

Macro-moths 2010

Melissa & Andy Banthorpe

Introduction

Generally 2010 continued the gradual improvement in recording conditions in the peak season, though most of May was cold and recording ended abruptly with cold weather in November and December.

There were two new county records this year – Toadflax Brocade and Clancy's Rustic. For further details see species list below.

During the year the Recorders ran lights in the field at the following places – Ampthill Park, Barton Hills, Chicksands Wood, Cooper's Hill, Dunstable STW, Flitton Moor, Flitwick Moor, The Lodge (RSPB Sandy), Maulden Wood, Priory CP, Stockgrove CP and Upper Alders NR. We trapped several times in Chicksands and Maulden Wood, which contributed to a joint Butterfly Conservation/Forestry Commission project looking at lepidoptera in a number of woods in Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire.

A National Moth Night (NMN) event was held in Chicksands Wood on 15th May and was a joint meeting with BNHS and Beds Bat Group. This unfortunately was a very cold night when the temperature dropped close to 5°C though we did fare better than some other counties where no moths came to light-traps.

Beds Moth Group held its first indoor meeting on 3rd February at Stondon Baptist Church hall, which was well attended. There was a review of the mothing year and a presentation on difficult species.

We are assisted in recording by a network of people regularly running light traps in their gardens. These are at Ampthill (two sites), Arlesey, Bedford, Biggleswade (three sites), Bromham (two sites), Broom, Carlton, Clifton (two sites), Clophill, Dunstable, Eaton Bray, Eaton Ford (two sites), Haynes, Heath & Reach (two sites), Kempston, Langford, Leighton Buzzard, Lower Stondon, Luton (two sites), Potton, Renhold, Sandy, Southill, Stotfold, Studham, Turvey, Upper Caldecote and Wilden. Some individuals also run portable traps in good habitat in their own locality which adds to the coverage. In addition, with the kind assistance of Ian Woiwod and Phil Gould, we have access to the records from the Rothamsted Insect Survey (RIS) traps in the county. These are situated at Cockayne Hatley and Eaton Bray.

The recording boundary for moths in Bedfordshire is that of the Watsonian Vice-county 30. For more details of this see the article in last year's Journal (Banthorpe 2010).

Review

The following list includes species of interest recorded in VC30 during 2010 but it should be noted that we are keen to receive records for all species including those regarded as very common, as without these records the dataset is incomplete and we will not be able to track future changes in abundance and distribution.

A list of the macro-moths of VC30 with their current status is on the Beds Moth Group website www.vc30moths.org.uk or available from the Recorders on request. This is amended at least once a year and often more frequently.

Hepialidae

16 Gold Swift *Hepialus hecta* (L.)

At least ten males observed display-flying around dusk on 22nd June at Studham Common (CRBB).

18 Map-winged Swift *Hepialus fusconebulosa* (DeG.)

Just one record again for 2010 of a singleton in the Cockayne Hatley RIS trap on 7th June (IPW).

171 Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet *Zygaena lonicerae* (Schev.) ssp. *latomarginata* Tutt

Out of about 200 seen at Sharnbrook Summit on 24th June, two of the form *citrina* were noted (KB).

Sesiidae

It was another good year for clearwing records with the following species recorded - Raspberry, Hornet Moth, Currant, Yellow-legged, Orange-tailed, Red-belted, Red-tipped and Six-belted - mostly to pheromone lures.

369a Raspberry Clearwing *Pennisetia hylaeiformis* (Lasp.)

New to the county in 2009, there was just one record of 5+ individuals to a pheromone lure this year in Biggleswade on 28th July (RCR).

379 Red-belted Clearwing *Synanthedon myopaeformis* (Borkh.) [Nb]

An unusual record of one attracted to MV light in Eaton Ford on 29th June (AAL).

380 Red-tipped Clearwing *Synanthedon formicaeformis* (Esp.) [Nb]

In addition to a number attracted to pheromone lures, there were three other records of this species in 2010. One was seen at Great Barford on 5th June near crucifers (JEC); one was seen nectaring on thistle at Wilstead Wood on 20th July (KB); and one was seen nectaring on knapweed at Chicksands Wood 8th Aug (NDW).

381 Large Red-belted Clearwing *Synanthedon culiciformis* (L.)

This species was looked for at Flitwick Moor and Rowney Warren on 27th May without success (ARO). The Recorders have also tried in Flitwick Moor a couple of times in recent years for this species. There is only one VC30 record from Rowney Warren of an adult on 1st May 1956 by Vic Chambers. The species is said to like birch stumps and the habitat at both the above sites would seem to be suitable but it is thought to be extinct in the county. It has occurred recently in VC31 (Hunts) and was last recorded in VC20 (Herts) in 1999 but not in sites that are relatively near to Bedfordshire.

Lasiocampidae

1632 Pale Eggar *Trichiura crataegi* (L.)

This species was recorded twice at Turvey Abbey on 2nd and 13th Sept (BrJM), the first records since 2005.

1633 Small Eggar *Eriogaster lanestris* (L.) [Nb]

Larval webs were found at Yelnow New Wood on 28th and 31st May (HAS) and 15th June (HAS, AMB & MGB); Little Staughton on 17th June (DVM & SM); and near Souldrop (vacated on elm) on 14th July (AMB & MGB).

Saturniidae

1643 Emperor Moth *Saturnia pavonia* (L.)

There were a handful of records in 2010. Females, all singletons, were seen at Cooper's Hill - to MV light 30th Apr (AMB & MGB); Marston Moretaine - on a house wall 9th Apr (PCa); and Upper Caldecote - found dead 10th Apr (DPr). Some assembling (of females to attract males) was also carried out in Bedford - 10th Apr (2m) and 11th Apr (2m) - and Renhold area - 9th Apr (2m) and 10th Apr (1m) (AS).

Thyatiridae

1660 Frosted Green *Polyploca ridens* (Fabr.)

A high count of 42 was recorded at MV light at Flitwick Moor on 16th Apr (AMB & MGB).

Geometridae

1661 Orange Underwing *Archiearis parthenias* (L.)

All confirmed records of this species were at The Lodge (RSPB Sandy); on 18th (4), 23rd (5) and 30th (2) March and 16th April (1) (NDW) and 26th Mar (2) (MB).

1662 Light Orange Underwing *Archiearis notha* (Hb.) [Nb]

This species was positively identified from good photographs and netted individuals in Potton Wood on 17th (3) and 23rd Apr (2) (IPW).

1662x Orange/Light Orange Underwing *Archiearis* sp.

If the critical identification features cannot be seen to separate the two species, records will be assigned to the aggregate group. In 2010 unidentified *Archiearis* sp. records were as follows: - two at Potton Wood on 8th April (IPW); 19 flying round birches at The Lodge (RSPB Sandy) on 19th March (MB) and a singleton on 10th May at the same site (NDW) were probably *A.parthenias*.

1665 Grass Emerald *Pseudoterpna pruinata* (Walk.)

A singleton to MV light at Heath & Reach on 7th July (MHo) was the first since 2005 when one was trapped at Amphill Park on 15th Aug by L.J.Hill.

1716 Vestal *Rhodometra sacraria* (L.)

A singleton to actinic light at Upper Caldecote on 17th July (MB) was the first in the county for four years.

1731 Chalk Carpet *Scotopteryx bipunctaria* (Prout)

The only record of this species this year was of one to MV light at Heath & Reach on 9th Aug (MHo). There is no chalk exposure in this part of the county but there is no doubt as to the id as a photo was sent to the Recorders for verification. There is one previous record from the area, from King's Wood on 27th July 1981 (VWA). These are the only two records in the county database that are away from the chalk and surprisingly are in the middle of an area of greensand.

1735 Ruddy Carpet *Catarhoe rubidata* ([D. & S.]) [Nb]

There were three records this year: Cockayne Hatley RIS trap 2nd July (IPW) and Turvey 2nd and 19th July (HAS).

1736 Royal Mantle *Catarhoe cuculata* (Hufn.)

There were three records of this rare Beds species in 2010: Biggleswade 25th June (LB), Arlesey 14th July (DT), and Southill 19th July (PD). This brings the total number of records in the database to seven. The previous four were from 1934 Pegsdon Hills (A.H.Foster); 13th July 1982 Luton (K.F.Webb); 29th June 1987 Sharpenhoe Clappers (VWA); and 30th June 2000 (3) Pegsdon Hills (V.C & B.Judd).

1739 Wood Carpet *Epirrhoe rivata* (Hb.)

On the Beds Moth Group meeting to Barton Hills on 3rd July two came to MV light (AMB & MGB, confirmed by CWP). There was also a further record of one in the Cockayne Hatley RIS trap on 16th July (IPW). It is a rare species in the county with just 20 records in the database and these are the first records since it was trapped at Pegsdon in 2003 by V.C. & B.Judd.

1788 Scarce Tissue *Rheumaptera cervinalis* (Scop.)

The species was recorded at Wilden on 24th Apr (NDW), Eaton Ford on 27th Apr (AAL), and Clophill on 15th May (RC).

1791 Brown Scallop *Philereme vetulata* ([D. & S.])

There were three records of this species in 2010. At Barton Hills on 3rd July (2) (AMB & MGB), Potton Wood on 5th July (IPW) and Upper Caldecote on 9th July (MB).

1802 Rivulet *Perizoma affinitata* (Steph.)

This is a much rarer moth in the county than its confusion species, Small Rivulet, and there were two records this year - Heath Wood, Whipnade 6th July (CRBB) and Broom 7th July (SCB).

1809 Twin-spot Carpet *Perizoma didymata* (L.)

The only record of this species in 2010 was at Biggleswade on 25th June (PM).

1811 Slender Pug *Eupithecia tenuiata* (Hb.)

There was just one record this year, of a singleton at Ampthill on 11th July (DTW gendet AMB).

1823 Netted Pug *Eupithecia venosata venosata* (Fabr.)

A singleton to light at Bromham on 6th June (PA) was the only record of this species in 2010.

1826 Triple-spotted Pug *Eupithecia trisignaria* H.-S.

This was first recorded in 2003 in Maulden Wood (CWP), where two were recorded this year on 21st July to MV light (AMB & MGB). The species was also recorded in Chicksands Wood in 2010 when nine were trapped on 9th Aug (AMB & MGB). There has been one further record, from 2009, which was missed from last year's report, that of one in the Cockayne Hatley RIS trap on 8th Aug (IPW).

1834 Common Pug

A very late record of this species came from Biggleswade on 17th Oct (LB). The flight season is normally over by the beginning of Aug so this was either a very late second brood individual or an indication of a very small third brood.

1841 Yarrow Pug *Eupithecia millefoliata* Rössler

A single larva found on a Yarrow seed-head in Maulden Wood on 25th Sept (MGB) was the only record of this species this year and the first time a larva has been found since Jim Reid found them near Sandy and Potton in 1998.

1844 Ochreous Pug *Eupithecia indigata* (Hb.)

Five to MV light at Chicksands Wood on 15th May (AMB & MGB) represent the seventh county record.

1875 Small White Wave *Asthenes albulata* (Hufn.)

This species is one that usually only turns up in woodland areas, therefore one in an Upper Caldecote garden on 2nd July (MB det AMB & MGB) was a surprise. Others were seen at a more expected location, Chicksands Wood, with one netted on 15th May (SRP det AMB & MGB) and two to MV light on 11th July (AMB & MGB).

1906 Brimstone Moth *Opisthograptis luteolata* (L.)

There was a very early record of this species at Greenfield on 6th Jan (DS). The moth was found indoors in the kitchen and is likely to have come in as a pupa in a plant-pot kept outside, which was then brought indoors for the winter.

1951 Grey Birch *Aethalura punctulata* ([D. & S.]

Only one record this year, from Potton Wood on 20th May (IPW).

Sphingidae

1984 Humming-bird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* (L.) [Migrant]

A number were seen in the county, though it was not a particularly good migrant year. The first reports of adults came from Flitwick (JA) and Sharpenhoe Clappers on 3rd July (MWa & DW). The last report was of one in Woburn on 23rd Sept (BJN). The maximum reported were two – Cockayne Hatley (HS) and Wilden Butterfly Park (AG) on the 4th July.

On 6th Aug two larvae were reported at Renhold (JCo) and this find was followed up by the Recorders the next day who managed to find three (at least four present at the site) despite searching in a downpour! Two were taken to breed through and they emerged in early Sept.

Notodontidae

2005 Great Prominent *Peridea anceps* (Goeze)

This species of old Oak woodland in the county is quite scarce. This year one came to MV light at Heath & Reach on 22nd May (JC) and an excellent 12 also to MV light at Stockgrove CP on 28th May (AMB & MGB).

2010 Scarce Prominent *Odontosia carmelita* (Esp.)

At a Beds Moth Group meeting at Cooper's Hill on 30th April it was pleasing that a singleton came to MV light at one of the traps placed under birches just above the acid mire (AMB & MGB).

Arctiidae

2068 Scarlet Tiger *Callimorpha dominula* (L.)

This is an interesting species with only three previous records in the county. Its range has been spreading east from Oxfordshire through Buckinghamshire recently and has reached at least Little Kimble (M.Albertini pers comm). It was surprising then that six were found in a Marston Moretaine garden on 4th July (MHa & CHa) and a probable singleton was seen in flight in Chicksands Wood on the same day by a recorder familiar with the species (DHB). Unfortunately this latter individual did not land so could not be inspected closely or photographed.

2038 Muslin Footman *Nudaria mundana* (L.)

Of late, this species has only been recorded at Turvey Abbey, where it was recorded again on four occasions with a maximum of ten trapped on 9th July (BrJM). However, it was also trapped at Carlton on 9th July, a site where it has been recorded before but not since 2001 (HAS)

2040 Four-dotted Footman *Cybosia mesomella* (L.)

On 9th June two were netted at Yelnow New Wood during the day (HAS), the sixth county record. The species was last recorded in the county in June 1997 (Cockayne Hatley and Chicksands Wood).

2043 Orange Footman *Eilema sororcula* (Hufn.)

A count of 17 at Studham on 5th June was exceptional. This species was new to the county in 2003 at Maulden Wood and is to be expected in low numbers at most sites in the county now when trapping in its flight period.

Noctuidae

2085 Archer's Dart *Agrotis vestigialis* (Hufn.)

A rare species in the county and not recorded since 2005, it was good to have two records in 2010, both singletons on 8th Aug and 1st Sept in Heath & Reach (MHo).

2087 Turnip Moth *Agrotis segetum* ([D. & S.])

This had a very good year with over 400 records received. This is close to three times the largest previous peak and is still notable when increased recent recording is taken into consideration.

2119 Pearly Underwing *Peridroma saucia* (Hb.) [Migrant]

There were two records this year, both singletons in the Cockayne Hatley RIS trap on 21st Sept and 6th Oct (IPW).

2127 Triple-spotted Clay *Xestia ditrapezium* ([D. & S.]

A male, found on 2nd July at Wilden (NDW gendet AMB) was the first confirmed record of this species since 2008.

2142 Beautiful Yellow Underwing *Anarta myrtilli* (L.)

The surprise find of the year was one at The Lodge (RSPB Sandy) on 26th July (WG, conf. AMB & MGB and M.Cubitt VC84 Recorder). The species had not been seen in the county since 1979 when it was recorded at Shire Oak (VWA), and was presumed to be extinct in the county. A maximum of four were seen at The Lodge in early Aug (MB *et al.*) with the Recorders managing to see one individual courtesy of SCB. On 12th Sept the Recorders found three larvae on the old heath (following permission to sweep there), which showed there had been breeding on site in 2010.

2165 Small Ranunculus *Hecatera dysodea* ([D. & S.] [RDB]

Up until 2010 there were only a handful of records of this species since its addition to the county list in 2005. This year there seemed to be a population explosion. The first record for the year was of an adult on 21st June at Lower Stondon and it was also trapped there on three other occasions (AMB & MGB). Adults were also recorded at two sites in Biggleswade (LB (13 times max 3 with second brood individuals twice in early Sept) and MS), Broom (SCB 4 times), Dunstable (LC), Eaton Ford (AAL 3 times), Eaton Bray (GBu) and Upper Caldecote (MB). Larvae were also found in Aug at Flitwick (max 31 on 14th Aug AMB); Leighton Buzzard, Lower Stondon, Luton, New Mill End and Priory CP (AMB & MGB); and Silsoe, Stotfold and Ravensden (AMB).

2194 White-point *Mythimna albipuncta* ([D. & S.] [Migrant]

This scarce migrant turned up twice in the Cockayne Hatley RIS trap this year on 16th August and 2nd Sept (IPW) and may now be resident in that area.

2204 Obscure Wainscot *Mythimna obsoleta* (Hb.)

The species was recorded as new to the county at Chalton STW in 2009 so it was especially pleasing to record four to MV light at Dunstable STW on 26th June (AMB & MGB).

2211 Wormwood *Cucullia absinthii* (L.)

There were two records of this rare species in 2010: Broom 19th July (SCB) and Biggleswade 21st July (LB).

2214 Chamomile Shark *Cucullia chamomillae* ([D. & S.]

This is another rare 'shark' species in the county and just one was recorded this year at Studham on 20th May (CRBB).

2223 Toadflax Brocade *Calophasia lunula* (Hufn.)

This was an expected addition to the county list in 2010 as it has been gradually moving up from London probably via the railway routes. It was trapped at Bromham on 13th May (PA), Luton on 16th June (AG) and Arlesey on 9th Aug (second brood) (DT).

2235 Tawny Pinion *Lithophane semibrunnea* (Haw.)

This species was recorded twice in Upper Caldecote this year. There were definitely two individuals involved as the Recorders still had custody of the first moth, which came to light on 13th Apr, when the second was trapped on 16th Apr (MB).

2260 Dotted Chestnut *Conistra rubiginea* ([D. & S.]

One was recorded in the Cockayne Hatley RIS trap on 6th Oct (IPW), which became the third county record of this species.

2276 Pale Lemon Sallow *Xanthia ocellaris* (Borkh.)

Surprisingly one of these turned up in the Recorders garden trap at Lower Stondon on 7th Oct on the same date as one was found at The Lodge (RSPB Sandy) (NDW). A third individual was recorded at Biggleswade on 11th Oct (LB).

2317 White-spotted Pinion *Cosmia diffinis* (L.) [RDB]

On 11th June Ian and Isla Woiwod found two larvae on elm at the known site near Carthagen Golf Course. This is a significant record as it is the first time that larvae have been found in the county. In addition to this, one adult was trapped in Potton on 21st July (CCa).

2347 Concolorous *Chortodes extrema* (Hb.) [RDB]

At least one and possibly two were trapped at Turvey Abbey. The first was seen on 26th June and the second on 21st July (BrJM). Neither was seen by the Recorders.

2360 Ear Moth *Amphipoea oculea* (L.)

There were two confirmed records of this species (dissection is required to separate from the other 'Ear' species) and both were males. These were from Leighton Buzzard on 12th July (AW gendet AMB) and The Lodge (RSPB Sandy) on 2nd August (JC gendet AMB).

2391 Silky Wainscot *Chilodes maritimus* (Tausch.)

A singleton to MV light in Chicksands Wood on 11th July (AMB & MGB) was a wanderer, possibly from the reedbed in nearby Sandy Smith NR.

2387a Clancy's Rustic *Platyperigea kadenii* (Frey.)

A singleton to actinic light in a Bromham garden on 8th Oct (PA det DVM) was a complete surprise addition to the county fauna. The moth was seen and its identity confirmed by the Recorders and also photos of it were checked by Martin Honey at the BM(NH) amongst others. It is a scarce migrant to the UK but also there is a recently established resident population along the south coast in Sussex and Hampshire. However, there are few inland records and to the best of our knowledge this is the furthest inland that it has been recorded.

2399 Bordered Sallow *Pyrrhia umbra* (Hufn.)

This is a scarce moth in Bedfordshire so it was good to have three records in the year; at Arlesey on 17th June (DT), Bromham on 22nd July (MaH & MiH) and Biggleswade on 30th July (LB). All were confirmed from photos seen by the Recorders.

2400 Scarce Bordered Straw *Helicoverpa armigera* (Hb.) [Migrant]

Surprisingly, in a year of few scarce migrants, one was trapped at Biggleswade on 5th Nov (LB). This was at the same site as the sole record in autumn 2009.

2439 Gold Spot *Plusia festucae* (L.) [Migrant]

There are only eight previous records of this species in the county. It was therefore good to have further four in 2010. These were at Kempston on 11th August (MJP), Turvey Abbey (BrJM) and in the Cockayne Hatley RIS trap (IPW) on 21st August and at Upper Caldecote on 24th August (MB).

2441 Silver Y *Autographa gamma* (L.) [Migrant]

The first record was at Clifton on 21st May (JE), the last was at Clifton on 12th Nov (ARO) and the maximum count was 89 at Potton Wood on 8th (IPW).

[2465 Four-spotted *Tyta luctuosa* ([D. & S.]) [Na]

There were none reported to the Recorders this year. The population does fluctuate so hopefully some will be seen in 2011.]

2469 Herald *Scoliopteryx libatrix* (L.)

A high count of 50 was recorded during a hibernation check at Woburn ice house by the Beds Bat Group on 14th Feb 2010. There are two higher counts of 60 also from Woburn ice house – 10th Feb 1996 and 14th Dec 2003 (JEC).

2475 Waved Black *Parascotia fuliginaria* (L.) [Nb]

One was in the Eaton Bray RIS trap on 23rd July (GBu). This is the fifth county record.

VC20 records

1984 Humming-bird Hawk-moth *Macroglossum stellatarum* (L.) [Migrant]

A single larva was found in Dunstable on 6th Sept (WP). This was bred through and emerged 20th Oct.

Migrant records are forwarded to the appropriate editor for inclusion in the Immigration of Lepidoptera to the British Isles Report for the *Entomologists Record and Journal of Variation*.

All records are held by the Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre and updated regularly. In addition the dataset is forwarded to the National Moth Recording Scheme when requested.

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Melissa and Andy Banthorpe are the Society's joint Recorders for Macro-moths, a position they have held in an honorary capacity since late 2006.