

NO:3 SEPTEMBER 2023

MOTH NEWS

FOR DERBYSHIRE 2023

Derbyshire Moths Facebook Group (DMFG)



MOTH OF THE MONTH

The fabulous **Clifden Nonpareil** is this month's Moth of the Month. It was a rather difficult choice to make, with the addition of quality migrant moths to choose from.

The "**Blue Underwing**" is a large moth measuring nearly four inches across. There have been numerous reports across the country during September 2023, indicating that either a large number of migrants had arrived on our shores, or, as is suspected, the species is expanding its range rapidly northwards, from southern and central England. Whatever the reason, to find one of these in the moth trap, or on a garden fence close to it, must be a tremendous experience, and one I'm hoping for, as it is a species I've yet to see.

There was an unprecedented record of six in the county this September. The first was from Brian Hobby at Kirk Hallam on 2nd, then Matt Leedell in Belper on 9th, Bryan Barnacle at Froggatt on 16th, Clive Ashton at Cromford on 17th, Nikki Barrow on 22nd at Shirland, and Steve Thorpe on 24th at Breaston. The species is still a rare moth in the county, and up to 2020, there had only been two modern day reports, one in 2012 from Findern, and one in 2020 from Calke Park, near Ticknall. Five of the six specimens are included in this bulletin.



Clifden Nonpareil - Brian Hobby - Kirk Hallam



Clifden Nonpareil - Matt Leedell - Belper

THE MOTH ID FORUM

During 2012, I had a "Guide-line" article, that I had prepared, posted on the late Martin Garner's website, discussing the identification of the two British Copper Underwings. The material I used at the time, was gathered together from various resources and publications, and also from observations that myself and Simon Roddis had put together. In fact Simon kindly supported the article with some of his photographs. So I felt it would be a useful article, especially for those who might be new-comers to Mothing. Unfortunately the article received a lot of very strong criticism and to a certain extent was ridiculed, and as a result, it put me off from posting any further moth related articles on Martin's site again.

Rather reluctantly, I've chosen the same two moths, the **Copper Underwings**, as this month's **ID Forum** post. There are masses of controversy over identifying these two species, as they are notoriously difficult, and only Gen Det analysis offers a 100% certainty in the identification process. Having said this, it is widely believed that as long as one gathers sufficient evidence based on the following, then it is possible to identify accurately, one from the other, especially in well marked individuals. Obviously worn moths should be recorded as **Copper Underwing agg** (aggregate).

In a recent article prepared by Les Evans-Hill, the most reliable feature, in order to clinch an ID beyond reasonable doubt, and without recourse to dissection, is the extent of copper/orange suffusion on the underside of the hindwing. This can be achieved (not always) with a moth in a clear-bottomed container, although ideally, the more splayed the wings are, the better.

Copper Underwing *Amphipyra pyramidea*. The copper/orange suffusion is limited to the outer third of the under hind-wing, forming a marginal band, and ends abruptly at the dark cross-band. The remaining basal two-thirds is straw-coloured, apart from a grey-brown speckled streak along the leading edge which gives a contrasting effect.



Copper Underwing - Simon Roddis

THE MOTH ID FORUM, continued.

Svensson's Copper Underwing *Amphipyra berbera svenssoni*. The copper/orange suffusion continues towards the base in trailing half, with a lack of any contrast, and without any sign of a marginal band.



Svensson's Copper Underwing - Simon Roddis

Copper Underwing also looks much brighter in comparison to Svensson's. An interesting feature is the extent of black on the sides of the abdomen, forming a bright chequered pattern in Copper, whereas in Svensson's it is rather indistinct. Overall, **Svensson's Copper Underwing** has a very drab appearance, in fact it was once called the Drab Copper Underwing.

There was a theory relating to the colour of the "palps," but this has now been debunked, and refuted by experts to have any relevance to the identification of the two species. Other features relating to markings on the upper-wings are also subjective.

Belated news.

A male **Yellow-legged Clearwing** came to lure at West Hallam Ash Tip on 11 July, plus at least half a dozen **Six-belted Clearwing** nearby. Also 5 **Red-tipped Clearwing** at Pleasley Pit, and good numbers of **Six-belted Clearwing** at the same site, Melanie Jane Penson & Marion Bryce.

September - Early autumn - With me finding a dead **Convolvulus Hawkmoth** on the road outside my house, Martin Roome catching a **Scarce-bordered Straw**, and other migrants being recorded such as **Vestal**, **Rusty Dot Pearl**, **Palpita Vitrealis**, a **Delicate** (2nd record for Derbyshire) at Birch Vale, several more **Dewick's Plusia**, and six reports of the fabulous **Clifden Nonpareil**, September turned out to be a superb month for recording Derbyshire's moths.

Clive Ashton kicked-off the month with a **Feathered Gothic** on the 1st at Cromford, and Dave Evans on 2nd at Belper, had **Rosy Rustic** and **Feathered Gothic** from 117/47. Emily-Louise Milnes had 73 **Large Yellow Underwing** from 206/30, and Doug Aston had a **Pine Carpet** on 2nd at Middleton-by-Youlgreave. Clive Ashton caught a **Triangle Plume** at Cromford on 1st.



Feathered Gothic - Clive Ashton



Triangle Plume - Clive Ashton



White-point - Sid Morris

On the 3rd the first highlight of the month was a **Clifden Nonpareil** trapped by Brian Hobby at Kirk Hallam. Little did we know at the time that more would be found. John Turner recorded a **Pebble Hook-tip** from his New Mills moth trap on 3rd, and Dave Evans recorded some migrant activity to his Belper garden moth trap over night on 3rd - **Rush Veneer**, **Rusty Dot Pearl**, **Diamond-back** and several **Silver Y** from 116/49.

Sid Morris had a **White-point** at Staveley on 4th, offering some indication that this species now seems to be well spread in the county.

September - Early autumn - Some very nice autumn moths were beginning to appear early in the month, and Christine Maughan recorded the first **Brindled Green** on the 3rd at Mickleover.

Neil Loverock recorded several special species from his Chaddesden moth trap on 5th, with **Maidens Blush**, **Toadflax Brocade**, and a **Dark Spectacle**.

Another bumper catch by Dave Evans on 6th at Belper with 365 moths of 53 species including 204 **Large Yellow Underwings**, but a highlight was **Lesser Treble Bar**.

Overnight on 6th, Sam Goddard had 80/32 at Fenny Bentley with **Honeysuckle Moth**, **Canary-shouldered Thorn**, *Hypsopygia glaucinalis* and three **Centre-barred Sallow** being particular highlights. Clive Ashton recorded a **Frosted Orange** at Cromford on 6th.

A Bat and Moth event was held at Morley Retreat on 6th, with Steve Thorpe leading the moth trapping evening for DWT. Particular highlights were an **Orange Sallow** and a **Brindled Green**. Steve Orridge recorded a **Vestal moth** in his garden moth trap on 8th.



The Vestal - Steve Orridge



Brindled Green - Christine Maughan



Toadflax Brocade - Neil Loverock



Dark Spectacle - Neil Loverock



Maiden's Blush - Neil Loverock

September Early autumn - A **Tawny-barred Angle** at Sandiacre on 7th, was a late record for the county (Emily-Louise Milnes) and an amazing count of nine **Centre-barred Sallow** in Dave Evans Belper moth trap on 7th. Sid Morris trapped at Markham Vale on 7/8 and recorded 103/27 with **Bulrush Wainscot** and **Burnished Brass** being main highlights. There were several reports of Hornets in moth traps during the month, causing chaos. Please be particularly careful when emptying your moth trap, especially at this time of year, as Wasps and Hornets can be quite hazardous.

John Turner recorded the first **Autumnal Rustic** at New Mills on 7th, along with a **Heath Rustic**. Dave Evans also recorded **Heath Rustic**, an **Ear Moth agg**, a **Brown-spot Pinion** and a **Barred Hook-tip** on 8th at Belper. Several **Red Underwings** were trapped including one at Cromford from Clive Ashton's moth trap.

Boom!, another **Clifden Nonpareil** on 9th, by Matt Leedell in Belper. John Turner at New Mills recorded **Vapourer Moth**, **Sallow**, **Centre-barred Sallow**, and **Dusky Thorn** on the 9th. It seems to be a good year for **Centre-barred Sallow**, with what seems to be record numbers being reported.



Centre-barred Sallows - Dave Evans



Clifton Nonpareil - Matt Leedell

Steve Thorpe trapped a few migrants on 8th at Breaston, including a **Dark Sword-grass**, and 2 **Diamond-back Moth**. Also recording 50+ **Box Tree Moth** and 20+ **Centre-barred Sallow**.

On 9th Emily-Louise Milnes recorded a **Cypress Pug** (3rd county record), and another **Dark Sword-grass**, at her garden moth trap in Sandiacre. The **Cypress Pug** was first recorded in the county at Allestree on 13/14th August 2022.



Dark Sword-grass - Steve Thorpe



Cypress Pug - Emily-Louise Milnes



Pink-barred Sallow - Nikki Barrow



White-point - Tony Davison



Box Tree Moth - Tony Davison

September - Early autumn - Nikki Barrow trapped at Press Lane NR, Ashover on 9th, and recorded the first **Pink-barred Sallow** of the autumn. A new species for the reserve, note the reddish/pinkish brown shoulders and head, a good ID feature

John Turner recorded some great autumn moths at New Mills on 9th. **Frosted Orange, Pink-barred Sallow, Black Rustic, Centre-barred Sallow** and **Sallow**. An extremely late **Grass Rivulet** (usually flies May-July) was recorded at Middleton-by-Youlgreave, by Doug Aston on 9th.

I ran a garden moth trap at Melbourne on 10th and had several firsts including **Box Tree Moth** and **White-point**. Also my second record of **Orange Sallow** for the garden. 123/36.

Clive Ashton trapped another **Cypress Pug** at Cromford on 11th (4th record for Derbyshire).



Cypress Pug - Clive Ashton

Sid Morris trapped at Markham Vale on 13th with 88/25, a **Northern Deep Brown Dart** egg being the main highlight. Another **Maiden's Blush** was recorded by Graham Pollock at Quarndon on 24th.

Simon Roddis posted a photo of a **Convolvulus Hawkmoth** taken by a teaching assistant at Castle View Primary School, Matlock on 15th. A migrant and a very good county record.

September Early autumn - I ran another garden moth trap at Melbourne on 16th with 131/26 - Highlights being a **Northern Deep Brown Dart egg** - NFG, 1 **Brindled Green**, 1 **Beaded Chestnut**, 1 **Large Wainscot**, 2 **Lunar Underwing**, 7 **Black Rustic** and at least 20+ **Vine's Rustic**. Overnight on 15th Sam Goddard recorded 2 **Frosted Orange** from his garden moth trap at Fenny Bentley.

Nikki Barrow also recorded **Northern Deep Brown Dart egg** and **Brindled Green** on 15th from 153/23.

Graham Finch had a good session with Leaf Miners at Spring Wood, with **Bucculatrix cidarella** on Alder and **Strophedra weirana** on Beech, being stand out highlights from 32 species. Brian Hallam trapped a strange aberration of **Vine's Rustic** from his garden moth trap at Findern on 15th from 143/28. Also recording **Frosted Orange**, and a well marked **Sallow** as other highlights.

On 15th John Turner at New Mills recorded a **Lesser Treble Bar**, and Anne Butler, also on 15th, from her Sandiacre garden moth trap, caught a fine example of the *flavescens* form of the **Sallow**.



Vine's Rustic - aberration - Brian Hallam



Northern Deep Brown Dart egg - Tony Davison



The Sallow form *flavescens* - Anne Butler



Lesser Treble Bar - John Turner

September Early autumn - An incredible catch of 123 **Box Tree Moth** from Steve Thorpe's Breaston garden moth trap on 15th. This species is now well and truly established in Derbyshire. The **Frosted Orange** has had a good year so far with numerous reports across the county.

Clive Ashton recorded the third record of **Clifden Nonpareil** on 17th from Cromford, along with a **Pinion-streaked Snout**.

On the 20 September I found the corpse of a **Convolvulus Hawkmoth**, on the road just outside my house in Melbourne. It may have been a female, as there were, what appeared to be, eggs surrounding the broken abdomen. The body was in a terrible state, but pink markings at the base of the thorax were the "giveaway" to the identification.

On 22nd Emily Louise Milnes caught a **Dewick's Plusia** in her Sandiacre garden moth trap.

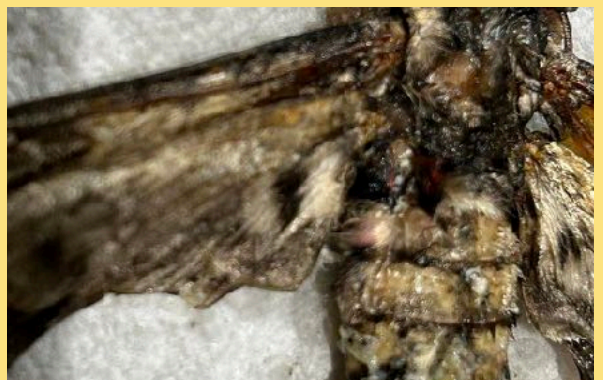
Also on 22nd, yet another **Clifden Nonpareil** trapped by Nikki Barrow at Shirland, along with a **Pearly Underwing** and a **White-point**. Three quality moths that were all new for her garden.



Clifden Nonpareil - Nikki Barrow



Clifden Nonpareil - Clive Ashton



Convolvulus Hawkmoth - Tony Davison



Dewick's Plusia - Emily Louise Milnes

September Early autumn - Northern Deep Brown Dart *agg*, seems to have had a good year, with singles being reported from various sites around the county. Another was trapped at Kirk Hallam on 23rd by Brian Hobby.

Martin Roome, this months latest newbie to "Moth-ing," certainly made a flying start by recording, so far, the county's only **Scarce Bordered Straw** of the autumn. The last one was in July 2022, during a time of high migrant moth activity into Britain. The species was first added to the county list in 2006.



Scarce Bordered Straw - Martin Roome

The sixth **Clifden Nonpareil** was recorded by Steve Thorpe at Breaston on 24th, making this month the best on record, in Derbyshire, for the Blue Underwing. Steve also caught a **Red Underwing**, providing him with a good opportunity to check the kidney marks on the upper-wings of both species. In **Clifden Nonpareil** it is a clear open spot.

Paul Buxton record three **Dewick's Plusia** at Sandiacre on 25th, a new species for his garden list, including a female that laid eggs.



Clifden Nonpareil - Steve Thorpe



Red Underwing - Steve Thorpe

On 25th Sid Morris recorded **Pink-barred Sallow**, **Green Brindled Crescent** and ***Hypsopygia glaucinalis* (Double-striped Tabby)** from Markham Vale. Since July Sid has recorded around 175 species from this site.

On 29th Clive Ashton discovered a **Light Emerald** in his moth trap. As it was very small in size, and very late for the time of year, it initially caused Clive a few ID issues.

September Early autumn - By the end of the month the final records, of what has been another amazing month for Derbyshire Moth Recording, were still pouring in.



Dark Sword-grass - Dave Evans



Oak Nycteoline - Dave Evans

Dave Evans had another of his "Bumper" moth traps on 25th, and recorded a **Dark Sword-grass**, **Oak Nycteoline**, **Black Rustic**, **Lunar Underwing**, **Autumnal Rustic**, **Yellow-line Quaker**, **Pink-barred Sallow** and **White-point**, being the main highlights, what a mouth-watering collection of autumnal species. Anne Butler posted the first **Blair's Shoulder Knot** of the year on 27th, along with **Barred Sallow**, 42 **Box Tree Moth**, 5 **Black Rustic** and a range of common species from her Sandiacre garden moth trap.

Steve Orridge reported a **Delicate** on 27th that was in a friends garden moth trap on 26th in Birch Vale. This represents the second county record of this migrant species. A **Palpita vitrealis** on 24th at Aston-on-Trent was sent in by Melanie-Jane Penson. Clive Ashton brought the month to a close with an **Autumn Green Carpet** in his Cromford garden moth trap on 28th, a species that is locally distributed and generally uncommon in the county.

Well, there we have it, another cracking month of Derbyshire moths, including some superb migrants and an array of good autumn species. Many thanks to all the county recorders who continue to support the Derbyshire Moths Facebook Group.



Delicate - Steve Orridge



Autumn Green Carpet - Clive Ashton