

NO:6 OCTOBER 2023

MOTH NEWS

FOR DERBYSHIRE 2023

Derbyshire Moths Facebook Group (DMFG)



MOTH OF THE MONTH

October is the best month of the year to see one of the most spectacular of our autumn moths, the **Merveille du Jour**. Its name translates to "Wonder of the Day" and so it is very aptly named. When one is found in the moth trap, there is a brief heart-stopping moment, as you take in the beauty and the unique colours and markings of this simply stunning moth.

I've been fortunate to have plucked several out of my moth trap over the years, including the very first record for the Isles of Scilly, on the 15 October 2006. I was moth trapping every night in the garden of the chalet I was staying in on St. Agnes, so you can imagine how I felt when I emptied the last egg tray!

So, it was no surprise to see records on the DMFG of this species, throughout early October. The first reported was on 3rd by Brian Hobby at Kirk Hallam, then about a dozen or so in the next 10 days of the month, including a first for Steve Thorpe in 14 years of moth trapping in Derbyshire. What a result! Just look at the colours on the below photographs. They don't come much better.



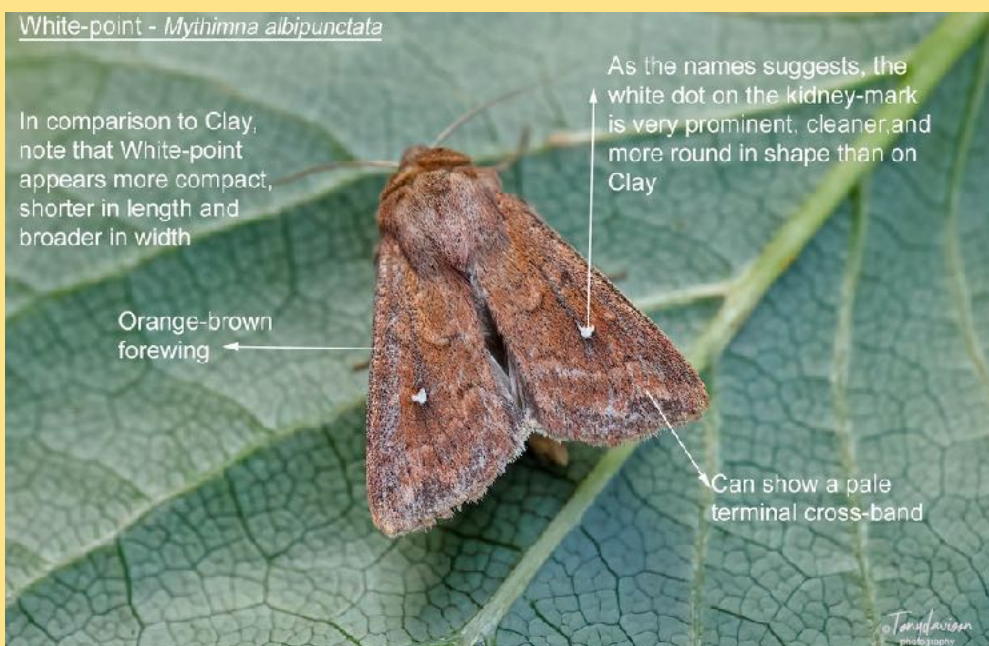
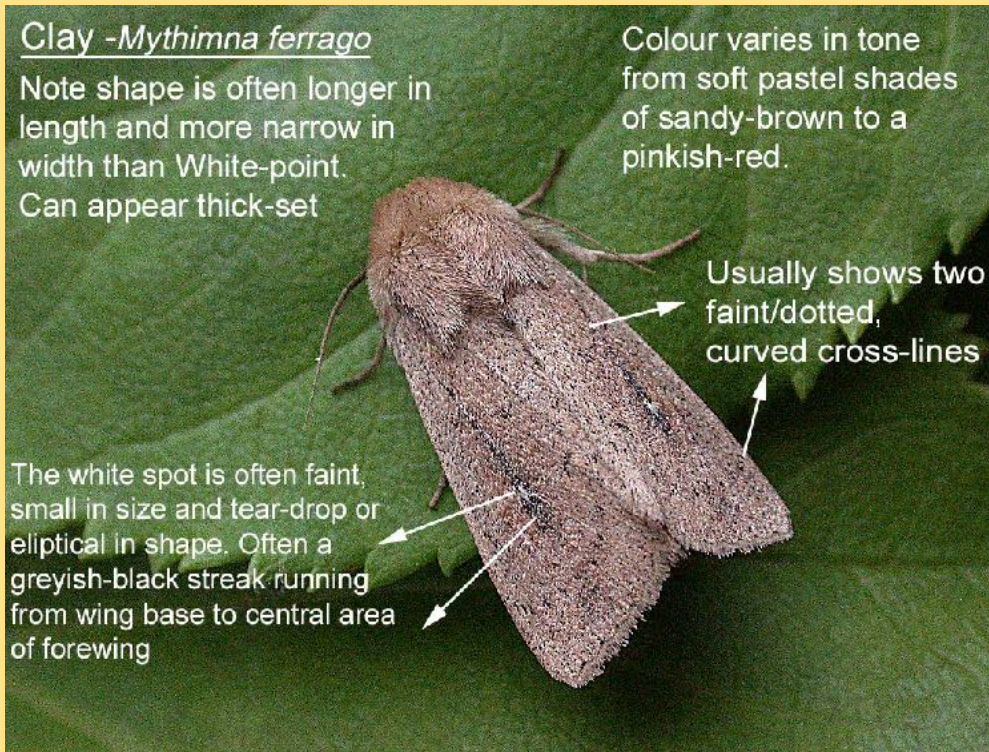
Merveille du Jour - Anne Butler



Merveille du Jour - Nikki Barrow

THE MOTH ID FORUM - Due to the increase in records of **White-point**, and its close resemblance to **The Clay**, I've decided to choose these two species for this month's ID Forum.

The **White-point** is a relatively new species to Derbyshire, with the first confirmed record on 22 October 2022 in Hathersage, trapped by the late Claire Miles. This record was followed by a second specimen taken on 26 August 2023, at High Leas, near Matlock. With numerous records reported from all neighbouring counties, and further records from Derbyshire in August & September 2023, including one trapped in my Melbourne garden on 10 September, this could relate to range expansion into the county.



October - Mid-autumn records - The month began with something slightly different, as Graham Finch posted a super collection of Leaf Miners from a trip to Calke Park, near Ticknall on the 1st. A total of 31 species were noted, most of which appear to be totally under-recorded in the county. Graham commented that October is the best time to look for Leaf Miners.

The first notable species was recorded by Clive Ashton on 1st, from his Cromford garden moth



Fletcher's (Pauper) Pug - Clive Ashton

Steve Thorpe recorded 101 moths in his garden moth trap on 1st including **Northern Deep Brown Dart** agg, a **Red Underwing**, 3 **Pink-barred Sallow** and an *Aceleris cristana*. The first **Merveille du Jour** of the autumn appeared in Brian Hobby's garden trap at Kirk Hallam on 2nd along with both **Red-line** and **Yellow-line Quakers**.

Another two **Merveille du Jour** from Sandiacre on 6th/7th were recorded by Emily Louise Milnes and Anne Butler. The **chestnuts** and **Blair's Shoulder-knot** were also beginning to be recorded during the first week of October.



Yellow-line Quaker - Brian Hobby



Red-line Quaker - Brian Hobby

trap, a **Fletcher's (Pauper) Pug**. First recorded in Derbyshire in 2002, current status unknown.

As John Turner from New Mills stated in his post on 7 October, it is always worth setting up the Moth Trap, you never know what may turn-up. For John a pristine **Merveille du Jour**, however it wasn't in his moth trap, but on the outside edge of his arbor. He also recorded **Red-line Quaker**, **November Moth** agg, **Red-green Carpet** and **Pale Mottled Willow**.

October - Mid-autumn - Steve Thorpe had another bumper moth session at Breaston on 6/7 Oct when he recorded another **Clifden Nonpareil** (Blue Underwing) from 71/21. It has certainly been a good year in Derbyshire for this species. Other notables were **Red-line Quaker** and **Green-brindled Crescent**.



Clifden Nonpareil - Steve Thorpe



Green-brindled Crescent - Steve Thorpe

On 6th Clive Ashton came up trumps with a **Feathered Ranunculus** from 10/8, along with a **Barred Sallow**, **Silver Y** and **November Moth** agg. Clive regularly runs two moth traps at Cromford, an actinic and a 125W MV. The MV trap recorded 33/12 including **Angle-barred Pug**, 6 **Blair's Shoulder Knot**, **Black Rustic**, 2 **Red-line Quaker**, 3 **Red-green Carpet**, **Juniper Pug**, 2 **Spruce Carpet** and a **Rivulet**. Interesting to see the different species range from the two moth traps using different light.



Feather Ranunculus - Clive Ashton

The **Feathered Ranunculus** is a resident species in the county, and is scarce and locally distributed. It seems to be present in low densities on the Carboniferous Limestone, only rarely being recorded from other areas of Derbyshire.

The first week of October certainly seems to be prime time for the **Merveille du Jour**, as Brian Hallam, from his Robinson trap at Findern, also recorded one on 5 Oct, in spite of wet and windy conditions. There was another record from Shirland on 7 Oct by Nikki Barrow, but her star of the show was a second record for the autumn of **Scarce Bordered Straw**. An interesting photograph that Nikki posted was of **Grey & Blair's Shoulder Knot** side-by-side for comparison.

Dave Evans first post for October was on the 8th, with records of **Large Ranunculus**, and **Large Wainscot** from 35/19.

Mild conditions early in the month were producing some large counts and 120/25 from Emily Louise Milnes Sandiacre trap on 8th included 45 **Box Tree Moth** and a **Rusty Dot Pearl**, a scarce migrant to the county.

Martin Roome recorded a **Figure of Eight** on 7th from South Wood/Piston Hill.

Further records of **Merveille du Jour** were from Clive Ashton at Cromford on 7th, 3 from Anne Butler on same date from Sandiacre, Steve Thorpe from Breaston on 7th, Graham Pollock on 8th from Quarndon, and from Emily Louise Milnes who trapped her second on 9th. An excellent set of records from across the county of this beautiful moth.

Clive Ashton's MV Moth trap at Cromford recorded an **Autumn Green Carpet** on 7th. Also on same date Christine Maughan had a Vapourer Moth and a late *Yponomeuta* species from her Mickleover Skinner trap.

The 7th seemed to be THE night for moth recording, as there were many posts from across the county.

Brian Hobby from Kirk Hallam, recorded 96/30 from his 125w MV Skinner trap. I've picked-out some of the highlights - **Satellite**, **Shoulder-striped Wainscot**, **Merveille du Jour**, **Pink-barred Sallow**, **Grey Shoulder Knot**, **Yellow-line** and **Red-line Quaker** and **Green Brindled Crescent**.



Scarce Bordered Straw - Nikki Barrow



Grey & Blair's Shoulder Knot - Nikki Barrow



Rusty Dot Pearl - Emily Louise Milnes



Autumn Green Carpet - Clive Ashton



Satellite - Brian Hobby



Shoulder-striped Wainscot - Brian Hobby

October Mid-autumn - Nadine Snowhill recorded the **Streak** from her Heath Robinson moth trap on 8th/9th, a species not often encountered, that is a resident in the county, but locally distributed.

Dave Evans trapped another **Feathered Ranunculus** overnight on 8th from his Belper Moth Trap. Steve Thorpe's garden moth trap had a good selection on 8th, in addition to his **MDJ**, a fourteen year wait to record one, he also had a **Rusty Dot Pearl** and **Brindled Green**, which was a new species for Steve.



Streak - Nadine Snowhill

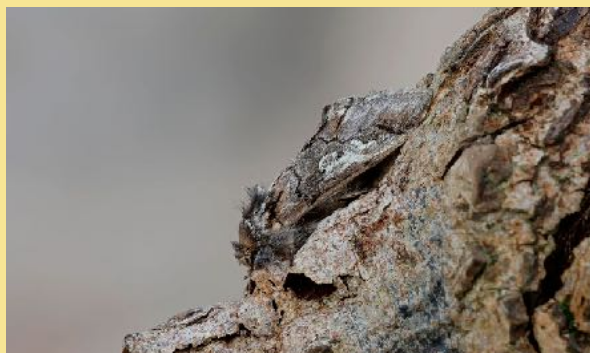


Figure of Eight - Martin Roome



Brindled Green - Steve Thorpe



Clifden Nonpareil - Tony Davison



Green-brindled Crescent - Tony Davison



Blair's Shoulder-knot - Tony Davison



Pink-barred Sallow - Anne Butler

I had my own excitement on the morning of the 10th, when I joined "The Blue Underwing Club"! I discovered a **Clifden Nonpareil** in the moth trap. Also a **Green-brindled Crescent**, **Yellow-line Quaker**, **Blair's Shoulder Knot** and 14 **Box Tree Moth**, being additional highlights.

Nikki Barrow from her Shirland garden moth trap recorded another **Figure of Eight** and a **Satellite** on 9th. Dave Evans had an **Autumn Green Carpet**, **Dark Chestnut** and **Spruce Carpet** also on 9th.

Anne Butler from her Sandiacre garden moth trap had a good catch on 9th including 64 **Box Tree Moth! MDJ**, 4 **Red-line Quaker** and a **Pink-barred Sallow** from 24/13 excluding the 64 **Box Tree Moth**.



Large Ranunculus - Dave Evans



Feathered Ranunculus - Dave Evans

John Turner, at New Mills recorded a **Dark Sword Grass** on 9th, most likely a migrant.

October Mid-autumn - Sid Morris recorded his first **Box Tree Moth** at Staveley on 10th, so this species is certainly spreading across the county at a great rate of knots!

A **Hummingbird Hawkmoth** was recorded by Michael Eyre on 13th but no site given. John Turner trapped at New Mills on 14th and recorded yet another **Merveille du Jour**, along with **Juniper Carpet** and a **November Moth agg**, and **Red-green Carpet**.

A noticeable change in air temperature around 14th/15th has had an impact on moth numbers, so unless we get a few warm nights, records will begin to dwindle. Steve Thorpe on 13th recorded **Feathered Thorn**, **Brick**, **2 November Moth agg**, **Red-line Quaker**, **Silver Y** and a **Chestnut**. Matt Leedell recorded an apparent **Autumnal Moth** on 14th.

Eleri Norris recorded the first record of **December Moth** of the season, at Highcliffe, Eyam. No doubt more will follow into late autumn and early winter periods.

Storm Babet put paid to moth trapping for several days during mid-month, but a few stalwart "Moth-ers" managed a few records and on 19th, Brian Hallam posted 16 moths of 8 species from his garden moth trap in Findern, including a **Scarce Bordered Straw** (3rd record this year of this rare migrant). Whilst Graham Pollock caught a fine specimen of **Dark Chestnut** from his Quarndon moth trap overnight on 21st. Nikki Barrow had just a single **Mottled Umber** from her Shirland garden moth trap, also overnight on 21st.



Scarce Bordered Straw - Brian Hallam



Mottled Umber - Nikki Barrow

A belated, but interesting record, was sent to me from Peter Hendry, of a **Cypress Carpet** he caught in his Hilton garden moth trap on 1 July 2020. It was rather a surprise, as this represents the 2nd county record of this species, with both records in 2020.



December Moth - Eleri Norris



Dark Chestnut - Graham Pollock



Chestnut - Brian Hallam

October Mid autumn - Steve Thorpe recorded some good results from his Breaston garden moth trap on 21st with 18/8 including **Feathered Thorn**, 2 **Dark Chestnut**, **Beaded Chestnut** 3 x **Brick** and 4 x **November Moth** **egg** and a **Green-brindled Crescent**.

All I could muster from my Melbourne garden moth trap on 22nd was a **Juniper Carpet**, **Red-green Carpet**, a **November Moth** **egg** and a **Light-brown Apple Moth**.

Similar species were being recorded from various locations in the county. John Turner from New Mills bucked the trend with a **Grey-shoulder Knot** on 26th Oct, and a late **Barred Sallow** from Sid Morris at Staveley on 28th.

Steve Thorpe held a successful moth event at High Lees Farm on 27th, and produced 66/13 including **December Moth**, **Satellite**, 2 x **Mottled Umber**, **Brick**, **Yellow-line Quaker**, **Merveille du Jour** and 21 **Chestnut**.

On 29th Nikki Barrow from her Shirland 20W actinic Heath Trap had just a solitary **Rusty Dot Pearl**, a nice end to the month with a good migrant, for the county.



Rusty Dot Pearl - Nikki Barrow.

As we enter the late autumn period I'm expecting the range of species and numbers to reduce dramatically. Let's see what happens.

Tony Davison.