



GMS NEWS

Weeks 28-36

Autumn 2010

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Here we go again - Season's greetings



Pic: Steve Orridge

Scheme overview for autumn 2010 – Norman Lowe

I have now received results for the Autumn 2010 period from 241 gardens covering all parts of the British Isles. This is almost as many as the 246 records received for the same period last year.

The commonest moths recorded throughout the British Isles

The following table shows the results for the commonest species in the British Isles for Weeks 28-36. Some people felt that the large size of the tables meant that things were a bit indigestible so I've just included the Top 20 this time. As before, I've shown increases from last year's figures in black and decreases in red, and there are just 9 of each, with two species for which no comparison can be made. So overall it seems that you've recorded similar numbers of moths compared with the same period last year.

Top 20 most-recorded moths – Autumn 2010

Posn	Name	2010		2009		Per cent increase/ decrease since 2009
		241 gardens		246 gardens		
		Total	Mean per garden	Total	Mean per garden	
1	Large Yellow Underwing	9118	37.8	7590	30.9	22.6
2	Setaceous Hebrew Character	5573	23.1	6302	25.6	-9.7
3	Lunar Underwing	4064	16.9	3460	14.1	19.6
4	Square-spot Rustic	2622	10.9	3273	13.3	-18.2
5	Light Brown Apple Moth	2125	9.0	3430	13.9	-35.2
6	Lesser Yellow Underwing	1561	6.5	2096	8.5	-23.8
7	Yellow-line Quaker	1526	6.3	1140	4.6	37.7
8	Common Marbled Carpet	1198	5.0	2695	11.0	-54.8
9	Beaded Chestnut	1192	4.9	934	3.8	30.2
10	Blair's Shoulder-knot	1137	4.7	928	3.8	24.2
11	Vine's Rustic	1116	4.6	n/a	Not a core species 2009	
12	November Moth aggregate	940	3.9	n/a	Not recorded 2009	
13	Black Rustic	886	3.7	1153	4.7	-21.8
14	Spruce Carpet	690	2.9	1504	6.1	-53.1
15	Common Wainscot	688	2.9	570	2.3	24.1
16	Flounced Rustic	677	2.8	361	1.5	91.1
17	Silver Y	668	2.8	1004	4.1	-32.4
18	Rosy Rustic	651	2.7	487	2.0	35.1
19	Chestnut	605	2.5	377	1.5	66.7
20	Red-green Carpet	602	2.5	905	3.7	-32.5

Top “winners” were Flounced Rustic with a 91.1% increase and Chestnut, which increased by 66.7%. Those showing the greatest decreases since last year were Common Marbled Carpet at 54.8% and Spruce Carpet at 53.1%.

But there is a feeling that some of the specialist autumnal species are declining so I thought I’d look at those autumnal species that didn’t quite make it into the Top 20. And as you can see in the next table, all of them were recorded in fewer numbers than they had been last year.

Specialist autumnal species with 1.5. to 2.5 moths per garden

Name	2010		2009		Per cent increase/ decrease since 2009
	241 gardens		246 gardens		
	Total	Mean per garden	Total	Mean per garden	
Red-line Quaker	578	2.4	913	3.7	-35.35
Green-brindled Crescent	489	2.0	511	2.1	-2.45
Feathered Thorn	412	1.7	468	1.9	-10.02
Barred Sallow	390	1.6	490	2.0	-18.68
Pale Mottled Willow	367	1.5	538	2.2	-30.46

Differences across the British Isles

So what are the differences for these 20 species between the areas? The table below shows the mean number of moths per garden in each area. As usual, for each species I’ve shown the highest mean-per-garden area figures in red and the lowest in blue.

For some reason the autumn figures seemed to show a much greater difference in numbers between the different parts of the British Isles than other quarters. In particular the Channel Islands show the highest figures for more than half of all the species and Scotland show the lowest for more than half the species. But when the Channel Islands figures are the lowest, for Yellow-line Quaker, November Moths and Rosy Rustic, Scotland has the highest figures (or nearly so).

Away from the north-south divide, it seems strange that Common Marbled Carpet is commonest in NE England but least frequent in E England. And why should Silver Y be so much commoner in NE England than elsewhere?

It’s always interesting to see that some species show little variation in numbers across the patch whereas other species, although widespread, are much commoner in some areas than others. So Spruce Carpet was present in only small numbers everywhere but Wales, where it was common, and Red-green Carpet occurred at a fairly similar frequency throughout.

Species frequencies by area 2010

	W Midlands	Channel Is	Ireland	Scotland	Wales	E England	NE England	E Midlands	Yorks/Humber	SE England	NW England	SW England
Large Yellow U,wing	26.3	148.8	9.0	3.5	15.8	36.8	23.8	31.0	24.5	55.4	29.5	73.6
Set Hebrew Character	14.7	69.6	60.7	0.6	14.4	12.8	7.8	22.7	31.9	7.4	12.3	60.0
Lunar Underwing	2.6	203.6	3.9	0.0	0.8	18.6	1.3	10.7	14.1	53.3	1.6	13.2
Square-spot Rustic	2.6	62.0	4.1	0.9	2.5	12.5	2.7	10.9	20.8	29.0	2.6	11.7
Light Brown Apple Moth	10.7	28.6	7.7	0.6	2.7	9.1	27.0	6.4	18.5	10.7	3.7	9.4
Lesser Yellow Underwing	6.3	15.8	4.1	1.2	2.9	8.0	5.0	7.7	7.1	10.9	3.6	6.9
Yellow-line Quaker	3.4	0.6	1.1	10.7	9.3	3.6	1.2	4.0	6.4	8.3	7.8	9.1
Common Marbled Carpet	4.6	3.8	10.9	2.7	6.3	0.9	13.8	2.2	3.5	3.2	7.7	7.3
Beaded Chestnut	1.9	25.0	2.7	0.0	1.2	5.0	0.0	3.8	5.0	2.7	0.5	16.7
Blair's Shoulder-knot	6.1	4.0	1.3	0.2	1.8	3.7	9.0	7.0	5.8	6.4	3.7	5.5
Vine's Rustic	0.4	26.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	10.0	0.2	1.1	1.0	19.4	0.0	3.4
November Moth aggregate	2.6	0.2	6.4	6.1	7.1	3.6	1.2	2.4	2.3	3.6	5.2	3.3
Black Rustic	2.5	15.6	4.7	1.5	3.7	2.9	0.2	1.9	0.4	3.1	3.1	7.9
Spruce Carpet	0.8	0.4	4.7	3.5	13.8	0.7	1.0	0.3	2.0	0.8	2.2	0.3
Common Wainscot	3.0	7.6	2.0	0.0	0.3	4.8	0.7	3.8	7.6	1.0	1.0	4.9
Flounced Rustic	1.6	9.6	0.0	0.0	1.7	3.9	0.7	1.0	1.0	9.2	0.7	2.8
Silver Y	1.6	4.0	3.4	4.1	2.1	2.2	15.8	2.6	8.3	1.0	3.2	1.8
Rosy Rustic	2.2	1.0	9.3	5.0	2.8	1.4	9.0	1.2	2.8	1.0	1.9	3.9
Chestnut	1.3	0.6	0.3	8.0	5.1	0.7	0.5	0.6	2.4	3.8	3.9	1.5
Red-green Carpet	2.5	1.4	3.3	1.8	3.2	1.0	2.5	1.0	1.4	3.5	6.0	1.6

Again, I've produced a table of regional top 10s. This quarter it seems that the species showing geographical "preferences" have divided into a north and west (shown in brown) and a south and east pattern, shown in green. Of especial interest is Lunar Underwing which although No. 3 in the overall Top 20 is rare or absent in the north and west. I know from my own experience that it has been declining steadily in Wales and yet it is common in the SW and Yorkshire. Square-spot Rustic is showing a similar south and east pattern, yet I've always thought it was a common species throughout the UK. On the other hand Common Marbled Carpet and the November moths appear in the Top 10s almost exclusively in the north and west.

It can also be interesting to see where a species has failed to get into the Top 10. For example is understandable that Light Brown Apple Moth is not in the Scottish Top 10 as it has only just arrived there, but it is also missing from the Top 10 in Wales where for some reason it has had a poor year.

Geographical Top 10s

North West		Mean	Scotland		Mean	North East		Mean
Large Yellow U'wing	29.5	Yellow-line Quaker	10.7	Lt Brown Apple Moth	27.0			
Set Hebrew Character	12.3	Chestnut	8.0	Large Yellow U'wing	23.8			
Com Marbled Carpet	7.7	November Moth agg	6.1	Silver Y	15.8			
Yellow-line Quaker	7.5	Rosy Rustic	5.0	Com Marbled Carpet	13.8			
Purple Clay	6.7	Silver Y	4.1	Garden Carpet	9.2			
Red-green Carpet	6.0	Brown-spot Pinion	3.6	Blair's Shoulder-knot	9.0			
November Moth agg	5.2	Large Yellow U'wing	3.5	Rosy Rustic	9.0			
Lt Brown Apple Moth	3.7	Spruce Carpet	3.5	Set Hebrew Character	7.8			
Chestnut	3.7	Com Marbled Carpet	2.7	Angle Shades	5.7			
Lesser Yellow U'wing	3.6	Red-line Quaker	2.5	Lesser Yellow U'wing	5.0			
Ireland		Mean	Yorkshire		Mean	East England		Mean
Set Hebrew Character	60.7	Set Hebrew Character	31.91	Large Yellow U'wing	36.8			
Com Marbled Carpet	10.9	Large Yellow U'wing	24.55	Lunar Underwing	18.6			
Rosy Rustic	9.3	Square-spot Rustic	20.82	Set Hebrew Character	12.8			
Large Yellow U'wing	9.0	Lt Brown Apple Moth	18.55	Square-spot Rustic	12.5			
Lt Brown Apple Moth	7.7	Lunar Underwing	14.09	Vine's Rustic	10.0			
November Moth agg	6.4	Silver Y	8.27	Turnip Moth	9.4			
Small Wainscot	6.1	Common Wainscot	7.64	Lt Brown Apple Moth	9.1			
Large Wainscot	5.9	Lesser Yellow U'wing	7.09	Lesser Yellow U'wing	8.0			
Red-line Quaker	5.3	Yellow-line Quaker	6.36	Beaded Chestnut	5.0			
Angle Shades	5.1	Blair's Shoulder-knot	5.82	Common Wainscot	4.8			
Wales		Mean	West Midlands		Mean	East Midlands		Mean
Large Yellow U'wing	15.8	Large Yellow U'wing	26.3	Large Yellow U'wing	31.0			
Set Hebrew Character	14.4	Set Hebrew Character	14.7	Set Hebrew Character	22.7			
Spruce Carpet	13.8	Lt Brown Apple Moth	10.7	Square-spot Rustic	10.9			
Yellow-line Quaker	9.3	Lesser Yellow U'wing	6.3	Lunar Underwing	10.7			
November moth agg.	7.1	Blair's Shoulder-knot	6.1	Lesser Yellow U'wing	7.7			
Com Marbled Carpet	6.3	Com Marbled Carpet	4.6	Blair's Shoulder-knot	7.0			
Chestnut	5.1	Yellow-line Quaker	3.4	Lt Brown Apple Moth	6.4			
Green-brind Crescent	4.5	Common Wainscot	3.0	Yellow-line Quaker	4.0			
Red-line Quaker	4.1	November Moth agg.	2.6	Common Wainscot	3.8			
Black Rustic	3.7	Square-spot Rustic	2.6	Beaded Chestnut	3.8			
South West		Mean	Channel Islands		Mean	South East		Mean
Large Yellow U'wing	73.6	Lunar Underwing	203.6	Large Yellow U'wing	55.4			
Set Hebrew Character	60.0	Large Yellow U'wing	148.8	Lunar Underwing	53.3			
Beaded Chestnut	16.7	Feathered Ranunculus	75	Square-spot Rustic	29.0			
Lunar Underwing	13.2	Set Hebrew Character	69.6	Vine's Rustic	19.4			
Square-spot Rustic	11.7	Square-spot Rustic	62	Lesser Yellow U'wing	10.9			
Lt Brown Apple Moth	9.4	Crescent Dart	37.6	Lt Brown Apple Moth	10.7			
Yellow-line Quaker	9.1	Lt Brown Apple Moth	28.6	Flounced Rustic	9.2			
Black Rustic	7.9	Vine's Rustic	26.4	Yellow-line Quaker	8.3			
Com Marbled Carpet	7.3	Beaded Chestnut	25	Agriphila geniculæa	8.1			
Lesser Yellow U'wing	6.9	Clancy's Rustic	24	Set Hebrew Character	7.4			

33 species appear in one or more Top 10 lists, almost exactly the same as the number of species in the late summer. Only Large Yellow Underwing features on all lists, with Setaceous Hebrew Character everywhere but Scotland.

No. of areas in the Top 10 for each species

Species	No. areas in top 10	Species	No. areas in top 10
Large Yellow Underwing	12	Spruce Carpet	2
Set Hebrew Character	11	Black Rustic	2
Light Brown Apple Moth	10	Angle Shades	2
Yellow-line Quaker	8	Turnip Moth	1
Lesser Yellow Underwing	8	Small Wainscot	1
Square-spot Rustic	7	Red-green Carpet	1
Common Marbled Carpet	7	Purple Clay	1
Lunar Underwing	6	Large Wainscot	1
November Moth aggregate	5	Green-brindled Crescent	1
Common Wainscot	4	Garden Carpet	1
Blair's Shoulder-knot	4	Flounced Rustic	1
Beaded Chestnut	4	Feathered Ranunculus	1
Vine's Rustic	3	Crescent Dart	1
Silver Y	3	Clancy's Rustic	1
Rosy Rustic	3	Brown-spot Pinion	1
Red-line Quaker	3	Agriphila geniculea	1
Chestnut	3		



Another ID feature prepared and contributed by Tom Tams

GMS News Notes and GMS Publicity

By Dave Grundy

In the last newsletter I made the plea for us to try to expand the number of GMS trappers from 300 to 600, by everyone in the GMS asking one friend to join in for 2011. That sort of expansion might be unrealistic, but do you have friends who might like to join in? Can you work your charm on them before March? Maybe you are in a local moth group, Wildlife Trust or Butterfly Conservation group and you could ask others to join in the GMS, either by standing up at a meeting or by putting a note in their newsletter? Remember that total beginners can join in and if they use the excuse that they haven't got a moth trap then remember that Christmas is coming up and a moth trap makes the perfect present – I'm sure that our sponsors will sell traps to them at competitive prices!

We have also brought out a new GMS leaflet and posters thanks to sponsorship from OPAL and t-shirts will again be on sale at the AGM next March. We have just had a stall at the British Entomological and Natural History Society exhibition on Saturday 13th November in London – as a result 16 new recorders are planning to join us. So, do you know any other ways to attract more GMS participants? If so then please let us know and we will try to get more people to take part in time for March 2011.



Norman Lowe encouraging a new GMS recorder at the BENHS exhibition

GMS Year End

Records should now have mostly reached area coordinators, but have they? Has your 36 weeks recording form been sent in yet? If not then please, please, please get it in as soon as possible. The GMS is now going from strength to strength and this year we will have 8 years of records under our belt for some gardens and this will allow us to

start plotting which species are our winners and losers. Therefore it is vital that you all now keep up with the recording effort! But, there are quite a few of you out there who still need to return their records, so please, please, please get your garden records back to us as soon as possible and definitely by December 31st. Records for your garden are incredibly important to us, so please don't think that your garden doesn't matter – it does, get those records in quickly.

If we have to start chasing people for records then it can be quite a hassle for us and for you, so please get them back to us quickly. If for some reason you did not manage to complete the recording year then please don't be shy about telling us that. We would rather you let us know as soon as possible. There is nothing worse for us than putting in lots of effort chasing records from someone only to find out that the person hadn't finished their records anyway! These records will then be input to the main GMS database and used to calculate details of what has happened to our moths for the GMS Annual Report and for the AGM. There is a lot of work involved in all of this.

GMS Winter 2010/11

The Winter GMS is now up and running for its third season and we expect at least 50 of you to take part. To the rest of you, then enjoy your well-earned rest over the winter and re-charge your batteries ready for the March 4th 2011 re-start.

The Winter GMS runs for 16 weeks and we will just produce one newsletter following the 16th week of the scheme. So, please keep filling in your recording form every week and then send it back to your area coordinator after week 16 (February 25th 2011) and definitely back to us by March 18th. We will then get the Winter Newsletter together in time to come out early in April 2011. This will go to everyone in the GMS, whether you are taking part in the Winter GMS or not. It will again be open to all GMS-ers to send in articles and digital photographs, so please keep sending them in to make the next newsletter a success. We especially look forward to articles from recorders new into GMS (how was your first year?).

GMS AGM sponsored by MapMate

We are proud to say that our GMS AGM this year is kindly sponsored by MapMate and for this we are very grateful. Because MapMate believe in the work of GMS then they are already giving us two copies of MapMate recording software for free to hold our database. If you don't already know about MapMate and you are looking for a way of storing your moth records on your computer or any other wildlife data then give MapMate a try.

You should have already made a note of the date in your diary! - So that you can't possibly be double booked – the GMS AGM will be on Sunday March 6th from 11am to 4pm, 2011 at Moira Village Hall (near Ashby-de-la-Zouch) in Leicestershire (just off the M42). Because last year's AGM was held quite a long way west in Herefordshire, we wanted to go further East for this year's AGM, so that more easterly GMS-ers can get there. We will send directions to everyone who books, nearer the time! You can bring friends and family too, but we will be limited to around 100 bookings for the hall. If you want to get into the first 100 to book then please get in touch direct to me or via your area coordinator. Please book now if you want to come along.

Speakers this year are still being finalised, but will include, Jon Sadler from Birmingham University and OPAL on further findings from his research on the GMS

database. Dave Grundy will give a general round-up on GMS 2010 and previous years plus a look forward to 2011, plus other speakers to be finalised. Anglian Lepidopterist Supplies will again bring a stall to the event, selling moth traps etc - please contact them beforehand if you want to order something special (remember that it will save you the postage!). We will also have Atropos Books back again selling moth books and subscriptions to their excellent magazine - again order items in advance if you want anything special. Finally exclusively available at the AGM will be our official GMS t-shirts for sale, so make sure you come along to buy one. For those who don't make it to the GMS AGM and I know for some of you it is maybe too far to come, then never mind the GMS Annual Report for 2010 should be coming out in April and will include information from the 2010 round-up as heard at the AGM and using all of your results.

The main speaker for the event will be from Butterfly Conservation from their Moths Count / National Moth Recording Scheme team and will talk about the work of the team and progress into the future. He will be talking about the brand new moth atlas and another exciting publication. There will also be Jon Clifton talking about the joys of going mobile with your moth trap - how to look for moths outside your garden fence! And finally we have local moth-trapper from Leicestershire Graham Finch giving a talk entitled "They won't come to you."



A busy room at last year's 2010 GMS AGM in Herefordshire

The GMS Chat-site

The chat-site is still growing all the time for GMS-ers who want to chat about their catches each week or want identification help or advice on moths. You will get to hear what other people from around Britain and Ireland are trapping. Or maybe you just want to brighten up those cold moth-less winter nights with moth chat? Because of the extra numbers, we now welcome an extra moderator for the group – Neale Jordan-Mellersh. If you want to join the chatsite, then get in touch with Neale on sneale48@hotmail.co.uk or John Bryan on john.bryan15@yahoo.com or Dave Grundy on dgcountryside@btinternet.com and mention the passwords Marbled Beauty to show that you are in the GMS.

GMS Recording for 2011

GMS 2011 will start on March 4th 2011, so I hope that you will all be keen to continue GMS recording in the coming year. Recording forms will come out to you just before the start along with instructions. Make sure that your trap is in full working order before that – try it out in February to check that it is still working well.

New Coordinator – Ireland

Unfortunately we have had to say goodbye to Angus Tyner as our GMS Ireland coordinator. He has got so much other work to do with moths involved with MothsIreland etc that he has had to regrettably stand down. However he is keen to keep involved with GMS as a participant and in the chatsite too. So, thanks Angus for the fantastic work that you have done for us – you have helped GMS Ireland to grow to a strong position with close to 20 recorders keen to take part and still growing. Well done!

Therefore we have been looking for a new coordinator and have now invited Jenny Seawright to take over. She lives in SW Ireland and I am sure you will join me in welcoming her aboard as new coordinator for Ireland. So, if you need to get in touch with her about anything to do with GMS in Ireland then she is on jseawright@eircom.net and Gortnamona, Ballingearry, Macroom, Co. Cork. Tel: 026-47324.

National Moth Recorder's Meeting

There will be a UK-wide Moth Recorder's meeting on Saturday 22nd January 2011 at the Birmingham and Midland Institute in central Birmingham organised by Butterfly Conservation. This is for anyone interested in moths and a great opportunity for moth recorders to be updated on the National Moth Recording Scheme. It will be great to meet up with other moth recorders and I've already booked so I would like to see you there – there should be a good few GMS-ers turning up. This is a free event with some excellent speakers and stalls selling books and traps which includes tea, coffee and lunch, but places are limited. Pre-booking is essential and find out further details by contacting info@butterfly-conservation.org or 01929 400209.

Moth-ing at Anstruther, Fife (VC85)

By Anne-Marie Smout

We have run a moth traps in our Anstruther garden (VC85) on and off since 1990. The garden is about ¼ acre, has two little ponds, a couple of mature trees, and is packed with as many plants, both natives and non-natives, as will survive the frequent exposure to fierce salt-laden easterlies. The most interesting thing about the location is of course that at the bottom of the garden we have a 20 foot wall, which drops down to the rocky shoreline of the Firth of Forth. Facing east we enjoy a fine view of the Isle of May and the Lothian Coast across the water.

We started with a 6w actinic Heath trap, which I now keep in the campervan for when we are on tour, and in 2000 we invested in a Robinson 125w, which greatly increased the volume of moths attracted to the light. However, following recent discussion on the Yahoo group I might bring the Heath trap out over the winter to see if, as suggested, the less bright light is better at attracting the hardy moths which supposedly are on the wing at this time of year. That would make a welcome change from the nil catch over the winter months last year.



Our garden June 2010

I joined the GMS at the start of 2009, enthused by an article in *Atropos* by David Grundy, and this has brought me and Chris, my husband, a huge amount of fun, both because it has made me run the light trap much more regularly and because I really enjoy the many photographs of lovely moths and the splendid and often esoteric discussions going on between the members of the GMS Yahoo group. The group is also very instructive in indicating which species of moths are on the wing at certain times of the year and therefore might come into my trap too.

Contrary to various messages from other GMS participants, 2010 has been a really excellent moth year here at Anstruther, certainly much more interesting than 2009. For a start, we have had 3027 individuals of 196 different species in the garden (1327 on GMS nights) as opposed to 1893 individuals of 135 species in 2009 (733 on GMS nights). We added 23 new species to our garden list in 2010 but only 6 in 2009. The list has now passed the dizzy heights of 300, not perhaps very impressive to GMS

moth'ers down south, but a much anticipated landmark for our more northerly and exposed location.

The upside of owning a seaside garden is of course that it may attract unusual migrants, and this year there have been several bold enough to make their way into the Firth of Forth.. It is rather easier to determine what are migrants and what are non-migrants in birds and butterflies, because we know far more about these, but in the case of moths there is a number of species which the books refer to as 'migrants'. The best moth of the year for us was undoubtedly a lovely *Palpita vitrealis* (see below). It turned out not to be a first for Scotland, but it was certainly a first for Fife.

However, amazingly we did get one first for Scotland, namely the tiny micro *Yponomeuta rorella* or Willow Ermine, not on the GRM list either for very good reasons. I don't profess to be any kind of expert in micro moths, so when four ermines turned up in the trap the night of 28/7/10, I managed to identify one as *Yponomeuta evonymella* (Bird-cherry Ermine), but sent the other 3 to Keith Bland at the National Museum of Scotland for his consideration, which is how I know. The other two were *Yponomeuta padella* (Orchard Ermine), which we have had identified as such before.

Another intriguing record this year was that of a Common Wainscot *Mythimna pallens* which found its way to my very first experiment with a wine-ropes on 14/10/10. This very late date prompted me to consult the experts, and Roy Leverton suggested that it was probably a migrant from Europe, rather than from southern England, where the species is known to produce a second brood. It did co-inside with a good fall of migrant birds.

As said before, it is difficult to know when a moth should be called a migrant or not. How far it should travel before being termed a migrant? We have several garden records of species that have only appeared here once or twice over the years. A case in point is the Hedge Rustic *Tholeera cespitis*, a singleton of this species having appeared in the garden in 1990, 1996 and 2010. Another is the Cinnabar *Tyria jacobaeae*, which we have had twice in the trap, in 2004 and in 2010, but to my knowledge it is not resident within miles of our garden. Moths can obviously move about a great deal.



Shoulder Stripe



Hedge Rustic

Keeping records over the years makes it quite obvious that there are also great yearly fluctuations in the abundance of recognised migrant moth species. For instance

Diamond-back moths (*Plutella xylostella*) came into the garden in for us unprecedented numbers in 2009, whereas this year we recorded a measly 18. The opposite was the case with Silver Ys (*Autographa gamma*), where 168 individuals were trapped between 10/6 and 22/10, as opposed to 48 in 2009.



Amongst the other macro moths which were new for 2010 but not necessarily proper migrants was a Grey Birch *Aethalura punctulatal*, sitting on the grass outside of the Robinson trap in early May. It was not a GMS night, perhaps luckily, as I might have been sorely tempted to count it(!) but it was new to us if not to Fife; we had a Shoulder Stripe *Anticlea badiata* earlier in April while there was a Large Wainscot *Rhizedra lutosa* in the trap at the same time as the *Palpita vitrealis* (see below), and a Streak *Chesias legatella* on 30/10.

Grey Birch photographed 5/6/2010

Most of the other lifers were micros, and I am now doing my best to swot up on micros, as their identification certainly presents a challenge, and if one is geeky enough to go in for collecting lifers, as I am, micros present the obvious answer!

I would like to end with saying a big thank you to our Scottish organiser Heather Young whose patience with my muddled records is just astonishing.

The best moth of the year for us was undoubtedly a lovely *Palpita vitrealis*, which turned up on the night of 10/9/10 as part of the haul for that GMS night. It is not on the GMS Scottish list, and we got very exciting reading Goater and Manley, who both call it a scarce migrant from southern Europe, while the UKMoths website has it down as an immigrant appearing most often in the south and south-west of England. It turned out not to be a first for Scotland, but it was certainly a first for Fife.



Palpita vitrealis trapped 10/9/2010

Summary of East Midlands Results for Weeks 28 to 36

Roger Freestone, East Midlands GMS Co-ordinator

For this quarter 21 sets of records have been received for Weeks 28 to 36, which is almost a full house of recorders. I would like to thank all EM recorders for your very prompt responses. This year we have had returns from 7 recorders from each of VC 55 and VC56, 2 from VC57, 1 from VC32 and a total of 4 from VCs 53 & 54 combined. This is a great response but it would be even better if we could involve more recorders for 2011. We already have three more registered for next year, but if you know of other moth-ers who might be interested then please try and exit them about GMS and give them my contact details.

“Statistics damn Statistics!”

It is always tempting to try and draw some conclusions from the data that I receive and it is easy to draw dubious ones due to limited data. On an initial look weeks 28 to 36 look worse than last year in terms of both number of species and total numbers of moths but was it?

A total of 3,320 moths (average of 147 per garden) were recorded in this quarter in the East Midlands compared to 2,497 (158 per garden) in 2009. A total of 106 different species were recorded in 2009 compared to 84 this year. Initially this appears quite significant but on looking further at the data doubts set in.

- In 2009 there were 25 species where only one moth was recorded whilst in 2010 there were only 12 single species recording.
- In 2010 there were at total of 16 gardens where a species was only recorded whilst in 2009 there were 44 gardens where a single species was recorded.

Both of the above data show that single records could skew data significantly and that we need to look at larger data sets to see if 2009 was a really any better or worse than this year. It is even more interesting to look at specific species. For instance from looking at the data, 2009 was a better year for recording carpet species than 2010. The recording rate (average no. per garden) for all but Red Green Carpet, which was about the same was generally significantly higher in 2009 compared to 2010.

- Common Marbled Carpet recording rate in 2009 was nearly three times higher than 2010.
- Grey Pine Carpet recording rate was nearly five times higher in 2009 and Juniper Carpet nearly four times higher.



Red-Green Carpet *Chloroclysta siterata* Common Marbled Carpet *C. truncate*



Grey Pine Carpet *Thera obeliscata*

Conversely, the recording rate of both Common and Smoky Wainscot were greater in 2010 (2.7 and 3.9 times respectively) compared to 2009. Interesting, but as always it is better to leave the statistics to the experts and it will be interesting to see what the national statistics tell us.

All this talk about Wainscots

by Paul Sokoloff VC 16 North-west Kent

All this talk about Wainscots, and the lack of moths in the trap leads the mind down strange tracks. Amidst the frenzy of checking how many of these beasts have been logged in various localities, and what can and cannot be called a Wainscot, I wondered who, when and why about the first person to use the term “Wainscot” for this group of moths, or for any particular species. The drivel that follows is the result of a quick rummage on the bookshelf.

I think it was Neale who said they were so named for their resemblance to the wood grain in traditional Wainscots (undoubtedly correct) and that (probably) some Victorian nerd coined the term (incorrect!).

Tracing the history has proved quite difficult for several reasons, not the least of which is that early illustrators tended to ignore these moths as they were not very spectacular. Other naturalists, including the great Charles Barrett [late 19th early 20th century] chose not to use English names when discussing moths.

Eleazir Albin in his *A Natural History of English Insects* (1735) illustrates a [wainscot] – possibly *pudorina* or *typhae* – that he bred from “great water grass”. Whether this is the plant we know as *Glyceria maxima* remains uncertain, but in any event he did not give the moth a name. Moses Harris in his fabulous book, *The Aurelian*, (1766) did not illustrate or describe any wainscots but in his later handbook, *The English Lepidoptera* (1775) he lists as species number 395 (out of 415) the “Wainfcott” which feeds on “great fword grafs” and is described as “wainfcott colour”. The exact identity of this insect is uncertain.

Donovan (around 1795 – 1805) does not figure a wainscot at all in any of his 16 volumes of *Natural History of British Insects*, but in his diary for collectors, George Samouelle (*The Entomologist’s Useful Compendium*, 1819) several wainscots (only one “t” now) are listed, including the “Red Wainscot” !!! John Curtis figures a couple of species in his *British Entomology* (the plate is dated 1827) and he also uses the word “Wainscot”.

Westwood and Humphreys in their *British Moths and their Transformations* (1843) illustrate and name a number of wainscots, and when Stephens and Stainton

published their Catalogue of British Lepidoptera in 1850, they listed 19 species with this name appended (including the “Tawny-veined Wainscot”). [Stainton did publish a Systematic Catalogue of British Insects in 1829, but I do not have a copy to check].

Therein, of course, lies another difficulty in the current census. Some moths which were called Wainscot are now not so called, and *vice versa*. The Bulrush Wainscot, for example, was for many years simply called “the bulrush”, and some such as those given above have now changed their names.

So a very brief trawl shows that the name “Wainscott” was used at least by 1775, and by 1819 there were a fair number of moths so designated.

Observations, summary and highlights

By Les Finch, VC22 Maidenhead, Berkshire

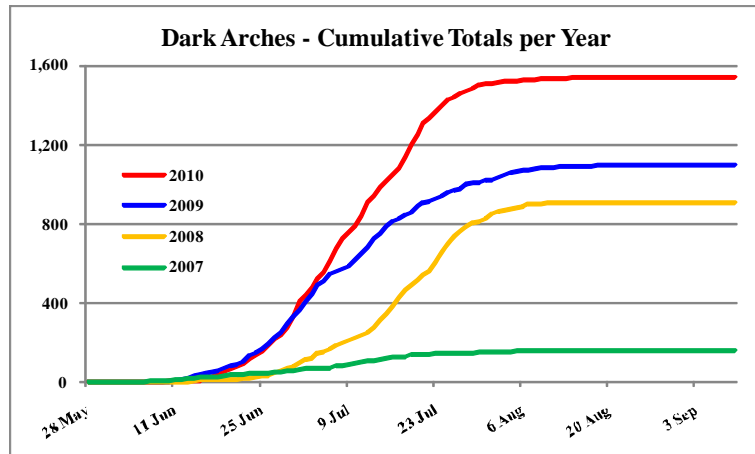
Moth Recording

Use has been made, variously, of two ‘Skinner’ type traps each fitted with twin 30 watt actinic tubes, one ‘Skinner’ type trap with a 15 watt actinic tube, one ‘Robinson’ type trap supporting two, vertically mounted, 30 watt actinic tubes, one ‘Skinner’ type trap in conjunction with a 25 watt blacklight blue compact lamp; plus, inside a ‘sentry box’ or a ‘slatted box’, a 125 watt MV lamp. However, a maximum of four light sources has been utilised in any one night.

During the year 276 species of macro moth(excluding aggregates) have been identified, and 20,861 individuals observed. Over 86% of the individual moths seen derived from the period 1 June to 30 September. As in previous years, flight dates varied dependent on weather conditions. Following the rather cold conditions experienced during the early months of the year, it is not surprising that the mean dates for species flying during this period were up to two weeks later than in 2009.

The most abundant species recorded in the tetrad have been Large Yellow Underwing(2,542 individuals), Dark Arches(1,546 individuals), Heart and Dart(1,274 individuals), Shuttle-shaped Dart(935 individuals), and Vine's Rustic(906 individuals); whilst the most frequently recorded species have been Shuttle-shaped Dart(142 calendar nights), Pale Mottled Willow(139 calendar nights), Willow Beauty(126 calendar nights), Large Yellow Underwing(121 calendar nights), and Double-striped Pug(98 calendar nights).

Of particular note, the numbers of Dark Arches trapped during the last four years have increased considerably, viz.



Well represented in 2010 have been Turnip Moth(451 individuals vice 89 in 2009), and Least Carpet(210 individuals vice 60 in 2009); whilst poorly represented have been Early Grey(42 individuals vice 189 in 2009), and Marbled Beauty(87 individuals vice 151 in 2009).

The list of species recorded includes 1 of the category Red Data Book 3(RDB3) status, 1 of the category Red Data Book K(RDBK) status, and 5 of the category Nationally Scarce Notable B(Nb), together with 49 'local', and 3 immigrant species. The Red Data Book 3(RDB3) species, Toadflax Brocade, was recorded at Hemsdale(garden) on 26 May, and on three occasions between 12 July and 23 August. Given that the species was recorded in 2009, the possibility of a local colony should not be discounted. The species has been established at Dungeness in East Kent(VC15) since the early 1950s, but expanded its range westwards along the south coast as far as Dorset(VC9) in the 1990s. More recently, it has become established in several south-eastern counties including South Essex(VC18), Hertfordshire(VC20), Middlesex(VC21), and Buckinghamshire(VC24); and occasionally has been recorded along the east coast as far north as South-east Yorkshire(VC61).

Six individuals of the RDBK species, Small Ranunculus, were taken between 11 July and 29 August. This fairly recent colonist is being reported elsewhere in the lower River Thames valley. The Notable B(Nb) species recorded were Mocha, Hoary Footman, Square-spotted Clay, Waved Black, and Buttoned Snout.

Five individuals of Mocha were taken at Beeching-grove Wood between 26 June and 30 August. This level of activity is similar to that in 2009, and the species is now being recorded in Berkshire(VC22) on a more widespread basis than hitherto.

Hoary Footman is well established along the coasts of Cornwall(VC1 & VC2), Devon(VC3 & VC4), and southern and western Wales. Otherwise, it is recorded primarily as an immigrant, but in recent years has been considered a colonist in several south-eastern counties of England. The frequency of Berkshire(VC22) records has been increasing, particularly in the south-east of the County, and the species is probably more plentiful than hitherto was apparent. Early records in the tetrad on 4 June and 9 June suggest possible immigrants, although other recent early records in the County may be indicative of two generations or an extended generation. Further individuals were taken on 29 July and 22 August.

Most frequently recorded in East Anglia, Square-spotted Clay is resident, inter alia, in Hertfordshire(VC20), Buckinghamshire(VC24), and Oxfordshire(VC23) and, in suitable habitat, is thought to be spreading its range south-westwards. Five individuals of this species were recorded at Beeching-grove Wood between 31 July and 8 September, where five individuals were found in 2009.

Waved Black is known to be spreading throughout several southern counties, and has been noted in at least fifteen 10km squares in Berkshire(VC22). Its status may be due for review. Six individuals were taken in five trapping sessions between 2 July and 24 July.

Buttoned Snout has been recorded particularly along the River Thames valley in recent years. The majority of imago records emanate from the period mid April to mid June, so that the occurrence of individuals on 22 May and 27 May should not be regarded as unusual.

(Editor: This is a substantial extract from a longer article – I will be happy to forward Les' full article on request)

“Good morning all” e-mails Steve (from barmy Buxton) VC57 to GMS colleagues on Wednesday 1st December 2010

As in my earlier mail I could not trap on the Friday night so the light shone brightly last night, Tues 30th Nov . There was no sign of the rumoured snow and we had clear skies all night. This fact most likely contributed to a minimum temperature of -5.9 'C. Needless to say the moths did not venture out and I can say we have an unbroken record of zerosunless?

Picking up on John Everson's mail "who in their right minds" I would say there are differing degrees of "madness". I have a lot of friends who can see no point at all in catching moths and most likely have some questions regarding my sanity. I would question the sanity of the vulcanologists who stand on the edge of sleeping volcanoes, or the scientists who spend months at a time in the frozen wastes of Antarctica (bit like the UK at the moment!)... or the earlier explorers venturing into territories unknown. No, we're doing it because some of us are daft enough and we might just learn something new and..... we might just get a moth when no else does! And maybe even a new record for latest or earliest for the garden.



As for the moth of the year.- my moth would be Brindled Ochre. There are other moths but this one springs to mind first only because my first record of it was as a victim of a spider's web in my garage and the fact that it is eight years since I last had one in my trap. So it was like saying hello to an old friend.
Photo by Chris Harlow from Aberdeenshire, posted on UK Moths website.

GMS in Surrey – town and country – some reflections on 2010

John Austin from Guildford, close to the chalk of the North Downs:

New moths for the garden this year include (in date order) Lead coloured Drab, Alder Moth, Rivulet, Brindled White spot , Obscure Wainscot, Scallop Shell, Small Seraphim, Herald, Blackneck, Maple Pug, Lesser Spotted Pinion, Square spotted clay, and Svensson's, Copper Underwing (probably overlooked previously). So not a bad haul, though a quiet autumn, whereas I have previously done quite well then.

Paul Wheeler from the heathland village of Chobham, close to the Chobham Common NNR:

A record number of individual moths this year- in fact, my gms total has increased each year. Of course, the number of moths to record has increased. For 2010, 44 were added, too and these accounted for 187 of the extra 501 moths counted over the 2009 total. An explosion in the number of crambids accounted comfortably for the rest of the increase, with *Chrysoteuchia culmella* going from 152 to 519 and *Agriphila straminella* going from 32 to 200. Remarkably I had counts of 2 for both these species in 2008. There was some clearing of piles of wood, dead trees and the like in the meadow at the back of my house so did the disturbance explain the increase or has it been a good year for crambids.

There are more zeros (55) than last year (34), but this is explained entirely by the additional species in the gms list. Of the 44 species added, I recorded 24 and failed to record 20.

Tony Beasley from the large Surrey village of New Haw at the junction of the Basingstoke and Wey Navigations:

Total moths processed in 2010 is just over 20,600 so the GMS represents about 10% of the total. This is our 4th year of garden mothing so we continue to see a number of new species; 62 micros and 25 macros- we are really only now getting to grips with the micros with Paul Wheeler's help. This included 2 Surrey notables- 609 *Elachista maculicerusella* and 757 *Recurvaria nanella*. Of the macros Brown Scallop was caught regularly and other new species included Festoon, Streak, Round-winged Muslin, Toadflax Brocade, Olive, Heart and Small fan-foot.

A selection of winners and losers are as follows-

Grass moths up by 1,000 (3,400 recorded)

Brimstone recorded the lowest total ever -91-down from an average of 130

All Footman species well down on last year

Flame shoulder scarce-only 38 recorded

Setaceous Hebrew character down from 600 last year to 100 this

Orthosia species up 100%

Flounced Rustic best ever at 468 up 30% on last year

Straw Dot worst year at 18.

Finally I mentioned Turnip moth and Vines Rustic; exceptional numbers recorded of 527 and 1,279 respectively, hugely above numbers recorded previously.

So overall a very mixed year but wonderfully interesting. Roll on 2011.

Gay Carr from suburban Roehampton, hard by the vast expanse of Wimbledon Common, the A3 and close to Richmond Park SSSI:

I am still surprised at the number of new species I get each year. This year they included March moth, scalloped hazel, flame carpet, coronet, pale prominent, purple thorn, flounced rustic and a number not on the GMS list such as frosted green, scorched carpet, gypsy moth, dark umber, barred straw, thistle ermine, and blue-bordered carpet.

Species that were well down on last year included Small Quaker (09: 68, 2010: 12), Lsr Broad-bordered yellow underwing, light emerald, green oak tortrix, copper underwing (09: 28, 2010: 8), pale mottled willow, square-spot rustic and willow beauty. However, some micros did much better, such as a. geniculea (09: 19, 2010: 113), a. straminella (09: 5, 2010: 23) and c.culmella (09:25, 2010: 46) and of the macros, double-striped pug and least carpet more than doubled their numbers.

Jerry Blumire from suburban Redhill:

My impression of 2010 is that moths were down both in quantity and variety compared with 2009 and thus continuing the downward trend of recent years. I run a Skinner trap with a 100W blended MV bulb in my garden in Redhill, Surrey and although I also have records of micro moths, here I have only compared macros. I could have expected fewer moths in 2010 for the simple reason that I had my trap running on fewer occasions – 104 nights in 2010, 122 in 2009. Consequently, I was a bit surprised to find that I had recorded 176 species in 2010 but only 169 in 2009.

Then comparing quantities of moths, I was even more surprised to see that numbers were significantly higher too! A good example of this was with Large Yellow Underwings. Like others, I had been wondering where they were for most of the summer, yet a final count up revealed 238 for 2010 compared with 159 in 2009. Other moths significantly up in 2010 for me were Dark Arches, Heart & Dart, Heart & Club, Shuttle-shaped Dart, White Ermine, Buff Ermine, Square-spot Rustic, Common Rustic aggregate, Vine's Rustic, Riband Wave, Marbled Minor aggregate, Blair's Shoulder Knot, Centre-barred Sallow, Fan-foot, Lesser Broad-bordered Yellow Underwing, Lesser Yellow Underwing, Flame and Small Fan-footed Wave. Species that *were* clearly down were Brimstone, Small Square-spot, Common Marbled Carpet, Garden Carpet, Early Thorn, Flame Shoulder, Early Grey, Straw Dot and Spectacle.

So why did I *feel* 2010 to be a relatively poor year? The only reason I could find was with the dates that species first appeared. As I said with Large Yellow Underwings, many seemed slow to put in an appearance. Of the 127 species that occurred fairly regularly in both years, 85 appeared earlier in 2009 with only 42 earlier in 2010. Was this due to weather conditions?



Finally, part of the fun of being relatively new to this is that 'garden firsts' were a fairly regular occurrence for me this year. My favourites were a beautiful Puss Moth, Black Arches, Toadflax Brocade (see left) and recently Merveille du Jour (at last!).

Final quarter in Scotland.

Autumn has been a bit of a disappointment here; not only has it been even wetter and windier than usual, but moth numbers are around 20% down on average compared to the same period last year. This rather spoils what at the three-quarter point had been a much better season overall, and the cumulative figures still show a healthy 50% increase in moth numbers in Scottish gardens in 2010. This figure is somewhat enhanced by the inclusion of extra species on the list, particularly the Common Rustic aggregate which turned out to be the third most common moth(s) up here, but even so, many species have appeared in greater numbers than last year.

Three of the top 5 Q4 moths in 2009 were carpets – Spruce, Red-green and Grey Pine – but all of these have declined in abundance (particularly Spruce – top of the pile at almost 28 / garden last autumn, down to just over 3 this time). When all results are in



we shall see if the anecdotal reports of geometers suffering more than others after the harsh winter are supported by the figures, but only one (Common Marbled Carpet) remains in the cumulative top 20 for 2010 out of seven in there last year.

Yellow-line Quaker was the commonest moth in Scottish gardens during Q4, although not appearing in mine this year, and just managed to squeeze into the lower reaches of the overall top 20. Otherwise, the cumulative figures are as reported in the last newsletter, with Large Yellow Underwing still by far the most abundant species.



Despite the drop in numbers, autumn is a fine time to study moths. Some of my favourites fly at this time of year, and while not abundant enough to feature in the GMS charts, are reasonably widespread and pop up in many of our gardens, except perhaps in the more urban areas. From the subtle dusting of green scales on the Green-brindled Crescent, to the intricate lichen patterns of the Merveille du Jour, the artistic talents of Mother Nature are showcased brilliantly. And who can fail to be impressed by the Dennis Healey eyebrows of the male Feathered Thorn?



Spare a thought though for the GMS-ers who trap faithfully every week, only to record yet another 'Nothing'. We averaged 80 moths / garden in Quarter 4, but that ranged from 287 for John in Killiecrankie, Perthshire to 1 (yes, one) on Scott's Yorkhill (Glasgow) balcony, a lonely little Brown House Moth. Richard in Broomhill (also Glasgow) fared only slightly better with 8, although that did include Copper Underwing aggregate, one that I have not yet recorded, and December moth. Gill in West Kilbride just made it to double figures, and 2 of those were Light Brown Apple Moth, confirming the spread of this species up both sides of the country (also seen in Anne-Marie's garden in Anstruther, Fife). The same could be said for Blair's Shoulder Knot, recorded by Anne-Marie and also Alison in Dumfriesshire – it will be interesting to monitor these and other species as they continue their (anticipated) range expansion into Scotland.

There was the usual smattering of immigrants augmenting our local populations, with a few more Silver-Y than last year, and around the same numbers of Angle Shades.



A definite migrant hot-spot seems to be Anne-Marie's coastal garden in Fife, and she has written a piece herself on some of the more interesting visitors to her trap this season, so read on, it's fascinating stuff.

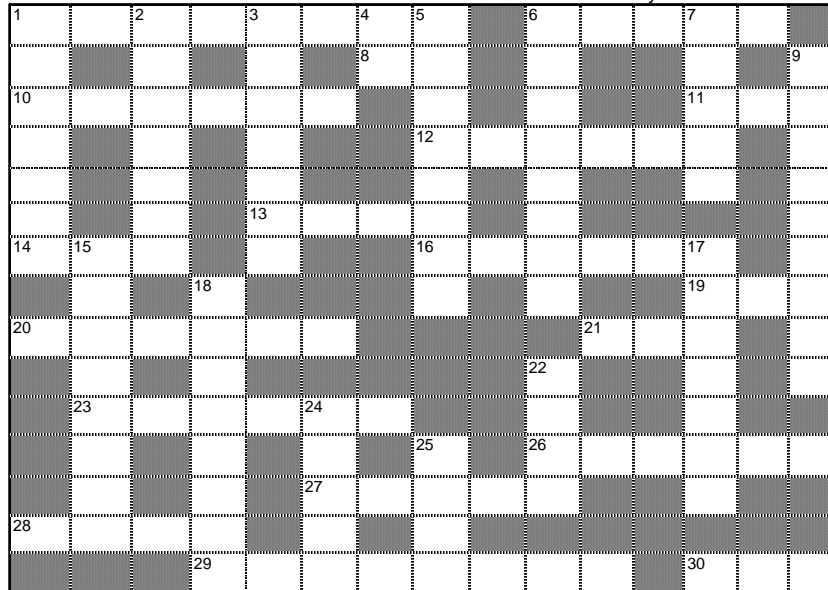
My thanks as always to those who have put out their traps in all weathers to further our collective knowledge of garden moths in Scotland, and I hope you will all be back for more in 2011.

Best wishes for Christmas, New Year, and the 'off-season' in general; meanwhile I and a few committed others will continue to trap over the winter, and I look forward to reporting our findings (or lack of them) in the Spring.

Heather Young
GMS co-ordinator, Scotland.
(Photographs by Ramsay Young).

A LEPIDOPTERAN CROSSWORD

by Nonconformist



Across

- 1. Does this fly on a waning moon? (8)
- 6. An " on your face" moth found in porridge. (5)
- 8. Was Juno's companion so specific? (2)
- 10. Panelling that almost needs an airpump? (6)
- 12 & 11. Score sixty and head for a pint. (6&3)
- 13. The pain of having coloured blood-vessels. (4)
- 16. A moth of kitchen and garden. (6)
- 19. Olive Oyl's sweet cream edged baby. (3)
- 20. The runner Ethel shouldn't look at. (6)
- 21. Is this a grey one I see before me? (3)
- 23 & 14. Species found when it begins to rain nacre. (6&3)
- 26. A moth certainly good for aches and pains. (6)
- 27. Should we call this moth Banquo? (5)
- 28. Still found in much of our clothing? (4)
- 29. Don't give the bird to this mammoth moth. (8)
- 30. A jewel in anyones moth trap. (3)

Down.

- 1. A far-eastern member of an acting group..... (7)
- 2. ... ruled over by a moorland species. (7)
- 3. Querky green twister? But not specific. (7)
- 4. An immigrant in reverse? (2)
- 5. A butterfly minus a carapace, very slow now. (8)
- 6. Found flying at Xmas parties? (7)
- 7. Barred brown earthy mineral. (5)
- 9. Was Graves the author of this little beauty? (5&4)
- 15. A clean it up generic for 6d. (7)
- 17. Strength-giver for Bluto's enemy. (7)
- 18. This moth is much too fine to handle. (8)
- 22. Metallic mark, but not precious. (4)
- 24. To fish for a moth without dark glasses. (5)
- 25. Yes! It's definitely mother, no hesitation. (4)

Nonconformist – not the editor – honestly – has set GMS moth-ers a Christmas challenge – a seasonal crossword. Answers will be posted on the GMS Chatsite on Jan 1st, 2011. Correctly completed puzzles, returned to the editor malcolm.bridge@ntlworld.com before then will receive appropriate recognition.

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Isle of Man: Steve Orridge (as above)

**Editor's last words: My grateful thanks to all of you who have contributed to
this GMS News and the others in 2010. From Crystal Palace wrapped in a deep
blanket of snow it seems quite right to wish you Season's Greetings.**

Malcolm



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