usual breeding site is in dead standing beech trees and the species is widespread but scarce in central and southern Europe (but not the UK).*

I did actually visit the Willins' but alas no beetle, and they could think of no timber that had recently been imported, however, larvae are likely to take several years to mature and the original source is unlikely to be traced.

**Barry Stewart**

### **THE TRANSPORTED BURNET**

On 29 July I received a call from Mike Clark who informed me that, whilst searching for Argentine Dock *Rumex frutescens* in the dunes at Kenfig that day, he had caught a burnet that bore a striking resemblance to the Transparent Burnet *Zygaena purpuralis*. Although, on distribution this seemed highly unlikely, Mike has such a good pedigree for finding

scarce species out of range that it had to be checked out. Fortunately Mike had taken the specimen home in the hope someone would come and look at it, which I duly did.

The moth was most striking and indeed it did initially appear to look good for *purpuralis*, however, after careful examination we noticed a few characters that made us come to the conclusion that it was probably an extreme example of the Six-spot Burnet *Zygaena filipendulae* form *conjuncta*.

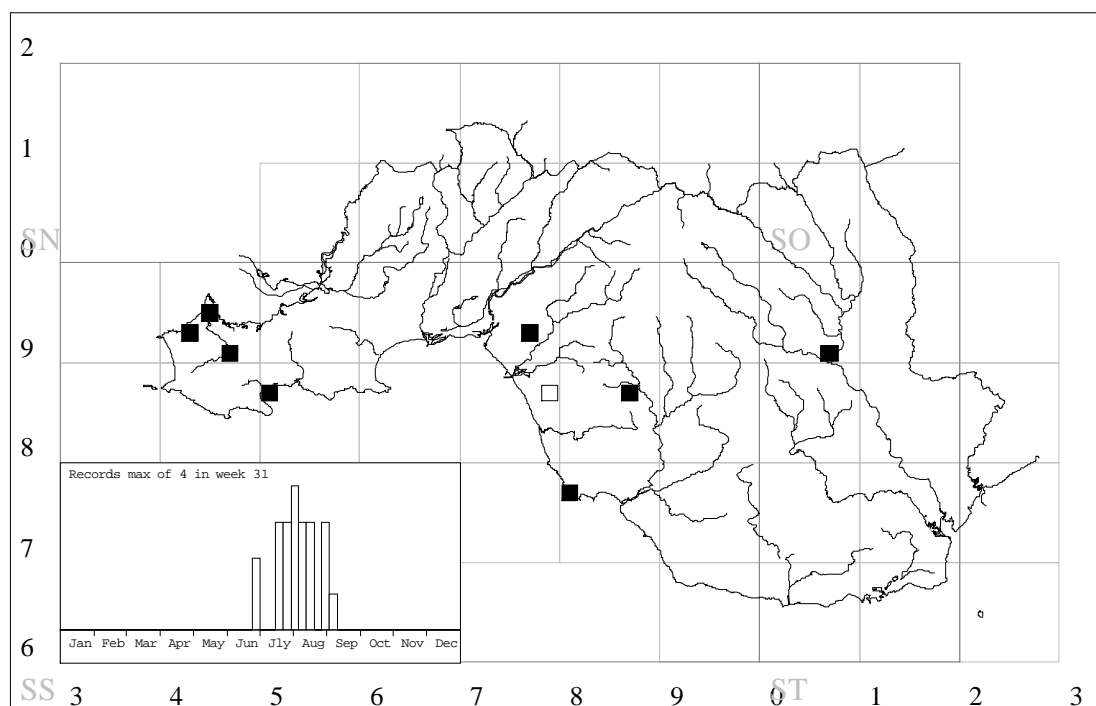
We both had good images of the moth (see photogallery) which were sent off to Dr. Mark Young, who forwarded them on to Dr W. Gerald Tremewan, who commented “*Yes, you are quite right in saying that this is confluent morph of Zygaena filipendulae. Moreover, it is suffused confluent and as you will see from my Ph.D. thesis, it is dominant over the normal form. As the specimen is so extreme, it is probably homozygous, so it would have been nice to have obtained a batch of eggs from it, assuming that it was a female. Last week I had a report of a longitudinally confluent Z. filipendulae, also from Wales, but none seems to be coming my way this year!*”.

The moth was returned to Kenfig the following day and after been examined by staff and visitors was released, hopefully to help preserve the genes of this very extreme form.

**Barry Stewart**

### **STATUS OF FOUR-SPOTTED FOOTMAN *LITHOSIA QUADRA* IN GLAMORGAN**

There are currently 21 records on the database of the attractive migrant the Four-spotted Footman in Glamorgan. Most of the records are relatively recent and as the species continues to be recorded during periods when migrant activity is minimal, it appears that it is probably now a resident in the county. How long it maintains its toehold, and whether-or-not it will spread remains to be seen. A picture of the most recently recorded individual is shown in this month's photogallery.



Distribution of Four-spotted Footman *Lithosia quadra* in Glamorgan.  
White squares pre-1980, black squares post-1980.

**Barry Stewart**

## **PROPOSED NATIONAL MACRO-MOTH RECORDING SCHEME SEPT 2005 UPDATE**

It is a year since the last newsletter went out so it is about time that we gave you an update on this project.

Although it may have seemed quiet, we have been very busy. First, to complete the important task of feedback to all those who had kindly participated in the planning phase consultation including GMRG members; we produced a series of papers for the entomological journals. These appeared during 2005 in *Atropos*, the *Entomologist's Record & Journal of Variation* and the *British Journal of Entomology and Natural History*.

Second, and even more importantly, we have been working extremely hard on a funding application to the Lottery in order to secure the necessary resources to set up and run the new recording scheme. These applications are complex, lengthy and time-consuming. Our completed bid was submitted at the end of July and is for a four-year project (starting in summer 2006) to set up and run the infrastructure of the new scheme, based on the existing network of County Moth Recorders. The bid also includes substantial training and public awareness elements. Sadly, there are no sources that can guarantee long-term funding for the project, but clearly we intend the recording scheme to run for many years after the initial four-year set up phase.

As the Lottery funded the planning phase of the project, their staff have been expecting our application. However, this is no guarantee of success. We expect the Lottery to take until March 2006 to make a decision.

Whilst we are seeking additional funding from other sources to match the potential Lottery grant, currently we do not have a 'plan B' if the Lottery turn down our application. Thus, whilst we have confidence that our application is a strong one, thanks in no small measure to all the support received during the planning phase consultation, the national macro-moth recording scheme is not a foregone conclusion. If we cannot raise the necessary funds from the Lottery, we may not be able to take the plans forward.

However, if all goes well with our fundraising, the National Macro-moth Recording Scheme will be an exciting project, with many significant benefits for moths and moth recorders. We will update you as the plans progress, but in the meantime please keep on recording and promoting moths (and passing your records to the your County Recorders), and keep your fingers crossed!

**Richard Fox and Mark Parsons, Butterfly Conservation.**

## **GLAMORGAN MOTH RECORDING GROUP & SEWBReC**

Following a meeting between representatives of GMRG and SEWBReC, GMRG have now signed a Data Exchange Agreement. It is a pretty longwinded legal document, but necessarily so since it has to:

- clearly define what can and cannot be done with the data
- set out what each party is liable for (and indeed not liable for)
- how the data will be exchanged and how often
- highlight any sensitive species or sites which require special attention
- list the support services being provided in return for the data

It's not exactly light reading, but if anyone wants to see it in full then feel free to contact me (see below).

So what does this document mean for the group? It does unfortunately mean that GMRG will no longer be generating income from desktop surveys. Any request for information sent to GMRG will be forwarded to SEWBReC for us to respond to. The up-side of this being that Barry & Mike will have more time to actually record moths rather than responding to consultant enquiries.

In addition to this time-saving benefit, SEWBReC will be providing GMRG with a range of services in return for access to it's data:

- Assistance with data entry work (which we've actually been doing for some time now).
- Provision of biological recording software (Recorder 2002 or MapMate), assistance with installation, basic training and basic technical support for users.
- Provision of free access to all relevant records held on SEWBReC databases – relevant records being those relating to Glamorgan or it's neighbouring counties, other Lepidoptera records or any associated species and/or habitats.
- Assistance with production of newsletters or other publications (including for example production of articles or updates on the work of SEWBReC, or the production of distribution maps and status reports to accompany articles produced by others). In particular assistance with the production forthcoming books.
- Hosting and assisting with the production of a Website publicising the Glamorgan Moth Recording Group, it's activities and publications (currently under construction).
- Notification of opportunities which may arise for paid or unpaid survey work.
- Publicity for the work of the group.
- Provision of base mapping (where permitted by SEWBReC's Ordnance Survey licence) to assist survey efforts.
- Assistance with professional archiving of notebooks, recording cards and other documents.
- Provision (subject to availability of funds and successful application) of small grants to assist management of biological records, or production of publications.
- Organisation and promotion of annual Glamorgan Recorders' Forum event.
- Assistance with identification of Lepidoptera/Odonata species on request.



Of these probably the most interesting for GMRG members is the provision of biological recording software (MapMate is the software used by the group, but Recorder 2002 can be made available if that is preferred). Members must be able to demonstrate they are active recorders and be willing for all their records to be passed on to SEWBReC. The software will remain the property of SEWBReC and should be returned to us if it no longer wanted. Among the other benefits, taking on the data entry work frees up some of Jake's valuable time so that he can concentrate on writing the Book, and I can now do some of the my identification in work time.

SEWBReC is here to help protect our natural heritage, and by making it's data available to us, GMRG is ensuring that Moths, Butterflies and Dragonflies are considered in any search that we undertake – and that can only be a good thing for the insects we care so much about.

For further information contact us.

**David Slade**

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**OBITUARY: Dr G.A. NEIL HORTON, 1915-2005**

It is with regret that we report the death of Dr. Neil Horton who died on August 29<sup>th</sup> this year. Dr Horton was the former Monmouthshire County Recorder, a post he held for 27 years. A fellow of the Royal Entomological Society and the author of Monmouthshire Lepidoptera *The Butterflies and Moths of Gwent* which was published in 1994. However his lasting achievement was his discovery above Abertillery in July 1972 of *Eriopyodes imbecilla*, a macro-moth species new to Great Britain, which he named The Silurian, the name of the ancient tribe that once dwelt there.

His legacy of recording lepidoptera in Monmouthshire is immense. Even in a Welsh context it is far-reaching, as I believe his book was the first true publication dedicated entirely to butterflies and moths for a Welsh county in hardback form.

We, in Glamorgan, are presently writing our own book about moths and Dr Horton's book is a constant and invaluable source of reference, a tribute to a very fine entomologist.

The Glamorgan Moth Recording Group offer our most sincere condolences to Dr. Horton's family as we mourn the passing of an entomologist who will be missed in both Monmouthshire, his home county, and the rest of Wales.

**David Gilmore**

Note: A full tribute can be found in The Silurian Newsletter (Monmouthshire Moth & Butterfly Group) No. 29 Sept. 2005 by Martin Anthoney.

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## PHOTO GALLERY 39(i)



Left: Wormwood larva, Pemberton, Llanelli, 26 Aug 05 (beaten by I.K. Morgan, photo. B. Stewart) [1<sup>st</sup> record for vc44]. Right: Six-spot Burnet *Zygaena filipendulae* form *conjuncta*, Kenfig, 29 Jul 05 (found by M. Clark, photo. B. Stewart).



Left: Four-spotted Footman, Cwm Ivy, Gower, 16 Aug 05 (caught V. Shenston, photo. B. Stewart) [21<sup>st</sup> record for vc41]. Right: Lesser Emperor, Kenfig, July 05 (M. Clark) [2<sup>nd</sup> record for vc41].



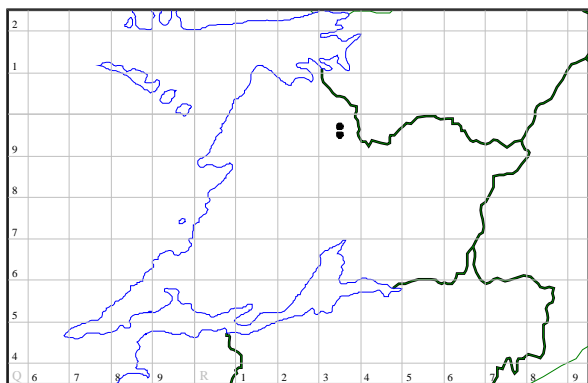
Left: Red-tipped Clearwing, Merthyr Mawr Warren (south), 9 Jul 05 (GMRG meeting on NMN/D, photo. J. Sherwood) [7<sup>th</sup> record for vc41]. Right: *Rosalia alpina* (a longhorn beetle), Llangennith, 18 Aug 05 (P. & C. Willins) [1<sup>st</sup> record for vc41].

## PHOTO GALLERY 39(ii)



Left: Irish Ladies Tresses *Spiranthes romanzoffiana*, near Cornamona, Lough Corrib 05 Aug 05 (photo M. C. Powell) Right: Irish Annulet, Cooiloorta, Burren, 06 Aug 05 (photo. V. McLoughlin).

2366 Burren Green (*Calamia tridens occidentalis*)



Left: Location of Burren Green trap sites, Cooiloorta, Burren Co. Clare. Right: Burren Green, Cooiloorta, Burren, 06 Aug 05 (photo V. McLoughlin).



Left: Royal Mantle and Right: The Tissue, Burren, Co. Clare 06 Aug 05 (photos V. McLoughlin).