

CARMARTHENSHIRE MOTH & BUTTERFLY GROUP

NEWSLETTER No 16

Spring 2013

Editor: Ian Morgan

INTRODUCTION

It is time again to start thinking about the 2013 season and coming out of `recording hibernation`! Recording ought to start early if you wish to record the full range of moths that are present at a particular locality, with some species being on the wing on mild winter or very early spring nights. These will include **March moth** *Alsophila aescularia*, **winter moth** *Operophtera brumata*, **pale brindled beauty** *Apocheima pilosaria*, **dotted border** *Agriopis marginaria*, **early moth** *Theria primaria*, **spring usher** *Agriopis leuchophaeria*, **satellite** *Eupisilia transversa* and others. Some late winter moths have only very few records in the county such as the **small brindled beauty** *Apocheima hispidaria*, an oak wood inhabitant. March will see an acceleration of moths emerging and this will increase substantially into April and onwards.

I am sure that we all hope that 2013 will bring better weather than in 2012 - which was essentially rain and wind, with only some brief periods of sunshine that lasted from the end of March to late December. We could all – both humans and lepidoptera- do with a sunny, warm summer in 2013, especially if it then develops into a good migrant year (which we have not had since 2006!).

The last newsletter was a bumper issue, due to the need to catch up with news and also because of the size of the article on the historical aspects of moth recording in the county. This one is more modest, serving mainly as a `wake-up call` to the few faithful moth-ers in the county, to prepare for the 2013 season. I sincerely hope that many of you will at least do some recording in 2013, to augment the work of the half-dozen regulars and the few more `irregulars` –we really need help to ensure reasonable coverage. I thank Mat Ridley for making the effort to provide his article and I extend the invitation to others to put pen to paper...articles or short notes will be welcome. It does not take a great deal to write something and all of us are interested in what others have caught or useful hints about what to look for. To achieve success in recording, it has to be a collaborative venture, otherwise much of the county will remain `terra incognita` as far as moths are concerned. Regular feedback between us all, via newsletters and emails, is vital to maintain interest.

Please bear in mind that later generations of moth-ers may well be interested in what you write – I always strongly advise to `write for the future` giving, if possible, reasonable details of finds (dates, precise localities, grid references etc). Other organisations such as the BSBI now give six-figure grid references with their reports on recording, and this is a stance that I have always followed for more than the last quarter century of recording. I disagree with the spurious need for secrecy or vague locational details (except in some exceptional cases of rarity or sensitive landowners), and I have not myself experienced any owner-occupier issues arising from this stance of open-ness, as all recorders ought to use common sense and ask access permission when relevant. Conservation depends on knowing where species are.

I hear on the grapevine that the new book entitled *The Moths of Glamorgan** is still at the printers (it is being published by Atropos), but as soon as it appears I will tip off everyone by email as it will be of great use to us here in adjacent Carmarthenshire, as well as being a `good read` in its own right. The authors are all active naturalists in Glamorgan who have done much for moth recording in that county, and certainly the

activities and efforts of the well-organised Glamorgan Moth Recording Group has been an inspiration to me.

*– *The Moths of Glamorgan* by Gilmore, D.R.W., Slade, D.J. & Stewart, B. (2013) and to be published by Atropos Books.

Orange Underwings: now is the time!

Remember to look for **orange underwings** *Archiearis parthenias* above birches on sunny, warm days in late March and early April. I used to see them annually at Mynydd Mawr Woodland Park at Tumble, as well as other old coalfield spoil areas where young birches are re-colonising. They occur too, above birches at Pembrey Forest and those birches that fringe the steep oak-clad `cwms` north of Carmarthen, in NE Carmarthenshire and doubtless elsewhere. I suspect that they are fairly widespread in the county.

I'll briefly repeat some advice that I have given before. You need a few days of sunny warm weather, without strong wind (light wind is ok) and they appear mostly from late morning, approximately 11.00am onwards, when the day has warmed up. They peak in the 12.00 – 2.00pm slot, but occur later in really good weather. **Be patient**, and watch the tops of birches (ideally young birches of about 20ft height, so that the moths are not too far away): they normally fly only briefly before alighting again or more protracted (but still brief) spells when chasing each other. If you are very lucky, they may descend lower or you may have a vantage point above the birches on a steep slope such as the birches at Pont y Clerc tip* near Ammanford. You will need binoculars and try to view the trees against a darker background to reduce glare.

* can be accessed via SN622118, and ascend the north face of the tip to the west.



Above: Wood edge habitat at Mynydd Mawr Woodland Park, Tumble, March 2011. The orange underwings utilise the young c.20ft birches. SN543125.

The Lunar Hornet Clearwing – an elusive resident.

One sometimes reads in the moth literature of people who bring logs home for their wood burning stove or fire and an interesting moth or beetle emerges. Such an article appeared in one of the Glamorgan Moth Recording Group's newsletters back in 1999 and I loosely quote extracts of Mike Clark's article entitled `*Fascinating Tale of a Boring Insect*'. Mike relates how, when he was cycling through woodland at Parc Slip in Glamorgan along a track that had been cut for a cycle route, he noticed a piece of

willow *Salix cinerea* that had been tossed aside with holes bored in it. He took the wood home and asked friends (unsuccessfully) if they could identify the species that caused the borings.

Having not obtained any firm identification, he tossed the log into a wastepaper basket (that was coincidentally located next to a radiator), planning to throw the short log away. Then `out of the blue` (as he put it), an insect hatched out and he duly photographed it. The moth was subsequently identified, by a member of the Glamorgan Moth Recording Group, as a **lunar hornet clearwing** *Sesia bembeciformis* – the first county record in Glamorgan since 1917! Soon after the Parc Slip record, another individual was found by bird-ringers in their mist net at Oxwich Marsh and was subsequently photographed by Barry Stewart – see below.



Above: Lunar hornet clearwing. Caught at Oxwich marsh, Glamorgan, May 1999. Photo: B. Stewart.

The species has been rarely recorded as an adult in Carmarthenshire – one was found dead at Carmel (SN589158) in 2000 and another recorded by Simeon Jones (and photographed) N. of Llanboidy (SN21-24-) on 19.7.06.

There have also been records of borings that are strongly indicative of this species at the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trusts holding at Penclacwydd, Llwynhendy. They were noticed when willows were thinned on the Millennium Wetland (cSS535983), borings have also been seen at other sites close by, at the bottom of Erw-las, Llwynhendy. I've also seen suspiciously suggestive borings at the base of the track (SN584159) ascending to the ridge in the Garn-big area at Carmel, not too far from the earlier 2000 discovery of an adult.

In April 2012, I visited an area immediately NE of Berwick Roundabout along the A484 at Bynea, Llanelli. Here, there has been a lot of clearance of willows alongside the ditches and `pills`, to improve the habitat for water voles. In one area only (SS543986), the stumps were full of borings but alas, as I subsequently found out, the cut wood above these stumps had been seemingly taken home to peoples` wood burning stoves. These would have included, sadly, the almost mature larvae of the clearwing moths within these logs. Possibly, a local population had been inadvertently decimated.

I managed to find a few logs with some holes in them and, even though they did not look ideal (and after a struggle carrying them some distance to my parked car), I took them home. These I set up by my kitchen window (see photo), and I impatiently awaited *my* lunar hornet clearwings to emerge!

Unfortunately none appeared, even though I'd left the logs *in situ* for a good six weeks or so. Perhaps there were no larvae in these particular logs, or possibly the situation was too hot or dry at this sunny window where I had placed the logs, so they were later relegated to my garden where they remain. I subsequently read that the

adults sometimes emerge *below* ground level at the base of the trees, so perhaps my sections were not `low enough`?



Above: A view of one of the `pills` or ditches cleared of willows. The stumps with borings were nearby but not all of the stumps had them –only certain willows. Bynea, April 2012.



Above: Cut willow stumps with borings near Berwick Roundabout, Bynea.



Above: My failed attempt! These willow logs were retained for several weeks but nothing emerged.

A Mixed Bag of `Mothy Thoughts`

Mat Ridley`s capture of a **lead-coloured pug** *Eupithecia pulchellata* at Carmel in 2012 is mentioned in his article elsewhere in this newsletter, but it is a species that we all ought to look out for if we are trapping in oak (or other) woodland with a field layer of cow-wheat *Melampyrum pratense*, its food-plant. In parts of the county, such as the hillside oakwoods around Rhandirmwyn, intensive sheep grazing has removed or at least suppressed the field layer of flowering plants and it is likely that lead-coloured pugs will be absent. I was botanising with a friend in Cwm Pedol (a tributary of the Aman on the southern flanks of Mynydd Du) last July, when I noticed an abundance of cow wheat (at c SN696150) and immediately thought `lead-coloured pug habitat` but the problem at this site would be its inaccessibility for `mobile trapping`. I do have another location in mind though, a cwm within Stradey Woods, Llanelli that is close to my home, though it will still require some very substantial `leg-work` to carry the trap to the trapping site. I might give it a try but as always, it`s a bit of `pot-luck` if the moths have emerged on the date you trap, even if it is planned for within the flight season.

This latter site – Cwm Mawr (SN483023)- is known to hold **bilberry pug** *Chloroclystis debiliata* as, in 2002, I noticed little caterpillars making `tent nests` at the tips of bilberry plants that are abundant in one area. These I passed on to Barry Stewart, who from them raised some adult moths, thus confirming the find. I`ve also had this species at the northern part of Colin Jones`s `home cwm` at Troserch Woods SN548042 near Llangennech. Barry`s photograph of one of the Cwm Mawr pugs is shown below.



Above: Bilberry pug. Photo: B. Stewart.

Talking of moths associated with bilberry, perhaps I also ought to try for the **little thorn** *Cepphis advenaria* (in late May-June) or even a **smoky wave** *Scopula ternata* (June-July), both of which are rare or scarce moths in the county. More frequent is another bilberry-associate, the **beautiful snout** *Hypena crassalis*, which can be disturbed by day during its summertime flight period.

I must also try to trap too, at appropriate season (spring), for the **great prominent** *Peridea anceps* and **white-marked** *Cerastis leucographa* within the same oak-birch woodland at Cwm Mawr, to see if they are really absent in the extreme south east of Carmarthenshire; they are species that I know that several moth group members have previously recorded at their trapping sites in the mid and northern parts of the county.

Every winter, I try to read up on moth species that I ought to get if I target, at the right time of year, the correct food plants, habitat or geographical location, making notes from the national field guides or simply what other recorders have had elsewhere.

Sometimes you succeed, but more often you fail, but it's worth trying!

A springtime species that I *will* try to target this April is the **lead-coloured drab** *Orthosia populeti*, placing my traps under aspens and hoping the male moths will have the requisite feathery antennae! We'll see what happens!

A few late moth records from 2012

George Tordoff of Butterfly Conservation has kindly informed me of some very useful records that he made in 2012. Perhaps the best was the pyralid *Anania funebris* (sometimes known as the 'white-spotted sable moth') at Pembrey Forest SN392021 on 9/6, whilst other records of interest include a **grass rivulet** *Perizoma albulata* at 'RAF Pembrey' (Tywyn Burrows, SN36-04-) on 18/5, and the little micro moth *Adela fibulella* at the 'Butterfly Ride' in Pembrey Forest SN397016 on 10/6. A **grass egg** *Lasiocampa trifolii* larva at Ginst Point SN32-02- on 12/5 is also noteworthy.

In the course of his marsh fritillary survey and other work, he also had quite a haul of diurnal moths, such as the pyralid *Pyrausta despicata* and the **treble bar** *Aplocera plagiata* at Cynheidre SN49-08- on 12/5, **mother shiptons** *Callistege mi* at Ty'n-yr-heol SN438038 on 9/6 and Gellidoc SN52-09- on 13/6. An **emperor moth** *Saturnia pavornia* was recorded at Graig, Cynheidre SN49-07- on 13/6. **Burnet companions** *Euclidia glyphica* were noted at Pembrey Forest and Bryn du SN47-04- (on 9/6); **yellow belles** *Semiaspilates ochrearia* at the North Dock, Llanelli SS497997 (on 12/5), and a **blue-bordered carpet** *Plemyria rubiginosa* was flushed at Median farm SN57-12- on 16/8. All this shows that useful records can be made by day!

*The following (slightly modified) article I wrote for the **Llanelli Naturalists Newsletter No 79, (March 2013)**. Although only a very few readers of the CMBG would have known him, it may be of interest as Dafydd ran a Rothamsted moth trap at his home at Ty'r Ysgol, Rhandirmwyn for many years.*

Dafydd Davies, Rhandirmwyn, 1924 – 2012.

Several members will have known Dafydd Davies (or Dafis as he latterly spelt his surname); inevitably the locational appellation 'Rhandirmwyn' was added to his name whichever way it was written, as it was there that he lived and worked for many years. Dafydd passed away in March 2012 and it is thought appropriate that we offer some words to celebrate his many achievements. This summary has been deliberately delayed because, given Dafydd's importance to natural history in Wales, there were many notes of appreciation written after his passing and since these would be a source of additional information, it was thought prudent to await these.

I first met Dafydd in July 1971, when he led a West Wales Naturalists` Trust field meeting at Tywyn Burrows (aka `RAF Pembrey Sands`) and he was very encouraging to all those attending, carefully identifying the plants and insects that we encountered.



Dafydd Davies at Nantymwyn Leadmine, Rhandirmwyn, 27 Aug 2005. Photo Kath Pryce

Indeed, Dafydd`s helpfulness and general kindness was a trait that all who knew him emphasised, and he took care to give generous encouragement to all budding naturalists – a trait that he shared with the late Noel and Georgina Tallowin and Mrs Irene Vaughan, all of whom he, of course, knew well. I subsequently had natural history-related `dealings` with Dafydd in the early 1980s, and more particularly when I worked with the Nature Conservancy Council, when I would get a `royal welcome` at their home at Ty`r Ysgol, Rhandirmwyn, with fresh cakes and tea made by his wife

Joan (who pre-deceased him). Dafydd served on the Advisory Committee for Wales of the Nature Conservancy Council and I remember getting his help to raise the issue of the tremendous damage that open cast coaling was doing to wildlife habitats in SE Carmarthenshire, an issue that he subsequently raised at meetings. We would also have an occasional field day out too, such as on Mynydd Mallaen or, in contrast, down on the dunes at Pembrey and always we would turn up something interesting. Perhaps predictably, as the Rhandirmwyn area was the last stronghold of the red kite in Britain during its nadir in the first half of

the 20th Century, he was heavily involved in its conservation and was a member of the `Kite Committee` that oversaw the co-ordination of the conservation strategy of this raptor. He also participated (this time unsuccessfully) during the late 1960s in the campaign against proposals for a massive reservoir at Llyn Brienne that drowned upland farmsteads and hillside oak woods alike. For his natural history pleasures, Dafydd focused on invertebrates, in particular beetles and moths, during the 1970s, making many noteworthy discoveries and his participation in the Rothamsted moth recording scheme only terminated (after some 24 years of operation) in 2010; his trap was regarded as one of the most productive in Britain, reflecting the wide range of habitats around his home as well as his enthusiasm. He also made the only modern county record of the white-barred clearwing *Synanthedon spheciformis*, a rare moth associated with alders, on the banks of the Afon Bran, Cynghordy (SN808403, 4.7.1977) and he was the last person to see high brown fritillaries *Argynnis adippe* in Carmarthenshire, at Cwm Crychan in 1976. A note on his more important beetle

discoveries appeared in the *Dyfed Invertebrate Group Newsletter* of June 1987, (6:10-12). Dafydd was once heartily amused when I told him that his nickname down at Pendine - where he would sometimes stay to collect coleoptera - was `Dai Beetles` (of which I'd been told by the late John Rees of Laugharne) and Dafydd laughed about it for a good few minutes! One of the scarce beetles recorded by him on the Pendine-Marros cliffs was *Amphimallon ochraceus*, which I was also lucky to subsequently see on these cliffs.

He was also involved in butterfly recording, being county recorder for a while and he also helped the then BSBI County Recorder, Mrs Irene Vaughan (who lived not far away at `Tal Ebolion`, Cilycwm), with the surveying of the county's flora and finding, for example, wild service tree *Sorbus torminalis* at Poor Man's Wood near Llandovery. The wood is now a Wildlife Trust reserve.

Such was Dafydd's circle of contacts that there were several accounts of aspects of his life written for `Y Cylchlythyr`, the newsletter of *Cymdeithas Edward Llwyd* and I have extracted notes from three of these – by one of his two daughters, Rhiannon; by Bethan Wyn Jones of the BBC; by the BSBI botanist Goronwy Wynne and additionally a poetic contribution by Harri Williams of Pontarddulais, who is well-known to many `Llanelli Naturalists`. Without doubt, one of Dafydd's most important achievements was the setting up of the Welsh language natural history society, *Cymdeithas Edward Llwyd*, named after the famous Welsh botanist and discoverer of the Snowdon lily *Lloydia serotina*. This is one of the rarest of our alpine flora and confined to a tiny number of sites in Snowdonia and it is also the emblem of *Cymdeithas Edward Llwyd*. Whereas I already knew that Dafydd was the founder of that society, it was not until I read the eulogies to Dafydd, that I was made aware that the society arose from discussions between Dafydd and like-minded Welsh-speaking naturalists, during a long walk up Cwm Twrch in July 1978. It was also in this delightful `cwm` (perhaps the best of Carmarthenshire's coalfield `cwms`, though it actually shares the boundary with Breconshire) that Dafydd found the rare and tiny bog orchid *Hammarbya paludosa*, at its only known county site. Coincidentally, Nigel Stringer and I tried to re-find it in August 2012, but we failed, though it has been seen in intervening years.

Again from the notes written about Dafydd, I learnt that he was brought up in Cwmgiedd near Ystradgynlais in Cwm Tawe and went to Trinity College Carmarthen to train as a teacher, teaching subsequently in England for a short spell, then at Rhandirmwyn, Cynghordy and Llandovery. An amusing anecdote is provided in Geronwy's account, where he writes of Dafydd's skills in persuading Carmarthenshire County Council to erect a teaching cabin in the hills some three miles from the small village school at Rhandirmwyn where he was headmaster. Here, the tiny class of `six juniors` would have natural history lessons in the field to augment the standard curriculum, but it was not until years later that it was realised that the cabin had been put up some 300 yards into Breconshire! Back in the 1980s, Dafydd would tell me how he would take keen-eyed pupils out looking for brown hairstreak eggs amongst the hedgerow blackthorns around Rhandirmwyn and his daughter Rhiannon recalled his sense of humour, how he would delight in Longfellow's lines about Hiawatha and give lessons about what would be termed `environmental studies` these days. She also remembers his pleasure in a framed piece of embroidery completed by her mother with Saunders Lewis's words, `Gwinllan a roddwyd i'n gofal yw Cymru fy ngwlad` (`Wales, our land, is a vineyard given unto our care`), reflecting his deep love for the land, its people and wildlife.

In 1995, under his skilled authorship, the *Enwau Cymraeg ar Blanhigion* (Welsh Names of Plants) was published and another highpoint for Dafydd was his success, after lengthy negotiations, in convincing the authorities at St Michael's Church at Oxford to put up a Welsh slate memorial over the location of Edward Llwyd's grave. The unveiling of the memorial stone was done by his wife Joan, after a memorable bilingual speech by Dafydd himself. In 1991, he was admitted to the Gorsedd of the National Eisteddfod and in 2002 was awarded an honorary MSc by the University of Wales, as well as being elected as a Fellow of the Linnean Society. Finally, in 2009, he received the Science Medal at the National Eisteddfod at Bala.

Bethan Wyn Jones relates how during his burial at the church at Rhandirmwyn, with many of his friends and family present, the sunshine warmed all on that March day, with catkins shaking in a light breeze, sparrows flitting under the eaves and the flowering daisies and primroses almost 'winking' at those present. I think Dafydd would have liked, on such a nice spring day, the presence of wildlife at his funeral. If I may, I will conclude with just the first verse of six, written by Harri Williams to commemorate and remember Dafydd:

*Os gwelwch wr a`i wallt yn wyn
 yn troedio`n ysgafn dros y bryn,
 a llyfr nodiadau yn ei law
 boed hindda, wynt, y niwl neu`r glaw.
 Pwy yw sy`n enwi cen a llwyn?
 Wel, Dafydd Dafis, Rhandir Mwyn.*

This translates as (and losing its poetic impact), *'If you see a white-haired man walking lightly over the hill, with notebook in his hand whether fine weather, wind, mist or rain. Who is he who can name lichens and bushes? Well, Dafydd Dafis, Rhandirmwyn`.*

GMS at Carmel in 2012

- Mat Ridley

Weather forecast a bit dismal? Not really looking forward to getting up early in the morning for another meagre catch? Then I heartily recommend GMS. With GMS - the Garden Moth Scheme -even an empty trap is useful ecological monitoring data! Peering disconsolately in to the trap in the hope of an odd moth or two you can console yourself with thought that you are doing your bit for science. Actually, don't let me put you off - it's rarely as bad as that! Of my 33 weekly GMS catches between early March and early November, I recorded less than half a dozen moths on only 8 occasions. The average was 21 moths per catch - although compare this to 28 in 2009 and 37 in 2010. There was a high point of 126 moths (of 11 species) on 24th March - the greatest numbers of moths are usually in March or April when the *Orthosia* group (quakers, clouded drab, Hebrew character) along with early thorn and brindled beauty are around. The greatest number of species, on the other hand, can usually be expected in July and August. I had over 30 species several times but it is an indication of the poor summer that this maximum figure can be over 50 in my garden in a better year.

An important point: the above figures are based on those that are recorded for GMS. My actual catches are around 10% higher. The scheme excludes some of the scarce or rare species and also, you might be pleased to hear, many of those tricky identification

challenges. Only four of the forty-odd pug species are included and on 25th June I caught one of those tricky ones: a **lead-coloured pug** *Eupithecia plumbeolata* which was my highlight of the year, at least as far as rare species go. I'm sure there is a pun alluding to the lead-coloured skies of 2012 to be had here, but I can't quite pin it down at the moment!

GMS now covers the whole of Britain after expanding from its West Midlands origins in 2007. Amateur entomologists (and no doubt a few professionals) can pool their data and make a valuable contribution to our knowledge of moth populations. There is plenty of information on GMS on their website including reports and analysis of the data that is being amassed.

As I'm finishing these notes the moth trap is blazing away hopefully in the garden. Although GMS starts on the first Friday in March (1st March in 2013) I'm taking advantage of the scheme's useful flexibility to trap on 28th February. Our Editor has been waiting patiently so I do need to get this finished and emailed tonight – very sorry but I'm afraid you'll just have to wait until our next Newsletter to find out if I was lucky enough to catch anything...

Some Butterfly Notes 2012

- Dave Bannister

As I guess, you all know the summer of 2012 was a bit of a washout for butterflies with the records for all the species that I would expect, but with the numbers well down. A few species seemingly did well - **Ringlets** especially and, in my own garden, I had many more **Small Tortoiseshells** and **Red Admirals** than for the past few years. On a more positive note, I received a number of new records for **Purple Hairstreak**, in the Brechfa Forest (near my own house at Gwernogle), at Allt Rhyd y Groes, (north of Rhandirmwyn) and also at Drefelin, in the Drefach-Felindre area of the Teifi Valley. New records were also received for **Dingy Skipper** on the rough ground on the far side of the racecourse at Ffos Llas* (Trimsaran) and also from Carmel NNR. In both instances, these records were from new recorders who visited the sites regularly and it is hoped that they will become annual contributors. George Tordoff of Butterfly Conservation Wales and some volunteers concentrated on revisiting almost thirty old **Marsh Fritillary** sites (those not surveyed for a number of years), and it was heartening to find that that they were still present on some of the sites visited. However, several sites have apparently been lost, usually through succession or agricultural improvement. If the site is not grazed, this results in the demise of devil's-bit scabious, its larval food-plant through its inability to compete with rank, coarse grasses and scrub. This loss was particularly noticeable in the south-east of the county, on Coalfield sites north and west of Llanelli, an area that used to be a stronghold for this butterfly. Local recorders are aware of ongoing losses in this particular area.

It was still present though at the Wildlife Trust reserve at Rhos Cefn Bryn (SE of Llannon) and it was seen at a site near Cynheidre, where it had n't been seen – presumably due to lack of recording, rather than due to true absence- since the 1990s. It was also noted near the BC Reserve at Caeau Ffos-fach, near Cross Hands. Survey of some old sites in NE Carmarthenshire proved unproductive but one has to be wary of dismissing the species as absent, as sometimes its flight period at a particular site may have been over or whatever.

A farm at Harford in north Carmarthenshire had 16 webs on an early autumn visit, but the ungrazed field was becoming ranker – not good long-term news. CCW staff had some luck early in the flight season, with 10 marsh fritillaries noted on common land at Salem (29/5) and no less than 89 counted (on 12/6) at Bryn Bydernyn SSSI near Llanybydder (where it had not been noted since 1996, again probably due to lack of survey). They were not seen at Rhos Pwll y Gawnen SSSI, an area of common right in the NW of the county near Trelech, or at Penty SSSI, a small site on the high ridge just south of the A48 near Nantycaws.

Dark Green fritillaries were seen at their usual stronghold within Pembrey Forest. As always, any offer of help in recording fritillaries (and other butterflies!) will be welcomed by and myself Richard Smith. Richard produces a regular and very informative e-newsletter in the flight season entitled `*Frits About*`. Anyone wishing to receive it, or wanting to pass on fritillary records, should contact him at rgsoverton@tiscali.co.uk

The winter surveys for **Brown Hairstreak** eggs (again organised by Richard Smith) have continued and a number of new sites around Llandeilo and Llangeler have been found. Advice on hedge cutting and help with management (mainly coppicing and fencing of blackthorn) has also been given.

Let us hope that summer 2013 will bring better weather.

*Former open-cast or colliery sites are typical for this species in Carmarthenshire.

An Invertebrate Miscellany

A feature that I like about the GMRG Newsletter is the periodic inclusion, from time to time, of some invertebrate photographs or articles as inevitably, when either keeping an eye out for diurnal moths or when operating moth traps, `non-lepidopterans` are seen. Perhaps we can make this an occasional feature, when space allows, as knowledge of other wildlife to look out for will enhance our moth recording. I enclose a selection of species that I saw in 2012 and it would be good to receive any photos of interest from others.



Above: Arhopalus rusticus. This came to light on 19/8/12 at Pembrey Burrows. Originally a species only found in Scotland, it now breeds in pines through much of the UK. This individual probably originated from the adjacent Pembrey Forest.



Above: *Arctophila superabiens* (syn. *fulva*). A characteristic hoverfly species of `rhos pasture`, coalfield grasslands and wood edge habitats; flying in late summer and early autumn. Note gingery thorax and heavily marked wings. The smaller hoverfly is an *Eristalis* species. Craig-ddu- Wharley Point cliffs, Llansteffan, Sept. 2012.



Above: *Sabacon viscayanum* subsp *ramblaianum*. A rare harvestman found mainly under loose, flaggy stones in cool, damp wooded `cwms`. This individual was found in a steep valley west of the Usk Reservoir in August 2012. Note the `boxing glove` pedipalps (`feelers`) and grey-brick general colouring. Photo: Barry Stewart.



Above: *Bombus hypnorum* – a bumblebee that has only colonised Britain in the last decade or so. Often found in gardens and already recorded at several Carmarthenshire localities –it likes Cotoneaster flowers for example. Note distinctive ginger/black/white colouration. Photo: Barry Stewart.



Above: *Theba pisana* – a `Mediterranean` snail confined to the coasts of SW England and SW Wales. It often forms characteristic dense aggregations atop dune plants to avoid the heat of the sand. Photographed at Pembrey Burrows in 2012, but it also frequent on the other sandy areas of coastal Carmarthenshire.

For your diary: National Moth Night 2013

This will take place during 8-10 August and, as well as the usual nocturnal trapping, will also include a daytime element, with a theme on `tiger moths`.

The Dyfed Invertebrate Group

Note: For those with a general interest in invertebrates, the Dyfed Invertebrate Group`s Newsletters from 1986 to 2001 are now *all* available on line at <http://yrefail.net/dig/index.htm>. Please note that the scanning in process may have rendered some grid refs incorrect, such as confusing `3` with `8` etc. There are a very small number of incorrect records in the annual Carmarthenshire moth reviews contained in that newsletter. It is hoped that a short `Erratum` can be prepared at a later date.

Other Useful Links

I always find the [Glamorgan Moth Recording Group](http://www2.sewbrec.org.uk/gmrg.page) website very useful – what`s turning up `next door`, as it were and with other informative tips. It can be located at <http://www2.sewbrec.org.uk/gmrg.page> whilst the [Gower Wildlife blogspot](http://goweros.blogspot.co.uk) often holds moth sightings or other wildlife news of interest, including sometimes from Carmarthenshire. It can be found at <http://goweros.blogspot.co.uk> [Our own newsletter](http://www.carmarthenshirebiodiversity.co.uk/Downloads/carmarthenshire-moth-group.html), including all old issues, can be accessed via the Carmarthenshire County Council website at: <http://www.carmarthenshirebiodiversity.co.uk/Downloads/carmarthenshire-moth-group.html>

The old newsletters, as well as various field guides are always worth reading when `swotting up` for recording! Thanks to Isabel Macho and Mark Newton for organising this useful link.

A Correction

I should, of course, written `Rothamsted` trap rather than `Rothampsted` in the article on historical recording in the last newsletter (No 15, Winter 2012). There were also a few spelling errors (eg `grass egger` rather than the correct `eggar`), for which I apologise.

The Next Newsletter

It is planned to bring out the next Newsletter at the start of July 2013 and, as well as the usual reports of which moths that have been seen in the spring, it will include the final part of the series on **Pyralid Moths in Carmarthenshire**, parts 1-3 appearing as far back as 2007! Please let me know, in due course, of any noteworthy spring records for inclusion. Good luck with your recording!

All moth records should continue to be sent to the **County Moth Recorder**, Jon Baker*, who is happy to help with identification problems regarding the macro moths and `larger micros`. He regrets that, due to eyesight issues, he cannot generally help with most of the smaller micros.

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Above: The Main Ride in Pembrey Forest. The coastal and relatively sunny position of Pembrey Forest, with its wide rides and clearings, and supporting a rich flora on its sandy and often lime-rich soils, results in a very rich lepidopteran fauna. George Tordoff and colleagues from Butterfly Conservation made some useful records in this area in 2012 (see the short article on p6).